

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

Mar 2023

GCBA RESULTS

Series 19 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Neville Shorrick and Martin Moxley, ahead of Hugh Wilkinson and Pauline Mussi. Congratulations to both pairs.

Spring Teams 2 - D1

1st Garry Watson, Richard Butland, John Councer and Mark Rogers.

2nd Mick Bird, Robert Coss, Rod Gass and Peter Jackson.

Spring Teams 2 - D2

1st Jack Armorgie, Ashok Kwatra, Roy Collard and Mike Wignall.

2nd Alan Wearmouth, Tony Hill, Peter Waggett and Ben Ritacca.

GCBA Match Point Pairs Feb

1st Ian Plewis and Pat Emery.

2nd Ian Sidgwick and Jane Rowley.

GCBA Match Point Pairs Mar

1st Mike Lewis and Roger Williams.

2nd Ashok Kwatra and Lesley Harrison.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

in the final round of the Midland Counties League Oxfordshire tackled Gloucestershire. All three Gloucestershire teams managed wins and the final league standings are as follows: the Dawes team won Division One, the Porter team came third in Division Two and the Markham team were second in Division Three. Congratulations to all those involved over the season. As a result, our Dawes team has been invited to compete in a national final against other regional league winners in June.

JUNIOR FUND RAISING EVENT

On the 4th March, the GCBA and Cheltenham Bridge Club jointly hosted the English Under-26 Women's Squad. The team had qualified, through the European Youth Championships, to play in the 2023 World Championships, and this was treated as part of their preparations.

With nine local pairs, the visitors played three sets of boards across the afternoon, and followed that with a challenge match against some different local pairs in the evening. A number of our bridge players provided accommodation for the visitors, for which they were very grateful. The overnight stay was followed by a squad training session the next day, where they played set hands and discussed the problems these threw up.

Three pairs from the attendees have now been selected for the World Championships, which take place in Veldhoven in the Netherlands. We wish them all the best. Just under £200 was raised to help finance that venture.

INTER-CLUB TEAM-OF-8

In order to identify the best County representatives to play for the EBU's Garden Cities Trophy, we are holding an event on Saturday 29th April – a teams game at Cheltenham Bridge Club of about 30 boards, starting at 1300 hrs. If any club wishes to enter up to two teams (each of 4 pairs) then they should contact the Chief TD (ctd@gcba.org.uk) by 22nd April.

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Ben Handley-Pritchard was in a team that recently reached the quarter-finals of the Vanderbilt, a highly prestigious American tournament. Well done Ben.

PLAY OR DEFEND?

This fascinating hand occurred in a recent Gold Cup match featuring a Gloucestershire team.

♠ KQJ4		
♥ Q975		
♦ 73		
♣ K92		
♠ 98762		♠ 3
♥ 8	6NT	♥ JT642
♦ 952	South	♦ JT86
♣ AJ86		♣ T43
	♠ AT5	
	♥ AK3	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ Q75	

Looking at all four hands, would you rather play or defend a contract of 6NT by South on a spade lead?. You can count 10 quick winners with an eleventh to come from clubs. If the hearts break there will be twelve tricks and there are squeeze chances if they don't.

The first move is to establish a club trick and hopefully rectify the count for any squeeze to operate. Since the ♣9 could prove to be a useful threat card, you win the spade lead on the table and play a club to your Queen. You are pleased to see this lose to West's Ace and a second spade is led, East discarding a heart.

Now your chances are not too bad. East would not have discarded a heart from a four card suit looking at that dummy. You play off two more rounds of spades and East discards the ♣4 and then the ♣T.

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

Mar 2023

When you try the heart suit it transpires that East started with JTxxx which was what you expected. Now when you play three rounds of diamonds you see both opponents following as you discard a heart from the table and you have reached the decision point.

If East started with four diamonds (and so no more clubs) then a finesse of the club nine will see you home whereas if he held just three diamonds originally, then his last two cards will be a heart and a club (presumably the Knave as he previously threw the ten) and you need to play a club to the King.

It might appear that this is just a guess but if you put yourself in East's position, surely you would prefer to make early discards from three diamonds rather than from ♣JTxx. You therefore correctly read that East is the player with the long diamond and hence finesse the nine of clubs to bring home your slam.

A nice guard squeeze on East. If West had returned a club after winning the Ace of clubs, then you win the King and East is caught in a simple red suit squeeze on the run of the spades. The winning defence is the unusual coup of ducking the first round of clubs as West.

True that South can then make two club tricks by playing a second club to the King, but I suspect that nobody will ever find this play. Now the count has not been rectified for any squeeze to operate successfully and if you cash all the spades to put pressure on East, then you have set up two winners for West. It's a good job I wasn't playing against a defender with that much imagination!

IMPROVER'S CORNER

A very common occurrence is to find yourself in 3NT with eight tricks and with the opponents threatening to take five tricks when they get in. This hand is an example:

♠ QJ965	♠ 743	♠ K82
♥ A52	♥ JT4	♥ 98763
♦ 98	♦ K52	♦ 764
♣ QT5	♣ K643	♣ J9
	3NT by South	
	♠ AT	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ AQJT3	
	♣ A872	

West hits your weak spot with a spade lead. Many declarers would hope to sneak through a heart trick by crossing to dummy and leading the ♥J. This fails and the defenders cash their five tricks. However, look what happens if you just run your diamond tricks. West can spare his two low hearts but is then stuck – a club discard allows you four club tricks, and a spade discard means the suit is no longer dangerous.

♠ KQJ9	♠ T82	♠ 653
♥ AK5	♥ J6	♥ 97432
♦ 953	♦ AQJT8	♦ 762
♣ QJT	♣ K64	♣ 92
	3NT by South	
	♠ A74	
	♥ QT8	
	♦ K4	
	♣ A8753	

West opens with a strong 1NT and you finish up in game after North makes an unwise overcall of 2♦. West leads a top spade. The idea of cashing the diamonds should be obvious but would you do it early enough?

If you duck two rounds of spades then West may switch to a club, and the defence can get to two spades, two hearts and a club. The way to play this hand is to win the first or second spade and then play off the diamonds. West cannot stand the pressure and must discard a spade, whereupon you have time to establish a heart trick. So the advice is: when you have eight winners and five losers in 3NT, play off your long suit early.

FEBRUARY PROBLEM

♠ A9	♠ KJ52
♥ AQT42	♥ KJ983
♦ AQ3	♦ 975
♣ T72	♣ A
	6♥ by West

On the King of Clubs lead, your best play is as follows: the spade suit offers the best chance for additional tricks. You should draw trumps finishing in dummy and play a spade to your nine. If the nine loses to the Queen you have 2 discards for your diamonds. If the nine loses to the ten, then you can ruff the club return, play a spade to the Ace and ruff a further club before cashing the King of Spades. If the Queen drops you are home and if all these plays fail, you still have the diamond finesse. In all this line is well over 80%.

MARCH PROBLEM

♠ AJ32	♠ KQ85
♥ Q	♥ 942
♦ QJ93	♦ AK82
♣ KQJ6	♣ A5
	6♠ by West

You play in 6♠ after South has opened 3♥. The defence start with two rounds of hearts. You ruff the second round low (North following) but when you cash the Ace of trumps, South shows out. How do you play from here?