



The Event has begun!!!

Date : 18-Feb-24

Day : 2

The Tolani Open Nationals Masters Bridge Championship 2024 got off to a great start today.

In a solemn but inspiring opening ceremony, Dr. Sujata Naik, daughter of Dr. N.P. Tolani took us through Dr. T's bridge journey. Her speech is covered in our video edition of yesterday's happenings.

The event, however, started off with a minute of silence to honor the sudden, heartbreaking demise of Subrata Saha, baba to many a bridge lover

Along with the tribute to Dr. Tolani, the event also remembered Subhash Agarwala, a stalwart from Nagpur. The Agarwala family has also sponsored a tournament in his name in Nagpur in 2023.

The inaugural ceremony also featured the inauguration of an app "Learn Game of Bridge" which will help any aspirant pick up the basics of bridge. This app is available **free of cost**. Built up in 7, easy to grasp modules, the app also has a Chat GPT based help which will help resolve some queries. In addition, there is a number on which people can message on WhatsApp to have their queries resolved.

Summary of Events

1. The National Masters Championships

The Tolani National Masters Championships got under way with 29 teams in the fray. After 6 rounds, **Dhampur Sugar Mills** (Ashok Goel, Vinay Desai, Swarnendu Banerjee, Ajay Khare and Raju Tolani) were leading the field with a total of 94.72 VP. In second place were **Texan Aces** (G. Venkatesh, Anil Padhye, P Sridhar, S. Sunderam, Arvind Srinivasan and D. Vijay) with 88.39 VPs. The 8th place team, Indian Chain has a score of 67.11 VPs, which would suggest a cut off score of around 89-90 VPs

The complete score [can be seen here](#)

Today, the teams will play 2 more rounds, after which 8 teams will qualify for the knock outs. The qualifiers will play the quarter finals which will be 3 rounds of 12 boards each.

The remaining teams will continue to play the league with a fresh draw although they will carry over their scores from the Swiss League.

2. The Tolani Masters Championship

The Tolani National Masters Championships got under way with 29 teams in the fray. After 6 rounds, **Amanora** (J K Bhosale, Dilip Gosavi, V Ravindran and V Ravichandran) were leading the field with a total of 92.22 VPs. In second place were **Mind Crusaders** (Rajib Roy, Gourav Biswas, Shouvik Das and Arnab Basu Roy with 89.73 VPs. The 16th place team, Setu, has a score of 63.46 VPs, which would suggest a cut off score of around 86 VPs

The complete score [can be seen here](#)

Today, the teams will play 2 more rounds, after which 16 teams will qualify for the knock outs.

The qualifiers will play the pre quarter finals which will be 3 rounds of 10 boards each. Subsequent, the winners will play the first round of the Quarter Finals which will be 3 rounds of 12 boards each.

The remaining teams will continue to play the league with a fresh draw although they will carry over their scores from the Swiss League.

Top Table Clash –

Cogito V Texan Aces

This was the meeting at Table 1 in the 3rd round of the Tolani National Masters

This was the seating

COGITO (23)	Texanaces (27)
OPEN	CLOSED
NS: Ajit B Chakradeo - Satish G Diwanji	NS: Arvind Srinivasan - Vijay Devadass
WE: S Sunderram - Padmanabhan Sridharan	WE: Andrey Purushottam - Swapan Some

First blood was drawn on board 23 which is shown below

23	♠A108
	♥K832
	♦KQJ4
All / S	♣J7
♠43	♠QJ72
♥10954	♥Q6
♦1085	♦A32
♣Q942	♣K1053
	♠K965
	♥AJ7
	♦976
	♣A86

In the closed room, the fairly new partnership of Arvind Srinivasan and D Vijay, had a fairly mundane auction of 1 ♣ -1 ♥ -1NT-3NT and, after receiving the lead of ♥T, South had no problems scoring 11 tricks.

In the open room, however, after Satish Diwanji opened a Precision 1 ♦ and Ajit Chakradeo bid 1 ♥, Sridhar doubled for the other two suits. Diwanji redoubled (support) and Sunderram bid 2 ♣. Ajit now bid 3 ♣ to force partner. With 3 clubs to the Ace, Satish Diwanji didn't feel comfortable bidding the No Trump game. He instead opted for 4 ♥ which has no chance whatsoever.

This mishap cost Cogito 13 Imps.

On the next board, both teams missed a slam in diamonds as aggressive pre-emption robbed North South of bidding space to find the slam properly. This was the hand

24 ♠QJ974
♥A
♦K6
None / W ♣KQ1098

♠K1063
♥6
♦J7
♣A75432

♠A52
♥J108753
♦9
♣J6

♠8
♥KQ94
♦AQ1085432
♣

In the closed room, Andrey Purushottam, known for his aggressive pre-empting style, opened the West hand with an egregious 3♣ bid. North had to pass with this club stack.

Now, Swapan Some, East further muddled the water with a 3♥ bid, regarded as unquestionably forcing.

South, D. Vijay, also joined the party with a 4♦ bid, but by now, the waters were so murky that he could not respond to his partners strong 4♥ support to his bid with 5♦.

In the other room, Sunderram chose to pass. Ajit Chakradeo, North, opened 1♠. Sridhar pre-empted 3♥, to which Satish Diwanji bid 3NT, thus pocketing the diamond suit.

The next big blow was arguably an own goal by Cogito in the closed room on the board alongside.

With a mama-papa 1NT-2♣ -2♦ -3NT auction, West has to choose which major to lead. Andrey, unfortunately pick the ♥9 which set up the suit for declarer who now could see 9 tricks quite easily (he made 10)

While, once again, one is not clear about the auction in the open room, Sunderram had no problems finding the lead of J after which declarer has no hope in hell of making the contract.

25 ♠K52
♥J1074
♦QJ
WE / N ♣A652

♠J3
♥9853
♦A976
♣J108

♠A10986
♥A2
♦8543
♣93

♠Q74
♥KQ6
♦K102
♣KQ74

Another 11 imps to the Texan Aces. With a few more mishaps here and there for Cogito, Texan Aces emerged comfortable winners 45-8. The detailed scores can be [seen here](#)

The Wonderland of Indian Bridge

A coffee table book titled "The Wonderland of Indian Bridge", containing selected bridge blogs on the nuances of the game and the players, written by Mr. V N Ramamoorthy, an avid bridge player and writer from Chennai, was launched at Chennai on 3rd February 2024.

This book will be available on sale at the venue from the 19th of February.

Priced at Rs. 300 only, the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the development of bridge by creating a trust which will institute prizes / trophies for beginners / students.

Those desirous of purchasing this book and contributing to the development of bridge may contact SRC Sekhar (90420 98755) or Sukrit Vijayakar (98334 30370).

Payment can be made by cash or G Pay to Mr. Ramamoorthy at 9380294636 (preferred).

Bols Bridge Tips – Courtesy IBPA



Howard Schenken is one of the earliest proponents of modern bridge.

He played a session with Ely Cuthbertson in the **Bridge Battle of the Century**, the famous Cuthbertson-Lenz match of 1931.

His record in major ACBL championships is unapproached: 10 wins in the Springold, 10 in the Vanderbilt, 5 in the Life Masters Pairs for the Von Zedtwitz Gold Cup. He also won the first three Bermuda Bowl championships and competed in several more.

He was one of the first proponents of a strong club system. He wrote two books on his one club system and related his experiences in *The Education of a Bridge Player*.

In America, he was known as the expert's expert. The story goes that a magazine asked twenty leading players to compile a ranking list, all modesty apart. There was one consistent feature in the ratings: **2 Howard Schenken!**

His piece for the Bols Competition was titled '**On Defence at Trick One**'.

Much has been written about the careful thought required of declarer before he plays the first trick. But little has been said about the player at the declarer's right; East in the normal diagram.

When you are in this position you often have a difficult, but vital role to play. Unlike declarer, you cannot see your partner's hand, but by reviewing the bidding and observing the lead you may be able to visualise it.

While South is thinking over his plan of attack, you may have a chance to plan your defence. Even if South plays quickly to the first trick, you should not allow yourself to be hurried.

For example:

3 NT South
Lead: ♥ 10

♠ 9 5
 ♥ J 10 4
 ♦ K Q 2
 ♣ A 10 7 5 3

♠ J 10 7 2
 ♥ Q 8 5 3
 ♦ A 9 4
 ♣ K 6

South opens a strong no-trump. North raises to 3NT and West leads ♥ 2. Declarer quickly plays dummy's 10, and of course you cover with the queen automatically.

Or do you? Not unless you have been lulled into following suit without thinking.

So, I will assume you are concentrating and are ready to begin the chore of counting points. You and dummy each have 10, South has at least 16, so your partner has at most 4. His fourth-best lead shows a 4-card suit with (a) no honours, (b) the king, (c) the ace.

If (a), you lose a trick by covering; with (b), you break even. So, you focus your attention on (c), which gives declarer K-x. In this case of course, you must duck, and when sooner or later you come in with the king of clubs your heart return defeats the contract.

Even when you have an automatic play to the first trick, you can pause and say, "Sorry, I'm not thinking about this trick". This may help you prepare a vital decision at the next trick, as in this example

South opens 1NT, North raises to 3NT and partner opens with the Queens of Spades.

Counting points presents no problems. You have 13, the dummy 8, and partner's lead has shown 3. The total is 24, and since declarer surely has 15 and more likely 16, you are on your own as sole defender

3 NT South
Lead: ♠ Q

♠ 7 6 5
 ♥ 9 2
 ♦ K J 10 9 8 7
 ♣ A 3

♠ A 3
 ♥ J 10 8 7
 ♦ A 6 5
 ♣ K J 10 9

Now you turn your attention to tricks. If declarer can bring in the diamond suit, he will romp home. But as you gaze at the dummy you notice that the ♦ A is only once guarded. The light dawns! Triumphant you win the first trick with the ♠ A and lead the ♣ K. As Muhammad Ali would say, "The Ace will fall in two rounds".

Note that the king of clubs cannot possibly give declarer a ninth trick: at most he will make one spade, three hearts, two diamonds and two clubs.

The next hand is difficult and requires careful planning. Please cover the West and South hands

West	North	East	South	Both Vul	♠ A 9 6 2 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ Q 5 ♣ Q 10 8 6
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♥		
Pass	3 NT	All pass	1 NT		
				♠ 10 8 7 3 ♥ 5 ♦ A 9 6 2 ♣ 7 5 4 2	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;"> N W E S </div> <div> ♠ K J 5 ♥ K 8 7 6 4 ♦ K 10 8 3 ♣ 9 </div> </div>
				3 NT South	♠ Q 4 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ J 7 4 ♣ A K J 3

West leads the ♦ 2 and declarer plays the 5 from dummy. Plan the defence in detail.

From the bidding and lead you deduce that partner's distribution is probably 4-1-4-4. If his lead is from the jack your 10 will force the ace. But if partner had had the ♦ J, declarer would have played dummy's queen, hoping to hold the trick!

So, you conclude that your king will win and that you can establish three diamond tricks. You can certainly expect to make the ♥ K, but you will need at least one trick in spades. With this in mind, you win the ♦ K and return the 8, thereby deceiving partner into thinking that South started with J-10-7-4!

This produces the desired result as partner wins with the ♦ A and shifts to a spade. Declarer perforce plays low from dummy and you win with the king. Now you shift back to diamonds and are ready to take the setting trick when you get in with the king of hearts. You apologize to partner for your deceit, but he forgives you readily since no other defence would have set this contract.

My tip therefore is: **When on defence in third position, cultivate the habit of playing slowly to the first trick. Careful thought will help you defeat many more contracts.**

Schedule of Events

Date	Time	Session
18-Feb-24		Swiss League Qualification
	10:00	Rounds 7 and 8 of Swiss league for Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters
		After 10 Rounds, the top 8 teams in the Tolani National Masters League will qualify for the Quarter Finals. The top 16 teams in the Tolani Masters will qualify for the Pre-Quarter Finals
	13:00	Lunch
		Swiss League Non Qualifiers
		The non qualifiers will play a continued Swiss League with a fresh draw. The scores from the Swiss League will be carried forward
		Rounds 9 and 10 of Continuation Swiss league for Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters
	17:00	Tea
	17:30	Round 11 of Continuation Swiss league for Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters
		Tolani National Masters QF 3 x 12 Boards
	14:00	Quarter Finals Session 1
	15:45	Quarter Finals Session 2
	17:45	Quarter Finals Session 3
		Tolani Masters PQF 3 x 10 Boards
	14:00	Pre Quarter Finals Session 1
	15:30	Pre Quarter Finals Session 2
	17:45	Pre Quarter Finals Session 3
		Tolani Masters QF 3 x 12 Boards
	19:30	Quarter Finals Session 1
19-Feb-24		Tolani National Masters SF 4 x 12 Boards
	10:00	Semi Finals Session 1
	11:45	Semi Finals Session 2
	14:30	Semi Finals Session 3
	17:00	Semi Finals Session 4
		Tolani Masters QF 3 x 12 Boards
	10:00	Quarter Finals Session 2
	11:45	Quarter Finals Session 3
		The losing quarterfinalists can join Session 2 of the pairs elimination provided they had given their entries earlier.
		Tolani Masters SF 3 x 12 Boards
	14:30	Semi Finals Session 1
	17:00	Semi Finals Session 2
	18:45	Semi Finals Session 3
		Pairs
	10:00	Match Point Pairs Elimination 1
	13:00	Lunch
	14:00	Match Point Pairs Elimination 2
		Losing Quarter Finalists from Tolani Masters can join with a pre determined Score
	16:30	Tea
	17:00	Match Point Pairs Elimination 3
		24 pairs will qualify for the Finals
	15:15	Match Point Pairs - Consolation
20-Feb-24		Teams Finals and Play offs 3 * 16 Boards
	10:00	Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters Finals and Play Offs Session 1
	12:00	Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters Finals and Play Offs Session 2
	14:00	Lunch
	15:00	Tolani National Masters and Tolani Masters Finals and Play Offs Session 3
		Pairs
	10:00	Match Point Pairs Finals - Boards 1 -26
	10:00	Consolation Pairs Session 1
	13:00	Lunch
	14:00	Match Point Pairs Finals - Boards 27-46
	14:00	Consolation Pairs Session 2
	17:15	Prize Distribution