

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2017-18

Apr 2018

PROGRAMME

For this month we have -

- Mon 2nd : Easter Pairs
- Mon 9th : Spring Pairs 2
- Mon 16th : League 10
- Mon 23rd : Spring Teams 4
- Mon 30th : Spring Pairs 3

Since many teams have a sit-out on the last League Monday, there will also be a multiple teams run that day for all teams who fancy a game. The Spring Pairs is a Swiss Pairs event; any pair can come along, but notice (patrick@gcba.org.uk) is helpful.

GCBA WEEKEND PROGRAMME

After the Cheltenham Congress (4th-6th May) the next event for the GCBA is the AGM and the Champions Cup. The event is on Sunday 13th May and starts at 1330; the bridge and food is free – do come.

On the 17th June we have a new special event specially for those who play in the Cleverly Teams League. It will be a multiple teams game for the majority, and will incorporate play-offs for the top teams in each regional division to determine promotion for next season. Prospective as well as all current players are welcome to come along.

BRIDGE AROUND GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Coming up in May ...

- 4-6th : the Cheltenham Congress. Entry forms are on the GCBA and CBC websites.
- 19-20th : Avon Green Point weekend, at the University of Bath.
- 26-28th : The EBU Spring Congress, Stratford.

DIRECTORS' THOUGHTS

It is surprising how consistent and uniform is the style of duplicate bridge played in clubs all across the country. Almost every session runs for 24-26 boards as either a one-winner or two-winner matchpoint pairs competition with 2-board or 3-board rounds.

There is some greater variety in the Monday night competitions run by the GCBA, but even in that context everything being done now has been done for many years already.

At least two aspects of this pattern are worthy of discussion. The first is the balance between matchpoint pairs scoring and teams scoring. The former makes every trick count while the latter puts the focus on the high scoring hands (and is the style for almost all championships). In the past scoring by IMPs was a burden for some, but with widespread computer scoring it is as simple these days as matchpointing. If you fancy a go, but are nervous, just contact ctd@gcba.org.uk for help and it will be forthcoming.

The other aspect is session length. These days a bridge session will often involve a 4-5 hour time commitment and this can be difficult to slot into busy lives; there must be many who do not participate in duplicate bridge because of this constraint – so perhaps we should be looking to have more, shorter bridge games, making it easier for some people to join in. If you want help organising such events, ask our CTD.

The March County match against Staffs & Shrops generated three good wins (17-3, 19-1 and 19-1).

GCBA RESULTS

The second session of the Spring Teams was won by Chris & Penny Healy, Patrick Shields & Bryony Youngs. The third session was won by Lesley Harrison & Ashok Kwatra, Pam Pearce & Steve Sasanow. Across the series (you get 8 points for a win) Tony Letts & Garry Watson have done best so far. Two sessions to go.

The first session of the Spring Swiss Pairs saw two undefeated pairs and the scoresheet has Ian Constable & Lesley Harrison equal with Joe & Wendy Angseesing in first place.

For some the final match of the County League was in March and the team of Joe Angseesing, Richard Butland, Richard Chamberlain, Paul Denning and Garry Watson have now won Division One. Second place won't be known until the missing match is played. Lesley Harrison's team and Wendy Angseesing's team occupy the bottom two places.

The Division Two winners will be determined when Mike Lewis' team has played their final match, to see if they can overtake Mary Jones' squad

And wider afield

In the Portland Pairs (the national Mixed Pairs) John Atthey & Claire Robinson came 7th and Pam Pearce & Ron Davis, Lesley Harrison & Ashok Kwatra both produced sessions over 54%. There were 283 pairs playing in 12 locations.

A noteworthy win came last week when Richard Chamberlain & Patrick Shields, Paul Denning & Richard Plackett beat the Mossop/Hackett team in Crockfords Cup (round 3).

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COUNTY PAIRS FINAL

This event mixed qualifiers from four distinct qualifying rounds, and the winners were Mark Rogers & Patrick Shields. Across the 36 boards they scored 5 clear bottoms (and 8 shared bottoms) one of which was ...

♠ T832	♠ QJ965	♠ A4
♥ --	♥ J872	♥ 5
♦ A7542	♦ 9	♦ KQJT863
♣ AK86	♣ 432	♣ Q97
	B 25	
	DLR N	
	VUL: EW	
	♠ K7	
	♥ AKQT9543	
	♦ --	
	♣ JT5	

East opened with 1♦ and South overcalled just 1♥. This would allow more time to uncover what partner has, but here it lost out by allowing West to make a jump cue bid of 3♥ showing shortage and good diamond support. North was sure now that game in diamonds was about to be bid, and that 5♥ was a decent sacrifice, so he bid 5♥ but East – and it's not clear why – would not be silenced and continued with 6♦. South judged correctly that if partner was weak there was little defence to this and sensibly continued with 6♥.

You might have thought that was enough bidding, but East's strong bidding induced West to keep going and he now bid 7♦. This isn't a terribly good contract (just under 50% isn't ideal for a grand slam) but everyone believed East-West to be stronger than they were, and South sacrificed in 7♥, doubled of course. This was the par contract, but as nobody else had bid so high, -800 was a complete zero!

Running Bridge in the Gloucestershire County

Your GCBA County Association advertised recently the offer of financial help to bridge clubs who had issues funding infrastructure. Two bids came forward and they have both been supported by the GCBA committee.

Gloucester Bridge Club put forward a plan to purchase a next generation dealing machine (the Dealer4 model) and the GCBA has been able to provide 20% of the cost plus a loan to cover the next 40%, to be paid back as business at the club expands,

Winchcombe Bridge Club has just changed venue and is growing and expressed a need to fund new tables and more Bridgemate devices. The county has again been able to help.

As said before, the County Association is still on the lookout for ways to help in its mission to promote bridge in the county, and your ideas on how it might help would be welcome. Anyone with useful insights will be most welcome to join the county committee. The burden will be minimal, and we need representation from those who do not play on Monday nights in Cheltenham! If you have any interest, please talk to patrick@gcba.org.uk.

Wessex Youth Bridge

The weekend of 8-9 April will see Cheltenham Bridge Club taken over by a cross-county venture in support of youth bridge. If you know anyone under 21 who might be interested, do point this out to them. The website below has the details www.bridgewebs.com/gloucestershieryouth

Best Conventions (8)

Number eight on my list of "must have" conventions is checkback after a 1N rebid. We have learned over the years how valuable it is to be able to bid Stayman over a 1N opener, and here the same principle applies. Investigating major suit fits with a 2♣ bid gives you serious extra space and that space is welcome.

In Checkback's original form, people played 2♣ (maybe 2♦ if clubs had already been bid) as an ask, with very natural responses – a minimum 1N bidder showing whatever extra length there was at the 2-level, and a better hand doing the same at the 3-level.

Today a much preferred style is to use both 2♣ and 2♦ as artificial bids, the former on any game invitational hand and the latter on any game forcing hand. This early clarification makes the bidding much more comfortable if a slam has to be investigated. Over the 2♣ bid opener always bids 2♦ and then responder makes a natural invitational bid (eg rebidding after an initial 1♥ response with 2♥ would show an invite with five hearts, pass or 2N being the game rejections).

Since a minimum with no fit will always end in 2N, to invoke checkback you need to have game invitational values at least. With a lesser hand you need a sequence which stops and the answers are (a) with hearts or spades bid 2♥ or 2♠, (b) with diamonds bid 2♣ and pass partner's 2♦, (c) with clubs bid 2N over which opener must bid 3♣ and you pass that. If you hold a natural, invitational 2N then you bid 2♣-2♦-2N to show that. Neat!