



# Table Talk Mar 2024

## News from the Wanaka Bridge Club

### From the President

Hi all

As we do not have a noticeboard facility at the club we have now got the WhatsApp Club Notices up and running. If you are not a member of this group please contact Bridget who will add you to it. If you haven't yet joined WhatsApp I encourage you to do so. If you are unsure of how to join ask your grandchildren or talk to a committee member!

Many thanks to Bridget for all the time and effort it has taken to set up this group.

With daylight savings approaching we were due to start bridge at 6.30pm from Apr 8 as advertised in the Bridge Book. At a recent Committee meeting some members felt that April was too early to change to winter hours. By majority vote it was decided this will not start until Monday, May 6 and run to Wednesday, Aug 28. These dates will be advertised on the Whats App Club Notices group.

Hope you are having a wonderful Easter. Take time to enjoy all that is happening in our area at the moment.

See you at the bridge table

Heather

### Programme: Mar-Apr 2024

Monday:

Easter Monday Open (both grades) Apr 1  
Silver Champ Pairs Apr 8  
Mt Iron Stakes from Apr 15

Tuesday:

As normal

Wednesday:

Matukituki Pairs concludes on Apr 3  
Bronze Champ Pairs Apr 10  
Hawea Pairs from Apr 17

Friday:

As normal except no bridge on May 31

### Tournaments

Also coming up:

Winton Open Swiss Pairs Apr 6 5A  
Otago Open Teams (Otago BC) Apr 13 5A  
Otago Autumn Intermediate Pairs Apr 14 5B  
Otago Autumn Open Pairs Apr 14 5A  
Avenal Park Swiss Pairs (Invercargill BC) Apr 21 8B  
Wanaka Open Pairs Apr 27 5A

### Wanaka Tournaments

A reminder to think about your entry to the Wanaka Open Pairs at the end of April. We have had entries for 22 out of a possible 40 pairs so far. As usual, we will be

looking for raffle prizes and for Wanaka members to bring a plate on the day.

[www.nzbridge.co.nz/events/10434/Wanaka-Open-Pairs](http://www.nzbridge.co.nz/events/10434/Wanaka-Open-Pairs)

We are also hosting the Otago/Southland Provincial Teams and Pairs Tournaments on the weekend of 1/2 June. Entry pages below.

<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/events/10523/Otago~Southland-Provincial-Teams>

<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/events/10528/Otago~Southland-Provincial-Pairs>

### **‘A’ and ‘B’ points explained**

When you do well in regular club competitions, you are awarded ‘C’ points. 100 ‘C’ points equals a ‘B’ point. If you look at the following site:

<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/ranking-competition-results.html>

you will see how you are awarded rankings as you accumulate ‘B’ points. In order to achieve the rank of Provincial Master and above, you have to start collecting ‘A’ points as well. These are awarded at higher ranking tournaments, generally the Open ones.

If you look at the Tournaments list above, you will see that the Winton Swiss Pairs is a 5A tournament. This means that the winners are awarded 5 ‘A’ points, with the placings being awarded less according to the number of entries. This is detailed at:

<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/points-tables.html>

When a competition is “Open”, anyone can enter it, and a lot, like our own have

prizes for intermediate players. However, if you are new to tournament bridge, we would recommend starting with a “B” tournament, like the Otago Intermediate Pairs listed above. This will attract a good mixture of rankings and will be more enjoyable than jumping straight into an Open tournament.

If you are looking to accumulate ‘A’ and ‘B’ points in a hurry then a Congress is the way forward. Tracey Gieck returned from the Gold Coast recently with 20 ‘A’ points in her back pocket. Congratulations to Tracey for being part of the winning Novice Team.

At the Queenstown Open Pairs tournament this weekend several Wanaka members were in attendance and many did well. Sherril Harries and our old friend Maggie from Te Anau finished 7<sup>th</sup> out of 42 pairs; and Tracey Gieck and her partner from Christchurch finished 10<sup>th</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate pair. Bridget McCaughan and Sonya Adams were 11<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate pair; while Marion Furneaux and Jenny Pryde were 12<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Intermediate Pair, They all finished within a few percent of the winners.

### **Mentoring**

The committee is keen to foster a collaborative atmosphere of mentoring within the club, especially with a view to mentors and mentees playing together in the Rippon Rosebowl handicap series in June. It would be great to see silver/bronze partnerships being formed now so they can begin to get a feel for playing together – there are opportunities for doing so every Tuesday and Friday, but also on some Mondays and Wednesdays.

It is obviously up to the individual partnerships how much time and effort they put in, but it would be great to see some pairs playing together before the Rosebowl. Ideally, pairs should meet up after play to discuss tricky boards and to identify where they were successful and where they might improve.

Mentors must be prepared to play the system of the mentee, which is most often going to be Acol with four card majors and mentees must be prepared to invest a little learning time.

If you know someone you would like to ask to be your partner in this, obviously go ahead and ask them. But if any silver players would like to help foster a bronze player and are happy to be paired up with one, please get in touch with Lyn Hill at the club or on 027 450 2587. Once we've got a list of mentors, we will be asking for bronze players who would like to be paired up with them. And if you want a partner for the Rippon Rosebowl, contact Bridget McCaughan 020 413 05985.

### **Friday Drinks**

The latest Friday drinks arrangements are working well, and will be continued beyond the six week trial period, so byo to be arranged amongst yourselves.

### **Seating Rights**

We have had a few requests for seating rights recently. Could I remind you to send them to the Club's Fastmail account ([wanakabridgeclub@fastmail.com](mailto:wanakabridgeclub@fastmail.com)), indicating whether the request is temporary or permanent and stating to the extent that you feel able the reason for the request?

### **Mistakes at the Table**

Recently there have been a higher than usual number of mistakes made in entering scores, replacing cards in the correct pocket and playing the correct boards. We are all there to play bridge, but could you pay a little more attention to the rest of your obligations at the table, as it causes headaches for the Scorers when you don't?

Also, please put the boards back into their tray in the right order for the benefit of the Card Dealers.

And finally, please leave the scoring tablets switched on when you put them back on the table, ideally plugging them in to charge.

### **The Otago Rating System as Used at Wanaka: a Two Month Review**

A player rating system developed by the Otago Bridge Club over the last 5-10 years has recently been adopted by two other Otago-Southland clubs, Wanaka and Taieri. Subject to satisfactory performance at these two clubs, the Otago system may well evolve into a single rating system which can be implemented nationally.

With 32 sessions played in 2024 at the time of writing (26 March) 98 Wanaka members have played at least five sessions, so that changes in their rating over time give a reliable index of their playing strength relative to others. Individual ratings for most players are stable, often varying by less than  $\pm 10$  about the long-term average and only rarely varying by more than  $\pm 15$ .

Several members have questioned whether an unintended side effect of the new system is that it discourages strong

players from playing with weaker partners. This is not correct, as can be seen by browsing the changes in ratings following each Tuesday session. These sessions typically involve a core of players with ratings between 150 and 400 interspersed with a few stronger players – such as Heather Wellman and John Schwarz – who regularly play with partners rated up to 400 lower.

Analysis of the 2023 data used to estimate the 2024 starting ratings confirms that stronger players are not penalised by playing with a weaker partner. The rating system adjusts for differences in partner strength, so that rating changes following each new set of session results always reflect the performance of the partnership rather than the individual players. For a recent example of this see John's result for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March, when he played with a partner rated 396 below him. The partnership was expected to beat only three of the other six pairs but played well enough to come top of their section, earning a small rating increase for both players.

Martin Unwin

## Membership

Nothing to report this month

## Director's Corner

A few members have been asking recently about alerting, and whether it is necessary for certain bids. This time I can't just reprint what it is the Laws of Bridge, as there is little information concerning alerting. What there is relates to the penalties for not doing so. It leaves the guidance to the local regulatory

authorities, in our case New Zealand Bridge, so the relevant guidance is in the New Zealand Bridge Manual, which you can find here:

<https://www.nzbridge.co.nz/user/inline/5021/2022%20Manual%20-%2020231119.pdf>

Essentially, this states that you cannot have undisclosed agreements with your partner, whether in bidding or play. "Your principle should be to disclose, not as little as you must, but as much as you can, and as comprehensibly as you can."

"Natural" bids, a willingness to play in the suit named, are generally not alertable. There are, however, exceptions. For instance, a 1D-2D sequence where the response is forcing is alertable; as is a 1D-3D sequence where the response is weak. In general, any bid that looks natural but which the opponents cannot be expected to understand has to be alerted.

Next, a list of bids that appear alertable, but are not. These are described as self-alerting, as they are in common usage:

Doubles; redoubles; cue-bids of opponent's suit (Michaels); conventional bids at the four-level or higher (such as ace-asking 4NT), although an opening conventional bid at this level has to be alerted; both a strong 2C and weak 2D response; a 2C Stayman response to 1NT (although a 2C response after a double has to be alerted)

Now, overcalls. A natural overcall is one at the lowest available level that promises strength in the suit bid, as is a NT bid that promises a stopper in the opponent's suit. Over a double, an alert is necessary if there is a bid in a new suit that is non-forcing (except by a passed hand), or is

there is a pre-emptive or fit-showing jump bid.

Over a suit overcall, an alert is necessary if there is a bid in a new suit that is non-forcing, or a NT bid that doesn't promise a stopper in the opponent's suit.

You will probably be aware that any 1C or 1NT bid has to be explained, given the different meanings that these bids can have. This is more of an announcement than an alert, as you don't have to circle your partner's bid.

On occasions where you think that your partner has made a mistaken explanation of your bid: as declarer or dummy, call the Director before the cards are played; as a defender, call the Director at the end of the hand.

And finally, pre-alerts. This is when you explain your bidding system to your opponents, either verbally or through the use of a system card.

## 19 + 1 = game

This deal from the final round of the Cardrona Stakes featured an even distribution of points but wildly different point distributions between the two sides, with the E/W pair each holding 10 points each and the N/S points divided 19:1:

|          |          |        |
|----------|----------|--------|
|          | ♠JT98753 | Dir: S |
|          | ♥53      | Vul:   |
|          | ♦7       |        |
|          | ♣943     |        |
| ♠AQ4     |          | ♠6     |
| ♥J92     |          | ♥AQT74 |
| ♦KT54    |          | ♦Q96   |
| ♣875     |          | ♣QT62  |
|          | ♠K2      |        |
|          | ♥K86     |        |
| 1        | ♦AJ832   |        |
| 10 10    | ♣AKJ     |        |
| 19       |          |        |
| Par: 100 |          |        |

  

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | N |
|  | - | - | - | 4 | - |
|  | S | - | - | 4 | - |
|  | E | - | 2 | - | 3 |
|  | W | - | 1 | - | 2 |

The auction at our table was:

East South West North

1♦ Pass 1♠  
2♥ 3NT Pass 4♠

The 1♠ response to South's opening 1♦ overstates North's meagre point count but is justified in that North can simply keep repeating the suit until South either passes or bids game. East's 2♥ overcall muddies South's waters but with a decent heart stop and partner showing spades a rebid of 3NT describes the hand well. North converted to 4♠ which became the final contract.

With a choice of unappetising opening leads East thought for a while before facing the 2♣. Declarer won in dummy, assuming East had led small from a suit headed by the queen but being in no hurry to take the finesse while there was a chance of felling the diamond KQ in three rounds. The diamond ace and a diamond ruff in hand was followed by the spade seven, hoping in vain to find the queen with East.

On lead at trick five West also had an unappetising return, eventually settling on a diamond ruffed by declarer. A second round of spades drew West's ace and forced another diamond return, allowing declarer to ruff in hand and draw West's last trump. With the heart ace and club queen onside declarer was now in control, losing just two spades and a heart to notch up 10 tricks.

If you read all of that, then thank you, that is reward for the effort that we put into producing the Newsletter every month.

Marc