



County Newsletter



Inside this issue:

Seniors Congress by the Editor	1
Llangollen Swiss Teams	1
Latest Results	1
Endplays by Pete Foster	2
Everything in Context by Bob Pitts	3
Calendar	4
Bridge Handicapping by Mike Swanson	4

IMPORTANT— The County are in need of a new Webmaster. After many years in this essential role, Jean Keen is stepping down and we need a volunteer to replace her. Many thanks to Jean (& Dave) for having undertaken the job for so long. Contact Paul Roberts if you are able to help.

EBU Seniors Congress

John Hampson and Julian Merrill have an excellent record in this event. Last year they won the A' final of the pairs event from a very good field. This year they managed a very creditable 5th in the A' final and then went on to achieve success in the Swiss teams, finishing 2nd with team-mates Barry and Barbara Stoker from Surrey. It is important to 'push' in teams events though sometimes this requires good play to justify your optimism. On this deal Julian did exactly that.

Dealer North Love All

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

Latest Results

In the North Wales one day GP pairs event in October, Peter Kaufmann and Chris Pope finished in second place. Chris and Peter were also winners of the North Wales teams with teammates Simon Edwards and Paddy Murphy.

The Chester Bowl was won by George Eakin and Angus Clark. Paul Roberts and Julian Merrill were the runners-up. The consolation final was won by Mark Weeks and Peter Sumption.

David Stevenson and Liz Commins won the LCBA October green-pointed pairs event .

David and Liz along with Paddy Murphy and Matt Foster won the LCBA Foundation Cup event at the beginning of November.

East opened 1 diamond in second seat and Julian overcalled 1 spade. An unassuming cue bid of 2 diamonds from North encouraged 3 spades from South, duly raised to game. The opening lead was a diamond and East cashed 2 rounds before switching to the king of clubs. Julian won this and drew the missing trumps. In order to succeed four tricks are required from the heart suit and from the play so far it seemed that East did not have too many of those. With no outside entry to dummy except in hearts it was essential to guess the suit correctly. Julian began by leading the heart ten and had the courage to run it when West did not cover, though if he had it would have been easy to take a later finesse against the heart nine. Note that this line of play works whenever East has one or two cards in hearts as long as none of them are the jack.

It is also worth noting that West had stayed strangely quiet. With a shapely hand a pre-emptive raise of East's opening seems obvious - in fact five diamonds seems a good two-way bet, but at only 7 of the 30 tables did E/W play the hand.

Llangollen Swiss Teams *by Bob Pitts*

As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, this is one of my favourite events each season. It is well organised, the venue provide sensible food and the atmosphere is excellent. I spotted only one current World Champion in the field this year, but there were many players with international experience. If this puts you off entering, do not fear - my team gained a useful swing when a well-known pair of internationals had a 'Blackwood accident' and declared a Grand Slam off a cashing ace. That plus some good play from my teammates Liz Commins, Barry Jones and Paddy Murphy helped us to finish in second place behind Michael Byrne's team (he had the World Champion on his side).

ENDPLAYS

or ... What to do before the Fat Lady sings

By Pete Foster

If you have heard of the term 'end-play' and are familiar with the technique then read no further.

Otherwise, this is a simple technique often used to avoid having to guess the location of a key card or to force the opposition into giving you a ruff-and-discard to dispose of a possible loser. It can also be used to force someone to lead away from a high card that you cannot pick up by other means. All of these are good reasons for considering looking to endplay an opponent. An 'end-play' is essentially a point in the play where you throw one of the opposition onto lead and they have no safe exit card that will prevent you from making your contract.

The following hand came up recently in a Manchester League match and demonstrates the principle very well.

♠ A Q 4 2
♥ Q 5
♦ A 3 2
♣ A 10 9 4

♠ K 8 7 6 3
♥ A 6
♦ 9 8 5
♣ K J 6

This is the situation with you declaring four spades from the South hand on the lead of the four of diamonds. Trumps are no worse than 3-1 so you should begin by counting your tricks. Five spades + three aces and the club king make nine. You could try a sneaky heart towards the queen, but this relies on a defensive error. If we knew who had the club queen, 10 tricks (or even 11) would be easy—how lucky do you feel? It is in this type of situation when you are wondering which way a finesse should be taken, that you should often look for an end-play to assist you.

If you win the opening lead with the diamond ace, draw trumps, then play ace and another heart, whoever wins the heart king has an unpalatable choice of plays. They can cash their two diamond tricks but then have to broach the club suit or give you a ruff-and-discard.

There is a slight improvement on the play; after drawing trumps, exit in diamonds. If the defender on the left plays a heart at any point you can try the queen, just in case, of course if that is covered by the king you must win and exit in hearts to produce the position mentioned above. If you follow this line and the first heart play comes from the player on your right, you must not attempt to let it run round to dummy, because if the player on your left wins the king and exits in the same suit, it will be YOU who are end-played. Just hop up with the heart ace and throw the problem back onto the defence.

Not rocket science, just a simple endplay that can guarantee your contract. Looking out for such opportunities will improve your results.

Everything in Context by Bob Pitts

The final round of this season's Northern Bridge League took place on October 13th (I have apparently been incorrectly referring to it by its old name of the Northern Counties League - sorry). There was not a great amount of cheer for our players, though the C team were a creditable 2nd in this round, but none of our teams finished above halfway overall in their divisions. Ah well...there is always next season.

As the A team were out of the running in their division they could afford to risk playing me, with John Hampson trying to keep me under control. The nicest thing about the day was the superb ethics displayed by everyone. For instance, if a player thought for a long time in the auction, their partner always accepted that as fact without being prompted and the T.D had little to do except put the boards out and print off the results.

I thought that this hand was fascinating as the 'normal' play was not the correct one. West opened one spade, I overcalled two diamonds and East's negative double got West to make a marginal overbid of three spades, which was the final contract. I led the diamond king, which declarer won to play three rounds of trumps. Now his next move was the heart jack. Well I know that the correct play is to cover with the queen in order to disrupt the potential later entry to the long hearts. However when he won with the ace and exited with the ten, taken by the king, John was endplayed and had to allow access back to dummy to discard the losing diamonds. Whilst my play was right within the heart suit itself, I had not given sufficient consideration to the whole deal. Had John's diamond five been from a doubleton, we would still have time to attack clubs from my side, and if it was the actual position, we might still have a chance if I don't cover the first heart. Right play, wrong context. So, assuming I get it right and don't cover the first heart, can you see the only working defence from the South seat after taking the king of hearts at trick five?

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

Ace and another club does not work, as declarer can then ruff the third round of clubs and take the heart finesse to get rid of his diamonds. A small club is not effective either as West covers with the ten, North has to play the queen and after winning the king in dummy, the next club has to be won by South and declarer still gets time to discard those diamond losers. However, see what happens if the jack of clubs is selected. Declarer cannot duck this, otherwise South has sufficient winners to defeat the contract and if the club king is taken, North get in on the next round of clubs. My first instinct was to berate John for not unblocking one of his high spades to avoid the endplay, but look at those trump pips!!! Shows that I was not with it on this deal; if I had been I might have found the magic lead of the club queen at trick 1 which would have solved all defensive problems.

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

Editor : Bob Pitts
 21 Dingle Road
 Leeswood
 Flintshire CH7 4SN
 Phone : 01352 771304
 E-mail: bob.pitts1@btinternet.com

Contacts and information

MBC : www.merseybridge.org.uk
 LBC : email jo-rogerarnold@talktalk.net
 Deva BC : www.bridgewebs.com/deva
 Angus Clark (county secretary) :
aandsclark@aol.com
 Dave Keen (chief selector) : email admin@mcba.org.uk
 County website : www.mcba.org.uk

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.

December

9th Waterworth Cup (County Pairs) MBC

January

7th - 11th BGB simultaneous pairs Clubs

19th/20th Chester Congress Deva BC

February

3rd County Trials MBC

10th Merseyside & Deeside Cup MBC

17th Jean Keen trophy MBC

March

2nd/3rd EBU Ranked Master Pairs Daventry

7th Charity Challenge sim. pairs MBC

10th Eric Howarth Cup (teams) Deva BC

April

8th-12th BGB simultaneous pairs Clubs

14th Annual Charity Teams MBC

A new Bridge handicapping system? *by Mike Swanson*

One Tuesday in November the Merseyside Bridge Centre held it's annual Men v Ladies bridge match. Each side had five teams of four and each team played a 5-board match against each of the opponent's teams, scored by imps but with a simple "1 for a win, half for a draw" scoring system for each match so there were 25 points at stake. When the ladies found out that Ted & I were to play they came up with an ingenious handicapping system for us as you can see in the picture. Yes we did wear them throughout and we were both somewhat dizzy by the end of the evening. The result? The men slaughtered the ladies by 13 points to 12.



The only hand I can recall was this. After Ted bid 4♥ I was uncertain what to do, so I decided to find out if 4NT was to play, and when Ted showed me two aces we came to rest in 6♣. North had two aces for her double and when she led the heart ace at trick one my troubles were over, though with South holding the diamond king the contract was always making.

	♠	♠ J 10 x x x	
	♥ K Q x	♥	
Mike	♦ Q x x	♦ A x x x	Ted
	♣ K Q J 10 9 x x	♣ A x x x	
	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♣	1♥	1♠
	3♣	3♥	4♥
	4NT	Pass	5♥
	6♣	Double	All Pass
			<u>South</u>
			2♥
			Pass
			Pass