

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2020-21

April 2021

GCBA RESULTS

The GCBA Swiss Teams (series 7) looks like it will be won by Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh, B.J O'Brien, Martin Kane, Filip and Diane Kurbalija,. With one match to play, they are well clear of the chasing teams.

The 9-high Swiss Pairs (series 7) was won by John Polhill and Hugh Wilkinson. Ralph Brooks and Diana Davies were runners-up. Series 8 is now well under way with John and Hugh leading the field – can they do a double?

Easter Handicap Pairs –

1st Ken Filmore and Nick Haynes
2nd P Shields and Derek Boreham

The County Leagues have now ended – with Division 1 won by Patrick Shields, Garry Watson, Ollie Burgess and Diana Nettleton, who just pipped season long leaders Dan McIntosh's team. Division 2 was won convincingly by Mike Lewis, Malcolm Green, Nicky Ferguson, Tom Jarman and Alison Nicolson.

The GCBA Pairs League series 2 was won by Dan McIntosh and Filip Kurbalija. Ben Ritacca and Peter Waggett tied for second place alongside the threesome of Peter Shelley & Trevor Ward.

MCOL

In the Midland Counties Online League, teams have played a varying number of matches, but based upon their average VP score, Glos are leading Division 1, lie second in Division 2 and fourth in Division 3. There are still 2 matches to play in these leagues and we wish our teams every success in the remaining matches

EASY TO GO WRONG?

This was an interesting hand from a recent GCBA Swiss teams match.

♠ K43	♦ A86
♥ T9	♥ QJ8753
♦ AJT862	♦ Q7
♣ Q5	♣ 64
♠ T972	♠ A86
♥ 2	3NT by
♦ K3	South
♣ KJ9832	
♠ QJ5	
♥ AK64	
♦ 954	
♣ AT7	

You play in 3NT as South after East has opened a weak 2♥. West dutifully leads his singleton heart. At one table, declarer won the opening lead and looked no further than to set up tricks in his long suit via a double diamond finesse. East won the first diamond with the Queen and cleared the hearts. The Ace of spades was a later entry to cash the established hearts and declarer was held to 8 tricks.

At the other table, declarer saw the danger of a spade entry with East and played a spade at trick two. East won and cleared the hearts. South must now play diamonds in such a way as to keep East off lead. South leads a diamond and if West plays small, Ace and another diamond brings home the contract.

If West rises with the King of diamonds, then he is allowed to hold the trick and subsequently there is no defence. South was quite pleased with his line and was praised by the other players when it succeeded.

However, later he realised that there is a lot more to this hand than at first appears. When East wins trick two with his Ace of spades and plays a high heart, West can use the opportunity to discard his King of diamonds, thus creating an entry to his partner's winning hearts.

Hence it appears that against thinking defenders, playing diamonds at trick two is best after all. Given that the hearts are breaking 6-1 on the bidding, then losing an early trick to West will not matter as he will not have another heart to play. If declarer makes the diamond play outlined above then the defence are powerless to defeat him.

Rising with the Ace of diamonds on the first round if West plays low will probably still make the contract even when West started with both honours, as 4 diamonds, 2 spades, 2 hearts and a club will be enough. Declarer will need either the A♠ or K♣ on-side in order to reach dummy.

On the surface, it looks like declarer has time to try both, losing just 2 diamonds a spade and a club, but if West does indeed hold 2 diamond winners and the King of clubs, an early switch to a club will attack dummy's entry before the diamonds are established.

All things considered, this was a fascinating hand.

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

Let's look at something which every player struggles with from time to time, and improvers more than most – remembering what has been played.

There are techniques that can be used for remembering large data sets, such as the digits of pi, but here we shall look at some simple steps that you can use to improve your recognition of what has gone – and hence what is left.

Focus on what is most important and don't try to remember too much. Gradually build up your memory capacity. Don't try to remember every card played as most of the spot cards are irrelevant.

Keep track of trumps. You can know if there are trumps outstanding by counting them in the best way. Start by asking yourself how many trumps they started with. Have they used one to ruff? How many rounds did they follow to? If they started with 5 trumps and you draw two rounds and no-one shows out, there must be one enemy trump outstanding.

When you can always correctly count trumps, move on to other long suits.

One method you could try is to keep track of which 3 cards in a suit are high. So if trick one sees the Ace and King played, mentally promote QJT. If the ten, Knave and King are played at trick one, the AQ9 are now the high cards.

When a player shows out in a suit – that is the time to take stock. Suppose you hold AKQ opposite three small cards. On the third round, one opponent shows out. Now count the suit around the table. You started

with 6 and they had 7. One opponent only had 2 so the other started with 5. When you re-create the original distribution of the suit, it reinforces your memory of the show-out. Over time, add in the memory of what was discarded.

SOLUTION TO LAST MONTH'S TEASER

In order to score +1920, you need to play 1M-XX and make 3 over-tricks! The following layout makes this possible:

♦ 9753			
♥ 9			
♦ 98765432			
♣			
♠ AQ	♦ KJ		
♥ AQ	1♦xx by	♦ KJ	
♦ AQ	South	♦ KJ	
♣ AQT864	♣ KJ97532	♣	
	♠ T8642		
	♥ T8765432		
	♦		
	♣		

South can make 10 tricks against any defence. South sets up one of his red suits depending on how the defence starts. This problem was devised by Richard Granville when he was just 18 and I am grateful for his permission to reprint it here.

Richard will be well known to most of our more seasoned players as a prolific winner on the National scene in the 1970's, and played numerous times for GB at Junior level, as well as for England in the Camrose. He largely stopped playing Bridge in the 80's to play 'Go', and represented his country in that game also. He has returned to the bridge scene in recent years, largely partnering Graham Sadie (formerly of Gloucestershire)

UNBELIEVABLE BUT TRUE

♠ AK953	♦ T
♥ AJ5	♥ 87642
♦ A5	♦ KQJT43
♣ A54	♣ 6

♠ 2	5♦by	♠ T
♥ KQ93	South	♥ 87642
♦ 87		♦ KQJT43
♣ KQJ872		♣ 6

♠ QJ8764		
♥ T		
♦ 962		
♣ T93		

South	West	North	East
1♣	X	1♦	
1♠	4♦	5♦	
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass		

On this hand South managed to win 3 diamond tricks (without loss), even though no-one discarded a diamond and the defence was reasonable if albeit unsuccessful. West led a top club, taken in dummy. Ace and a heart ruff was followed by a trump to dummy and another heart ruff. Declarer now played a diamond to the Ace. East was Swedish International Jan Wohlin and he could see what was about to happen. When a diamond is played next from dummy, he could win and play a further diamond, but declarer would simply discard a club from the table on this trick and leave East endplayed. Wohlin had to hope that West held the ♦9. He therefore dropped the King of diamonds under the Ace and played a low diamond when the 5 was led from dummy. Unfortunately, it was South who held the nine and this duly won the trick. Declarer then led his ♦6 and discard a club from dummy. Of course, East could win this trick but would then be forced to concede a ruff and discard and with it the contract. Declining to be humiliated in this way, Wohlin allowed the ♦6 to hold. South then just conceded a club to make his contract.