

# GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

July 2023

## GCBA RESULTS

Series 21 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Pauline Mussi and Hugh Wilkinson, closely followed by Hylary Kingham and Brian Dorey.

### Summer Open Teams 2

1<sup>st</sup> Tom Jarman, Jack Armorgie, Paul Denning and Roy Collard.

2<sup>nd</sup> Steve Bunker, Allan Sanis, Roger Schofield and Judy Sanis.

### Summer Open Teams 3

1<sup>st</sup> John Cuncer, Mark Rogers, David Atthey and Alison Pritchard.

2<sup>nd</sup> Val Constable, Patrick Phair, Jim Simons and Patrick Shields.

### Summer Open Teams 4

1<sup>st</sup> Val Constable, Patrick Phair, Jim Simons and Patrick Shields.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ashok Kwatra, Alastair Catchpole, Peter Swales and Paul Lilley.

## SYNERGY – U3A AND BRIDGE CLUBS

There are many U3A groups across the country offering bridge teaching and playing sessions for their members, but most have little or no contact with the bridge clubs which operate in their area.

Perhaps people consider that U3A bridge is more for beginners and casual bridge, and that bridge clubs are more elitist? If that were true, the future of UK bridge would suffer. Many U3A groups do a great job bringing people into the game, and offering a social outlet, but might lack an obvious route for people who want to go further in developing their skills. This, at the same time as many bridge clubs are struggling for members.

Most clubs are seeing F2F playing numbers around two thirds of pre-Covid levels, as players have not returned after the long hiatus, or are confining themselves to playing on-line.

It could be worthwhile for the local U3A bridge group and the local bridge club to get together and explore how they can help each other. Alan Stanfield has unearthed a report on how Warrington Bridge Club teamed up with their local U3A group to their mutual benefit. The full report can be found [here](#) and might be of interest to clubs in the County.

## PACHABO PLAYTIME

The Pachabo is a National event for teams who win their own county championship. This year the event was won by Gloucestershire, represented by Dan McIntosh, Rob Myers, Paul Denning and Garry Watson. Looking through the archives, Gloucestershire's last win in this event was in 2008.

The competition uses a hybrid scoring method, with half the spoils available based on the IMP difference over a 4-board match, and the other half awarded on a point-a-board basis, whereby a difference in aggregate score can translate to a win of two points on that board or a 1-1 draw, or a loss.

So on a hand where your opponents score 630 in 3NT and you are playing in 4♥, more than 2 victory points will rest on whether you succeeded and whether you made +620 or +650 with an overtrick here. Gloucestershire's winning margin was only 2.5 VPs after 88 boards of play!

The lead changed hands many times over the course of the weekend, but steady nerves and a win in the final match gave us the trophy.

The following deal occurred in our crucial match against Manchester, who finished third, and shows that even the most experienced pairs can sometimes make enormous blunders.

♠ K9762  
♥ K9752  
♦ A  
♣ T8

♠ QJT8  
♥ AQ4  
♦ K96  
♣ A95

♠ A3  
♥  
♦ 875432  
♣ KJ742

N/S Vul

♠ 54  
♥ JT863  
♦ QJT  
♣ Q63

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♣	2♦	2♥
3♦	3♥	4♣	4♥
X	Pass	Pass	Pass

With Gloucestershire East-West, frisky competitive bidding resulted in three down for 800, a good result since 5♦ would never have been made in practice. At the other table, events followed a bizarre course.

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♣	X	2♥
Pass	Pass	4NT	Pass
6NT	X	7♣	X
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North's bid showed the majors and East's initial double showed values. He intended 4NT as showing the minors. Unfortunately West was on a different wavelength and the final contract was four down for a further 800 to Gloucestershire and a rare 17 IMP score. Had this board been flat, the trophy would have been heading North this year.

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## IMPROVER'S CORNER

Much has been written about the careful thought required of declarer before he plays to the first trick, but little has been said about the player on the declarer's right. When you are in this position you often have a difficult but vital role to play. Unlike declarer, you cannot see your partner's hand, but by reviewing the bidding and observing the lead you may be able to visualise it.

While declarer is thinking over his plan of attack, you have a chance to plan your defence. Even if declarer plays quickly to the first trick, you should not allow yourself to be hurried. For example:

♠ 85  
♥ JT3  
♦ KQ5  
♣ AT976

♠ J974  
♥ Q865  
♦ A73  
♣ K4

3NT by South

South opens a strong no-trump (15-17) and is raised to game. Your partner leads the ♥2 and dummy plays the knave. The lead tells you that partner has a four card heart suit headed by the Ace or King (♥AKxx would lead a top card first). If you play the Queen then declarer will win two tricks in the suit regardless of his holding.

However, if you play low then whenever South started with ♥Kx, the defence is destined to win three hearts, a club and a diamond to beat the contract. Even when you have an automatic play to the first trick, you can pause and say 'sorry, I'm not thinking about this trick'. This may help you prepare a vital decision at the next trick, as in this example:

♠ 752  
♥ 64  
♦ KJT984  
♣ A3

3NT by South

♠ A4  
♥ J953  
♦ A73  
♣ KJT9

South's 15-17 1NT opening is raised to game and partner leads the ♠Q. It should be clear to you that declarer will succeed easily if he can bring in the diamond suit and that you can attack dummy's outside entry. Win the spade lead and switch to the King of clubs.

If dummy ducks then you can always play a second club. Now a hold up play in diamonds will limit declarer to one spade, two diamonds and two club tricks. If he has four heart tricks then there is nothing to be done but that is very unlikely.

Third player should always make a habit of counting the points when dummy goes down, so that he will have a picture of how much he may expect from partner. This practice will put the defender on the track of many a killing defence.

## JUNE PROBLEM SOLUTION

♠ A63  
♥ AKQ2  
♦ K743  
♣ A9

3NT by West

♠ Q982  
♥ 76  
♦ A  
♣ 876532

North leads the ♦Q and South plays the ♦2, showing an odd number. How do you set about making nine tricks?

There are insufficient entries to set up and enjoy the club suit, so spades will need to furnish the three tricks you need to go with your six outside winners.

If the suit breaks 3-3 or one hand holds ♠Kxxx then they will delay their spade winner until the third round, and cut you off from the long spade in dummy. You need therefore to find South with either a singleton or doubleton King of Spades.

You should lead the ♠8 at trick two and run it if South plays low. Later you will cash the Ace, dropping South's King, and then finesse the nine for your third trick in the suit. This play wins against ♠K7, ♠K5 or ♠K2 with South. If South holds ♠KJ or ♠KT and plays his minor honour on the first round, then you duck the trick and later will have the same finesse position against North.

An interesting position arises if South plays the ♠K on the first round. If this is a singleton, then you win and play towards dummy's ♠Q9 and insert the ♠9 when North plays low, or duck when North inserts an honour.

Against most defenders this works, but a clever defender sitting South might play the King from ♠KJ or ♠KT and now the finesse of the ♠9 loses and North still has a spade stop. Would have been better to start with a low spade from dummy?

No – the ♠8 is best, with three winning positions against all defenders, and two more against most. Playing the King from KJ or KT certainly gives declarer a losing option and is a defensive play worth noting.

## JULY PROBLEM

♠ JT3  
♥ AKJT842  
♦ 62  
♣ 4

4♥ by West

♠ AKQ  
♥ 7  
♦ 53  
♣ AQ76532

You get to game in hearts after North has opened the bidding with 1♦. North cashes two top diamonds and switches to a club. What's your safest line for ten tricks?