

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

Aug 2024

GCBA RESULTS

Summer Open Teams 4

1st Val Constable, Mike Wignall, Patrick Phair and Jim Simons.

2nd Ashok Kwatra, Leslie Harrison, Steve Evans and Paul Lilley.

Summer 9H Teams 4

1st Val and Gordon Atkinson, Wendy Leich and Mary Woolley.

2nd Ian and Wendy Melvin, Lois and Stephen Fletcher.

Summer Open Teams 5

1st Roger Miles, David Atthey, Peter Waggett and Mark Rogers.

2nd Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Steve Sasanow and Nick Haynes.

Summer 9H Teams 5

1st Paul and Sue Grierson, Chris Grierson and Deborah Kahn.

2nd Ian and Wendy Melvin, Lois and Stephen Fletcher.

Summer Open Teams 6

1st Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Jane Rowley and Nick Haynes.

2nd John Councer, Mark Rogers, Tom Jarman and Roger Miles.

Summer 9H Teams 6

1st Ian and Wendy Melvin, Lois and Stephen Fletcher.

2nd Val and Gordon Atkinson, Wendy Leich and Mary Woolley.

GLOS AND HEREFORD CONGRESS

Congratulations to Tony Hill and Alan Wearmouth on winning the Swiss Pairs. Alastair Catchpole and Steve Evans finished third. In the Swiss Teams, the Gloucestershire team of Ashok Kwatra, Arun Nanda, Leslie Harrison and Paul Lilley were second, with Tony Hill, Allan Sanis, Judy Sanis and Brian Goalby third. Congratulations to all successful entrants and thanks to so many local players for participating in a very successful face-to-face event.

CONGRATULATIONS

Very well done to Richard Chamberlain and Patrick Shields, who were part of the English Seniors team at the recent European Championships. The team finished in a creditable seventh place and has thus qualified to play in the 2025 World Championships in Poland.

A BLIND SPOT?

This hand cropped up in a teams event and resulted in a flat board as neither declarer managed to make their game. See if you can do better. West leads the Ace of clubs and you ruff in dummy. How do you proceed?

♠ J743
♥ 742
♦ AQJ963
♣
4♥ by S
♠ KQ
♥ KQJT93
♦ 85
♣ Q64

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♦	3♣
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

You would like to ruff more clubs on the table, but you lack quick entries to hand. Suppose you play a spade at trick two. West will win the Ace and then the defence can play two rounds of trumps. Now you are reduced to finding the diamond finesse working to give you enough tricks.

Unfortunately, the diamond finesse loses, and the defence take their club tricks to beat the contract by two.

It looks an unnatural play, but you can make the hand by leading the ♦Q from the table at trick 2. The defence can win this trick but if they now play Ace and another trump, you simply draw the trumps and run the diamond suit. If they try just leading a small trump, retaining the Ace, then you can win in hand, ruff another club and discard your remaining club loser on the diamonds. A spade switch leads to the same outcome.

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Playing the diamond Queen is nothing more than a ducking play that allows you to keep control of the hand but is not easy to spot and hence it is not surprising that both declarers had the same blind spot.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Getting a picture of the hidden hands will improve your game. If, for example, you are missing five cards including the Queen, and the suit divides 3-2, the Queen can be expected to be in the three-card holding with a probability of 60%. This is, of course, true not only for the Queen, but for any other specific card. Equally, the player with the Queen has a 60% probability of having a three-card holding when the suit is dividing 3-2.

Sometimes, defenders are kind enough to help you count the hand if they are playing length showing signals, but of course they don't always tell the truth!

By forcing the opponents to discard certain low cards it is possible to obtain information about the most likely distribution of the suit. Suppose KQ2 of a suit are missing and the ace is played, collecting an honour and the deuce; it can be inferred that the one who plays the deuce most probably has the missing honour, as the chance of the two being singleton is only one of the three 2-1 breaks.

This same principle can be applied to many other situations. If declarer has AKQ3 opposite 54 in a suit, and leads out the AKQ with both opponents following, the player holding the two is forced to play it else the 3 will be high. The position of the two indicates the most probable position of the missing card (four out of seven or 57%). Note that you cannot apply the same logic to the play of the six or higher cards in this example. Since these cards are higher than the 3, any of them can be retained as the first three rounds are played.

If the two and three are the only missing low cards, this same principle applies to both cards. If they are divided then you gain no clue, but if both are played from the same hand then the probability that this hand contains the length is very high. However, be sure to appreciate that you will need to see both small cards appear before reaching this conclusion.

SOLUTION TO JUNE PROBLEM

♠ JT9		♠ AKQ765
♥ AQJ	6♠ by	♥ KT6
♦ AQT3	West	♦ 98
♣ AQ5		♣ 87

East	South	West	North
		2NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

North starts with a trump lead, South following suit. How do you plan the play?

If trumps break 2-2 then you have a straightforward elimination play – draw the trumps, cash the hearts and play a diamond to the Queen. If North wins, he must lead round to your major tenaces or concede a ruff and discard. This play isn't guaranteed however against a 3-1 trump break. Start by testing the trumps. If they are 3-1 then draw a third round and make the key play of cashing the hearts before playing a diamond to the Queen. You are home if North has no hearts left as he is endplayed in the minors. If North is able to exit with a heart, then ruff on the table and play off the diamond Ace and ruff a diamond. If the Knave has fallen you are home but if not, then you fall back on the club finesse.

AUGUST PROBLEM

	♠ KJT73
4♥ By	♥ 9732
West	♦ Q4
	♣ KQ
♠ AQ94	
♥ A	
♦ T2	
♣ AT9542	

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♦	3♣	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

North leads the ♣3 to your Ace and declarer's ♣8. What is your plan for getting four defensive tricks?