

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

October 2023

GCBA RESULTS

Series 23 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs has just one round remaining. The scores are currently very close at the top with the leading six pairs no more than 5 victory points apart, so it is all to play for.

Winter Teams

After two rounds of this five session Swiss Teams event, Richard Butland has opened up a considerable lead over Alan Wearmouth's combo in second place, with teams captained by Patrick Shields and Steve Bunker tying for third position.

Bredon Vale Cup

This event was won by North Cotswolds (Ian Sidgwick, Jane Rowley, David Cook and Jeanette Simon). The runners-up were Cheltenham B (Nigel Burton, Carol Cowlshaw, Val and Gordon Atkinson).

County Leagues

In the second round of matches, teams captained by Michael Lewis, Robert Wilkinson, Kanwar Rahim, John Cuncer and Peter Waggett all registered wins.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

Gloucestershire were in great form in the second match of the county series, this time against Nottinghamshire. The Dawes team won 19-1, The Porter also won 19-1 and the Markham won 20-0. Well done to all participants.

EVERETT CUP

This takes place on Sunday November 5th 2:00 p.m. at Cheltenham Bridge Club and is our annual charity event with all proceeds going to the Sue Ryder Hospice. Just turn up as a pair and you will be drawn into teams on the day. The entry fee is £7.50 including light refreshments at half time. There will also be a raffle with some excellent prizes so do support this event if you possibly can. Entries can be made via a form available on the GCBA website.

WEST OF ENGLAND CONGRESS

Many congratulations to Jack Armorgie and Alastair Catchpole on an outstanding performance in winning the Swiss Pairs event from a field of 84 pairs that featured several international players. They managed to win every one of their matches. This is a board from the last round – they reached a slam on a combined 21-count and needed to make it on the lead of a diamond to the Ace and a spade switch

♠ AK
 ♥ A6532
 ♦ 3
 ♣ A9854
 ♠ J65
 ♥ T4
 ♦ 62
 ♣ KQJT76
 ♠ QT98
 ♥ 7
 ♦
 AKQJT75
 ♣ 2
 ♠ 7432
 ♥ KQJ98
 ♦ 984
 ♣ 3

West	North	East	South
		3NT	Pass
4♣	x	4♦	4♥
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You have three outside winners so need to make nine trump tricks. You start by winning the spade and playing Ace and another club. East ruffs the second club with the heart seven and you overruff. You cash the King of trumps and East shows out.

Now you know that your crossruff will succeed as you can ruff three more clubs in hand whilst your losers in the pointed suits get ruffed in dummy. West's ten of trumps is picked up in the end position by leading a loser from hand whilst dummy still holds the A6 of trumps. Well played by Alastair and the score on this board helped them on their way to a 20-0 win in the final match.

ONE DAY ONLINE SWISS TEAMS

This event, one of a series run by the EBU throughout the year, was won by a team that included Patrick Shields and Garry Watson. An unusual occurrence cropped up in the first-round match.

♠ AK
 ♥ T973
 ♦ K754
 ♣ 843
 ♠ 853
 ♥ AJ865
 ♦
 ♣ A9652
 ♠ QJT9742
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ QJ
 ♠ 6
 ♥ K2
 ♦ QT98632
 ♣ KT7

Both Souths opened 3♦ as dealer. At one table, West deemed his hand worthy of a take-out double and East then not unreasonably bid 6♠ over a 5♦ raise from North. North was able to double this contract with some confidence and it duly went one down with the two vital finesses both working.

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Any fears that this would be a losing board were dispelled when it transpired that at the other table, West passed on the first round and North tried the ploy of bidding 3NT, intending to run back to diamonds if doubled.

In practice this became the final contract and made with an overtrick after a muddled defence, hence gaining 6IMPs. I don't think I have been involved before in a deal where one side passed throughout whilst the other pair playing the same way freely bid to what they hoped was a making slam!

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Most players realise the advantage in playing low from dummy when a Queen is led through dummy's King at trick one. The Ace is almost certainly over the King and by playing low a couple of times, the Ace may fall on your right, establishing the King as a trick. However, there are many other situations (not so well known) where playing low from dummy at trick one may gain a trick.

♠ K75		
♥ A74		
♦ QJ6		
♣ A874		
♠ J64		♠ 3
♥ Q932	4♠ by	♥ JT6
♦ KT84	South	♦ A9732
♣ J9		♣ QT32
♠ AQT982		
♥ K85		
♦ 5		
♣ K65		

When West leads ♦4, it looks normal to play the Knave from dummy, but if you do that, then East will win and not return the suit. You will then lose a club and a heart, making just ten tricks.

However, if you play low from the table at trick one, it would take a brave East to insert the nine and risk losing to a singleton ten in declarer's hand. If East plays the Ace, then you can subsequently play the Queen of diamonds from dummy, discarding a loser, with another loser going later on the established diamond to finish with eleven tricks.

Perhaps the advantages of playing low from dummy when a small card is being led through a king can be most clearly seen by taking a look at the difficulties that are created for the defender sitting over dummy.

♠ K76		
♥ JT53		
♦ AKJ84		
♣ T		
	4♥ by	♠ AJ543
	South	♥ 9
		♦ 765
		♣ J853

West leads the two of spades and declarer plays low from dummy. As East, what do you play at trick one?

If you play the Knave because declarer may have a hand like

♠98 ♥K87642 ♦3 ♣AK62

then you find that partner has actually led a singleton, declarer holding;

♠QT98 ♥KQ842 ♦- ♣KQ76

and partner is wondering why you didn't provide an early ruff.

But if you did play the Ace in order to give partner a ruff, you might find that partner has led from ♠QT2 and holds ♥AQ and the hand was easily beaten if you had just cashed your two spade tricks. So the tip is to play low from dummy when it can't cost you a trick and is likely to cause third hand a problem which is hard to solve.

SEPTEMBER PROBLEM

South opened 3♦ and against your slam North leads ♦2. How do you plan the play?

♠ AKQJT52	6♥ by	♠ KQJT4
♥ A65	West	♥ 63
♦ AQ4		♦ 742
		♣ KT9

North obviously has a singleton diamond. The spade suit will furnish enough tricks to discard your diamond losers but entries to dummy are very limited. One possibility would be to lead a low club to dummy's ten which would work provided North holds the knave (and doesn't play it). However, you have a better line.

North is virtually certain to hold the ♠A as else South, with a good six card diamond suit and at least ten points, would have opened at the one level rather than pre-empting, particularly second in hand. So win the diamond lead and draw trumps. Follow with the Queen of clubs to dummy's King and lead a top spade discarding a diamond. North will win but must now lead a black card giving the much-needed entry to discard your second diamond loser.

OCTOBER PROBLEM

♠ AK		♠ 942
♥ AKQJ54	6♥ by	♥ T3
♦ AK92	West	♦ T4
♣ A		♣ T97652

North	East	South	West
	Pass	3♦	x
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North leads the ♣K against your slam. Given that North would have led a diamond if he had one, can you see a way of making 12 tricks?