

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2021-22

July 2022

GCBA RESULTS

Series 15 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Jim Berry and Cyril Green, with Rowan and Michael Lytheer in second place. Series 16 is now underway, with the early pace being set by Tony and Rosalind Reeves.

Summer Teams 4 (F2F event)
1st Roger Eaton and Ted Phillips, Patrick Shields and Val Constable.
2nd Allan and Judy Sanis, Jim Simons and Patrick Phair.

Summer Teams 5
1st Patrick Shields, Diane Kurbalija, John Atthey and Diana Nettleton.
2nd Ian Plewis, Pat Emery, with Nigel Pitel, Nicky Ferguson

PRESIDENT'S CUP

Gloucestershire was invited to play in what has been traditionally a Northern Counties Event organised by Merseyside and Cheshire. The competition is for teams of eight and our team performed creditably to finish second over this two-day event. The county was represented by Val Constable, Jim Simons, Lesley Harrison, Pam Pearce, Martin McWilliam, Patrick Shields, Ashok Kwatra, Angelos Agathangelou, Tom Jarman, Roger Scofield, Keith Sharp, Joe Angseesing, Andrew Kambites, Jon Arblaster, and Mel Barlow.

The hand at the top of the next column proved rather difficult. In the event, the only declarers who made 13 tricks in hearts were blessed by mis-defences, but the grand slam in hearts can always be made on the following very logical line.

♠ A8
♥ J96532
♦ K754
♣ A

♠ KJT75
♥ 87
♦ J983
♣ QT

♠ 9632
♥ 4
♦ 62
♣ K96532

♠ Q4
♥ AKQT
♦ AQT
♣ J874

Win the heart lead in hand and play a club to the Ace. Then use your trump and diamond entries to ruff 3 clubs on the table. Now cash your spade Ace and re-enter hand with a trump. When you play off your last trump, East cannot hold both his spade and diamond guards and has to capitulate. A nice dummy reversal and Vienna Coup. Who says these plays only turn up in books?

COMMITTEE NOTES

Cheltenham Bridge Club have recently purchased a new Bridge Dealer 4 machine, enabling them to donate their older backup machine to Tewkesbury BC, who are very grateful.

The committee has agreed to reward any player reaching the Master Point rank of District Master with a free entry for themselves and their partner to any GCBA event in the following twelve months. The awards will be made each year in January and July; in July 2022, 15 players are receiving this reward and we extend them all our congratulations.

The weekend of 23rd /24th July sees a return of the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire face-to-face Green Point weekend. Please support this event if possible.

GOLD CUP PLAY

The result of matches between two quality teams usually depends on bidding decisions, but in a recent Gold Cup match, the outcome could have been decided by accurate play. Consider this hand:

♠ T63
♥ Q62
♦ QT4
♣ J932

3NT by South

♠ AJ7
♥ AJ73
♦ A3
♣ KQT3

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

The 2♠ bid showed 5/5 with spades and a minor and less than opening bid values. The response asked the opener to show his minor and you choose to make a practical bid of 3NT. West leads a low diamond and you have to plan the play.

The bidding and lead strongly suggest that West has five diamonds and East three. If West has either diamond honour (very likely) then you have two diamond tricks, and can establish three clubs, two hearts and a spade. That only comes to eight tricks so you have to consider where you might find a ninth.

Your chances are not great, and the only realistic hope is to bring in the heart suit for 3 tricks. To do this, you will need to find West with the King of hearts singleton or doubleton. The play should go as follows after you put in the diamond ten on the first trick.

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East will play the King and it makes no difference whether you win or duck this trick. When you are in with the diamond Ace, just play Ace and another heart. West wins his King and can continue diamonds but as long as you retain the Queen until the third round, you can then knock out the Ace of clubs and come to nine tricks.

You would be defeated if West could win the club as he could then take his established diamond winners, but if West has both entries, then no line of play would have worked. At the table, declarer hoped to attack West's entry early by playing clubs after winning the diamond Ace.

This led to a rapid demise when East won and cleared the diamond suit. Even if East had held the ♥K and West the Ace of clubs, there would never have been nine tricks as East could not have short hearts on the bidding. West's hand was:

♠Q8542 ♥K8 ♦J8752 ♣7.

A second hand from the same match also presented a play problem.

♠ J
♥ QT5
♦ AK73
♣ AKQ84

♠ QT754
♥ 83
♦ 842
♣ T63

3NT by South

♠ K932
♥ AK9642
♦ Q9
♣ 7

♠ A86
♥ J7
♦ JT65
♣ J952

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	X	1♥
2♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The defence start with three rounds of hearts and you ruff the third round with the Knave.

You draw trumps and need to decide how to play the diamonds. Take one top diamond and now lead a spade from the table. It is hard for East to cover as this would be fatal if South held ♠AQT, but when East plays low, declarer knows that East does not hold both missing spade honours. The inference from this is that East holds ♦Q to justify his opening bid and so you play to drop his Queen and bring home the contract.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Thinking in the auction is of course very important. All too often one is focussed on one aspect of how the auction needs to develop and that blinds you to possible alternatives. Consider this hand that was shown to me the other day. Vulnerable against not you pick up:

♠AJTx ♥AQJx ♦AKJx ♣x

and hear partner open 1NT (15-17). You start with a Stayman enquiry and partner bids 2♠. You are immediately thinking that this hand is a choice between playing in six or seven spades. You wheel out RCKB and opener has one key card. That is disappointing but now that you know that a key card is missing you settle for 6♠, satisfied that you are in the correct contract.

However, you have failed miserably! After the key-card enquiry, you should ask partner about the Queen of trumps! If you do this and partner denies holding this card then you can bid 7NT with confidence. You know that only 5 points are missing, and these must be the ♠K and ♠Q. Partner must have all the missing honour cards to make up his minimum 15 points.

Partner's hand was in fact:

♠xxxx ♥Kxx ♦Qx ♣AKQJ.

There are 13 top tricks in no-trumps whilst 6♠ was defeated when both trump honours sat behind the Ace.

JUNE'S TEASER SOLUTION

♠ K3
♥ K92
♦ 854
♣ AT942

3NT by South
on ♠J lead

♠ Q86
♥ AQ7
♦ AQJ
♣ QJ83

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

Suppose you try the King of spades from dummy and it holds the trick. You need to bring in the club suit and you will be fine if the club finesse works, but if it is wrong, then East will return a spade and you will suffer defeat as West will have at least 4 spades to cash. You can't affect the position of the club King but you can improve your chances of success by ducking the first spade in both hands. All West can do is to play a second spade which you win. Now if you take a losing club finesse you will be OK whenever the spades originally divided 6-2 as East will no longer have a spade to play.

JULY PROBLEM

North leads a diamond against your grand slam. Is there any hope of success?

♠ KQ98765
♥
♦ KQT
♣ A63

7♠ by West

♠ AJT
♥ JT98
♦ A32
♣ 954