



21 October 2021

## Newsletter No: 4 for 2021

Hi Everyone

I am sure we all feel the same, we have had enough of Covid impacting our lives. Regrettably, it looks like Covid will continue to be a disrupter even when vaccination rates are at a level that will allow us to get on with our lives with less impositions.

Earlier this week, the Government announced minor change to the Covid rules other than Northland moving to Alert Level 2. Which means for those located in Auckland and parts of the Waikato more online bridge.

### Online Bridge

Earlier this week the Board had its usual monthly board meeting. Much of the meeting dealt with online bridge. Online play is now a key route to keep bridge players engaged and active, providing the social (to some extent) and competitive requirement of players during these exacting times. We are hopeful many will return to club bridge, but some will not. It would be wrong to disregard this latter group from both a club and national perspective. We need to have in place a regime that caters for both club and online bridge without being at the expense of one or the other. We need to have in place protocols where a club might offer both. We need to think how we manage the financial implications of people solely playing online. We have formed a working party under the chairperson of Anne Barrowclough. This piece of work is being treated with urgency and will incorporate the findings from the tournament trial taking place over Labour Weekend.

### Covid

Two weeks ago, we asked Clubs to help us get a feeling as to the number of players who were vaccinated. We are delighted with the response which supported the belief that players support the vaccination regime. The underlying response is that the vast majority (>90%) are fully vaccinated. It shows we care, and we can have confidence when returning to the Club. I know some players, and clubs questioned our authority to undertake the survey. We respect everyone's privacy. The request for information was purely voluntary. We have no interest in personal information. All we were after was to gain a sense of the number of those vaccinated, should the Government require people attending events to be double



jabbed, and to help with marketing collateral. Being able to say, to new players, you are coming into a safe environment is a positive message. If we have offended anyone we apologise.

We have also received emails questioning whether we are planning to mandate vaccinations. Except for national events, the right for mandating vaccination does not rest with NZB. It is a Club responsibility. We must respect the rights of Clubs to determine their own policy(ies). You may have noticed in the last day or so that Westport for their upcoming event require players to be vaccinated. We are aware some clubs require face masks to be worn. When considering the need for vaccination we will continue to follow public policy on this matter. If, by example, the Government dictate, people must be vaccinated to attend an event then we will follow the direction. For the time being it is a wait and see.

The other question that keeps surfacing is the use of face masks. For those who have kept abreast of rules you will have observed the messaging keeps changing. Yes, you must wear masks, no you do not have to wear face masks. Yes, you should retain physical distancing, no physical distancing is not required.

To be clear, a face mask is required: - when using public transport; when flying; using a taxi; visiting a healthcare or aged care facility; inside a retail business; inside a public venue; when you are at work if you have customer contact. The literature says masks are particularly useful in poorly ventilated indoor spaces and when physical distancing is hard. In general, the advice is a face mask should be used whenever you can. Further if you are around people, you do not know, the advice is to wear a face mask.

In a work environment, which might equally apply to Clubs, vaccinations and mask wearing is a health and safety nightmare. Businesses have a responsibility to care for their staff. Mixing vaccinated and non-vaccinated staff is a challenge and could leave a business exposed. The reason for sharing this comparison is to say forming a policy within a club is not easy. Everyone needs to think about their fellow human being. Those who are vaccinated should respect those who are anti vac and those who are anti vac should respect those who are concerned about being infected. We should also respect those who are medically exempt. The number in this latter group is small. The Government estimate less than one hundred people out of a 4.2 million.

### **Sponsorship**

We have always been grateful to the range of sponsors who support bridge. In many ways they have allowed clubs to prosper. Nationally we also have had the benefit of sponsorship. With ~14,000 members plus families we have an opportunity to grow the support we receive. To maximise our position, we need to be able to demonstrate the benefit to sponsors. Having a common database would be a big step forward. However, for this to happen we need to work with clubs, demonstrating we can work in partnership without undermining the relationship of player and club. To demonstrate what is possible the congress team has secured sponsorship of \$76,000 from Tourism Bay of Plenty.

### **Congress February 2022**

The plan is for Congress to be a memorable event. In addition to the usual participant, we are keen to see players who have not in the past participated at Congress. There will be events for all grades and level of experience.

## **Financial**

Last month we incurred a small loss of \$6.3k. Not surprising when club and tournament bridge has been less than expected due to our adversary Covid. There are no underlying concerns. To the end of September, we remain ahead of budget which could change depending on how long club and tournament bridge is disrupted. Membership to the end of September was down 28 to 13,709. Bouquets to Timaru up 13, Waiheke up 7, Wellington up 6, and Taieri and Greymouth both up 3.

## **Marketing**

As previously advised, we have engaged Fish Digital. There are multiple strands of work underway including a review of our imagery, creation of a new learner's webpage, a social media audit and recommendations.

## **Regional Bridge Mates**

We are delighted to share the appointment of Sonya Adams (Wanaka) as the new RBM for Otago Southland.

## **Youth**

Paul Coleman continues to work with youth. He is presently running a Sunday morning online event. Pleasingly averaging 3 to 7 tables.

## **Interprovincials**

A major event on the bridge calendar as regions vie for the Dougal McLean Trophy. Plans were well advanced for the event to take place in Auckland. Again, Covid has challenged us. A delay in deciding how this event should proceed exposed players, regions and NZB to costs that might not be able to be recovered. The event will now take place Realbridge, from Friday 19 November to Sunday 21 November. This year we will have 4 to 6 youth teams participating.

## **Complaints Discipline and Disputes Committee**

We are delighted to announce that Christine Wilson has been appointed to this independent committee. Christine's experiences as a player, director, club president, teacher, and recorder are a positive asset to this committee.

## **Auckland Northland Regional Recorder**

The appointment of Christine Wilson to the CDD Committee has meant she has had to relinquish her role as Auckland Northland Regional recorder. We are delighted to announce the appointment of Glennis Palmer who assumes the role of recorder with immediate effect.

## **Restricted Open Players**

There will be no change to the criteria applying to this grade for 2022.

## **Rating Point Roll Over**

With continued disruption to our playing calendar this year we have agreed to reduce the rating point depreciation rate from 20% to 10% for the roll over scheduled for 1 Jan 2022.

## **New Zealand Wide Pairs**

This event is fast approaching. At the last count we had 47 clubs supporting the event. As you know everyone simultaneously plays the same the hands with results scored at club level, regionally and nationally. With once again Covid being a disrupter we have agreed for clubs caught in Alert level 3 will be allowed to play online using Realbridge. Online participation will be limited to members of the club in question and not open to players from elsewhere. The preference is for players to play f2f.

## **International Test**

The following players have been selected to participate in the December tri-series between New Zealand, Australia, and Indonesia. Congratulations to all

### *Open:*

1. Ashley Bach, Michael Cornell, Peter Newell, Martin Reid
2. Matthew Brown, Michael Whibley, Nick Jacob, Geo Tislevoll

### *Women:*

1. Andi Boughey, Carol Richardson, Shirley Newton, Jenny Wilkinson
2. Linda Cartner, Glennis Palmer, Christine Gibbons, Jenna Gibbons, Jane Lennon, Jane Skipper

### *Mixed:*

1. Wayne Burrows, Clair Miao, Kate Davies, John Patterson
2. Liz Fisher, Blair Fisher, Barry Jones, Jenny Millington, Jo Simpson, Sam Simpson

### *Senior:*

1. Julie Atkinson, Patrick Carter, Grant Jarvis, Jonathan Westoby
2. Alan Grant, John Skipper, Tom Jacob, Brian Mace

In addition to the above we will have a youth team taking part.

## **Recent results from Overseas**

### *The Margaret Bourke Invitational Teams*

1. Runners up- Barry Jones, Jenny Millington, Blair, and Liz Fisher, Jo, and Sam Simpson
2. Semi-finalists- Michael Cornell, Ashely Bach, Peter Newell, Martin Reid

### *Sydney Spring Nationals*

1. Open Team- Winners: Geo Tislevoll, Nick Jacob
2. Butler Swiss pairs- Winners: Jeremy Fraser Hoskins, Paul Carson

Congratulations to all. New Zealand remains a strong force in the region.

Cheers Allan

Stay safe, stay well