

# GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2017-18

Sep 2017

## PROGRAMME

In this first month of the new season we have -

- Sep 4<sup>th</sup> : Winter Teams 1
- Sep 11<sup>th</sup> : Winter Pairs 1
- Sep 18<sup>th</sup> : League 1
- Sep 25<sup>th</sup> : Ladies/Mens Pairs

## GCBA WINTER PROGRAMME

The pattern you see above is repeated across many months. The fourth Monday is a single session event until we reach February, and the fifth Mondays in October & January are League Mondays.

The first weekend competition run by the GCBA is the Bredon Vale Cup on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Clubs can enter up to 3 teams of four. The second is the Everett Cup on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

## BRIDGE OUTSIDE GLOUCESTERSHIRE

You can also obtain a good game of bridge in various neighbouring counties in coming months; in planning ahead you might look at

- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September is the first of the two day Welsh Foursomes (Swiss Teams) being played in Newport just across the Severn Bridge.
- Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September is day one of the West-of-England Congress, now held at Weston-super-mare. [But the Sunday Swiss Teams is already full]
- Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October are the days of the "Malvern" Congress being played this year in the heart of Worcester.
- Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November is the start of the EBU Seniors Congress in Reading with two days of pairs and one day of teams.

## CONVENTION CARDS

Those who have played competitive duplicate bridge for many years are very familiar with convention cards, but for those who are coming new into this world they are something of a mystery. In order not to frighten off these new players, we need to remind ourselves of what role the CCs play.

You will not find the use of convention cards written into the Laws of Bridge; what you will find in the Laws is the requirement for "full disclosure" (ie your opponents fully understand your bidding system) and convention cards are just one of the means we use to do that.

The EBU Regulations require that every pair has two "fully completed" convention cards. This regulation aims to support full disclosure, and to do that without the hassle of asking lots of questions. Failure to have the required CCs does not stop the game proceeding, but it does increase the potential for unauthorised information from questioning, and can slow the game down.

In the context of newcomers to the game, the value of convention cards is extremely limited. If playing against newcomers, full disclosure is much better achieved by – when necessary – warning them in advance and through alerts about any bidding they might not understand.

It is important that experienced players, familiar with convention cards, do not use these to make the game less accessible to newcomers, and thereby encourage them to turn away from playing duplicate. Please be gentle!

## GCBA Results

*In the penultimate Summer Pairs session the winners were Allan Sanis & Garry Watson ahead of Joe & Wendy Angseesing. On the full count across the series, Joe & Wendy have moved well clear of the field and held that place without playing the final session, in which the winners were (NS) Ian & Val Constable, (EW) Patrick Phair & Peter Waggett.*

*In the Summer Teams session five it was a win for John Arblaster & Mel Barlow, Mary Jones & Cynthia Moore. In session six it was Tricia Gilham & Richard Harris, Mark Rogers & Peter Waggett. Across the series it is the first three named in that last team who share top place with 21 points, one point ahead of Diana Nettleton, Pam Pearce, Keith Stanley & Garry Watson.*

*Across the Monday nights, September to August, the Master Points earned are tallied. GCBA gives an average of 900 mps per session, and an average of 18 people per session collect them. The Geoffrey Paterson trophy is given to the highest achiever who has not played for the top County team in the past three years. This year it goes to Ashok Kwatra (with 1134 master-points) ahead of Peter Swales on 1013. Ashok had been placed fifth last year. A total of just over 100 different people collected master-points from Monday events, the highest total being that of Joe Angseesing.*

*In the NICKO we have one Cheltenham team now in the final, after convincing wins over a team with three Hacketts and then the Petersfield team.*

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## Slam Bidding

The difficulty of reaching an easy slam continues to astound. Here's an example from the final session of the Summer Pairs -

♠ JT873		
♥ --		
♦ A64		
♣ AQJ75		
♠ 9		♠ Q4
♥ KJT862	B 6	♥ Q943
♦ T9752	DLR E	♦ J3
♣ K	VUL: EW	♣ 96432
♠ AK652		
♥ A75		
♦ KQ8		
♣ T8		

The bidding starts with a pass from East and a 1♠ opener from South. It is a close choice now as to whether a vulnerable West bids opposite a passed partner; 3♥ is rather appealing but the majority choice was to pass.

Over to North – how do you describe this hand? It's only 12 hcp but on the losing-trick count it has 6 losers (or less if we don't allow 3 spade losers) so it is clearly better than an average opening bid (7 losers).

We need to tell partner of the support and if 4♥ showed shortage it would be a candidate but since you might make that splinter with the same high cards and a singleton heart, you really need to do more.

The value of using 2N as a forcing raise in partner's major (the Jacoby 2N) now stands out. South can then also indicate extras and you are off to the slam zone. Without a forcing raise in a major, many hands like this become very difficult to bid. It is worth adding to your armoury!

On the night only 4/10 pairs managed to bid the slam, and everybody made 13 tricks.

## Bidding Strong Hands

Just after the rules in the Blue Book changed (see last month's newsletter), this hand arose and created some controversy ...

♠ --		
♥ KJ743		
♦ --		
♣ AQJ98632		
♠ AKJ9		♠ QT854
♥ QT6	B 5	♥ 2
♦ K953	DLR: N	♦ AJ72
♣ 54	VUL: NS	♣ KT7
♠ 7632		
♥ A985		
♦ QT864		
♣ --		

The controversy was over the choice of opening bid by North. The real reason to open a "strong" bid is the fear that opening at the 1-level will get passed out. It doesn't apply here but still too many people feel compelled to open this North hand with 2♣ or 2♦.

The problem arises because these are artificial bids, and the EBU has responsibility in this country for licensing artificial bids, and its licensing insists that a bid which could have any choice of suit and is labelled strong must have either 16 HCP or 12+ HCP and at least 5 controls (A=2, K=1).

This hand does not conform, and agreeing to open 2C or 2D with it is therefore using an unlicensed convention. If this is brought to the director's attention the offending pair's score will be capped at 40%.

Two of the successful auctions reported on this hand started 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♥ and at this point North got really excited and they ended in 6♥. To be fair, East and West both seemed to have been asleep during this auction.

## World Championships

The English Ladies did well in Lyons last month, collecting the silver medal in the 2017 series. This memorable hand was the last hand of the Open Series 128-board final.

♠ 965		
♥ KQJT		
♦ T32		
♣ T62		
♠ AJ43		♠ KQT82
♥ A2	B 32	♥ 9
♦ KQJ9	DLR: W	♦ A76
♣ J95	VUL: EW	♣ AK87
♠ 7		
♥ 876543		
♦ 854		
♣ Q43		

There were only 6 tables in play at this late stage in the event, and all six tables opened a strong (15-17) 1N as West and received a transfer to spades. The fit in spades came to light and after some cue bids it fell at five of the six tables for East to bid 4N to check on aces.

After West had shown two aces, East knew there were no top cards missing there, and four of the five continued with a grand slam try – once with 5N while the others all tried 6♣.

It was over 6♣ that Andrew Robson had a 3-minute think (we have it on video and it has been timed) before emerging with a bid of 7♦. It took David Gold another five (!) minutes to pass that bid, but their 12-minute auction got them – and them alone – to the only good grand slam, and it rolled home.

After someone commented on how such esoteric sequences only arise in bidding competitions, Andrew Robson acknowledged that the hand was "a gift from the gods". He also said that "It's very rare that both players know their partner's hand before a card is played - here we both knew." Would you have known?