

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2021-22

March 2022

GCBA RESULTS

Series 13 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs has now completed. Congratulations to Rosalind and Tony Reeves who finished just ahead of Val and Gordon Atkinson.

Spring Swiss Teams on Mar 7th had three teams equal first:

1= Peter Swales, Paul Lilley, Martin McWilliam and Leslie Harrison.

1= Alison Pritchard, David Atthey, Patrick Shields, and Garry Watson.

1= Joe Angseesing, Paul Denning, Val Constable and Andrew Kambites.

After four matches of the now Bi-weekly GCBA Swiss Teams the event is led by Patrick Shields, Paul Denning, Diane Kurbalija, and Dan McIntosh (helped by John Matheson, Rob Lawy, Diana Nettleton).

In the County Leagues, Rob Lawy's team leads Division 1. Matches 1-7 in Division 2 have now been completed, with teams led by Alan Sanis and Ashok Kwatra filling the top two spots. The eight teams now split into Division 2A and 2B.

TOLLEMACHE

Gloucestershire's team was successful in the annual national inter-counties teams-of-eight competition this year, winning the strong final by a commanding margin – this despite a 3-17 loss in their first match. Many congratulations to Richard Butland, Richard Chamberlain, Paul Denning, Andrew Kambites, Dan McIntosh, Richard Plackett, Patrick Shields, Rob Stevens and Garry Watson.

This was Gloucestershire's first win in the event since 2007.

THE RETURN TO LIVE BRIDGE

Across the country, face-to-face bridge is starting up again but it is the case still that more bridge is being played online than is being played face-to-face – and significantly so.

Of the ~30 clubs in the County of which we have information, it looks like three have had to give up because Covid led to too few players attending; the others are all still active – with four of these now running both live and online games, and two running only online games.

The numbers for live games are generally lower than in 2019, with a much larger drop in those clubs which adapted to online play and helped their members become comfortable online. Both forms of the game have their own positive features (you get to socialise least with BBO, but you cannot revoke or lead-out-of-turn when playing online) and both live and online are here to stay.

The County games bring in an audience from all across the county, so travel is a greater cost for these players than for most. They are also generally the more competitive players and as such have found online bridge (with its record keeping and analysis tools) very attractive.

The GCBA has run three live games in the past six months with attendance that only just made them viable. The current thinking is to try for a monthly face-to-face game from June onwards, but this game needs to have some "Unique Selling Point" to make it attractive enough for players to travel. Watch this space!

HANDS FROM THE TOLLEMACHE

With 98 boards being played by four pairs from each county, there were many hands that influenced the result. Here are a couple of Gloucestershire's successes. The first comes from our second round match against Manchester.

♠ QJ6	♠ K7
♥ 8754	♥ 962
♦ KJT	♦ A62
♣ A63	♣ Q9852
♠ T9852	♠ A43
♥ A3	♥ KQJT
♦ 8543	♦ Q97
♣ JT	♣ K74

At three tables, the contract was 3NT by South on the ♠T lead. The Gloucestershire declarer covered with the Queen and ducked East's King. When East continued spades, the defence was finished. Declarer had time to knock out the missing Aces, safe in the knowledge that if spades broke five-two, the contract could only be defeated if the hand with five spades held both Aces.

One opposition declarer failed by winning the first spade and then choosing to play diamonds first, which allowed the defence to set up five tricks.

The second Manchester declarer (an international) ducked the first trick but made the mistake of winning the club switch and then playing hearts. This allowed the defence to set

STOP PRESS: GCBA is running the County Pairs heat on Monday 11th April, live at Cheltenham Bridge Club (1900 hrs start, all welcome)

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up three clubs to go with their spade and two Aces for a two trick defeat.

It was different at the fourth table, where Gloucestershire played in 4♥. This contract looks to have four losers but that is not the case. Declarer won the spade lead and knocked out the Ace of trumps. A second spade lead was taken and the ♦A dislodged. Thereafter it was a simple matter to cash the minor suit winners and be in the happy position of being able to endplay either opponent to concede a ruff and discard.

That board contributed 50 imps and was key in beating a strong Manchester side 20-0.

Sometimes, a good score was obtained through discipline. The following hand is an example from day two of the event.

♠ A		
♥ QT86542		
♦ 9		
♣ K862		
♠ Q9532		♠ K4
♥ KJ73	B2	♥ A9
♦ T5	NS	♦ K8642
♣ Q9	Vul	♠ AT73
	♠ JT876	
	♥	
	♦ AQJ73	
	♣ J54	

East was the dealer and opened 1♦. Thereafter the Gloucestershire pairs bid sensibly but the opposition got overboard at all four tables; Gloucestershire defended four times collecting penalties (only one doubled) against opponents who had bid too much without a combined 8 card fit anywhere, and that amounted to another 50 imp swing in our favour, this time on a part-score hand. This board was a major contributor to

another big win that put us out of reach of our nearest rivals.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Many improvers are well aware of the basics of card play but often they fail to implement simple solutions at their disposal. Consider this hand which I saw recently.

♠ QJ3		
♥ 872		
♦ A52		
♣ 9863		
♠ AK65		♠ T84
♥ Q	2♥	♥ K653
♦ JT764	by S	♦ KQ93
♣ T76		♣ 54
	♠ 972	
	♥ AJT94	
	♦ 8	
	♣ AKQJ	

The defence started with three rounds of spades, dummy winning the third round. I am sure that most (possibly all) players realise that the way to tackle the trump suit is to take two finesses. However, when I watched the hand, declarer led the ♥8 from the table and ran it. Subsequently, declarer entered dummy with a diamond and took another trump finesse. Whilst this won the trick, there was no further entry to dummy to repeat the finesse and declarer was held to nine tricks.

Clearer thinking would quickly provide the solution to making ten tricks. Simply play hearts the first time by leading the ♥2 to the ♥9. Then the diamond entry is used to run the ♥8 and this then leaves you in dummy to repeat the finesse. On the scoresheet, scoring 170 was worth over 90% of the match-points, so this would appear to have been a common blind spot. The lesson to learn is that

whatever your standard, concentration and playing to your own abilities can dramatic improve your scores.

FEBRUARY 'TEST YOUR PLAY' SOLUTION

- ♠ QT3
- ♥ A72
- ♦ Q74
- ♣ K983

3NT by South

- ♠ KJ3
- ♥ QT8
- ♦ KJT2
- ♣ A52

You receive the lead of the ♥5 to East's Knave. What is your plan for making 9 tricks?

You have two Aces to knock out in order to arrive at 9 tricks. Some layouts don't matter, for example hearts breaking 4-3 or both Aces being in the same hand. However, if hearts are breaking 5-2, you will be in trouble if you don't play the suit where the holder of the five card suit has the entry. How can you tell? Well of course you have no way of telling, but if you duck the ♥J at trick one, then you don't need to guess. Win the next heart and all is good.

MARCH PUZZLE

- ♠ 653
- ♥ 92
- ♦ K94
- ♣ AJ532

6♠ by South

- ♠ AKJT82
- ♥ AQ
- ♦ AQ3
- ♣ K6

West leads the ♦J. You win the Ace and play off two top

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trumps, finding out that West started with ♠Q94. You play clubs, ruffing the third round whilst West discards a heart. Continue from there.