



Five Minutes With...

Jeff Travis



Jeff is one of our awesome teachers at SA Bridge Assoc. We are so fortunate to have a high-calibre teaching program developed by Jeff and Justin, which is both engaging and multi-dimensional. What's more, the program caters to all ability levels from beginners, to rookies and advanced. The vast majority of our members know Jeff who is well recognised for his bridge teaching, mentoring, his approachable and affable nature and great sense of humour!

Jeff was brought up in a family of card players. He recalls his father playing bridge when Jeff was a boy.

'My father played bridge, but not often. Sometimes my uncle and a couple of dad's friends would come to our house and play auction bridge. I never played in those games, but I used to watch.

'We used to play lots of card games at home – I reckon that I played thousands of games of crib with my father. We also played games with tricks and trumps, mainly euchre but also a game that I think was called nap. Mum occasionally used to join in with these games', he said.

With card playing in the blood and being nurtured in a card-playing family, Jeff and a friend decided to take up the challenges of bridge.

'In year 12 a school friend suggested that we play contract bridge. He looked it up in Encyclopaedia Britannica (truly) and told us the rules. We started playing at lunchtime, which attracted the attention of Mr Jackson, the Deputy Principal.



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'We thought we'd be in trouble for playing cards, but he arranged for Tony Lusk (David's brother), who was one of the teachers at the school, to teach us the game. Arjuna Delivera and Rex Whitford were part of the group. All three of us were in the same class at Enfield High'.

University followed and was no deterrent to Jeff and his mates furthering their bridge experiences!

'The next year, 1971, I went to Uni where there was an active bridge group, including John Kikkert, John Hewitt and Brenton Lewis. I seem to recall that John Horowitz would also drift over from the Medical School for the occasional game. We actually had intervarsity bridge events. I remember playing in a competition at Monash in 1971', he said.

When did Jeff first get involved at SA Bridge Assoc? Well, it was before the club moved from the City to Unley.

'I joined SABA in 1971 because the hotshots from the Adelaide Uni bridge club played there', he said.

In my early years at SABA there were tough games on Monday nights (pairs) and Thursday nights (teams) and the place was packed.

Jeff's involvement and commitment to SA Bridge Association is extensive for over 50 years!

'I do a fair bit of teaching and tutoring, which I enjoy.

'I've served on the Management Committee a couple of times.



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'I was part of a small team with Zolly Nagy and Gordon Henderson that looked at the club structure and recommended that we engage a full-time club manager. John Zollo was successful in winning the position, with Gary Deaton and Priya Kamineni subsequently filling the role.

Jeff, a Silver Grand Master, is humble about his bridge success.

When asked about the highlights of his Bridge career, he responded, 'I've been runner-up in a few national events, so no highlights there. Winning the State Teams a few times with Russel, Justin and Phil was satisfying', he said.

When asked about what are the main benefits of playing Bridge, Jeff made a perceptive and mildly amusing response, 'I think the main benefit is that you can play at a good standard regardless of age.

'You don't see any 60-year-olds playing in the AFL or the Sheffield Shield, but you see plenty of old codgers representing the state in open bridge competition!' he said.

Jeff speaks of the multifaceted benefits of playing bridge, 'There is research that suggests that bridge helps you retain your mental sharpness and reduces the likelihood of depression. It also provides social contact. I've made many firm friends through bridge,' he said.

What is the ideal number of Bridge games to play weekly?

'For me, once or twice a week. I suspect that when Felicity retires, she will want to play about 10 times a week, so my concept of "ideal" may change! he quipped.



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Should schoolchildren be encouraged to learn Bridge?

‘So many older people who complete the beginners’ classes say that they wish that they’d learnt to play when they were young, so they think that an early start is a good move,’ he said.

What are Jeff’s plans now?

‘I resolved to play less bridge, but somehow, I seem to be playing more.

In September this year, he travelled to Alice Springs to play in the Territory Gold and to New Zealand to play in the NZ Nationals, and he thoroughly enjoyed both events.

This next cameo story reflects Jeff’s sense of humour!

‘What was perhaps my biggest disappointment in bridge occurred at the NZ Nationals late in 1989. A strong team of four from NSW had entered, and when one of the team was unable to attend at the last minute, I was asked to fill in. We were runners-up (naturally) but the disappointing aspect involved my cat Gareth. I suggested to the other three team members that I register the cat at a bridge club and that we all use his ABF number in Australian events. I thought that he had a fighting chance of winning the McCutcheon Trophy for the top masterpoint earner in 1990! They were interested in the concept but quailed at the execution, so my dream of owning the first grandmaster cat went unfulfilled!!

‘Felicity and I would like to do some traveling, and I still hold out hope of seeing Port Adelaide win another AFL premiership’, he said.

Jeff offers some sage advice for ALL bridge players, ‘I think that one of the critical elements of the game is the importance of



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partnership harmony and the absolute requirement to be able to view situations from partner's perspective. We all have our good days and our bad days, but nobody tries to lose. There is only one other person in the room who wants you to win – everyone else is trying to beat you. Look after your buddy. You're never too young to learn that, he said.