



# Table Talk

March 2022

## News from the Wanaka Bridge Club

### Marc's Missive

After a unanimous show of support at our Special General Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February we are on the move. All we must do now is move all our accumulated stuff either to the Wanaka Presbyterian Church Hall or into storage. We plan to do most of this on the weekend of 26-27<sup>th</sup> March but if you can store any tables or chairs at home, please start taking them now. We will keep a register of their location.

Ken Roberts has generously offered us space in his barn to store as much as we need. I have a large trailer that can be used to transport furniture. If you have anything similar and available please let us know.

Covid has finally reared its ugly head at the Club. We still have a good number of players each week although a few are staying away. The committee is keeping an eye on numbers and will move online to RealBridge should table numbers fall away drastically. In any case we will be running the Easter Open scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> April as an online event. We are also making provision for the upcoming tournaments hosted by the Club to be held online if necessary.

We have been discussing the feasibility and desirability of combining Monday and Wednesday bridge again. The benefit in terms of hall rental is clear, but there would be a number of extra tables, scorepads and chargers needed and the side of the Hall is not as pleasant a space as the middle. Please send your thoughts and ideas.

The first novice lesson of the year took place last Thursday. There were 26 in

attendance and another 5 who couldn't make that evening. Pretty good given that the A&P Show was cancelled. For me the highlight was an island of three men in the middle of the room surrounded by ladies. Clare is presenting the lessons this year and Sonya is once again running them. Martin has started Improver lessons on the third Sunday of the month.

The latest round of Directors' Exams is on – you guessed it – 26-27<sup>th</sup> March, the same weekend as we vacate our current premises. I am assured that the exams are nowhere near as daunting as they appear! It's an open book exam so candidates are free to (and expected to) consult the 2017 Laws of Duplicate Bridge and other reference material as necessary. As always it would be good to have more Directors at the Club so please let me know if you are interested.

Marc Simmonds (President, WBC)

### Match Programme: Mar-Apr 2022

Mon 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> March: Cardrona Stakes (Silver pairs only);

28<sup>th</sup> March: Silver Champs Round 3;

4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> April: Mt Iron Stakes, bronze/silver pairs allowed;

18<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Monday): Open play;

Tuesday bridge: 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> March;

Wed 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March: Matukituki Pairs (Bronze pairs only);

30<sup>th</sup> March: Bronze Champs Round 3;

6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> April: Hawea Pairs, bronze/silver pairs allowed;

20<sup>th</sup> April: Easter Handicap Pairs; Open play;

Fri 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>  
April: Afternoon social bridge, starts 1:00  
p.m. No partnership restrictions, all  
results handicapped.

Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> April: Wanaka Open Pairs  
Tournament (5A points).

## News From the Committee

### The Big Move

- As Marc has noted the club needs to move out of our current rooms by the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March and be ready to play on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March. A working bee will be held over the weekend to help move (start time TBA). We will need as many volunteers as possible, and vehicles with a trailer unit will be especially welcome.
- In the absence of a convenient place to store member name badges at the new venue please collect your badge from the club and keep it until further notice.

### Table Fees: New Billing System

- The new table payment is working well, with directors reporting their appreciation of not having to deal with cash.
- John Hogg reports that about \$2,000 worth of session cards have yet to be refunded or converted to a credit. If you still hold a partially used session card, please hand it to John or a committee member asap so any unused sessions can be credited to your account. Any uncredited cards will be written off at the end of the current financial year and will no longer be redeemable.
- While we remain at our Cliff Wilson Street premises you also have the option of using your old session cards to buy a standard \$7 drink from the bar (a saving of \$1) but this option will no longer be available once we move

to the Presbyterian Church  
Community Hall.

### Wanaka Open Pairs 23<sup>rd</sup> April

- The 5A Wanaka Open Pairs tournament is confirmed for 23<sup>rd</sup> April in the new clubrooms, with a maximum of 20 tables. Wanaka players made up almost half the pairs playing in last year's event so we strongly encourage you to enrol as soon as possible using the above link.
- Should Covid-19 restrictions necessitate holding the tournament online, our options include using Real Bridge or Compass to take care of directing.

### Fire Alarm

- As many of you will be aware we were forced to cancel the first scheduled night of the Matukituki Pairs on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March when a rogue fire alarm in the upstairs apartment interrupted play after the first hand. Fortunately it was a mild night so players were able to wait outside in comfort but by 8:00 p.m. it had become clear that no further play would be possible. Thanks to Jacquie Staley for capturing this image of the resulting scene:



### Rubber Bridge

- We have yet to hear from any pairs keen to take part in this year's Rubber Bridge competition. Applications need

to be in by 25<sup>th</sup> March so please contact Lynne Fegan (027-473-2249) asap if you wish to play.

### **Interim Bar Closure**

- We are unable to run a bar at the Presbyterian Church Hall so as from Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March drinks will no longer be available for at least the remainder of 2022. Any remaining wine in the fridge will be sold at cost price to members, and no more will be purchased until we can re-establish the bar at our new premises following our final move in 2023.

### **2022 Subscriptions**

- As of 8<sup>th</sup> March a handful of members had still to pay their 2022 subscription. If you are one of these you will have received an invoice by now so please pay this asap if you wish to remain a financial member. John Hogg notes that the increased annual subscription has kept the club afloat.

### **Membership Update**

- Our current membership is 183 including 14 country members. We have received five resignations due to people relocating, and we welcome Geoffrey Clarke as a new member. We also note with sadness the passing of Eddie Lowe, long a stalwart of our Tuesday afternoon sessions.

### **WBC Website**

- Thanks to all members who have given us positive feedback on the updated website. We recognise that ongoing updates will be necessary for as long as the covid-19 situation remains volatile, so please email the club at [wanakabridgeclub@fastmail.com](mailto:wanakabridgeclub@fastmail.com) if you spot a need for further changes.

### **Bridge Pads**

- Marc Simmonds has introduced a simple colour coding system to reduce

the incidence of bridge pads either not working or not charging. Pads marked with a red sticker are not working, whereas those marked with an orange sticker – currently 18 – are working. Charging sockets marked with a blue sticker are working, so please avoid plugging your pad into an unmarked socket as it will not charge. These codes are explained in more detail in a notice on the wall above the pads.

### **2022 Lessons and 2021 Follow-Up**

As Marc describes earlier in this newsletter our 2022 beginner lessons started on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Lessons will continue at the club for as long as possible and will go online if and when this becomes necessary.

2022 improver's lessons have started, with the first lesson (on 20<sup>th</sup> February) covering the Stayman convention. There was a strong turnout from the 2021 novice group and many attendees voiced their approval of the topic and the manner of presentation (a short on-screen presentation followed by card play). The next lesson will be from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup>, and will cover transfer responses to a 1NT opening bid. Transfer bids complement Stayman by allowing the partnership to search for 5-3 major suit fits as well as 4-4 fits, and are both simple to learn and fun to play.

As was mooted in the recent survey of last year's novice group there is room for ongoing short (15-20 minute) improver's lessons on Thursday evenings, like those we used to run on Friday afternoons. These will cover basic topics we haven't necessarily covered in previous lessons but which should be part of your bidding and playing arsenal. We will confirm a starting date shortly so please watch this space for news.

## Otago/Southland Bridge News

### 2022 Provincial Competition

Following a request from the Otago/Southland Regional Committee the Wanaka Bridge Club has agreed to host this year's Provincial Competition over Queens Birthday weekend. The competition involves two separate events on consecutive days, with the Provincial Teams on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June and the Provincial Pairs on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Our impending move to the Presbyterian Church Hall will not alter this arrangement as the hall has all the facilities necessary to run the event successfully. The event will either be face-to-face or on-line depending on the Covid-19 situation at the time.

### Regional Bridge Mate Visits

Regional Bridge Mate Sonya Adams has visited 7 of the 16 Otago/Southland clubs during a recent road trip and is reporting back to OSRB. OSRB's main concern is the number of cancelled tournaments.

## Director's Corner

### Alerts and Explanations

Upon enquiry about partner's call or play from an opponent, whose turn it is to call or play, you must give a full and clear explanation of you and your partner's agreement (if there is one) or any information available through partnership experience. Questions about calls that were available but not made may also be asked.

In responding to an enquiry from an opponent whose turn it is to call or play your explanation should include all specifications for the call or play including range of high-card strength, distribution, suit quality or any other relevant features explicitly agreed by the partnership.

***Be very careful to provide explanations only for conventions that the partnership has previously discussed.*** If you have no explicit agreement, say so. Do not invent an explanation or state a meaning that has been inferred from the evidence of the bidding, the hand held, or general bridge experience. The recommended wording in such cases is simply "We do not have an explicit agreement".

In such cases it is important to avoid explanations including phrases like "I assume it's ...". For example, imagine you are playing with a new partner and have agreed that an immediate 2NT overcall of a 1H or 1S opening bid shows at least 5-5 in the minors, but did not discuss the high card strength. After alerting partner's 2NT bid and been asked for an explanation you should say "at least 5-5 in the minors, high-card strength undefined". If the opponents press for more information, e.g., by asking if the bid is weak or strong, simply say you have no explicit agreement. Saying something like "I assume it's weak" gives your partner unauthorised information and risks being on the wrong side of a director's ruling if the opponents contest the result of the hand and your ad hoc explanation proves to be incorrect.

With very few exceptions, none of which are likely to occur at the Wanaka club, bids above the 3-level should not be alerted. For example, many pairs routinely use 4C to ask for aces but others play it as a splinter or control-showing bid, so it's your responsibility to ask. Other bids, notably doubles, redoubles, and cue bids of the opponent's suit are deemed to be self-alerting so once again you should ask.

### A Counter-Productive Overcall

This hand from the first night of the Mt Barker pairs provided a good example of how an overcall can sometimes backfire:

♠ K974 ♥ J5 ♦ JT83 ♣ K95		Dir: E Vul: E-W
♠ AT85 ♥ QT642 ♦ Q62 ♣ T	♠ J3 ♥ K73 ♦ 9754 ♣ Q832	
8 8 6 18	♠ Q62 ♥ A98 ♦ AK ♣ AJ764	♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ N 42132 S 42132 E ----- W -----
Par: 140		

The auction was short-lived:

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♣	1♥	X
1NT	X	All pass	

North's negative double after West's 1♥ overcall promised four spades and at least 6+ HCP, so when East chipped in with 1NT South had little hesitation in making a penalty double. With at least 24 HCP between the N/S hands, useful holdings in all four suits, and the vulnerability in their favour N/S have only to defeat the contract by two tricks to outscore any possible game contract their way.

E/W scrambled just three tricks, losing two spades, five clubs, two diamonds and the heart ace to concede -1100. With 3-card heart support East would have done better to pull the double to 2♥. South would still double, with accurate defence holding declarer to six tricks for -500, but it's better than -1100.

The real damage, however, stems from West's 1♥ overcall. If West remains silent North's natural response is now 1♦, after which South has an obvious 2NT rebid followed by a raise to 3NT by North. On the night the only positive scores for E/W were the 7 out of 12 tables where N/S were left to play in the unmakeable 3NT, going at least one down on a heart lead.

Even if East remains silent after North's negative double South can still earn his side a good score by passing the double for penalties for +200, having been alerted to the potential heart weakness by West's overcall. Either way, the damage has been done.

### The One Minute Bridge Player

With North/South silent West becomes declarer in 3NT:

West	East
♠ A Q 7	♠ J 3
♥ A J 8 7	♥ 6 5 4
♦ 6 5	♦ A K Q 8 7 4
♣ A J 8 2	♣ 7 5

North leads the spade five, won by dummy's jack. If the diamonds break 3-2 – a 68% chance – you can cash six diamond winners, two spades, a heart, and a club for an easy ten tricks.

However, if you start by cashing a diamond honour and the diamonds break 4-1 – a 28% chance – you have no other entry to dummy and will make only three diamond tricks to go two down.

The *safety play* is to lead a small diamond from dummy at trick 2. When you regain the lead, run the diamonds for a total of nine tricks. This line of play guarantees your contract anytime the diamonds are 3-2 or 4-1, a 96% chance. It is called a safety play because you deliberately give up the chance of an overtrick in exchange for maximising the chances of making your contract.

At rubber bridge or in a teams match the safety play should be an automatic first choice, since the extra 30 points you score for the overtrick is of little value. It is a closer decision at duplicate, where the overtrick counts for a lot more, but if your table sense or a subtle hint from the opponents suggests a 4-1 diamond break the safety play becomes a much better bet.