

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

February 2024

GCBA RESULTS

In the ongoing Winter Swiss Teams competition, there were big wins for the two leading teams captained by Richard Butland and Patrick Shields. Just one VP now separates those teams with one session (of 2 matches) remaining.

County Leagues

In the 8th round of matches, wins were recorded by teams captained by Val Constable, Kanwar Rahim, Ashok Kwatra and Richard Butland.

MIDLANDS LEAGUE

The February match saw us play against Derbyshire. Congratulations to the Dawes team on a 19-1 win, putting them 13 VPs ahead in Division One with one match remaining.

Unfortunately, Derbyshire were unable to field complete teams in either the Porter or Markham matches so these games were reduced to teams of four rather than eight.

The Porter team lost 12-8 whilst the Markham team registered a 13-7 win to put themselves second behind Worcestershire, our opponents in the final match. There is thus a realistic chance of us winning Divisions One and Three. Well done to all those who have taken part over the season.

FEBRUARY PROBLEM

♠ AQ6 ♠ 7542
♥ A3 6♠ by ♥ 9
♦ Q952 West ♦ AK
♣ AQ63 ♣ K97542

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♣	2♥	4♥
4♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The 2♣ overcall showed both majors (at least 5/5). How do you play on the lead of the ♥K?

TOLLEMACHE CUP

Gloucestershire qualified for the Tollemache final which has just been played. On paper, this was the strongest field for many years, although in the actual event, many of the expected stars did not turn out to play.

Gloucestershire did not play as well as they would have hoped, and as is often the case when playing below one's best, they also suffered from a series of unlucky boards such as opponents bidding a grand slam on a trump finesse and break and it romped home! Let's hope for better things next year.

This deal was just one example of a lapse in concentration that cost the team IMPs.

♠ 2 ♠ A865
♥ A853 5♦ by ♥ T4
♦ AQJ9 West ♦ KT3
♣ AQ63 ♣ K752

You play 5♦ after North has pre-empted in spades and has led the ♠K. You need to ruff at least one heart in the dummy and the trumps will need to break, as when you concede a heart, you will be forced by the defence playing another spade.

So you win the lead, duck a heart and ruff the spade return in hand. Now after Ace and a heart ruff, declarer crossed back to hand in trumps to ruff the last heart. Now a club to the Ace allows the remaining trumps to be drawn and the contract to be claimed when the trumps break 3-3.

Unfortunately, on the fourth round of hearts, North discarded his singleton club and was hence able to ruff your Ace of clubs, leading to a one trick defeat. Quite simply you needed to cross to hand with a club first and a diamond later.

JUNIOR BRIDGE

Jan Bailey and her team continue to work tirelessly to promote and support Junior Bridge in the county and there is now have a group of youngsters playing regularly.

Jan arranged some excellent publicity for local Junior Bridge by securing an interview on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and also an article on the BBC news website. You can access the article by [CLICKING HERE](#) and you can listen to the recording of the radio show by [CLICKING HERE](#) (and forward until 2hr 41minutes into the show).

Jan also reported that at the Generation Game, we recently had seven Gloucestershire children and four grandparents in attendance. She noted that one of the seven children has moved up to secondary school this year and has told a teacher there about playing bridge at primary school. Consequently Jan will be meeting with the teacher to discuss the possibility of playing at his new school.

The Generation Game is an EBED monthly event which is played online (on RealBridge) on the last Sunday of the month, running from 6.30 to 7.30pm. There is no charge, and the idea is that a child can play competitively (and safely) online with a parent or grandparent.

The children can also partner a sibling or friend. So far, this event has attracted young people from all over the country. There are two sessions running, Bridge and MiniBridge, so do encourage family and friends to take part if you can. If interested, please contact joan@ebedcio.org.uk

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

♠ AK974		♠ J865
♥ 9873	3♠ by	♥ AQT42
♦ KJ3	West	♦ 87
♣ K		♣ 65

In a pairs event, where overtricks are important, the auction goes 1♠-3♠ and you get a trump lead. South plays the Queen, so you draw trumps in two more rounds finishing in West and take a losing heart finesse. A low diamond comes through and you play..?

If at this point you are trying to work out who has what and whether to play the King or the Knave then your approach is wrong! In the planning before your play to trick one you should have anticipated this dilemma and concluded that the diamond position is a pure guess and that if the play develops as anticipated, then you are playing the King without hesitation.

To see why the King is the correct play consider the situation of the North player who started with:

♠T32 ♥J5 ♦AQ95 ♣AQ93

When the King was played without any apparent thought, North assumed his partner held the ♦J and continued with a low diamond to try and put his partner in for a club switch. On this defence, declarer made two overtricks for a top on the board. At tables where declarer dithered before playing a diamond (often the Knave), then the defence automatically cashed 2 diamonds and a club, holding declarer to 9 tricks. Hence the tip is: **When you have a critical guess to make in a suit, do your thinking beforehand and don't give the game away by hesitating at the crucial moment.**

With that in mind, try this deal:

♠ KJ		♠ 95
♥ AQ3	6NT by	♥ T84
♦ K62	West	♦ AQJT4
♣ QJ862		♣ AK3

How do you play on a diamond lead? You can count five tricks in each minor and the ace of hearts for a sure eleventh. The twelfth trick can come from a correct spade guess or a successful heart finesse.

If you lead a spade and put in the Knave, forcing the Ace, you will succeed. If you lead a spade towards the King and the Ace was on your right, you will succeed. Or if you take the heart finesse and the King is onside, you will succeed. But which play is the best? Is it possible to give yourself more than one chance?

Yes, if you lead a spade towards your hand and make your play without hesitation. There is nothing to say if you guess correctly in spades, but if you guess wrongly, then you may get another chance when the spade honours are split.

Suppose that you lead a spade to the King, losing to the Ace. West is very likely to continue diamonds, and you are now in a position to take the heart finesse - your second chance. You may also find that even if North holds the Ace of spades, he might duck if you smoothly play a spade to your King, expecting you to hold something like KQT in the suit and maybe mis-guess later.

Notice, of course, what happens if declarer tries a spade lead at trick two and hesitates over his third-hand play. If he guesses wrong, North will know that South holds the other honour, and it is easy to return the suit and defeat the slam.

WOMENS BRIDGE

Alison Pritchard writes:

Some of Gloucestershire's top women players played in the World Bridge Federation's Online Women's Teams event recently. They teamed up with one player from Sussex, one from Surrey and an up-and-coming English Junior. Bridge was played for three days and the opponents included teams from several European countries, India, South Africa and South America.

Whilst the team didn't take the world by storm, everyone enjoyed it enormously. It was an uplifting experience playing competitive and very friendly bridge with women from across the world. If anyone is interested in joining our Gloucestershire sisterhood in an event like this in future, please contact Alison Pritchard - alison2no1@hotmail.com

SOLUTION TO JANUARY PROBLEM

♠ AKQJ		♠ 9632
♥ 97	6♠ by	♥ A86
♦ 4	West	♦ AK76
♣ QJ9532		♣ A6

You play in 6♠ after North has opened the bidding with 3♥. North leads the 4♣. Plan the play.

This hand draws on a well-established truism. If a pre-emptive bidder doesn't lead his own suit, then he is leading a singleton! So it would be fatal to duck the opening lead and lose the first two tricks. Put up the Ace of clubs and draw trumps in three rounds before crossing to dummy with a diamond and leading a club to your nine. Now just concede a club and claim.