



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – February 15, 2021

Top Online Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since January 1, 2021.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	43.19	1	Suzanne Edwards	18.94	1	Casey Baron	18.21
2	Robert Griffiths	25.57	2	Stephen Nantes	17.94	2	Salvatore Pace	15.13
3	Mike Peng	25.23	3	Janet Howell	17.55	3	Judy Beauchamp	9.72
4	Moira Hollingsworth	24.36	4	Shirley Metcalfe	16.35	4	Nanci Phelan	9.27
5	Cindy Mahn	24.07	5	Brian Kirkconnell	16.25	5	Virginia Alviano	8.86
6	Bruce Roberts	22.17	6	Kathy Russell	15.45	6	Renate Boucher	8.74
7	David Wilson	20.08	7	Barbara Arthur	13.96	7	Noah Pace	8.39
8	Margot Stockie	19.05	8	Sandy Graham	13.52	8	Anita Hanson	7.55
9	Colin Harrington	18.92	9	Robert Gilck	13.18	9	Barb Neibert	7.11
10	Edith Ferber	17.91	10	Brian Silva	12.47	10	Belinda Burt	6.89
11	Dianne Aves	16.93	11	Sandy Lee	11.37	11	Susan Kerrigan	6.74
12	Liz McDowell	16.66	12	John Hanemaayer	10.81	12	Susan McDonald	6.59
13	Neil Jeffrey	13.63	13	Tony Verhoeven	10.80	13	Steve Allen	6.21
14	David Longstaff	12.96	14	Cheryl Kip	10.51	13	Joe Blake	6.21
15	Ted Boyd	12.78	15	John Kip	10.22	15	Kathleen Burns	6.18
16	Adrian Record	11.18	16	Adriaan Kempe	9.33	16	Denise Ontonovich	5.90
17	Tom Ramsay	10.08	17	Ron Lawrence	9.26	17	Mary Lynn Benjamins	5.84
18	John Vandergrift	10.03	18	Paul Latimer	9.11	18	Nancy Cattanach	5.74
19	Steve Carpenter	8.98	19	Jim Dalgliesh	9.06	19	Marlene Dopko	5.68
20	Susan Lawton	8.83	20	Fred Young	8.45	20	Martin Jones	5.66
21	Malkin Howes	8.67	21	Sue Peterson	8.32	21	Carol Filipowitsch	5.62
22	Peggy Pearson	7.93	22	David Dennis	8.18	22	Carol Robinson	5.56
23	Stephen Young	7.44	23	David Embury	8.09	22	Trent Robinson	5.56
24	Mary McClelland	6.50	23	Roy Dandyk	8.09	24	Andy Martinek	5.53
25	Diane Bourdeau	6.04	25	Lori Cole	7.55	25	Ginny Scott	5.49

Welcome

A warm welcome to the following new club members.

- **Judi Blowes**
 - **Margaret Sanderson**
-



Congratulations!

The following local players have advanced to the next ACBL level.

Junior Master

- **Carolyn Israel**
- **Dona Reinhart**
- **Casi Zehr**

Club Master

- **Ginny Alviano**

Sectional Master

- **Rachael Sun**

Life Master

- **Anne Bell**

Bronze Life Master

- **Roslynn Short**

Silver Life Master

- **Stephen Carpenter**

And a warm welcome to the following new ACBL members.

- **Rick Arthur**
 - **Anne Clarke**
 - **Suzanne Cline**
 - **Carolyn Hodgson**
 - **Richard Hodgson**
 - **Bill McNaughton**
 - **Jane Wilson**
-



Mark Your Calendar - February 14

Just a reminder that we're running three sweetheart Swiss teams games on Valentine's Day.

CATEGORY	START/EST. FINISH TIME	FORMAT
199er	9:30 am 3:15 pm	42 boards over 6-7 rounds with a break of 40-50 mins (midway through session)
499er	10:00 am 4:15 pm	48-49 boards over 6-8 rounds with a break of 40-50 mins (midway through session)
Open	10:30 am 4:45 pm	49 boards over 7 rounds with a break of 40-50 mins (after Round 3)

Double master points will be awarded (half red/half black) as part of the ACBL's Valentine's Weekend event.

- The cost is 10 BBO\$ per person.
- Prizes will be awarded in each of the three categories.
- The individual games are not stratified.
- You may register as a pair or as a four-person team.

Please register on BBO at least **20 minutes prior to game time**. The game director has extra work to do behind the scenes in a Swiss game, so please make his work as easy as possible. To join the game, you need to start by registering with your partner the same as you do for a regular club game. If you have not played in a Grand River virtual game before, please ensure that your pair is registered **30 minutes prior to game time** in case there are issues.

Once your pair is registered, the "leader" of your pair may invite another pair to make a team. The leader is the person who did the original invite for your pair. The leader then clicks on the **SELECT TEAMMATES** tab in the registration screen. They can then scroll through a list of pairs and click **INVITE** for the pair they want. For those of you who have decided on a team, you know who to pick. Anyone who *receives* a team invite needs to check who is inviting them before they accept. Otherwise, they may end up on someone else's team!

If you haven't agreed on a team, then you can scroll through the other available pairs and invite one. Please wait until 15 minutes before game time to do this in order to give the prearranged teams a chance to pair up. If you do not successfully invite another pair to make a team, you will be automatically paired when the game starts.

PLEASE BE SURE TO BE ONLINE THREE TO FIVE MINUTE PRIOR TO GAME TIME AND ENSURE THAT YOUR PARTNER/TEAMMATES ARE ALSO ONLINE VIA TEXT CHATS.

PS from Cheryl Kip, Membership Lead

If you'd like to play in this full-day event on Sunday, February 14 but don't have a partner, please let me know. I am keeping a list of people who are looking for partners and I will spread the word. Also, be sure to tell me which game you're interested in 0-199, 0-499, or open. You can contact me at ckip1636@rogers.com.

Learning the Lingo – Watch the Spot Cards

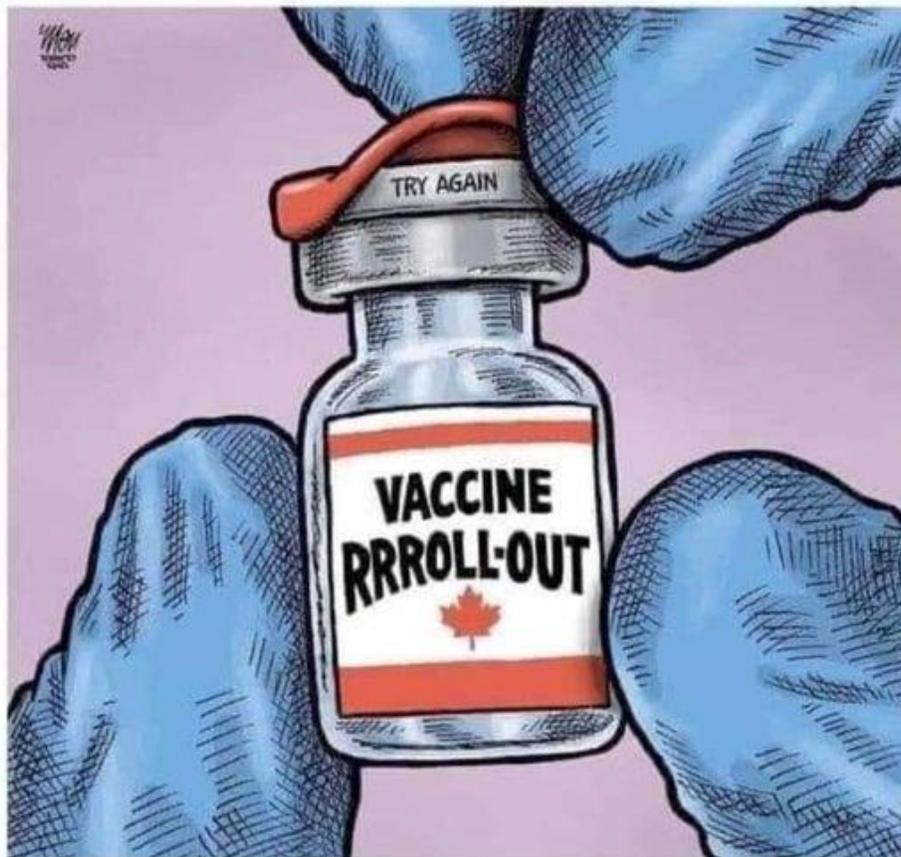
Contributed by Jean Farhood

I have been playing social bridge on BBO with friends who are not experienced duplicate players but are having a great time playing bridge virtually during the pandemic. One of the most common mistakes I see is their failure to pay attention to the spot cards (non-honour cards). Here are two examples that cost them an extra trick – not crucial in a social game but very costly at duplicate.

- Left-hand Opponent (LHO) is declarer in 2♣ after you open 2♥. Dummy has ♣J98xxxx ♥Ax, ♦KQxx and a ♠void. Partner dutifully leads the ♥9, Dummy wins the ♥A and leads a low club. You play small from ♣K10x, LHO plays ♣Q and partner wins the ♣A and continues with the ♥5. You win and keep leading hearts until declarer ruffs and partner overruffs. When Declarer is back in dummy with the ♦K, he leads a low club. Did you hop up with the ♣K? Or did you pay attention to the spots and recognize that the ♣10 would be good enough?
- Here's another one – partner leads the ♦8 against a 4♥ contract. Dummy tables ♦Qxxx and you hold ♦KJ9xx. If declarer plays the ♦Q, you MUST cover with the ♦K because you know that Declarer holds the ♦A (partner would NEVER underlead an ace against a suit contract!). If Declarer plays low, you insert the ♦J to force Declarer to play the ♦A.

Maybe these examples occurred later in the round when the players were tired and had lost focus. For sure, it's a challenge to try to keep track of all the cards, but if you can pay attention to the spot cards you will improve your duplicate scores. Keep playing and having fun!!

You have to be Canadian to understand!!!



A Message from Your Directors (Part 1)

Online bridge is a strictly-timed game. You've asked your opponent to explain his bid, the clock is ticking, and no explanation seems to be forthcoming. Now what?

- First, as a bidder, at the time you make your bid you must clearly and fully self-alert your bid if an alert or announcement is required by the ACBL (recall that January 1 brought with it changes to the alert and announcement requirements). Naming the convention is not an explanation. Your explanation needs to stand on its own – not in the context of your partner's bid/alert. Also, as a bidder, if the gold box pops up for an explanation you must immediately type a meaningful explanation on the line – repeating your original explanation is not going to be helpful and silence is unacceptable.
 - Second, all unalerted bids should be taken as natural, unless that obviously makes no sense and the bid would be an unalertable convention like Michaels. If the bid subsequently turns out to be alertable and damage results, the director should be called in order to rectify the result.
 - Third, you should not frivolously ask the meaning of a bid. Just because you can anonymously ask for an explanation does not mean you should click on the bid. If you know the meaning of a bid, you should not ask for an explanation just to get confirmation. It takes time for someone to explain their bid and that eats up time on the clock. Your frivolous delay of the game is not acceptable and, if it negatively impacts your opponents, the director may adjust your score as rectification.
 - Fourth, as the person asking for the explanation, don't hold up the game for a long period of time waiting for the explanation. If the explanation is not going to affect your bid, then you should immediately make your bid and not hold the game up at all. If the explanation will impact your bid, then you should wait about 30 seconds. If no explanation has come in that length of time, call the director with a message about who won't explain their bid. For example, "North not explaining bid". If the explanation is provided after you called the director, you can cancel the call or chat the director that it is okay now. If there has been no explanation by the time the director arrives, then the director will decide whether to ask the partner to private chat you the meaning of his partner's bid, or tell you to do your best playing on and then call the director back if rectification is needed because you were actually damaged by the lack of explanation. You must tell the director how having that explanation would have made you play differently and had a result more in your favour. The director will decide if any rectification is required.
-



This is what "I can wait" looks like.



This is what "Sorry" looks like.



"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" Psalm 23

This is what courage looks like.



Flowers Who Are Born to Blush Unseen

Contributed by Louise Dawdy and Kathy Chandler

This month we are highlighting Kevin Latter. Kevin has taken on many volunteer roles at GRBC, but he is likely best known for his role as an affable director and bridge lab mentor. As a game-playing enthusiast, Kevin first became interested in bridge about 10 years ago. His other passions include cricket, soccer (Chelsea), and rugby.

Although hailing from Britain, Kevin has travelled extensively. As his father was in the army, Kevin not only experienced many different countries and cultures around the globe, but also became proficient in several languages, including French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. As a youth, Kevin also spoke Swahili fluently.

Aside from bridge, Kevin's other interests include food (especially cheese and ice cream), wine (Italian reds, especially Taurasi), and reading. Kevin's top choice of places to visit on the other side of "this" would be India and New Zealand. Kevin's first "go back to" country would be Italy. Kevin's bridge tip for lower-level players is to learn to use weak two bids/pre-empts and other interfering bids - because "they are hateful" when on the receiving end and do cause trouble for your opponents.

Asante, Kevin! (Thank you in Swahili)

Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous. Here are a few examples.

I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.

You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

Unit 249 2021 Elections

Unit 249's 2021 elections will be held in June 2021, and nomination forms must have been submitted by April 17, 2021. Candidates need the signatures of two nominators to run for the board. Both the nominee and the nominators must be ACBL members in good standing, and their ACBL number must be included. Click [here](#) for the nomination form.

Nominations can be accepted electronically and separately (i.e., the nominators can email their nomination to the board's secretary, and the nominee can accept the nomination also by email).

Ode to Bridge

I'm giving up bridge - tonight's my last night,
It's Amen to Stayman, I give up the fight.
The insults and muddles are giving me troubles;
I can't sleep at night for remembering doubles.

What to bid, what to lead, and which cards have been played?
Did my partner's discard mean she wanted a spade?
So, for now it's all over - I'm off to the back wood,
I'm bidding good riddance to Gerber and Blackwood.

I can't stand the hassle, I can't stand the pain,
I'm getting those bad cards again and again.
I'm giving up bridge - tonight's a bad night,
Declarer is horrid and nothing's gone right.

My partner's quite hopeless but tends to blame me,
When we go down in four and we should be in three.
And I sit there in dread when I hear her say "double",
She does it a lot and it always means trouble.

My points are not high, and I'm wondering why,
She keeps on and on bidding right up to the sky;
We're in seven hearts and my nerves are all frayed,
When wonder of wonders - the contract is made!

We've got all the tricks, the defenders look grey,
And I have to admit that my partner's okay.
But ... I'm giving up bridge - tonight's my last night,
Farewell to conventions, I give up the fight!

So I end with some words that I know to be true,
Bridge is a game, not for me but for you.
So be kind to your partners, and don't mind their cheek,
For it's only a game - oh! and see you next week!

More from Your Directors (Part 2)

Contributed by Kathy Russell

BBO Chat Manager – Quickly and Easily Pre-Alert Your System

The ACBL changed the Alert procedures on Jan 1 ([Red Alert – BridgeFeed \(acbl.org\)](#)). These updated procedures apply to your play on BBO too. In addition to how you alert/announce specific bids when they are made, you may now be required to pre-alert your system at every table – before the bidding starts. BBO Chat Manager is an easy way to quickly chat the same message over and over. It stores all the chats you want to re-use with all your partners, and you select the one you want as needed. These links show you how to use Chat Manager – a short video or written instructions.

[Chat Manager on BBO - YouTube](#)

[Using BBO Chat Manager.pdf \(bridgewebs.com\)](#)

How to Call the Director

If an irregularity occurs at the table, you should use the “Call Director” menu option as shown in the following video. Once the director has been called, you should keep an eye on the chat area so you can see and answer the director’s questions.

[How to Call the Director when in a BBO tournament - YouTube](#)

Wondering What Your Opponents Are Playing? See Your Opponents’ Convention Cards During Play!

Do you wonder what your opponents are playing but don’t want to take the time to ask a bunch of questions or you don’t want them to know what your questions are? Or is your opponent taking too long to answer your query? Take a look at their convention card! All regular partnerships should have a convention card on BBO, and BBO will make it available to everyone at the table. This video has a segment that shows you how to display a convention card for the people playing at your table.

[BBO Convention Cards - How to See Convention Cards at the Table - YouTube](#)

You Didn’t Finish A Board and You Disagree with The Result Given?

First of all - Play Faster! Our games give ample time per board. Usually, if you don’t finish a board, the BBO bots play out the rest of the board under multiple scenarios and assign a score – the game director is not involved. If you don’t agree with the assigned score, you can immediately use the “Call Director” menu option and explain the line of play that you intended. It is insufficient to just say that you don’t agree with the score. If you run out of time in the last round and object to the assigned score, the “Call Director” menu item is no longer available to you. In this case, within 5 minutes of the end of the game, you need to send a private chat to the online game director. The director has only a short window in which to make score adjustments. Normally the game director will be using the club account **VACB129866** and that is what you need to private chat. It would be wise to “Follow” VACB129866 so it is in your friends’ list to save you time.

Lebanese Limerick

There once was a player from Beirut
Who thought he would try to be cute.
He overcalled a spade
And died as he played.
The post mortem: a four-card suit.

LESSONS NOT YET LEARNED



Planning the Play of the Hand in No Trump

It's not too late to sign up for this workshop.

Level: **Beginner**

Instructor: Stephen Carpenter

Date: Wednesday, February 17, 9:30 am - noon



Easy End Plays – Curtains for the Opponents!

End plays are tactical plays whereby a defender is put on lead at a strategic moment and forced to play a card that gives declarer an extra trick. Strip and throw-in end plays really aren't all that difficult, and this workshop will focus on how to execute them.

End plays should be part of every declarer's arsenal. In addition to generating an extra trick or two, end plays also are very fun for declarers - as they watch their opponents' dawning realization that there is no way out of this vise.

Level: **Intermediate**

Instructor: Malkin Howes

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 9:30 am - noon

The complete schedule for our winter lessons is up on our website now.

- Click [here](#) for information about our Beginner 2 course (Beginners 1 is now almost completed) which will start on March 11 and run for five weeks.
- Click [here](#) for the workshops for advancing players.

Click [here](#) for information about how to pay for your lessons (scroll down).

The GRBC February 14 Morning 499 Game is Cancelled...
THE GBC February 14 Morning Fast Pairs Game is Cancelled...

Instead of playing in either of these games, why not invite another pair to join you and your partner to play in the GRBC Valentine's Swiss that day?

Coming Virtual Activities

- Friday, February 12, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Friday, February 12, 1:00 pm, **499er game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Friday, February 12, 7:00 pm, **open game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Saturday, February 13, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Sunday, February 14, **Valentine's Swiss Teams Games** (see registration details above)
- Monday, February 15, 12:30 pm, **49er game (18 boards @ 8 minutes) \$5**
- Monday, February 15, 1:00 pm, **open game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Monday, February 15, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$5**
- Tuesday, February 16, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Tuesday, February 16, 1:00 pm, **open game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, February 17, 9:30 am, **Declaring No Trump Contracts**
- Wednesday, February 17, 1:00 pm, **499er game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, February 17, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, February 17, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, February 18, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, February 18, 1:00 pm, **open game (26-28 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, February 18, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) \$5**

We have fun in **spades**.
We play with all our **hearts**.
We treat our members like **diamonds**.
It's Valentine's Swiss Teams time at our **club**.

TCG - The Common Game: Fast Results Analysis, Part 2

Contributed by Jack Cole

We continue with the *Personal Common Game Home Page* link in your Common Game email, on the “**Attendance**” tab and the “**Prior Games**” tab. (Reminder that some TCG results may not be available until later in the day.)

We’ve seen the deal-by-deal Fast Results Analysis (FRA) that shows, for example, the hands on which one performed poorer than Double Dummy. This day, on board 19 I was declarer at

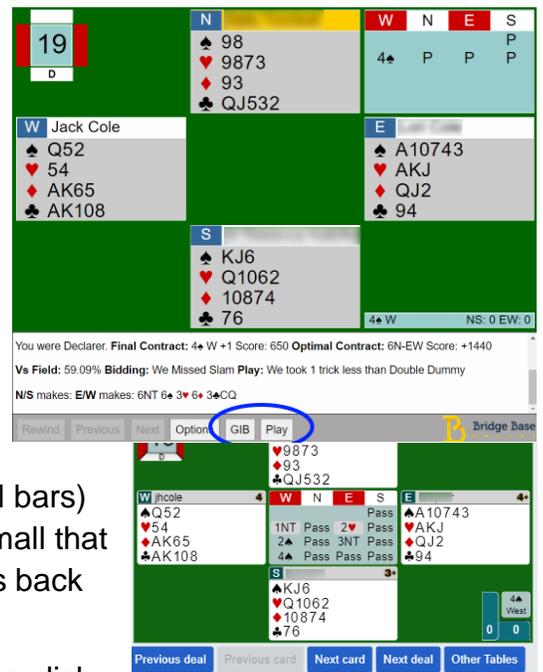
05A	18	W: Defending	4♠ N+1	-1	-650	♠A	9.09	5♠X-EW-3;	-500	We missed sacrifice	-4
05A	19	W: Declarer	4♠ W+1	-1	650	♠Q	59.09	6N-EW	+1440	We Missed Slam	-13
05A	20	W: On Lead	3N S+2	-1	-660	♥4	0.00	4N-NS	NS: EW:6N 6♠ 3♥ 6♣ 3♠	Sum Contract Bid	-1

4S, making five! Happy... until TCG tells me that, first of all, we should be playing 6NT, and also, by the way, I should have made another trick! Thank you, TCG! But how?

So I click on the board number, at the left. TCG sends a message off to BBO, and a full-screen picture of the board appears, as shown to the right.

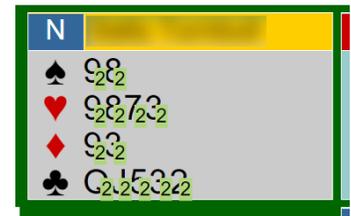
TCG can help figure things out, using tools from BBO. Alas, TCG comes up a little short here, because it neither shows the bidding (it just shows the final bid), nor the actual play of the hand. Those things **are available** from BBO by going to the History tab, selecting the match, and the board. BBO’s display (at lower right) is a quarter the size of the TCG display, but by using the “Next card” button you can step through the **actual play** of the hand.

You can also go to the “hamburger” menu (three horizontal bars) and turn on “Show double dummy”, but the display is so small that it’s difficult to use. This is where The Common Game steps back up.



There are two ways to use the tool from TCG. The first is to click the “Play” button, and replay the hand from scratch, making all your own decisions, for all 4 hands. That may not be enough to find the ultimate line of play so, when in doubt, you can also click the “**GIB**” button.

GIB stands for “Ginsberg's Intelligent Bridgeplayer” (or perhaps “Goren-in-a-Box”). GIB is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) behind the BBO robots, and it was originally developed by Matthew Ginsberg for Microsoft’s online bridge club! Each time the GIB button is clicked, the AI works out the result of playing every eligible card in the hand, and shows you the best card(s) to play!



For example, North is about to lead, and GIB shows (with the little green 2’s) that leading **any** card will result in a +2 result; 6 Spades is makeable, so no surprise. Suppose North chooses the 9 of Hearts, and now it’s East’s turn. **Press GIB again**, and it shows that playing East’s Jack would drop you to +1! The finesse fails, as South holds the Queen. Play the Ace or King instead, as they are marked “2”.



You can work your way around the whole hand like this. GIB may also show “=” (makes exactly) or a red number (down that many tricks). I suppose I could even use BBO to replay the hand my way, and follow along with GIB in another window, to find out exactly where I went wrong. Oh joy!

Have a go at replaying a hand with GIB's help. Next week – more stats from TCG!



Fact or Fiction?

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

This hand was from a team game and was written up in the 1960's. The contract was 6♥, declared by South with a lead of the ♥J. After Declarer drew trumps, there was nothing to do but play off the ace and king of diamonds, hoping for the reasonable diamond split that would give him 12 tricks. When West showed out on the second diamond, the contract looked hopeless.

Board 12
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ J 8 7 6 5 ♥ J ♦ 8 ♣ A 10 9 7 3 2	♠ Q 10 4 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ J 7 3 2 ♣ K Q 8	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 3 ♥ 10 5 3 ♦ Q 10 9 4 ♣ J 6 5 4
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ A K 2 ♥ A K Q 9 8 6 ♦ A K 6 5 ♣ —											

But South didn't fold up his tent and concede two diamond tricks; he found a way. After the diamond disappointment, Declarer played the ♠A, followed by the ♠2. When West followed low to the ♠2, the ♠10 was played from Dummy - winning the trick - and South was halfway there. Next, he led the ♣K from Dummy. East played low, Declarer discarded his ♠K, and when West won his ace, the contract was safe. West was known to be out of red cards; whatever he led would let Declarer win the two black queens in dummy, throwing away his two losing diamonds.

Once South found out about the bad diamond split, he saw that there was still a way to make the contract if West held both the ♠J and the ♣A. Of course, he played for the holding that he needed and the story had a happy ending.

This hand was written up in Charles Goren's column. He said that he was the declarer who made this creative play. His contemporaries suggest that the creativity was in the writing - that the play probably didn't actually happen, except in Charles' imagination. "If you believe that, you'll believe anything", one expert is reported to have said. In any event, it is a fun hand, whether or not it *really* happened.

Mr. Goren also reported that his team had a big loss on the board, since his opponents bid 7♥ on the hand and West led an 'insulting' ♣A. This set up two club tricks in Dummy and gave the other declarer an easy 13 tricks.

🦉 **And you should have seen the one that got away!!!!!!!**



Dear David

Your Majesty!

Dear David,

How do you find out about the ♦Q on this hand?

	N North ♠ A ♥ K7 ♦ AK762 ♣ AKQ76	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>5♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>6♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	2♣	P	2♦	P	3♦	P	3♥	P	4♣	P	4♦	P	4NT	P	5♣	P	6♦	P	P
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♠	KJ1053																									
♥	J10932																									
♦	J																									
♣	104																									
E	East																									
♠	Q9864																									
♥	8654																									
♦	Q8																									
♣	53																									
	S South ♠ 72 ♥ AQ ♦ 109543 ♣ J982	6♦ S NS: 0 EW: 0																								

In order to ask for the queen on this hand, the cheapest bid that is not the agreed trump suit is the asking bid. Since diamonds is the agreed suit, 5♥ asks about the queen of diamonds. Further to that, any time you have a fit of 10 or more cards, you should tell partner you do have the queen even if you don't - because the odds favour a 2-1 trump split. Sometimes you may be able to finesse if Qxx is in the West hand (not this time because you are also missing the jack). Sometimes Declarer will have six diamonds and there will be no worries at all. When partner asks for the queen and you have it, you should bid the cheapest suit that contains a king, unless that suit is higher than the agreed trump suit. If you have no king below the agreed trump suit but you do have the ♦Q, bid 5NT. If you don't have the queen, rebid the trump suit at the cheapest level possible.

On the above hand, the auction after 5♣ should go: 5♥ (do you have the ♦Q?). 5NT (yes, I do, but I don't have the ♠K or ♣K and I can't tell you whether I have the ♥K because that would take us beyond 6♦). 7♦ (seems like a good contract). If North knew about his partner's club suit, he could bid 7NT. However, you don't have to take unnecessary risks when bidding a grand slam, because any grand will usually get you a very good score. On this hand, one pair bid 7♣ and the other nine pairs were in game or a small slam.

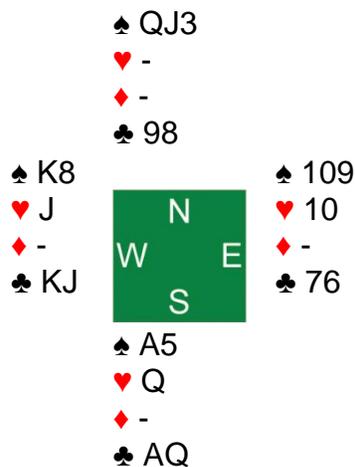
Asking about the queen is an important tool for you to use. Generally, you need at least four of the five keycards (the four aces and the trump king are keycards) and the trump queen, or all five keycards without the trump queen, to be in a reasonable slam. If you are not using Roman Key Card (RKC) Blackwood yet, now is the time to start.

Jake's Challenges

Last week, Jake Liu issued the following bidding challenge, and put the answer on our club's revamped Facebook page. For those of you who don't do Facebook, here is the challenge and its solution.

THE CHALLENGE

South was in three no trump and this was the situation after the eighth trick had been played.



At this point, Declarer has collected five tricks and needs four more tricks to make the contract. You are South and have the lead in your hand. How can you make your contract?

THE SOLUTION

At Trick 9, cash your ♥Q, discarding a club from Dummy. You are pleased to see both opponents follow suit. Now there are two ways for you to make your contract, both of them involving an end play. Either

- Cash the ♠A and then play your ♠5. West will be forced to take the trick with his king and then lead away from his king/jack of clubs. Even if West drops his king of spades under your ace, you can still take three more tricks since Dummy's queen and jack are now winners.
- OR**
- Cash your ♣A and then play your ♣Q. West will be forced to take the trick with his king and then lead away from his king/eight of spades. Even if West drops his king of clubs under your ace, you can still make your contract because all you have to lose now is a spade.

This line of play will succeed even if both the ♥J and ♥10 are in the East hand (but not if they're both in the West hand).

This week, Jake has a new challenge (#11) for you. The answer can be found on [our Face-book page](#).

♠ A64
♥ AK10
♦ 10875432
♣ -



♠ KJ83
♥ 73
♦ AJ
♣ K8532

West North East South

1D / 1S
1NT 2D / 3D
/ 3S / 4S

I was South and bought the contract for four spades. I was inspired to make this pushy bid because a) I expected my partner to hold good diamonds (since he bid them twice) and b) West's one no trump bid suggested that spades would split 3-3. West's opening lead was the king of diamonds. When Dummy came down, I was disappointed and despaired of making the contract. However, the opening lead gave me a glimmer of hope.

I played low from Dummy, East played the nine, and I took my ace. Plan the play.