



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – January 15, 2024

Click [here](#) to access our regular game schedule.

Looking Ahead

- ♥ Our BBO games during the week of January 8 – 14 will be **NABC Louisville fundraiser games** = double black points, BBO\$1 surcharge
- ♥ Saturday, January 13, [Learn Bridge in a Day](#)
- ♥ Barbara Arthur will be giving a **mini-lesson on Counting Trumps** at the Monday morning bridge lab on January 15.
- ♥ Our BBO games during the week of January 15-21 will be **Silver Linings games** = 1½ times silver points, BBO\$1 surcharge
- ♥ **First Beginners 1 lesson**, Saturday, January 20, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm.
- ♥ Stephen Carpenter will be giving a mini-lesson on **Responding to Pre-empt**s at the Monday morning bridge lab on January 22.
- ♥ Our BBO games during the week of January 28 - February 3 will be **Junior Fund Charity games** = double black points, BBO\$1 surcharge
- ♥ Malkin Howes will be giving a mini-lesson on **Filling Out Your Convention Card** at the Monday morning bridge lab on January 29.
- ♥ **Starting Signals – Attitude** workshop by Neil Jeffrey, Tuesday, January 30, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
- ♥ **The Friday night open game on February 9 is cancelled.**
- ♥ [Niagara Sectional](#), February 9-11, St Catharines
- ♥ **Pop-Up 499er F2F Pairs Game**, Sunday, February 11, 1:00 pm, \$1 surcharge
- ♥ **Royal STaC Week**, Tuesday, February 13 – Friday, February 16

Red Masterpoints

Contributed by Joe Blake, Special Events Lead

Are you a 499 player looking for **Red** masterpoints?

- The ACBL is giving us a special "Pop-Up" game on Sunday February 11 at 1:00 pm that will be allotting half the master points as **Red**.
- The entry fee will only be one extra dollar over a regular game fee. It's almost like they're giving away **Red** master points.
- There is no sign-up required, so grab your partner and join us at the club for a good day of F2F bridge.

P.S. By the way.....did I mention there will be **Red** masterpoints available?

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Member

- Ed Hills
-



Congratulations...

to the following local players who earned master points at the Toronto regional and sectional tournaments.

- **Judy Beauchamp and Martin Jones**, 3rd in A, Friday Afternoon Gold Rush
 - **Jim Dalgliesh and Suzanne Edwards**, 14th in A, Friday Afternoon Gold Rush
 - **Suzanne Edwards and Barbara Arthur**, 9th in A, Saturday Afternoon Gold Rush
 - Doug Andrews and **Colin Lafferty**, 6th in A, Saturday A/X Pairs
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and to the following local players who earned master points at the Cleveland Regional Tournament.

- **Sharon Boyd and Adrian Record**, 10th in A, Thursday Open Pairs
 - **David Baker, Mary McClelland, Bruce Roberts, and Dianne Aves**, 4th, Wed-Thur KO-2
 - **David Wilson, Dianne Aves, Edith Ferber, and Bruce Roberts**, 4th, Saturday CKO-1
 - **Adrian Record, Sharon King, Mike Peng, and Mary McClelland**, 1st, Saturday CKO-2
 - **Sharon Boyd, Kathy Russell, Margot Stockie, and Moira Hollingsworth**, 2nd, Saturday CKO-2
 - **David Wilson, Edith Ferber, Mary McClelland, and Sharon Boyd**, 7th in A, Sunday Open Swiss Teams
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On Track...  ...To Online



AND THE WINNER IS... Our second series of **online playing draws** has begun, and our first winner is **Don O'Bright**. Congratulations! Don played on the final day of Week 1, Tuesday morning, January 9, in our **299er** game. We had **141** entries this week for a chance to win a \$25 gift card from the LCBO. Every time a **current GRBC member** plays in one of our **online games**, their name goes into the draw. Play with us on BBO by Tuesday, and the next winner could be you! Three more winners to come.

Can You Help?

The fire department has required us to remove the rolling shelving from the anteway leading to our teaching room. Unfortunately, the old shelves were unsalvageable and have been disposed of.

- So now we are wondering if any of our members will be willing to **donate any portable shelving, especially metal ones**, that they might have on hand.
- We are also looking for someone who is **skilled at painting/wall papering** to help spruce up the anteway.

If you can help, please email Margot Stockie, margotstockie@hotmail.com.



Bean There Done That

Contributed by Steve Allen, Treasurer (GrandRiverBridgeClubTreasurer@gmail.com)

Since October, GRBC has been a member of the SE CAROLINA for their BBO games, as are 172 other bridge clubs across North America. The plan is to have players from all member clubs choose SE CAROLINA's BBO games when not playing in their own club's BBO games.

This liaison with SE CAROLINA provides benefits for you as well as for GRBC. SE CAROLINA offers three games at different levels every morning, afternoon, and evening ... seven days a week. These games are able to provide a larger purse of master points. GRBC receives a portion of our member's entry fee from SE CAROLINA games. That's free money for us!

There are oodles of BBO game opportunities out there. It may sound like a broken 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ LP record, but please use this chart as a guide for choosing where to play. The righthand column shows why it's important to Mister Bean.

Order	Whose BBO Game?	GRBC's \$ Income Per BBO Player (\$Cdn)
1	Play in our GRBC game (view schedule)	\$4.70 (all players)
2	Play "local" in our Ontario Unit 249 clubs' game (Tillsonburg, London, Goderich) (view schedule). It may seem like the "Miracle on 34 th Street" movie by pushing business their way, but members from those clubs are playing in our games too. Reciprocal...	\$0 when you play there \$4.70 when they play GR
3	Play in SE CAROLINA's GRBC sponsored 749er game on Saturday mornings. It's our game that SE CAROLINA runs for us (they promote it, they direct it, they share income with us)	\$1 to \$2.50 of all players' entry fees
4	Play in SE CAROLINA BBO games	Up to \$1.30 of our members' entry fees (\$0 from non-members)
5	Play elsewhere	\$0 (bupkis)

From Mister Bean's perspective, our affiliation with 2/3/4, above, is purely a financial arrangement. We receive income from a source that would otherwise not exist. **We received almost \$1,000 in our first three months of the SE CAROLINA liaison. That's not chickenfeed! But if we don't support SE CAROLINA games, that will not continue.**

NOTE: To find SE Carolina games, type 'SE' in the search bar. You know how to find our GRBC games!



Join the Club!

So far, 253 bridge players have chosen to join or renewed their memberships for 2023-2024. If you still haven't joined/renewed, you will be most welcome! All you need to do to renew your membership is to give the game director \$35 or else pay remotely as outlined [here](#). To join for the first time, you need to pay AND fill out a membership form, which is accessible on the same page. Your membership will be valid through June 30.

New Chief Cook and Bottle Washer

The management team is delighted to announce that **Becky Blake** has agreed to help keep our coffee machines healthy and our kitchen clean.



Partner Finder

Contributed by Joan Slover

Most of you know about finding a partner on Pianola by posting an ad. Did you know that you can receive emails that someone is looking? Instead of going *into* Pianola and check whether there's anyone advertising, Pianola can send you an email when someone is looking and when they've found a partner.

To set this up, In Partner Finder click on the PREFERENCES tab at the top and then choose your default preference (Notify, Neutral, or Block). You want Notify.

Blue Medical Masts are Garbage

Penske requests that our players not put their non-recyclable blue medical masts in the blue totes marked "Recycling" in our shared lobby. The Region of Waterloo stipulates that these masks must be placed directly into the garbage, for health and safety protocols.



The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the "The Answer Lady" I have been responding to questions from "newer" players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players' questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

Over the last few weeks, this column has attempted to address the topic of weak opening bids, including raising Opener's bid when Responder has support for that very suit. This week, a reader seeks advice when Responder has no support for Opener's weak but has a "good" suit of their own.

Question

My partner and I were the opponents sitting North/South on the hand shown below. As you can see, South passed at first opportunity and West opened the bidding with a weak 2♠ bid. After North passed, East (with a void in spades) bid 4♥ and made five. How did East know that 4♥ was the right place to be? What are the guidelines for bidding on when Responder has no support for Opener's weak two bid?

An interested reader

The image shows a bridge hand simulation interface. At the top left, a card with the number '3' and the letter 'D' is shown. The interface is divided into four quadrants representing the players' hands and the bidding process.

W	N	E	S
♠ QJ10962 ♥ Q ♦ Q102 ♣ K64	♠ 7543 ♥ 5 ♦ 9753 ♣ A985	♠ ♥ AKJ8643 ♦ AK84 ♣ 103	♠ AK8 ♥ 10972 ♦ J6 ♣ QJ72
2♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

At the bottom right, there is a score display showing 0 for West and 0 for East, with a '4♥ East' indicator above the scores.

Answer

Thank you, interested reader, for sharing your timely question and hand. Barbara Seagram in her 2020 book *Barbara's Bridge Tips*, Part 1, Section 17, pp. 62-70 provides an excellent discussion on page 68 of pre-emptive bids, including responses to weak two bids. Some common options for Responder are as follows.

- Pass even with an opening hand and no support
- Raise partner's suit
- Bid a new suit

When bidding a new suit, Responder is denying support for partner's suit but should have at least a minimum opening hand and a good five-card suit. Responder should never bid a new suit with a pre-emptive hand of their own (never pre-empt over a pre-empt). Barbara suggests that a bid of a new suit by Responder *be forcing for one round*. If the bidding went 2♠ by Opener and 3♥ by Responder, Opener would raise the bidding to 4♥ if they had three hearts.

In the hand provided, Responder is sitting in fourth seat. Opener has bid 2♠, and neither opponent has entered the bidding. East has a void in Opener's suit (spades) and has not just five but seven hearts, along with 15 HCPs. The likelihood of Opener having the necessary three hearts to raise the contract to 4♥ is slim, so East bids immediately to 4♥.

Here is another hand below (a F2F game, so the bidding sequence can't be displayed). West opened the bidding with 2♠ and North overcalled 3♥. East as Responder has limited support for West's spades but has a good suit of their own, namely diamonds, and a void in hearts, and so they bid 4♦. South supports the hearts with a 4♥ bid. East, not to be outdone, bids 5♦, making seven (West did not bid on with no support for diamonds). East ruffs the first heart, pulls trump, and leads the ♠K to partner's hand, overtaking it with the ace and discarding dummy's losing spades on the long spades. A club lead would limit the contract to six.

D 20	N	W N E S
	♠ 72 ♥ AQJ1096 ♦ 108 ♣ A87	P P 5♦ P P P
W	E	
♠ AQJ1085 ♥ 753 ♦ 6 ♣ 1032	♠ K ♥ ♦ AKQJ7532 ♣ K964	
S	5♦ E NS: 0 EW: 0	
♠ 9643 ♥ K842 ♦ 94 ♣ QJ5		

Time You Learned our Lessons!

Newcomer bridge labs most Monday mornings, 9:00 am – 11:30 am, except on holiday Mondays. Upcoming mini-lessons include **Counting Trumps** with Barbara Arthur on January 15, **Responding to Pre-Empts** with Stephen Carpenter on January 22, **Filling Out Your Convention Card** with Malkin Howes on January 29, and more **Play of the Hand (Suits)** with Dave Quarrie. NO EXTRA CHARGE

Beginner 1 Lessons

Instructor: Sue Moses

Dates: Saturday, January 20, 27, February 3, 10, & 17 Cost: \$85 (includes the cost of the text)

Current Enrollment: 10

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Starting Signals – Attitude

Instructor: Neil Jeffrey

Cost: \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members

Level: **Novice**

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 30, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at our club

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Pre-Emptive (Weak) Twos – Including the Responses

Instructor: Jack Cole **ONLINE**

Cost: \$40 for members and \$50 for non-members

Level: **Novice**

Dates & Time: 9:00 am – 11:30 am, Friday, March 1 and Friday, March 8

NB: We must have received eight registrations by January 31 for this module to proceed.

A Student of the Game

My baby has gone to college. I am standing in his empty room, contemplating my empty life. The phone rings. It's Holly. 'Bridge lessons? Why?'

But then, why not? At that point my friend could have suggested fly fishing or funnel cake baking and I would have gone. But it just so happens to be bridge, and bridge is where I follow her.

The next day we head out to a place called the Indianapolis Bridge Center, oddly enough. It's in a drab business area and while its industrial carpeting and fluorescent lighting aren't exactly warm and welcoming, I soon find out the people are.

Noel is our teacher. She is pretty and nice. She is teaching beginning bridge. And when I read the first page of the beginning text book titled *Bidding*, I feel confident. It starts out: 'There are four suits in a deck of 52 cards'. Simple. This should be fun.

Fast forward... It's been four weeks since we began our bridge lessons. I liked Noel at first. But now she is saying things like 'The opening can open the bidding with 12 or more points. The overcaller can have 7 to 17. The responder to the opener must bid with at least six points and the advancer to the overcaller must remember only to count on her partner for seven points.' And if that isn't bad enough, she continues with, 'A strong hand is opened with an artificial bid of two clubs that has nothing to do with the club suit and, in fact, if you do have a strong hand in clubs, ignore it...'

By the end of the *Bidding* series, I'm thinking back on the phone call I received from Holly and wishing she had suggested rocket science lessons instead. I think I could have done that....."

Excerpted from *The 8 of Clubs Was Good? Comfort Food for the Bridge Player's Soul*



Dear David

The Law of Empty Spaces

Okay, okay, okay – it’s not really a law, but it does sound cool.

♠ A K 10 8	♠ Q 5 3
♥ A 9 4	♥ 10 7 3
♦ 10 5 2	♦ A 9 6
♣ K 10 4	♣ Q 6 3 2

1♣ by West, 1NT by East – all pass.

South leads the ♦3 and declarer wins the third round. The ♠Q and a spade to the ace is next, both opponents following with small spades. Now declarer decides to lead the ♣4 from dummy. North pops up with the ace and leads the ♥Q → 3, 2, 4. A low heart now goes to the king and ace. The ♣K is next, then a club to the queen, North showing out on the third round. What do we know? We know South had four clubs. It has been confirmed that South started with four diamonds since North did not cash a diamond when he was in with the ♣A. South has followed to two rounds of spades and two rounds of hearts = 12 cards accounted for. When you lead a third round of spades at this point, South follows with the ♠6. You have accounted for all 13 of South’s cards, so you play the ♠K, knowing that North has the singleton jack left. Making 1NT. Count, count, and count again.

So, what has all this to do with empty spaces? Here is the entire hand.

Dir: S	
Vul: All	♠ J 9 7
	♥ Q J 8 6 5
9	♦ J 7 4
14 8	♣ A 9
9	
♠ A K 10 8	♠ Q 5 3
♥ A 9 4	♥ 10 7 3
♦ 10 5 2	♦ A 9 6
♣ K 10 4	♣ Q 6 3 2
	♠ 6 4 2
	♥ K 2
	♦ K Q 8 3
	♣ J 8 7 5

Declarer mistakenly won the FIRST round of hearts (Q, 3, 2, A), so he has only an inferential count – South has four clubs, four diamonds, one heart, and two spades = two unknown cards. North has two clubs, three diamonds (assumed), one heart, and two spades = five unknown cards. If you were looking for a needle in a haystack, would you look in the pile that had two unknowns or the pile that had five unknowns. Logically, the pile with the greater number of unknowns is more likely to be the one with the needle. When you are looking for the location of a specific card, the hand with the greater number of unknowns is usually your better bet.

For Intermediate *Jake's*
Play a Bad Hand Well

No. 130

N W E S	♠ 75
	♥ AK10987
	♦ 2
	♣ K843

♠ 1098
 ♥ QJ5
 ♦ QJ65
 ♣ A105

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♦ ¹	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	All pass		

1. Game forcing

I was South, defending against 3NT. My partner's opening lead was the ♠3, and my ♠8 lost to West's ♠Q. West then led his ♥6 to dummy's ♥7, which I took with my ♥Q. At Trick 3, I led the ♠10, which held. If you were in my shoes, what would you do now?

SOLUTION

Let's count Declarer's tricks. Assuming he has one more heart (highly likely, given the way he is handling the heart suit), there are five potential heart tricks in dummy. He probably also has the ♠A (since it looks as if he ducked your ♠10 in an attempt to sever communications between you and your partner), potentially leading to seven tricks in the majors for him. That means he needs only two tricks in the minors to make his contract. If he holds the ♦AK, there is nothing you can do. If, however, he holds only one of them, let's say the ♦A, he must have the ♣Q based on his bidding. If so, there is the danger that he can develop his ninth trick in clubs by leading the ♣Q as soon as he gets in. If this is the layout, here is the position with ten tricks to go.

♠ KJ6	N W E S	♠
♥ x		♥ AK1098
♦ Kxx		♦ 2
♣ xxx		♣ K843
♠ A		
♥ x		
♦ Axxxx		
♣ Qxx		
♠ 9		
♥ J5		
♦ QJ65		
♣ A105		

Given this scenario, you must lay down your ♦Q right now at Trick 4! (You're not giving away a trick because with a singleton diamond in dummy, Declarer cannot finesse your ♦J later, even if he holds the ♦10.)

When you lead your ♦Q, there are two possibilities.

- If Declarer ducks, you can probably assume that he doesn't hold both the ♦A and the ♦K. Now you can safely continue diamonds.
- If Declarer takes your ♦Q with his ♦A, you can't be sure who holds the ♦K (even though your partner might try to signal, it's always possible that he doesn't have the right cards to guide you.) Even so, there is no reason for you not to lead another low diamond as soon as you regain the lead with your ♠A.

Here is the complete hand.

	♠ KJ632	
	♥ 43	
	♦ K98	
	♣ 762	
♠ AQ4	N	♠ 75
♥ 62	W	♥ AK10987
♦ A10743	E	♦ 2
♣ QJ9	S	♣ K843
	♠ 1098	
	♥ QJ5	
	♦ QJ65	
	♣ A105	

Your diamond attack was almost as deadly as a heart attack!



Top 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 the beginning of December.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	15.37	1	Lori Cole	8.19	1	Peter Gaasenbeek	6.95
2	Cindy Mahn	11.89	2	Kevin Latter	8.14	2	Brian Gaber	5.88
3	Mike Peng	10.92	3	Jack Cole	7.34	3	Stu Cowan	5.19
4	Edith Ferber	10.02	4	John Kip	7.13	4	Andrew Widdis	4.74
5	Malkin Howes	9.00	4	Cheryl Kip	7.13	5	Sharon Nesbitt	4.01
6	Steve Carpenter	8.74	6	Nancy Cattanach	7.03	6	Sheila Charters	3.97
7	Moirra Hollingsworth	8.30	7	Louise Dawdy	6.61	7	Randall DeKraker	3.81
8	Dave Quarrie	8.20	8	Rick Arthur	5.88	8	Paul Raymond	3.53
9	Stephen Young	7.75	9	Denis Williams	5.83	9	Jane Wilson	3.49
10	Neil Jeffrey	7.55	9	Regina Williams	5.83	10	JP Fraresso	3.43
11	John Hanemaayer	7.44	11	Jim Dalgliesh	5.11	11	Russel Kerr	3.37
12	Neil Coburn	6.92	12	Renate Boucher	4.93	12	Audrey Cook	3.36
13	Ted Boyd	5.89	13	Judy Beauchamp	4.88	13	George Rybiak	3.26
14	Margot Stockie	5.59	14	Susan Durance	4.84	14	Cassandra Zehr	3.08
15	Kathy Russell	4.98	15	Glenn Mockford	4.77	15	Robert Darby	2.96
16	Lynda Burnett	4.88	16	David Dennis	4.56	16	Phil De Montigny	2.95
17	Roy Dandyk	4.74	17	Elinor Girouard	4.24	17	Doug Fickling	2.66
18	Adriaan Kempe	4.71	18	Molly Worden	3.98	17	Mark Sherwood	2.66
19	Susan Lawton	4.30	19	Paul White	3.96	19	Debbie Miethig	2.50
20	Sharon Boyd	4.28	20	Martin Jones	3.93	20	Larry Brooks	2.42
21	Bob Griffiths	3.98	21	Lissa Lowes	3.61	21	Pat Northey	2.33
21	Dave Embury	3.98	22	Joe Blake	3.60	22	Hilary Kekanovich	2.22
23	Jennifer Verdam	3.71	23	Bev Hitchman	3.40	23	Richard Rybiak	2.13
24	David Wilson	3.60	24	Diana Spearn	3.13	24	Kathy Chandler	2.12
25	Dianne Aves	3.34	25	Tony Verhoeven	3.08	25	Andrew McNaught	2.04

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- For both online and f2f games, log on to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. *When you use Partner Finder, it will allow folks to see your contact information. If you have posted a Partner Finder ad, kindly remember to check your phone and email and, when you've found a partner, delete your ad. Someone who replied to your ad may be waiting for a response.*
- For online games only, log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab (or look to see if someone else has already registered there).

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead. Please let her know what sort of game/partner you are interested in – your playing level, your available time slots, F2F and/or online, and any other pertinent information.

We have fun in **spades**.

We play with all our **hearts**.

We treat our members like **diamonds**.

We're always looking for volunteers at our **club**.