

# TABLE TALK

## NOVEMBER 2024

TAURANGA BRIDGE CLUB | 252 Ngatai Road, Otumoetai 3110 | 07 576-5022 | www.taurangabridge.co.nz



### Happy Birthday NOVEMBER

Margaret Adams  
Lyn Bailie  
Pam Batten  
Bren Birss  
Jeannie Bruning  
Janet Coleman  
Irene Edgar  
Christine Grant

Mel Grigsby  
Jenny Lynam  
Linda Mannix  
Joan McNeill  
Liz O'Riordan  
Jo Simpson  
Joanne Simson  
Pat Webb

Please make sure that your birth month is entered into Hello Club – no need to put the year



### WHAT'S HAPPENING/COMING UP (Make a note in your diary)

- **November Etiquette** check our Etiquette section on the noticeboard - our topics this month: **Choose to be Nice & Bridge Dummy**
- **AGM Tuesday 26th November** 6.30pm Drinks 7pm AGM starts
- **Holiday Bridge December** Monday night 9th, Tuesday daytime 10th & Friday daytime 13th **NO PARTNER REQUIRED**. This will also be the case for January Holiday Bridge.
- **Wednesday Holiday Bridge** 11th Dec. **Lucky Dip partners.**
- **Christmas Party** Saturday 14th December & our theme this year is the letter **D** . . . diva, dwarf, duchess, diver, driver, Dutch, Danish, disaster, demonstrator, dog, Dame, daffodil, daisy, dare devil, Dean... to name but a few!! **\$30 for lunch & afternoon Bridge, \$20 lunch only, \$10 Bridge only.** Tickets on sale soon.
- A reminder about our Reserved Car Parks. **Tuesday & Friday afternoons ONLY...** they are for any member who has compromised mobility, obviously the Director of the day may use one. Please feel free to use them if you're running late & one is empty.



### OUR OCTOBER WINNERS

M:	Congress Pairs <i>Phil Mangos – Bayleys Lifestyle Real Estate</i> 1+3 Teams #2	<b>Bruce Gibson &amp; Sue Sherwood</b> <b>Bruce Gibson, Sue Handley, Janice Simpson &amp; Liz Swanston</b>
T:	Call Me An Uber Handicap Prs <i>Bureta Walking Group</i> House Builder Handicap Prs <i>Cooper Young Construction</i>	<b>Karyl Anderson &amp; Liz Swanston</b> <b>Peter Hagan &amp; Hilary McKenna</b>
W:	Laughing Gas Handicap Teams <i>Gasp</i> Halloween Handicap Pairs <i>Tauriko Players</i>	<b>Desrai Karl, Jeannie Bruning, Jenny Glubb, Louise Fletcher, Sarah Graham, Clare Trass</b> <b>Michael Rhodes &amp; Desrai Karl</b>
Th:	Swiss Pairs #2 <i>Althorp Village</i>	<b>Sam &amp; Jo Simpson</b>
Fr:	Alan Turner Memorial Teams: Handicap:	<b>Christine Gibbons, Judy Pawson, Jo Simpson, Shirley Bain, Sam Simpson</b> <b>Jenny Glubb, Jeannie Bruning, Louise Fletcher, Desrai Karl, Mark Newman, Leigh Hacker, Athol Ryan</b>



Last month I touched on the important role that the dealing teams play within the club. This month I wanted to talk about the role that directors play in keeping our club sessions running smoothly. Directors are a lot more visible than the dealers but there are still aspects of the role that you may not be aware of and you may be interested to learn more about.

Club session directing starts with figuring out a movement, this is very much dependent on the number of tables and is the reason we need everybody seated 15 minutes early. Several factors need to be taken into account when selecting a movement including whether there will be a phantom, how many sets of boards are available, how many people need seating rights. These days we also avoid playing movements where only 1 board is played per round as this is very slow.

Once the movement is chosen the director ensures the tables are laid out in a sensible manner, numbered properly and that the phantom is correctly positioned to avoid any pair being phantom three times. They then ensure the scorer has been informed of the movement to get the scoring software ready to have bridgemates start talking to it. Once this is done the boards can be distributed making sure to place any feed-ins in the correct spot.

The good thing is that we have charts of movements so the director doesn't need to remember the intricate details of a movement. The charts will tell them which boards go to which table, where the feed-ins go and for Howell movements where the stationary pairs are located. The final step before the start of play is to start the timer. What this is set to will depend on the number of boards per round and the playing level of the group but the typical allowance is between 6 and 7 minutes per board.

Once play is underway is where you really notice the presence of the director because in a silent room there will suddenly be a call of "DIRECTOR!" and then the obligatory reminder from somewhere else in the room: "PLEASE!". Most director calls boil down to a small number of very common infringements: call out of turn, insufficient bid, lead out of turn and revokes whether established or not. For these and a number of other less common infringements there are a series of very useful flow charts that we have at the club for the directors to refer to, as well as a full copy of the laws.

Keeping things moving and playing to time is also under the purview of the director although with playing directors now so prevalent we have also begun to designate a second person as room manager purely to keep the room to time when the director may be otherwise engaged.

We are blessed with a sizable team of directors at our club and for most of our sessions we use playing directors which, obviously, means the director doesn't have to miss out on playing themselves! However we are always looking to increase our director stock and with this in mind we will be running some sessions next year for interested folks to introduce them to what is involved. While there are directors qualifications that can be undertaken there is no requirement whatsoever to be qualified, in fact the majority of our club session directors are unqualified.

So please if you think you might have an interest in directing keep an eye out for the seminars that will be on offer early next year.



## BOUQUETS

Thank you to those who have very kindly donated biscuits for afternoon tea / supper. Appreciated by everyone. A special thank you for the home baking!!!

**Beryl Smith** our thanks for the fabulous job you do of afternoon tea... coming in especially!!



## CHRISTMAS RAFFLES



Ho ho ho!! It's that time of the year!! Our Christmas Party is **Saturday 14th December** & most of you know that we have superb raffles run in conjunction with the party.

Thanks to your generosity we run a considerable number of raffles and we're now ready to accept your thoughtful donations.





# AN INTERESTING HAND (CLUB CAPTAIN) Hugh McAlister

♠ AK6

♥ J73

♦ KJ5

♣ A762

♠ Q74

♥ K9

♦ A632

♣ KJ53

♠ 982

♥ Q10642

♦ 974

♣ Q9

**S deals, both vul**  
**S declares 3NT**  
**- lead 4H**

♠ J1053

♥ A85

♦ Q108

♣ 1084

## TIP OF THE MONTH #12 Combining our chances

**Bidding:** South opens 1NT (12-14, balanced) and North (also balanced) raises to 3NT.

**Lead:** 4H is standard 4<sup>th</sup> highest... nothing better.

**Play:** East takes the first trick with AH and returns the 8H (standard, top of two hearts left). *How would you plan the play?*

- You win KH, and face the prospect of 3 more heart losers when you lose the lead. You count 8 winners off the top....which finesse do you take for the ninth trick?
- Either finesse, as things stand, is a 50% chance. We need to realise that there are no second chances if we get it wrong...we need to “combine our chances” – try and drop the queen in one suit first (about a 34% chance in an 8-card suit, less in a 7-card suit)...and if that is unsuccessful, then take the finesse in the other suit...overall +/- 67% chance of success (appreciatively better than a mere 50%). So, play AK of clubs first, then, if the QC doesn't drop, take the diamond finesse....in this case, and in 67% of similar cases, it works!

### LESSONS:

1.

A finesse has a 50% chance of winning....and losing (the chances may vary a bit with different bidding). Where possible, we should try a line of play with better than a 50% chance of success.

2.

The principle of “combining our chances” is that we try something else before taking our risky finesse, as long as there is no down side to that. (Here, we lost nothing by trying A and K of clubs first).

3.

The other important principle is that our chances of dropping an opponent's honour increase with the number of cards we hold in that suit (that is why we chose clubs first).

## THE DISCIPLINE OF BRIDGE – a few reminders

- South, in control of the Bridgemate, must check that the table are about to play the board that is indicated on the screen.
- Always count your cards before looking at them. There have been a few instances recently where a card has been in the incorrect slot.
- Once play is completed, the first thing to do is agree how many tricks were made / lost. Please do NOT gather up your cards until a ‘solid’ decision is reached.
- SOUTH is responsible for entering the hand de tails into the Bridgemate. It is EAST's responsibility to check that every detail of that entry is correct.
- Table Talk is a no-no...no exceptions. That, of course, includes facial expressions.
- Dummy is exactly that. A dummy. NEVER touch a card, or hover your hand over dummy. Dummy's hands remain on his/her lap until a card is requested by declarer.
- Play proceeds in a timely manner - no long pauses. Of course once dummy goes down, declarer takes a moment or two to plan play... dummy does NOT move the first card until instructed (even if it is a singleton)!

## UNDERSTANDING BRIDGE HANDICAPS

This article is an attempt to explain the handicapping system we currently use....partly to try and answer the concerns of some who view the system as possibly “flawed”, unfair or illogical.

A “handicapping system,” in sports or games, is defined as “...the practice of assigning an artificial advantage through scoring compensation or other advantage given to different contestants to equalize the chances of winning...” (Miriam-Webster Dictionary).

Such a system is in common use in golf, but is also widely used in bridge, chess and even horse racing (where different weights are added to saddlebags!). The theoretical aim is to give everybody an “equal” chance of winning. In bridge terms, an ideal handicap system, working perfectly, would mean every one getting 50%! In practice, of course, this never happens...why?...

1. Primarily, because we as players never play exactly to the same standard consistently from one day to the next;
2. Despite playing theoretically “correctly”, we are not always rewarded for our efforts; and
3. Because no handicapping system is perfect! These important limitations should be in the forefront of our minds in any discussion about handicapping systems.

**Why have a handicap system?** Just like in golf, and other competitive sports, everyone who plays wants to know that they have a chance of winning “at their level”. We have grades (Novice, Junior, Intermediate, Restricted Open and Open) for tournaments and some Club sessions. At a good proportion of Club sessions, final results are determined on a handicap basis. This spreads the “glory of winning”, not to mention the prizes, more evenly. This is a time-honoured and worthy aim.

**How does our system work?** Various systems have been employed in the past. Our current system employs the Compass scoring software, used by a number of Clubs around New Zealand. These Clubs (approximately 45 Clubs and 4,000 players) use the same deal files, and our results in our Club are automatically compared, every event, with results obtained by thousands of others around the country (a scoring system known as X-Club – if you are interested, you can access these results on our own Club website). The system has been adapted from one used by the English Bridge Union and used widely throughout Europe.

### Understanding Bridge Handicaps

In a nutshell, the system looks at everyone’s **last 2,000 hands played** (at a mean of 25 hands per session, this equates to 80 sessions, or 6-12 months for most people).

## MUSINGS AT THE TABLE #11 (CONT'D)

**It compares your results with all those in X-Club.** It is even clever enough to factor in the strength of the opposition you played against in every hand; the influence of partnerships (many play better with one or more partners, a concept known as “synergy”); and even takes into account “current form.” Our handicap is recalculated by the Compass software automatically every week.

### THE NUTS and BOLTS

Firstly, you need to have played at least 200 boards (8 or 9 sessions) to get a registered handicap. The more scores that are included, the more “steady” the handicap. Most people score between 40 and 60%. Most handicaps are between +12% and -12%. A handicap of +15% means you average 35% in raw scores (**in a comparison across the board in X-Club results**). A handicap of -12% means you average 62%. The handicap of a partnership is simply the sum of your two individual handicaps, divided by 2 (e.g. if the partners have handicaps of -12% and +8%, the combined handicap will be -2%). Handicaps in Teams events are more problematic, and intrinsically less reliable, but basically represent the average of the handicaps of all team members. A “high handicap” is a large **NEGATIVE** handicap (good player).

### Why do we use the results of other Clubs (X-Club)?

The answer to this is a simple statistical truism....the more information you include, the more accurate the result. The Compass system, used by many Clubs in NZ, and the amazing power of computerisation, allows such comparisons relatively easily.

### Why do some handicaps seem “out of whack”?

There may be several reasons for this. The **commonest misconception** is that Open players should have higher handicaps than Intermediate players (and so on). This is categorically incorrect.

Handicapping is a dynamic process, not a static measure. The handicap measures how you have played your **last 2,000** hands, not how many A points you have amassed in your lifetime. It is a more accurate measure of your **current ability**. A handicap can be distorted if players have played only a few times, or play with their regular partner.

**Where to from here?** It would be a monumental challenge for any Club to “go it alone” and design and implement their own handicapping system. There is safety (and comfort) in numbers. Having said that, NZ Bridge is apparently exploring the possibility of some form of National handicap system (don’t hold your breath!).

Your Committee acknowledges the well-meaning concerns expressed by some in recent times. It is hoped this article goes some way to reassuring those with doubts and questions. We have also decided, as a trial, to publish “current” handicaps on the board, on a monthly basis (in reality, of course, they change from day to day, and even hand to hand!).

Constructive feedback is always welcome. However, it is incredibly difficult to critically examine the accuracy of any individual handicap on any particular day!