

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

June 2024

GCBA RESULTS

Summer Open Teams 1

1st John Councer, Angelos Agathangelou, David Atthey and Roger Miles.

2nd Val Constable, Jack Armorgie, Patrick Shields and Alastair Catchpole.

Summer 9H Teams 1

1st Patricia Fleming, Paul Matthews, John Davies and David Bruce.

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

Summer Open Teams 2

1st Patrick Shields, Alastair Catchpole. Ben Ritacca and Jack Armorgie.

2nd Alison Pritchard, Mark Rogers, Tom Jarman and Roger Miles

Summer 9H Teams 2

1st Paul and Chris Grierson, Paul Price and Chris Hosking.

2nd Mark Sefton, Paul Harvey, Cathy Presland and Ian Pedder.

Summer Open Teams 3

1st Alison Pritchard, David Atthey, Mark Rogers and John Councer.

2nd Patrick Shields, Alastair Catchpole. Ben Ritacca and Jack Armorgie.

Summer 9H Teams 3

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

2nd Jacqui Moore, Chantal Ball, Tera Thomas and Geraldine Smith.

NATIONAL RESULTS

Gloucestershire teams competed in a couple of events at the beginning of June with some disappointing results. In the Garden Cities Final Cheltenham finished in bottom place of the eight finalists.

In the Inter-Counties league finals, the Dawes team finished fourth out of six teams in a close finish. The selected team had to be changed at the last minute due to illness and a freak result on one board in the final match cost the team 7 VPs, enough for second place if that single board had gone our way. The Markham team finished equal third in their event, when one more victory point would have given them second place.

In the Corwen Trophy, an event restricted to those who have performed well in their respective County pairs championships, Jack Armorgie and Alastair Catchpole finished in the top third of a strong field.

Congratulations to Jackie Davies who captained the team that won the latest EBU one day green-pointed Swiss Teams event.

FUTURE EVENTS

The Midlands Mixed Teams event takes place on July 6th on RealBridge. Applications to represent the County are welcome and should be made to rec@gcba.org.uk

July 20th and 21st sees the Gloucestershire/Herefordshire Green Point weekend, played at the Larruperz Centre in Ross-on-Wye. This is always a very friendly and enjoyable event so do support it if at all possible. More details can be found on the GCBA website.

This year's Cheltenham Congress will take place on Sat 24th and Sunday 25th August at Dean Close School. In addition to the normal Swiss Pairs and Teams events, there will be a 9 High Swiss Pairs held on the Sunday.

SIMPLE PLAY

How do you approach the following deal after North leads the ♥K?

♠ KQ753		♠ A64
♥ A2	4♠ by	♥ 8643
♦ AK4	West	♦ 82
♣ A93		♣ 8654

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

There is a reasonable chance of five spade tricks, four outside top cards and a diamond ruff on the table. Suppose you win the lead, take your diamond ruff and then draw trumps.

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If the spades are 4-1, then you will lose two clubs and one in each major. But you can overcome this problem. The correct way to play is to duck the opening lead and win the continuation.

Now after taking your diamond ruff on the table you lead a heart from dummy. If South follows you ruff and play two trumps finishing on the table. Now if the spades are 4-1 you just lead another heart from dummy and South cannot prevent you from making your small trump in hand.

In a recent pairs event, very few declarers made ten tricks.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

The vast majority of club players are playing purely for the social aspects of the game and the pleasure that playing gives them. As a consequence, they don't spend a lot of time on analysis and play in auto-pilot mode. Consider this very simple deal:

♠ AT3		♠ 7
♥ A42	3NT by	♥ 853
♦ 986	West	♦ AK7543
♣ AK43		♣ 762

When this hand was played in a duplicate pairs event, many players failed to make 3NT after a spade lead. I expect people saw readily enough that they needed to make 6 diamond tricks but started by playing the six of diamonds to dummy's Ace. Now even though the diamonds luckily broke 2-2,

the suit was blocked, and they were limited to 3 tricks in the suit.

The following deal is similar:

♠ J3		♠ AKQ
♥ J42	3NT by	♥ Q753
♦ J76	West	♦ A4
♣ AKQ53		♣ 8764

On a spade lead, declarer won perforce and called for a club from dummy. Now the rules stipulate that when a suit is nominated but not the rank, then the lowest card must be played, so the four was led from the table. When the clubs broke 3-1, the blockage in the suit restricted declarer to four club tricks, resulting in defeat.

These simple hands are misplayed (often by people capable of making far more difficult contracts) because when a hand looks easy, players do not give enough attention to the spot cards and play on auto-pilot.

Whilst clearly there may be hands when starting with your lowest card is essential, those hands are very rare, and most of the time retaining your lowest spot card will have no detrimental effect.

Hence, rather than always starting with your lowest card, adjust your 'automatic' play to starting with a higher spot card when declaring, hanging on to your lowest card until you see the hand develop – you will be surprised at how your game will improve!

SOLUTION TO MAY PROBLEM

♠ AQ9		♠ 542
♥ AJT952	6♥ by	♥ KQ63
♦ 3	West	♦ AK
♣ 652		♣ AKJ3

You reach your slam unopposed. How do you play on ♦Q lead?

There is a 100% line on this hand. Win the opening lead and draw trumps leaving a high trump on the table. Now cash the two top clubs and the other top diamond discarding a club from hand. You then play a spade towards your hand and just cover South's card.

North wins but is now stuck. A spade lead runs round to your major tenace, and a club lead allows you to score a club trick with either the Knave or the three regardless of how the club suit was originally laid out. Obviously, a diamond lead concedes a ruff and discard. In any event, you have your twelfth trick.

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?