

Arab Bridge League

ABL Online Mixed Teams

17- 31 January 2021



Bulletin 4

Thursday 21th January

Editor Ron Tacchi

Over Half-way in The Round Robin

On the third day, in Group A **WASO**, **EGYJOR** and **NINE** were the winners, all with respectable scores. EGYJOR maintained first position in the standings with WASO now taking second. In Group B it was **Diamond**, **Cedars 2** and **Queens** who were successful, again with decent scores. Queens and Diamonds flipped first and second position in the table and are close to twenty points (a full match) ahead of the chasing pack.

At the end of the bulletin I have written a study on one of the hands played yesterday, this was as a result of a comment from one of the players. If you have any comments about any of the hands please feel free to get in touch and I can discuss them in the bulletin.

Results Round Robin 3 Group A

| Team | Team | IMPs | VPs | VPs |
|---------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Al-Yassamen | WASO | 13-34 | 4.81 | 15.19 |
| EGYJOR | LIONS | 38-4 | 17.31 | 2.69 |
| Sharjah Club | NINE | 35-58 | 4.44 | 15.56 |

| Group A | Al Yass | EGY-JOR | Lions | Nine | Shar-jah | WASO | Rk | VPs |
|--------------|---------|---------|-------|-------|----------|-------|----|-------|
| EGYJOR | 10 | | 17.31 | | 14.18 | | 1 | 41.49 |
| WASO | 15.19 | | 9.39 | 12.29 | | | 2 | 36.87 |
| Nine | 7.97 | | | | 15.56 | 7.71 | 3 | 31.24 |
| Al-Yassamen | | 10 | | 12.03 | | 4.81 | 4 | 26.84 |
| Sharjah Club | | 5.82 | 15.38 | 4.44 | | | 5 | 25.64 |
| Lions | | 2.69 | | | 4.62 | 10.61 | 6 | 17.92 |

Results Round Robin 3 Group B

| Team | Team | IMPs | VPs | VPs |
|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| DIAMOND | PEPSI | 33-10 | 15.56 | 4.44 |
| FRIENDS | CEDARS 2 | 21-42 | 4.81 | 15.19 |
| QUEENS | TRUMPS | 64-19 | 18.66 | 1.34 |

| Group B | Cedars 2 | Dia-mond | Fri-ends | Pepsi | Queen | Trump | Rk | VPs |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|
| Queens | 12.29 | | 19.34 | | | 18.66 | 1 | 50.29 |
| Diamond | | | 14.6 | 15.56 | | 17.97 | 2 | 48.13 |
| Cedars 2 | | | 15.19 | 6.96 | 7.71 | | 3 | 29.86 |
| Pepsi | 13.04 | 4.44 | | | | 10.31 | 4 | 27.79 |
| TRUMPS | | 2.03 | | 9.69 | 1.34 | | 5 | 13.06 |
| Friends | 4.81 | 5.4 | | | 0.66 | | 6 | 10.87 |

All information can be found on the website:

www.bridgewebs.com/ablonline/





Information for Captains

Alert

All alertable bids must be pre-alerted (press the alert button before making the bid). Giving an explanation is not compulsory unless it is an extra-ordinary bid.

For example if you are playing forcing NT over major openings (which is very common) alerting should be sufficient (if needed opponents can ask for explanation) , but if you are playing 1NT transfer to X, only alerting is not enough. You have to type the explanation before making the bid. We strongly recommend you try to help opponents giving sometimes the simplest of information.

For example, if you are opening 1♣ with 2+. At least the first time you do it, just type “2+” in the explanation box when you make the bid. Only alert your own bids, do not even attempt to explain your partner’s bids. Alert explanation space is limited on BBO, if opponents ask for further clarification using private chat respond privately, not on table chat. (Of course, unless opponents asked on table chat), If you are playing an unusual system make sure you pre-alert it before you start bidding the first board, including but not limited to: Variable or weak NT openings, strong ♣ or ♦ systems, 4-card major systems like ACOL, playing unusual honor card leads like Rusinow or low from a doubleton

Systems

HUM, Browne stickers systems, Forcing Pass Systems, Random Openings, and Encrypted Signals are not allowed all the time.

Players can’t consult their system cards or notes between the start of the auction period until the end of the play. Exception: players may consult their defence notes vs 2♦ multi opening.

Psychic conventional opening bids are forbidden

Codes

If you want more information about an opponent’s bid, whether or not it was explained, you should send a private message to the opponent who made the bid asking for clarification.

Requesting information may be made at any time, at the time the bid is made, when the auction concludes, or any time during the play as long as it is a private chat between one opponent and the bidder.

If players explain bids via chat they should set the recipients to Opponents, not Table, so that only opponents see the explanation, not the partner. But the best way is to explain the bids via the BBO alert mechanism.

Line up

All line-ups are blind and a personal line-up form (link) for each team including all the matches will be sent to the team captain to keep the link as it will be used each time , the team captain will choose 1) the match number, 2) pick the players from the given name list and players preferred direction (North, South, East or West) and submit it at least 60 min before the match starts.





ABL Online Mixed Teams



Two Important Pieces of Information For Captains to Note

Very important notes, Kindly circulate to all of your players

1. The BBO accounts for the TDs are as follows :
ABL, ABL_1, ABL_2, ABL_3, ABL_4 and ABL_5
2. At the beginning of each match/session, the TDs have to start more than one table at the same time in order to host all the championship matches and they place the players in their seats according to pre-sent line-up.... Sometimes, we have a late offline players (please check the event regulations for penalty of late arrival at BBO) and this may cause some delay in the other matches/tables.

In order for the TDs to avoid this, they will hold an empty seat for you and they will move to host another match and then back to the late table. For that reason, it is quiet normal that your players might have a message from the TD through the BBO server with the following text

Want to substitute

Would you like to play in Teams tournament # xxxxxx Teams "ABL Mixed Teams Championship as a substitute? Your partner will be xxxxxxxx"

YES NO

Please alert your players to accept this request ASAP.

*VERY IMPORTANT NOTES *

The BBO Management recommends that you wait in the main section of BBO when you are about to receive an invitation to play. Different areas of BBO are managed by different servers, so if you are located in the casual section the system may read you as being offline even if you are online.

Also, we use a special procedure in order to make sure that all of our matches are starting at the same time. We start inviting players and set up the team match some minutes before the official starting time. This may result in your partner already sitting (and waiting) at the table of the ABL Mixed Teams match while you are still in the lobby. That is totally normal, and is done in order to be more precise on the starting time. We kindly ask all players to just stay in the lobby (main section of BBO or in the competitive section) and wait for our invitation.

Group A

| Day Date | | RR - Match 4 / 5 | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|--------------|
| | | GMT Time : 16:00 | | | |
| Sunday 24.01.21 | 1 | WASO | X | 3 | EGYJOR |
| | 4 | Al-Yassamen | X | 2 | Sharjah Club |
| | 5 | Lions | X | 6 | Nine |

Group B

| Day Date | | RR - Match 4 / 5 | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|---------|
| | | GMT Time : 16:00 | | | |
| Sunday 24.01.21 | 1 | Pepsi | X | 3 | Friends |
| | 4 | Diamond | X | 2 | Queens |
| | 5 | CEDARS 2 | X | 6 | TRUMPS |





ABL Online Mixed Teams



Queens

Round Robin 3

Trumps

The match of the day is surely Trumps versus Queens. Whilst Trumps are not yet troubling the top of the table, with four teams qualifying everything is up for grabs – and with the world events today it seemed only right to watch Trumps.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

| | | |
|----------|--|----------|
| ♠ 742 | | ♠ AK96 |
| ♥ QJ1087 | | ♥ K4 |
| ♦ 107 | | ♦ AK842 |
| ♣ 654 | | ♣ K8 |
| | | ♠ J85 |
| | | ♥ 653 |
| | | ♦ J9 |
| | | ♣ AQJ103 |

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|---------------------------|-------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| - | Pass | 2♦* | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |
| 2♦ | wk 2 in maj or strong bal | | |

A rare case of the strong variant of the multi 2♦ opening. Also we saw one of those conventions that I would place in the soon to be best seller “25 conventions you do not need” and that is not accepting the transfer with a doubleton over a 2NT bid. I understand that on occasion it can possibly give some small advantage but you lose the ability to play in three of a major. Playing in 3NT partner’s hand has no value and consequently you go three off. Three Hearts on the other hand should only go one off if the defence is on its toes.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|-------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | Faraj | Al Midfa |
| - | Pass | 1♦ | All Pass |

One of the five deals that was played at the one-level – that lets you know how exciting the deals were. East minded her work and made seven tricks and six IMPs for Queens.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

| | | |
|--------|--|---------|
| ♠ 873 | | ♠ A104 |
| ♥ A82 | | ♥ Q1097 |
| ♦ A864 | | ♦ QJ73 |
| ♣ 1097 | | ♣ 52 |
| | | ♠ Q962 |
| | | ♥ KJ543 |
| | | ♦ - |
| | | ♣ KQ84 |

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|----------|-------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| - | - | - | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 2NT | Pass | 3NT |
| All Pass | | | |

East made a passive spade lead hoping to find a good spade suit in partner’s hand. Declarer won in hand with the ♠J and advanced a small heart and played the ♥J from dummy. West erred when ducking the trick. It lost a valuable tempo and also meant that the defence could only take two heart tricks. A spade was then played to the king, taken by the ace. East got off lead with a club and declarer cashed six black tricks ending in dummy, a small heart saw East win the trick and try a diamond but that set up declarer’s king for the ninth and game-going trick.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | Faraj | Al Midfa |
| - | - | - | 1♥ |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

With less bidding to cloud the thought process East commenced with a small diamond to partner’s ace and another was returned, declarer interjected the ♦9 but East won with the ♦J. East found a good switch to the ♥10, covered by the ♥J and taken by the ace. A heart continuation sealed declarer’s fate and the contract finished up two down. Thirteen IMPs to Queens





ABL Online Mixed Teams



Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|---------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|------|
| ♠ 9764 | | ♠ A | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ 1032 | | ♥ KQ854 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ 92 | | ♦ QJ10 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ AK97 | | ♣ QJ63 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ KQJ1032 | <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ 85 |
| | | N | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | | E | | | | | | | | |
| | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ — | ♥ AJ976 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ K87643 | ♦ A5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 8 | ♣ 10542 | | | | | | | | | | |

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|-------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| — | — | 1♥ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♠ | All Pass | | |

West appeared to be over cautious with her 2♠ bid, her hand has only four losers and surely 3♦ is natural and not overstating the hand. It would probably meet with a 3NT response but then a bid of 4♦ gets across your hand and both 4♠ and 5♦ are good contracts.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | A.Faraj | Al Midfa |
| — | — | 1♥ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

West's Four Spades could best be described as pragmatic – on another day there could have been a good play for 6♦. For example East's hand could have been ♠A ♥QJ854 ♦QJ10 ♣A763, less of a point count than the actual hand and the same distribution, but nevertheless ten more IMPs to Queens.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--|---------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--------|
| ♠ K3 | | ♠ AQ984 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ 87 | | ♥ — | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ 986432 | | ♦ AJ107 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 653 | | ♣ KQJ4 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 102 | <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ J765 |
| | | N | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | | E | | | | | | | | |
| | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ AKQ10652 | ♥ J943 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ 5 | ♦ KQ | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 982 | ♣ A107 | | | | | | | | | | |

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|-------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

I would never have bid 3NT with the East hand but surprisingly the contract is unbeatable and when South started with a spade declarer ended up with an overtrick and not a single heart trick.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|--------------------------|---------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | A.Faraj | Al Midfa |
| 4♣* | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♠ | Pass | 6♥ | |
| 4♣ | Better than a 4♥ opening | | |

I always assumed that the 4♣ opening was a constructive 4♥ bid rather than just a pre-empt. It is a difficult hand to judge, I must confess to not knowing what I would do at the table, a very different situation to sitting at a computer screen with all four hands in front of me. It is not a good slam, about 52%, that the hearts suit comes in for no losers, but then you must not lose a spade as well. However if someone tipped you the wink that the hearts were 4-2 you can make the contract – you have enough entries to the East hand to reduce your trumps and perform a trump coup on the hapless South. A much needed ten IMPs for Trumps.





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Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ A9
 ♥ K8762
 ♦ AKQ4
 ♣ 83

♠ Q83
 ♥ 109
 ♦ 73
 ♣ Q97642

♠ J542
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ J1085
 ♣ KJ10

♠ K1076
 ♥ AJ43
 ♦ 962
 ♣ A5

N
 W E
 S

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|---------------------|----------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| - | 1♥ | Pass | 2NT* |
| Pass | 4♦* | Pass | 4♥ |
| Pass | 4NT | Pass | 5♥ |
| Pass | 6♥ | All Pass | |
| 2NT | Jacoby | | |
| 4♦ | 54 in the red suits | | |

I applaud the contract but I am not impressed with the bidding. If your version of Jacoby 2NT forces you to bid 4♦ I do not see how South can add anything to the auction. North is then launching into Blackwood not knowing if there are two club losers. However the gods were smiling and a good slam was reached. It succeeds if the trumps play for no loser (about 52%) or the diamonds break 3-3, which is odds of close to 70%.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|---------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | A.Faraj | Al Midfa |
| - | 1♥ | Pass | 2NT* |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

2NT was alerted but no explanation given and so why the bidding died at the game level I cannot say but it cost thirteen IMPs

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 10765
 ♥ 82
 ♦ KQ3
 ♣ Q753

♠ AQ4
 ♥ AQ107543
 ♦ A92
 ♣ -

♠ K93
 ♥ KJ96
 ♦ J854
 ♣ 102

♠ J82
 ♥ -
 ♦ 1076
 ♣ AKJ9864

N
 W E
 S

Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|-------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| - | - | Pass | 3♣ |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

I enjoyed watching West play this contract. Imagine that you have reached a rather delicate 6♥, how would you play? The answer is for a minor error from the South hand. You ruff the opening club lead, draw trumps, eliminate the club suit and cash three rounds of spades ending in dummy. Then you play a small diamond and hope South is napping and insert your ♦9. North now has to win and either lead away from the ♦Q or give a ruff and discard. Of course South can thwart the plan by rising with the ♦10, but you need to be very awake to do that. It was only worth one IMP but it got a big score from me on artistic impression.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|--------|---------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | A.Faraj | Al Midfa |
| - | - | Pass | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♥ | 3♣ |
| 4♣ | Double | 4♥ | All Pass |

At this table declarer took a different approach with the diamond suit and played for South to have a doubleton honour by playing ace and another – today the artistic touch won the prize.





ABL Online Mixed Teams



Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| ♠ — | ♠ KQ42 | ♠ 109763 |
| ♥ K86432 | ♥ AQJ7 | ♥ 109 |
| ♦ K32 | ♦ Q1064 | ♦ J97 |
| ♣ AQ74 | ♣ 2 | ♣ K106 |

| | |
|---------|----------|
| ♠ AJ85 | ♠ 109763 |
| ♥ 5 | ♥ 109 |
| ♦ A85 | ♦ J97 |
| ♣ J9853 | ♣ K106 |



Open Room

| West | North | East | South |
|------|----------|----------|----------|
| Ali | Kreidieh | Sulka | Vroustis |
| — | — | — | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | Pass | Double |
| 2♥ | Double | Pass | 3♣ |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

East led partner's suit which declarer took with the ♥J and immediately set about the diamonds, small to the ace, small to the queen and a third round to set up the long diamond for the ninth trick.

Closed Room

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|--------|---------|----------|
| Eidi | Shah | A.Faraj | Al Midfa |
| — | — | — | Pass |
| 1♥ | Double | Pass | 2♠ |
| 3♣ | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ |
| All Pass | | | |

Declarer started well by taking the heart finesse and playing a club taken by West who continued the suit, ruffed in dummy. Ace of hearts was cashed and a diamond to the ace allowed another club to be ruffed. Now all declarer has to do is play a heart from dummy and ruff as cheaply as possible, then ruff a club with a top trump in dummy and repeat the exercise and then exit in diamonds and you must come to another trump trick. Unfortunately declarer decided to tackle trumps and was now without enough tricks and with the bad split the contract failed by two. Twelve IMPs to Queens.

At the end of the match Queens had decidedly beaten Trumps 64-19.

Knock out brackets

Quarter Final

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----|------------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|
| 1 st | Group (A) | Vs | 4 th Or 3 rd | Group (B) | = | Match (1) |
| 2 nd | Group (A) | Vs | 3 rd Or 4 th | Group (B) | = | Match (2) |
| 1 st | Group (B) | Vs | 4 th Or 3 rd | Group (A) | = | Match (3) |
| 2 nd | Group (B) | Vs | 3 rd Or 4 th | Group (A) | = | Match (4) |

Semi Final

Winner of Match (1) Vs Winner of Match (4)

Winner of Match (2) Vs Winner of Match (3)





The First Thought is the Deepest

I had some correspondence from a player about Board 1.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

| | | |
|----------|--|----------|
| ♠ 1042 | | ♠ J7 |
| ♥ AQ62 | | ♥ J1098 |
| ♦ KJ6 | | ♦ AQ985 |
| ♣ QJ4 | | ♣ A8 |
| ♠ 53 | | ♠ AKQ986 |
| ♥ 53 | | ♥ K74 |
| ♦ 10432 | | ♦ 7 |
| ♣ K10753 | | ♣ 962 |
| | | |

The contract was Four Spades by South at every table. Frequently the bidding went 1♣-1♦-4♠, and in nearly every case where it differed South had bulldozed into 4♠ without support from North. The contract made eight times and failed twice. One of the times it failed was when East overcalled the opening One Diamond with a Double – Why? Whenever I do that partner always jumps to Four Spades for a miserable two off. You have a perfectly respectable five-card suit you can bid at the one-level – if partner has hearts he will probably bid them. The upshot of this speculative Double was that West now led a heart and the contract romped home.

The normal defence was a diamond to the ♦J and ♦Q, followed by the ace of clubs. West needed to encourage so that a club could be ruffed to take the contract down. In my commentary I suggested that West should play the ♣10 to ensure a club continuation, at the table I was watching the ♣7 sufficed but I argued that you should make it as easy as possible for partner and that there virtually no risk in paying the ♣10. My correspondent made two points, firstly he thought the ♣10 might be a bad card if declarer had four clubs to the nine and his second point was that if he had stopped to think at length about the situation he would be giving away unauthorised information.

On the first point I disagree and I shall put forward my case below, as to the second point I admire his ethical position – we are all aware that there some who have behaved with less than the necessary propriety during the various on line tournaments. I shall also address this in the next paragraph.

I would argue that the distribution is close to an open book after the first four cards have been played. Firstly you know partner has exactly five diamonds. You know South for his bid has six or more spades, if more, then beating the contract is problematic so immediately your defence must be based on declarer having six spades and almost certainly not four hearts because South would have looked for a major-suit fit. It follows on that partner has two spades and therefore six cards in the round suits. You also know partner does not have five hearts as the bidding would have been different, thus by a process of simple logic and arithmetic East has two club and four hearts. This is not rocket science, it should be an automatic reaction as soon as you see dummy to start constructing the other hands. One of the easiest traps into which to fall is the sin of only thinking when it is your turn to act. I know that I often do this, especially towards the end of a long match, but I now try my best to ‘think’ all the time, it is not easy.

My point is that before partner has tabled the ace of clubs you have worked out the distribution and ‘know’ partner’s hand so can now play the ten of clubs in safety and in tempo but most importantly you will have spared partner the need to think, which may well be a good thing. The other case where the contract succeeded was when East shifted to the ace of clubs at trick two West played the ♣5. I have no idea what their methods are but it does not seem to be either fish or fowl. With little guidance East now attempted to cash the ♦A and so presented declarer with the contract.

In the literature of how to play the hand declarer is always beseeched to stop and plan before playing the first card. During this time it is not forbidden for the defence to do the same. On this hand you can quickly work out that if declarer follows to the first trick that his distribution is 6313, as the meerkat* might say ‘simples’. So my advice to one and all is use all the time that is available to construct the other hands – one of the advantages of bridge is that you can see two hands – if you can reconstruct one of the others you have the automatically done the same for the fourth hand and now you are playing double dummy.

*meerkat – is a reference to an advertisement on British TV where meerkats are used to encourage you to think about changing energy suppliers.

