

# THE NOTTINGHAM BRIDGE CLUB

## Newsletter - May

### A Way Forward

As I write, it looks as though the government's roadmap is holding well. People are meeting in groups of six outdoors, and pubs and restaurants with outdoor seating are doing good business. There is also every reason to hope that the next step, with six people meeting indoors, will go ahead on 17 May.

But how likely do you think it is that there will be a complete removal of restrictions in June? At this month's Committee Meeting none of the trustees were confident that this would happen. Foreign holidays still look uncertain and there seems to be a growing list of virus mutations queuing up to cause concern. Until mingling on a larger scale is permitted, then bridge as we knew it before the pandemic remains unlikely.

However, all may not be lost. If the new regulations for Rule of Six indoors are the same as they were for pubs last time - i.e. you do not need masks while you are seated at a table and there is no time limit on how long you can be there - we may well be able to play teams of four matches.

We would not be able to have the usual swap of opponents at the half-way point, but that seems a small price to pay for the opportunity to get back to competitive bridge at a real table. Master Points will be awarded and success will be reflected in your NGS rating.

We will not know for certain until the government confirms the move to the next step and tells us exactly what rules will apply. However, the Committee decided that we should take an optimistic approach and prepare to be able to play matches on 17 May if regulations permit. We have scheduled our next meeting for 11 May when there should be enough information to enable us to take that decision and report back to you.

In the meantime, to help our organisation, we need to hear from teams that would wish to take part. There is more information on the next page, including how to get in touch.

*David Dunford*

### A New Normal

What might face-to-face bridge look like when we reach Step 3 of the roadmap out of lockdown? The Committee took the view that, while members might be willing to wear masks to fly to a Mediterranean resort, it was too much to expect people to do so while playing 24 boards of bridge. So, we are very much hoping that the regulations will permit four people to sit together at a table for a few hours without any masks.

A Risk Assessment has been produced and can be seen in the Information section on the Club web site. It will be updated as more information becomes available, but already shows the measures that we plan to put in place.

It is important to stress that, just like pubs and restaurants, we cannot guarantee that nobody will catch the virus when they visit the Club. However, we believe that members will feel that the measures we put in place will reduce the risk to an acceptable level for most players.

Players will be kept socially distanced as they enter the

club and will wear masks except when playing at the table. Every table will have its own set of boards and all items will be quarantined for more than 48 hours before they are used again.

Although the toilets will be available, the kitchen and bar will not: players will need to bring their own drinks and drinking vessels.

Playing tables will be suitably distanced, with just two in each of the three playing areas. So, we will be able to accommodate 24 players, i.e. six teams, with each match playing exactly the same set of hands. This means that all teams have the same mix of flat hands and exciting ones.

The main risk of transmission of the virus is now considered to be through particles in the air: ventilation is the key. We will be opening lots of windows and keeping doors open to encourage movement of air. It will be draughty! So, players will need to dress accordingly – and be grateful for the draught which is helping keep them safe.



# Teams of Four

## Your Questions Answered

### When are the matches?

If enough teams sign up, we will run two competitions, each lasting five weeks. One on Mondays and the other on Thursdays, both starting at 7pm.

### How many in a team?

Four people make up your team for a match, but it is recommended that you have a squad of six so that you can be sure of fielding a team every week.

### Do we all have to be members of The Nottingham Bridge Club?

Yes, you do.

### I have a partner, but can't find others to make up a team.

Let us know and we'll try to form a team with others who are in a similar position.

### How do I register my team?

The Team Captain needs to send an email to

Teams@NottinghamBridge.Club with the name of your team (12 characters maximum) and the names of the members of the squad. Also state whether you wish to play on Mondays or Thursdays.

### Can I play in more than one team and can we play both nights?

You cannot play for more than one team on a particular night. Whether you can play on both nights will depend on how many teams wish to take part. We wish to give as many members as possible the opportunity to play.

### How much does it cost?

It will be £2.50 per person per 24 board match. Everyone will be invoiced at the end of the competition and asked, where possible, to pay by bank transfer. We wish to move to a cashless system, both to reduce the workload of the treasurer and to reduce the handling of cash.

## Have fun playing the purest form of the game!

With the prospect of restrictions easing, The Nottingham Bridge Club is looking to get things up and running again for the time being, but not in the format we all know for our regular fix of duplicate bridge. We will be playing Teams of Four which, in my opinion, is a far better way to play this beautiful game, and also allows us better control of Covid guidelines.

For those unfamiliar with Teams of Four there is no need to worry, the initial scoring is the same as duplicate when you complete a hand. All you need is four of you rather than two. One of your pairs sits N/S at one table and the other pair sits E/W at the other table. Once a hand is completed you will have a direct comparison of scores for that hand.

For example: suppose you bid 4H vulnerable and make +620 while your team mates at the other table get the opponents down in the same contract 4H-1 and make +100. You add the scores together to make 720. This is then converted to imps (International Match Points) using a special conversion table. In this case, 720 converts to 12 imps.

The conversion table is designed so that a single overtrick makes little impact: 1 imp at most. But, as we have seen, failing to make a game can have a big effect on your imps score.

You repeat this exercise for every board you play. In our matches, you will be playing 24 boards against one of the opposition pairs. Under the current Rule of Six, we are not able to switch opposition half-way. At the end of the 24 boards, you add up all the imps for your team against all the imps scored by the opponents to see who has won. A final stage is to convert the winning margin to Victory Points so that you can see how you did compared with the other matches that were played.

If that sounds complicated, don't worry! The computer will be doing the imps scoring for you and working out the overall results.

Why is this such a pure and fun way to play bridge ?

You don't need to worry about overtricks. They have very little consequence. You just look to make your contract safe and secure as declarer; or try to defeat a contract as a defender by taking risks. It's the ESSENCE of the game of bridge. MAKE or DEFEAT

It's You (your team) against Them. It's not what all the other pairs are doing around the room. It's just what your team mates have done.

Games contracts become more valuable (certainly when vulnerable), part scores tend to be less important. So, more of a thrill to take a few risks and push for game to get big rewards.

Just to end, an example of declarer play at teams:

♠94	♠AKQ32
♥AK2	♥65
♦AK2	♦8762
♣A9876	♣53

Bidding 1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (P) - 2NT - (P) - 3♦ (might find a 5-3 spade fit) - 3NT. Lead ♥Q .

At teams play, win the opening lead play a low spade and duck in dummy you make the contract against a 3 -3 and 4-2 break. Nine tricks secured at teams. In duplicate match points, you might hope for a 3-3 split so that you can make that all-important overtrick. At teams there is no need to worry about the overtrick.

*Andrew Scott*