

Former champs on deck as club grows

BY EUGENE BENSON

MEMBERSHIP at the Moonee Valley Bridge Club is booming and the names behind the club's success tell an interesting story.

In the past 12 months, the club's numbers have grown from 200 to 300, there are meetings and matches six days a week, and a beginners' class is about to start.

There must be something about the competitive nature of bridge, as many of the club's members are former elite athletes.

Among regulars at the club's Ormond Road headquarters are former Opals basketballer Rhonda Koltun, former Australian All Star team baseballer Robert Rowan, three-time Commonwealth shooting gold medallist Kim Frazer, Sri Lankan cricketer Trevor Jansz, former star athlete Ian Williams and ballroom dancing champion Gillian Campbell.

Mrs Koltun said during her five years with the Opals during the 1970s she came across several American

players who played bridge. "I thought they looked like they were having a lot of fun so I thought I better learn it.

"These days it helps keep the competitive juices flowing, too."

Mr Jansz, now well into his 80s, was a devastating spin bowler and more than adequate batsman.

After emigrating to Australia, he started playing bridge during lunch breaks at work with colleague Mr Rowan.

Mr Rowan was a fine cricketer, too, but is better known for his years as a Claxton Shield baseballer and Australian representative.

It seemed only natural the two would join the Moonee Valley club together.

Mr Jansz said he's too old these days to get too competitive at the bridge table, but he loves the social nature of the club.

Card shark: Former top cricketer Trevor Jansz is among the many former sports stars who are members of the Moonee Valley Bridge Club.

Picture: Scott McNaughton

