

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2015-16

July 2016

Programme

And this month we have -

- Mon 4th : Summer Teams 3
- Mon 11th : Swiss Pairs 3
- Mon 18th : Summer Teams 4
- Mon 25th : Summer Pairs and EBU Simultaneous Pairs

Other dates for your diary

- Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th July are the joint GCBA – Herefordshire Green Point Swiss Pairs and Teams, at Ross on Wye. The format is ideal for a mixed standard of players and the location and arrangements have worked well now for many years. Entry forms can be found on www.gcba.org.uk and there are still vacancies on both days.

GCBA MONDAYS SUMMER COMPETITIONS

For both the pairs events and the teams events (all the Mondays in June through August) you just need to turn up as a pair. It would help if ctd@gcba.org.uk knew of any new pairs coming to the Swiss Pairs on the second Mondays. You can play any of these competition series with as many different partners as you like.

GCBA MONDAY PROGRAMME

Preparations are underway planning the programme for the season starting in September. If you have any ideas to input, please send them to ctd@gcba.org.uk as soon as you can.

Invoking the Rules

There is often discussion about sportsmanship in bridge, and whether or not it is right to allow an opponent to correct a mistake, such as a revoke.

The Laws themselves are quite explicit – Law 72A says that “Duplicate bridge tournaments should be played in strict accordance with the Laws” and in Law 10 it states that “Players do not have the right to determine (waive) rectifications on their own initiative.”

There is however a sympathetic audience for allowing a simple error to be corrected. Difficulties can arise when this is not uniformly applied, and since it is unenforceable, we find uniform application is rare.

We should think of a mistake such as failing to follow suit when one can, as being as silly as forgetting to draw the last trump and then seeing your winner ruffed. We would never consider offering the trick back to declarer in the latter circumstances – so why should we treat other forms of mistake differently?

We have discussed this in GCBA County Team match preparations and have decided that the only sensible and consistent approach is to always follow the letter of the Law, ie to enforce the rules.

There are times when this can create some ill-feeling, but the non-uniform application of leniency creates at least as many problems and – under the Laws of the game – cannot be defended.

It is unfortunate that the positive label of “sportsmanship” is too often given to applying the Laws of Bridge casually. Applying the Laws must never be considered unsportsmanlike.

GCBA Results

After two rounds of the Summer Teams, a large number of people have scored points by coming in the top 8 pairs (on Butler Imps scoring) and the leaders are currently Paul Lilley & Mike Wignall on 13, followed by Tony Letts & Roger Schofield on 12 and then Jim Simons on 11 points. Winners on the four sessions to come will each score 8 points, so there is lots of scope for others to catch up.

The second session took place of the Summer Swiss Pairs; nobody has managed 6 wins yet but Ashok Kwatra & John Skjonnemand, having come in only on session two, are the one undefeated pair. The overall leaders are Mark Rogers & Peter Waggett by 2 VPs from Tricia Gilham & Richard Harris with the third pair 2 VPs back and the fourth 1 VP behind that.

We have had one session of Summer Pairs at which the winners were Norah Allen & Suzanne Griffin followed by Ian & Val Constable.

External Results

In the EBU Interclub Knock Out the remaining Cheltenham team beat Exeter, and play West-of-England in the round of 16 teams.

In the Gold Cup both teams with Cheltenham players have been beaten, but there is always next year's competition which is just about to start. In that there are Cheltenham players in the teams seeded eleventh (Chamberlain & Denning & Shields) & fourteenth (Butland).

The Midlands Counties Bowl was won in Solihull by the GCBA team of two Angseesings and two Constables. Well done!

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Summer Swiss Pairs

This hand from the June session proved a disaster for almost all the pairs concerned.

♠ 83		
♥ T9		
♦ KQJ9864		
♣ T5		
♠ J642		♠ QT7
♥ Q732	B 18	♥ A84
♦ 73	DLR: E	♦ T52
♣ KQ4	VUL: ALL	♣ J963
	♠ AK95	
	♥ KJ65	
	♦ A	
	♣ A872	

East-West kept quiet on this hand, and North-South were able to bid 1♣-1♦-2♥-3♦-3N for which none of the players could be faulted.

From North's perspective partner might have Ax of diamonds and since it is a pairs competition it has to be 3N. From South's perspective there was no viable trump suit but stoppers everywhere and a decent number of points.

Only one pair – Paul Archer & Sarah Watson got to 5♦ and they scored +600 while everyone else went minus. Spade leads and hearts leads from West were equally common against 3NT and the sight of declarer squirming made the the blockage in the diamond suit evident.

Declarer only has 6 tricks but two declarers managed 8 tricks, three managed 7 and only three were held to down three.

The best option for avoiding 3N seems to be an auction that starts 1♣-3♦ (if that is played as a constructive pre-empt). South on this auction should recognise that the North hand cannot have running diamonds and an entry, and that makes bidding 5♦ seems more attractive than 3N.

LEAD PROBLEMS

While bidding remains the single biggest influence on one's results, the opening lead has a large part to play too. Occasionally the choice defines success or failure for the contract, but good choices on a regular basis will make declarer work a lot harder, and when given the chance declarers will often stumble. Try these two recent examples

Q1 : NICKO match vs Exeter :
♠ AQ8 ♥ JT863 ♦ KJ7 ♣ J6
You are in second seat and on lead after 1C-1H-X-P-3N-end.

Q2 : WALES vs FRANCE :
♠ K84 ♥ 532 ♦ K84 ♣ KQ96
You are on lead against 1D-P-1N-end.

On the first hand there are two points to note. Firstly that partner did not support hearts, and secondly that declarer is likely to have long running clubs on this auction. Clearly attack is needed and if declarer has a weakness it is surely in spades (the suit promised by dummy). So the ♠A is the best lead and when you do that and see the king in dummy and continue the suit, you will have five tricks for the defence.

On the second hand it is quite the opposite. The only suit declarer is likely to have is clubs, which are lying well for you. Partner's failure to overcall means there isn't a 5-card major with partner, so attacking isn't going to work. It is important therefore not to give away any tricks and the winning lead is a heart from the 532. A spade looks more attacking but is into declarer's queen-ten-nine and gives declarer three tricks in a suit where a poor guess might have limited them to one. In the event, there were 35 leads of hearts vs 13 leads of spades.

European Teams

England (and the other home countries) are just back from the 53rd European Bridge Teams Championship, which took place in Budapest. The English Women's team did excellently, collecting the Gold Medal on the last board. The English Open team not so, but they had good fortune on this ..

	♠ K65	
	♥ K	
	♦ QJ74	
	♣ QJ642	
♠ 32		♠ T
♥ AJT97642		♥ Q
♦ 9		♦ AK86532
♣ 93		♣ A875
	♠ AQJ9874	
	♥ 853	
	♦ T	
	♣ KT	

West dealt and usually opened 4♥, and when it was 3♥ then East raised it to game. Naturally South tried 4♠ and it went back round to Tony Forrester sitting East. He didn't want to defend, and he knew either 5♦ or 5♥ would be better, so he bid 4N wanting to suggest two places to play.

Andrew Robson got that message but thought one of the places was no-trumps, and he passed. Hurdle number one was overcome when the Austrian LHO led the ♣K, and the second hurdle was overcome when the only workable heart distribution – singleton king – turned up, and Tony collected +660 for a result unique across the 82 tables in play.

In the England Women's match the board was flat in +990 when both Souths played 4♠x+1, while in the Welsh Seniors match it was flat with -850 when both Wests played in 5♥x making. There was only one other match where the board was flat – there both declarers contrived to go off in 4♠x.

Even the best of bridge players often find the hands difficult!