



## BARBADOS vs TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GOES ONLINE FOR 2021

With COVID19 pandemic travel restrictions still in effect, the 56<sup>th</sup> annual tournament will be played online over two weekends in May – 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. There will be 2 x 12 board matches per day starting at 10.30am and 1.30pm.

Both countries took confidence in the new robust anti-cheating regulations of WBF, ACBL and BBO and agreed to the virtual tournament for 2021.

This formal tournament began in 1966 and 2020 was the first time without play although ladies teams did not play on three previous occasions, 1997, 1998 and 2012.

TEAM BARBADOS			
OPEN		LADIES	
Anthony Watkins <i>bajetw</i>	Charles Hollingsworth <i>11sturges</i>	Amanda Storey <i>FarawayD</i>	Patricia Greenidge <i>dicyrah</i>
Douglas Rotchell <i>kipper</i>	Patricia Cummins <i>Patclo</i>	Jackie Thompson <i>jthomp4227</i>	Norma Springer <i>norma13</i>
Leroy Lynch <i>stretch278</i>	Neal Rechtman <i>nrechtman</i>	Roglyn Hinds <i>chry2</i>	Sian Lange Sianl

TEAM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO			
OPEN		LADIES	
Sham Mohammed <i>sham</i>	Noor <i>O1raaf</i>	Deborah Fletcher <i>luna10</i>	Alana Xavier <i>alayneni</i>
Bobby Persaud <i>draja22</i>	Alvin Fitzpatrick <i>alvinf</i>	Kalifa Howard <i>kalifa1990</i>	Sharon Parmanan <i>RoseSP</i>
Curtis Legall <i>ShadowX</i>	Mannie <i>dsawat7</i>	Denise Jose <i>Andrea 47</i>	Patricia Howard <i>patthom</i>

The Friday Night Pairs (14<sup>th</sup> May) is at 6.00pm on BBO. Please register with Jackie Thompson by 10<sup>th</sup> May.

### SUN, SEA & SLAMS 2022

**Sun, Sea & Slams 2022** will be held 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> February at the Barbados Beach Club. The tournament is sanctioned by ACBL for Black and Gold points due to our partnership with Barbara Seagram. Details will be posted shortly to the BBL and CACBF websites.

## LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANIC ASH CLEANUP



La Soufriere volcano on St Vincent erupted on 9<sup>th</sup> April sending thick plumes of ash eastward to Barbados where it “fell like snow.”

During the week 19<sup>th</sup> April, the Bridge Centre, inside and outside, was made spic and span from the volcanic ash. The entire square area of the Pine Road premises is hard surface – two roofs and tarmac yard – and dozens of bags of ash were collected. The forlorn Christmas tree, “abandoned” since December, was broken down and returned to storage.

A decision on the return to games will be made at the next meeting of the Board.

### WHATSAPP REACTIVATED

The **BRIDGE League Info** WhatsApp Group continues to be active. Eleanor Dottin has been added as an Administrator. Please restrict messages to bridge related matters and people.



### CACBF PRESS RELEASE

The Championships scheduled for later this month in Panama have been cancelled.

### CONDOLENCES

Richard Whitelocke of Jamaica died in February. Richard was a regular at our Sun, Sea & Slams tournament and was booked for the tournament this year, which was Covid19 cancelled.

Mark Wheeler of USA died in February. Mark, spouse of a United Nations officer, played regular morning bridge with us. When they transferred to Trinidad and Tobago, he was a regular player at the Mayfair game.

Janet Alleyne of Trinidad and Tobago died on 26 April. Janet was a regular member of the Mayfair Ladies Team playing against Barbados Mayfair Ladies.

Our condolences to the families.





**DOUGLAS 'KIP' ROTCHELL, CACBF  
PRESIDENT, SHARES HIS HEART  
SURGERY EXPERIENCE.**

I share this in response to the many requests to tell my story. I hope you will find interesting, enlightening and at some points humorous.

In 2015 I said, "doctor, doctor, go away and come another day." That day came on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 when I made my way into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados to fix the stenosis of my aortic valve. Six years previously, my GP heard some turbulence in my chest, later confirmed by an ECHO gram to be the aortic valve closing only 93% after each beat. Though he was concerned, 93% was not bothering me one beat as I was enjoying life with Natalie and playing lots of bridge.

Three years later the GP nagged for follow-up though I remained asymptomatic. This time the valve had deteriorated to about 87% and I was referred to a cardiologist. When I saw him a couple of months later, the now third ECHO gram read 50.1%, marking me prime for valve replacement. I am referred to a cardiac surgeon. Of course, all these visits and tests shrinking my hip pocket and I am fuming when not vaping.

I saw the cardiac surgeon in August 2019 and was by then exhibiting symptoms like sleeping 12 hours a day rather than the six I used to boast of. Clearly time to get to surgery but as keen as I was for the fix, my hip pocket was hesitating. Fortunately, the Barbados National Health Service that provides citizens cradle to grave health care remains in place notwithstanding the financial and economic challenges, so I joined the 4-6 months waiting list.

In February 2020, I had a tough decision to make. Bridge or surgery! Surgery or bridge! *Sun, Sea and Slams*, the Barbados annual bridge tournament since 1980 is played the second week of February. I opted for bridge, pushing the surgery towards the end of February into March. Then COVID19 came calling and all elective surgeries were suspended and re-prioritised.

One year later my condition had deteriorated, and I was moved up the elective surgery waiting list to #3. My check-in date was 18th March. Natalie took temporary leave of absence from her work in Canada and came to be with me, quarantine and all that jazz.

The heart is life and many people asked about my mental wellbeing during the waiting period, especially in the last week before the surgery. I can honestly say that I was not the slightest bit nervous but I would not be human if I didn't have feelings of apprehension. I knew it was going to be 4-6 weeks of painful recuperation and nobody looks forward to that.

So, the morning of the surgery is upon us. I signed a few papers, changed into a gown that put my ass on display and mounted the gurney. The obligatory kiss and squeeze of the hand from my Nathalie and I was wheeled away. I was overcome by a deep sense of calm and was totally relaxed. I was happy to see the drug dealer was a friend I've known for more than 30 years. He did the deed and woke me 26 hours later to tell me I was on SICU (surgical intensive care unit) and everything went well.

Then doctor pain came to see me and stayed and stayed and stayed. The expected three days in SICU became fourteen. I felt as if a bus had not only hit me but backed up for good measure. For pain management I had only to rate the level I was experiencing on a scale of 1 to 10 and the medics would squirt something into one of the dozen drips attached to me. Talk about instant relief... it was perfect! ... and the colostomy bag? Heaven sent.

It is a twist of irony that while giving the utmost care to the body, the SICU deliberately destroys the mind by way of sound torture – the same three notes every 18 seconds (yes, I timed it!) 24 hours a day from a monitor. I now intend to have a few words with the manufacturers of this equipment because this is technology in the reverse in 2021. Surely the machines should be silent unless there is an emergency. Their logic is akin to the fire alarm beeping continuously and going silent in the event of a fire.

Ten days into my stay in the SICU my breathing became difficult. X-rays showed a build-up of fluid in the sacs around the lungs. Two gigantic needles were inserted, one on each side and a total of 2.6 litres of fluid was drained! I immediately felt much better and four days later was well enough to be transferred to the ward.

The move to my own room was heaven on earth. The first night I slept for 10 hours straight. Within 48 hours I felt so much better and was ready to go home. I was evicted on Easter Sunday morning. I too, rose again!

It is now a few days short of the end of April and the incision to my sternum has healed well. I am on Warfarin for life and have to monitor my blood for signs of thickening.

I thank Natalie who dropped everything and came to be with me. Also, a big shout out to all my friends and family for their warm wishes, encouragement and love. I am truly blessed to have you all in my life and now that I've got this new valve in situ... I plan to be around for a very long time.

Final word must go to the nurses and doctors of our QEH. I am so proud of the professionalism, sense of duty and caring they all possess. I couldn't have asked for a better team to bring me back from the edge of the darkness. (Edited for this newsletter)