

# GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2023-24

March 2024

## GCBA RESULTS

The Swiss Teams event which has been running throughout the winter has now concluded. Just one point separated the two top teams, with Patrick Shields, Garry Watson, Jack Armorgie and Alastair Catchpole edging it from Richard Butland, Paul Denning, Roy Collard and Tom Jarman. Leslie Harrison, Ashok Kwatra, Steve Evans and Paul Lilley finished third.

### County Leagues

In the penultimate round of matches, there were wins for teams led by Patrick Shields, Richard Butland, John Councer, Allan Sanis and Mike Lewis.

## WILTSHIRE CBA CONGRESS

Many congratulations to Jack Armorgie and Alastair Catchpole for their magnificent win in the Swiss Pairs at the recent WCBA Congress held in Bath. They did not lose a match all day and finished more than half a match clear of second place. Jack and Alastair also teamed up with Steve Evans and Tony Hill to finish a creditable 8<sup>th</sup> in the Swiss teams.

## NEWENT BOWL

Sixteen teams competed in a Swiss Teams competition for the Newent Bowl. The event was won by Judy and Allan Sanis, playing with Tony Hill and Alastair Catchpole, more than half a match clear of Steve Lawrence, Anne Summers, Ken Haines and Sue Wickenden.

## MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

The Final County match of the season was against Worcestershire, played F2F. Our hosts were very generous with their hospitality, and also their IMPs. The Dawes team won 19-1, the Porter won 17-3 and the Markham won 13-7. This means that in both Division One and Division Three, Gloucestershire came first, and finished fourth in Division Two. Congratulations to all the players who contributed over the season. The league winners have an opportunity for further honours as they will be invited to take part in the National Inter-County League Finals in June.

## TOLLEMACHE FINAL

Eight teams assembled in Coventry for this year's County teams-of-eight final. The team of Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh, Ben Ritacca, Peter Waggett, Richard Butland, Graham Cornell, Paul Denning, Garry Watson, Richard Chamberlain and Andrew Kambites represented Gloucestershire in a strong field. The team finished in a slightly disappointing sixth place overall.

## SENIORS TRIALS

Congratulations to Patrick Shields and Richard Chamberlain upon reaching the second stage of the trials to select an England team for the European Championships (Seniors) to be held in Denmark at the end of June. We wish them every success in the next stage in early April.

## A RARE SCORE

A 19 IMP swing on a board is very rare and, on this occasion, came about on a routine hand involving a monumental mix-up in a recent County League match. The result at the first table was E/W going one off in 2♦ for -100.

♠ 6	♠ A53
♥ Q94	♥ JT653
♦ Q43	♦ K952
♣ AKQT87	♣ 9
♠ T842	♠ KQJ97
♥ AK	♥ 872
♦ A86	♦ JT7
♣ J632	♣ 54

Events at the second table took a different path. West opened what could have been a short 1♣ and North doubled (a natural 2♣ overcall would have worked better). East tried 1♦ (showing hearts) and South bid 1♠ (close to 2♠ following partners double). North's bid of 1NT was raised invitational to 2NT by South but this was misinterpreted as showing diamonds.

Whilst this would have been the case after a 1NT opening or direct overcall, surely these systemic bids do not apply when South has already had a chance to begin to describe his hand. The rest of the auction turned into a battle with North taking a rosy view of his playing strength opposite a long diamond suit and South really having no idea what was going on. The final contract of 6♦X went 8 down for a score of 2000 to E/W.

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## IMPROVER'S CORNER

You will be familiar with the situation where you hold AJx sitting behind KQT9xx. Suppose one is played to the King - it is normal to hold off as this disrupts declarer's communications. What may not be so obvious is what to do when one is played to the ten. In reality, this position is essentially the same and holding off will likely encourage declarer to later try one to the nine. However, in this article I am going to encourage you to duck when you hold the Knave but NOT the Ace. Consider this deal:

♠ A82		♠ T965
♥ 93		♥ J54
♦ KQT953	3NT by South	♦ J4
♣ 74		♣ Q932
♠ J43		♠ KQ7
♥ Q876		♥ AKT2
♦ A86		♦ 72
♣ KJ5		♣ AT86

After a 1NT-3NT auction, West leads a low heart. You win and play a diamond to the 9, which wins. You return to hand in spades to play a second diamond to the ten. The roof falls in when East wins with the Knave as you can no longer set up and reach the diamond suit.

Here is another example:

♠ 862		♠ Q543
♥ 94		♥ J832
♦ AQT954	3NT by South	♦ J7
♣ 74		♣ Q85
♠ JT9		♠ AK7
♥ KT5		♥ AQ76
♦ K63		♦ 82
♣ KJ32		♣ AT96

Declarer won the spade lead and ran the eight of diamonds. When this held, he then played a diamond and paused for thought when West followed low. It seemed that either West started with KJxx, in which case the suit could not be brought in, or East had bravely ducked from Kx. Declarer decided to rise with the Ace on the second round and lost a contract that would doubtless have been made had East won the first round with his Knave. This stratagem also applies on this deal:

♠ A62		♠ 85
♥ 84		♥ J9632
♦ KT9753	3NT by South	♦ J4
♣ 96		♣ AT54
♠ JT943		♠ KQ7
♥ QT7		♥ AK6
♦ AQ2		♦ 86
♣ Q7		♣ KJ832

South wins the spade lead in hand and runs the diamond eight. If you allow this to hold, declarer leads another diamond and this time may well duck your partner's Queen, hoping for you to have started with Ace doubleton. If he does play like this then he will be cut off from the diamond winners in dummy. If you had won the first trick, declarer cannot go wrong later and will always make four diamond tricks.

So the tip is: Whenever dummy has a suit such as AQ109x or KQ109x, and appears to be short of entries, be willing to hold off with Jx.

You may well find that this daring manoeuvre offers the only real chance of preventing declarer from bringing in the long suit.

## SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY PROBLEM

♠ AQ6		♠ 7542
♥ A3	6♣ by West	♥ 9
♦ Q952		♦ AK
♣ AQ63		♣ K97542

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♣	2♥	4♥
4♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North showed at least 5/5 in the majors and South led the ♥K. Your play? It looks like the spade finesse will fail, so with eleven top tricks you need to organise an endplay. We start by winning the lead, ruffing a heart to eliminate that suit, and draw trumps and cash the top diamonds.

You now have a choice of elegant endplays. You could cash the Ace of spades to remove South's only spade and then throw him in with a diamond (discarding a spade from the table) and gain your twelfth trick via a ruff and discard from South.

Alternatively, you can ruff your last diamond on the table and then just play a spade and duck whatever South plays. Either North will win and have to return a spade into your tenace, else South will win and give you a ruff and discard.

## MARCH PROBLEM

♠ KQ753		♠ A92
♥ J72	6♠ by West	♥ A
♦ A9		♦ JT52
♣ K53		♣ AQJT2

East	South	West	North
1♣	1♥	1♠	3♥
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

How do you play on a heart lead?