



April 2022

Franklin Bridge Club

Welcome Back To All!

Bridge life returns to just-about-normal at Franklin this month, with president Caroline Griffin emailing members that the club will be open to all members from Tuesday 5 April.

“Vaccine passports are no longer required for entry and our QR code will be removed,” she said. “Mask wearing is still optional and encouraged and also frequent hand sanitising encouraged. Please do not come to the club if you are feeling unwell.” Franklin has also already returned to its usual-sized tables, with the wide plywood table-tops removed.

Our club’s announcement follows Bridge NZ’s latest Covid advisory posted on 29 March with the headline, It is time to return to the table.

Chair Allan Morris said the rules allow with very few exceptions for bridge clubs to return to the table. “Whilst online bridge has filled the vacuum and allowed players the opportunity to play there is a large number who have declined the opportunity to play online and are waiting for clubs to resume face-to-face bridge.”

He said face-to-face tournaments will return in May. “The existing transfer of tournaments from face to face to Realbridge will continue through until the last weekend of April. NZ Bridge expects that tournaments scheduled from May – apart from those approved for online already – will be conducted face to face.”

Our Restricted Tournament’s Online

The Franklin Restricted Pairs tournament this month will take place online and not at the club. The 8B event, held on Saturday 23 April, is open to all grades, but Open players must play with either an Intermediate or Junior. Enter on the NZ Bridge website in the Upcoming Tournaments section. The cost is \$25, and the easiest way to pay is into the club bank account, with your name and Tournament in the details boxes.

Best Defence – Now’s Your Chance

An opportunity to improve your defence at bridge is coming in June with a seminar at the club featuring a NZ representative bridge player. New Plymouth silver grandmaster Pam Livingston will present the seminar, Hone Your Defence, on Saturday 11 June.

With a cost of \$30, the schedule is:

- tea and coffee from 10am and session one 10.30
- lunch break noon to 1pm (tea and coffee provided; bring your own lunch)
- session two 1pm to 2.30.



Members of neighbouring bridge clubs have also been invited to take advantage of Pam’s visit and attend.

Pam has represented New Zealand both in the Open team and the Women’s team. She is a panellist on Daily Bridge in NZ, an expert panel on the NZ Bridge website, and she has a regular spot, Talking Bridge Down at the Pond with Kermit, on the weekly BridgeZone radio show.

“While I have taught students all over the world in an online classroom,” says Pam, “I much prefer to teach in person. As well as seminars, I offer private bridge coaching utilising Zoom for that personal touch. This is either pairs or individuals, and beginners through to open players.”

The defence seminar is aimed at novice to advanced intermediate players. It has been organised by John Fergusson, who can answer any questions you have about it. Book a place by paying the \$30 into the club bank account, 01-0403-0040699-01, with your name and livingston in the details boxes.

Congratulations Junior Tournament Winner!

Big congratulations to **Ratilal Ranchhod**, right, on winning his first tournament!

Ratilal won the Mt Albert Junior tournament which was played online on 19 March. Extra impressively, he was playing with a new partner for the first time, Richard Whitelaw of Papakura club; and Ratilal only started bridge in 2018, with of course the last two years’ play being very disrupted.



The pair played consistently well, coming fourth in the morning session with just over 54% and then improving to first in the afternoon with an impressive 64.58%, giving an overall 59.38%.

Other Franklin members have been playing in online tournaments in NZ. **Grant Jarvis** had a memorable March, claiming further A points in various high-powered events. The first weekend he played the two-day National 15A Pairs, coming second out of 49 pairs. A few days later he played with Palmerston North partner Bob Hurley in the Auckland Bridge Club's 7 St Vincents 8B, coming second. They played the Taranaki Congress at the weekend and their team came seventh in the 42-team 10A Open Teams; and the partnership placed third out of eighty pairs in the 5A Swiss Pairs. A week later Grant and his team came fifth in the Rotorua 10A teams, with 40 teams contesting; Bev Henton also played in the event. The last Saturday in March saw Grant come third in the Hastings 5A Open Teams; and the following day he was third in the Marlborough 5A pairs.

Kevin Birch continues to shine playing online events. The Auckland Bridge Club held a Ukraine Fundraiser, a special two-night tournament on 31 March and 1 April, which raised a preliminary estimate of about \$6,000 for Ukraine humanitarian support. Kevin won the Intermediate-Junior section with Auckland Bridge Club partner Takayo Yanagisawa. Grant and Bev also took part, with separate partners, in the Open section.



In Australia, **David and Sue Spencer** did some hard work at the bridge table, followed by a celebration of their efforts, left. They came 21st out of 82 pairs contesting the Australian Swiss Pairs in the Tasmanian Festival of Bridge in late March. (Well known Australian bridge author and teacher Ron Klinger, whose books may be familiar to members, came 5th in the event.)

70% Club

Friday Individual 25 March	75%	Trevor Robb-Jim Buckland
Wednesday Mixed Pairs 30 March	73.5%	Chris Glyde-Maria Casci

First Local Tournament At Tables

This month tournament players who are itching to get back to a face-to-face tournament have the first opportunity for the year – and players of all ranks can take part. The Howick bridge club's 8B Restricted Pairs is on Saturday 30 April and their poster proclaims: Yes! Back at the Tables - YES! Full details are on their poster in the NZ Bridge website's Upcoming Tournaments section.

The Auckland bridge club's three-day Easter Congress will be held online via Realbridge, with events for Open Pairs 10A, Restricted Open 8B, Congress Teams 10A and on Monday a Walk-In Pairs 3A. Details on NZ Bridge.

Upcoming Trials For The Inter-Regionals

Also still being held online despite the May date, the Auckland-Northland region qualifying trials will be held over the first weekend in May, to select teams for each of Open, Intermediate, Senior and Women categories. A youth team will be invited. The 2022 Inter-Regionals, on November 18-20, will also remain online.

Auckland-Northland region committee member Grant Jarvis said: "We hope to see strong trials fields and we particularly encourage Intermediate players to trial. We rely on clubs to encourage their players from all grades to 'have a go'. Please remind members that we are defending the title." He noted that for 2022 a senior must now be at least 63 during the year.

Rubber Bridge National Competition

Entries for the annual national rubber bridge competition must be in by 10 April, with the draw for the first rounds to represent Auckland-Northland being sent out soon after. The games can be played either face to face in homes or at clubs, or online, the latter organised by the Auckland bridge club. The club also has full details and links on its website: www.akbc.co.nz/rubber-bridge.

Entries to Grant Jarvis: gjarvis@xtra.co.nz. Please include your phone number, email and your club or clubs. A confirmation of entry will be sent.

The Auckland club is running an online rubber bridge session on Saturday 9 April at 7pm. This is not just for those wanting to enter the tournament – first time rubber bridgers can take the opportunity to try this version of the game. Full details on the Auckland bridge club website.

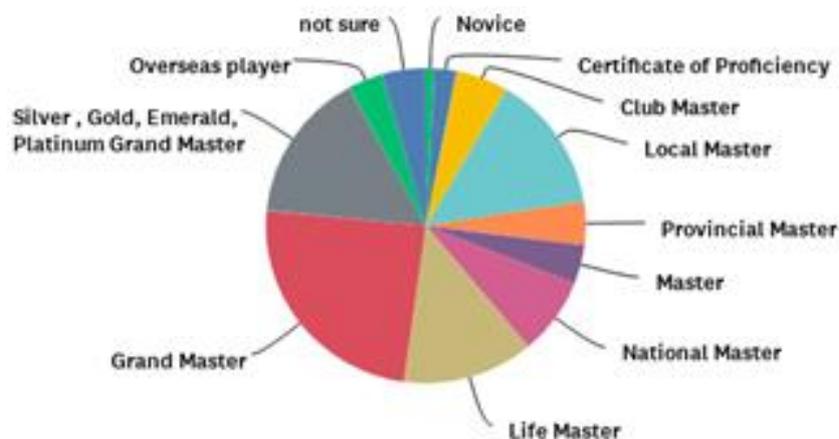
Easter Bridge Dates

A reminder that there is no bridge on Good Friday or Easter Monday.

National Congress Survey

After February's first online national congress, NZ Bridge conducted an online survey to poll opinions about aspects of the congress, and last month it published the results and its reaction to them.

A total of 227 people responded, dominated by the high bridge ranks: over 40% were ranked grandmaster and above, and adding in life masters appears to show that high-ranked players providing 50% of the feedback (exact numbers aren't given in the



release, but a graph is above). Altogether, 620 players took part in February's congress, including 100 Australians.

Given that this year's October congress is expected to be played live and not online – the programme for it is now on the NZ Bridge website – the main relevant results from the survey are:

- ◆ Possibly the most pertinent in light of current debate re tournaments being live or online:
 - nearly half (47%) of the participants would play at the next congress regardless of whether it is online or face to face
 - nearly a quarter have yet to make a decision
 - from the supplied graph it appears that about 10% would only play if the congress was held live at tables
 - those who would play only online – from the graph this seems to be about 18% of respondents – mentioned that this preference was due to cost / convenience / vaccination requirements.

Those who preferred face to face felt online play missed the social connection or they found online bridge tiresome. (The report notes that a higher online preference would be expected from those surveyed when they had taken part in an online event.)

- ◆ Website information / ability to find information rated the lowest at 3.6 out of 5, with the cost of the event being the next lowest.
- ◆ Most of the other feedback was relevant only to the online contexts of the congress: the full report and comments are on the NZ Bridge website.

The programme for the October 2022 congress, which will take place from Saturday 1 to Saturday 8 October inclusive, is online at NZ Bridge under the Congress tabs. There will be no evening play, except for rubber bridge; and the mixed and same-sex pairs are no longer being held.

Beginner Lessons Programme

Topics for upcoming beginner lessons are:

Thursday 7 April	Overcalls; and Basic Scoring
Thursday 14 April	Takeout Double; and the Finesse
Thursday 21 April	Pre-emptive Openings
Thursday 28 April	Strong Opening Bids
Thursday 5 May	Revision (just play).

Auckland Super-Grandmasters

Well-known Auckland bridge club tournament director Patrick Carter has become this country's fourth Emerald Grand Master, the top NZ rank.

And Andrew Tarbutt of Orewa has reached the rank of Gold Grand Master, with Andi Boughey of Akarana becoming a Silver Grand Master.

Jack James of Palmerston North has become a Grand Master at the age of 24 – he has been playing bridge for nine years.

NZ At World Teams In Italy

The World Team Championships have been held from late last month till Saturday 9 April in Salsomaggiore, Italy. NZ fielded only one team, Open, playing in the Bermuda Bowl, and their performance has been, to quote one of the team members, "disappointing", coming 15th out of 24 teams at the end of the qualifying rounds. There were also several expat New Zealanders in overseas teams: three playing for Australia and two in the Canadian women's team.

Robot Beats Champions' Declarer Play (But Still Can't Bid ...)

In a major breakthrough, an artificial intelligence robot has beaten eight world champions at bridge play.

French start-up business NukkAI announced in late March that its AI bot, called Nook, took home the crown at the two-day Nukkai Challenge in Paris – the first time that AI has won at bridge.

The experiment was in declarer play only: each human champion played alone, controlling both sets of cards, against a pair of AI bots. The Nook AI, meanwhile, took on the exact same role as the human champions, playing the same cards against the same opponents. Nook won 67, or 83%, of the 80 sets.

Member News

from Our Roving Reporters



Popular member (and Friday partnership secretary) Maggie Ulrich celebrated her 80th birthday last month. On the Friday before the big day Neil Miller, on behalf of the club, presented her with a beautiful orchid, right, and players had a choice of two celebratory cakes at lunchtime. The next day her sister-in-law at Aka Aka put on a birthday lunch for her. Pictured there helping her party are bridge friends, left to right: Dennise Biddick, Ann Anderson, Maggie, Sandra Sitton, Jan Rae and Sharron Rusden.

A campervan trip down south obviously does wonders for your bridge, judging by the results of Chris Glyde and Maria Casci. After not playing any club bridge at all since pre-lockdown August last year – that’s over six months – with clubs on their holiday route not allowing visitors, they came back to the club in the last week of March. And came first in the first session on Wednesday (see 70+ club) and second-equal in the Friday session.

Secretary Susie Longdell is still making a very slow improvement after her fall and doesn’t expect to be sitting at a bridge table for a good while yet. “I was told at the beginning it would be a long recovery process but it’s starting to feel like it’s going to take for ever.”



Online Help



This month's websites are for Monday nighters who have just started playing the restricted teams, above. These sites have useful articles on tactics for playing in teams events.

The links are live: click on them to go to the website and click Allow if a box comes up asking for permission. (If the connection does not work, copy and paste the underlined link.)

A brief summary:

www.kwbridge.com/imps.htm

Good detail:

<http://bridge-tips.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TEAMS-TACTICS.pdf>

And some more good detail:

www.hamiltonbridge.com/AcrobatArticles/TeamGames.pdf

Director? Please?

by Ninth Wicket

The Stop Card

The purpose of the stop card is to prevent extraneous information being conveyed by how long a player took to make a call. This is most likely to be significant when a player makes a high-level bid which unexpectedly limits the next opponent's options.



When a player makes a jump bid they should place a Stop Card in front of the left-hand opponent. That opponent must wait about 10 seconds or until the stop card is withdrawn (whichever comes first).

Furthermore they must not give any indication whether they are “waiting” or thinking about their call. This procedure prevents anybody at the table knowing whether the call made required any thought.

A call made in violation of this mandatory pause gives partner information they are not entitled to. If that disadvantages the opponents they may be entitled to an adjusted score.

WHAT IF?

Your right-hand opponent makes a jump bid without using the stop card? (Or doesn't keep it out for anywhere near 10 seconds.)

You are free to take as long as you need (within reason) to make your bidding decision without any constraint on partner.

Your right-hand opponent has apparently forgotten to withdraw the stop card?

You may make your call after waiting about ten seconds.

You want to ask about your right-hand opponent's bid when they have used the stop card?

You should ask about the bid immediately. The ten seconds only starts when you have found out all you want to know about the meaning of your opponent's bid.

Also if the bid is alerted it is a good idea to always ask so as to avoid indicating a lack of interest.



Cartoon by Pam Livingstone's son William Livingston.

www.facebook.com/Pam.Livingston.Bridge.Coach