

Worcestershire 09-02-2025

The results were:

A Team -26 imps or 8-12 VPs
B Team +172 imps or 18-2 VPs
C Team +11 imps or 11-9 VPs
9-High -61 imps or 6-14 VPs

Well done to these pairs who had very strong results:

Tom & Ian (A)	+1.75	+56 imps
Sandra & Krys (C)	+1.64	+52 imps
Matthew & Chris (B)	+1.35	+43 imps
Mary-Ann & Christopher (B)	+1.24	+40 imps
John & Bridget (9 High)	+0.90	+29 imps

Particular congratulations to Tom & Ian, as it's much tougher to be top of the cross-imps in the A. They did it with a consistent series of plus scores without any firecrackers (except B18!)

We enjoyed a ridiculous first set by the end of which we were +50 and the B had powered to a 100 imp lead. Matthew and I were a bit down in the other sets as our oppos got much luckier (that's my story and I'm sticking to it!).

Board 1	♠ AJ98762	
Dealer N	♥ 10543	
None Vul	♦ 10	
	♣ Q	
♠ 43		♠ 10
♥ A72		♥ KQ96
♦ 753		♦ AJ84
♣ A10963		♣ J842
	♠ KQ5	
	♥ J8	
	♦ KQ962	
	♣ K75	

Most were in 4S-1, doubled 3 times. We were also 4S-X but Matthew was allowed to make it. After 2 hearts and a club, West failed to switch to a diamond.

Christopher commented:

Most norths opened 3S (one opened 4S). Eight easts doubled (one didn't). Six souths bid 4S (two didn't). Three wests doubled, one passed, and the other (me) took the wrong road by bidding 5C. 5C is our best shot at a game - only one off if I get the hearts right by playing for north to be 7411, and 4S did make three times on mis-defence, so this is a tricky decision at Teams.

Board 3	♠ KJ108	
Dealer S	♥ Q74	
EW Vul	♦ J	
	♣ K10987	
♠ 543		♠ 2
♥ AK53		♥ 9
♦ Q98742		♦ AK653
♣ —		♣ AQ5432
	♠ AQ976	
	♥ J10862	
	♦ 10	
	♣ J6	

6D is an easy make as was found by 2 A pairs (1 each). Well done Jonathan & Henry with this auction:

	Henry		Jonathan		
P	P	1C	1D		
2D*	4C*	P	5D		The splinter 4C is a big help here
P	6D	P	P		
X					

Our auction went:

Chris		Matthew	
P	1D	2C	P
2S	P	P	5D
P	5S	all pass	

East has to do much more and -100 scored very well.

At Nick & Alan's table, Nick opened a light 1S as South and Alan raised to 4. East bid 4N and now E-W are always getting to 6D, which was doubled and made.

Krys commented:

Luck plays a bigger role in Bridge than people sometimes admit. Our highest scoring board was B3. We play Lucas-type opening twos in the majors, with some fairly tight restrictions. Two of a major normally shows five in that major and a lower suit of five or more cards. The hand should be in the 5-10 point range, and it should hold just seven losers, give or take a half. I opened 2S and Sandra jumped to 4S. Luckily for us, East then chose to bid his 6-card club suit in preference to his 5-card diamond suit, or what most people would have chosen in this situation, which is 4NT to show two places to play. The resulting 5C contract proved to be a nightmare for the poor declarer going for -400 when his partner came up with a void in Clubs and his side could have been making 6D. We were lucky!

Finn commented on the bidding:

Wildest hand of the match. 6D is cold, but is it biddable? The moral of this particular hand, I think, is not to let a sub-standard point count stop you from opening at the one level if your hand is shapely enough and has good suits.

1. IF WEST OPENS 1D (nine points but a 3460 shape with two pleasing suits), you'd probably need a coach and horses to hold East back. Hard to imagine an auction that doesn't ask for aces, unless of course North-South prevent that by making a nuisance of themselves in spades.

2. IF WEST PASSES... then North should open 1C (unless you have some kind of two-level gadget available for this kind of two-suiter). Again, you don't have the points. (10 including a stiff diamond jack.) Your black suit intermediates are golden, though, and you're in third seat at favourable vulnerability opposite a passed partner. Don't give the opponents an easy ride! (When I did this, the opponents had already reached 5D by the time the auction came around to me again. The West hand had a better bid available than just blasting 5D, though, which was to splinter in clubs.)

3. IF EAST IS ALLOWED TO OPEN IN THE PROTECTIVE SEAT... do you open 1C or 1D with that hand? 1D, surely. That way, you'll be able to show your second suit even if the opponents compete aggressively in a major. South will bid Michaels, North might well blast 4S and then WEST can surely have a go at 6D. If the opponents have bid up to 4S and you have three small there, partner must have a singleton at most and you've got everything else sewn up.

Board 4	♠ 2	
Dealer W	♥ A10964	
All Vul	♦ AQ86	
	♣ K108	
♠ QJ104		♠ A985
♥ 853		♥ J2
♦ 974		♦ J102
♣ Q64		♣ AJ32
	♠ K763	
	♥ KQ7	
	♦ K53	
	♣ 975	

6 pairs stayed in part-scores but with combined 14 losers you need to be in the making game. Well done to John & Bridget in the 9 Highs who bid 4H and made 12.

Board 5
Dealer N
NS Vul

♠ 742	♠ 9	♠ A108
♥ A964	♥ Q1072	♥ K53
♦ A6	♦ K9872	♦ J1053
♣ A975	♣ KQ10	♣ 643
	♠ KQJ653	
	♥ J8	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ J82	

Sandra & Kryz played in 2S-X and Kryz made it!

Ace and another D, then when in with SA, East continued Ds enabling Kryz to throw a H loser but ruffed by W. After HA and CA the rest were declarers. The defence need to cash the 2 top Hs first.

Board 6
Dealer E
EW Vul

♠ A1032	♠ 965	♠ QJ
♥ 763	♥ Q1052	♥ AJ94
♦ K943	♦ 10	♦ J875
♣ AK	♣ Q10864	♣ J95
	♠ K874	
	♥ K8	
	♦ AQ62	
	♣ 732	

Our oppo over-reached and West played in 3N.

Matthew led a C which I returned when in with SK. After another S, declarer led a D to his 9. Matthew cashed 3 clubs, then led a H and, when the dust settled, he was 3 off.

Board 7
Dealer S
All Vul

	♠ 86	
	♥ 94	
	♦ Q1073	
	♣ QJ764	
♠ AJ109542		♠ 73
♥ K2		♥ J765
♦ 2		♦ A9864
♣ AK2		♣ 108
	♠ KQ	
	♥ AQ1083	
	♦ KJ5	
	♣ 953	

14 losers combined for E-W and 7/16 found the making 4S. Mary-Ann and Christopher bid:

1H	X	P	2D
P	3S	P	4S

Board 8
Dealer W
None Vul

	♠ Q102	
	♥ 653	
	♦ KQ1065	
	♣ K10	
♠ K9		♠ AJ53
♥ 84		♥ AQ
♦ J973		♦ 842
♣ AJ742		♣ 9863
	♠ 8764	
	♥ KJ10972	
	♦ A	
	♣ Q5	

Most were in a making H part-score or a losing 4H, but North and East at our table had eaten lots of Shredded Wheat earlier in the day.

	MC		Chris
P	P	P	1H
2N*	P	4C	P
P	4H	5C	P
P	X		

After cashing DA, encouraged, and safe in the knowledge that Matthew's 4H must include either A or Q, I next led HJ. Very silly of me; I should realise support at the 4 level only promises xx. Declarer cashed HA and then finessed CJ – whoops! DKQ and a 4th D promoted my CQ, so that was -3 for +500.

As prefaced, our oppos became less generous and a lot more fortunate after this set.

Board 9	♠ AKJ94	
Dealer N	♥ AQ10	
EW Vul	♦ AK7	
	♣ K2	
♠ Q1085		♠ 62
♥ 9752		♥ J3
♦ 864		♦ QJ92
♣ 107		♣ QJ953
	♠ 73	
	♥ K864	
	♦ 1053	
	♣ A864	

There are making slams in NT, Hs and Ss with NT the more obvious of the 3. The combined 31 count and no fit make this a pushy contract, but well done to John & Bridget who bid it and hard luck to Jonathan & Henry who had it bid against them and made on a minors squeeze against East.

Nick commented:

This was probably the most interesting (and costly) play decision. Alan (North) was a bit unlucky to get a club lead in 6N as we'd given away almost nothing in the auction and I could see his problem at T1. Indeed, I think I would probably have done exactly as he did, i.e. win on table and take a 'successful' finesse of SJ. It's a bit ironic that you can't make the contract from there. You would have had to finesse S9, then judge to overtake the (winning) H10 in order to take a 2nd finesse of the J. I can see no reason to prefer that option to the one Alan took. There would have been far more winning options if he'd taken the C lead in hand but that's largely because HJx is coming down in 2 and because West will have no Cs left if he gets in later, but there's no reason to anticipate either of those things.

Clive Owen played exactly the same way as Alan and, at his table, W made the understandable error of returning C10 when in with the 4th S when a low D was, in theory, necessary to beat the contract. Steve Allerston judged it much better at our table; leading a MUD D6, not the 8 and following that up with the 4 when Alan continued with DK. Not that it mattered now as you don't have the entries for any squeeze and must rely on Hs 3-3. Credit to Clive, though - he took his chance.

Board 11
Dealer S
None Vul

♠ K10932	♠ AJ854	♠ Q
♥ 4	♥ 3	♥ Q9876
♦ 63	♦ J1085	♦ AQ2
♣ A8743	♣ 652	♣ KJ109
	♠ 76	
	♥ AKJ1052	
	♦ K974	
	♣ Q	

I played this as South in a delicate 4D after West had shown spades and a minor. CA then switch to a small S taken with Ace. H finesse, then H ruff with West showing out and the suit 5-1.

DJ fetched the Ace from E, who tried CK ruffed in hand. Another H ruff with the 10, then D8 to my 9 and DK drawing the Q, leaving 3Hs to cash for 10 tricks.

Board 12
Dealer W
NS Vul

♠ 964	♠ J32	♠ KQ8
♥ A	♥ KQ10975	♥ J632
♦ K93	♦ 86	♦ 7542
♣ AKJ754	♣ Q6	♣ 92
	♠ A1075	
	♥ 84	
	♦ AQJ10	
	♣ 1083	

Tom & Ian reached and made 3N after N showed his Hs.

Tom received the lead of DQ then DJ won by K. CA then a S to Q-A. S cashed 2Ds before putting Tom on the table with HA. Tom now eschewed the finesse and cashed CK, making the rest. Interesting psychology – what does S lead after the Ds to tempt declarer to take the losing finesse?

Board 15
Dealer S
NS Vul

♠ 93	♠ KQJ10	♠ 8654
♥ 3	♥ A10	♥ QJ652
♦ K874	♦ Q10652	♦ J9
♣ Q98752	♣ J4	♣ A6
	♠ A72	
	♥ K9874	
	♦ A3	
	♣ K103	

Most were in 3N, going off more often than making. After 3 Cs, I decided to play the danger hand West for heart Hx or Hxx and took an immediate finesse of H10. No way of making it now.

Krys had other ideas. He decided to play E for HQJ and led up to Ace and the 10 back, covered by E, and eventually ending up with 10 tricks.

Which is the better line? Interesting question as East comes under a lot of pressure on the return of the 10. Should he duck? What if he ducks – do you rise with K or play low? Anyway, you can't argue with success!

Board 17
Dealer N
None Vul

♠ 1074	♠ AQJ98	♠ K
♥ 98642	♥ AJ10	♥ Q53
♦ 84	♦ 1032	♦ AK97
♣ J43	♣ A10	♣ Q9762
	♠ 6532	
	♥ K7	
	♦ QJ65	
	♣ K85	

In the likely 4S contract by N, after DAK and a ruff you need to drop SK. No-one found this line, including Matthew at our table.

Which D should you follow with to put East off continuing Ds? Matthew tried the 3 hoping West was placed with 10842. Against Graham & Jackie, N dropped D10 at T1 and Graham switched to a H. Declarer cashed SA to stop the possible ruff and received the good news.

Rob was favoured by a C switch at T2 and after a S finesse, East still persisted with Clubs making an easy game from there.

Board 18	♠ AQJ1094	
Dealer E	♥ 3	
NS Vul	♦ AQJ9	
	♣ Q10	
♠ K7		♠ 52
♥ AKJ54		♥ Q1062
♦ 642		♦ K53
♣ 972		♣ K864
	♠ 863	
	♥ 987	
	♦ 1087	
	♣ AJ53	

This is a hand I'd prefer to exclude from the commentary. However, it went:

	Chris		Matthew
P	P	1H	X
3H	P	P	3S
P	P!		

In a kindly and considerate way after the set, Matthew commented that I should have thought for less than 2 seconds before bidding 4S. His X then 3S must show something like an old-fashioned Acol 2S, so with an Ace and 3 trumps I was worth 4. I do agree. However, I thought for a lot longer than 2 seconds and sadly passed. My fault.

After the same auction, Abbey & Rob and the oppos of Henry & Jonathan found the 4S bid.

Fun and games at Tom & Ian's table, where it went:

P	P	1N	2S
X*	P	3H	all pass

In 3rd at green, Ian psyched a 15-17NT and, after Tom's X, North was convinced that South must have a Yarborough, so the bidding subsided with 3H going -3 for -150 and a great score.

Maybe only try this at home if you're having a good day!

Board 20
Dealer W
All Vul

	♠ A7652	
	♥ A2	
	♦ K4	
	♣ AK75	
♠ Q843		♠ KJ9
♥ KQ85		♥ 109763
♦ AQ		♦ 9532
♣ J109		♣ 2
	♠ 10	
	♥ J4	
	♦ J10876	
	♣ Q8643	

After an uncharacteristically disappointing first 16, Alan and Nick found their way to 5C tick.

	Alan		Nick	
1N	X	2D*	X	2D showed Hs
2H	P	P	3C	
P	3S	P	4C	
P	5C			

The stiff DAQ meant that 11 tricks rolled in. Well bid.

Board 22
Dealer E
EW Vul

	♠ K6543	
	♥ K974	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ J4	
♠ Q2		♠ J10987
♥ J85		♥ A
♦ A8653		♦ K72
♣ 873		♣ KQ65
	♠ A	
	♥ Q10632	
	♦ J109	
	♣ A1092	

Alan & Nick were clearly getting into gear now and reached the pushy 4H by North after E had shown S + C.

SJ led and a great finesse of H9 brought the Ace. A spade was ruffed and trumps drawn. CJ fetched Q and Ace, then a further club to East's K. When East failed to find a D continuation, Alan could discard one of his Ds on C9. Nigel also made 4S, well done.

Board 25	♠ Q97	
Dealer N	♥ Q4	
EW Vul	♦ 1097	
	♣ K7532	
♠ KJ62		♠ 10
♥ K10873		♥ J952
♦ AJ8		♦ KQ5
♣ 9		♣ J10864
	♠ A8543	
	♥ A6	
	♦ 6432	
	♣ AQ	

A pushy but making 4H was bid by Graham & Jackie and Peter & Malcolm, well done. Jackie found the 2H overcall of 1S (well positioned honours make this a good bid) and Graham was quick to bid 4H. We were allowed to play in 2S tick by South: after a C lead, SA, CQ not ruffed, S to K then another S, I just lost 2S and 3Ds.

Christopher commented:

We reached the sensible 4H after south had opened 1S. All eight norths defending heart contracts led a spade. Every south won SA, and here the ways diverged. Two played HA and another heart, which made declarer's life relatively easy. Three played CA followed by CQ, ruffed, while two switched to a diamond. After ruffing CQ, I guess you would normally enter dummy with a diamond and lead a heart to hand, putting up HK on the basis of the auction (though this was not always what happened), so these two ways converged. At the other table, however (ours), south played a *small* heart at trick 2 without any apparent thought, putting me to my longest think of the day. I felt he might have preferred HA looking at Ax, and guessed wrong...sorry partner.

Board 26
Dealer E
All Vul

♠ J10
 ♥ K108543
 ♦ AJ32
 ♣ 4

♠ Q975
 ♥ J
 ♦ K9765
 ♣ A103

♠ AK43
 ♥ AQ9
 ♦ 10
 ♣ KQ852

♠ 862
 ♥ 762
 ♦ Q84
 ♣ J976

The making 6H was found by Alan & Nick and Sandra & Krys. Well done both.

Krys commented:

I opened a natural 1C, Sandra bid 1H and E doubled to show the other two suits. I then took the opportunity to make a support redouble, which doesn't come up very often, but we find useful when it does. In this case it shows exactly three of partner's suit (hearts) and 5+ of my suit. Sandra could see then that the game looked like a good contract and jumped straight to 4H. Realising that partner must have at least 6 hearts for her bid, with my very useful holdings in the oppo suits, I pushed on to the small slam after going through Roman Keycard.

Board 28
Dealer W
NS Vul

♠ KJ5
 ♥ KJ97
 ♦ AK5
 ♣ KQ8

♠ 964
 ♥ Q52
 ♦ Q1092
 ♣ J65

♠ Q10
 ♥ 10643
 ♦ 864
 ♣ 10942

♠ A8732
 ♥ A8
 ♦ J73
 ♣ A73

I felt a tad aggrieved on this one. It went

	MC		Chris
1N	X	2D*	P
P	X	P	?

1N was 12-14 and 2D showed Ds and Hs. What could I bid? I decided to pass but we let it through for -180. Without the 2D bid showing Hs I had an easy 2H bid for +140.

Board 31	♠ J6	
Dealer S	♥ 64	
NS Vul	♦ A532	
	♣ 97654	
♠ KQ853		♠ A10
♥ 3		♥ AKQJ982
♦ 1087		♦ 96
♣ QJ83		♣ A10
	♠ 9742	
	♥ 1075	
	♦ KQJ4	
	♣ K2	

Our oppos were 1 of the 2 pairs who opted for 3N instead of the easy 4H. When Ds split 4-4 their luck was in. Grrrrrr!

Board 32	♠ AQ964	
Dealer W	♥ 104	
EW Vul	♦ AJ732	
	♣ 9	
♠ K32		♠ J1085
♥ J532		♥ Q98
♦ 1098		♦ Q4
♣ A103		♣ KQ84
	♠ 7	
	♥ AK76	
	♦ K65	
	♣ J7652	

A slightly pushy 3N is the best spot for N-S. It makes if you drop DQ but I finessed and was rescued when West inexplicably followed with HJ leaving my H7 as boss for the 9th trick. A good way to end I thought!

Finn commented:

Auction (weak 1NT and four-card majors): 1S 1C 2D 2NT 3NT. I knew we didn't have 25 points, but I was about to table two five-card suits to the ace. Anyway, the lead was the diamond 10 with AJ732 in dummy and K65 in hand. The question is whether you should finesse the jack or not.

Personally, I think the one holding LHO can't have on this auction is Q109. Q109x, yes. Leading from shortage, also yes. Leading from 1098, again a possibility (and this was LHO's actual holding). The correct diamond play, I think, is to rise with the ace and play to the king in hand. This caters for all holdings. If they're 4-1, you'll find this out. If LHO did indeed start with Q109x, you're well set to lead a third round of diamond towards table and you're still in control. And, of course, on the actual holding you'll be extremely smug.