

Kent Youth Bridge Report – June 3, 2018

Kent Youth remains focused on its strategy of building a critical mass of school bridge clubs, rolling out EBED's JAS and increasing the number of Interschool's Tournament participants. We continue to see an increase in the number of bridge clubs (towards our target of 20) and awareness of Junior Bridge – thanks to good promotion in local media, word of mouth (the reason for driving numbers), the KCBA website and an increase in events – SIMS, Interschools, and the Southern Counties Junior Bridge Camp. Some of the children who have been playing for a few years are now integrating into the “gentle” bridge sessions at TW, Hildenborough and St Julian's during the half-term breaks and summer holidays. (Updated Map of Schools, attached)

William Bourne is doing a splendid job in setting up the Southern Counties Bridge Camp at Ardingly on the 7th and 8th of July 2018. KCBA have agreed to subsidise the event (to encourage Kent-based participation) with an amount of £500. Sussex and Surrey have also matched this amount. This means that the first 11 Kent juniors can sign up for the weekend (online) for only £15/person (compared with the standard fee of £60) including; all meals, accommodation, teaching, competitions and supervised sports. To date we have about 60 juniors signed up (80 attendees) and there are only four “residential” places left.

Two Junior SIMS events have now been run at Ruffians, for Kent juniors, and numbers were up at the last event on March 25. The next junior SIMS will be an autumn event at the start of the next “junior bridge season”. In addition, I am hoping that we can offer a “real easy” session for juniors (and beginners) at the Kent Congress, as discussed at our last meeting .

Liz Blande continues to help with the Junior Section on the Kent Contract Bridge website and is doing a super job with this. We now have online entry forms for the Interschools and Southern Counties camps, and will expand this for SIMS and other future events.

2017-2018 sees the first offering of a “bridge season” for schools bridge clubs and junior players – running from the start of the school year in early September to late spring (ending with the May Interschools). The intention being to allow children to focus more on outdoor

activities during the summer months. I believe this structure has worked very well, with all of the JAS training fitting neatly into a well-planned schedule over the autumn / winter months. In addition, the bridge camp and teach in, and the various gentle bridge sessions, offer lots of playing opportunities for the keener juniors. The second interschools tournament on May 18 this year, was another great success. Fantastic support from EBED, WCPS (the host) and local bridge players assisting on the day. A full report will be posted on the KCBA site, but in short, we had more schools participating and a good level of increase in interest. The format works very well from a planning, timing and competition perspective and we will continue with the same "blue print" for the 2019 event – again targeting over 100 children. Schools with new bridge clubs this year include: Sevenoaks, Walthamstow, Mersham, St James, and Seabrook. I am hoping that we can add Churchill and Sackville in 2019 and re-ignite clubs at New Beacon, Radnor House and Penbury.

Yours in Bridge

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