



Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

County Newsletter

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Editorial

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
County Selection by John Hampson	1
Hand from Down Under by Tim Bourke	2
Flat board by Alan Stephenson	3
Llangollen Teams by Bob Pitts	4
Calendar	4

If you played in the Llangollen Swiss teams you will have found yourself using the new WBF victory point scales. There has been a lot of controversy over their introduction and many people in the game think they are an unnecessary complication to scoring. The idea was introduced with the credo that every imp should count but there is still a limit to the size of your vp win and in short Swiss matches you might not see the value of that. Those in favour feel that the new scale is more fair and gives greater relative reward for winning a match, even if by only one imp. If you have an opinion on this contentious change I would be pleased to hear from you and if you wish I can help to add your views to the international debate.

County Selection

by John Hampson (Chair of Selectors)

At last June's AGM there was a general request from the chair for a more open approach from the selectors in choosing the teams in general but particularly for the two prestigious County events i.e. the Presidents Cup and the Tollemache Trophy.

With this in mind the following are some guidelines that any players wishing to be considered for the above should take into consideration for the coming season.

Firstly we are looking for established pairs who have good results in major team competitions (wins in national knockouts and top five finishes in open teams). No results from quality pairs competitions will be ignored but we are selecting for teams events and so greater emphasis will be placed accordingly.

Last year we had great difficulty in raising an A team for the Northern Bridge League. Obviously we don't expect players to be available for all the rounds, as work, holidays and other commitments tend to get in the way. However it is reasonable to expect serious County players to be prepared to turn out for at least two these NBL rounds. In addition the Presidents Cup, an event in which we have had some success over the years, is a great opportunity for players with Tollemache aspirations to turn in some good results in the middle of the Summer. So please do try to make yourselves available for this event.

The County trials are really a bit of a misnomer. The idea has always been simply a competition to give all players an opportunity to let the selectors know that they are interested in playing for the County. It has never been the intention that those at the top of the final list will be the County A team. Nevertheless it provides useful information to the selectors to see how various pairs do against each other and the selectors are grateful to those who participate.

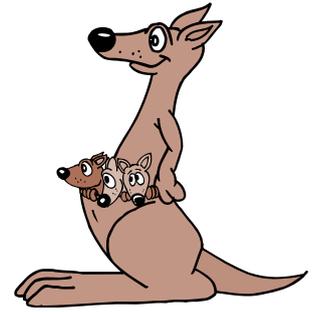
I would stress again that we are looking at established pairs, particularly for the Tollemache event. This does not mean that if we have two ranked players who have only played infrequently together that they will be overlooked, it is simply a matter of priority. Ranked players who wish to try new partnerships will be very welcome for selection for NBL matches.

We have no pre-selections, although it would be foolish for us to overlook experience and past performance. We are completely open minded and are always looking for new blood to represent the County. So if you are interested, make yourselves available for the NBL and other good team events, put in some good results and come next November you might well find yourselves playing in Northampton (the Tollemache qualifier venue).

All interested players that we are aware of will be emailed within the next month so please take a moment to respond with your availability/interest, and if you want to be considered but do not receive an email, then please contact me to let me know that you wish to be considered for County selection.

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke



Dealer North. EW vul.

♠ K 10 7
♥ A K J 10 3
♦ 7 4 2
♣ Q 2

♠ Q 4 2
♥ 9 5
♦ A K Q 8
♣ 10 6 4 3

♠ 8
♥ Q 7 2
♦ 10 9 6 3
♣ J 9 8 7 5

♠ A J 9 6 5 3
♥ 8 6 4
♦ J 5
♣ A K

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

One of Australian international Bobby Richman's aphorisms was, "More points are lost by not raising partner's major suit on three-card support than by any other action." Here the raise to two spades is the best rebid on the North cards. South could have used a two-notrump rebid to enquire whether the raise was on three- or four-card support but that wrinkle was unnecessary here.

West began the defence with his three top diamonds. Declarer ruffed and cashed the two top trumps, reducing his chances of landing the game to the heart finesse. When it failed the unlucky result was a one-trick set.

"You should have taken two rounds of clubs before touching trumps," said an ever-unsympathetic dummy. "Then, after playing the ace of trumps you lead a second trump towards dummy and when West follows low, you should finesse dummy's jack of trumps. As the cards lie, East would show out and you would have ten tricks.

"Suppose instead that east was able to win with the trump queen, having started with a doubleton in the suit; he would have been end-played and would either have had to return a heart into dummy's tenace or to concede a ruff-and-discard on a minor suit exit."

"Furthermore, suppose West shows out on the second round of trumps. You would then rise with with dummy's king and cash a top heart before throwing East on lead with the third round of trumps. Then after ruffing the minor-suit return, you would take the heart finesse."

Flat board.....by Alan Stephenson

This interesting board appeared in an early match of the Swiss teams at this year's Chester Congress.

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

As East you get to play six hearts on the lead of the four of spades at one table (playing 3rd & 5th leads) and the spade three where North/South were leading 4th highest. Naturally the spade king is headed by the ace and a small trump comes back. Before you plan the play let's review the bidding at both tables:

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>		<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
2♠	Pass	3♣	Double		2♦	Pass	2♥*	Double
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♥		2♠	3♥	Pass	4NT
					Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥

N/S were playing weak two's.

After North's multi opener, South's two heart bid was a neutral relay. West doubled to show hearts and the response to 4NT showed one key card.

Now back to the play. After the trump return, you draw a second round of the suit to find they have split 2-2. You then play three rounds of diamonds and North follows with the three, four and ten as you ruff in hand, with South playing the six, seven and queen. You ruff a spade to dummy and play another round of hearts with both North and South discarding spades. It is decision time. You play the club jack from dummy, North follows with the three and you play the king, whilst South plays the two. When you lead a further club South follows with the five. So do you play the ace or the ten from dummy?

Both declarers played the ace and went down for a flat board and a missed opportunity. In discussing the hand afterwards we came to the conclusion that declarer should probably get it right by applying the principle of vacant spaces. You know North is likely to have six spades and is known to have two hearts, three or four diamonds so one or two clubs. A similar count on South suggests four spades, two hearts, four or five diamonds and so two or three clubs. Thus North has two vacant spaces to South's three when they follow to the second round of clubs, which makes the finesse better odds than playing for the drop. It is close and the respective East's cannot be criticised too much. What do you think?

The Congress had 36 pairs on Saturday and 17 entries for the Swiss teams on Sunday, so the Congress was a virtual sell-out. The pairs was won by Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield with Pauline Lang and Rod Franks winners of the consolation event. The Swiss teams was won by Duncan and Diane Ault, John and Cathy Ashworth who were a full match clear of Tracy Capal, Marilyn Malinowska, Dan Crofts and Gary Hyett (Ed)

Since the excellent idea was introduced in 2002 by players from the Manchester area, there has been a bridge event run in conjunction with each of the Commonwealth Games. The Games are in Glasgow this time and as part of the Championships there is an Open Transnational Swiss Teams and an Open Pairs. If you are interested in participating the website for information is www.commonwealthbridgescotland.com/. If you decide to participate it will be a wonderful experience you will never forget.

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

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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.

February

16th Jean Keen trophy (Women's' teams) MBC

March

8th Manchester GP pairs

9th Eric Howarth trophy (GP teams) Deva BC

April

7th -11th BGB simultaneous pairs (at MBC & BBC on 9th)

13th Merseyside B.C. Charity Pairs MBC

27th Preece Rosebowl BBC

May

5th May Day Swiss pairs MBC

15th Andrew Rosebowl LBC

18th Green-pointed Swiss pairs MBC

29th Liverpool Open pairs LBC

Llangollen Teams 2013

by Bob Pitts

One of the delights of our sport is that even the most inexperienced of us can play in events against top-class players, and hopefully improve our game as a consequence. There was certainly a broad spread of experience at the Llangollen Swiss teams with international players rubbing shoulders with local club players. My partner and I spoke to a couple from our local club in Wrexham and despite their poor results they were enjoying themselves and expressed an intention to enter again in 2014.

In a weekend full of interesting deals, this one caught my eye.

Dealer South Love All

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

West usually became declarer in four spades after South had opened one club or a Precision style two clubs. It was normal for North to start with the club ace and on seeing dummy, switch to a diamond, South continuing the suit. After winning trick three, West got a shock upon cashing the trump ace, but this just provided an opportunity for a trump endplay if North had the correct shape. At trick five a heart was led to dummy and the top three hearts were cashed, declarer discarding a couple of clubs. Now a heart ruff in hand, followed by a club ruff in dummy. West could ruff dummy's final heart whilst poor North had to follow suit. Declarer was down to just K J 9 of trumps and could exit with the jack or nine to endplay North into conceding the last two tricks. It seems to take an initial diamond lead to mess up the timing for the endplay.