

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2024-25

Nov 2024

GCBA RESULTS

Autumn Teams

At this stage of the competition, the leading four teams were separated into a mini-field to play against each other.

1st Patrick Shields, Peter Wagget, Alastair Catchpole, and Tony Hill.

2nd Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Steven Sasanow and Nick Haynes.

The remaining teams continued in the Swiss competition in which the current standings are:

1st Leslie Harrison, Steve Evans, Peter Swales and Lindsay Stewart.

2nd John Cuncer, Mark Rogers, Alison Pritchard and Roger Miles.

County League

Round 3 of this event saw wins for teams captained by Richard Butland and John Cuncer. Currently the Butland team leads the division, with teams captained by Allan Sanis and Patrick Shields in second and third.

Leslie Everett Cup

1st Richard Seymour, Liz Giles, Roger Williams and Stan Powell.

2nd Ian and Wendy Melvin, Steve Sasanow and Nick Haynes.

3rd Allan and Judy Sanis, Steven Betteley and Helen Morris.

MALVERN CONGRESS

At the recent Malvern Congress, the highest placed Gloucestershire pair in the Swiss Pairs was Allan Sanis and Garry Watson (7th out of 52 pairs).

The Swiss teams was won by a team containing Patrick Shields, with the all-Gloucestershire team of Mike Wignall, Ben Ritacca, Alan Wearmouth and Tony Hill in second place (26 teams took part).

MIDLAND COUNTIES LEAGUE

The second round of this league saw us pitched against Leicestershire, who traditionally feature strongly in this competition. The Dawes team won 19-1, the Porter team drew 10-10 and the Markham team won 20-0. Congratulations to all the players who took part.

TOLLEMACHE TROPHY QUALIFIER

The inter-counties team-of-eight competition has recently held its qualifying round online. Each N/S pair compare scores with each E/W pair to produce four comparisons per deal.

The board below was the final deal for all competitors in Gloucestershire's group. East/West have 24 points between them but only one 5-card suit as a potential source of tricks.

♠ 3		
♥ J75		
♦ T97		
♣ T98762		
♠ 986		♠ AK752
♥ A84	All	♥ KT92
♦ AJ85	Vul	♦ Q6
♣ J53		♣ Q4
	♠ QJT4	
	♥ Q63	
	♦ K432	
	♣ AK	

Making a game is generally borderline with such values and in the event, just 5 pairs out of 28 contracted for game. As the cards lie, 3NT is unbeatable, albeit very luckily, as the club suit is blocked, and South has all the outstanding values so that he is repeatedly end-played to concede tricks to declarer. The spade game has no chance as there are two trump losers as well as 2 clubs and a heart, so making a part score looks the par result.

In order to qualify for the national final, the other results from the weekend meant that Gloucestershire needed to gain at least 42 IMPS on this board. They achieved this in some style when one Glos E/W picked up an 800 penalty from 3♣ doubled by North, whilst the Devon East declarer at another table went down in the makeable 3NT. Another Glos pair picked up 500 from 4S doubled and our fourth pair achieved a plus by playing in the making 2♠. The final IMP score on the deal was +50 to our county team and with it a place in the Tollemache final next February (on a three-way split-tie).

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Congratulations to the team of Richard Butland, Rob Stevens, Paul Denning, Ben Ritacca, Alan Wearmouth, Ron Davis, Roy Collard, Richard Chamberlain, Andrew Kambites, Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh and Garry Watson.

IMPROVER'S CORNER

Continuing with last month's theme of timing, how do you plan the play on this deal on the lead of ♠5? You hopefully try the Knave at trick one, but this is covered by the Queen.

♠ J3
♥ Q72
♦ AT965
♣ AQ5

3NT by
South

♠ AK6
♥ AJ
♦ QJ872
♣ 842

You see that even if every finesse is losing, you can still make two spades, two hearts, four diamonds and a club. However, get the timing wrong and you might lose three spades, a heart and a diamond. If you assume that the opening lead is from length, then the danger hand is West, and his potential entry needs to be attacked early. The only possible entry he can have is the King of hearts so this points the way to the correct play.

Win the opening lead and play the Knave of hearts from hand. If this is taken by

the King and a spade comes back, you duck and then take a diamond finesse. If this loses, either the spades break 4-4 or East has no more, and you collect your nine tricks. Whilst it is vital to play hearts first, note that it would not be a good idea to play Ace and another heart as this might give the defence a chance to set up some long hearts and then get in with a diamond to cash them. One more example on this theme should make you confident in playing hands where more than one suit needs to be attacked in a no-trump contract.

♠ 94
♥ J76
♦ JT82
♣ AT95

3NT by
South

♠ AK5
♥ AT3
♦ AQ94
♣ QJ3

West leads the six of spades and a count of tricks shows that you will need to generate tricks in both minor suits to make your contract. By now you should see the correct technique – as West is the danger hand with the possible long spades then the suit to play first is diamonds, as this is the suit where West may have an entry.

Win the lead and just play Ace and another diamond. The defence can win and continue spades but you hold up until the third round and then take a club finesse into the safe hand.

SOLUTION TO OCTOBER PROBLEM

♠ A8642 ♠ K953
♥ A3 4♠ by ♥ Q4
♦ KQ8 West ♦ AJT65
♣ KJ4 ♣ 65

How do you maximise your chances on the lead of ♥J from North?

Even if you have a trump loser, you still have ten tricks via four spades, a heart and five diamonds. The danger is that you may have four losers in the form of one trump, one heart and two clubs if the cards lie badly. The key to the deal is to keep South off lead if at all possible, so that he cannot make the potentially damaging club switch.

Duck the lead in both hands so that South does not have a heart entry. Now you can win the continuation and start with a low trump towards dummy. This gives you the extra chance that North started with a singleton Queen of spades. If North does play the Queen, you duck to again keep South off lead. Else you will have to hope that South cannot win a trump trick or that if he does, then you get lucky in the club suit.

NOVEMBER PROBLEM

♠ K52 ♠ 643
♥ AK9752 4♥ by ♥ QJT4
♦ A6 West ♦ K52
♣ 94 ♣ AQJ

How do you play to maximise your chances on the lead of ♦Q from North?