



Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 25 Number 4 – April, 2023



April events



Bloomington-Normal Duplicate games at the First Christian Church located at Jefferson and Lee streets near downtown Bloomington starting at 11:00AM on Mondays:

all games – 299ers only and open pairs - SPECIAL GAMES ANNOUNCED

Contact Lori Moore at 309-838-8085 for more information.

Mike's Bridge Club schedule – ALL games at Centennial Christian Church, 1219 E. Grove St, Bloomington, unless otherwise noted:

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – open pairs

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 299ers only pairs

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus pairs

Contact Mike Tomlianovich at 309-825-5823 for more information.

Online(BBO) bridge available at:

Tuesdays, 6:50pm – 749ers only pairs

Thursdays, 6:30pm – 499ers only pairs

Thursdays, 6:50pm – open pairs

Saturdays, 10:00am – open pairs

Sundays, 6:50pm – mentee-mentor 2nd & 4th – open 1st-3rd-5th pairs

for more information contact one of:

Lori Moore at 309-838-8085

Mike Tomlianovich at 309-825-5823

Eunice Patton at 309-660-2380

All game results are posted online: <http://live.acbl.org/>

All games sanctioned by the American Contract Bridge League.



The Bloomington-Normal "Top 25" Masterpoint holders

As of 3/6/2023 – residents of Bloomington-Normal only
paid up ACBL members only



1	4,768.41	Steve Babin
2	3,643.18	Zach Freehill
3	3,455.38	Eunice Patton
4	3,261.33	Cindy Moore
5	2,607.56	Mike Tomlianovich
6	2,438.39	Ann Schuyler
7	2,420.93	Lori Moore
8	1,936.95	Ron Emmett
9	1,833.34	Joyce Clay
10	1,651.03	Jeff Furler
11	1,329.16	Steve Wulfers
12	1,272.27	Jeanne Strand
13	874.93	Barb Neuges
14	866.16	Dave Freehill
15	851.99	Ray Dostal
16	833.21	Sallie Boge
17	730.71	Fred Spitzzeri
18	618.86	Larry Ziegler
19	599.80	Mary Cralley
20	505.44	John Cralley
21	507.26	Chris Zogg
22	466.79	Rick Dalton
23	451.71	Gene Byers
24	418.99	Pat Lebeck
25	383.54	Marilyn Byers

more players:

13,628.59	Chris Benson-LeRoy
6,151.00	Larry Matheny-Ft Collins CO
5,925.20	Ron Sholes-Springfield
5,649.44	John Seng-Champaign
4,720.90	Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
3,896.77	JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
3,835.55	Terry Goodykoontz
3,812.75	Carole Sholes-Springfield
3,805.65	Mary Allen-Peoria
2,754.63	Georgia Heth-Morton
2,704.78	Hank Hoffman-East Peoria
2,654.93	Margaret Hansell-Champaign
2,548.96	Chuck Young-Peoria
2,459.04	John Maloney-Spring Hill,FL
2,090.87	Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
1,959.05	Bill Bulfer-East Peoria
1,471.62	Wes Seitz-Champaign
1,167.10	Bill Strauss-Urbana
982.20	Darryl Bremner-Clinton
975.41	Bill Thompson-Ft Myers,FL
803.78	Carole Miller-Champaign
747.56	Melda Richardson-California
679.16	Connie Tucker-Champaign
624.90	Lane O'Connor-Naperville
601.17	Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
596.44	John Ford-Harvard,MA
577.24	Ron Sinn-Peoria
465.62	Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria
414.23	Lynn Steffen-El Paso





IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

with Larry Matheny



The next 4 columns appear on the next 4 pages:

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

An experienced declarer will always look for ways to avoid a finesse. This hand shows that some of these opportunities can be difficult to see.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #53 Dlr E Vul N/S	♠ AJ96 ♥ Q3 ♦ K943 ♣ 763					
♠ 102 ♥ AK62 ♦ 10875 ♣ K82	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 74 ♥ J985 ♦ QJ2 ♣ J1095	West Pass All Pass	North 3♠	East Pass Pass	South 1♠ 4♠
	♠ KQ853 ♥ 1074 ♦ A6 ♣ AQ4					

BIDDING: South had just enough to continue on to game over his partner's limit (10-12 pts.) raise.

PLAY: West led the ace of hearts and then shifted to a spade. Declarer counted two heart losers and two possible club losers. Rather than rely on the club king being on-side, declarer looked for another way to make the hand. South returned a heart at trick three and West exited with his last trump. Next, declarer played ace, king, and a third diamond ruffing in his hand. He then ruffed his last heart in dummy and led the last diamond. When East showed out, declarer pitched a low club from his hand. Poor West won the diamond but now had to lead a club into declarer's AQ or give a ruff/sluff. If East had held the last diamond, South would ruff and fall back on the club finesse.

You can see there was nothing difficult about this hand. Declarer merely needed to look at all of his options and select the one with the best chance of success. Here he found one that was 100%.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

A good declarer looks at all of his options before deciding upon the best line of play. And, when it's a matchpoint event, overtricks are especially important. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #1 Dir E Vul N/S	♠ J9843 ♥ K62 ♦ KQ106 ♣ 10					
♠ K65 ♥ J10 ♦ J9753 ♣ 765	♠ AQ10 ♥ AQ ♦ A42 ♣ AKQJ3	♠ 72 ♥ 987543 ♦ 8 ♣ 9842	West	North	East	South
			Pass Pass Pass	2♥* 6NT	Pass Pass All Pass	2♣ 4NT

*Controls: Either one ace or two kings

BIDDING: South held a huge hand and as soon as he discovered his partner held two kings, he knew slam was likely. His rebid of 4NT showed 25-26 HCP and it was a simple matter for North to do the math and bid the slam.

PLAY: West led the jack of hearts and declarer quickly counted twelve tricks: one spade, three hearts, three diamonds, and five clubs. This was a matchpoint (pairs) event so now it became a question of making the overtrick. South saw he could either take the spade finesse or first see if the diamond suit was going to be polite. He won the heart lead in his hand with the queen and then played the ace to unblock the suit. Next it was a diamond to dummy's king and a low one back to his ace. When East showed out on the second round, the subsequent diamond finesse gave him all thirteen tricks.

Those pairs who ended in a spade slam were forced to take the losing spade finesse but what was surprising was the number of pairs in 6NT who also tried the finesse. I guess it was just too tempting to refuse. Finesses should be the last resort, not the first.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

In a pairs event too many players play bridge rather than matchpoints. Believe me when I say matchpoints is a different game. Making your contract may not be an issue; rather you need to achieve the greatest plus or smallest minus possible. This hand is a good example.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #2					
Dlr E	♠ Q1063				
Vul N/S	♥ J7652				
	♦ AQ8				
	♣ 7				
♠ 82		♠ A5	West	North	East
♥ Q43		♥ K1098			Pass
♦ 964		♦ 7532	Pass	4♣*	Pass
♣ AQ932		♣ K105	All		4♠
	♠ KJ974		Pass		
	♥ A				
	♦ KJ10				
	♣ J864				

*splinter bid

BIDDING: In this partnership, North's leap to 4♣ showed four-card spade support, shortness in clubs, and around 9-12 HCP. South had no interest in getting higher and signed off in game.

PLAY: Realizing South may have to ruff some clubs, West led a low trump to his partner's ace. A second round of spades followed as declarer stopped to analyze his position. He saw the contract was not in jeopardy as he had ten tricks with four spades, one heart, three diamonds, and two club ruffs in dummy. But, he also saw that if the outstanding hearts divided 4-3, he could make a valuable overtrick. After winning the second spade in his hand he unblocked the ace of hearts and conceded a club. Declarer won the diamond return in dummy and ruffed a heart. Next he led another diamond to dummy to ruff another heart. He still had two dummy entries with club ruffs to establish dummy's fifth heart. Scoring +650 instead of only +620 earned a lot of matchpoints.

Notice there is nothing difficult about this hand but so many declarers worry only about making their contract rather than looking for the best matchpoint score.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

We spend approximately half of our time on defense but most players prefer discussing and dealing with bidding and declarer issues. Here is a defensive problem that was solved by merely counting points. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #3 Dir E Vul N/S	♠ A75 ♥ Q542 ♦ A8 ♣ 10543		West	North	East	South
♠ J9642 ♥ KJ8 ♦ K1054 ♣ A	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 83 ♥ A10976 ♦ 732 ♣ 982	1♠ All Pass	DBL*	Pass Pass 1NT	1♣
	♠ KQ10 ♥ 3 ♦ QJ96 ♣ KQJ76					

* Negative double

BIDDING: West had a poor suit to overcall 1♠ but he held enough values to justify his action. After North's negative double, South closed the bidding with 1NT showing 12-14 HCP.

PLAY: Seeing no future in his spade suit, West led the four of diamonds. The eight held the trick in dummy and declarer next led a club to his king. After winning the ace, West started to play another diamond to establish his king but instead stopped to analyze what he had learned. From the bidding he knew South held one if not both of the spade honors. It was also clear declarer held the QJ of diamonds and the top two (or three) club honors. Any logical combination of those cards placed South with 12-14 high card points so one thing became clear: South did not hold the ace of hearts. With that card along with the others, he would have too many points for the auction. So at trick three, West put the heart jack on the table and then continued with the king and another. These six tricks for the defenses held declarer to his contract and a great result. In fact, at two tables, N/S bid and made 3NT.

Notice West did nothing more than count the high card points South had shown from the



Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2022 & 2023 only

2022/10/27	73.61%	Lynn Steffen & Karen Fox(499ers online)
2022/10/12	75.00%	Chris Benson & Steve Babin
2022/9/26	72.22%	Janet Creek & Mary Jane Linke(social to duplicate)
2022/9/21	71.25%	Chris Benson & Steve Babin
2022/7/29	70.15%	Lori Moore & Rick Dalton
2022/7/21	73.61%	Chris Zogg & Carolyn Burrell(499ers online)
2022/6/29	81.35%	Marilyn & Gene Byers(749ers online)
2022/6/9	71.43%	Cindy Moore & Jeff Furler
2022/6/6	70.37%	Sharon Martin & Margaret Wolf(social to duplicate)
2022/5/25	72.62%	Glee Cumbow & Jim Kalmbach(299ers)
2022/4/26	70.24%	Rick Dalton & Rob Husband(499ers online)
2022/4/25	72.40%	Chris Zogg & Zach Freehill
2022/4/11	72.50%	Lori Moore & Rick Dalton
2022/4/11	70.00%	Ann Rybolt & Pam Graves(social meets duplicate)
2022/3/28	71.30%	Dick Dubroff & Mike Gross(social meets duplicate)
2022/3/21	75.00%	Mike Gross & Zoe Freeman(Mon eve pairs)
2022/3/14	72.22%	Mike Gross & Michelle Tomlin(Mon eve pairs)
2022/1/24	72.22%	Cheris Larsen & Mike Gross(Mon eve pairs)
2022/1/17	71.88%	Margaret Wolf & Dick Dubroff(social meets duplicate)



BRIDGE BITES

from: The American Contract Bridge League

By: Brian Gunnell



#113 – TRIPLE PLAY

♠ 8754
♥ AK65
♦ 9832
♣ T

♠ K6	North	♠ 3
♥ QT43	West	♥ J9872
♦ J	East	♦ AK65
♣ J98764	Declarer	♣ K53

♠ AQJT92
♥
♦ QT74
♣ AQ2

None Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

When, as a defender, we have a trump holding such as Kx or QJx or JTxx, conventional wisdom tells us that it is frequently better not to chase after ruffs as we would have scored that trump trick naturally. Let's see how that advice works on this deal.

First Play: West ignores conventional wisdom and leads his singleton Diamond. East takes his ♦K and ♦A and gives West his ruff. Now, with only two enemy trumps remaining, Declarer should play for the drop, and that is 10 tricks for Declarer. Actually, Declarer had a second compelling reason to play for the drop. If he were to finesse the Spade he would be playing West to have two singletons. That's not impossible, of course, but with such extreme distribution, and being non-vulnerable, he might have been heard from in the bidding, don't you think?

Second Play: Our second West decides to lead a Heart, reasoning that it would be better to win the ♠K (when Declarer finesses) and *then* try for the Diamond ruff. That way he scores *two* trump tricks. Dummy's Ace wins that opening Heart lead and, sure enough, the Spade finesse is lost to West, and the defense now scores two Diamonds and a ruff. Down one!

Third Play: That Heart was a better opening lead from West, but it was followed by some pretty atrocious play by Declarer! All he has to do is to cash both of Dummy's Hearts, pitching Diamonds, and then take the Spade finesse. Now the defense can cash their Diamonds, but Declarer can ruff the third round high. 10 tricks.



#114 – A BLOCKING PLAY

♠ AK6
♥ K64
♦ J72
♣ T984

	<i>North</i>		
♠ T32 ♥ J73 ♦ AT983 ♣ A6	<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>	♠ Q9854 ♥ 9852 ♦ Q4 ♣ 32
	<i>Declarer</i>		

♠ J7
♥ AQT
♦ K65
♣ KQJ75

E-W Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

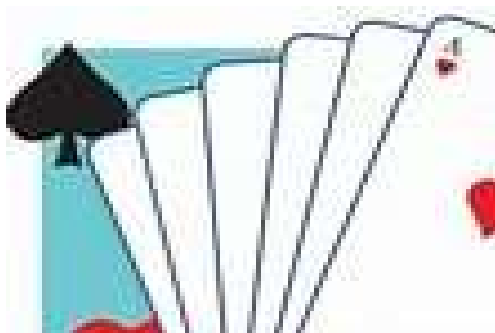
Against 3NT, West starts out with the Diamond Ten, it's the standard lead from that holding (top of a so-called "interior sequence"). You are Declarer, and the questions of the day are "What's the big danger?" and "What are you going to do about it?"

You have enough tricks once the enemy's ♣A is out of the way. If the defenders' Diamonds are 4-3 then nothing can go wrong, you cannot lose more than three Diamonds and the ♣A. So, the danger is a 5-2 Diamond split, and you have a make-or-break play at Trick 1.

Pretending that you haven't already peeked at the E-W hands, what 5-card Diamond holdings could West have led from? One possibility is **T9xxx**, in which case you are safe whatever happens. A second possibility is **QT9xx**, in which case East will win his Ace and return a Diamond, after which the contract will depend on the whereabouts of the ♣A ... if it's in the hand with long Diamonds you are down ... if not, then you make your contract (with an overtrick).

In both the above cases it doesn't matter what you do, the lie of the cards will determine your success or failure. But now consider what to do if West has led from **AT9xx**. Low from Dummy, low from East, what do you play? You could duck, praying that the ♣A is with the short Diamonds. But the correct play is to win the first trick with the King. Now the Diamonds are blocked! When the defense gets in with the ♣A, their Diamonds are all winners but they cannot be untangled. So, the winning plays at Trick 1 are low from Dummy and the King from hand.

P.S. There is another possible West holding. He might have led from **AQT9x**, in which case Declarer may have a second stopper by playing Dummy's Jack at Trick 1. But that play also requires West to hold the ♣A. The odds are better that West has **QT9xx** than that he has **AQT9x** and the ♣A.



#115 – WHICH FINESSE?

	♠ A6432 ♥ 832 ♦ 642 ♣ T6	
♠ KJ87 ♥ K65 ♦ T98 ♣ J72	North West East Declarer	♠ QT95 ♥ 7 ♦ 753 ♣ K9843
	♠ ♥ AQJT94 ♦ AKQJ ♣ AQ5	

When this deal was played in a team match, both Souths charged into 6♥ with little or no encouragement from North. Now, you have probably noticed that Dummy is alarmingly short of entries. So you might think that at Table 1, where West led a helpful Spade, Declarer would be in rather better shape than at Table 2 where West led a distinctly unhelpful Diamond. But, in fact, 6♥ went down at Table 1 and made at Table 2!

At Table 1, Dummy's ♠A won the first trick and Declarer pitched a Club loser. Seeing 12 easy tricks if the ♥K was onside, Declarer ran the ♥8, but was down when West took his King and returned a trump. Declarer had blundered grievously, as there was now no way to avoid a Club loser. Instead of giving himself just one chance to finesse he could have given himself two chances. Yes, on the opening Spade lead Declarer must not

throw a Club loser, instead it is a Diamond winner that has to go (the Ace would be the ostentatious choice, of course). Now Declarer takes the Club finesse and, if it loses, then he can get to the board with a Club ruff and try the Heart finesse. Of course, when the Club finesse works, then Declarer cashes the ♣A, ruffs a Club (with the Eight, to be safe), and tries for an overtrick with a Heart finesse.

At Table 2, after the more challenging Diamond lead, Declarer's play at Trick 2 was the clever ♥Q, trying to force an entry to Dummy. But West was just as clever and ducked! Declarer persisted with the ♥J and West brilliantly ducked that one too! But Declarer would not be denied and, leaving West's remaining trump at large, she now played Diamond winners. Whatever West did on the last Diamond, Declarer would score 12 tricks! Great defense, great declaring!



#116 – THE ART OF CONCEALMENT

♠ T32
♥ J43
♦ AK62
♣ AT9

♠ K74 ♥ T982 ♦ QT5 ♣ 432	North West East Declarer	♠ AJ95 ♥ 765 ♦ 9843 ♣ K5
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♠ Q86
♥ AKQ
♦ J7
♣ QJ876

South opens 1NT, which nowadays usually shows 15-17 HCP. North bids 3NT, and West leads the ♥T.

Declarer can see enough tricks once the ♣K is out of the way, but those Spades look somewhat fragile. We have two questions. Firstly, how do you play the Hearts? Secondly, how do you play the Clubs? These questions are not misprints, we'd really like to know!

Declarer can see that the opening Heart lead is from **T9xx** or some such holding. But, from East's seat, it might well be from holdings such as **AT9x** or **KT9x** or **QT9x**. How can Declarer muddy the waters and create some doubt in East's mind? She could routinely play low from Dummy, as most would, but the play most likely to cause confusion is surely the Jack! Declarer then wins the trick with the Ace, and East will say to himself: "I've seen this movie before. Declarer was hoping that I had the Queen and would cover. Clearly she is laying a false trail and has AK doubleton in the suit"

Now Declarer plays on Clubs. If she leads the ♠Q then that pretty much advertises the situation. So, instead, she runs the less informative Jack, and when East wins the King he'll have some thinking to do. Declarer has a maximum of three points in Diamonds, and appears to have seven points in Hearts. The Club situation won't be clear, and East might visualize Declarer's hand as: ♠KQx, ♥AK, ♦QTxx, ♣J87x, or something similar. If so then a Heart continuation beats the contract.

A less devious Declarer will play a low Heart from Dummy on Trick 1, and will run the ♠Q at Trick 2. When East wins his King, he'll have more clues, and is more likely to diagnose Declarer's Spade weakness. If he does, he will be sure to switch to the Spade *Jack*, a so-called "surrounding play" which allows the defense to grab four Spade tricks, setting the contract.





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

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