



# Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Newsletter

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## Editorial

This issue is full of contributions from the readership which is the situation I always hoped for when I revived the newsletter nearly 3 years ago. It is heartening to hear how local players are performing in a variety of events and even better when they are able to share interesting deals with us. Well done to all the correspondents and please keep it up!

If you are thinking of emulating them and writing an article for the next issue, it would be helpful if you could send me the copy by mid-May.

Since the February issue, the EBU have published the master point ranking lists for last year. With the introduction of universal membership the County list is much larger than in the past which is good to see - congratulations to all those new members and I hope you earn many more points this year. Pride of place in the rankings goes to David Stevenson, who was the fourth highest earner of masterpoints for the year in the whole country.

### Quick play problem *by Paddy Murphy*

A quick problem, how do you play this hand in 3NT at pairs; West leads the A then K of hearts, East discarding the 3♠ (suit preference) and the 4♣, then switches to the 10♣? Cover up the full hand and decide on your line before peeking.

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

W	N	E	S
			1NT
3♥	Dbl	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Answer to problem. Finesse the J♦ then cash the Q♥ and triple squeeze East for ten tricks. The full hand is :

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

The fact that West switched at trick 3 marks him with no entry for his hearts, so put the pressure on East.

## ASK THE PANEL

By Bernard Kaye

This interesting deal arose in a Wednesday duplicate at Manchester Bridge club.

Dealer West Game All

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

Hands like East's don't come along too often and it is useful to have the means to show balanced hands to within a 2 point range. Thus partner and I use 'Kokish', after East opened two clubs and got a two diamond response, two hearts is a relay showing a game force with hearts or a balanced 25+ (with 23-24 East would rebid 2NT rather than two hearts). West asked with two spades and East showed the balanced type. Now West used puppet stayman to show his hearts and when East invited to show 27+, the no-trump slam was reached.

As East I received the lead of the four of diamonds and my thinking went as follows :

- 1) What is the best plan bearing in mind that its pairs and there looks to be an easy 12 tricks if spades break?
- 2) After taking the ace of diamonds, let's assume like me you lead a spade to jack (left-hand opponent playing the 10).
- 3) Should I take the high-risk finesse of the spade 8 which if it loses still retains the positional the heart/diamond squeeze against RHO? Instead I continued with a spade to the queen, and LHO showed out.
- 4) So should I play the hearts next and if so do I play heart queen or duck? Perhaps instead cash a few spades and see what LHO discards.
- 5) The four of diamonds lead suggested a maximum of four diamonds in that hand, so the hand on the right has 5 spades and at least 3 diamonds. There are endplay possibilities if RHO has the heart king, but if it is on your left he may be tempted to go up when you lead towards queen of hearts. However you can't go for the endplay and sensibly try the hearts together.

Being unsure of the best line, I asked a few of my contemporaries at Manchester who collectively have a vast amount of experience. Bernard Goldenfield came up with the solution immediately. At trick four, duck a round of hearts. Regardless of who holds the heart king, LHO will get squeezed in the red suits if he holds it and the other hand gets caught in the majors otherwise.

## Bidding Tips by David Stevenson

Liz Commins and I have had a very successful year and we have been asked what the secret of our success is. Plenty of practice, of course, playing on average four sessions a week, and discussing things that went wrong afterwards. We also have developed many, many agreements, so we have about a hundred pages of notes.

But it is also our aim to be difficult to play against. Suppose you pick up

♠ A 9 8 7 2  
♥ 5  
♦ 10 8 7  
♣ 9 6 5 2

Do you bid? Our answer is “of course”. You could open 2S, showing a weak hand with spades and a minor. If RHO opens 1H you bid 1NT which shows a weak 2- or 3-suiter with spades.

How about this hand:

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

Your RHO opens a short club [2+ clubs, common with 5-card majors]. Perhaps you scrape up a 1D bid. We don't: if they do not open a natural bid we like to sow confusion. So we bid 1S. No, it is not a psyche: over a short club 1S shows 3+ spades and a five card suit elsewhere. How should opponents play double? Penalties and miss a heart fit? Sputnik, and miss a spade fit?

Finally, think of a raise: you hold:

♠ K 6 5  
♥ Q J 10 6 5 2  
♦ 6  
♣ K 8 7

LHO opens 1C [natural], partner bids 1H, RHO doubles and you bid? No doubt you bid 4H, doesn't everyone? Of course, LHO now bids 4S 90% of the time, and when it comes back after two passes you have to decide whether to sacrifice, with opponents knowing about their fit. Liz and I would not bid 4H: we would bid 5H: now what do they do? Sure, they may get it right, but we have them worried.

When defending a contract we play signals not just for the first card but often the second and third. A quick example: you hold 8 6 4 in hearts, which are trumps: partner leads a club: declarer wins and draws trumps. What do you play? Well, 8 then 6 then 4 says you like the club lead, and your spades are better than your diamonds: 4 then 6 then 8 says you do not like the club lead and your diamonds are better than your spades. This and other agreements makes defence much easier.

When I was much younger, players in clubs used to experiment with systems. Nowadays, too many people think playing fancy methods is for good players. If you are a middle of the road club player, my advice is: take up a couple of odd conventions and try them out. Switch from Benjamin to the Multi. Try a weak 1NT overcall. Try five card majors. Try pre-empts with a shorter suit than previously. Above all, try something, and you too can be difficult to play against – and that is what you want.

**Don't forget to support our County green-pointed pairs event. It is important to have plenty of support from County members. It takes place on May 19th at the Merseyside Bridge Centre. For entries and information check with John Hampson 01270 524525**

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## 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

8th-12th	BGB simultaneous pairs	Clubs
14th	Annual Charity Teams	MBC
21st	Preece Rosebowl	Blundellsands

### May

6th	May Day Swiss pairs	MBC
7th-10th	EBU simultaneous pairs	Clubs
16th	Andrew Rosebowl	MBC
19th	GP Swiss pairs	MBC
30th	Liverpool Open Pairs	LBC

### June

1st/2nd	Match v Dublin	Deva BC
6th	Liverpool Open Teams	LBC
7th	Worldwide simultaneous pairs	MBC
20th	Jim Davies teams	Heswall BC
25th	Bill Hughes simultaneous pairs	Clubs

## Latest Results

The Merseyside & Deeside Cup (pivot teams) was won by Angus Clark, Sally Clark, Mike Jubb and George Eakin.  
The Jean Keen trophy (Women's teams) was won by Gill O'Neill, Margaret Barnes, Joan Marray and Avril Thompson.  
The winners of the Eric Howarth Cup were David Stevenson, Liz Commins, Paddy Murphy, Simon Edwards, Matt Foster.  
Dave and Jean Keen, Liz Commins and David Stevenson were the winners of the teams event at the Falkirk Congress

## EBU Life Masters Pairs *by Pete Foster*

John Liebeschuetz has been a friend of mine for many years, but since his move to Cambridge our chances to play together are limited. We try to get together for the EBU Ranked Pairs and this year had some success in the Life Masters event. John particularly liked this hand and his analysis of it with some interesting points for both declarer and the defenders is detailed below.

Dealer South Love All

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

We were defending four hearts by South on my lead of the club queen. Declarer won, ruffed a club in hand, dummy was re-entered with a trump for another club ruff. Now declarer played the trump ace, cashed the spade ace and led another spade towards dummy. I ducked and declarer went wrong inserting the ten. After winning the jack it was clear for Pete to play the diamond queen and the contract went two off. Declarer should however have got this right. If the ten of spades loses to the king, she still needs the diamond ace onside for the contract, whereas if she rises with the queen and exits with another spade to West, the defence can only get one more trick as West is endplayed to concede either a ruff and discard or a trick to the diamond king. On this line of play it does not matter which defender holds the diamond ace.

It was only afterwards that I noticed I'd missed a chance for a brilliancy. If I drop the king of spades under the ace then Pete always get in later with the jack to lead a diamond through. To avoid this scenario, declarer must not play the ace of spades, instead leading up to the queen is the successful first play in the suit. When this wins she can continue with the spade ten, running it if not covered, in order to keep my hand off lead.

*(Pete and John won this event by a huge margin: they were 43.76 crossimps ahead of second place)*