



Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Newsletter

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Editorial

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The biggest problem we have in the lack of 'new blood' entering the game, but as well as this, there are many players who do play regularly but rarely venture outside of their home club. There has been a noticeable drop recently in entries to many events both within the County and neighbouring bridge associations. If we do not support these competitions they will disappear and we will all be 'poorer' for it. So, if you have not played in anything, other than at your club this year, why not try just one event and see how much fun it can be. The Jim Davies is an excellent relaxed teams evening with short matches, or if you want to play pairs, why not try the green point event on May 18th or the Liverpool open pairs on May 29th. I can assure you that you will be welcomed with open arms by the organisers. GO ON - give it a whirl.

Distraction

by Bob Pitts

There are occasions as declarer when you can have too many high cards. Oh no I can hear you all saying - the more the better, but let me see if I can change your mind. East opens the bidding with one heart and you finish as West in the fine contract of four spades. North starts with a small trump, so how do you intend to proceed? Well it would not be unreasonable to attempt to set up the heart suit as nothing else looks very appealing. So you win the trump in dummy and take the heart finesse, which loses to the king. Not surprisingly, another trump comes back, South again following. You play a heart to the ace, which gets South's eight and you cross to the dummy whilst drawing the last trump from North to play a hopeful heart. South disappoints you by discarding a small diamond and suddenly there is no recovery, even if North has the diamond queen (he hasn't).

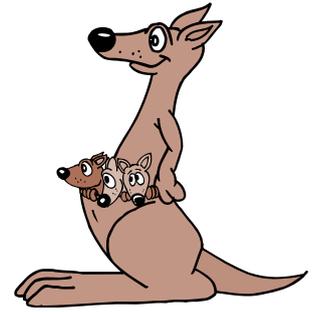
	♠ Q J 9 2		♠ A K 10 3
West	♥ A Q		♥ 10 9 7 3 2 East
	♦ K 5 3		♦ A J
	♣ 9 8 5 3		♣ 7 2

So, could you have made it? The answer is yes as long as you set up the hearts correctly. The problem was that your hearts in hand were too good. The queen is a distraction. If you can ruff two hearts in hand to set up the fifth one that will give you 4 trumps, 2 diamonds, 2 ruffs and 2 hearts including the long card in the suit. If instead you had held ace and a small heart, you would have not been able to take that failing finesse. The correct play is to win the opening lead in hand, and play the ace then queen of hearts. Assuming North continues with a trump (nothing is better), this is won in dummy and a heart ruffed in hand. A diamond to the ace permits another heart ruff and the fifth heart is established. Now the diamond king is played followed by a diamond ruff in the dummy. The last trump can now be drawn and the long heart is the game going trick.

So are you convinced now?

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke



Dealer West. EW vul.

	♠ 9 6 3		
	♥ K 10 6		
	♦ K Q 7		
	♣ 10 9 8 4		
♠ A 7		♠ 2	
♥ 9 3		♥ Q J 8 7 5	
♦ A J 10 9 2		♦ 8 5 3	
♣ Q J 7 2		♣ A K 6 5	
	♠ K Q J 10 8 5 4		
	♥ A 4 2		
	♦ 6 4		
	♣ 3		
West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	2♠	4♣	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West judged correctly that East's four club bid could not be forcing as he'd had a three spade call available to him to show a stronger hand. With clubs 4-1 and both diamond honours wrongly placed, his discreet final pass was the prudent call at the prevailing vulnerability.

West led the nine of hearts, which was clearly from a doubleton or singleton. Declarer saw that he had a fine dummy; the task before him was to keep partner happy by making the game.

The main issue was that there was an apparent loser in each suit and that the only way to avoid a heart loser was to make two tricks from the diamond combination, the ace needing to be onside. Thus declarer won the heart lead with his ace and led a diamond at trick two (although a club would have worked as well). West played low and dummy's queen won the trick.

Declarer now paused to consider the rest of the play. If East held the ace of trumps, there would be no way to prevent the defenders from making a trick in hearts. If he played a trump to the third trick and West had the ace he would win and play another heart; then when West got in with his assumed ace of trumps he could cross to the East hand with a club to cash the defence's heart trick.

So, realising that he had to cut the link between the defensive hands, declarer instead played a club at trick three. On this layout, east won with the king of clubs and exited with the queen of hearts. Declarer took this in dummy with the king and then played a trump to the king and West's ace. West now played a hopeful club, as he had no heart card left. Declarer ruffed, drew the outstanding trump and then led a diamond, taken by West with the ace. The nine of trumps remained in dummy as an entry to the diamond winner which was a parking place for South's heart loser.

Commonwealth Bridge recalled....by Bob Pitts

In the previous issue I recommended playing in the Commonwealth Games Bridge festival that is being held in Glasgow this Summer. When the first of these events took place in Manchester 12 years ago, I was fortunate to be a part of the Merseyside and Cheshire team that took part in the Manchester Challenge. This was a multiple teams event that included many local County and sponsored teams along with all of the Commonwealth teams that had failed to reach the semi-finals of the main event. We were pleased to finish fifth beating some strong teams along the way, but the best part was meeting and talking to players from so many different parts of the world. It was certainly one of the friendliest events I have ever played in.

There were a variety of systems being played; probably the most extreme being the Australians who played a strong club system, with openings of 1♦/1♥/1♠ each showing length in the next suit up. With each match being of only two boards there was not too much time to worry about our defences to such extreme things and we were soon back to opponents who played a strong no-trump and five card majors.

Regardless of your system, accurate sacrifice bidding should be an important part of your arsenal and on this deal in our match against Antigua, Dave and Jean Keen proved themselves to be the perfect teammates, actually making their sacrifice and thus covering a poor decision by yours truly at the other table.

Game All Dealer South

	♠ A K J 8 7 4	
	♥ Q 8 7	
	♦ A	
	♣ 8 5 4	
♠		♠ 9 3
♥ A 6 4 2		♥ J 10 9 5 3
♦ K J 10 5 3		♦ Q 6 4 2
♣ Q J 9 3		♣ A K
	♠ Q 10 6 5 2	
	♥ K	
	♦ 9 8 7	
	♣ 10 7 6 2	

East-West had an easy game in hearts, so competing to four spades was the correct thing to do and the opposition decided to double rather than push on to the making five hearts. The contract was played by North and not appreciating the danger of his club holding, East led a heart., which went to the king and ace. West switched to a diamond, which declarer (Dave) won. He cashed the heart queen then cross-ruffed the red suits whilst drawing trumps. When he exited with a club, West could cash his two tricks there, but was endplayed to give a ruff-and-discard for the contract.

The County Green-pointed Swiss pairs event for the John Armstrong trophy takes place on May 18th at the Merseyside Bridge Centre. This is an excellent event and it is hoped that as many members of the County as possible will support it. There is an excellent selection of food available at a very modest price (pre-booking essential). Get your entries in to Bernard Kaye as soon as possible so that you do not miss out (entry forms can be printed off from the County website).

Contacts and information

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All of the club contacts are available on the County website

Calendar

All events here are correct at time of publishing but you are advised to take the precaution of checking with the organisers in all cases.

April

13th	Merseyside B.C. Charity Pairs	MBC
27th	Preece Rosebowl (County Ladies pairs)	BBC

May

1st	MBL pairs event	MBC
5th	May Day Swiss pairs	MBC
15th	Andrew Rosebowl (County Mixed pairs)	LBC
18th	Green-pointed Swiss pairs	MBC
29th	Liverpool Open pairs	LBC

June

5th	Liverpool Open teams	LBC
6th	Worldwide simultaneous pairs	MBC & BBC
12th	Jim Davies Swiss Teams	Heswall BC
24th	Bill Hughes simultaneous pairs	Deva BC

Playing like 'Deep'

by Matt Foster

A long, long time ago (no singing please) when I started to learn this game my grandfather gave me a book by Terence Reese called "Play these hands with Me" - or at least something like that. It was highly instructive and at the risk of incurring the wrath of lots of people I shall adopt that style.

Sitting North in the final of my club pairs event I hold ♠ Q 8 7 6 ♥ K 9 5 4 2 ♦ 9 ♣ 10 9 7. Everybody is vulnerable and East is the dealer.

East opens with a weak no-trump and partner doubles. This shows an opening hand (in theory) with spades and another. West, known for his imaginative actions, bids three diamonds. Well, I have 4 trumps and what appears to be a useful singleton. I'm sure partner will tell me what double means, but happily that's not a problem I face. I do the obvious thing and bid three spades. Opener passes, partner goes four spades and everyone passes.

I hope he knows what he's doing. The diamond ace is led and dummy hits with:

♠ A J 10 2 ♥ A Q ♦ J 6 3 ♣ K Q 6 2

Only eight trumps, that's a shame - but the pips are good. I suppose partner has his bid.

Anyway, it continues with another diamond to the ten, and I ruff (the two is missing). Seems like West has K Q 10 to some number of diamonds. Well a cross ruff doesn't look very likely, so I suppose we'd better try and draw trumps. I play a spade to the jack, and it holds (we knew it would if we think about it), with West contributing the nine.

Time to think, I'm going to take this at face value, though this West is quite capable of false carding here (if you hold 9 x of trumps, you will be surprised how many good results you can get by dropping the nine on the first round). I cash two rounds of hearts, and the jack appears from East. Does he only have 5 red cards? Interesting, still I must make the tricks I can, so I play dummy's last diamond ruffing with the seven (by this point astute readers will have noticed I was missing K 9 5 4 3 of trumps), and East produces the diamond two. Had it been over ruffed, that would be game over as I would now have the trump entries to lead towards the club honours twice.

Surely this is double dummy now, but wait - who has the club jack? I'm fairly certain West has a doubleton club. Worse still, the club eight is missing. I may have to guess, but nothing is lost by leading the ten of clubs and happy days, East (incorrectly) contributes the jack (West actually petered with the eight at this point, but we won't mention this to protect the 'innocent'). I win and there are lots of ways to get home now. A trump off the board seems the most stylish approach so that's what I do. Deep Finesse confirms that 10 tricks are always there but for once I was fortunate enough to be able to play the hand with the same knowledge that 'Deep' has with a reasonable degree of confidence.