



## SUMMER NEWSLETTER

### Chairman's Corner

#### An Opportunity to Reset

Before Covid or BC there was very little to think about when planning a club's programme. The typical Somerset club met on the same day, at the same time and at the same venue each week and played match point pairs most if not all of the time. Many players played at more than one club demonstrating that they expected to play more than once a week. A second session for most clubs was not a possibility because the hall was in use for kick boxing, Zumba or other village activities. BC very few clubs offered lessons.

Then came Covid and all face to face activity stopped but very quickly players changed to online evidenced by four times weekly county games and 14 virtual clubs in Somerset. Our recent survey indicated that although most players looked forward to a return to f2f, many were hesitant and most intended to continue to play some on line bridge.

I have been tremendously impressed by the manner in which so many clubs adapted to the new world by setting up virtual clubs in the early days on BBO and more recently using Realbridge and particularly by the way in which clubs have combined to boost numbers for online sessions.

It is clear that online bridge is here to stay because of the opportunities that are opened up in terms of extra sessions, improver sessions perhaps with clubs combining for online, online leagues and most importantly teaching. Clubs also need to cater for those members who prefer to play online and this may best be achieved by clubs collaborating to offer online games. It would be so much better for these online games to be organised by clubs rather than the county because county games would pull players away from club games and also deprive clubs of revenue.

It would be all too easy to go back to the old normal but I suggest that now is the time to reset the programme with imagination to make full use of the opportunities afforded by online bridge.

Tony Russ SCBA Chair

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You may remember that SCBA had arranged a **Club Teacher Training Course** at Nailsea during 2020 - this was obviously cancelled but I am very happy to say that we have arranged with EBed to hold such a course in Yeovil on October 26th and 27th this year. Concessions and free places are available to affiliated clubs and you can read about these and how to register for the course by on the Somerset website.

This course will be open to all but Somerset clubs have an early opportunity to book a place for anyone interested in starting or supporting some teaching at the club.

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## **SCBA GRANTS**

The SCBA is happy to accept applications from affiliated clubs for grants to assist them with the expenditure involved in restarting face to face bridge and/or a membership campaign and/or a teaching programme. Applicants should email [scbachair@icloud.com](mailto:scbachair@icloud.com) with details of what is required, the cost and the contribution requested from the SCBA.

## **Upcoming Events:**

Sunday July 25<sup>th</sup> **Blue Pointed Swiss Pairs on Realbridge**  
1pm start Six seven-board matches with a break halfway through.  
Cost £10 per pair in advance – enter via the website.

Sunday August 22<sup>nd</sup> **a planned return to live bridge!**  
The **Paul Jones** team event at Woolavington  
1pm start – each player will partner each member of their team in turn.  
£12 per player to include tea or £8 without tea.  
(if this needs to be played online on Realbridge the cost will be £5 per player)



Welcome Back

# West of England Congress

Friday to Sunday 8th - 10th October  
Includes two Green Pointed events  
Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare

[www.bridgewebs.com/somerset](http://www.bridgewebs.com/somerset)  
Email [woe2021@icloud.com](mailto:woe2021@icloud.com)

## Winter County League

This will now be played on Realbridge with matches taking place on Friday evenings in two stanzas of 12 boards. Cost £30 per team. From October.

More details on the SCBA website on all events..

**Somerset Online games** – Pairs on BBO 1pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday

## **Clubs Round-up**

**Winscombe** – the Friday evening session will move to Thursday afternoon with September 2<sup>nd</sup> being the planned date for recommencement. Tuesday social sessions will recommence from September 7<sup>th</sup>. A full course of lessons is planned from October including Beginners year 1 and 2 and Improvers. Further details from Janet contact [obrien-jm@outlook.com](mailto:obrien-jm@outlook.com)

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**Kingston Seymour** – the intention is to resume face to face bridge from September 7<sup>th</sup> at the village hall. Any queries please contact Tim on [tim.mather23@gmail.com](mailto:tim.mather23@gmail.com)

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## **Crewkerne**

The Committee decided we will return to 'face to face' at Merriott Village Hall on Monday 6 September for a trial sessions of 6 tables. Those wishing to take part in this session should notify Jo as quickly as possible at [johemm@btinternet.com](mailto:johemm@btinternet.com) - managed on a first come, first served basis.

The Committee will adhere to the following structure until such times as we all feel comfortable without them. Given the prospect of many restrictions being lifted on 19th July, these processes could change if all club members decide unanimously to do so.

Temperature will be taken on arrival

Sanitise hands on arrival

Masks to be worn on arrival/when moving (may be removed whilst playing)

Only the Mitchell movement to be played for the foreseeable future

Please bring your own refreshments

Bidding boxes will be taken at the door and kept for the duration of the session

(bring your own box if you prefer)

Cushions will be available but must be kept for the duration of the evening

Only 'North' will handle the tablets

Sanitise hands between each board.

Hand Sanitisers will be allocated to each table (or if you prefer, bring your own)

If the trial on 6<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm is successful we will resume normal club nights from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September starting a 7pm.

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### **AXE Online Club** (Wedmore, Cheddar and Winscombe)

Congratulations on the first birthday of the club. Having started on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 AXE members have now enjoyed 85 sessions in their first year averaging ten tables a session. Two players – Ruth Pearson and Richard Earthy only missed two sessions all year playing 83 times.

Results of the first year contests and a comprehensive break down of the statistics are available on the club website [here](#) under Happy Birthday AXE. The home page includes much helpful advice for those who have not played online before.

Playing twice a week on Monday and Wednesday at 7pm please contact Gillian on [gillian.toogood@mail.co.uk](mailto:gillian.toogood@mail.co.uk) if you would like to join AXE.

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A **new online magazine** is now available from the EBU

**Discovery Issue 1** is available [here](#)

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# Is the four-four fit preferable over the five-three?

By Geoff Davies

I've come across a completely free dealer program called Deal 3.1 that lets you control what hands you deal and the analysis which is done on the hands. It is particularly useful since it has a built-in double dummy solver so you can check, for instance, how many tricks you can make in a particular contract. For those that are interested I give the details of how to obtain and use the program at the end of this article. For the moment I want to talk about my first investigation using it.

I've often been told that if you can play in a 5-3 fit or a 4-4 fit on a particular hand then you should choose the 4-4 fit since you may make more tricks. Here's an example:

S	AKQ84	962
H	AKJ2	Q765
D	T5	A98
C	K2	A93

Playing in spades on a 3-2 break you make 5 spades, 4 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs which is 12 tricks. Playing in hearts, however, you can probably ruff a club in the left hand and hence make 5 heart tricks generating 13 tricks in all. It doesn't help to ruff a club playing in spades because you have to ruff in the long trump hand. Alternatively, you could discard two diamonds on your long spades and ruff a diamond in the right hand. Ruffing in either hand generates an extra trick when playing in hearts.

This takes no account of bad breaks and over-ruffing etc. so I wanted to investigate whether it was generally true that you make more tricks in the 4-4 fit and how often following this advice would be of benefit. I dealt hands similar to the one above where one partner has 5 spades and four hearts and the other had three spades and four hearts. So that you would probably be playing the final contract, I wanted the hands to have more than 20 points in total.

The way you control the dealer program is by writing routines in 'Tool Control Language' or TCL. Here's the bit that describes what hands you want to generate. Basically you deal random hands, reject the ones you don't want and

accept the ones you do want. The symbols != mean not equal to and hcp is the number of high card points in a hand.

```
main {
  reject if {[spades north]!=5}
  reject if {[hearts north]!=4}
  reject if {[spades south]!=3}
  reject if {[hearts south]!=4}
  set hcpN [hcp north]
  set hcpS [hcp south]
  set points [expr {$hcpN + $hcpS}]
  accept if {$points > 20}
}
```

For simplicity, I've only considered the case where spades are 5-3, since the hearts case would presumably be the same. In 10,000 accepted deals the total number of tricks that could be taken was 96,936 playing in spades, the 5-3 fit, but 98,119 playing in hearts, the 4-4 fit. That's 1183 more tricks or an extra trick every 8.5 accepted deals. (N.B. that's deals fulfilling the above criteria, not random deals!) It's worth having the extra trick by itself but it might be the difference between making game or not. Playing in spades you could make 5427 games but playing in hearts you could make 5703 games. That's an extra game bonus every 36 accepted deals.

What matters, however, is how often would we encounter this situation in real life. By doing away with the double dummy analysis we can select suitable deals extremely quickly. In a million deals I determined that there were 2612 deals where you would have the majority of the points and be 4-4 in one major and 5-3 in the other. That's 383 random deals per accepted deal so you make an extra trick every 3236 deals and an extra game every 13871 deals. Playing 24 boards per session as much as 3 times per week that's an extra trick every 10 months and an extra game every 3.7 years. This knowledge won't change your NGS grade a great deal!

So, we've confirmed the advice, it is generally better to play in the 4-4 fit than the 5-3 one but Deal 3.1 has allowed us to see that we won't benefit from this very often, even if you apply it to minors as well!

The home page for Deal 3.1 is <https://bridge.thomasoandrews.com/deal/> . It is not a modern program with a slick graphical interface but is driven from a command line interface so you will need some appropriate computing experience but I will be happy to help get you up and running if you want to give it a go.

Alternatively, [email me](#) if you have something you would like analysed and I'll see what I can do.

Thanks to **Geoff Davies** for another excellent article.

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Playing <b>3NT</b> you have	<b>S</b> 10 5 4	opposite	K 6
	<b>H</b> A J 2		<b>K</b> 5 3
	<b>D</b> A K J		<b>Q</b> 10 7
	<b>C</b> K 9 6 4		<b>Q</b> J 10 8 3

The question is how to proceed after a low **heart** lead.....

The lead presents declarer with a free **heart** trick with the **J** BUT if the Ace of clubs turns up with your LHO a spade switch could be disastrous. Take the **H** lead with the **King** and then if the Ace is in the wrong place the defence have much less to go on and may well continue **hearts** rather than finding the killer spade switch.

(Stolen from the mind of Bobby Wolff)

Playing online should have enabled most players to become more aware of evil distributions with the BBO dealer particularly responsible. Here is one such as described by Phillip Alder:

Playing Four <b>Hearts</b> you hold	<b>S</b> 6 4 3	opposite	A K Q
	<b>H</b> A Q J 2		<b>K</b> 10 5 3
	<b>D</b> J 6 3		<b>7</b> 5 4 2
	<b>C</b> A K Q		5 2

Winning the club lead and starting off with the AH reveals the 5 – 0 trump break in the LHO hand and leaves you cursing the stayman convention when 3nt has ten top tricks..... what to do?

The answer is to play two spades, then revert to clubs over-ruffing if LHO trumps, drawing the remaining trumps and cashing the last spade or discarding a boss spade on the third club if LHO follows... now the last spade can be ruffed and declarer makes two spades, four hearts, three clubs and the spade ruff for ten tricks.

Once again the key to the play is to ignore what looks like a guaranteed trick – lose a battle and win the war...

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The editor welcomes news snippets, interesting hands, anecdotes or vague ramblings from all players or clubs.

Please email me on [paul.burgess738@gmail.com](mailto:paul.burgess738@gmail.com)