

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2020-21

November 2020

GCBA RESULTS

Series 5 of the Swiss teams is progressing. Paul Denning's team currently leads that ahead of Stefan Lindfors, but there are still a couple of rounds to be played.

Series 4 of the 9-high Swiss Pairs was won by Val & Gordon Atkinson, with Caroline Thomas and Ruth Brooks half a match behind in second place.

The GCBA on-line league Div 1 is currently headed by Dan McIntosh's team, with Patrick Shield's team in second place. In Div 2, Mike Lewis' team holds a small lead over Ashok Kwatra's ensemble.

TOLLEMACHE QUALIFIER

The EBU held this year's qualifier on-line, hosted on the RealBridge platform. Unlike BBO, RealBridge features audio/visual content, so that you can chat and see other players at your 'table'. This made the game more enjoyable for participants and until such time as face-to-face bridge is allowed to resume, is the closest to a real game that I have seen in the last 9 months. The other change this year was that the event was played across a single field with the top 8 teams qualifying for the final next February, (instead of 2 qualifiers from each of 4 groups). I am pleased to say that Gloucestershire qualified in 6th position in a strong field. The county was represented by Paul Denning, Richard Plackett, Patrick Shields, Richard Chamberlain, Alan Wearmouth, Tony Hill, Richard Butland, Garry Watson.

ANNOUNCING

It took a while but before lockdown we had all got used to a certain odd combination of alerts and announcements as the primary way in which we fulfilled our obligations of "full disclosure" during the bidding of any bridge hands.

This combination was the best compromise that could be found in the face-to-face world between the needs of disclosure and the creation of Unauthorised Information (UI) as we did so.

Online bridge, however, offers alternatives and although we started online by trying to emulate the face-to-face approach – there are better ways that we should adopt. The key difference is that the bidder can announce the meaning of a bid without any danger of giving Unauthorised Information to partner, and they can do this without having to race to announce before the LHO bids.

The process to adopt is to type something into the "Explain" box beside the word Alert, before making a bid; the best announcement is the one which saves opponents from having to ask any more questions.

Even announcing "4+" or "5+" when opening 1♥ or 1♠ will save them uncertainty and a possible question. The range of every NT bid or rebid can be captured here. The intention behind every double ("takeout" / "suggesting defending") can be documented. And bids above 3N can be announced freely.

In addition, on reviewing the hands afterwards, reading partner's announcements can often highlight misunderstandings which would not otherwise come to light. Self-announcing is a positive advantage of online bridge.

BE A TRICKY OPPONENT

This game of ours has endless fascination. See what you think of this hand as a defender in a pairs game.

				♠ 762
				♥ 87
				♦ AQJT4
				♣ A86
				4♥ by South
♠ KQJ94	♥ KT5	♦ 8	♣ K754	
South	West	North	East	
1♥	1♠	2♦	Pass	
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass	

You are West and start with a top spade. Declarer wins the Ace, takes the Ace of trumps and then overtakes the King of diamonds with dummy's Ace and continues with another top diamond, throwing a spade from hand. You ruff and can cash one spade before exiting with ...? South's hand should be an open book. The minimum he must hold for a jump rebid is surely ♠Axx♥AQJxxx♦K♣Qxx and hence you can't expect anything more than your trump trick still to come. If you play a club, South will have no option except to run it to his Queen. However, suppose instead of ruffing the second diamond with your ten, you choose to ruff in with the King and then play a club. South will surely reason that you have no more trumps so will rise with dummy's ♣A and play diamonds to throw away his remaining clubs. You of course can then ruff in and cash a club for 1 down. Yes South could have made sure of the contract by letting the club run to hand but at pairs, the lure of over-tricks will mean he is almost certain to be defeated by your devastating defensive play.

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The Ace of Trumps – Part 2

Continuing on from the last issue, we generate a further tip.

Tip (from part 1)

When partner leads an obvious singleton it is sometimes right to switch to your own singleton or doubleton before giving partner a ruff then you can get your own ruff in return.

♠ 62 ♥ K432 ♦ 2 ♣ J65432		♠ J98 ♥ T98 ♦ KQJ987 ♣ Q		♠ A43 ♥ 765 ♦ A65 ♣ K987	
		4♠ by South			
		♠ KQT75 ♥ AQJ ♦ T43 ♣ AT			
South	West	North	East		
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass		
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass		
4♠					

Once again partner leads an obviously singleton 2♦. If you win the diamond and play one back, South's heart losers will go on the good hearts. If you switch to a heart at trick 2, you establish a heart trick for partner which will go with your 2 Aces and a diamond ruff which you give when winning the Ace of trumps.

Tip

your partner leads a singleton in dummy's long suit and you have the Ace of the suit plus the Ace of Trumps, it is often right to try and build a trick in a side suit before giving partner his ruff, particularly when the bidding tells you that he can only get one ruff anyway.

♠ 94 ♥ KT43 ♦ AKQ3 ♣ KJT		♠ AQ2 ♥ AJ98 ♦ 72 ♣ 5432	
♠ 53 ♥ Q765 ♦ JT98 ♣ A76		4♠ by South	
		♠ KJT876 ♥ 2 ♦ 654 ♣ Q98	
North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Partner leads the J♦. Dummy wins and plays the 9♠ - how do you defend?

It is important to duck this trick and win the next spade lead with your Ace. Now a diamond return locks declarer on the table with no way back to his hand to draw your trump without sustaining a diamond ruff.

Tip

When dummy has a doubleton trump and you have the Ace and length and are looking for a late ruff, it is generally right to take your Ace on the second round as this may deprive declarer of a convenient way to re-enter his hand.

This offering is a little harder

♠ Q8 ♥ KJ ♦ AT987 ♣ AKJ6		♠ A2 ♥ AQ6 ♦ KQ4 ♣ T9875	
♠ 43 ♥ T9875 ♦ J632 ♣ Q2		4♠ by South	
		♠ KJT9765 ♥ 432 ♦ 5 ♣ 43	
South	West	North	East
3♠	Pass	4♠	X
Pass	Pass	XX	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Partner leads the ♥T, covered by the Knave and Your Queen wins the trick. How do you defend? Hearts represent your best chance of beating the contract, but dummy can ruff the third round. If you play Ace and another trump, declarer will make 6S, 3C and 1D. The solution is to switch to your low trump at trick 2, retaining control of the suit. Then when you win the trump Ace, you can take 2 more heart tricks to beat the contract.

Tip

When declarer needs to ruff a loser in dummy and you have the Ace of trumps, it is frequently right to under-lead your Ace, allowing you to later draw dummy's trumps whilst retaining control. This particularly applies if dummy has a doubleton trump.

A quiz - solutions next time.

Problem A ♠ 954 ♥ 7542 ♦ Q98 ♣ AQ6		♠ A6 ♥ T963 ♦ A76543 ♣ 7	
		4♠ by South	
West	North	East	South
3♣	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads ♦2. Plan the defence

Problem B ♠ KQ98 ♥ 9832 ♦ Q8 ♣ KJT		♠ 765 ♥ AJ ♦ 975432 ♣ A7	
		4♥ by South	
North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

On your ♣A lead, East plays the 6 and declarer the 8. You continue with a club to dummy's King and partners 2. How do you plan the defence from here?