



**Josée Hammill Bridge**

Hello Josee ,

This newsletter is jam packed with bridge opportunities! My Winter lessons, upcoming recorded lesson on Avoidance plays, Gentle bridge for 0-20MP, a new game at Armour Heights for 0-49 MP players, in person tournaments in Toronto, so I will keep this introduction super short. Just make sure that you READ everything that follows!

But first please allow me to extend to all of you my sincere words of gratitude for all of your support through this difficult period of my life. My brother passed way just hours after I sent you the last newsletter. I did not get to say goodbye to him in person, but I do feel comforted with the fact that my mom was by his side that morning.

In fact, she had told him that I was arriving the next day. François used to say that my visits to Québec City were like a holiday for him as he didn't have to keep tabs on my mom's health and wellbeing. So, I think that once mom told him I would be there very soon, he figured that since his bags were already packed, he could go on his long-awaited holiday. This weekend is the funeral so I am hopping on a plane shortly and will be back next week.

Again, thank you for your emails, cards, hugs, food drop off and your support through the airwaves. Do know that I and my whole family appreciate you so much.

Enjoy what is below!

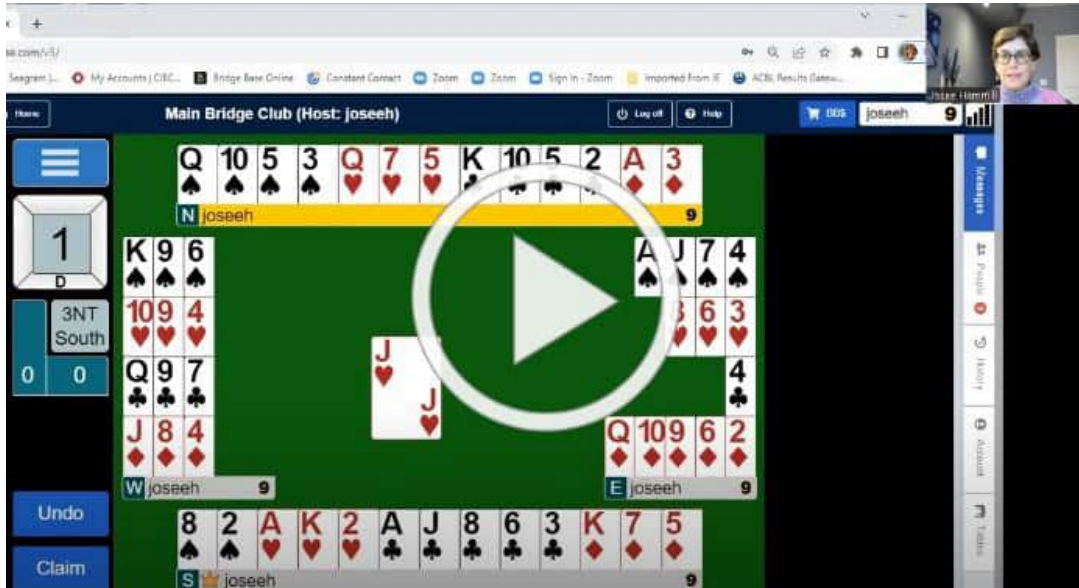
*Josée*

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P.S. Enjoy this short lesson: [Today's video](#) is a teaser for my upcoming new lesson, next week! The topic is Avoidance Play. Can you find the surest way to make this 3 NT contract?

Just click on this link and as always let me know if you have any questions: <https://youtu.be/brubNfbORB4>

*Hint: On Youtube, press the letter F on the keyboard to watch the video in fullscreen.*



## UPCOMING NEW LESSON - AVOIDANCE PLAY

***Excited to offer the following learning opportunity this coming month. The lesson will be recorded with unlimited access after purchasing.***

Don't miss my upcoming brand-new recorded lesson. The topic is **Avoidance Play.**

The term avoidance play may seem intimidating, but it's far from it! Avoidance means nothing more than preventing (or avoiding) a particular defender from gaining the lead. Let's learn from Eddie Kantar once again with a set of 12 super interesting hands and a bonus article from Easley Blackwood to supplement the lesson.

The lesson will be recorded and a PDF of all the hands including commentary from Eddie Kantar will be sent to you. This topic will much improve your declarer play.

Next week, when the date of release has been set, you will be the first to hear ! Stay tuned!

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## LEARNING CURVES

by Bill Buttle



".....and remember, as declarer, always try to determine who might be your dangerous opponent! "



## **TORONTO NON-LIFE MASTER REGIONAL WIN RED & GOLD MASTER POINTS**

**January 6 - 8, 2023**

**Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel  
123 Queen St. West, Toronto ON**

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**I will be at the hotel on Saturday, January 7th, before the free lesson and before the 0-20 MP game. Let me introduce you to the joy and excitement of tournament play! Send me an email and we will coordinate where to meet!**

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### **Intermediate / Novice Schedule**

**Friday January 6, 2023**

**Lesson 9:00 - 9:40**

49er Pairs	10:00
199er Pairs	10:00
Hand Analysis	1:15 - 2:00
Gold Rush Pairs (750/300/100)	10:00 & 2:30

199er Pairs

2:30

## Saturday January 7, 2023

### Lesson 9:00 - 9:40

#### 0-20 Pairs Supervised - FREE

10:00

199er Pairs

10:00

Gold Rush Pairs (750/300/100)

10:00 & 2:30

I/N Hospitality after 10:00 game/before 2:30 game

49er Pairs

2:30

199er Pairs

2:30

## Sunday January 8, 2023

199er Pairs

10:00

Bracketed Gold Rush Swiss Teams

10:00 & TBA

**NOTE:** The 2:30pm 199er games will run if there are sufficient numbers of players.

**SINGLE SESSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR GOLD RUSH PAIRS GAMES.**

Supervised games mean players can ask bidding questions during the game.

Questions? Need a partner? Call Steve

**Session fees: \$18 CAD (members) +\$4 for non-current members**

**All events under 100 Master Points pay only \$10 per session**

**Players must have an ACBL number.** Guest memberships are currently free. Contact Josée at [mjhammill@rogers.com](mailto:mjhammill@rogers.com) if you need one.

### Intermediate/Novice Program

- **Tournament Chair:** Darlene Scott - [DarleneScott@me.com](mailto:DarleneScott@me.com)
- **Supervisor & Partnerships:** Steve Overholt - 647-897-6179 - [soverholt1@gmail.com](mailto:soverholt1@gmail.com)

### **ZERO TOLERANCE for unacceptable behaviour!**

If someone negatively affects your enjoyment at this tournament, please contact a Director IMMEDIATELY. A fun time is guaranteed for all!

## BOOKING DETAILS

Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel  
123 Queen St. West, Toronto ON M5H 2M9  
Rooms - Call 1-888-627-7175

[Ask for special bridge rate "AC3"](#)

\$159 CAD (approx. \$119.00 USD) if booked by December 8, 2022  
Book this special rate for American Contract Bridge League 2023

[https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?  
id=1663169488869&key=GRP&app=resvlink](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1663169488869&key=GRP&app=resvlink)

**OPEN PLAYERS: SECTIONAL BRIDGE TOURNAMENT ON SAME  
DATES**

Go to [www.unit166.ca](http://www.unit166.ca). Click on Event Schedule at Top left.

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# JOSÉE HAMMILL – 2023 WINTER SCHEDULE

## TWO NEW IN-PERSON OPPORTUNITIES



In February and March, I will be offering two new in-person lessons aimed primarily at a very gentle level. These are for quite new players. Do tell your friends.

The course is **Introduction to Declarer Play** and the return of **Bid & Play – 2023 Edition!**

Lessons are taught in person at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church.

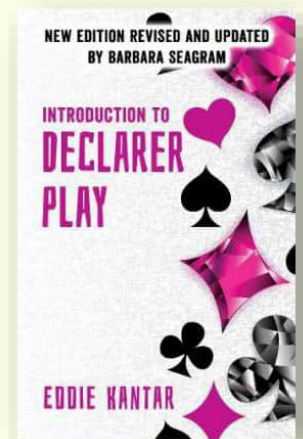
### **INTRODUCTION TO DECLARER PLAY – A 4-WEEK COURSE**

Do you love playing bridge? Are you looking to do more this Winter? Still feels like Play of the Hand is puzzling at times? Then you NEED this course!

- *Counting Losers*
- *Counting Winners*
- *Ruffing losers in the Dummy*
- *Extra Winners in the Dummy or in Declarer's Hand*
- *Long Suit Establishment (aka Taking Tricks with Tiny Cards)*
- *When and How to take a Finesse and much more!*

- ✓ **Dates** – Wednesdays, March 8, 15, 22, 29
- ✓ **Times** – 1-3 pm
- ✓ **Price** – \$155 (includes Eddie Kantar's Book

Introduction to Declarer Play – new edition revised by Barbara Seagram)



## BID AND PLAY – 2023 IN PERSON EDITION!

Two very gentle sessions aimed at strengthening your bidding and playing foundation. These sessions are for anyone who has recently completed the Bridge Basics program, or need a refresher on bidding and playing techniques. Hand evaluation, supporting partner's suit, No trump bidding and responses, competitive auctions. How high to get and how to get there.

### DATES:

- Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 pm
- Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 pm

### PRICE: \$30 per session

- Lessons will include a PDF of all the hands including commentary on bidding and responding, opening lead and declarer's strategy.
- The lessons are held at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church - 105 Wilson Avenue, Toronto.
- To register, please email me at [mjhammill@rogers.com](mailto:mjhammill@rogers.com)

Looking forward to seeing you in person in February and March!

*Josée Hammill*

[www.bridgewebs.com/josees](http://www.bridgewebs.com/josees)

416-300-9140

## DID YOU KNOW THAT? BRIDGE FUN FACTS



**Who was a Broadway chorus girl who later become an expert bridge player (and is universally considered the best female player of all time)?**

Answer: **Helen Sobel Smith**

Helen Sobel (nee Martin) was born in 1910 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She did not learn to play bridge until moving to New York and becoming a Broadway chorus girl. There, a fellow dancer taught her the game, which she quickly learned with the aptitude of a genius. She even parlayed her strawberry-blonde good looks into advantage at the bridge table. As Eddie Kantar claims:



Helen Sobel seldom, if ever, misguessed a queen in a slam contract when she was playing against two men. Her trick was to lift her skirt a little above her knees. It never failed that the one with the queen of spades was too nervous to look around, but the one without the queen always looked.

Sobel was fiercely competitive. For good measure, she sometimes wore sunglasses to tournaments to deceive opponents into regarding her as a dumb blonde.

She won her first national championship, the Women's Pairs, in 1934. In 1937, Sobel played on the United States team that participated in the World Bridge Championships, held by the International Bridge League in Budapest. She was the first female player to represent the United States in a world championship. That same year, she married Al Sobel, a tournament director for the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). It was her second marriage (the first being to Jack White), but it would not be her last.

Following a divorce in 1945, she would go on to marry Stanley Smith, an accountant.

Universally considered the best female player of all time, she won a total of 35 national championships, 3 more than her longtime partner **Charles Goren**, aka the "King of Bridge." Once, when a female kibitzer observing Goren asked her how it felt to play with an expert, Sobel replied, "I don't know. Why don't you ask him?"

The two were never romantically involved, but 20 years of playing bridge together fueled speculation which Sobel handled with her natural wit. When asked by a reporter if she and Goren would

marry, she responded, "We would in a moment - if anybody would have us."

Unlike Goren, Sobel was not a heavy teacher or promoter of the game. However, she wrote two books, contributed a guest article for a third (Bridge for Women), and appeared on Goren's television show, "**Championship Bridge with Charles Goren**". In her later years, she partnered other experts including Oswald Jacoby and continued to win consistently.

Helen Sobel died in 1969 of cancer. The ACBL elected her to its Hall of Fame in 1995.

You can watch [this rare recording](#), where she plays a hand in this video from Championship Bridge, and how she managed to unblock the club suit and make the contract.

<https://youtu.be/peHM3kjHCsA?t=546>

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## **BRIDGE QUESTIONS? - ASK JOSÉE!**

Starting with this newsletter, I'll be featuring your most commonly asked bridge questions.

You can ask anything bridge related! Just email me @ [mjhammill@rogers.com](mailto:mjhammill@rogers.com).



Put in the subject line **Ask Josée**. I look forward to hearing from you!

***Hi Josee, Playing some practice hands today, I am South and opened 1♥ (hand at right). Partner supports and bids 2♥. What is my new point count and what is my next correct bid? SJ***

♠ J  
♥ A76542  
♦ Q2  
♣ AK56

That is a great question and reevaluating is such a wonderful concept that will help you find games more often than not even if you dont think the points are there!

Your hand originally (when you first opened) valued as follows 13 HCP ( I give myself nothing for the singleton ♠J) plus 2 for length. So it is a 15 point hand to start.

When partner supports, start with your 15 point hand, add one more for the 5th heart and 2 for the 6th heart) so now your hand is worth 18 points. I know it feels like you are double dipping but just do it!

There are two ways you could show this point count.

The easiest would be to raise to 3♥ to show this hand (16-18 total points) and interested in game . Another way you could convey your point count would be to introduce a second suit and bid 3 clubs (4+ cards). This indicates to partner that you are interested in a game in hearts, and you have another suit, clubs. Partner can now picture where 9 cards are in your hand.

SJ had a follow up question:

***- Now what about partner, how does she revalue her hand after my 3♥ or 3♣ bid?***

Answer: Partner will not be revaluing any more. There are two ways to value your hand - one is when you know or think you will be declarer and the other is when you know you will be the dummy.

As long as you think you are declarer you count length points and once you know you will be declarer you now revalue after partner has shown you support - adding one more point for the 5th card, 2 for a 6th, 2 for 7th and so on.

As dummy partner looks at shortness and that is based on how many card support partner holds for you.

- With 3 card support, we use the 1-2-3 method: 1 pt for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton and 3 for a void.
- With 4 card support, we use the 1-3-5 method: 1 pt for a doubleton, 3 for a singleton and 5 for a void.

Let's look at these two hands and see how we revalue according to the auction.

West opens 1♥ (count declarer

points - 14 HCP +1 for length). East with no adequate trump support for West, bids 1♠ (East at this point believes there is a chance she could be declarer in spades and counts length - 10 HCP plus 0 for length).

West	East
♠ KQ32	♠ 8654
♥ AQT97	♥ 65
♦ K764	♦ AQ3
♣ void	♣ A52

Back to West who is forced to bid (partner has introduced a new suit and is therefore unlimited)

West asks herself if playing in Spades is a good idea and with 4 card support for Partner, now knows that we have the golden fit and that West will be the dummy. West now revalues as dummy and counts shortness . With 4 card support we use the 1-3-5 method so West's hand revalues as 14 HCP + 5 for the void in clubs. West no longer counts length points as West will not be declarer. So West's hand revalues as 19 points and West bids 4♠ to show a maximum hand.

Hope this helps!



I am so excited to introduce you to Cyndy Winkler with whom I will be working closely in 2023 to continue to expand your bridge opportunities to play in person.

Cyndy shares my commitment to ease you into duplicate bridge in a gentle, nurturing and supportive environment.

Please join me in welcoming Cyndy. You can email her at [cyndywinkler@gmail.com](mailto:cyndywinkler@gmail.com) to get more details on her new 0-49 MP game which starts on March 7<sup>th</sup>!

Hi Bridge Friends,

I started playing in my mid-20's and have 50 years of bridge under my belt. I continue to learn every time I teach or play. I've achieved bronze LM status and am a certified ACBL teacher and director,

but I haven't done much directing until recently. I remember the first time I tried duplicate bridge at a club, my partner and I felt we knew what we were doing, so why not try it out? The sharks in the room must have seen through us easily and we finished the session deflated and discouraged. However, my partner and I refused to give up and we continued playing.



When I moved to Canada in 1994, I wanted to meet new people so I started teaching beginning bridge classes in Thornbury in the Blue Mountains. Over 75 people eventually became my students and they still play bridge and keep in touch today..

I see this wonderful opportunity of offering a phased bridge where beginning players will feel more comfortable. We'll call ourselves **Stepping Stones Bridge Club**. The club is aimed at players who may make mistakes but want to learn by playing and get better. You can't play bridge or golf once a year and expect to improve. Play, play, play. Gentle Bridge will be referred to as Step 1 (0-20 limit), and Step 2 will cover players who have 0-50 masterpoints. The difference with Step 2 will be that we will have pre-dealt hands with take-home records to review.

Our first goal is to offer bridge in a fun, friendly, supportive and welcoming environment. We want you to have fun, learn and enjoy.

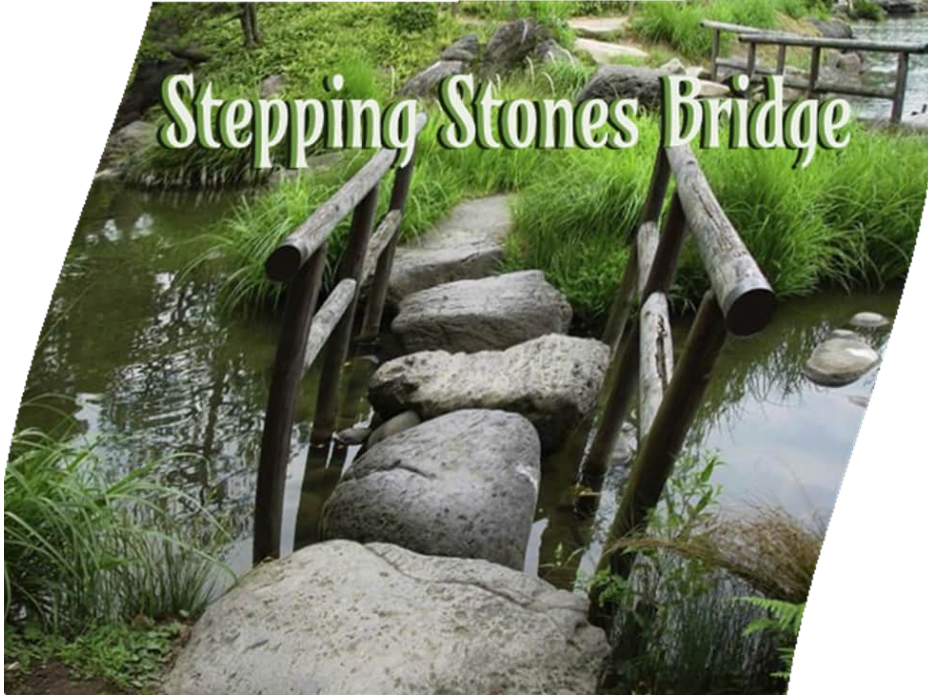
Josée will still be actively involved with our club, and Gary Reinblatt, my partner, who is also an ACBL teacher and BLM, will be helping me, along with some of the amazing volunteers who are so happy to work with you at our Monday games.

I look forward to seeing you in early March for the start of Step 2.

*Cyndy*

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**COMING IN 2023 IN PERSON GAME  
FOR 0-50 MP PLAYERS!**



A stepping stone is an action that helps one make progress towards a goal.

Our first and main goal is to offer bridge in a fun, friendly, supportive and welcoming environment.

### **Stepping Stones Bridge with Cyndy Winkler & Josée Hammill**

We hold a face-to-face weekly, ACBL duplicate bridge games on Mondays at 12.30 pm for players with 0-20 master points and starting on March 7th, a weekly face to face game for players with 0 to 49 MP.

The 0-20 MP game will continue on during the winter. In January and February, we welcome Douglas Jordan to run this game in Cyndy's absence.

- LOCATION: Armour Heights Presbyterian Church 105 Wilson Ave
- Handicap accessible - elevator.
- Registration required by emailing [gentlebridgejosee@gmail.com](mailto:gentlebridgejosee@gmail.com)

**Coming Soon:** A game for players with 0-49 master points, starting on March 7, 2023 on Tuesdays at 12 noon.

It is often difficult and intimidating for new players to compete against opponents who have years of playing experience and have earned many master points.

Both these games are aimed to ease your introduction to playing duplicate bridge. The environment is gentle and supportive. We are there for you.

At the 0-49 MP game more hands will be played than in the 0-20 MP game and hand records will be provided. This Step 2 of the Stepping Stone Bridge model will provide players with an easy transition to playing duplicate bridge in a competitive environment.

Both these games are aimed to ease your introduction to playing duplicate bridge. The environment is gentle and supportive. We are there for you. Partnerships can be arranged for both games. Table manners and basic etiquette will be followed at all times.

Any question or to get on the mailing list for the 0-49er game, email CYNDY at [cyndywinkler@gmail.com](mailto:cyndywinkler@gmail.com)

**“Bridge is a competitive, challenging game that should be enjoyed by all who play it”**

A huge thank you to the Monday games amazing volunteers: Susan Trumper, Beth Hemstad, Ruth Oppenheim & Lynn Eplett. In January, we will also welcome Defne Berkin and Jocelyne Mongrain.



**TORONTO IS HOSTING A  
NATIONAL BRIDGE TOURNAMENT  
July 18-28 2024**

**It is called the Toronto NABC  
North American Bridge  
Championships**

**It sounds daunting for less  
experienced players BUT it's a  
huge opportunity for novices and intermediates and they  
have a big room set aside JUST FOR YOU. SO hold those  
dates!**

**We need volunteers to help her to run this very special  
tournament. It is heaps of fun being involved.**

**Do contact me if you can help in ANY way, email me at  
[mjhammill@rogers.com](mailto:mjhammill@rogers.com) and I will share more details There**

**are lots of committees to get involved in and we welcome  
any commitment you can offer!  
All hands on deck! (pun intended!)**