



County Newsletter

We need your news, stories and results

Issue 11

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Latest Results

Congratulations to David Flacks and Liz Commins who won the EBU Premier Life Masters pairs in early March. David Stevenson was 3rd in the Premier Grand Masters partnering Tracy Capal of Manchester.

David Stevenson and Liz Commins were members of the team that won the Eric Howarth trophy; their teammates were Paddy Murphy and Matt Foster.

Paul Roberts & Julian Merrill won the Northern final of the EBU National Pairs - an excellent achievement.

Dave & Jean Keen and David Stevenson & Liz Commins were 2nd in the Swiss teams at the Cumbria Congress in March.

Dave & Jean Keen were members of the team that finished 2nd in the North Wales Spring Swiss teams. Ted Reveley, Bill Niccol, Stuart Matthews & Alan Stephenson were 3rd.

The County Women's team event for the Jean Keen trophy was won by Joan King, Pat Crossley, Lollo Murthwaite, Mui Fellows. The runners-up were Margaret Howe, Barbara Serres, Joan Marray, Jill Knight.

Editorial

We all make mistakes in this difficult game of ours and if like me you are hard on yourself about the things you get wrong, then cheer up - I am going to show you that even the best players can make huge errors.

Look at this pair of hands from the quarter finals of the recent USA national event the Vanderbilt (a major Spring competition named after one of the creators of contract bridge as we know it today).

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

After an auction that left much to be desired, West selected 7D as their final resting place. North held the diamond ace so took exception to this and rather than accepting his fate, West retreated to 7NT. Of course this was also doubled, but after cashing his ace, North switched to a club from J 10 x and West conceded a much larger penalty; minus 1700 in fact.

In the same event, Geir Helgemo, one of the best known professional players in the world, had a problem explain the auction to the defenders until it became apparent that he had opened 2C but thought he had opened 2NT - it can happen to any of us, even with bidding boxes!!

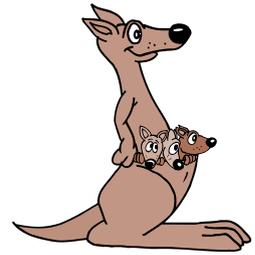
The Eric Howarth Trophy

The winners offered this possible 'missed opportunity' from the event. Matt Foster and Paddy Murphy had the sequence shown, with Paddy (East) focusing on the club situation once a trump suit had been agreed. Matt felt the club queen might be enough to bid the grand, but decided he needed a 4th trump or the trump queen to be sure. Therefore they settled safely in 6D, which made 13 tricks when the trumps spilt 2 - 2. When West at the other table mistimed the play in 6S they had a huge gain anyway.

	♠ K Q 9 x x		♠ A J	
West	♥ 10 x		♥ A	East
	♦ J 10 9		♦ A K x x x x	
	♣ Q 10 x		♣ A K J x	
South	West	North	East	
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣	
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦	
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♣	
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♣	
Pass	6♦	All Pass		

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

By Tim Bourke



Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ 6 2		
	♥ 4		
	♦ 10 8 7 4 2		
	♣ A Q 9 7 3		
♠ A Q J 7 5		♠ 10 9 3	
♥ K Q J 7 3		♥ 10 9 6 5	
♦ J 5		♦ Q 9 6	
♣ 6		♣ 8 4 2	
	♠ K 8 4		
	♥ A 8 2		
	♦ A K 3		
	♣ K J 10 5		
West	North	East	South
2♣ ¹	3♣	Pass	1♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	3NT

1. This bid promised at least 5-5 in the majors and at most six losers on the Losing Trick Count

North did well to retreat from three no trumps into five clubs as the former would have no play on the routine lead of the king of hearts.

That card proved a less-troublesome lead against the final contract. Declarer could see that to make his contract he had to develop four diamond tricks without letting East on lead to fire through a spade. So, after taking the ace of hearts, he played the king of trumps followed by the jack of trumps to dummy's queen. Next he led the seven of diamonds, intending to run it if East played low. However, when East inserted the nine of diamonds, declarer took this with the king. Next he crossed back to dummy with a trump to the ace and led the diamond eight and passed it round to West's now bare jack. (East could not afford to play the queen of diamonds as that would give declarer five diamonds tricks). After winning the trick, West forced dummy with a heart, but declarer was in control. He ruffed in dummy, cashed his ace of diamonds and crossed back to table with another heart ruff. After winning tricks with the two long diamonds, South pointed to his ten of trumps for the eleventh trick.

This plan required West to hold at least one of the queen, jack or nine of diamonds. An instructive point is that if East has two of these cards and declarer draws a third round of trumps early, then he has to guess whether West has the jack or queen doubleton (lead the diamond ten first in both cases) or the nine doubleton (lead the diamond eight or seven). However, by playing on diamonds after just two round of trumps declarer can succeed on the above deal by attempting to pass any one of the ten, eight or seven or diamonds to West.

EBU Ranked Masters by Bob Pitts

Each year the EBU hold stratified pairs events for players based upon their master point ranking, thus if you enter you should be playing against pairs with similar ability and experience to yourself. Whether this reduces or adds to the randomness of some of the results is open to debate.

This season's competitions took place on the first weekend in March, and we had three local players who performed very well. David Stevenson, partnering Tracy Capal of Manchester, finished third in the Premier Grand Masters section, but pride of place goes to Liz Commins and Dave Flacks who won the Premier Life Masters. A superb achievement by Liz and Dave.

All of the sections were playing the same hands, and handily for this report, both partnerships independently had a story about the same deal.

Dealer East N/S vul.

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

This deal came up during the final session. When Liz and Dave were sat East-West Liz opened three diamonds on the East hand (as many of you know they are both enterprising bidders). South overcalled three spades and North took most of the cards from his bidding box by raising to the spade grand slam. As you can see, with spades 2-2 this rolled home easily. Prior to this hand Liz and Dave were leading the event and despite admiring the aggression of their opponents, they were both concerned that this might seriously damage their chances. However, they only lost 6.07 imps as several other pairs had also bid to 7 spades (the ranked masters is cross-imped not matchpointed). They subsequently had several other good results in the session and eventually finished 15 imps clear of the field.

When David Stevenson was sitting West, his partner opened a weak two diamonds and South decided to pass hoping for a penalty if his partner re-opened with a double. The West hand is so weak that it must be a good idea to sow some confusion, hence David's decision to respond two spades. This caught North in a difficult position and a rather messy auction resulted in him declaring four hearts. Despite the opponents holding eight trumps between them, this contract was cold. Of course, as you know, this was not their best spot and you will not be surprised to hear that this was a heavy loss for North-South - 12.4 imps it cost them!!

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If you have not yet informed the Chief Selector about your availability for the forthcoming County matches, please do so asap - you are all needed, especially for the matches in the Northern Counties League.

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.

April

10th/11th/12th	BGB simultaneous pairs	Clubs
15th	Charity teams	MBC
22nd	Preece Rosebowl	Bl. BC

May

7th	May Day swiss pairs	MBC
9th/10th	EBU simultaneous pairs	Clubs
17th	Andrew Rosebowl	LBC
20th	Green pointed pairs	MBC
26th/27th	Annual match v Dublin	Dublin
31st	Liverpool Open pairs	LBC

June

7th	Liverpool Open teams	LBC
14th	Jim Davies Swiss teams	Heswall BC
21st	County AGM	MBC
24th	B/C team match v Derby	MBC
26th	Bill Hughes sim. pairs	Clubs

The President's Cup event is on the weekend of June 30th/July 1st

Note—the Preece Rosebowl is the county ladies pairs event held at Blundell-sands BC and pre-entry is required as the entry fee includes the buffet tea. Contact Doris Coltman on 0151 924 1712

The EBU National Pairs Northern Final by Paul Roberts

In pairs, you get some very fine decisions, where the outcome of a minor misjudgement can be massive.

On this hand, at game all, East was looking at ♠ T 2 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ A 9 5 ♣ K Q J 8 4. After 2 passes, playing Acol with a weak NT, he naturally opens 1C. South (Paul Roberts) bids 1H, West passed, North (Julian Merrill) bids 1S. East decided to pass, and South bids 2S, passed round to East. Playing teams, a pass is automatic, but what about pairs?

East enquired about the length of North's spades, for his 1 spade bid, and was told that 5 spades would usually be expected, but were certainly not guaranteed. I guess East's thought process was something like: "I'm looking at a pretty crisp 16 count, the opponents have not tried for game, so partner must have some values. If the opposition have a fit, so we should have a fit. If we can make 3C or 3D at pairs scoring it will be a disaster if we let N/S play in 2S, whether it makes or goes one off. Even if 3C or 3D goes 1 off, the opponents may not be able to double, which would give us -100, still better than -110 for 2 spades. There's also the chance that we might push them to 3 spades, which will probably go off. East therefore decided to double – clearly for takeout (*surely East should have doubled for takeout on the previous round if systematically possible and avoided this problem - Editor*). South passed, and West bid 3D, doubled by North for penalties, and duly going 3 off, for a clear top for N/S. The other hands were:

South: ♠ KJ93 ♥ KJ732 ♦ 4 ♣ A97, West: ♠ Q84 ♥ T984 ♦ K832 ♣ 65, North: ♠ A765 ♥ 5 ♦ QJT76 ♣ T32

So, where did East go wrong in the analysis?

Most importantly, if one side has an 8 card fit, the other side does not need to have an 8+ card fit. (Hands where the partnership has one 5 card fit and three 7 card fits are not uncommon). In any case N/S are not certain to have an 8 card fit – it's still possible that North has 4, and South 3. Also, thinking about the bidding:

South overcalled 1 heart, then supported his partner's spades. Why didn't he make a takeout double with both majors?

He may have a shortage in diamonds, and some length in clubs.

That would mean that even if West does have 5 diamonds, the suit may well be breaking badly.

He may only have 3 spades, in which case NS may not have an 8 card fit.

Why didn't West take action? Surely he would have bid 2C over 1H with a few points and 3 clubs?

North has not supported his partner's hearts, so West has probably got at least 3 useless hearts

After South's 1 heart overcall, East's heart Q is probably worthless – he therefore only has a working 14 count.

Playing at this level, you should assume that opponents will be alive to the possibility of making tight doubles of part score contracts.

(Congratulations to Paul and Julian on their win in the Northern final of this event. The National final is very soon and we wish them every success).