



Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 25 Number 11 – November, 2023



November 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 – social meets duplicate pairs 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(if attendance warrants)

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus

NOTE: The 11/8 games will be held in the conference room of Hilltop Homes office, 1902 S Main St, Bloomington.

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, 6:50pm – 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 10/7/2023 – residents of Bloomington-Normal
only paid up ACBL members only



- 1 **5,000.44 Steve Babin**
- 2 **3,717.21 Zach Freehill**
- 3 **3,530.65 Eunice Patton**
- 4 **3,357.08 Cindy Moore**
- 5 **2,663.30 Mike Tomlianovich**
- 6 **2,484.79 Ann Schuyler**
- 7 **2,473.35 Lori Moore**
- 8 **1,975.92 Ron Emmett**
- 9 **1,978.45 Joyce Clay**
- 10 **1,687.93 Jeff Furler**
- 11 **1,384.89 Steve Wulfers**
- 12 **893.54 Barb Neuges**
- 13 **882.61 Dave Freehill**
- 14 **848.54 Sallie Boge**
- 15 **774.12 Fred Spitzzeri**
- 16 **705.34 Larry Ziegler**
- 17 **604.34 Mary Cralley**
- 18 **555.92 Chris Zogg**
- 19 **535.97 Rick Dalton**
- 20 **509.93 John Cralley**
- 21 **481.36 Gene Byers**
- 22 **454.89 Pat Lebeck**
- 23 **410.22 Marilyn Byers**
- 24 **381.43 Kay Marvin**
- 25 **365.28 Joyce Werner**

more players:

- 13,882.09 Chris Benson-LeRoy**
- 6,285.80 Larry Matheny-Ft Collins CO**
- 6,018.24 Ron Sholes-Springfield**
- 5,744.94 John Seng-Champaign**
- 4,932.06 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria**
- 4,704.59 Paul Lindauer-Chicago**
- 4,031.45 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI**
- 3,964.50 Mary Allen-Peoria**
- 3,943.45 Terry Goodykoontz**
- 3,872.20 Carole Sholes-Springfield**
- 2,790.35 Georgia Heth-Morton**
- 2,757.76 Hank Hoffman-East Peoria**
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign**
- 2,659.03 Chuck Young-Peoria**
- 2,501.22 John Maloney-Champaign**
- 2,118.19 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon**
- 2,045.17 Bill Bulfer-East Peoria**
- 1,518.69 Wes Seitz-Champaign**
- 1,227.66 Bill Strauss-Urbana**
- 1,071.43 Darryl Bremner-Clinton**
- 1,058.45 Bill Thompson-Estero,FL**
- 803.78 Carole Miller-Champaign**
- 792.02 Connie Tucker-Champaign**
- 767.60 Melda Richardson-California**
- 644.75 John Ford-Harvard,MA**
- 625.97 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria**
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville**
- 538.31 Barry Mayworm-Princeton**
- 497.11 Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria**
- 466.42 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

There's no doubt that some amount of good luck is necessary to turn an average session into a great one. Here's a hand where a lot of luck was needed.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)

Hand #28 Dir S Vul N/S	♠ 74 ♥ 865 ♦ Q3 ♣ A108765	♠ Q52 ♥ Q107432 ♦ 964 ♣ 9	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ A1063 ♥ A9 ♦ K10872 ♣ K2	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣*</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South				1NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass	3NT	All Pass			
West	North	East	South																		
			1NT																		
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3NT																		
All Pass																					
	♠ KJ98 ♥ KJ ♦ AJ5 ♣ QJ43																				

*Invitational (!)

BIDDING: Our team was behind when this hand arrived at our table. Sitting South, I opened a routine 1NT and accepted my partner's invitation to game. When dummy hit I was shocked and wondered how just far behind my partner thought we were.

PLAY: West led a low heart to East's ace and I won the continuation with the king. A lot of cards had to be right for this contract to make so I took a deep breath and led the queen of clubs. East won the king and just when I expected to see another heart, a low spade landed on the table. My first stroke of luck; apparently the hearts were divided 6-2. Since I would always go down if the spade ace was on my left, I rose with the king and won the trick. That was my second piece of good luck. I ran the clubs and eventually led a diamond to my jack which won and I had nine tricks.

Our opponents stopped in a club partial so this was a 10 IMP gain. It was a fun hand but I'm afraid it will only serve to encourage my partner.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

There is perhaps nothing more difficult in bridge than defense. A good defender will listen carefully to the auction and make assumptions as to the location of high cards. But even that may not be enough and sometimes a decision must be made at trick one. Take a look at poor East in this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #29 Dir E Vul N/S	♠ 7 ♥ K74 ♦ AKQ54 ♣ AK98		West North East South		
				1♠	Pass
♠ 82 ♥ Q10952 ♦ 83 ♣ 10542	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ AKQ1065 ♥ A86 ♦ J ♣ Q76	Pass Dbl Pass Dbl Pass 3♠	2♠ Pass Pass 3♦ Pass 3NT	
	♠ J943 ♥ J3 ♦ 109762 ♣ J3		All Pass		

BIDDING: North really liked his hand but so did East. This meant there was very little left for the other two players. I was sitting South and after North's second takeout double, I reluctantly showed my diamond suit. But my partner wasn't done; his cue bid asked me to bid 3NT if I had a spade stopper so I took a deep breath and did so.

PLAY: West obediently led his partner's suit and the spotlight was now on East. He could see that I only had seven tricks: 5 diamonds and 2 clubs. He decided to cash this top three spades and exit with the ten of spades to wait on his tricks. I won the fourth spade discarding a heart, a diamond, and a club from dummy. The jack of spades was my eighth trick and I proceeded to run the diamonds. East was immediately under stress. In order to protect his queen of clubs, he was forced to discard his two remaining spades and then two hearts. Unfortunately for him, his partner discarded two clubs along with a heart. I read East's last four cards as the heart ace and Qxx of clubs. Hoping I was right, I led a low heart and East was end played. It didn't matter if he led a low club or the queen, the rest of the tricks were mine.

East had to make a decision early in the hand. If he thought his partner held good heart cards, he must switch to a heart. If his partner held the jack of clubs, the defense he finally chose would work. Note that he cannot play three rounds of spades to see his partner's discard because a heart shift then would give me my ninth trick. This was a difficult hand to defend and the heart shift would have worked. Of course, if his partner had not discarded two clubs,

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

Finding the right opening lead can be difficult but the auction is often a big help. But, as you will see with this hand, sometimes the defenders just don't listen.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #30 Dir E Vul N/S	♠ AKQ3 ♥ AJ652 ♦ 74 ♣ K8		West	North	East	South
					Pass	1♠
♠ 54 ♥ Q1094 ♦ J10532 ♣ 42	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 6 ♥ 873 ♦ AK9 ♣ J97653	Pass	2♥* 3♠ 4♥	Pass Pass Pass	2♠ 4♣ 4♠
	♠ J109872 ♥ K ♦ Q86 ♣ AQ10		All Pass			

*Game Forcing

BIDDING: South's hand wasn't the greatest but it's one most of us would open. North immediately had visions of a spade slam and playing the 2/1 system, his heart bid created a game force. Their system uses mandatory cue bidding after the forcing raise so South showed his club control. But, when North failed to show a diamond control, South stopped in game.

PLAY: This was played in a local club game and none of the West players found a diamond lead. The declarers were each able to discard a diamond from dummy on a club honor and make twelve tricks. One pair even bid and made slam. I don't know the bidding at each table but I would have thought at least one pair had an auction similar to the one above where the diamond weakness was painfully obvious to everyone at the table.

Could you and your partner stay out of slam with these cards? Or perhaps you should bid it and hope for the same defense.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

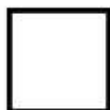
Bridge is a difficult game where even the experts make mistakes. Here is a hand where a defender didn't know when to leave well enough alone. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #31
Dir N
Vul N/S

♠ K6
♥ 982
♦ AQ984
♣ K75

♠ Q5432
♥ J
♦ 73
♣ QJ962



♠ AJ9
♥ AKQ10764
♦ 6
♣ 84

♠ 1087
♥ 53
♦ KJ1052
♣ A103

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

BIDDING: North-South were in the middle of a bad session so the kindest thing you can say about the auction is that South thought they needed a very good score. East doubled which conventionally asked his partner to lead dummy's first bid suit, diamonds. As you will see, that was a big mistake.

PLAY: West obediently led a diamond and declarer quickly realized the double was based on the diamond king and the club ace. Declarer won the diamond ace as East encouraged with the five. Declarer took note of the diamonds spots and saw a chance. At trick two he played the diamond queen and ruffed when East covered with the king. West followed with the trey and declarer read the opening lead to be from a doubleton diamond. Next South led the heart ace and followed with a heart to dummy. He then led the nine of diamonds covered and ruffed. Now he led to the king of spades to play the diamond eight. This was also covered and ruffed. Now it was a simple matter to ruff the third spade in dummy and play the good diamond four and discard a losing club. I'm sure you noted that East could not afford to signal encouragement with the five at trick one.

The irony of the hand is that East doubled for a diamond lead but if he just passed, West would probably have led the queen of clubs and the contract would quickly be defeated. Isn't this a great game!!

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Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2023 only

2023/9/25	72.33%	Chris Benson & John Seng
2023/9/18	70.33%	Cindy Moore & Terry Goodykoontz
2023/8/28	77.70%	Dick Dubroff & Mike Gross(social meets duplicate)
2023/8/21	70.51%	Steve Babin & Paul Lindauer
2023/8/6	70.63%	Cindy Moore & Steve Babin
2023/7/31	70.37%	Dawn Laffey & Joni Newberg(social meets duplicate)
2023/6/26	70.35%	Kay Ann Criswell & Becky O'Donnell(social meets duplicate)
2023/6/5	71.25%	Dick Dubroff & Mike Gross(social meets duplicate)
2023/5/11	76.07%	Lori Moore & Cindy Moore(BBO speedball)
2023/5/1	72.62%	Eunice Patton & Steve Babin
2023/4/13	72.22%	Ron Calabrese & Bob Bye(499ers online)



BRIDGE BITES

from: The American Contract Bridge League

By: Brian Gunnell



#141 – BACKING THE FAVORITE

♠ Q4
♥ K7
♦ QJ7
♣ KJT852

♠ 5	<i>North</i>	♠ J9876
♥ 832	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	♥ T654
♦ 986432		♦ A
♣ Q76	<i>Declarer</i>	♣ 943
♠ AKT32		
♥ AQJ9		
♦ KT5		
♣ A		

Both Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

South wastes little time in reaching 6NT, West leads the Diamond Nine and, when Dummy goes down, Declarer can see just 11 top tricks. How would you go about getting the 12th trick?

One possibility is that one or other of the defenders has the doubleton ♣Q. If that doesn't work then you will have to fall back on the Spades, and that's a suit which offers you a choice ... either play the Spades from the top, hoping that the Jack comes down in three rounds ... or cash the Queen and finesse the Ten. If you look at the Spade suit in isolation, it's a close call as to which line is better (playing for the drop is a slight favorite). But, as the play of the hand develops, watch how the odds change.

East wins that opening Diamond and a Heart is returned. You cash the remaining Hearts, then the ♣A, ♦K, ♦Q, and ♣K. The ♣Q does not fall on the play of the Clubs, so now it all comes down to the Spade suit. Is playing for the drop of the Jack still the slight favorite? Not at all! East showed up with one Diamond and four Hearts, and pitched a Spade and a Club when you played the Diamonds. That means he must have started out with three or four Clubs, so his original distribution must have been 5=4=1=3 or 4=4=1=4, there are no other possibilities. What does that tell us? That East started with more Spades than West and is therefore more likely to have the Jack. So the percentage pendulum has swung in favor of taking the Spade finesse. 12 tricks for those who did a little counting.



#142 – A MATTER OF ENTRIES

	♠ Q ♥ QJT95 ♦ A642 ♣ 865	
♠ KT9543 ♥ 862 ♦ 9 ♣ KJ2	<i>North</i>	♠ 876 ♥ K74 ♦ QJT8 ♣ Q74
	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	
	<i>Declarer</i>	
	♠ AJ2 ♥ A3 ♦ K753 ♣ AT93	

N-S Vulnerable

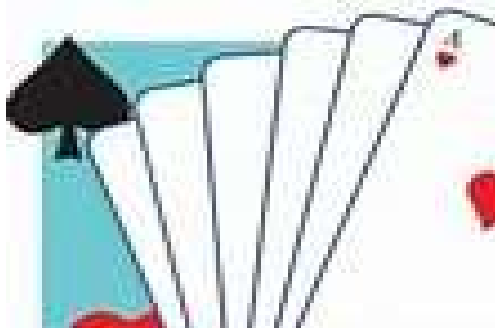
<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1NT	2♠	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West's frisky 2♠ overcall is brushed aside and South becomes Declarer in 3NT. West leads the Spade Ten, won in Dummy. There's a trap for the unwary on this deal, and today's Declarer fell right into it. But our readers won't, will they?

Dummy's ♠Q won the opening lead and Declarer could see that it was plain sailing to at least nine tricks, his minimum haul being two Spades, four Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club. Never one to turn up his nose at an

overtrick or two, Declarer ran the ♥Q at Trick 2. It seemed like good news when that finesse won, but in fact Declarer had just bungled the contract. He crossed to the ♥A and, when the King did not fall he needed two entries to the board, one to knock out the ♥K, the other to enjoy the established Hearts. Alas, he had only one such entry, and was destined for an ignominious down two. Yes, the winning line was simple enough, Declarer must play the ♥A at Trick 2, then a low Heart to the board.

Now, let's replay the hand with the Heart King and Eight exchanged between the E-W hands. Let's say that, as before, Declarer goofs mightily by running the ♥Q at Trick 2. West must duck the trick! If West makes the mistake of grabbing his King then Declarer's misplay will go unpunished.



#143 – STRANGER THAN FICTION

♠ A
♥ KQ42
♦ AJ3
♣ AJT32

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
	1♠	Dbl	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

♠ KQT954	North	♠ 32
♥ J5	West	♥ 9873
♦ 765	East	♦ T
♣ KQ	Declarer	♣ 987654

Yes, it is true, some newspaper hands are works of fiction, and never actually happened. Others are factual re-enactments. Which is this? It has to have happened in real life, we really couldn't make this stuff up.

♠ J876
♥ AT6
♦ KQ9842
♣

The N-S auction went off the rails, thanks to conflicting views as to the meaning of the 3♣ and 4♥ bids. So, while the other N-S pairs were luxuriating in their comfy Diamond slam and its 9-card fit, our South was laboring in the 4-3 Heart slam. West led the ♠K, won in Dummy. Declarer reasoned that, with Spade length on her left, East might well have four Hearts. With unerring inaccuracy, she finessed the Heart Ten, losing to West's Jack, after which West could have beaten the contract by leading the ♠Q, setting up a trump trick for East. But West did not know that Declarer started with only three Hearts (though Declarer's Heart play might have made him suspicious). So, after winning the ♥J, West got out with a trump.

Now what? Declarer could have prayed for 3-3 Hearts, hoping to scoot home with the aid of a Club ruff. But where was the fun in that, especially when there was the chance for a delicious swindle? Instead of taking the Club ruff, Declarer drew trumps and, leaving the ♣A an orphan in Dummy, she rattled off her Diamonds. Grimly holding on to the ♣KQ, West pitched away all his Spades, hoping that East held the ♠J. Thus was Declarer's foolish contract fulfilled, with the Spade Jack and Eight taking the last two tricks and Dummy's ♣A acting as no more than a decoy. Stranger than fiction, indeed.



#144 – NICE LEAD, PARTNER!

♠ AK865		
♥ A6		
♦ 9753		
♣ 53		
♠ J43	North	♠
♥ QJT87	West	♥ 54
♦ QJ	East	♦ KT8642
♣ KT8	Declarer	♣ AJ642
♠ QT972		
♥ K932		
♦ A		
♣ Q97		

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♣	4NT
Pass	5♣	5♠	All Pass

There are other ways to bid the North hand, but our North was obviously a paid-up member of the Bid-What-You-Think-You-Can-Make Club. East's 4NT showed the minors, then North pushed on to 5♣, in this case bidding what he *hoped* they could make.

As West, what would be your choice of opening lead? Outside of the trump suit, Declarer does not appear to have an obvious source of tricks. West has

the Hearts under control and East has long minors so, with no side-suits that can be set up, it's reasonable to assume that Declarer will be relying on ruffs to bolster his trick total. That's right, an opening trump lead seems to be called for.

Over to Declarer. He can count five natural trump tricks, plus the ♥AK and ♦A. That's eight tricks and, to get to eleven, he needs three ruffs in one hand or the other. Of course, the trump lead and the 3-0 split put a dent in those hopes, but Declarer is not done yet. Ruffing three Diamonds in hand won't work, that will run into an overruff by West. So Declarer's plan is to ruff two Hearts and a Club in Dummy.

The opening trump lead is won in Dummy, and that is followed by ♥A, ♥K, and a Heart ruff. Now a Club is led from Dummy, East ducks and Declarer's Queen is taken by the King. Back comes another trump, won in hand by Declarer, who next ruffs his last Heart in Dummy. A second Club is led and, again, East must duck, hoping that West has the Ten, and can continue with another trump. East reasons that Declarer probably does not have the Ten (if he did, he would surely have finessed it on the first round), so she boldly ducks. West wins his Ten, and the third round of trumps is the one that dashes Declarer's hopes.

"Nice lead, Partner!"

"Nice Club ducks, Partner!"





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —