

GCBA Newsletter

Season 2024-25

Jan 2025

TEACHER'S WORKSHOP

Recently there was a teacher's workshop for bridge teachers from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It was organised by Alan Stanfield of GCBA and chaired by Ian Sidgwick of GCBA and Chair of English Bridge Education & Development (EBED). A good discussion was held on various related topics and all delegates went away knowing more. Supporting our teachers and encouraging people to learn are obviously key to the future of our game.



*** MASTER POINTS RECORD ***

The EBU started issuing masterpoints in 1956. Grand Master Allan Sanis won master points in that inaugural year and has continued to do so **every year** since. Clearly this is a record which cannot currently be surpassed – well done Allan.

GCBA RESULTS

County League

Round 4 saw wins for teams captained by Richard Butland, John Cuncer, Patrick Shields and Jim Simons. Currently the Butland team leads the division, with teams captained by Patrick Shields and John Cuncer in second and third.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

Gloucestershire played Nottinghamshire in the December session with excellent results all round. The Dawes team won 19-1, the Porter team won 17-3 and the Markham team won 20-0. Congratulations to all the players who took part. These results put us top of Divisions One and Three, and third in Division Two.

AN UNUSUAL PLAY

♠ JT7
 ♥ JT6
 ♦ KQ752
 ♣ 75
 ♠ KQ8643
 ♥ 8
 ♦ T94
 ♣ KJ2
 4♥ by South
 ♠ A952
 ♥ AK542
 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ 6
 ♠
 ♥ Q972
 ♦ 86
 ♣ AQT9843

This deal arose in a recent match. How do you plan the play on the defence of two rounds of clubs?

The bidding suggests that West has at least nine black cards so the hearts might well be 4-1. If you ruff the second club, you are down to four trumps and in danger of losing control of the hand. The solution is to concede a heart whilst dummy still has a trump to take care of any further club leads. At the third trick you play a low heart to the ten. If this loses, you will have four hearts, five diamonds and a spade for your contract. Suppose that on this layout, East allows the ten of hearts to hold the trick! Now you lead a second heart and must duck in hand, allowing East to win the trick. A club continuation is still no danger as there is a trump in dummy and you easily come to ten tricks. It is unusual for both sides to make a critical ducking play in the same suit.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	2♠	Pass	3♣
3♥	4♣	Pass	Pass
X	Pass	4♥	All Pass

GCBA Newsletter

Season 2024-25

Jan 2025

IMPROVER'S CORNER

The above hand was about retaining control. Trump control features most frequently when you are somewhat short of trumps and may be subjected to a forcing defence. Consider this deal.

♠ 965		
♥ 84		
♦ 984		
♣ AQ863		
♠ KT		♠ J8432
♥ J763	4♥ by	♥ 52
♦ KQT62	South	♦ AJ5
♣ 95		♣ T74
♠ AQ7		
♥ AKQT9		
♦ 73		
♣ KJ2		

West led a top diamond and continued the suit to East's Ace who played a third round, ruffed by South.

Declare had plenty of tricks if the Knave of hearts fell so started by playing out the top trumps. When the suit broke 4-2, he tried to cash the clubs, but the defence was able to ruff the third round and force out South's last trump. The defence later won a spade and a further diamond for minus two.

South could have made the contract if he had considered that the most likely heart break was a 4-2 division. Look at the effect of leading the ten of hearts at the fourth trick. If the defence wins, they cannot profitably play another diamond as you can ruff with dummy's eight and make all the remaining

tricks. By conceding the trump early on, you retain control of the hand. In fact, on this layout, it is not unlikely that West will duck the heart lead, expecting his partner to be able to win so you might well finish with eleven tricks.

Retaining control is not limited to deals with a tenuous trump holding. Consider the following:

♠ K74		
♥ T85		
♦ Q73		
♣ A872		
♠ J96		♠ T
♥ K2	4♠ by	♥ J97643
♦ AKJ642	South	♦ T9
♣ 96		♣ JT43
♠ AQ8532		
♥ AQ		
♦ 85		
♣ KQ5		

You play in the spade game after West has made a 2♦ overcall. West leads ♦AK and another diamond and East ruffs the third round with the ten of spades. How do you play?

Counting your winners gives six spades, one heart and three clubs so all you need to do is ensure that you score your winners. Simply discard the Queen of hearts on the third trick and you are home. If you make the mistake of overruffing then you will be limited to five trump tricks and will be dependent upon a favourable club break or a successful heart finesse, neither of which materializes on this layout.

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER'S PROBLEM

♠ AK3		♠ QJ2
♥ KJ9872	6♥ by	♥ A3
♦ 5	West	♦ A83
♣ AQT		♣ KJ953

You play in the heart slam after South has opened the bidding with 3♦. How do you play on the lead of the 9♦ from North?

You have more than enough winners to make your contract, but you should appreciate that you will fail if you lose two trump tricks. There is nothing to be done if North has all five outstanding trumps, and you make easily if they break 3-2, so let's consider the 4-1 breaks. On the bidding, if anyone holds four hearts it will be North, so your best line is to win the lead, cross to hand with a spade and lead the Knave of hearts. If this is covered your problems are over, and if it isn't covered, you run the Knave. Of the 4-1 breaks, this line only loses to a singleton Queen with South. Your chance of success with this line is over 95%.

JANUARY'S PROBLEM

♠ 74		♠ J65
♥ AKT53	4♥ by	♥ Q86
♦ AJ8	West	♦ Q3
♣ AQ4		♣ KJ963

West arrives in 4♥ after North overcalls 1♠. North starts with three top spades. How do you plan the play?