

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

September 2023

GCBA RESULTS

Series 22 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Tony and Rosalind Reeves, with Hylary Kingham and Brian Dorey in second place. The series 23 leaders after one match are Alan and Teresa Thomas.

Summer Open Teams 8.

1st Peter Waggett, Joe Angseesing, Tony Hill and Alan Wearmouth.

2nd Richard Butland, Paul Denning, Jack Armorgie and Tom Jarman.

Winter Teams Session 1

This event is a Swiss Teams over five sessions. Setting the early pace are teams led by Patrick Shields, Richard Butland and Ashok Kwatra.

Cheltenham Congress.

This successful face-to-face event was well attended by local players. Congratulations to Jonathan Bailey and Pauline Mussi on winning the 9-high pairs event, and also to Lindsay Stewart, who was a member of the winning combo in the Swiss Teams.

County League.

This season's competition is now underway as a face-to-face event. The first round saw wins for teams captained by Roy Collard, Colin Lennox, Peter Waggett, Kanwar Rahim and Richard Butland.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

The new season started with a match against Warwickshire, one of the stronger counties in the group. Our Dawes team won 16-4, the Porter lost 8-12 and the Markham registered a 14-6 win. Well done to all involved.

SUMMER YOUTH CAMP

The summer youth camp (supported by the GCBA) took place earlier this month. These camps cater for all levels of ability and experience from beginners to internationals and offer a wide range of teaching and competitions. There was very positive feedback from those who took part. The picture below shows Archer (from Cheltenham) Henry and Alexander (from Cheltenham) receiving their Mini-Bridge certificates.



The camp also included a Tournament Directors' course which was attended by Alastair Catchpole. The next camp takes place in October in Tunbridge Wells, so if you have young relatives who might be interested to learn and improve our great game, do encourage them to attend if they can.

NEVER GIVE UP

I am indebted to Jack Armorgie for the following hand played in a recent Teams tournament with East-West Vul against not.

♠ AQT832		♠ K64
♥ Q7	4♠ by	♥ AT8
♦ Q7	West	♦ A82
♣ K94		♣ JT72

South	West	North	East
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

North leads ♣3 against your game. It looks easy enough. You can afford to lose 2 club tricks and then dummy's long club will take care of a red suit loser in hand. South wins the Ace of clubs at trick 1 and returns the suit. You rise with the King as you can't afford to suffer a third-round ruff if North started with Qxxx and to your horror, North ruffs your King and exits with a trump.

The contract now looks pretty hopeless as you still have a certain club loser and one discard on the long club is not enough to dispose of your 2 red suit losers. Still, a good adage is to never give up, so you draw the remaining trumps, finding that North started with a doubleton – and so placing him with ten red cards.

You now exit with a club on which North discards a heart, hoping that South will gift you something on his return, but rather than open up a red suit he accurately exits with a club, making you take a discard at this point, but from which suit should you make a discard?

It should be clear at this point that having lost three tricks, only a squeeze can come to your rescue and for this to work, North must be assumed to hold both red Kings. If he was originally 5/5 in the red suits, then he can discard down to a singleton King in whichever suit you now make your discard and trust his partner to guard that suit, so you need to find North with a 6/4 shape in the reds.

His discard of a heart might suggest he has extra length there but think back to the bidding. North, playing a Multi, passed in first seat and would surely have opened if holding a six-card heart suit – so you imagine his shape to be 2461.

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This leads you to discard a diamond on the fourth round of clubs, and follow with Ace and a diamond ruff. This leaves North in sole control of the diamond suit, and he cannot stand the pressure when you run the trumps.

Very well played by Jack and worthy of a game swing. Sadly, it was a flat board as the contract was played by East at the other table after a 1NT opening and a transfer to spades. South unsurprisingly did not find the club lead from AQxxx and the contract was a trivial make.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

♠ KQT94		♠ AJ3
♥ AK	4♠ by	♥ 973
♦ 9843	West	♦ A65
♣ 95		♣ A742

How do you set about this contract on a trump lead from North? You have nine winners and a diamond ruff on the table would see you home. So one line would be to play Ace and another diamond. The initial trump lead is annoying as the defence might play trumps each time they win a diamond. Still, if the diamonds are breaking 3-3 you will be fine, or perhaps the hand that wins the third diamonds may have no more trumps to lead. so overall your chances are around 50%. But you will be unsuccessful on this occasion as the full layout is as follows:

	♠ 8752		
	♥ J86		
	♦ Q7		
	♣ KJT3		
♠ KQT94		♠ AJ3	
♥ AK	4♠ by	♥ 973	
♦ 9843	West	♦ A65	
♣ 95		♣ A742	
	♠ 6		
	♥ QT542		
	♦ KJT2		
	♣ Q86		

North wins the second diamond to play another trump. When you play the third diamond, even though South has no trump to play, North can ruff his partner's winner and lead a third trump to leave you a trick short.

You may be surprised to find that the contract is virtually assured. Instead of trying to ruff a diamond on the table, you should aim to ruff three of dummy's losers in your own hand. Win the opening lead with the ♠9 and cash the two top hearts before crossing to dummy with the ♣A to ruff a heart. Now give up a club trick.

Win the trump return in dummy and ruff a club. You can still enter dummy with a diamond to ruff another club. You now have nine tricks with the Ace of trumps still to come. You will make four side-suit winners, three trump tricks with the ♠AJ9, and three high ruffs in hand.

Increasing the total number of trump winners by taking ruffs in the longer hand is known as a dummy reversal and whilst in no way is it a difficult technical play, it is a play which is a blind spot for many players. We are so used to making declarer's hand the master hand for planning purposes and hence looking for a way to cover declarer's losers.

If you plan the play on the basis of seeing dummy as the master hand, then ruffing a heart and two clubs and just losing two diamonds and a club seems an obvious thing to do. It can be a useful tool to see the deal from a different perspective.

SOLUTION TO AUGUST PROBLEM

♠ A87542		♠ KQJ
♥ K3	7♠ by	♥ A9642
♦ KQ	West	♦ A87
♣ 764		♣ A9

How do you play on ♣K lead? You have twelve tricks and need to set up the long heart for your thirteenth. There will be no problem if the hearts break 3-3 but a 4-2 split is more likely and you must prepare for that. Since you need a late entry to dummy to cash the heart, you will also need to find the trump suit breaking no worse than 3-1.

Win the lead and cash two diamonds and the King of hearts. Now cross to dummy with a trump and make the key play of discarding your remaining heart on the Ace of diamonds. Now ruff a small heart with a low trump and cross back to the table with a trump for a further heart ruff, this time with the Ace of trumps! Now dummy can be entered with the third round of trumps and the hearts will now be good.

SEPTEMBER PROBLEM

♠	E/W	♠ KQJT4
♥ AKQJT52	Vul	♥ 63
♦ A65	6♥ by	♦ 742
♣ AQ4	West	♣ KT9

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

North leads the ♦2. How do you plan the play?