



Tuesday Night Tips

The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

The Tuesday Night at City has developed its own vibe – a group of bridge enthusiasts playing a friendly competitive game with Phil Halloran and Martin Clear as the hosts. Phil organises the session to make sure there is no sit-out, and Martin continues to lead the group for bridge discussion after the session. He will pick an interesting hand from the face-to-face session for the Tuesday Tips column.

The Protected Loser

F2F at City – Tuesday Night 25th July 2023

16	♠ T85	Dir: W
	♥ T5	Vul: E-W
	♦ KJ9	
	♣ J8543	
♠ AJ	♠ K642	5
♥ KJ9763	♥ AQ42	12 17
♦ T4	♦ A863	6
♣ KT7	♣ A	
	♠ Q973	
	♥ 8	
	♦ Q752	
	♣ Q962	

Let's look at a slam. On Board 16 of the 25-July Tuesday night face-to-face game at the Sydney Bridge Centre, most of the field successfully bid to the 6♥ slam, possibly via a splinter and then Roman Key Card Blackwood.

How are the hands for the slam? Very good. Count the winners: 2 top spades, 2 top clubs, 1 top diamond, 6 heart tricks and a club ruff makes 12. So ... "draw trump and claim"? Not in Pairs! There's an overtrick to look for. Should declarer take the spade finesse? Are we risking the contract in order to make an overtrick?

If your answer was a categorical Yes or No, both those answers are wrong! It depends on what suit the opponents led on opening. If they led a diamond, the Ace is forced out, and trumps are drawn, but the spade finesse cannot be taken because if it loses, a diamond will be cashed to defeat the contract. However if the opponents opened with any other suit – a trump was led at our table – the spade finesse should be taken. This is because if it loses, the opponents cannot cash a diamond. A switch to diamonds if the spade finesse lost may knock out the ♦A, but it's too late: the ♠A is cashed, dummy is entered via a club, and the ♠K allows the other diamond to be thrown away - still making 12.

This makes the spade finesse safe to play for the overtrick as long as a diamond was not the opening lead. The principle that allows this play is that of the "protected loser". A loser that cannot be lost immediately because it is protected by winners above it can be transferred to another suit as above. I often see declarers delay the drawing of trumps in order to discard protected losers on other side suit winners, when it is unnecessary (and risky) as long as the losers are still protected.

Making 13 was worth 90%, settling for 12 in the slam was only worth 50%..

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

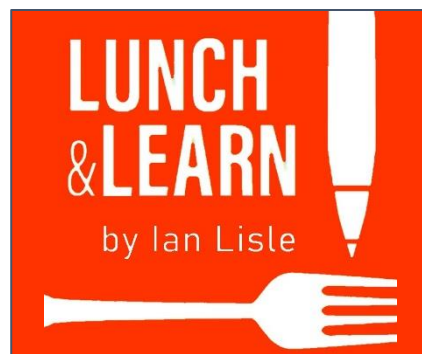
Upcoming Events (please check SBC website / What's on...)



Sunday 13th and 27th August
1.30pm – 4.30pm



Friday 25th August 10am – 3.30pm
The Main Rules of Bridge
Saturday 26th August 10am – 1pm
Two-Over-One



Tuesday 15th August, 1.15pm-ish
After session study forum, facilitated by Ian Lisle. We do starter, you bring your own lunch.