

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2016-17

June 2017

PROGRAMME

This month we have -

- Jun 5th : Summer Teams
- Jun 12th : Summer Pairs
- Jun 19th : Summer Teams
- Jun 26th : Summer Pairs

For the Summer Teams, you need to turn up as a foursome. Efforts are being made to arrange a stand-by pair, but with no success yet.

BRIDGE IN JUNE

In Italy (Montecatini) for two weeks in June there is the European Open (teams and pairs). Richard Chamberlain & Patrick Shields will be playing the Seniors Teams and the Seniors Pairs, while Paul Denning (with three from Wales) will be playing in the Open Teams.

All through the period, there will be the chance to watch top players using the BBO (bridgebase.com) facilities. You don't even need to have an account on BBO to watch, and you can come in through a browser on a PC, or with the Bridgebase applet on a smart phone or a tablet. Bridge will take place roughly 1000-2000 hrs each day from 10th June through to the 24th June.

BRIDGE OUTSIDE GLOUCESTERSHIRE

You can also obtain a good game of bridge in various neighbouring counties in coming months; in planning ahead you might look at

- 10-11 June has the Oxfordshire Congress taking place in Woodstock.
- 22-23 July is the Green Point Swiss weekend at Ross-on-Wye, run jointly by GCBA and HCBA.

The NICKO

The NICKO is the EBU's National Inter-Club Knock Out and it was started in 1989; the earliest record of the Cheltenham team is in 1995 when Graham Cornell, Paul Denning, Diana Nettleton, Derek Rue, Patrick Shields and Keith Stanley reached the national final, but lost to Southampton. In 2007 a similar team lost the final to Manchester. The one success we have had is when the Cheltenham team (Richard Butland, Richard Chamberlain, Paul Denning, Derek Rue, Patrick Shields and Keith Stanley) got knocked out in the first round but went on to win the NICKO Plate in 1999. Garry Watson has won the NICKO five times, playing for Coventry Bridge Club.

About 300 teams enter from across England, and Cheltenham often has more than five. In the past, other Gloucestershire clubs have put forward teams also. Matches are mostly 24 boards and arranged to suit the teams; entries usually close in September. You should consider forming a team.

In this year's competition the County has two teams in the last sixteen : the team of Joe Angseesing & Roger Jackson, Tony Hill & Alan Wearmouth have to play a Manchester team. The team of Richard Butland & Paul Denning, Richard Chamberlain & Patrick Shields have to play Janet de Botton's TGR team. Two other clubs (Manchester and Welwyn Garden City) also have two teams in the last sixteen.

GCBA Results

In the third and fourth sessions of the Spring (Swiss) Pairs we had exactly 8 tables and then 7 tables. In the absence of the erstwhile leaders, the next pair – Roy Collard & Val Constable – held on to the lead they had over the field to win by just 4 VPs, ahead of John Councer & Mark Rogers.

The final session of the Spring Teams was won by John Atthey & Paul Denning, Martin McWilliams & Toby Roberts, ahead of Patrick Shields and three from Bristol. Over the four sessions (8 points for a win, down in twos) we have top with 18 points the team of Hill & Wearmouth, Rogers & Waggett followed by the winners of this last session equal with the Constables' team on 16. Patrick Shields played in three different teams and collected 20 points, but that doesn't count!

The AGM Pairs had 20 pairs playing and the winners were Malcolm Green & Mike Lewis ahead of Peter Swales & Anne Swannell. The event was stratified and section prizes also went to Megan Davis & Jean Whiting, and to Andrew Bull & James Hastie.

In the Swiss Teams at the new Avon County Green Point weekend, the top team of 50 (winning with a match to spare) was Joe & Wendy Angseesing and Tony Hill (with Martin Garvey).

Did you know that the internet shows us that the GCBA is also

- Greater Cleveland Boating Association
- Georgia Children's Book Award
- Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
- Greater China Business Association and many more

Contributions welcome - to Patrick Shields, editor@gcba.org.uk
Check out the GCBA web site at www.gcba.org.uk

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GCBA Squad

Once a month the GCBA runs a practice session for the top end of the county team, involving 18 boards of play and then a discussion. This hand proved troublesome last time ...

♠ T865		
♥ KQJ8		
♦ 65		
♣ QT6		
♠ KQ7		♠ J942
♥ A2	B 8	♥ 964
♦ AKQ7	DLR W	♦ 98
♣ AKJ7	VUL:none	♣ 8543
♠ A3		
♥ T753		
♦ JT432		
♣ 92		

The West hand is stronger than we are used to, but as long as you can show it to partner you will end in 3N and the play becomes the issue, on the ♥K lead.

First step is for declarer to count tricks, and there are six on top, with more possible from spades and from clubs (and just occasionally from diamonds). which to tackle first? It might be right to try two top diamond first, but when nothing useful happens one should play spades before clubs as (a) club doesn't generate enough tricks, and (b) playing clubs might generate an extra winner for the defence.

South might hold up once but still has to win the ♠A early. If the defence now cash hearts (is that best?) declarer knows that the ♦7 and ♣7 can be spared, and so has two easy discards. When the lead is regained, and declarer cashes the last diamond, North is stuck – as a discard of either black suit gives declarer the ninth trick in that suit. So you expect everyone to make, but the result of 3N= was only found at three of the six tables. We will keep practising! I hope you got it right.

Crockfords R4

This hand offered declarer a dilemma in a recent Crockfords match ..

♠ AJ97		
♥ QJ		
♦ KJ3		
♣ AT94		
♠ 8542	B 29	♠ T6
♥ A83	DLR : N	♥ T97652
♦ 96	VUL: all	♦ Q742
♣ KQ32		♣ 6
♠ KQ3		
♥ K4		
♦ AT85		
♣ J875		

The bidding at both tables was 1N(strong)-P-3N-end and the lead was a heart, West ducking at both tables. Declarer won this and now had eight top tricks.

The heart suit was wide open, and this worried declarer (but that fact wasn't so clear to the defence yet). There are eight top tricks, and the ninth will have to come from diamonds as there isn't time to lose a club trick to set one up there.

Three lines are possible : one is to make an immediate diamond choice and hope if it fails that the opponents don't continue hearts. A second is to cash the spades and hope then to judge better what to do, And the third is to exit in hearts letting them cash four tricks and giving you a squeeze / diamond-guess position at the end.

Both declarers chose the early diamond play, hoping for a defensive error and they both lost to the queen and the defence cashed out. ☹️ Cashing the spades first would have seen East discard a heart and a diamond. Would this help you get the diamonds right? You might exit in hearts now (safely) and try to judge the end position. That would be my favourite.

Spring Fours

The team with three county players plus Filip Kurbalija from Cardiff did respectably in this (EBU's strongest) competition, reaching the last 12 before losing their second life A big gain came on this when we played against a team consisting of a sponsor and three bridge professionals.

♠ J32		
♥ T982		
♦ AQJ62		
♣ 5		
♠ Q		♠ AK9765
♥ AKQ7654	B 21	♥ J
♦ 7	DLR :N	♦ KT
♣ AT84	VUL:ns	♣ K962
♠ T84		
♥ 3		
♦ 98543		
♣ QJ73		

The bidding started (East-West only) with 1♠-2♥-2♠ and now West made the key decision to emphasise the heart suit at the expense of the clubs. Since the system in use was 2/1-GF, the 2♥ bid had committed the side to game and he could comfortably bid 3♥. Without 2♥ being a game force, it would have been a jump shift on the first round, or 3♣ at this point – neither of which is as comfortable.

The East hand is looking respectable now. The heart support is limited but it is an honour (often better than two small) and the rest of the hand is AK-K-K. So East perked up with a 4♣ cue bid and now West was off to the races. Ace-asking confirmed one loser, so he settled for 6♥ (making).

In the other room, the scientific Bulgarians had a strong-club relay auction to discover they had a 4-4 club fit and good values, and they settled in 6♣. The defence to this was straightforward and our team gained 14 imps in a match in which they won all four stanzas.