

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

Apr 2023

GCBA RESULTS

After four rounds of Series 20 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs, Tony and Ros Reeves lead the way from Liz Wall and Denise Clayson.

Spring Teams 4 (F2F event)

D1 : Alan Wearmouth, Tony Hill, Peter Waggett and Ben Ritacca **and then in second place** Garry Watson, Richard Butland, John Councer and Mark Rogers.

D2 : Roger Eaton, Ted Phillips, Chris Healy and Mike Robinson, **and then in second place** Colin Lennox, John Jenkins, Ian Plewis and Pat Emery.

County Knockout

So far three teams have reached the semi-final stage. These teams are led by Patrick Shields, Richard Butland and Jack Armorgie.

County Leagues

Division 1 was won by Patrick Shields, Garry Watson, Diana Nettleton, Tom Paske and Tony Forrester. Runners up were Richard Butland, Paul Denning, Graham Cornell, Andrew Kambites, Dan McIntosh and Richard Chamberlain.

Division 2 still has matches outstanding but looks likely to be won by Jim Simons, Patrick Phair, Mel Barlow, John Arblaster, Nigel Edmondson and Robert Wilkinson.

The County AGM takes place on Monday 29th May, starting at 1800 hrs and followed by a free game of bridge. It's an offer that does not happen every day! Please come along.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The County Pairs will this year be contested in the following format. There will be heats at Cheltenham Bridge Club on several April Dates (see the website for more details). GCBA are holding a heat on April 20th and South Cotswolds have two heats in early May.

Those who qualify will then play in the County Final on Saturday May 20th at Cheltenham Bridge Club. The leading pairs from this final will be eligible to play in the Corwen Trophy, a National Final to be held over the first weekend in June. Why not take this opportunity to expand your bridge horizons and hopefully achieve National success?

GCBA NEWS

GCBA has organised a second weekend of learning bridge in the North Cotswolds, a stage two to the January stage one. As before the Cheltenham teaching team came up trumps and it was fully subscribed with 16 students. Local ladies donated home baked cakes for the afternoon tea. It was a charity fund raiser taking the total of the two weekends to just over £1500, most of this for Friends of Stow Surgery.

Gloucestershire now has a second EBU director, following the appointment of GCBA President Ian Sidgwick, who joins Patrick Shields on the EBU's Board of Directors.

WHEN A HAND LOOKS EASY

Here is a hand from the April heat of the Cheltenham Pairs League that falls into this category. You get a small spade lead from West.

♠ T86
♥ 654
♦ K754
♣ AKQ

3NT by South

♠ A75
♥ A82
♦ AJT
♣ J982

You duck the first two rounds of spades and win the third, East discarding a small club. So how do you plan the play? Counting your tricks, you see you have two major suit Aces, four club tricks and hence you just need three diamond tricks to fulfil your game. Since you have 4 of the top five cards in diamonds, making 3 tricks looks trivial, just giving up a trick to the Queen if necessary.

If you don't think the whole hand through, then it looks obvious to run the Knave of diamonds through West, safe in the knowledge that if East wins the Queen, he does not have any more spades to play. But look what happens if you do that. East will win and play back a heart. You will have to win that trick with the Ace else West will be in to cash their spades and beat the contract.

Belatedly, you realise that your entries are getting messed up. You can take 3 clubs in dummy and return to hand with a diamond to your Ace to play the last club, but now you will have to overtake the ten of diamonds with the King, and you will be defeated if the diamond nine and eight have not dropped.

A better approach is to play all the clubs in dummy before cashing the King of diamonds and then taking a diamond finesse through East.

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True you will be down if this loses, but since East has only two spades versus West's five card holding, then East is more likely to hold the Queen of diamonds. When the diamond finesse works, you are home.

Interestingly, of the four times that South played no-trumps on a spade lead, nine tricks were only made twice.

The moral of the story is to plan the play of the whole hand early on, and not just take a superficial view based upon the 'obvious' line in just one suit.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

The theme of this month's tip revolves around the correct card to play when switching to a new suit midway through the hand. Consider these two deals.

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| ♠ 93 | | |
| ♥ 764 | | |
| ♦ AQT98 | | |
| ♣ QJ5 | | |
| ♠ AT862 | | ♠ J54 |
| ♥ Q832 | 3NT by | ♥ A95 |
| ♦ 53 | South | ♦ 7642 |
| ♣ K2 | | ♣ 643 |
| | ♠ KQ7 | |
| | ♥ KJT | |
| | ♦ KJ | |
| | ♣ AT987 | |

Sitting West, you lead the ♠6 to partner's Knave and declarer's Queen (winning with the King might be a better play as this would leave the defenders guessing as to the location of the King). Declarer plays the Knave of diamonds to dummy's Queen and continues with a club finesse. You win the King and consider your next move.

Declarer is marked with the spade King (else East would have played it at trick 1). So you need to get partner in for a spade lead through South.

The only suit that you can get partner in with is hearts, so you switch to a heart and your luck is in when partner wins the Ace and a spade return gathers six tricks for the defence.

On this second deal, I have changed the layout somewhat.

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| ♠ 93 | | |
| ♥ 764 | | |
| ♦ AQT98 | | |
| ♣ QJ5 | | |
| ♠ QT862 | | ♠ J54 |
| ♥ KJ82 | 3NT | ♥ A95 |
| ♦ 53 | South | ♦ 7642 |
| ♣ K2 | | ♣ 643 |
| | ♠ AK7 | |
| | ♥ QT3 | |
| | ♦ KJ | |
| | ♣ AT987 | |

This time you lead a spade to the Knave and declarer's King. A diamond to dummy is followed by a club finesse and you are in. This time you can see that a second spade is not going to be effective since South is marked with the Ace, so you switch to a heart, hoping that partner has the Ace and that you can take four tricks in the suit. Good news, partner wins the Ace but then blows the defence by switching back to spades, thinking of a spade layout like in the first example. How could this catastrophe have been avoided?

The answer lies in which spot card West leads when he finds the heart switch. If switching to a new suit midway through the hand, it is often more important to show your attitude to that suit rather than your length. If you want the suit returned, then play the lowest card. If you want partner to switch back then lead a high spot card to deny a good holding.

So in the first example you should switch to the eight of hearts to say your hearts are poor and in the second example you should switch to the two of hearts to say that you would like hearts returned.

MARCH PROBLEM SOLUTION

| | | |
|--------|-------|--------|
| ♠ AJ32 | | ♠ KQ85 |
| ♥ Q | 6♠ by | ♥ 942 |
| ♦ QJ93 | West | ♦ AK82 |
| ♣ KQJ6 | | ♣ A5 |

You play in 6♠ after South has opened 3♥. The defence start with two rounds of hearts. You ruff the second round low (North following) but when you cash the Ace of trumps, South shows out. How do you play from here?

You can always make this contract provided North has exactly two hearts and at least two cards in each minor (which is quite likely on the bidding). Play a low spade towards dummy. If North plays the ♠9, win the Queen and play the ♦A and a diamond to your Queen. Now cash two top clubs and follow with the ♣Q.

If North follows you discard a diamond from the table and continue with another club. If North ruffs you overruff. North is now marked with a 5-2-3-3 shape so it is safe to cash another diamond. That is ten tricks with a further two to come on a high crossruff.

If North started with four clubs then you discard two diamonds to get to the same position. If North started with only two clubs then he must have begun with four diamonds so you can overruff him and cash the diamonds to get to the same ending. The overall chance of success is around 87%.

APRIL PROBLEM

| | | |
|----------|-------|--------|
| ♠ A | | ♠ K42 |
| ♥ AKQJ98 | 4♥ by | ♥ 7642 |
| ♦ KJ4 | West | ♦ T93 |
| ♣ AT2 | | ♣ Q74 |

How do you play this contract on a spade lead?