

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2021-22

December 2021

GCBA RESULTS

Series 9 of the GCBA Swiss Teams was won by Paul Denning, Richard Butland, Joe Angseasing, Andrew Kambites and Graham Cornell. Ben Ritacca's team were runners-up.

Series 12 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs is nearing completion with Jonathan Bailey & Pauline Mussie leading from Ros & Toy Reeves.

Autumn Swiss Teams. The Dec 6th game was won by the Harrison team, followed by Robots and then the Stirrup team. Across the series of 4 games equal first were the GREEN team (Lewis, Nicolson, Wignall, Williams) and the HARRISON team (Swales, Lilley, McWilliam).

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUES

Gloucestershire continued its winning ways in the most recent matches against Nottinghamshire and then Staffs & Shropshire. The Dawes team won 19-1 then 20-0, the Porter 18-2 then 16-4, and the Markham team 11-9 then 14-6. Congratulations to everyone involved.

COUNTY LEAGUE

Division One is currently led by Rob Lawy, Jim Grant, Harry Anoyrkatis and Stefan Lindfors. Alan Wearmouth, Tony Hill, David Jones and Peter Shelley are in second place.

Division Two sees Ashok Kwatra, Jack Armorgie, David Atthey and Alison Pritchard tying first place with Peter Waggett, Ben Ritacca, John Cuncer and Mark Rogers.

NATIONAL NEWS

The English Bridge Union, our National Bridge Organisation, had its AGM at the end of November. The minutes and a recording of the session will be available soon [on their website](#); the key discussions were around

- Refinements to the Disciplinary Process, which has been exercised more than ever this year.
- Raising the UM fee (which your club pays on your behalf) by 4% to reflect inflation over two years.

COUNTY NEWS

The survey last month, of those who play in the open GCBA games, showed considerable comfort with online play and some keen, and some very sceptical, about face-to-face games. This has led us to plan that the next four months will use the same pattern of games as the last four months of 2021.

- 1st Monday : Swiss Teams
- 2nd & 4th : Pairs League
- 3rd & 5th : County League

We will have a few special face-to-face events as we did in October and November, and we will review the position at the start of February. Our County Championships will kick off soon as online events.

Away from the Monday nights on BBO, we must still collect some fees from contestants – covering RealBridge expenses and EBU subscriptions. The [instructions are on the website](#) but PLEASE can players paying in money put an clear reference with the transfer, so our treasurer knows what to do with the money!

OPENING LEADS

One normally leads low from suits of 3 or 4 cards headed by an honour, but there are some situations where the lead of the high card may produce better results. The most common of these occurs when there has been a competitive auction. Suppose that the defender on lead has, say, Kxxx of his partner's suit and scarcely any other assets. It may very well be good play to start with the King so as to retain the lead and find the killing switch through the dummy. Here is a slightly different situation

♠KT4 ♥QT4 ♦Q32 ♣J976.

The bidding has gone:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass

The bidding suggests that they have little to spare, and South appears to have no spade support. For that reason it is good play to attack with a spade. No other lead appeals and declarer may well be embarrassed by an early attack on dummy's entry.

Having reached that conclusion, the best card to lead is the king. You might pin a singleton honour, or declarer may misjudge the lie of the suit. In play this was the full deal:

♠ AJ9832	♠ Q65
♥ J32	♥ K765
♦ J7	♦ K864
♣ T2	♣ 73
♠ KT4	♠ 7
♥ QT4	♥ A98
♦ Q32	♦ AT95
♣ J965	♣ AKQ84

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Declarer allowed the King of spades to win. On the next trick he received a nasty shock when the Jack of spades lost to the queen. He elected to discard a heart. Now, after a heart switch and continuation, he was limited to six tricks. At the other tables, after a heart opening lead, South succeeded in scrambling home with two heart tricks, four clubs, two diamond tricks and a spade.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

You need to value a reliable, happy partner above anything else. Working together as a team is important for the success of your partnership. You both want to win, so you can't gain anything from getting upset when play doesn't go exactly as planned. And it seldom does! Here, you'll find some tips on keeping your partner happy.

1. Treat your partner like your best friend.

Even if you don't know your partner well, treating them with respect improves their play.

2. Tolerate your partner's errors.

Don't keep harping on your partner's errors; just forgive and try to forget (at least until after the game). After all, do you want to be reminded of all the mistakes you've made? (Everybody makes mistakes, including you.) If you have constructive criticism, save it for after the session, when you'll both be calmer.

3. Deal well with disaster.

A truly good partnership handles the inevitable disaster with a touch of humour. If your partner doesn't have to worry that you'll have an apoplectic fit whenever something goes wrong, they'll play better.

4. Only play conventions you both want to play.

Don't force your partner to play your favourite conventions (such as artificial bids). A partner worried about a convention inevitably makes more errors in the bidding, play, and defence, not to mention screwing up the convention if it comes up.

5. Own up to your own errors.

Avoid the human tendency to lay your own errors at your partner's doorstep. A weaker partner will feel good to know that you, the stronger player, make errors as well — and are a big enough person to admit them.

6. Offer words of encouragement.

Give your partner a few words of support after the hand is over, particularly if they don't make their contract. "Tough luck" and "Nice try" go over better than "My cat would have made that contract in her sleep."

7. Treat your partner the same whether you win or lose.

When the session is over, win or lose, tell your partner how much you enjoyed playing with them (no matter how you feel). Kind words mean the world to a player who knows they haven't played well. It also shows class.

NOVEMBER PUZZLE

♠ AJ2		♠ Q8643
♥ AKJT54	6♥ by	♥ Q7
♦ 3	West	♦ 985
♣ AK8		♣ Q75

You were asked to plan the play after 2 rounds of diamonds were played. Clearly success will depend upon the spade suit and the odds favour playing South for Kx (or a singleton King). The chances of this occurring are around 16%. However, you should be in no rush to take this line. Suppose you ruff the second diamond and follow with five more tumps and three clubs finishing in dummy. At this stage everyone has three cards left. If nothing unusual has occurred, you play a spade to your Knave as above, but if South has discarded a spade then you assume this was from an original four card holding. If that is the case then your only hope is to play a spade to the Ace and drop a singleton King offside. When this hand arose declarer missed the chance to bring home the slam in this fashion.

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE

♠ AJT986		♠ KQ
♥ 6	6♠ by	♥ A843
♦ A	West	♦ J9853
♣ AKQ72		♣ 64

Play this slam on a heart lead. If you make it (as you should) then you will have done better than the international player that met this hand at the table.