

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

Sep 2022

GCBA RESULTS

Series 16 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Tony and Rosalind Reeves, with Pauline Mussi and Jonathan Bailey in second place.

Series 17 has now started and the early pace is being set by David Knott and David Bruce.

Summer Teams 6 (F2F event)
1st Roger Eaton and Ted Phillips, Patrick Shields and Pam Pearce.
2nd Paul Denning, Roy Collard, Jack Armorgie and Garry Watson.

Summer Teams 7
1st Richard Butland, Graham Cornell, Dan McIntosh and Andrew Kambites.
2nd Val Constable, Mike Wignall, Jim Simons and Patrick Phair.

Summer Teams 8 (F2F event)
1st Peter Waggett, Tony Letts, Mark Rogers and John Cuncer.
2nd Val Constable, Richard Butland, Jim Simons and Patrick Phair.

Autumn Teams 1 (F2F event)
1st Jack Armorgie, Tom Jarman, Paul Denning and Roy Collard.
2nd Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Nick Haynes and Steven Sasanow.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

Gloucestershire's first match of the 22/23 season was against Derbyshire. Our Dawes team won 17-3, the Porter lost 3-17 and the Markham team won 14-6.

GCBA AUTUMN PROGRAMME

The GCBA will continue with a regular Monday night pattern over the coming months; in the 4(5) weeks we have in order:

- F2F teams at Cheltenham
- BBO Pairs League
- League (F2F/online)
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- League (F2F/online)

To play on the first Monday of the month you just need to turn up but for others must first notify the Chief TD at ctd@gcba.org.uk. All events have a tiered structure and should cater for all players.

Most special events come at the start of the month: on the first Saturday in October and December we have a training day which has a mix of tutorial work and play & discuss and starts at 1000 hrs. On the first Sunday in November we have the Everett Cup – our annual charity event, in support of Sue Ryder. Further details and entry forms for all of these events are now on the county website.

Clubs are invited to send (up to three) teams to play in the Bredon Vale Cup on Sunday 25th September; this is the inter-club championship. We last ran this event for 12 teams in November of 2019, when it was won by the EDF club which no longer exists. Please chase your club to get entries organised.

We are also continuing the 9-High Swiss Pairs with roughly one match a week; the 17th series from September and new pairs are welcome at any time. If interested, just email to online-swissp@gcba.org.uk

GERARD FAULKNER SALVER

This is the National Seniors Knock-out competition and the 2021/22 event was won by Patrick Shields, Richard Chamberlain, Paul Denning and Garry Watson. They won the 48-board final against Derek Oram's team by the slender margin of 4 imps (having been comfortably in-front for most of the match).

There were several large swings in the match, but the following hand caught my eye and shows how simple bidding decisions can win a match.

♠ J		
♥ 942		
♦ K42		
♣ QJ8764		
♠ 732		♠ AQ6
♥ JT86	2♥/4♥ By	♥ Q3
♦ AQJ7	South	♦ T9863
♣ T5		♣ 932
		♠ KT9854
		♥ AK75
		♦ 5
		♣ AK

The North/South hands have marginal game values, but there is no primary major suit fit and 9 tricks are the limit on this deal. The auctions at both tables started the same way - 1♠ from South and a 1NT response. The Oram team needed to find points and pushed on with a 3♥ rebid which led to the poor game. The Gloucestershire South, no doubt influenced by having many of the values in the short suit, rebid a simple 2♥ and this ended the auction. The resulting swing was a 5 imp gain, more than the winning margin in the match.

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

There are many aspects of the game that do not lend themselves to easy self-study. However, learning about suit combinations is something that can be improved upon from books (or more likely today from the internet). In the problems that follow, assume that you are playing in no-trumps and that you have sufficient outside entries available to manage any necessary to-and fro between the two hands.

A. How do you play AKQT3 opposite a singleton 2 for 5 tricks?

B. How do you play AKQT9 opposite a singleton 2 for 5 tricks?

The above problems look very similar, but they do in fact have different solutions. The best play in 'A' is to finesse the ten on the first round. You need to find Jxx or Jxxx in front of the top honours (30%). This is a better chance than trying to drop Jxx offside.

In B, the presence of the 9 means that playing the suit from the top is now the better play. You gain whenever either hand has J, Jx or Jxx and this amounts to a 36% chance of success. Note that in 'A', dropping a singleton or doubleton Knave still doesn't give you five tricks, as your small card has not been promoted to winning rank.

Now consider these 3 situations

C. AT98 opposite Q432 for 3 tricks

D. AT982 5 opposite Q432 for 4 tricks

E. A5432 opposite JT98 for 4 tricks.

In C, your best chance is to take 2 finesses. Start with a low card from the Q432 holding and finesses the 8 if the next player follows. Later you will finesse the 9. This offers an overall chance of success of 78%. Note that you start with a low card rather than the Queen as you can then change tack if the next player shows out.

In D, the addition of a ninth card makes a big difference and this time you should start with the Ace (giving a success rate of 82%).

What about E? Again you have a nine card fit so do you start with the Ace first? No, playing the Ace first is not as good as taking 2 finesses (76%).

A final combination to try:

F. How do you play QT2 opposite K543 for 2 tricks?

This is the sort of combination that even very experienced players get wrong. It looks tempting to play off the King in the hope of dropping a singleton Knave offside, but this is unnecessary. The most effective play is a low card to the Queen and assuming nothing significant happens, you later play a low card to the ten. This play also picks up a singleton Knave offside and has the advantage of scoring 3 tricks when AJ doubleton sit under the Queen.

Suit combinations can seem like rather a dry topic, but knowing how to handle the more common arrangements can pay handsome dividends at the table. There are many aids available on the internet to help you in this regard. In the above analysis, I have used a program called suitplay.exe, which is available to download for free and is very easy to use.

JULY PROBLEM SOLUTION

♠ KQ98765		♠ AJT
♥	7♠ by	♥ JT98
♦ KQT	West	♦ A32
♣ A63		♣ 954

In the problem as set, you were asked to assess your chances in 7♠ on a diamond lead. Apologies to those readers who struggled with this. I had intended the problem as to make 6♠ rather than 7♠. In the grand slam you would require not only a favourable lie of the cards, but also a gross mis-defence and be still on a guess – e.g. if North held KQ doubleton heart and South rose with the Ace on the first heart lead from dummy.

In the small slam your chances are actually at least 50%. You simply need South to hold 2 or 3 heart honours, and if North had held multiple heart honours he might well have led one. Win the diamond lead on the table and lead a heart, discarding a club if South plays low. You use the trump entries to take 2 further ruffing finesses against South, enabling you to ditch your second club loser. Of course if South covers any heart lead, you ruff and repeat the process.

SEPTEMBER PROBLEM

An easy one this time.

♠ 6432		♠ AKQJT75
♥ AKJ8	6♠ by	♥ 53
♦ AQ	West	♦ 94
♣ AKJ		♣ 954

How do you play on a trump lead, South following suit?