A belated Happy New Year to all readers!!

It all seems a long time ago now but I do hope that none of you got the lurgy as badly as I did over the Christmas/New Year period. All plans and celebrations cancelled, including food and alcohol, worse luck! 😞 😞 😞

Yet one has to try to find a silver lining in every cloud. I spent several days on the sofa with the fire on, dog on my feet and tissues to hand, going through a box of old papers that needed filing, and found my old TD course papers. Oops. How much had I forgotten! Well, It prompted me to make my New Years Resolution to get back on top of the Laws and improve my directing.

Bridge is a funny old game—it must be one of the few games where many people start and carry on playing without having a real idea of the ‘Rules’ of the game (as opposed to the mechanics or the system one plays).

As we know, it can be very complex and there are always a plethora of views at the table as how to deal with any particular error or mishap! Of course as players we are not to determine our own rectification at the table, but properly call the Director, to ensure full equity is restored. In this issue we focus on the Laws of Bridge with several articles and celebrate the fantastic success of 6 of our Nottinghamshire players in recently passing the TD course assessment. Well done all!

Best wishes ❤
Editor

Have fun with Bridge in 2017!
Readers Forum

This is a section whereby anyone can post their thoughts on aspects of the game, including a technical query. I will do my best to supply an answer including contacting EBU on your behalf if needed. If you wish to supply or respond to these articles please contact the Editor. Note that these articles are the personal views of Nottinghamshire Club Players who send them in and not of NCBA/EBU.

Someone recently asked about Dummy responsibilities. Tim Anderson our County TD kindly provides this answer.

‘Having none partner? What are dummy’s rights?’

A hand of bridge is played by declarer and two opponents.

Dummy’s task is to sit there, play cards as instructed by declarer, and keep count of tricks won and lost by arranging them appropriately at the end of the trick.

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Is that all? Well, nearly but not quite. And there is some misunderstanding about this – be warned that if Dummy exceeds their rights, the director is entitled to penalise the offender!

Dummy’s rights are spelt out in Law 42 and Law 43 in the EBU law book (the “red book”). Here are the qualified rights in Law 42B:

1. Dummy may ask declarer (but not a defender) when he has failed to follow suit to a trick whether he has a card of the suit led.
2. (S)he may try to prevent any irregularity by declarer.
3. (S)he may draw attention to any irregularity, but only after play of the hand is concluded.

What does this mean? It is OK to say, “having none, partner” or equivalent if declarer fails to follow suit. It is NOT OK to point out irregularities such as revokes, leads from the wrong hand etc. during play; you have to hold your tongue and wait until play is finished. Then Dummy can call the director.

But what about provision 2 above? Dummy “may try to prevent any irregularity by declarer.”

This is widely misunderstood. Let’s say it is declarer’s lead, and declarer calls for a small spade from Dummy. Can Dummy say, “It’s your lead”? 
No! **Law 45 C** says “A card must be played if a player names or otherwise designates it as the card he proposes to play.” The small spade therefore has already been played. Dummy has no business drawing attention to the irregularity, and can be penalised for doing so.

What if the lead were in Dummy and declarer seemed to be about to lead from their hand? The usual interpretation is that it is OK for Dummy to warn declarer that the lead is in Dummy – since the card is not yet played. If the card is played though, it is again too late.

The law is, I have to say, somewhat confusing on this point. Law **43B 2(a)** is stern: If dummy, after his violation of the limitations listed in A2, warns declarer not to lead from the wrong hand, either defender may choose the hand from which declarer shall lead.

Still, currently I doubt you will be penalised if you “try to prevent an irregularity” in this case, provided it is BEFORE the card is played and declarer has made some obvious signs of being about to lead from the wrong hand. If either of these is not the case, Dummy must keep quiet.

What if there is, say, AKQJ2 of Spades in Dummy and declarer, the lead being in Dummy, asks for “a Spade”? Dummy is obliged to play the 2 of Spades, without fuss or question, because the law states that **if no rank is designated, the lowest rank is presumed.** The seemingly innocent question “which Spade”? is against the law and should be penalised.

What if declarer asks for “the Jack” when there is both a Jack of Spades and a Jack of Hearts in Dummy? The law says that **Dummy must continue the suit, which won the previous trick** if applicable. If Dummy won the trick in, say, Diamonds, then declarer must clarify and Dummy can say, “which Jack”?

What about if Dummy spots an irregularity such as a revoke by a defender? Can Dummy call the director? **Law 9** addresses this point:

3. **When an irregularity has occurred dummy may not draw attention to it during the play period but may do so after play of the hand is concluded. However any player, including dummy, may attempt to prevent another player’s committing an irregularity (but for dummy subject to Laws 42 and 43).**

Note that Dummy is specifically prevented from trying to prevent revokes by defenders, so it is not very clear what other irregularities Dummy is allowed to prevent. However, let’s say Dummy noticed that a defender had dropped a card on the floor, say. I doubt anyone would object if Dummy pointed this out, so as to prevent an irregularity later on.

Finally, Dummy can tell Declarer that he has pointed a card incorrectly (showing a trick lost when won or vice versa) but only until the lead to the next trick (**Law 65 B3**).

**Overall, the intent of the laws is that Dummy does NOT participate in the play, other than as declarer’s agent to play the cards mechanically. Sometimes it is hard to bite your tongue, but that is the game of Bridge**
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING COMPETITIONS MATCHES & EVENTS

There have been some exciting events and results recently- and there are more coming up.

Do think next year about entering some of these competitions and events- there are activities for all standards and all levels of ‘competitive edge’. All clubs welcome visitors though check websites for timing and conditions (e.g. if sole players can attend).

❤️ County Teams update

Nottinghamshire has 3 teams of Eight in the County Leagues; one in each of the 3 Divisions competing respectively for the Dawes, Porter & Markham Trophies.

15 January saw Nottinghamshire lose its unbeaten record in the Dawes losing 20:0 Away to Warwickshire (in the prestigious West Midlands venue) in a highly disappointing performance. Porter also lost 14:6 but congratulations to the Markham winning 14:6. Well done, Warwickshire – And thanks for the excellent tea!

If you have a look on the NCBA website you can see the full results of our County Teams together with a short commentary on some of the most interesting hands of the night, by NCBA Chair, and Dawes player, John Auld. It is always instructive to follow commentary on own hands as an aide for developing ones skills- so take a look.

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<tr>
<th>Current Results</th>
<th>Dawes</th>
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<td>Notts v Worcs</td>
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<td>3:17</td>
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<td>Oxf v Notts</td>
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Keith Rodgers County Team Captain- wants to hear from You if you are interested in playing for the County at any time.
The first round of the NCBA Nottinghamshire Teams of Four Knock Out Championship was won by Mark Goddard (1st left) Ankush Khandelwal (3rd from left) Rob Sharpe (4th) and Willie Crook (5th) with John Auld Chair NCBA presenting. Well done, guys. There were 9 teams and 8 go through to the second round. Full results are on the NCBA website. Stage 2 and 3 look set for some nail-biting matches as this is highly contested championship.

NCBA is hosting these forthcoming competitions.
For further information please contact Events Manager Graham Brindley by email at graham@brindley57.plus.com or by phone on 0115 9232186

A) The Journal Cup on Sunday 23rd April. This 'all-play-all' event is the county’s open pairs competition. The top three pairs are eligible to play in the Corwen Trophy, the EBU organised pairs championship for top placed players in the county pairs championships across the country.

B) The Priday Cup Finals on 30 April. This friendly "No fear" competition for players NGS 8 and below aims to support less experienced players develop their competitive competition skills. We invite Nottingham clubs to hold a qualifying heat (part of a normal club night) in the period from 14th March to 10th April to identify the top willing 3 pairs to go forward to the Priday Finals.
Don’t forget the on-going NCBA Winter Pairs. Held every second Wednesday on an accumulator basis with Butler Imps scoring through until April. Come along and enjoy classy top level bridge. If you are looking for a partner contact the county secretary Clare Batten at CPBatten@yahoo.com who will act as a contact point.

♣ NCBA Diary Date:

Please note the NCBA AGM is to be held on 10 May. We will be arranging for a special speaker. There are some interesting agenda items so come and contribute to how Bridge is organized in the County.

Decisions are made by those who show up!

There will be a game of Bridge afterwards with some refreshments so it would be helpful to have an idea of numbers. Please let Clare the Secretary know ASAP if you can attend.

❤ Nottingham Bridge Club’s Diary Note:

Sunday 19 March – Nottingham Bridge Club AGM followed by the friendly pairs Broadhead Bowl and supper is included in the normal table fee. Please come along.

Tuesday 28 February – Nottingham Bridge Club hosts its annual Max Radford and Poyser cups. These are the ‘similar’ pairs competitions. It will be run as a normal drive, but the top men's pair and top ladies' pair will win the respective trophies. You need to be a member of the club to enter.

♦ EBU Comps

As well as County and Club competitions, don’t forget that EBU runs various competitions throughout the year. These are not just for the ‘elite’.

The Ranked Master Pairs, Master Pairs and National Pairs are coming up shortly and are held in various venues around the country so travel is not so awkward. Have a look at comps@ebu.co.uk for some ideas and give it a go.

Somebody said you only get better by playing against better opponents so don’t hold off from trying some of these events- they are not that scary!
Café Bridge returns to Nottingham

As mentioned in the December issue, Café Bridge aficionados are set for a further excellent treat in Nottingham on 5th April. Café Bridge Nottingham has been going for several years now, initially organized by Phil Meats and Toni Smith, there is now a superb team of loyal supporters helping this charitable event become the highlight of many people’s Bridge calendar. If you haven’t tried it, give it a go. It will blow your mind!!

These events are in aid of Beaumond House Hospice, a Newark based Charity, supporting people and their families with terminal cancer.

Café Bridge works by pairs playing duplicate Bridge across different venues out in the public domain under some interesting movements devised by movement expert Phil who scores using BrIAn, the hand held device recently featured in EBU magazines.

This popular event gets Bridge into the public eye, enables participants to sample the delights of the best local restaurants and cafes, and provides a social fun event all in a good cause. We have a quality raffle for which local artist Judy Meats donates a bespoke painting, amongst other prizes as well as donating her time in supporting the organization behind the scenes. Come and join us!

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ALL CLUB SECRETARIES

Don’t forget that this Newsletter is issued to all clubs and players in Nottinghamshire that we are aware of so is an ideal way to advertise your forthcoming event whether that is a training, social or competitive bridge event. Just send details to Clare, the NCBA Secretary.

Keep up to date with what is going on by regularly checking the NCBA website calendar, which lists all the various competitions and events. Items in this Newsletter are just a snapshot.

Click on link below for various events. http://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoj/bw.cgi?club=nottinghamshire&pid=display_page85&sessid=52761165593049

NB: You do not need to be an affiliated club/member to have your news item included.
Get Involved - Protective Bidding

In duplicate bridge, it is good practice to strain to prevent your opponents from playing in a low level contract.

In this article, we shall discuss the situation in which an opening bid of 1 of a suit by an opponent will be the final contract unless you protect, i.e. take some positive action. The first thing to decide is what high-card point count, HCP, is required. The traditional suggestion is that you “borrow a King”, i.e. you add 3 to your HCP. The logic is fairly clear, even if not the figure you actually add.

The opener has bid at the 1 level, so doesn’t have an enormous hand, and his partner has passed, so your partner must have some points. Thus, with a suitable distribution, i.e. a shortage in the suit opened and support for the other 3 suits, and an HCP as small as 9, you should double for take-out.

Example 1. You are dealer, sitting North, and the auction starts P 1H P P.
What should you do holding ♠ KJ42 ♥ 65 ♦ K73 ♣ Q632?

The answer is that your hand satisfies the above conditions perfectly, so you should double.
The complete deal is:  
N  KJ42  65  K73  Q632  
E  A5  AQJ42  AJ4  875  
S  Q1063  K73  Q92  KJ4  
W  987  1098  10865  A109

Your partner will bid 1S, which will probably end the auction. Note that E can make 7 tricks, (4 in Hearts and 3 Aces, and S can make 7 tricks, 3 in Spades, 1 in Hearts, a Heart ruff and 1 trick in each of the minors). Thus your re-opening bid has really paid off.

Suppose now you are in the protective position and have a balanced hand. Can you protect and, if so, when and how?

Before we answer this question, let us consider what HCP is required for an immediate overcall of 1NT. The traditional answer is 15-17. Bearing in mind the “borrow a King” idea, that suggests that, with a balanced hand having an HCP of 12-14, you should protect by bidding 1NT. In fact this range is traditionally changed to 11-14, the reason being that, if you have 11 HCPs and partner has 13 HCPs, you can often make 3NT since you can place most of the outstanding points.

**Example 2.** You are sitting W and the dealer, N, opens 1H and the next two players pass.

What should you do holding ♠K93  ♥J102  ♦K864  ♣A75 ?

You are sitting in the protective position, you have a balanced hand and 11 HCPs. So you should bid 1NT, even though your holding in Hearts, the suit opened, is weaker than you would like.

The complete deal is

N  A5  AKQ43  A9  8642  
E  QJ102  965  Q73  KQ3  
S  8764  87  J1052  J109  
W  K93  J102  K864  A75  

(Note that N can make 7 tricks, 5 in Hearts and 2 Aces, and W can make 7 tricks in No Trumps, 3 in Spades, 3 in Clubs and 1 in Diamonds.) Thus again your re-opening bid has paid off.

**So get Protective!**
Recently NCBA arranged for new TD training to be held in Nottinghamshire. Congratulations to Nottinghamshire players included in the list below, who have recently passed the exams this time around and so who are now newly fledged Tournament Directors:


Laws Challenge
This questions was posed in the last Issue:
‘Why not make it a New Years Resolution to take on board and apply some of the basic rules: here’s one: If your partner follows suit and 2 seconds later, after the opponents have followed, your partner says, oh I didn’t mean that card and replaces it with another. Is he ever allowed to do this? THINK!! Answer in next Issue.’

Answer
Generally a card played can’t be changed. There are Laws to determine when a card is ‘played’. But, also some exceptions. Have a Look at the Red Book Law45C(4)b: Unintended designation: ‘Mechanical error’ is often quoted as the reason for changing one’s played card. But you should call the Director as s/he will need to determine if it was a mechanical error or a change of mind, which is not allowed. And there may well be lead penalties or other sanctions depending on who wants to change their card for a mechanical error. CALL THE DIRECTOR!!
**Nottinghamshire Youth Bridge**

The newly resurrected Nottingham University Bridge Club lost their second match in the knock out Portland Bowl competition against Durham. Therefore they leave the competition. But hey, a good start to their first season. **Well done guys!**

**The Uni Club members want to thank EBU/EBED, Nottingham Bridge Club and NCBA for their continued support.**

**Young Bridge Challenge**

This will take place in Loughborough on 4\textsuperscript{th} March and is a fun day of bridge for young players of all abilities. There are competitive tournaments – including the Schools Cup – but also more relaxed tournaments, including a minibridge competition. Entry is free. For more information, or to enter, please contact [lisa@ebedcio.org.uk](mailto:lisa@ebedcio.org.uk)

**Best Defence by Ian Dovey**

This hand came up in a recent Team-of-Four match. After a weak 2S opening bid, N/S got to 4H – played by South.

West started with the spade Ace and saw partner drop the Queen. The King of spades saw East show out.

What now? – (Declare is now showing 4 spades to the Jack and 5(+) hearts, and at best East is K x in the trump suit).

Richard Page, who plays most of his bridge at Woodborough, found the switch to a diamond ....... and declarer went one down.

Although West can play a third spade giving East the opportunity to ruff there are no more tricks for the defence.

This was declarer’s hand.

Well done, Richard Page.
INVITATION

DO YOU WISH TO LEARN ABOUT EBUScore?

We are currently discussing with EBU for them to come and deliver a presentation in Nottinghamshire on the EBUScore system. EBU have said that EBUScore may have to be used to score the To8 in the future. Some clubs may wish to consider whether to adopt this new free system rather than Scorebridge/other currently being used.

If your club, or you as an individual, are interested please log your name with Clare the Secretary. If there is enough take up we will arrange for this session at a mutually convenient time and place.

ADVERTISEMENT

FOR NEW COUNTY TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

NCBA need to recruit a few more County TD's to cover natural wastage (our current County TD Tim Anderson is likely to move to a different County in the near future) and ensure that there is always a non-playing County TD available for County competitions. After all, directors like to play in some competitions too so we need more than one.

NCBA are willing to support financially as well as with mentoring etc. volunteers to undertake this role for the County. There is one course a year for this role, run by EBU usually in their home offices in Aylesbury. There is a first day in May and then the 2-day assessment in September. The exact dates, cost and venues are yet to be decided. Have a look at the EBU website for more details.

If you wish to volunteer to support Bridge in Nottinghamshire in this fashion please forward your expression of interest to Clare the Secretary. A NCBA selection process may then have to be undertaken if there are many applicants. It is important to note that NCBA would be sponsoring any such recruits on the basis that they do contribute their time and expertise to NCBA Bridge in a range of ways, for a defined period of time. This can be discussed further with all interested applicants. Please log your interest with Clare by 1 April in order to arrange funding and secure a space on the course as there are limited numbers.
Spotlight on: Ravenshead Bridge Club

Ravenshead Bridge Club is an unaffiliated club north of the city, which prides itself on serving the local community. They have 2 drives a week: Monday sees the Club play Rubber Bridge and then they switch to Duplicate on a Thursday. The club has a modest turnout but they are looking to increase numbers.

Clive Aveyard, the Chair for the past two years, told me that they are always willing to receive visitors and new members and they have a particular focus on bringing on beginners and developing players.

Club members have forayed out into nearby clubs such as Woodborough to play in a friendly Teams of Eight locally arranged match or just as visitors. They also are a social club and have excellent Christmas parties. ‘What makes our club stand out, is our friendly social approach. This helps us make a real contribution to the local community’ added Clive.

He also explained, when asked why his club was unaffiliated currently, that his Committee would need to see a tangible benefit to affiliating to the EBU to justify the cost. However, gamely Clive agreed to join a group in the summer discussing how EBU and NCBA can better support smaller and local clubs, including those unaffiliated to EBU.
(Editor: More details of that initiative will be posted in the next Newsletter but if anyone wants to express advance interest in this group, please contact the Secretary Clare)

Look on the Ravenshead website for more details or contact Clive at caveyard22@aol.com if you would like more details about the club or wish to come along as a visitor. You will be given a warm welcome by Clive (right below) and his members (below)!
The 2016/2017 competition is progressing satisfactorily with just over half of the season completed:

**Division 1**

The position in Division 1 is the closest it has been for some years with four different teams having led the division at some time since the start of the season. It now looks like a straight fight between Nottingham Gambit and Retford A for the top spot. Woodborough Red have matches in hand but will have to score some notable wins to avoid being relegated.

**Division 2**

The second Division has been as competitive as always with just over half the season completed. It now looks to be between Keyworth A, Woodborough White and Retford B for the promotion places. Phoenix Red, having come very close to withdrawing from the League in early December, have gamely decided to carry on and were rewarded with a good win in January.

**Division 3**

Nottingham B, Keyworth B and Sunday Tigers Cosmos have opened up a gap between themselves and the chasing pack and the two promotion slots look, at the moment, to be between these three teams.

For current league tables go to:-
www.bridgewebs.com/nottinghamshire/
and select "League for Teams of 8" from the left hand menu.

**Chris Clark**
**Secretary, NCBA Teams of Eight League**
CALLING ALL SOCIAL ASPIRING AND FUN BRIDGE PLAYERS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: WE NEED YOU!!

NCBA TEAMS OF FOUR LEAGUE 2017

Don’t forget that if you fancy the idea of entering a Team in this excellent friendly and fun Summer League you will need to contact Keith Spencer (keith.m.spencer@btinternet.com) by the end of April. Too many Teams missed the deadline in 2016 so get thinking about your summer teams now as, Spring will come around very quickly. Indeed with this unseasonal warm weather (it was 9 degrees today and I painted my shed in the sunshine!!) you might be fooled into thinking spring is here already- probably like the daffodils!!

REMEMBER YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE A CLUB MEMBER, NOR AN EBU MEMBER, TO PLAY IN THIS LEAGUE. TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND PASS ON THE INFORMATION TO THOSE YOU KNOW IN UNAFFILIATED CLUBS- WE WANT EVERYONE ON BOARD!!

NCBA has taken the opportunity to review the To4 Rules, making them similar to the To8 for this season, bar a more the relaxed eligibility. They are on the NCBA website and duplicated here for your information. Please note the To4 is not a club event- it is a squad of 6-8 persons event so nominated players are not needed. Thanks to Jane Hall for her attention to detail and drafting skills.
RULES FOR NCBA “TEAMS OF FOUR” LEAGUE

The League is under the management of the NCBA committee. All players are expected to ensure that matches are arranged and played for mutual convenience and enjoyment. Where problems arise captains are urged to consult one another to resolve matters to mutual satisfaction.

Postponement of matches causes problems to all and every effort should be made to complete fixtures on the dates agreed.

General

1. The entry fee for the league is payable before the start of the season.

2. Any squad wishing to enter or withdraw their team must do so before April 30th.

3. All differences and disputes that cannot be settled between teams shall be referred to and settled by the NCBA Committee, whose decision shall be final. For any breach of any of these Rules or any other irregularity, the Committee may impose such penalties either by way of deduction of points or otherwise as it may think fit.

4. If at the end of the season a team has played less than half of their matches then the results for the matches they have played are cancelled. If the offending team has played half or more of their matches then their results stand and the other teams in the division that have not had the opportunity to play against the offending team are awarded VPs along the following lines:-

   The non-offending team receives (a) 12 VPs or (b) its average score in VPs for the season or (c) 20 minus the offending team's average score in VPs for the season, whichever is the greatest.

5. New teams entering the League will start in the lowest division.

Eligibility

6. The League is open to any squad of players. Membership of the EBU or NCBA is not required.

7. No player may play for more than one squad within the League in any one season.

8. A squad may consist of up to 8 players. Names must be submitted to the League Secretary who will publish them on the website.
9. Any team that includes an unauthorised player for one or more matches will incur a penalty of 5 VPs for each occasion. Unauthorised players are those who have previously played for another squad in the same season.

Matches and Results

10. Matches may be played on any day and at any time to suit both teams. Matches are to be played over 24 boards with imps scoring. Where 24 boards cannot be played (for whatever reason) the same victory point scale should be used. At least 18 boards must be played.

11. Matches are played within several rounds. Each round has a finishing date. If there are difficulties in arranging a date to suit both teams then the home captain is expected to offer three alternative dates for the match before the finishing date. These must be in different weeks and on differing days and the away captain must accept one of these alternatives. The League Secretary must approve any exceptions.

12. If a ruling on the laws of bridge is required, the captains of both teams should be called, and they should attempt to agree on a ruling. (For help contact the League Referee: details at the end of the Rules). All irregularities should be reported to the League Secretary either at the time of the occurrence, or with the result sheet. No appeal will be considered once the result sheet has been signed by both captains. Captains are advised not to sign a score sheet if they have a dispute that could not be solved on the night.

13. Results of matches must be returned to the League Secretary within 7 days of the match.

14. Matches must be played by September 30th. Matches not played by then will be recorded as 0 – 0 unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See note 1)

15. An agreed match date may be re-arranged only by mutual consent or, in exceptional circumstances, on application to the League Secretary who may sanction rearrangement or refer to the NCBA Committee.

16. Where matches are postponed, even by mutual consent:

   (a) Within 7 days, a penalty of 3 VPs may be incurred by the team that postpones the match. Within 2 days, a penalty of 6 VPs may be incurred by the team that postpones the match.

   (b) A statement to the effect that a penalty is due should be entered on the reverse of the results sheet and signed by both captains. Penalties for late postponement of matches cannot be waived; they **must** be notified in this manner. Any dispute should be communicated to the League Secretary, in writing, as soon as possible.
(c) Penalties for postponement will generally not be applied if there was an acceptable reason for the team that postponed the match being unable to meet its commitment. In these cases no statement is needed on the results sheet. Acceptable reasons include: poor weather conditions (e.g. thick fog, snow), sudden illness of team members.

(d) The process of re-arranging a postponed match is the responsibility of the captain of the team, which caused the postponement, and the venue may be specified by the other team captain. Any expenses incurred by the team not at fault (e.g. for hire of venue) should be made good by the team that postponed the match.

17. Non-arrival or late arrival of one or more members of teams is treated as a late cancellation.

**All of one team is present**

(a) If no members of the offending team are present 45 minutes after the scheduled start, then the match can be abandoned.

(b) If some members of the offending team are present (this constitutes notification):

i) After 30 minutes of late arrival (notified or not) the match is reduced by 2 boards and for each extra 15 minutes a further 2 boards. A total of 18 boards must be played. For each board not played 3 imps is awarded to the non-offending team.

ii) The match cannot be abandoned until 1 hour 30 minutes has elapsed from the scheduled starting time. (Note: This period of time may enable the team to be completed either by the arrival of the player(s) or by replacement player(s) being found).

**Neither team is complete at the scheduled start**

(c) The team which is completed first is the non-offending team and Rule 17 (b) applies.

**Abandoned match**

(d) The offending team is penalised by 6 VPs and the non-offending team awarded 12 VPs or its average score for the season or 20 minus the average score of the offending team whichever is the greatest.

18. As a matter of course, any team not completing the full fixture list by September 30th is not eligible for promotion to another division, irrespective of their position in the league. Applications for exceptions to this rule should be made in writing to the League Secretary as soon as possible, and each case will be considered by the NCBA Committee. (see note 2)

19. At the end of each season, provided that the structure of the League remains the same, within each division the two teams with the most VPs will be promoted to the division
above and the two teams with the least number of VPs will be relegated. In the event of a tie the team that won the head to head will take precedence.

Rules of Play

20. Computer dealt hands may only be used with the prior agreement of both teams. Prior being; when the match is confirmed and again, for the avoidance of doubt, before the match starts.

21. All pairs should have matching convention cards. Failure to do so will mean that when any bidding dispute or ruling on the laws of bridge is required (see Rule 12 above) players without convention cards will always be disadvantaged. (See note 3)

Notes:

1. If one team is entirely at fault, (including withdrawal from the league after the half-way point) that team receives 0 VPs. The non-offending team receives (a) 12 VPs or (b) its average score for the season or (c) 20 minus the opponent's average score, whichever is the greatest. Matches may be played after the end of March with the prior permission of the League Secretary.

2. Only teams that can demonstrate beyond doubt that their failure to complete their fixtures is through no fault of their own may be exempted from this rule. The Committee's decision is final.

3. Convention cards can be downloaded from the EBU http://www.ebu.co.uk/laws-and-ethics/convention-cards and customised to individual pairs' systems.

To the League Secretary:

Keith Spencer
Keith.m.spencer@btinternet.com
Telephone: 0115 9655314

Referees:

County Tournament Director: Currently Tim Anderson
Telephone: 0115 922 477
As well as being the county secretary I am also one of the two shareholders for the county. Twice a year I go down to London on behalf of Nottingham to the shareholders meetings. I also attend and Chair the Midland Working group. I represent all Nottingham EBU members at these meetings so I am anxious to know everyone’s views how bridge should be organised.

Things will change with time and it is important that all members are involved in this process. In the future it may well be that bridge is organised on a regional rather than county level. One topic that has been discussed at these meeting is the **national grading system (NGS)**. Many clubs are using the NGS system to run handicapped events. The county uses the system to exclude the top players from our “No Fear “event, the Priday cup.

The EBU has now written to all clubs asking for their views on the NGS. It may be useful to explain what this system is and some of the factors used to calculate it. The idea is that this system assesses your current performance whereas master points show your lifetime achievement. Each time you play a session of bridge at an EBU club your data is sent to the EBU. They use this information to work out how much money is owed to them from the pay to play system and allocates your master points.

But the data is also used to calculate your performance as a percentage. This is then converted to a grade ranging from a two to the ace of spades. Each time you play and data is added, this percentage can go up or down. I am not going to go into the maths behind how they reach whether you get a positive or negative percentage for each session. I don’t understand it myself! Two other things they use are the grades of the other people playing that evening or the strength of your opposition as it called, and the grade of your partner.

If you go to the EBU website you will find a list of the grades of all the EBU members. If you do not want to have your ability listed then you can opt out but to do this you have to log on to the members area. If you do log on you will see all your session data. If you have a regular partner or partners then you can also see your partnership grade. This can be higher or lower than your individual grade. It can give you an idea of how well you play as a partnership.

The EBU have always had an opt out available for people who act as a host however, you will see below, that they want to remove this and are asking for views from clubs. **It is important we contribute to how Bridge develops as it is our game.**
Precis of the EBU Consultation Paper recently issued to all Clubs:

The EBU’s National Grading Scheme has now been in operation for over five years.

EBU think this an appropriate time to consult with clubs to establish whether there was anything further, which could be done to improve the NGS.

One proposal is to remove the ability to exempt a pair from the NGS calculation, and all therefore results will be included. **We would like your feedback on this proposal.**

To remind you, one host player in each session, with their partner if desired, is currently permitted to have their score exempted from inclusion in the NGS calculation, providing they express their intention to be exempted in advance of the session starting.

This exemption was included so pairs, which come about when an unfamiliar partnership is created at short notice, with no time to discuss a system, do not have their NGS adversely affected.

Instead, we are seeing instances where a player appears to be exempted with great frequency, but only when they get a bad score – their good scores are always included. This indicates that they wait until the session is scored before choosing whether to be exempted, and therefore appears to be willful manipulation of the system. Others have been exempted even when playing with regular partners.

Remember players who do find their grades are lower than they think merited by their ability or for whatever reason can, always opt to have their NGS shown as “private” until they get back to what they believe to be an appropriate grade. You can read more about the NGS in [this article](#).

If you have any other thoughts or ideas relating to the NGS then please get in touch with Gordon Rainsford: [gordon@ebu.co.uk](mailto:gordon@ebu.co.uk)
ROLL OF HONOUR

If you recall from the December Issue, we focused on saying thank you to those who help out in making Bridge successful in Nottinghamshire. Did you play your part and thank those in your club? A few warm words goes a long way in rewarding folk and keeping volunteers on board.

In particular the Editor was contacted to say a special thanks to

😊 Mel Sheppard 😊

for all the work he does for Nottingham Bridge Club. Whilst many people help out at the club, I was told that he has stepped into the vacant shoes left by the unforgettable Dinah Mairs and is always there without being asked, covering all duties such as Directing, providing access for the club, emptying the dishwasher, preparing Boards sorting out the Bar etc.

Being prepared to drop by and open the club up takes personal time and Mel is unselfish, of a personable giving nature and supportive to so many at the club that he therefore deserves a huge and public vote of thanks.

Consider yourself well and duly thanked Mel!!!

(Editor: content based on verbal report by a club member)

Keep those votes of thanks coming!!

◆ Erratum: Rebecca Ronan won the Southwell Café Bridge last autumn not Rebecca Rance. And Steve Fordham was in the winning Crantock Bowl Team. Apologies guys.
COUNTY MATCHES: THE FOURTH DIMENSION!!

A very exciting development has been initiated by NCBA with our neighbouring County’s. We currently have teams in each of the three County Leagues. But how do we build capacity and develop up and coming players for the future?

Currently there is no scope for people to get skilled up for moving into the county scene, or just to gain experience at a more competitive level.

THAT IS- UNTIL NOW!

We have agreed to start holding ‘friendly’ County matches outside the main Leagues. This will enable interested players to have a go and build capacity for the main County matches in the coming seasons. If you are interested in this please contact Phil Dale or Ray Furlonger, joint Captains of the 4th league. rayandjulia@furlonger.co.uk phil.dale7@btinternet.com

The first match is scheduled for 7th May against Derbyshire.

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2016 NCBA Committee members and Officers (and their home club)
President Gordon Fullerton (Keyworth)
Chair John Auld (Nottingham)
Secretary Clare Batten (Nottingham)
Treasurer Ian Dovey (West Bridgford)
County TD Tim Anderson (W Bridgford)
To4 convenor Keith Spencer (Woodborough)
To8 convenor Chris Clarke (East Bridgford)
County Captain Keith Rodger (Nottingham)
Communications & Promotions Toni Smith (Woodborough & Nottingham)
Website Keith Spencer (Woodborough)
Events Manager Graham Brindley (Nottingham)
Other committee members: Anthony Pettengell (Phoenix & Nottingham & Woodborough)
Jane Hall (Woodborough)

Any comments on this newsletter or related issues are welcome. Please contact Editor Toni or Secretary Clare or any NCBA Committee member.

Any articles or bridge information for inclusion in future Issues happily received. Editor: tonitsmith@tiscali.co.uk

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