

Gloucestershire 2025-01

A decent day for the county against very strong opponents:

A +65  
B +106  
C -100  
9 High -22

Stars of the B were Finn and Stuart with an astonishing +2.68 (85 imps!) and from the C team Sandra and Kryz with +1.38. The A pairs of Charlie & Jonathan and Nick Lee and myself also got decent scores.

Really nice to see the 9 High players getting a good taste of a competitive 32 board match. I hope they all enjoyed it and benefited from the experience.

Some of the more interesting boards below:

<b>Board 2</b>	♠ 3	
<b>Dealer E</b>	♥ 9853	
<b>NS Vul</b>	♦ QJ54	
	♣ KJ109	
♠ Q98		♠ AKJ7
♥ A10		♥ J7642
♦ A8732		♦ K96
♣ 653		♣ A
	♠ 106542	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ 10	
	♣ Q8742	

After a conventional sequence to 3N by West, Rob Procter had no clear lead as North and chose a D, which allowed West to make 10 tricks. Where the bidding was clearer a club lead took 3N -1. 4H was making where reached.

Nick Lee and I are a well-seasoned pair with 12 hands on BBO behind us, so I should have placed more faith in Nick's great description of his East hand.

1H 2D (10+ not GF)  
2S 3C  
3D 3H  
3N ?

Surely Nick has shown a 4-5-3-1 shape with the delayed 3N bid and I should bid 5D, but I tamely passed and was very fortunate when the 4-1 break also defeats this.

<b>Board 3</b>	♠ A	
<b>Dealer S</b>	♥ 864	
<b>EW Vul</b>	♦ QJ964	
	♣ K943	
♠ KJ9542		♠ 8
♥ A53		♥ KQ10972
♦ 83		♦ 75
♣ 105		♣ Q876
	♠ Q10763	
	♥ J	
	♦ AK102	
	♣ AJ2	

The A lost further ground when Jonathan / Charlie got too high in 4H X and went for 1100, although the rest of their card was very good. Nick / Alan reached the making 5D, as did Finn / Stuart and Sandra / Krys – well done.

<b>Board 6</b>	♠ 986	
<b>Dealer E</b>	♥ KJ109843	
<b>EW Vul</b>	♦ 54	
	♣ 10	
♠ AQJ105		♠ K
♥ Q2		♥ A5
♦ A83		♦ Q1076
♣ 654		♣ J98732
	♠ 7432	
	♥ 76	
	♦ KJ92	
	♣ AKQ	

Jonathan / Charlie made 3N here to pull points back. Charlie managed to end-play South with his last club, so he had to lead away from DK. Well played.

<b>Board 13</b>	♠ 87	
<b>Dealer N</b>	♥ K876432	
<b>All Vul</b>	♦ 92	
	♣ J5	
♠ A6		♠ 92
♥ J10		♥ A5
♦ Q108643		♦ AJ75
♣ 964		♣ Q10872
	♠ KQJ10543	
	♥ Q9	
	♦ K	
	♣ AK3	

Most played in 4S as did we. D6 was led to Ace and King, then East switched to a trump and 2 rounds were played to prevent the C ruff. I played 4 more rounds of trumps and East came down to HAx and CQ10xx, crucially baring in Ds. HQ was ducked and a second H won by E who was now end-played to lead away from CQ.

<b>Board 14</b>	♠ A1072	
<b>Dealer E</b>	♥ AK864	
<b>None Vul</b>	♦ Q92	
	♣ 2	
♠ K3		♠ J9864
♥ 10732		♥ J
♦ KJ54		♦ 876
♣ Q108		♣ AJ54
	♠ Q5	
	♥ Q95	
	♦ A103	
	♣ K9763	

5 pairs bid and made 4H which has CA and DK right and the 4-1 trump break manageable. Afraid we stayed in 3H but were not alone.

<b>Board 16</b>	♠ –	
<b>Dealer W</b>	♥ AQ1074	
<b>EW Vul</b>	♦ 9872	
	♣ AK98	
♠ AQ842		♠ KJ95
♥ 98		♥ J65
♦ KQ4		♦ 106
♣ 642		♣ J1053
	♠ 10763	
	♥ K32	
	♦ AJ53	
	♣ Q7	

We pulled a few imps back when Alan / Nick's oppos stayed in 3H after a 1S – 2H – 2S – 3H auction. With 5 losers there's a case for North bidding 1 more at teams.

At halfway the A were down by 10 but the B were pulling ahead, the C down a bit and it was close in the 9 Highs.

<b>Board 17</b>	♠ 109	
<b>Dealer N</b>	♥ Q7432	
<b>None Vul</b>	♦ KJ105	
	♣ 86	
♠ 763		♠ AKQ52
♥ A9		♥ 6
♦ A432		♦ Q7
♣ AKJ9		♣ Q10732
	♠ J84	
	♥ KJ1085	
	♦ 986	
	♣ 54	

In the A, oppos Dan & Patrick bid strongly to 7C, handing us with an enormous present when it proved to have no play; Nick guarding the Ds and me guarding the Hs. Making 6S / 6C were reached by Abbey / Rob, Sandra / Krys and Finn / Stuart.

In the 9 High both Patricia / Cliff and Sarah / Peter reached 6S making – well done.

Sarah and Peter bid

1S – 2D / 2S – 4N / 5H – 6S

The 5H bid showed 2 key cards + SQ (reversing the normal 5H/5S replies).

**Board 18**  
**Dealer E**  
**NS Vul**

♠ J5	♠ AK10862	♠ Q943
♥ K10986	♥ AQJ5	♥ 432
♦ A109	♦ 75	♦ J4
♣ KQ5	♣ J	♣ 10863
	♠ 7	
	♥ 7	
	♦ KQ8632	
	♣ A9742	

We reached the non-making 3N and Nick L went 2 off after a good defence with West ducking the first D, effectively killing the dummy. With dummy having a strong suit but limited entries this is nearly always the right play.

7 pairs managed to make 4S or 3N. Unfortunately, 5 were Gloucestershire, but well done to Charlie / Jonathan and Nigel / Gillian.

**Board 23**  
**Dealer S**  
**All Vul**

♠ A	♠ 109753	♠ K864
♥ J943	♥ KQ105	♥ 8
♦ J962	♦ AK4	♦ Q873
♣ 10642	♣ 8	♣ AJ75
	♠ QJ2	
	♥ A762	
	♦ 105	
	♣ KQ93	

Ours went:

1C 1S  
1N 2D  
2H 4H

The 1N rebid showed 12-14 and 2D was GF checkback.

East- West were Patrick and Dan Mac. Dan led a D to dummy's Ace. HK and A revealed the bad break and a straightforward hand became stickier. I couldn't afford to draw trumps as would be forced in Ds, so I led SJ to Dan's Ace perforce. He continued Ds to my King and I led C8 from dummy and the critical moment had arrived. Patrick chose to duck, although with AJ that rules out giving me a guess holding KJ say. Clearly rising with CA then SK and a ruff takes me off, but not obvious when you're defending.

I continued with SQ knowing that a spade ruff couldn't hurt me. After a lot of thought Patrick won and continued spades to Dan's ruff. I ruffed the D continuation, drew the last trump and could claim.

Nigel / Gillian and Peter / Malcolm also made the game as did Richard / Diane in the 9 Highs.

Diane was in 4S after opening a weak NT. She got the DJ lead and played on trumps to West's Ace. A club to Ace, then a D return allowed her 10 to win. Now she could draw trumps and can easily pick up the Hearts. West's lead of DJ was helpful to declarer, but well done in bringing this home.

<b>Board 27</b>	♠ AQ	
<b>Dealer S</b>	♥ 642	
<b>None Vul</b>	♦ 832	
	♣ J8653	
♠ J7643		♠ K5
♥ K98		♥ AJ103
♦ KJ9		♦ AQ10754
♣ 94		♣ 10
	♠ 10982	
	♥ Q75	
	♦ 6	
	♣ AKQ72	

5D was bid and made at 6 tables with Charlie / Jonathan, Peter / Malcolm and Nick / me for the county. It first looked a forlorn contract but after N turns up with stiff SAQ and S had opened 1C, I could play S for HQ and bring it home.

However, Alan points out that there's no need to risk the heart finesse:  
 After a club lead, ruff a C at T2, cross to a trump and lead a spade. N wins with SA and exits with what? A trump? Win in dummy and play a second spade. When SQ comes down you can cross to dummy as you draw the last trump and ruff a spade. Your 2 H losers go on SJ and the 5<sup>th</sup> spade, with no need to finesse hearts at all. (That is how Patrick played it against Alan & Nick and is a much better line than mine).

<b>Board 29</b>	♠ 85	
<b>Dealer N</b>	♥ KJ65	
<b>All Vul</b>	♦ KQ104	
	♣ 832	
♠ KQ2		♠ J96
♥ A97		♥ 10432
♦ 765		♦ 93
♣ AJ105		♣ 9764
	♠ A10743	
	♥ Q8	
	♦ AJ82	
	♣ KQ	

5 pairs bid and made 3N including Abbey / Rob and (of course) Finn / Stuart, who were still improving their excellent card.

At our table, we took it -1. After S showed spades and Ds, Nick found the good lead of H4 to the 9 and J. A spade went to my K and I made the obvious switch to a small C. HQ was led and I grabbed it to cash 3Cs.

<b>Board 30</b>	♠ Q97	
<b>Dealer E</b>	♥ K1086	
<b>None Vul</b>	♦ 87	
	♣ AJ62	
♠ 5		♠ AK86
♥ 542		♥ AQ3
♦ AKQJ6		♦ 5432
♣ 10984		♣ KQ
	♠ J10432	
	♥ J97	
	♦ 109	
	♣ 753	

We lost ground as Patrick / Dan found the making 6D against Nick / Alan. Sandra / Krys suffered a similar fate; bad luck for both pairs. Finn / Stuart defeated 6N after oppos reached the wrong slam. Remind me not to play to against Finn and Stuart if I can possibly help it!

<b>Board 31</b>	♠ K8		
<b>Dealer S</b>	♥ 108		
<b>NS Vul</b>	♦ Q10642		
	♣ J974		
♠ J7643		♠ Q5	
♥ KQ9		♥ J52	
♦ 7		♦ AKJ93	
♣ KQ103		♣ A82	
	♠ A1092		
	♥ A7643		
	♦ 85		
	♣ 65		

Most were in 3N with a variety of results. In the A it was made by Jonathan / Charlie and my me / Nick.

Both of us were favoured by a C lead which gave 8 tricks including 2 hearts. A finesse of DJ provided the ninth at both tables.

<b>Board 32</b>	♠ K754		
<b>Dealer W</b>	♥ QJ1094		
<b>EW Vul</b>	♦ Q3		
	♣ 97		
♠ 9632		♠ AQ	
♥ 5		♥ AK73	
♦ AK102		♦ 64	
♣ K532		♣ J10864	
	♠ J108		
	♥ 862		
	♦ J9875		
	♣ AQ		

Rob / Abbey and Martin / Amr were unlucky in oppo reaching the making 3N that was only found at 2 other tables (both by Gloucestershire in the 9 High – were there some junior pairs in their team?).