



Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Bulletin

Issue 49

AUGUST 2018

Editor's News

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The Garden Cities is the EBU inter-county event for the club champions of each County. There are four area heats with the top two at each of those going through to the National final, and as mentioned in the previous bulletin, our representatives, the Deva club, qualified for the National final. That took place in June and the team played excellently finishing as runners-up in a very strong field. The team in the final were David Stevenson, Liz Commins, Chris Pope, Andy Prothero, Paul Roberts, Julian Merrill, David Flacks, Peter Hall, with John Hampson, Seb Jones and Keith Shuttleworth having been part of the team for the qualifier.

Well done to all of them and thanks for showing everyone that we play a pretty good game in Merseyside and Cheshire.

Presidents Cup

by Paul Roberts

The Presidents Cup is an annual inter-County teams-of-eight event which usually involves counties that take part in the Northern League, though a few other counties outside of the region do sometimes take part and are very welcome. M&CBA finished a disappointing 6th this year but we did have an occasional success.

In the final session I picked up ♠ 7 6 3 ♥ A Q 7 5 4 3 ♦ Q 7 6 ♣ K. Not the greatest opening bid but I tried one heart. With our opponents silent, Julian responded three diamonds, which shows 16+ points and either a very good 6+ card suit or a respectable one with primary support for my suit. I bid the obvious three hearts and Julian rebid three no-trumps. I decided to bid on and chose four diamonds - clearly forcing and Julian asked for key cards before settling in the diamond slam.

Julian's hand was ♠ A K ♥ K 2 ♦ K J 10 8 4 2 ♣ A 9 6

Diamonds broke 3-1 (the ace was singleton) and hearts were 3-2, so slam was making in no-trumps and hearts as well as diamonds. The no-trump slam is laydown on any defence and distribution but six diamonds is clearly better than six hearts.

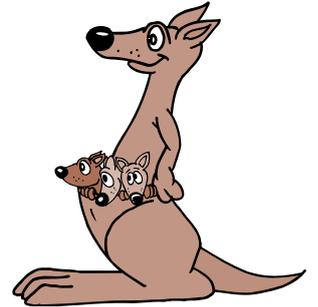
We were the only pair in the four tables involved in our match to bid any slam on these cards and that was clearly down to Julian's decision to force on the first round of bidding. His suit is clearly substandard for our agreement but his choice was heavily influenced by the problem of what his second bid would be if he responded differently (the only other choices are two diamonds, or two no-trumps showing a balanced 16+). It also made it much easier for me to bid four diamonds over three no-trumps on a minimum hand. Julian's bidding had improved my hand substantially as I now know that my club king and diamond queen are important cards, so we can underwrite five diamonds and the slam might well be on.

Unfortunately I cannot see how to reach the perfect six no-trumps, but maybe that's just being picky!

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer South. Game All



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

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass	2NT ²
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

1. Game forcing enquiry 2. No 3-card spade support; no 4-card heart suit; no 5-card diamond suit

West led the jack of hearts. Declarer counted seven top tricks and the most likely way to generate the extra two tricks he needed was by developing long tricks in spades. If spades were 3-3 any play would work. However, declarer saw that playing the ace, king and another spade would waste his nine. So after winning the first trick with the ace of hearts, he led a low spade from the table. East followed with the two and declarer played the nine from hand. After that held, he cashed the spade ace and crossed to dummy with a low club to the ace. Next he played king and another spade, throwing two low clubs from his hand.

Upon winning the fourth round of spades with the queen, East shifted to the nine of diamonds. Declarer covered with the ten and this was taken by West's jack. As cashing the ace of diamonds was likely to give declare an overtrick, West exited with a heart and declarer claimed nine tricks; four spades, three heart and two clubs.

Declarer's play in spades was best. It picks up four tricks against all 3-3 breaks, Q J doubleton with West, east holding four spades with the queen and jack, plus a jack or queen doubleton in the East hand. This offers slightly more than a 60% chance of making four tricks in spades - quite an improvement over the 39% offered by just banging out the ace, king and another spade. Not to mention that, on the given layout, banging out ace, king and another spade would allow East to lead diamonds through declarer's hand twice.

Garden Cities Final

by David Stevenson

On Board 25 Liz held ♠ 7 4 ♥ Q 9 7 5 4 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ Q 10 5 and opened the bidding with a multi two diamonds. LHO doubled, I responded two hearts (weak relay) and the three no-trump bidding card appeared on her right. She decided to try the seven of spades for her opening shot.

Board 25

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

A look at the whole hand shows that it makes without a spade lead. However, I heard that at two other tables North led a spade and South played the jack at one table and the ace at the other. The jack gives two stoppers and the ace means South has no entry if declarer plays the diamonds correctly. At our table I played the spade five showing an odd number and declarer had no recourse. I followed in diamonds with the five then the two to show I liked the initial lead and Liz played another spade when she got in with the diamond queen for a thoroughly deserved +100.

Board 41

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

Even at this level players holding AKQ to seven of a major feel that it should be the trump suit and this deal was played in hearts at half of the tables, even reaching the seven level in one case. At our table Liz and I bid 1♥ - 2♣ - 3♥ - 4♣ - 4♦ (RKCB for clubs) - 4♥ (0 or 3) - 4♠ (asks for club Q) - 5♣ (no) - 6♣. The play seemed slightly tricky after a spade lead, so I cashed a top heart discarding a spade then ran a club to the queen at trick 3. This lost but I now had the entries to establish and run the hearts for 12 tricks.

(The Deva team gained 12 imps on the first of these boards and 24 more on the second, on their way to an excellent second place in this national event - Editor)

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.

August

5th	Friendly match v Derby	Blundellsands
11th	Northern Bridge League round 2	

September

11th	Andrew Rosebowl (County mixed pairs)	tba
22nd	Northern Bridge League round 3	

October

6th	Northern Bridge League round 4	
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November

10th	Waterworth Cup (County GP pairs)	MBC
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December

9th	Merseyside Cup	Deva
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Jim Davies Teams

by Barry Jones

Our team that won this event last year included Geoff Toon, a schoolfriend of Al & Stu, but unfortunately as he lives in California he was not available this time. Fortunately we had a super-sub and were still able to lift the trophy.

There did not seem to be much of interest in the hands, though this one brought us a handy swing.

♠ 10 8 6 5 4

♥ 9 5 4 3

♦ Q 7 5 3

♣

♠ A 9 7 3

♥ K Q

♦ 8

♣ A 10 8 6 5 3

♠ Q 2

♥ A J 8 2

♦ J 6

♣ Q J 9 7 4

♠ K J

♥ 10 7 6

♦ A K 10 9 4 2

♣ K 2

Sitting West I opened one club and Mark responded one heart. South overcalled two diamonds and I repeated my club suit. North failed to raise so Mark could bid three diamonds to ask for more information. I showed my heart control with a call of three hearts. Mark agreed the suit with four clubs and I went onto the club game.

A diamond was led and the suit continued which I ruffed. A hopeful trump ace was played next but North showed out. After a quick rethink, I continued with the king of hearts, then the queen which I overtook with dummy's ace. I threw a spade on the heart jack and played dummy's last heart on which South discarded (merely delaying the inevitable). I ruffed the heart and exited with a trump to South who then had to lead away from the spade king or give me a ruff-and-discard, either of which would concede the contract. At the other table, the declarer in the same contract lost their way going one off

Thanks to David Stevenson for organising the event and the Liverpool BC for hosting it.

(The winners were Barry Jones, Mark Weeks, Alan Stephenson, Stuart Matthews and the runners-up were David Stevenson, Liz Commins, Paddy Murphy and Tracy Capal).

Llandudno Swiss Pairs

by Paddy Murphy

Congratulations to John Sansom & Jason Hackett on their joint win with Rodney Lighton & Neil Thomas of the Llandudno Swiss pairs event.

Swiss Pairs is a difficult form of scoring with each board in a 8 board match being worth 12.5%, so 7 average boards and a bottom is fatal. It is thus vitally important to focus on every board as the first or the last board of the set could be the opportunity to shine or recover the match. One board Jason and John played against Chris Pope and Paddy Murphy was a classic example of the skills needed to win such an event.

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

The bidding was

West	North	East	South
1♣	2NT(i)	3♥(ii)	4♣(iii)
5♣	5♥	Pass	6♠
All pass			

(i) Majors (ii) Good defensive raise (iii) Tell me more

The six spade bid was a good shot as North was likely to be void in clubs and the match was going badly (current score was likely to be close to 2-18), however the play illustrates the extra chances an expert player has for gaining information. The ace of hearts lead was ruffed and a trump was led to dummy with everyone following; another heart was ruffed, then a club then a heart then another club and a final heart were all ruffed. As both East and West followed to the four hearts and a trump and were known to have club length Jason crossed to dummy with a trump and played the winning heart pitching a diamond. No diamonds had been discarded at this point and he surmised that West was probably 1-4-2-6 shape and he thus assumed that with three diamonds East was more likely to hold the diamond queen and took the finesses against East to make thirteen tricks. Scoring +1010 was worth 95% of the match-points and helped them to hold the loss to 7-13.

Note the forthcoming County events and PLEASE support them if you can

Andrew Rosebowl County Mixed Pairs September 11th

Lady Connell trophy (County KO teams) - entry info. available soon

Waterworth Cup County Green pointed pairs November 10th