



# County Bulletin

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## Editor's News

Entries for most bridge events are falling, yet some of our clubs seem to be doing quite well. Certainly if you play at the Deva on a Monday or Tuesday the place is usually packed and some of the other sessions are also well attended. However few people seem to play in competitions outside of the club, so the Deva committee decided to try to encourage some of the membership to do so by sponsoring five pairs to play in the EBU National Pairs this year. The results over a series of club nights throughout the Autumn and Winter were recorded and the five pairs with the best scores were offered a subsidy on their entry fee. I was one of the lucky players and was discussing this initiative at the area qualifier with a player who is very active within the EBU in trying to promote the game and he thought it was a great idea. Even though none of us qualified through to the final the Deva did supply five of the thirty-one pairs at the Northern heat. I think the Deva BC committee are to be warmly applauded for their actions in trying to promote the game from beyond the boundaries of the club. Well done!

## The Chester Congress

*by Our Roving Reporter*

The Chester Congress, held at the end of January was, as usual, a success. There were many interesting deals, especially in the Teams event on the Sunday, and this one seemed to bedevil many of the participants.

*Dealer West Both vul.*

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

There was a great variety of results with seven of the North/South's electing to play in no-trumps at the two or three level, occasionally successfully. Only three got to play in the club game with two defending five diamonds doubled. I know of some West's who declined to open the bidding and a few North's as well. I cannot see any reason to pass with the North hand as there is no rebid problem but those that did got frozen out by a weak two spades from East. Where West opened with a weak two in hearts this tended to finish the auction, though I would hate to pass with that South hand. None of the seventeen North/South partnerships managed to reach the excellent slam!

# NORWEGIAN MAGIC

by Knut Kjaernsrod



Dealer East. E/W vul.

Imp scoring

<p>♠ Q 6 5</p> <p>♥ 8 6 4</p> <p>♦ 9 7 5</p> <p>♣ K J 10 7</p>	<p>♠ A 8 7</p> <p>♥ A 9 5</p> <p>♦ Q 6</p> <p>♣ A 8 6 3 2</p>	<p>♠ J 3</p> <p>♥ K 7 2</p> <p>♦ 10 4 3 2</p> <p>♣ Q 9 5 4</p>	<p>♠ K 10 9 4 2</p> <p>♥ Q J 10 3</p> <p>♦ A K J 8</p> <p>♣ void</p>
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West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♣ <sup>2</sup>
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Game forcing spade raise with 3+ spade support
2. Club void

The Devil's Coup was executed on this hand by one of my countrymen, Geir Brekka. West led a heart. Brekka took dummy's ace and played the ace of clubs (discarding a heart), club ruff, diamond to the queen and another club ruff. He then played high diamonds (discarding a heart from dummy on the third) and on the last one, West wrongly elected to throw a heart, and dummy's last heart was discarded. Geir trumped a heart in dummy and then a club in hand to reach this position

<p>♠ Q 6 5</p> <p>♥</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣</p>	<p>♠ A 8</p> <p>♥</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣ 8</p>	<p>♠ J 3</p> <p>♥ K</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣</p>	<p>♠ K 10</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣</p>
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On the knave of hearts West had no answer. If he trumped high, Brekka would be able to finesse against East's knave, or just ruff the club. With a trump loser and the heart finesse wrong he had made all 13 tricks!

(Thanks to Knut for this hand - it occurred during last year's European Open Championships in Tromso)

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## Merseyside BC Swiss Teams

by Bob Pitts

For many years, the Merseyside Bridge Centre has held a Swiss teams event on the first Tuesday of each month. The competition goes on throughout the year to produce a final winner by December. Teams do get an allocated victory point score for any missed sessions (as long as they don't miss too many) which is a sensible way to run things. I have not played in it for some years, but a last minute emergency dragged me out for the March session. It can be a different game when you have already had a couple of glasses of wine before going out to play.

This interesting deal cropped up during the first of our two 12 board matches.

*Dealer South Love All*

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

At the other table, North played in 1NT on the lead of a small heart, giving declarer his ninth trick. At our table I was in the no-trump game from the South seat after the auction 1♦ -1♥ - 1NT (15-17) - 3NT. West led a 3rd & 5th spade two to the jack and ace (which card should East play from this holding when he has a doubleton? Your views would be welcome). I crossed to the club king and took the diamond finesse, which West won. Unsure about the spade position he exited with a club. I tried a hopeful heart to the king but this lost to the ace. East now made the perfectly reasonable play of the spade ten, but as the cards lay this was fatal. I won with the king, cashed all the minor suit winners and in the 3 card ending shown below I exited with the heart ten, hoping for a position like this to exist.

	♠	
	♥ 7 5 3	
	♦	
	♣	
♠ Q 6		♠
♥ J		♥ Q 6
♦		♦
♣		♣ Q
	♠ 9 3	
	♥ 10	
	♦	
	♣	

If West wins, as happened at the table, he can cash the spade queen but has to concede a ninth trick to the spade nine. It is no better if East overtakes the heart jack, as after cashing the club queen he has to lead to dummy's heart seven. Six imps to the good guys.

If you want to get involved in this event contact Dave Keen or the Centre for further details.

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**Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association**

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All of the club contacts are available on the County website

## 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

24th Preece Rosebowl (Ladies pairs) BBC

May

5th Merseyside League Pairs MBC

22nd John Armstrong trophy (GP swiss pairs) MBC

June

8th Liverpool Open Pairs LBC

16th County Annual General Meeting MBC

18th/19th President's Cup (inter-county teams) Bradford

23rd Brideg4Fun Play with an Expert MBC

28th Bill Hughes Simultaneous pairs Deva BC

## The Eric Howarth Trophy

*by Danny Miller*

Match 1 and Danny's opponents had an unfortunate problem on this deal.

*Dealer West Game All*

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

Danny reports - 1NT by West and it was not a good day to select this bid. North's double showed hearts or hearts and a minor. East passed expecting it to be taken out, but South was content and West had nowhere to go – even running to clubs is -800. 1NT was five down and 13 imps against the heart game at the other table.

On the hand below Danny conjured up a bid with great success. I opened one club on the South hand and received a one spade reply. Not having a rebid that showed 8 tricks in a minor I decided to show where my values lay with a two heart call! After all if 3NT is the correct spot it will be better played from the North hand. Two hearts had the somewhat dramatic effect of enticing partner to use RKCB, to which I responded five hearts to show two aces and no queen of hearts – indeed not! Partner now bid 5NT asking for any outside kings and again I was honest, after all I could not have much more and partner obviously has at least KQ(J)x of hearts and the other two aces. After that the Grand Slam was easy to reach.

	♠ 8		♠ A J 10 4 3
<i>South</i>	♥ A 10 4		♥ K Q J 5 3 <i>North</i>
	♦ 9 3		♦ A 2
	♣ A K Q 8 6 4 3		♣ 10

Paddy Murphy reported that on that deal against him Catherine Draper and Dave Debbage had a more standard auction. 1♣ - 1♠ - 3♣ - 3♥ - 4♥ - 4NT - 5♥ - 5NT(intended as a grand slam try but taken as king asking) - 6♣ - 7♥.

There also arose a classic defensive problem which both Danny and others failed to solve

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

♠ A J 9 4      *You*  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ J 10 6 5 3 2  
 ♣ 10 8

After your right hand opponent has shown a very good hand with hearts, he arrives in a contract of six hearts. You lead a diamond and see this dummy. The lead is won and the heart nine is played, with partner playing the six and declarer the five. Now a spade is led from dummy to declarer's king and.....? If you win, or think before ducking, then you have just let the contract home. Declarer will use the other dummy entry to take the winning club finesse, but if you do not give away the position, he will almost certainly play your partner for the spade ace. Declarer held ♠ K Q 3 ♥ A K Q J 10 5 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A Q

## EBU National Pairs

*by Bob Pitts*

In mid-March the area qualifiers took place for the EBU National Pairs. The same hands were played at all nine centres around the country with the top fifty partnerships to go forward to the final. There were five pairs from the Deva BC taking part at the Bradford heat, but none of us could string together two good sessions to go through.

This deal had points to discuss for both partnerships.

*Dealer North EW vul.*

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

I think players are too often swayed towards no-trump contracts at matchpoint scoring and this can affect their judgement. If North opens a weak no-trump how would you handle the South cards? Jumping to 3NT could be a winner but why not involve partner by showing your suits. In one of my regular partnerships South can transfer to clubs and then bid hearts to show shortage - very useful here. Another route could be to show both minors with shortage in hearts or just a simple three clubs to show a slam try in clubs. A quarter of the field opted for a no-trump contract and not surprisingly none of them got a decent score. A few reached the club slam which was not always made, but a better money contract than 3NT.

As East which heart do you lead v the no-trump game (you are leading a heart aren't you?). The ace will get an encouraging card from West, OK if you play low encouraging but if playing standard signals West has to choose between the six or the jack and the jack may block the suit if East next plays the four. When East continues with a small card and West wins, the next round makes the position clear. If East initially leads the four, when partner's jack wins trick 1 and returns a heart East must be careful not to win cheaply as otherwise the suit will be blocked, but isn't it obvious that West holds at least Q J x x ? Not every defender got this right.