

BRIDGE TE AROHA: lovely place, lovely game ♠♥♦♣

January 2022



Apologies if this reaches you on 32nd January.

A New Year and hopefully plenty of bridge to play and enjoy in Te Aroha and for us devotees maybe a little further a 'field too. It has been a tough period of late for all Kiwis whether bridge players or not and as I write, there may be more difficult times ahead.

Take our new club committee. Like every other club, they have to decide how best to handle the playing of bridge in our club during the time of Covid. It is not easy trying to create an atmosphere in which all can play. Some bridge clubs have adopted the philosophy that you need to have a "My Covid Pass" to play and that does give a perceived degree of safety for others who wish to play.

At their December committee meeting, our new Committee tried to be fair to all. As long as we do not have more than 12 tables at a session, we could, under the orange traffic light system, play without requiring to ask whether players are or are not double vaccinated: members only, though.

We no longer have orange but red. The situation seems to change week by week. At a committee meeting in late January, the committee agreed that you had to show a "my vaccine pass" to play in either the Tuesday evening or Friday day sessions.

There may also be a group who do not require a “vaccine pass” renting the club rooms on a Thursday night. What is most important for our club, for all bridge clubs, is that we must respect that we do not all have the same views on bridge in Covid times. We must respect others even if we do not agree. We must keep the club as a friendly club and one which will survive and hopefully grow once Covid has passed. It will pass but perhaps not immediately.

If we do not see you in the next few weeks, please keep up to date where the club is at and we hope to see you back very soon, when you feel able to come.

Meanwhile, it is more important than ever now to stay away if you have a sniffle or a cough. Others will appreciate that.

Punching Above Its Weight

Te Aroha is a small New Zealand town but now has a reasonably large bridge population. That was not always the case and some can remember back a few years ago when the club almost folded.

We can relieve that history on another day but on this day, I would like to focus on the fact that in terms of bridge in this country, Te Aroha Bridge Club is “punching well above its weight”.

I am not going today to talk about the club’s first Gold Grandmaster or his role with New Zealand Bridge. For those of you who may not know, he has for close to 20 years been a full-time employee of our National Body. He will keep! Let’s move on.

Back in November, we had the Inter-Provincials and two Te Aroha members, Anna and I, were in the Waikato Bays Open team which finished second. However, the Waikato Bays Youth team went one better and three of the four members of that team are members of our club, Charlotte Jager, Tyrel Glass and Jacob Kalma. Jacob also had a great weekend in early December when he played for the New Zealand Youth team which had a convincing win over 2 Australian and 2 Indonesian teams in a tri-nation contest on Real Bridge.

and more on the Kalma family

Most of you will know the strong influence the Kalma family has had on this club and indeed continues to do so. Many may not be aware of the effect one member of that family, Anna, is having on bridge in a much wider area than this town.

Again, we will leave her influence, roles at the club for now. Anna has for several years been a member of the Waikato Bays Regional Committee, a very proactive group in respect of the promotion of bridge in our region. Then, last April, she went “national” and got elected to the Board of New Zealand Bridge. Many will know of Anna’s farming roots and farming is still a very big part of her working life. However, along the way, she has picked up marketing qualifications and these are now coming to the fore in her national role.

She is “leading the charge” of getting bridge more well -known in our community, of hopefully attracting more and diverse groups of people into playing the game she and we all love. Already, you may have noticed a change of image in respect of the New Zealand Bridge website. In fact, there are two websites, a new one aimed at those who know nothing or very little about the game and then the other aimed primarily at existing players. There are new logos bringing a refreshing look as people use the website more and more. “A Game for life” is the central thrust of this new image.



There are also drivers to portray the game on social media, on Facebook, on Twitter. There will be drives to change people's perception of the game, to make it friendly, playable and fun for all. Anna is behind all of this for The Board of New Zealand Bridge. Watch out for more changes over the next few months. They will certainly have Anna's guiding hand.

Of course, she can play bridge pretty well too and I know that more than most. I hope to be able to report on what happens to us at the bridge table and hopefully the news will be good! The last year has been a bit disjointed in terms of playing bridge but New Zealand Bridge has still managed to produce its awards of the most A Points won during the course of the year. There is a separate men's and women's award and guess who came second in the women's category.

Anna is really proud of what she and others have achieved locally with the Te Aroha club but her influence is now being felt all around the New Zealand Bridge community.

TIEING THE KNOT



That's what happened to two of the above mentioned in late December in a garden in Te Aroha. They kind of knew each other through bridge but they did not meet through bridge. However, it is very much an interest they have in common.



So, that's Charlotte and Tyrel very much in wedding mode. They are not the only ones in white and black, though. Very much part of the picture are Caesar and Delta

Charlotte and Tyrel have bought in town. We look forward to see them at the bridge club in the coming year.



SUBS TIME

Oh, Victor has not quite got my hands tied behind my back to put this piece in but pretty close! You will have all received a notice that your annual subs are due and I am sure you all have paid them...but just in case you had a momentary lapse, do pay up soon. Full Membership is 40.00, Associate Membership 20.00 while you can buy either 10 weeks' Table Money for 40.00 or a full year of Tuesday nights for \$170.00 at the same time.

It gives me great pleasure to switch my home club membership from Franklin to Te Aroha. So, pay today if you did not pay yesterday. Oh, thanks for releasing your grip, Victor!

A “Pack of Bastards” and a Common Link.



What’s going on here? You probably know who all this group of players are. So, they do not need to be named. What has caused them to be given the above title?

In fact, this is only half the group of “POBs”. The other half escaped before they could be snapped.

In order to explain, we are going to show you the full results from a recent Tuesday night play. Often, when results are shown, it is only the top few we display. Not this time, though. We do not want to take anything away from Hermanna and Hannah’s fine 61% session but take a look at the other end of the chart below.

Rank	Pair	Name	Matchpts	%	Masterpts
1	1	<u>Hermann Hemmes & Hanna Frischknecht</u>	77	61.11	40
2	3	<u>Guy Kalma & Peter Daffurn</u>	75	59.52	27
3	9	<u>Ari Rigter & Henk Hemmes</u>	78	54.17	15
4	2	<u>Joy Williams & Judith Howard</u>	68	53.97	2
4	7	<u>Jan Meertens & Laurie Belfield</u>	68	53.97	2
6	5	<u>Corolyn Stephenson & Ross Stewart</u>	56	44.44	
7	4	<u>Malcolm Kirkby & Peter Tait-Jamieson</u>	55	43.65	
8	8	<u>Leon Tebogt & Anna Blattler</u>	52	41.27	
9	6	<u>Tim Rigter & Anna Kalma</u>	47	37.30	

That's right, with a score that reflects rather a trying night came two of the top players at the club. Nothing to do with Tim and Anna, of course. They were "card perfect throughout". (The source of this comment has asked to remain anonymous though no such privilege is granted here, Anna.)

She referred to the opposition that night by the very descriptive title "Pack of Bastards" as she headed for the door. No wonder they are all smiling in the picture, no doubt reflecting on the bottom boards they dished out to Anna and Tim. Yet, it got worse. Fast forward to the Friday game.

	Pair	Name	Matchpts	%	Masterpts
1	7	Hermann and Henk Hemmes	94.3	65.49	40
2	6	<u>Unknown & Val Waite</u>	79	54.86	26
3	2	<u>Malcolm Kirkby & Peter Daffurn</u>	73	52.90	12
4	5	<u>Nick Whitten & Peter McNeil</u>	73	50.69	
5	4	<u>Val Ferguson & Jenny Shaw</u>	66	47.83	
6	3	<u>Hanna Frischknecht & Peter Tait-Jamieson</u>	63.7	44.24	
6	8	<u>Ari Rigter & Austin Brown</u>	63.7	44.24	
8	1	<u>Rochelle van Heuven & Tim Rigter</u>	57.3	39.79	

Hermann carried on winning while Tim found a new partner after the “POBs” had dealt to him and Anna. Now, club President, Rochelle, is no slouch at the table and as you can see helped to improve Tim’s score markedly! It looks like the “ POBs” were still around!

However, when asked why his score seemed to be under the 40% benchmark each time, Tim did not even blame the “ POBs”. Quite simply, he said that the common link between the sessions was simply that he played each session with a female partner. “That’s what you expect.”

Saving Tim!

As this is a polite publication, usually, I will not dare to comment on such a statement but will simply refer him to the session winners!

Thanks, Tim and your lovely partners for being such good sports. Better times ahead.

(Please, please, no hate mail..or female.. to Tim. He loves you all.. and thanks to the picture-maker, Peter Daffurn, a proud “POB”.)

A Good Fit

I promised you some bridge each issue. So, this month’s hand, from a recent Tuesday evening session shows you some of the things you need to look for when going for a relatively low high-card point game. Take a look:

North Deals ♠ 7
 None Vul ♥ 7 3 2
 ♦ 10 8 5 4
 ♣ A J 7 5 3

♠ K 10 6 4
 ♥ 9 6
 ♦ Q J 9 7 3
 ♣ 10 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A J 8 3 2
 ♥ K J 10
 ♦ K 2
 ♣ 8 6 4

♠ Q 9 5
 ♥ A Q 8 5 4
 ♦ A 6
 ♣ K Q 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 NT	Dbl
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

It is quite common to open 1NT with a 5-card major and an otherwise flattish shape: hence East's opening. South doubled to show 15+ hcp and West decided to take their chances in this doubled contract.

However, as North I was not so sure and retreated to my long suit, clubs, showing a hand of up to 5 hcp with normally at least a 5-card suit. Anna, my partner, decided to bid her heart suit...and suddenly my hand looked a lot better, still with just a 5-count but with three hearts and the chances of ruffing some spade losers in my hand. So, I invited game and Anna, with potentially useful club cards accepted.

West led a spade to East's ace and East switched to a trump. Anna could finesse with ♥Q, ruff a spade in dummy, back to a club and ruff her last spade. She returned to hand with a second club, gave East their heart trick, before enjoying the rest of the clubs and ♦A...11 tricks. Anna always has 10 top tricks, 4 trumps, 5 clubs and ♦A on any lead though ruffing a spade loser or two is a great idea before drawing trumps.

North-South had only a combined 22 hcp. The keys to the successful contract were the double fit in hearts and clubs and North's singleton spade. Both players knew the signs were promising the moment hearts were bid and supported and could evaluate that this was the time to bid aggressively.

More Aggression?

That's what this bridge player showed recently on a tennis court and finished up with concussion and three fractured fingers!



The advice he was given after missing the ball and finding the Astroturf surface rather too quickly was to stick to bridge. Sounds good advice to me. Oh, by the way, he did have the sense to fall on his right hand since he is mainly left-handed.

Don't forget to give him some interesting, funny or good news stories for February. at rksolomon@xtra.co.nz or just call on 027 245 5418.

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