

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2020-21

May 2021

GCBA RESULTS

Series 7 of the **GCBA Swiss Teams** was won by Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh, Filip and Diane Kurbalija (with B.J O'Brien & Martin Kane subs). The team of Paul Denning, Andrew Kambites, Richard Butland and Joe Angseesing (plus Rob Stevens as a sub) finished as runners-up.

Series 8 of the **9-high Swiss Pairs** is nearing a conclusion. With one session to play, John Polhill and Hugh Wilkinson (winners of Series 7) are leading, with Pauline Mussi and Jonathan Bailey currently in second place.

The tenth series of the **EBU Lockdown League** completed recently. The team including Peter Waggett, Ben Ritacca, Alan Wearmouth and Tony Hill won Division 4, thus gaining promotion – well done to them.

This year's **Garden Cities** competition was conducted in a different format this year, with teams from clubs across the country all competing together in a large qualifying round. Gloucestershire, represented by a Cheltenham team, finished in 11th place in a strong field, missing out on a place in the National Final.

Congratulations to Kristian Cole who has so far this year secured 11 (eleven!) wins in the **Daily EBU** organised pairs games.

The **County Knock-out** teams has now reached the final stage – contested by teams led by Denning and Shields. At the half-way point, Shields holds a slender 7 IMP lead. This event will conclude in late May.

The County Pairs final was won by Patrick Phair and Patrick Shields, with Ben Ritacca and Peter Waggett runners-up.

MCOL

In the Midland Counties Online League, with one match remaining for Gloucestershire, the standings are as follows:

D1: Gloucestershire need 7 points to ensure taking the title.

D2 and D3 : results are close but Gloucestershire will most likely finish third in each division if they can manage a win in the final match of the season versus Notts.

A LOSING BOARD

Sometimes a hand comes along where you do everything right but still get a bad result. Consider this hand:

♠ J		♠ T53
♥ J8765	6♠by South	♥ 93
♦ 8		♦ QT94
♣ AT9732		♣ J654
	♠ AKQ986	
	♥ AK2	
	♦ AK65	
	♣	

West leads his diamond. You win and draw trumps and cash a second diamond but your hopes of claiming the contract are dashed when West shows out. Knowing that West has eleven cards in the rounded suits, you play the ♥A and a low heart to dummy's ten. Now you lead the King of clubs from dummy and discard your King of hearts when East plays low. West now has to give you an entry to dummy and both your losing diamonds go away on the two winners on the table. You might expect a healthy gain on the board for finding this winning line. Unfortunately, at the other table opponents stretched to 7♠ and teammates led the ♣A - giving declarer 13 top tricks.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Let's look at an everyday play that too often people get wrong.

Suppose you hold QJ9xx of trumps in hand and four small cards in dummy. Dummy has only one entry, so you play a low card towards your hand and right-hand opponent follows small. How do you play?

The choice is between playing the 9 and playing an honour. If trumps are 3-1, no play will win against AKT on your left. If left-hand opponent holds a singleton Ace or King, then the 9 is the winning play. If his singleton is the ten, then you need to play an honour. Since a singleton Ace or King is twice as likely as a singleton ten, then the odds favour the play of the nine by precisely 2:1. You should familiarise yourself with this reasoning and remember it. It will come in handy when you play this combination correctly and partner demands to know why you lost a trick to the singleton ten!

You can apply this logic to many similar combinations. Try this one: KJTxx in hand and xxxx in dummy which again only has one entry. You lead towards your hand and RHO plays low.

If the suit breaks 2-2, it is a pure guess as to how the cards lie and either the ten or King might be right. If the suit is breaking 4-0 then nothing works. However, when the suit breaks 3-1, the only situation where you can avoid 2 losers is when LHO holds a singleton Queen. This makes the play of the King on the first round a clear winner.

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DECEPTION IN DEFENCE (part 1)

There are many opportunities to gain in defence by false carding. The only thing defenders have to be careful about is that they don't deceive their partner when honest strength or count signals are needed.

We begin with some so-called obligatory false cards. These are "obligatory" because they do not cost anything and they may gain (but no guarantees). The main idea is that in many situations, not following suit with your lowest card can give declarer options to go wrong that they would not have had otherwise. Many involve holdings in a suit where declarer has a strong holding (typically trumps). Key holdings to alert you to a possible obligatory false card are 10x, 109x, J10x, J9xx, K108x or K10x. Try this:

	KJ965	
Q43		T2
	A87	

Declarer plays the A and intends to finesse the J next (the standard, best percentage play). However, East plays the 10 under the Ace. Declarer reasons that it might very well be a forced card from a Q10 holding (more likely than a singleton 10). So he plays to the K on the second round and loses an unnecessary trick. The same thing applies if dummy has the AKJ, or if East has 9x not Tx – still play high.

	AJ84	
K5		T93
	Q762	

Declarer leads low to the J, intending, if it wins, to play the A next and pick up the entire suit whenever the K doubleton is on side. However, under the

J, East plays the 10 (or 9). Now, declarer has another option: go back to hand and lead the Q. This picks up the whole suit whenever East has 109 and also protects against 2 losers if East has played a singleton. Even if declarer knows East might be false carding, he is likely to fall for this. Note that playing the 3 first leaves declarer with no choice but to succeed.

Variations: In this example, give East T8x instead of T9x and it is still right to play the 8 on the lead to the Jack. This might make it more likely for declarer to lead the Q the next time the suit is played.

And, if declarer has QJ92 opposite A765 and the Jack is led for the first trick, next hand should duck and fourth hand should play the eight from T8x. Declarer will most likely continue with the Queen.

This gets tricky for second hand, however, for if partner has the 109x he has to cover when the J or Q is led by declarer – an example of why defense is so hard in Bridge. Both layouts shown the previous column are easy to remember and cannot cost. Defenders should make the play of the 10 smoothly, without hesitation – having thought about it in advance, before declarer plays the suit.

	AKQ953	
82		JT4
	76	

Declarer plays the A and, if East follows with the 4, has no choice but to continue with K and Q. If, however, you follow to the first trick with the 10 or J you give declarer a chance to go wrong. He may think Restricted Choice applies and play you for a singleton and go to his hand to finesse the 9 in dummy.

Note: if dummy held AK10953 and East followed to the A with the Q or J, then Restricted Choice would apply and it would be correct for declarer to finesse. It does not apply in the hand shown solely because of the obligatory false card.

	7	
JT6		A3
	KQ98542	

Declarer leads to the Q. If West plays the 6, declarer has no choice but to next lead low – which holds the losers to one. However, if West plays the 10 or J, Declarer can picture him holding the J10-bare and he would have to lead the K next to save a trick. So, he has an option to go wrong. West can suspect a situation like this if declarer had pre-empted the suit. In any case, it would be hard or impossible to construct a hand where playing the J or 10 loses a trick if declarer is known to have a very long suit.

	Q842	
3		J965
	AKT7	

Declarer, with a known 4-4 fit, lays down the A. If both defenders follow low, declarer will go to the Q, guarding against Jxxx in East (we cannot pick up J9xx in West). It works and declarer picks up the entire suit. But, what happens if East plays the 9 at trick one. Now, declarer can pick up Jxxx in West's hand and that looks like a likely holding after East follows with the 9. Declarer often will lay down the K at trick two – setting up East's J for a trick. The 9 cannot lose and often will gain. Can declarer do anything to guard against this obligatory by East? Yes, he should lead the first round from dummy. East will be reluctant to play the 9 as it may cost if partner has the singleton 10.

.....to be continued next month.