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Chairman's Corner

Recovery and Review

The last two and a half years have been difficult times for bridge. The upheaval caused by COVID-19 has meant that many former players have gone missing. Online bridge has been no panacea: it does not provide the social interaction that is the lifeblood of bridge. Unfortunately the online bridge world is also sometimes unfriendly and too much abuse occurs.

These are challenges for bridge administrators, as little can be controlled online by either the sponsoring club or the NSWBA. That means we must strive to attract the missing players back to face-to-face bridge or attract new blood – the latter being the harder task. NSWBA may be able to assist with marketing, promoting bridge lessons etc (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

For some of the clubs in our state, matters were made even more difficult earlier this year when floods damaged premises and equipment. Many have assisted with the recovery in different ways: the NSWBA donated a dealing machine to the Lismore Bridge Club, delivered by their regional representative.

Meanwhile, the NSWBA is aiming to develop a five year strategy of steadying the ship and then sailing ahead with growth. A consultant has been employed to assist with this.

In the first phase, inputs to the Strategic Review were interesting and wide-ranging. There was concern about priorities in relation to the City premises and comments that indicated a disconnect between the Council and various groups of stakeholders who felt their view was not being heard by Councillors. Unfortunately a continuing theme was one of confusion on the part of stakeholders about the apparent conflict of interest with the NSWBA being the state peak body and conducting a bridge club. In fact there are actually two bridge clubs within the NSWBA, one offering a high level of competition (the NSWBA itself) and another offering social interaction (the Sydney Bridge Centre or SBC) but these are often lumped together.

Importantly, at this point in time the Review is still in the stage of data collection and no decisions about change are being made yet.

The second phase of the Review aims to gather the views of more stakeholders about the ideas raised by the consultations in the first phase, via a survey released in late September.

This is where you can contribute, by helping the Council to create a different NSWBA in 2023 and beyond. Please participate in the online survey – it is vital that the Councillors hear your personal view on the complete range of subjects, even if you believe that a particular subject will not directly affect your enjoyment of the game.

With your efforts, I hope that the endangered status of bridge can be turned around. Please get out there and tell the world how wonderful the game of bridge is. Congress organisers would love you and your members to form teams and enter the various face to face congresses on offer, so that these wonderful weekend events do not slowly wither.

John Scudder

Chairman, NSWBA



How to run a club session as a Teams event

Introduce your club players to a new format

Many would argue that Teams is by far the fairest form of competition in bridge. Unlike matchpoint pairs, you are not at the mercy of the rest of the field, or of the opponents doing their "one good thing" against you; unlike Swiss IMP pairs, it doesn't matter if you hold bad hands all through the match, because your teammates will be getting the good hands. Despite this, most club sessions are run as matchpoint pairs, at least in part because many directors lack familiarity with running a single session as a Teams event. In a talk first presented at the Coffs Harbour Congress in 2022, Ronnie Ng, who is a member of the NSWBA State Committee, explained how it's done.

The details and a step-by-step [guide](#) for a single session are on the NSWBA website, but here is a very condensed summary of what Ronnie told his audience:

- ◆ The number of boards per match (and the length of the session) is based on the total number of tables in play. For example, with 7 tables there will be 6 matches (against all the other teams) so 4 boards per round might be enough (a 24-board session). With 11 tables one might play 3-board matches (a 30-board session).
- ◆ With an odd number of teams, the movement is "pairs up two, boards up one" (this is known as an American Whist movement). With an even number of teams, a bye table is required between each table. Call those the half-number tables (say 1½ between 1 and 2, 2½ between 2 and 3 etc) then the movement is "pairs up one, boards up one-half" (known as a New England Relay).
- ◆ One set of boards is enough for an odd number of teams, but if there is an even number things work much better with two sets.
- ◆ Scoring can be done in Compscore 2 or 3 using [templates](#) from Altosoft, also available via the NSWBA website – no special skills are required. Team members enter names and ABF numbers into Bridgemates at their first (home) table and scores are imported normally.

Quite apart from offering variety in the form of competition, there are at least two other important benefits of running Teams sessions at your club: (1) less experienced members gain more exposure to this form of scoring (2) it's possible to combine 2 or more single-session events into club qualifying events e.g. for the NSW State (Country) Teams and the GNOT, which can be scored at a higher (Red or Gold) masterpoint level. The NSWBA page also has an [additional guide](#) written by Ronnie that shows you how to do this.

If you really want to help your members understand the difference between Teams and matchpoints, you could try running a Teams event with Board-a-Match (BAM) scoring. BAM is basically matchpoint scoring across 2 tables rather than across the field, so +430 is a win against -420 whereas it's a zero IMP difference in a normal Teams event. Changing the scoring takes just one click in Compscore.

Why not give one or both of these a try very soon? 



State Committee met face-to-face in July 2022.

From the State Committee

The State Committee of the NSWBA is responsible for promoting bridge across NSW and also aims to provide support for club activities and club administrators.

Through 2022 the Committee initiated a number of projects. A particularly successful one has been the launch of an Online Pairs League, which is now into its second season. Reflecting the reality that the bridge landscape changed during COVID, with many players taking to online bridge, this uses the RealBridge platform to offer a state-wide friendly IMPs Pairs bridge competition. A feasibility trial was undertaken in April and the first season of the tournament then ran over 8 weeks in July-August. Players were stratified into 3 Divisions, playing a full round-robin with North-South and East-West winners in each division.

If you haven't already encouraged your club members to participate in the next season, you should, because NSWBA returns \$10 to the NSW-registered home club of each participant! Also worth noting is that the competition focuses on encouraging relatively less experienced players to get involved in IMPs competitions, with half-price entry for players on <100 masterpoints.

Another successful initiative was the launch in mid-year – after extensive delays because of COVID – of the NSWBA Zonal Championships. The first of these was in the Southern Zone and involved clubs from Wollongong to Batemans Bay to the Southern Highlands. It is hoped that similar Championships might run in other Zones in 2023.

Early in the year, the Committee funded a regional TV advertising campaign about bridge. This yielded an excellent advertisement but unfortunately few new "leads" after a single round of advertising. Because it was not possible to fund the multiple cycles that are necessary to make an impact via TV, the advertisement video clip is instead available for clubs to upload to their social media pages or to link from their websites. The link to the advertisement on the NSWBA website is:

<https://nswba.com.au/campaign/assets/PrimeTVAd.mp4>

This year the Committee received many requests from clubs for a reduction or waiver of affiliation fees. Acknowledging the impact of COVID on clubs' income and membership renewals, in a limited number of instances an adjustment has been made. Of course given that the affiliation fees are the only real source of funds for the Committee's activities, forgoing them does have an impact on what the Committee is able to do, so all such adjustments are one-time-only arrangements.



1. Dealing machine donated to Lismore.
2. Online Pairs League.
3. Winners of Southern Zonal Championship.
4. Still from the TV commercial.

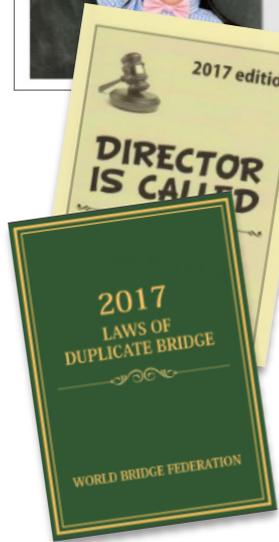
What can the NSWBA do for my club?

Some of what the NSWBA does for clubs is fairly obvious e.g. it pays for the insurance cover organised by the ABF (which covers Directors, other Officers and Voluntary Workers, as well as Public Liability) and provides access to assorted State championships, as well as travel and accommodation support for participants.

Other things may not be self evident. For example, as a club official, you can ask the NSWBA for:

- ◆ Assistance with training of bridge teachers, with teaching workshops and with access to the ABF Teacher Training program
- ◆ Assistance with training of club and tournament Directors and with Directors' Workshops (see next column)
- ◆ Assistance with marketing activities
- ◆ Advice on matters relating to club administration, running a Congress, applying for subsidies, disaster assistance etc.

Clubs needing advice or assistance with any of these or other bridge matters should contact their Regional Representative in the first instance. A list of Regional Representatives can be found on the NSWBA website, in the [Club Handbook](#). 🇺🇸



Hosting a Directors' Workshop

Would your club like to host a workshop for Directors in your area? The NSWBA State Committee would be happy to support you to do so, by subsidising travel and accommodation for the person who provides the training.

Currently that's Ian Lisle, who runs a friendly and informative workshop which not only covers core issues such as the Laws of Bridge and the selection of an appropriate movement for a session, but also the intangibles that make all the difference to running a session well.

Some of the interesting areas that Ian touches on include:

- ◆ dealing with difficult players
- ◆ effective communication at the table
- ◆ technology issues
- ◆ solving problems "on the fly"
- ◆ catering for the clientele.

As well as offering much useful advice, Ian will point your Directors towards worthwhile resources that will help them to make bridge sessions in your area even better. Why not contact NSWBA about making something happen at your club? 🇺🇸



Templates ready to use.

Learn to Play Bridge

Beginners Course



INTRODUCTORY LESSONS

By Armidale Bridge Club

Love to have fun? Love a challenge? Want to meet new friends? Improve your brain power? Do you like to play games? Then bridge may be for you ...

When:
Starting date: 31st October 2022
Time: 7pm to 9pm

Where:
ABC clubhouse: 12 Rockvale Road, Armidale

Cost:
\$60 per person includes textbook, snacks, drinks, and membership of the Armidale Bridge Club for the following year. 8 scheduled lessons.

Contact:
Interested? Want more information?
Glenda Parmenter (0414 937 801)
glendaparmenr4@gmail.com

Bridge
The world's most popular mind sport

Bridge is a game played with a 52-card deck by four people. Players bid to a contract and then play the cards to make that contract. It involves strategy, deduction, concentration, and observation.

Play bridge for your health and happiness.

- Meaningful social interaction
- Maintain mental sharpness
- Make new friends

A game that can be played by all ages

"Many games provide fun, but Bridge grips you."



Southern Highlands Bridge Club players claim victory in Country Mixed Pairs title



State Events and Your Club



NSWBA is responsible for running a number of State-level events in which your members can participate, with the possibility of earning red masterpoints and/or representing the club in a State/Country final. In addition, your club can be the host for one or more State-level events – if this isn't something you have considered before, maybe you would like to try?

Here are some of the NSW State-level events that have been held or are currently ongoing.

State Wide Pairs: This is a one-session matchpoint pairs event that runs in your club during the first week of August. Red masterpoints at level B4s are awarded and paid for by the NSWBA. Dealing files and hands records are provided and there's a booklet with a brief commentary on each deal. The event is scored across all participating clubs to determine the overall winners. There are many prizes (cash, Bridge Shop gift vouchers, certificates) and special prizes for players in Under-25, Under-50 and Under-100 masterpoint categories. Entry fee is only \$8 per pair. The [2022 SWP results](#) are now available. The SWP will be held from 1 - 7 August next year. Why not schedule it for one of your regular sessions that week in 2023?



State Novice and Restricted Teams: This is being held at the **Illawarra Bridge Association on Saturday and Sunday 12 - 13 November**. Eligibility is based on masterpoints as at 1 September 2022, with Novice being <100 masterpoints and Restricted being <300 masterpoints. The flyer for the event is [here](#).



State Seniors Championships: This included Pairs and Teams events and was hosted by the Central Coast Leagues Club Bridge Club in June.



State Veterans Championships: Again comprising Pairs and Teams events, this was hosted by the Tomaree Bridge Club in August.

State Open Pairs and Country Pairs Championships: The Finals of these Championships will be held at the NSWBA on 19 - 20 November. This event began earlier this year: all affiliated clubs can run qualifying sessions, for which red masterpoints are awarded at State Championship level (the [regulations](#) include a detailed description, with screen shots, of how to set your scoring program to calculate the red masterpoint awards correctly). You don't have to send club representatives to the Finals in Sydney, but if you do send a pair, the NSWBA will pay for the masterpoints issued in your club's qualifying event (and you don't use your B4c allocation). If it's too late for you this year, make sure you schedule sessions in 2023.

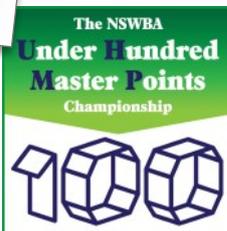
State Teams and Country Teams Championships: The Finals of these Championships, for which club qualifying sessions were run earlier in the year, will be held at NSWBA on 9 - 11 December.



State Mixed Pairs and Country Mixed Pairs Championships: The Finals of these were held at NSWBA on 28 - 29 May. Again, clubs can hold qualifying events for which red masterpoints are awarded at state championship level. Once more, you do not need to send a club representative pair to the State Finals in order to award red masterpoints and you don't use your B4c allocation. Make sure you program this for 2023!

The Under 100 Masterpoint Pairs: This event has already started, but it's not too late to take part. See the documentation available at the [UHMP website](#) for full details. Any regular club session in October or November can be converted into a UHMP session, but obviously one with a high number of <100 MP partnerships would be best. Or maybe convert a supervised duplicate into a UHMP session – half the field will get red masterpoints. Club sessions require little

extra effort from clubs. There's also time to organise a local final in the week November 21 - 27. UHMP Local Finals are run along the same lines as the State Wide Pairs, but are restricted to players with fewer than 100 masterpoints. Prizes are awarded in each of the 4 divisions: 0-10, 10-25, 25-50 and 50-100 MPs. If you want to hold a club session and/or a Local Final, submit the appropriate form available on the [UHMP website](#). 🇺🇸



The 2023 Congress Calendar is open for applications, please [submit your congress online via the NSWBA website!](#)