

GCBA Newsletter

Season 2024-25

June 2025

SENIOR CAMROSE SUCCESS

Many congratulations to Paul Denning and Diane Kurbalija who were part of the Welsh team that won the Senior Camrose competition (Home internationals) in May. Patrick Shields and Richard Chamberlain played in the same event as part of the England squad (finishing fourth). We are proud that Gloucestershire has produced many players over the years who have represented their country and who act as an inspiration to others.

GARDEN CITIES

Well done to Stroud Bridge Club on reaching the National final of the Garden Cities trophy. In the South West Regional Final, the Stroud team of Mark Rogers, Peter Waggett, John Cuncer, Angelos Agathangelou, David Atthey, Alison Pritchard, Roger Miles and Tom Jarman finished a close second to a side from Dorset. The team went on to finish sixth in a strong final.

GCBA RESULTS

County Knock-out

Winners: Patrick Shields, Alastair Catchpole, Jack Armorgie and Garry Watson.

Runners-up: Richard Butland, Paul Denning, Richard Chamberlain, Andrew Kambites and Dan McIntosh.

County Pairs Championship

1st Alastair Catchpole and Steve Evans.
2nd Ashok Kwatra and Nick Haynes.
3rd Ian Sidgwick and Jane Rowley.

County 9-High Championship

1st Vince Milner and Pat Barbour.
2nd Liz Burgess and Rosie Dalton.
3rd Roger Eaton and Cathy Scott.

Summer Teams Round 1

1st Jack Armorgie, Alastair Catchpole, Tony Hill and Steve Evans.
2nd Ashok Kwatra, Leslie Harrison, Peter Swales and Paul Lilley.
3rd Patrick Shields, Matthew Toynbee, Andrew Bull and Garry Watson.

Summer Teams Round 2

1st Garry Watson, Matthew Toynbee, Andrew Bull and Patrick Shields.
2nd Peter Waggett & John Cuncer, Tom Jarman and Roger Miles.
3rd Allan Sanis & Toby Roberts, John Arblaster and Mel Barlow.

Summer Teams Round 3

1st John Cuncer, Mark Rogers, Roger Miles and Alison Pritchard.
2nd Steve Sasanow, Nick Haynes, John Stirrup and Jon Hancox.
3rd Jack Armorgie, Alastair Catchpole, Tony Hill and Steve Evans.

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

Sometimes you have options in the play, and it becomes important to play your cards in the right order to preserve those options. Consider this simple deal.

♠ K94		♠ 72
♥ KT2	3NT by	♥ Q6
♦ Q5	West	♦ AKT943
♣ K8752		♣ AJ6

North leads a low spade to South's Queen and you win with the King. There will be no problem if the diamonds come in for 6 tricks and if it proves that one defender stops the suit, then the club suit offers an alternative source of tricks. If you finesse against the Queen you may be able to score five club tricks to go with three diamonds and a spade. However, if you play the diamonds "normally" by cashing the Queen and then the Ace, you will be badly placed if one opponent shows out. You need to take a first round finesse in clubs but unfortunately, you are in the wrong hand to do that. The solution is very simple. In order to preserve the option of trying for five club tricks, you should play a small diamond to the Ace and then one back to the Queen. Then if the diamonds haven't broken, you can try the club suit.

On the next hand, care is needed. North leads the ♠Q against 3NT. How do you plan the play?

♠ K6		♠ A3
♥ AQ73	3NT by	♥ K84
♦ AJT7	West	♦ 98643
♣ K72		♣ QJ5

You have six top tricks and need to develop three more. One line might be to take a double finesse in diamonds and another would be to knock out the Ace of Clubs and hope the heart suit breaks 3-3. The diamond play is 76% and a 3-3 break only 36% - so not a close decision. Of course, you don't need to commit to one line over the other at this stage. If you win the spade lead in hand and play three rounds of hearts finishing on the table, then you will know which suit to tackle. If hearts were 3-3, you just knock the club Ace, and if not then you are in the correct hand to start on the diamonds. By playing the cards in the proper sequence, your overall chance of success is around 85%.

SOLUTION TO MAY'S PROBLEM

♠ AKT97		♠ QJ5
♥ 952	4♠ by	♥ 64
♦ A9	West	♦ K732
♣ K84		♣ A972

How do you the plan to make ten tricks after North leads a low trump?

One possible way home is to hope the clubs break 3-3 and duck a club at trick two. However, you have a much better line available in the form of a dummy reversal, something which is often a blind spot for many players. You can succeed by ruffing two diamonds and a club in the West hand.

Win trick one cheaply, cash two top diamonds and ruff a diamond with the ♠A. Next take two top clubs and ruff the last diamond with ♠K.

Now concede a club. Suppose South wins and plays a heart to North, who exits with a second round of trumps. After you win this in dummy, all that remains to be done is to ruff dummy's fourth club with the ♠10. You have made two trumps, four tricks with the ace-kings and taken three ruffs in hand. That is nine tricks and dummy's jack of trumps will be the 10th.

Note that if you still had the top trumps when you conceded the club trick you would have to win the second round of trumps in hand. Then, with no way back to the table, you would have had to concede defeat.

JUNE'S PROBLEM

♠ AQ		♠ 9874
♥ AKJT74	6♥ by	♥ Q53
♦ A	West	♦ K732
♣ A842		♣ K7

Play this slam after North leads a trump, South following suit.