

GCBA Newsletter

Season 2024-25

Mar 2025

CONGRATULATIONS

Gloucestershire has won the Midlands Counties League Division One, with our second team finishing third in Division Two and our third team runners-up in Division Three. Very well done to all those who participated throughout the season. The first team will be invited to represent the Midlands area in the National Inter-County league final in June.

COTSWOLD CUP

Sunday April 6th - 2pm at Cheltenham Bridge Club, sees our annual charity event in aid of the Sue Ryder Foundation. Entries are by pairs, and the organisers will team you up with appropriate teammates. There is a raffle and more. Do come along. [An Entry form is now available - click here.](#)

GCBA RESULTS

Spring Teams

This competition has now split into 2 divisions. In the top division of four teams the standings are currently:

1st Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Steven Sasanow and Nick Haynes.

2nd Jack Armorgie, Alastair Catchpole, Peter Waggett and Patrick Shields.

3rd Patrick Phair, Jim Simons, Val Constable and Mike Wignall.

4th Richard Butland, Paul Denning, Roy Collard and Ben Ritacca.

In the second division, the Swiss Teams, the leading positions are:

1st John Cuncer, Mark Rogers, Alison Pritchard and Roger Miles.

2nd Pat Emery, Ian Plewis, John Jenkins and Colin Lennox.

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

The final match of the season was against Worcestershire and played face to face. Unfortunately, Gloucestershire lost all 3 matches :- Dawes 9-11, Porter 3-17 and Markham 4-16. Had the Markham team held their loss to 6-14, they would have won their division.

OTHER RESULTS

In the national Seniors Knock-out competition, the team of Richard Chamberlain, Patrick Shields, Paul Denning and Garry Watson have reached the semi finals. This same team has also qualified for the knock-out stages of Crockfords Cup.

In the NICKO competition for club teams of four, three teams from Cheltenham Bridge club and one team from Stroud have reached the third round.

Well done to Alan Wearmouth for finishing second in the EBU Swiss Pairs in February, and to Jackie Davies for finishing third in the same event (where 58 pairs took part)

At the recent Wiltshire Green Point Weekend in Bath, in the pairs event, Garry Watson and Allan Sanis were the highest placed Gloucestershire pair (12th from 60 pairs). In the teams, Alastair Catchpole, Tony Hill, Paul Denning and Garry Watson came fourth from 29 teams.

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

Counting is an essential element of successful declarer play and there is nothing difficult in doing the arithmetic provided you take the trouble to observe and collect the necessary data. Consider this deal:

♠ T53		♠ AKJ4	
♥ AT3	3NT by	♥ 74	
♦ KQ5	West	♦ 742	
♣ K954		♣ AQ63	
East	South	West	North
1♣	3♥	3NT	End

North leads the ♥8 to South's Knave. You duck and win the ♥K continuation with the Ace, North discarding a diamond. You lead a top diamond which North wins with the Ace and returns the Knave. You duck and win the third round, South following suit.

When you play a club to dummy and cash a top spade, both opponents follow, but when you return to hand with a club, South shows out. At this point you have all the evidence you need to make the winning play. Have you been watching?

South has shown his shape to be 2731. Hence there is no point taking a spade finesse as even if it wins, you will only make three spade tricks. So you must play a spade to the Ace, hopefully dropping a doubleton Queen from South, scoring four spade tricks to make your contract.

The next deal is again a simple exercise in counting, but the conclusion leads to a spectacular outcome.

♠ K84		♠ 762
♥ AKJ42	4♥ by	♥ Q653
♦ AK5	West	♦ T83
♣ 82		♣ AQ5

You play in 4♥ after North has overcalled with 1♠. You win the heart lead and draw trumps, North having three. Now you take a successful club finesse and cash the Ace before ruffing dummy's last club, North following three times.

North follows to both top diamonds and you have reached the critical point. North has shown a 5323 shape and hence South must have started with a 2155 distribution. From the bidding and opening lead, you can be sure that North started with the ♠A so your winning play is play the ♠K.

The defence can then either take three spade tricks or two spades and a diamond, but following either of these they will have to concede a ruff and discard and with it the contract.

SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY'S PROBLEM

♠ AQ5		♠ 74
♥ KQJT95	4♥ by	♥ 742
♦ AK	West	♦ T9542
♣ J3		♣ K95

You arrive in 4♥ after South has opened 1NT (14-16). North leads a heart to South's Ace, who returns another trump, North following. What is your plan to make ten tricks?

The first thing to say is that if you still have the ♥5 in your hand then you have no chance of success as you need to be able to access dummy via the ♥7 at some point. The bidding marks South with the missing key cards and it looks at first glance like you might need to find North with the ten of clubs to succeed.

You can, however, give yourself an additional chance. Cash the top diamonds before running the Knave of clubs. South wins with the Queen but he cannot play a spade without giving you the spade finesse and a spade ruff for the contract.

A club return is no better for you now make a club trick and the spade finesse with the heart as an entry. Hence South must exit with a diamond but if the diamonds were 3-3 then you ruff high in hand and now dummy has 2 winning diamond tricks.

MARCH'S PROBLEM

♠ A93		♠ 7
♥ K8	6♦ by	♥ 753
♦ KQ743	West	♦ AT85
♣ 942		♣ AKQJT

You arrive in 6♦ after North has shown at least 5-5 in the majors. North leads the ♠K. What is your plan to make the slam?