

New Post

Heather Wellman
January 27, 2026



Welcome to 2026

It's great to see so many of you at the bridge table. Roll on February, when Tuesday and Friday bridge will get under way. Please remember the Church has changed the starting time for Tuesday bridge to 11.30am

With the new year we have a few things happening:

Our lovely bridge book, many thanks to Lyn Hill for her hard work.

From next month we will be using the Howell movement for almost all all table sizes up to 11. The director's decision is final when selecting a table movement and in the placing of the phantom pair- please respect their decision. If you require seating rights, please email the club so we can compile a list for the directors and we can then arrange the appropriate seating for you.

Planning is underway for the new online lessons starting in March- more info next month.

And lastly our Charity nights are the 2nd and 4th of February. Can you please bring \$10 cash on the night. If you aren't playing on these nights but wish to make a donation, we will have a container available. This year's charity is Wanaka Volunteer Fire Brigade Sky Challenge team, who are climbing the Sky Tower in full BA raising money for Blood Cancer NZ.

Cheers

Heather

Programme Feb 2025

Silver Championship Pairs Feb 2, 9

Mt Barker Pairs from Feb 16

Tuesday:

From Feb 3

Wednesday:

Bronze Championship Pairs Feb 4, 11

Wilkin Pairs from Feb 18

Friday:

From Feb 13

Tournaments

Also coming up:

Invercargill Swiss Pairs 8B Feb 15

Cromwell Intermediate Pairs 5B Feb 21

Cromwell Junior Pairs 3B Feb 21

Tournament Results



Jane Hamilton and former member Shona Watt were runners-up in the Intermediate section at the Festival Pairs in Dunedin last weekend. They were 13th out of 30 pairs when the Open pairs were included, which is a fantastic result.

At the Alexandra Holiday Pairs, there was a strong Open field of 39 pairs. Marion Furneaux and Jenny Pryde finished 13th and Sherril Harries and Georgie Roberts were 14th.

Movements

All of you will have played a Howell movement at some time. but not regularly. It will not necessarily mean everybody playing everybody else, but each pair can only miss one round of play even if there is a phantom. This is the biggest general complaint that we get is from members who sometimes miss two rounds in a Mitchell movement. The Directors and Computer Operators who aren't familiar with Howell (and that's nearly all of us) are getting some training this week and next.

Sessions

There will be a little more work to do before we start a session, so please be seated by 6.50 at evening sessions. This means aiming to get to the Club by 6.45 at the latest.

Teams

You will have already received an email informing you that a Teams Scoring and Strategy session will be taking place at the Fire Station from 2-4pm on Friday the 30th. Please do not park in the Fire Station car park.

AGM

It was suggested that we might have a wider selection of prizes at the AGM. Please send your suggestions to the Fastmail account.

Memorial Service

There will be a memorial service for Dennis Pezaro at the Rippon Vineyard on Sunday the 26th April at 2pm.

Director's Corner

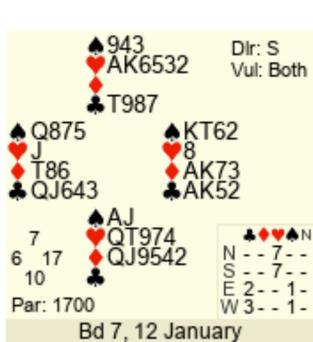
A reminder about alerting. First off, alerts are for the benefit of the defenders. If your partner fails to alert or provides a mistaken explanation, do not say anything until the end of the auction. Also, ignore partner's incorrect explanation when it is your turn to bid. If you have made the mistake and realise that partner has corrected it in their explanation, you cannot change your next bid accordingly (although how anyone is supposed to monitor this is a mystery).

So what is alertable and not? Generally, bids that do not mean what they look like are alertable (although partner still has to explain a 1NT or 1C bid), Exceptions to this are familiar bids like strong 2C (and the 2D response), ace-asking bids and Stayman. Also negative doubles and most cue-bids, Michaels and the unusual 2NT being the most commonly used. There is a fairly comprehensive list of alertable/non-alertable bids at <https://www.bridgewebs.com/truro/All%20About%20Alerts.pdf> The article shows what a minefield the subject is!

Now for a more thorny subject. I "enjoyed" my first directing experience of the year recently. It felt like a 13-round fight. There were many rounds where play wasn't finished within the time limit by several tables, which is not uncommon - it was, after all, the first competition of the year. The really dispiriting part was the lack of urgency that started playing the cards. People were making themselves a cup of tea after the clock had started running and they were even filling in their bridge books. Please do this after you have played the hands if you have the time or when you are dummy. I also cleaned a lot of cups. If you don't clean your own cup, you may find that nobody is allowed to use the tea-making facilities.

To Double or not to Double

This hand from a recent Monday evening session featured a spectacular deal with a freakish distribution:



At our table the auction was:

South West North East

1D Pass 1H X

4H Pass Pass X

All Pass

With 17 HCP, strong holdings in the black suits, and cover in opener's first suit East has a perfect hand for a takeout double. If West has either black suit a spade or club contract may well be playable, and if West has heart cover NT might be viable.

South's immediate raise to 4H showed a 5-loser hand and put East on the spot. To double or not to double? At our table East doubled for penalties, hoping to take two tricks in each of the minors and defeat the contract by at least one trick. Unfortunately this was a bridge too far. When dummy tracked with a void after East led the club ace declarer had only to ruff in dummy, draw trumps in one round, and cross-ruff three clubs in dummy and four diamonds in hand before crossing to dummy with the spade ace and discarding two spade losers from hand to claim 13 tricks.

So was East's second round double just outrageously bad luck, or was it a little reckless? The advice given by most bridge writers is that for a suit contract or a suit recontract to succeed the doubler should have at least two likely trump tricks plus outside high card strength. With no likely trump tricks East needs to rely on high card strength alone, and unless both North and South have losing doubletons in both minors the defence has every reason to be conservative.

Two West players bid 4S, pushing North up to 5H. At both tables East also made a penalty double but even this proved to be optimistic.

Christmas Pairs
1st John Hogg and Brian Vass
2nd George Foreman and Georgie Roberts
Holiday Pairs
1st Jackie Roberts and Jacquie Staley
2nd Tracey Gieck and Gina Treadwell

Thanks for reading

Marc