

# THE NOTTINGHAM BRIDGE CLUB

## Newsletter - February 2021

### What's On

#### Three at 7.30pm

We now have three tournaments at 7.30pm in the evening - Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays – corresponding to the face-to-face drives we used to hold. They are 18 boards, which most people seem to find is as long as they want to spend staring at a screen. Like all our tournaments, Master Points are awarded. They are attracting the same sort of mix of club players as in the face-to-face times, with an average of 8 on the NGS scale.

#### ACOL Only

We now have two 7pm tournaments – Wednesdays and Fridays - where we ask everyone to play ACOL with a weak no trump and three weak twos. We have people on standby in case there is a half table, so you won't meet any robots. They are slightly more leisurely tournaments than the 7.30pm ones, with only 14 boards. They are primarily aimed at those who are newer to the game but everyone is welcome to join in, so long as you play the same system.

#### Monday Afternoons

Our Monday afternoons, at 1.30pm are sociable tournaments which provide a stepping stone between our ACOL only tournaments and our general 7.30pm tournaments. They are usually around 16 boards long. You'll meet people playing other systems, and maybe even robots. But mainly you'll meet people who want a pleasant afternoon's bridge.

#### Learning Opportunities

Our online course for complete beginners has entered its second term. It's going well, with a group of enthusiastic learners, although we're hoping that this is a one-off course and that the next course will be face-to-face.

Andrew Scott is chomping at the bit to get back into the classroom. In the meantime, he is running an Ask Andrew session on Monday evenings where he talks about boards from the 7.30pm Friday evening tournament, or any others that you would like to discuss. He is also running reviews

with pairs where he gives advice on your recent bidding/play/defence. An ideal opportunity to identify what you need to do to improve your scores.

Graham Brindley is holding his improver sessions on Thursday evenings. He's started back at the beginning of his syllabus, which makes it ideal for anybody who has learnt within the last couple of years or so. You may think you already "know" a topic, but after a session with Graham, you'll know it inside-out. One benefit of going online is that Graham now has many more in his classes than he could fit into a room at the Club, but still manages to make it an interactive experience.

Our Wednesday evenings aren't just for playing, they provide learning opportunities, too. Ian Dovey watches the play and highlights opportunities for improvement that get sent out to players afterwards.

#### Teams

After its successful first season of online Teams of Four matches, the County is running a second season starting at the end of January. It's social bridge with a competitive edge. There's no entry fee and no prizes but there will be Master Points. It will be in a Swiss form, designed to produce matches which either team might win. There are details on the County web site or email Ian Dovey at [Organiser@tea4ms.space](mailto:Organiser@tea4ms.space). Teams can be any mix of people and, if you are keen to play but can't make up a full team, let Ian know and he'll try to find the extra players.

#### Directing

Looking ahead to a return to face-to-face bridge, we've run an online course for budding directors. Bite-size sessions, of half an hour at a time, have covered the main situations a director will meet when BBO no longer prevents people from revoking, leading out of turn or making all those many mistakes that are now just a distant memory. If you might be interested in learning what is involved – with no commitment to becoming a director afterwards – do get in touch.

#### NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER MASTERPOINT PROMOTIONS

Local Master

Club Master  
Area Master

District Master  
County Master  
Master

Advanced Master  
4 Star Master  
4 Star Premier Master  
Life Master

Carolyn Akers - Nigel Akers - Liz Beswick - Janet Draper  
Jane Evans - Margaret Litchfield  
Linda Gregson - Sue Hollins  
Maureen Bates - Peter Bates - Frances Linehan  
Paul Wicks - Dan Zimsek  
Elizabeth Dunford  
Iris Foweather - Andrea Gelsthorpe  
Heather Darwent - Rosemary Gunn - Louise Scull  
Pam Maguire - Tony Ward  
Wendy Walker  
Toni Smith  
Christopher Close

# IT'S ACOL, JIM

# BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Last year I volunteered to direct Derbyshire's individual competition, which was being held on BBO. Since it was an individual competition, the default system, I was told, would be simple ACOL. Now, I was familiar with the EBU's Simple System convention card. So, when I was told the system had been put up on their web site, I didn't bother to look. After all, I wasn't planning to play: they had people on standby to make up full tables in case there were any sitouts.

As it happened, BBO was in mischievous mood and we lost one of the players and I was unable to bring them back in. So I substituted myself in their place. The opposition opened 1NT and my partner bid 2♣. The EBU Simple System is really simple, so I knew that my partner was offering to play in clubs, and with nothing better to offer myself, I happily passed. Happy, that is, until I saw my partner's healthy major suits and distinctly unhealthy club suit. I was later informed that my partner had not been happy with my pass after their bid of Landy. It was also pointed out to me that, as clearly shown on their web site, the simple system being played was the EBU's Standard English Modern Acol.

This prompted me to look in detail at the system and browse through the system file, which goes into some detail. In case you are not familiar with the system, it goes hand-in-hand with the EBU's teaching programme for beginners. It forms part of the set of materials for students learning bridge in what they describe as "the nationally approved method of learning the game".

Sure enough, Landy is listed as a defence to opponents opening 1NT. In fact, there are quite a lot of interesting conventions in there and I'm happy to admit that not all of them are in my usual repertoire – especially as our President, Mark Goddard, had to look at least one of them up to find out what it was. I wonder how many of us play two-way Baron (not to be confused with ordinary Baron) in response to partner's opening 1NT? Or, what about the Grand Slam Force? You bid 5NT, without 4NT having been bid, and your partner replies 6H: what are they telling you?

There's plenty there to discuss in the bar with other ACOL players. But if you want to get a real debate going, ask them how they open with a balanced hand with

12 HCP and a five card suit. In fact, if you had two of the best known teachers in the country – Andrew Robson and Bernard Magee – you could sit back and enjoy the debate. Robson is a no-nonsense man: you should always open 1NT. Magee is more flexible: with a strong major (at least two honours) he will allow you to open the suit, planning to rebid it. The EBU has recently come down in favour of Robson. Their beginners' course in bridge teaches students to always open 1NT, however good a five card major they may hold.

What do our members do? With the full visibility offered by BBO, we can see how everybody is bidding these hands. We have a small minority of ACOL bidders who are very happy to open a nice looking five card minor. And when it comes to majors, Mr Robson seems to have few followers. Here is an example hand, opened in one of our tournaments last year:

♠ AJ843  
♥ 763  
♦ AK4  
♣ J6

Only two of the 13 ACOL players opened 1NT. One of the two was rewarded with 100% and the other got 77%.

However, members do seem to have a limit as to how good the suit has to be. With this hand:

♠ A5  
♥ Q8532  
♦ AQ10  
♣ 986

only two of the ACOL players opened 1♥.

What's my view? It's that most members would be happier to play a five card major system: that way you can open your five card major in the knowledge that you can still find the safe haven of 1NT if you need to. Better still, with hands like the ones below, you can play in a comfortable 2♥ while others are battling in 1NT:

♠ 64	♠ 753
♥ AK92	♥ QJ83
♦ 762	♦ J4
♣ AJ96	♣ Q1084

Any appetite for a conversion course to five card majors?

*D\_H\_D*

# The Unusual No Trump

The Unusual No Trump shows 5-5 in the LOWER TWO unbid suits and not both minors as a lot of players seem to think.

For example, 1♣ followed by a 2NT overcall shows diamonds and hearts. Likewise 1♦ followed by a 2NT overcall shows clubs and hearts.

When the opposition open 1 of a major, then the 2NT overcall shows both minors.

Players then get phased by how many points should it show. You need to ask yourself what you are trying to do:

- look at the Colour (Vulnerable or Not)
- am I looking to save? (you have a poor hand with shape, then look at the Vulnerability)
- am I looking to make? (I need partner to show which suit they prefer)
- just taking up bidding space? (again look at the Colour)

I could go on and on and on and on, but examples hopefully will explain better. Here are hands from recent duplicate tournaments:

14 ♠	N	♠ AJ2 ♥ KQ ♦ QJ732 ♣ J42	W	N	E	S
			1♣	2♥	1♣	1♥
			P	P	3♣	P
W	♠ 97543 ♥ 92 ♦ A96 ♣ Q83		E	♠ KQ86 ♥ 8543 ♦ ♣ AK1075		
		S		♠ 10 ♥ AJ1076 ♦ K10854 ♣ 96		
					3♣ W	NS: 0 EW: 0

Above 1♣ opening from East, South to bid...Save or looking to make? SAVE at this point in time! While an overcall of 1♥ is reasonable does it do a lot? NO!!!!

14 ♠	N	♠ AJ2 ♥ KQ ♦ QJ732 ♣ J42	W	N	E	S
			1♣	P	1♣	P
			P	P	2♣	P
W	♠ 97543 ♥ 92 ♦ A96 ♣ Q83		E	♠ KQ86 ♥ 8543 ♦ ♣ AK1075		
		S		♠ 10 ♥ AJ1076 ♦ K10854 ♣ 96		
					2♣ W	NS: 0 EW: 0

While this example shows the effect of doing nothing: no bidding, no effort, no result! 1♣ is now a free bid for West, and life is easy for the opponents. (Spades are KING)

So, how about after 1♣ you bid 2NT (save at this point) and showing the red suits (the lower two) and green (non vulnerable). Now West can't bid spades; partner probably bids 4♦ with such a nice hand, just to make life difficult for the opponents and the ♥KQ also look good since partner also has hearts. (4♥ makes as it happens, but not easy to bid)

NB: 2NT cannot be natural. Think of the times you would need it? So, it must be UNUSUAL! If you do have 20-22pts in this situation, double then bid Notrumps. (It will be very rare.)

You have tons of working values:

WORKING VALUES = suits bid or implied.

Note 4♦ makes 10 tricks, but opponents can make 3♣. Just get bidding FAST when you have distribution.

Andrew Scott

## Midland Counties Congress

The Midland Counties Congress was held on 8 January with a large field of 68 pairs competing for a range of trophies: Men's Pairs, Ladies' Pairs, Mixed Pairs and Fritch.

Toni Smith and Pravin Tailor deserve special congratulations for not only winning the Peter Millar Plate

for Mixed Pairs but also being the highest ranked pair in the whole field.

Andrew Scott and Patrick Gaudart were last year's winners of the Hudson Trophy for Men's Pairs and put up a good defence this year, but came fourth in the Men's Pairs, and ninth overall in what was a strong field.

## 2021 Membership Subscriptions

Thank you to all who have paid their 2021 subscriptions. But there are still quite a few of you that I haven't heard from. So, if you haven't already, please get in touch. We've discovered that a few emails have changed since last year, so not everyone may have received my email. You can let me know by emailing

NottinghamBridgeClub@gmail.com

It's just £10 for the year. Bank transfers are easiest – and I can give you the details - but we're happy to receive a cheque through the post to 401 Mansfield Road, NG5 2DP

Phil Gross, Membership Secretary