

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

Feb 2023

GCBA RESULTS

Series 19 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs is now at the half-way stage. Jim Berry and Cyril Green are leading just ahead of Pauline Mussi and Hugh Wilkinson, and Neville Shorrick and Martin Moxley.

Spring Teams 2 : D1

1st Patrick Shields, Val Constable, Patrick Phair and Jim Simons.

2nd Garry Watson, Richard Butland, John Councer and Mark Rogers.

Spring Teams : D2

1st Kanwar Rahim. John Stirrup, Steven Sasanow and Nick Haynes.

2nd Mick Bird, Robert Coss, Rod Gass and Peter Jackson.

MIDLANDS COUNTIES LEAGUE

We played Leicestershire in the January round of the Midland Counties League. Our teams produced a mixed performance. The Dawes team lost 7-13, the Porter team won 17-3 and the Markham team won 12-8. Worcestershire were our February opponents and the match was played face-to-face in Cheltenham. This was the first time in the last three years that we have played a F2F county match. The Dawes team won 19-1, the Porter lost 8-12 and Markham lost 6-14. With one match remaining this season, our teams are lying first, third and second in their respective divisions.

NATIONAL TEAMS LEAGUE

The second season of this event is now underway and Division 1 now features two teams with Gloucestershire players. Good luck to all involved.

GCBA'S FIRST EVER BEGINNERS' TEACHING

Our clubs in the general North Cotswolds area do not offer teaching and have not done for some years. New members are always needed, and so this impacts their mid-to-long term sustainability. Local resident and GCBA President Ian Sidgwick felt that action was required.

Having first established that the excellent Cheltenham Bridge Club teaching team were available for hire, advertising was placed in a number of local small town / village Facebook pages, the "Nextdoor" community site and the GCBA website. Also through the more traditional routes such as word of mouth via the clubs and using the posters and leaflets that the EBU has given (for free) to all clubs and counties.

Fifteen pupils were recruited to the "Get Started in a Weekend" course, held in a village hall. Run as a charity fund raiser, it raised over £800 for local charities, exceeding our expectations. A second "Part Two" weekend has been offered in April and most have signed up. In the meantime we are running supervised practice and reinforcement sessions on Saturday afternoons for the learners.

We are fortunate in having a couple of "gentle" sessions locally to ease the route from Beginner to Club Player. Ideally every club would have a teacher but most do not. English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) runs teacher training courses ([details on their website](#)) and the fees can be zero. Volunteers needed!

JUNIOR EVENT

On the 4th March the GCBA, with support from Cheltenham Bridge Club, is running a fund raising event for the English Junior bridge teams. We have a dozen of the team coming along, and want to give as many local players as we can the chance to play against them. The event runs 1200-1800 on the Saturday and the £25 per person charge includes lunch, and afternoon refreshments.

There will be three 12-board bridge games, each supported by a discussion of the hands. There is much to learn at this and we encourage as many as are free to sign up via the entry form [on the GCBA website at this link](#). We don't often get the chance to meet the Junior team members, so do try to take advantage of this offer.

COUNTING IN DEFENCE

Many defensive problems can be solved by forming a picture of declarer's hand and acting accordingly. Try this hand for example:

♠ JT5			
♥ T72			
♦ J94			
♣ KQT3			
♠ Q73			
♥ K5	4♥ by		
♦ AK86	South		
♣ AJ64			
South	West	North	East
1♥	X	1NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

You start as West with three rounds of diamonds. Everyone follows. Declarer wins the third round with the Queen and plays Ace and Queen of Hearts, partner following twice. You win the heart lead, and the question is how to continue?

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The bidding marks declarer with ♠AK, and the play to date marks declarer with six hearts and three diamonds and hence he has four black cards. Leading the ♣A could find declarer with a void, and now the king and queen will take care of losing spades. A ruff and discard at this stage is no better (discard a spade from dummy, ruff in hand and then set up the fourth spade with a third round ruff).

The answer is to lead a low club at this point; then, you will either ultimately win a club or a spade, depending upon declarer's exact shape. A beautiful defence that most people would miss at the table, but it takes only a little thought.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Most players would admit to the following mishap. You are declaring 3NT and opponents are running their five card suit so you are going at least one down. Being depressed about your bidding, you discard poorly, mess up your entries, and your remaining eight tricks become six.

Bad news brings emotions which can distract and cause muddled thinking. More experienced players know that it is important to keep their wits when things go sour. There is no doubt that strong negative emotions obstruct our thoughts, but is there anything worse for our emotions than bad news? Maybe there is.

After the bidding goes 1NT-3NT you lead your fourth best spade from KJ9753. Dummy displays two low spades and a 12-count. Initially, you worry that you may have led into declarer's AQ, but no, partner wins the first trick with the Ace

and starts to think. Perhaps he doesn't have another spade: is he thinking of switching? Eventually he leads a second spade and you are now in charge with six running spade tricks, which you duly take, and you feel excited about getting +200. Now what?

You remember that partner's last card was the seven of diamonds, but the discard before that, and the one before that, together with what dummy and declarer played are lost in a euphoric haze. So you exit with a club, only to see declarer claim the remaining tricks as you fail to make partner's Ace of Hearts. Ecstasy is just as bad for your game and it can muddle your bidding judgment, declarer play and defensive awareness. Try this hand at pairs:

♠ QJ7		♠ 95
♥ J76	3NT by	♥ KQ43
♦ KQ73	West	♦ AT
♣ KQ3		♣ AJ964

North leads the ♠6 to South's Ace and a spade comes back, ducked by North. It looks fairly routine but perhaps you have been unlucky in getting the spade lead. Should you finesse the ten of diamonds for a possible tenth trick?

First you cash the ♣K and West discards a diamond. Suddenly your nine tricks have shrunk to eight and now you have two possible plays for a ninth – the diamond finesse or play the spades for 4-4 and lead hearts at this point. The right play depends on how you read the spade distribution.

If South returned the ♠2, they figure to be 4-4, but if a higher spade was returned, they figure to be 5-3 and the diamond finesse is the better play. The issue here is simple – either you paid attention to

the spade spots at trick two or you didn't. If you allowed the comfort of nine apparent tricks to cloud your vision, you're in trouble.

Anytime you feel yourself succumbing to any sort of emotion, whether positive or negative, then you need to fight off that emotion, stop and pay attention.

JANUARY PROBLEM

♠ A		♠ 6542
♥ AK9754	4♥ by	♥ 82
♦ 864	West	♦ AT52
♣ T72		♣ AKQ

You play in 4♥ by West on the lead of the ♦K. You can count ten tricks if the hearts are 3-2 so you win the diamond and play off the top hearts. Unfortunately, on the second heart North shows out, discarding a spade. So how do you play from here?

In a sense, the bad trump makes no difference as you still hope to make 5 trump tricks in addition to your outside winners. After the top hearts cross to dummy with a club to ruff a spade in hand and repeat the process. If South follows to three rounds of clubs, you are home provided he has at least three spades. If South show out on the last spade, he might ruff in front of you in which case you simply discard a losing diamond.

FEBRUARY PROBLEM

♠ A9		♠ KJ52
♥ AQT42	6♥ by	♥ KJ983
♦ AQ3	West	♦ 975
♣ T72		♣ A

You play in 6♥ as West on the lead of the King of Clubs. What plan gives you the greatest chance of success?