

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2016-17

April 2017

Programme

This month we have -

- Apr 3rd : League 10
- Apr 10th : Spring Pairs 2
- Apr 17th : Easter Pairs
- Apr 24th : Spring Teams 3

Prior entry is only needed for the League, for which this is the last match.

GCBA WEEKENDS

In April we have

- Ace of Clubs Final taking place on Sunday 2nd, at Cheltenham Bridge Club. Qualifiers from clubs should know if they are coming. The event starts at 1330 hrs.
- The Cheltenham Congress runs 28-30th of the month at the Chase Hotel. There are distinct events on each of Friday, Saturday and Sunday. See the brochure on the web site for full details.

OTHER WEEKEND EVENTS

You can also obtain a good game of bridge in various neighbouring counties in coming months; in planning ahead you might look at

- 13-14 May has a Swiss Teams weekend at Solihull (West Midlands BC)
- 20-21 May has a Swiss Pairs followed by a Swiss Teams at the University of the West-of-England, organised by Avon CBA.
- 27-29 May has the EBU's Spring Bank Holiday congress at Stratford.
- 10-11 June has the Oxfordshire Congress taking place in Woodstock.

EBU's Garden Cities

This competition has been running since 1987; it is an inter-club competition run initially within counties, and then with county winners progressing to one of the four regional finals, from which the top two teams progress to the final.

It is a team-of-8 competition and Gloucestershire has nearly always been represented by Cheltenham Bridge Club, but occasionally by other clubs. Clubs interested need to contact the CTD to indicate their interest, and will need a play-off with the Cheltenham entry.

Cheltenham Bridge Club won the national final in 1998 and in 1999, and had three second places in 2001, 2002 and 2003. They missed the final twice after that, and then re-started; they came 4th in 2012 and 3rd in 2013 but have not qualified for the final since then. Their next chance is on 6th May this year.

Faulkner Salver (EBU Seniors)

This has been the EBU's knock-out teams for seniors since 2003, and there were two county teams in the 57 who entered this year. Garry Watson's team is in round 4 after two wins and a BYE, and play their fourth round match on Easter Monday.

Meanwhile, the Constable team lost in the first round but there is a repechage which got them back in, but they lost again in round 4 to Peter Shelley's Avon team (whom Garry Watson beat in round one, but they also came back).

GCBA Results

The final of the Winter Teams was won by Patrick Phair & Steve Evans, Roy Collard & Val Constable on a split tie. (Patrick replacing Ian Constable in round two). The Swiss Teams was won by Alan Wearmouth's team (Tony Hill, Mark Rogers, Peter Waggett).

The first session of the Spring (Swiss) Pairs saw 15 pairs take part and the (unbeaten) leaders were John Cuncer & Mark Rogers, followed by Roy Collard & Val Constable.

On the ninth match in the League the Wearmouth team had a disaster and lost 0-20 to Ashok Kwatra & David Simons, Lesley Harrison & Mike Wignall, allowing the Angseesing team to close to 1 VP behind. Meanwhile in Division Two (originally the bottom half of Div One) the leader is Mark Rogers' team, and in Division Three Wendy Angseesing's team is 14 VPs ahead of Jim Simons' team.

In the second session of the Spring Teams it was a win for Ashok Kwatra & David Simons, Paul Lilley & Pam Pearce ahead of Alan Wearmouth's team. But it is the Constable team leading the series overall.

In the County Pairs Final (8 pairs) it was Roy Collard & Pam Pearce ahead of Ian & Val Constable.

BBO has added a wonderful new facility build around declarer play problems. Once logged in go to PRACTICE -> TRAINING TOOLS -> BRIDGE MASTER and choose the level of problems you fancy.

Ever come across this? Craftily lead diamonds after ending in three no-trumps (6)

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Winter Teams 6

This hand from the final session proved to be a difficult slam to get to. It was bid at 2/8 tables in the Swiss Teams and at 0/4 tables in the play-offs.

♠ AJT932		
♥ AK		
♦ 87		
♣ A54		
♠ --		♠ 7654
♥ 82	B 11	♥ J7654
♦ Q6432	DLR S	♦ K9
♣ KQJ962	VUL:none	♣ 73
♠ KQ8		
♥ QT93		
♦ AJT5		
♣ T8		

The South hand is a 1N opener for many but for the strong NT brigade the opening is 1♦. After a 1N opener, North can transfer into spades and then might suggest some slam interest (but it is not clear how); South has a good minimum but swap round the clubs and hearts and slam is poor, so there just won't be enough momentum to get there. And things are less clear if West bids (a jump overcall of 3♣ has much to recommend it).

What about the suit opening? One table was 1♦-1♠-2♠ (by NS) and then West came to life with 3♣ - a better option on the first round! North was interested in slam and tried 3♥ which his partner raised. Since South had bid three suits, North felt sure there were short clubs opposite and bid 6♠ happily.

At the other table after 1♦-1♠ it was a 1N rebid, and now the South hand showed good spade support in response to checkback, and that enthused North sufficiently (along with a diamond cue bid) to bid the slam. Is it not funny how a different system and hence opening can change the outcome to such an extent?

CBC Pairs

This hand presented some nice footwork by East-West (if they were put to the test).

♠ KJ76		
♥ Q973		
♦ Q6		
♣ T75		
♠ 32		♠ 95
♥ T4	B 13	♥ K62
♦ J9752	DLR : N	♦ AK843
♣ A983	VUL: all	♣ KJ4
♠ AQT84		
♥ AJ85		
♦ T		
♣ Q62		

East opened 1N but South had system and showed the majors; North was happy to choose 2♠ but East had a maximum with short spades and produced a takeout double. This is not without dangers but at pairs ...

West of course bid diamonds and North continued and they ended in 3♠. On a diamond lead, declarer will ruff the second round and draw trumps, and follow with a heart to the jack. One might prefer to lead the ♥Q next to cater for KT62 hearts onside, but surely West would have led a singleton heart.

Who has the doubleton heart is a mystery, as East might just have a 2254 shape or the actual 2353. Clearly crossing to dummy and leading the ♥Q will get you no heart losers and so nine tricks, but ♥A is not silly and if you do that you are forced into playing another heart.

Now the problem is in East's plate. Clearly a diamond ruff-and-discard is wrong, so clubs have to be broached. With this holding sitting over dummy, there is only one card which gets three tricks for the defence – leading the jack. The East-West who first pushed the opponents to the three level and then found this defence did deserve their good result!

League 9

One big distributional hand stood out from the rest on this session

♠ AK9875		
♥ Q		
♦ --		
♣ AQ9852		
♠ 4		♠ QT62
♥ T632	B 21	♥ K8754
♦ AJ76532	DLR N	♦ KT8
♣ 6	VUL: NS	♣ T
♠ J3		
♥ AJ9		
♦ Q94		
♣ KJ743		

Most tables saw North open 1♠ over which partner bid 2♣. West now came in – the nervous ones with 2♦ but those evaluating the position better with 4♦. North clearly now has a massive hand and must find a way of telling partner this.

The only bid which does that is 5♦ (although some Norths had also been able to bid a less clear 4♦). The 5♦ bid tells everyone about enormous club support – enough support to under-write a slam opposite perhaps as few as 9 hcp and a three card club suit.

South is looking at two key cards now (♥A, ♣K) and should be able to tell that partner cannot have a 5♦ bid without the two top spades, and the ♣AQ. Since partner seems to have a losing heart, the North hand must also be void of diamonds. Is that enough to tell you that 7♣ is easy? It should be. [Sadly only three out of 12 tables found the grand slam]

But it is not over when you bid 7♣, as East-West have a good sacrifice available in 7♦. And it was bid against one of the grand slams and they had to settle for +1100 rather than +2140. It's a difficult game.