



# Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 1 – January, 2024



## January 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**

**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**

**Sundays, 6:50pm – mentee-mentor 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> – open 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> 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 12/7/2023 – residents of Bloomington-Normal  
only paid up ACBL members only



- 1 5,042.59 Steve Babin
- 2 3,732.13 Zach Freehill
- 3 3,549.47 Eunice Patton
- 4 3,381.56 Cindy Moore
- 5 2,681.32 Mike Tomlianovich
- 6 2,511.59 Ann Schuyler
- 7 2,498.81 Lori Moore
- 8 2,019.02 Joyce Clay
- 9 1,987.13 Ron Emmett
- 10 1,692.90 Jeff Furler
- 11 1,398.01 Steve Wulfers
- 12 907.85 Barb Neuges
- 13 886.49 Dave Freehill
- 14 856.43 Sallie Boge
- 15 780.37 Fred Spitzzeri
- 16 728.34 Larry Ziegler
- 17 604.82 Mary Cralley
- 18 566.30 Chris Zogg
- 19 558.01 Rick Dalton
- 20 509.93 John Cralley
- 21 482.62 Gene Byers
- 22 464.28 Pat Lebeck
- 23 411.62 Marilyn Byers
- 24 392.69 Kay Marvin
- 25 365.28 Joyce Werner

**more players:**

- 13,939.11 Chris Benson-LeRoy
- 6,339.32 Larry Matheny-Ft Collins CO
- 6,042.51 Ron Sholes-Springfield
- 5,765.34 John Seng-Champaign
- 4,991.71 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
- 4,757.52 Paul Lindauer-Chicago
- 4,031.69 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
- 3,996.65 Mary Allen-Peoria
- 3,983.88 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
- 3,888.73 Carole Sholes-Springfield
- 2,790.81 Georgia Heth-Morton
- 2,776.86 Hank Hoffman-East Peoria
- 2,674.60 Chuck Young-Peoria
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign
- 2,506.19 John Maloney-Champaign
- 2,127.42 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
- 2,073.90 Bill Bulfer-East Peoria
- 1,539.96 Wes Seitz-Champaign
- 1,235.05 Bill Strauss-Urbana
- 1,098.90 Darryl Bremner-Clinton
- 1,058.45 Bill Thompson-Estero,FL
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
- 810.82 Connie Tucker-Champaign
- 803.78 Carole Miller-Champaign
- 772.70 Melda Richardson-California
- 657.82 John Ford-Harvard,MA
- 634.96 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville
- 561.21 Barry Mayworm-Princeton
- 502.61 Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria
- 484.90 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

Having the right conventions in your arsenal can make it easier to reach the optimum contract. Here is a good example.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

<p>Hand #36 Dir E Vul E/W</p>	<p>♠ AKQ10 ♥ 754 ♦ Q2 ♣ QJ87</p>	<p>♠ 4 ♥ Q9832 ♦ J1064 ♣ 1054</p>	<p>West North East South</p> <p>Pass            Pass    1♠</p> <p>Pass            Pass    3♥</p> <p>                 2NT*            **</p> <p>Pass    3♠        Pass    4NT</p> <p>Pass    5♠        Pass    6♠</p> <p>All</p> <p>Pass</p>
<p>♠ 732 ♥ AK106 ♦ 873 ♣ 963</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>♠ J9865 ♥ J ♦ AK95 ♣ AK2</p>	

\*Forcing spade raise  
\*\*Heart shortness

**BIDDING:** South had a fair hand that became great after North responded 2NT. This was a conventional bid (Jacoby 2NT) that showed four+ spades along with values for at least game. South's rebid showed a singleton or void in the heart suit. Their agreement was that North would sign off in game if the shortness bid was a turnoff. Accordingly, South used Roman Keycard Blackwood to discover his partner held the ace, king, and queen of spades and bid the slam.

**PLAY:** West led the top two hearts and South quickly wrapped up twelve tricks. The heart shortness was the key to the slam. Just imagine the South hand with a small doubleton heart to appreciate the value of this. Same high card points but a much weaker hand. Also, the Roman Keycard convention eliminated South's concern about trump quality. Do you have the tools to bid this slam?

## IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

Here's another example of a convention that can get you to the right slams and keep you out of the bad ones.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #37 Dir W Vul E/W	♠ AJ5 ♥ K1053 ♦ Q9542 ♣ A		<b>West</b> <b>North</b> <b>East</b> <b>South</b>	
♠ 96 ♥ QJ86 ♦ 1087 ♣ 9763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 1072 ♥ A9742 ♦ 63 ♣ 1042	Pass   1♦   Pass   1♠ Pass   2♠   Pass   5♥* Pass   6♣   Pass   7♣ All Pass	♠ KQ843 ♥ ♦ AKJ ♣ KQJ85

\*Exclusion Blackwood

**BIDDING:** North's best rebid was a raise of his partner's spades. Raising with only three cards is acceptable holding honor third along with shortness in a side suit. After hearing the diamond bid and the spade raise, South leaped to the five level in hearts. This was the Exclusion Blackwood convention asking for the number of aces OUTSIDE of the heart suit. North showed two aces and South bid the grand slam.

**PLAY:** There was nothing to the play with declarer quickly claiming thirteen tricks. It's clear to see that standard Blackwood would not have helped in the auction. The response of two aces would not have told South which aces North held. This is a convention you and your partners might want to consider.

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## IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

To be a competent declarer you must look ahead and anticipate problems. Take a look at this hand where the declarer failed to see what could go wrong.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

<b>Hand #38</b> <b>Dir N</b> <b>Vul E/W</b>	♠ A7 ♥ 963 ♦ J32 ♣ Q10987					
♠ 932 ♥ 874 ♦ AQ98 ♣ A43	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ J654 ♥ A2 ♦ K1072 ♣ J65	<b>West</b> Pass Pass	<b>North</b> Pass 2♥	<b>East</b> Pass All Pass	<b>South</b> 1♥
	♠ KQ108 ♥ KQJ105 ♦ 65 ♣ K2					

**BIDDING:** South had a nice hand but took no action over his partner's raise.

**PLAY:** With no attractive lead, West attacked with the ace of clubs. Even though his partner discouraged with the five, West continued with a second round. Declarer counted five possible losers: 1 spade, 1 heart, 2 diamonds, and 1 club. He saw he could ruff a spade in dummy and possibly discard a diamond on dummy's good club. Since it was likely the opponents would switch to diamonds when they regained the lead, declarer immediately went to dummy's spade ace and discarded a diamond on the queen of clubs. Next he played three rounds of spades trumping the last one in dummy and then led trumps. East won the second heart and returned his last spade for West to ruff. Declarer made nine tricks but this was a pairs event and overtricks were important. Declarer erred by not playing his three **top** spades before ruffing his fourth one with dummy's nine of hearts. He should have realized leaving a fourth spade in his hand exposed him to a ruff. Careful play would have meant ten tricks for an excellent result.

Another item to note is the opening lead. It is usually wrong to lead an unsupported ace. You can see that any other lead allows the defenders to cash their four tricks before declarer can establish a discard on the club suit.

## IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

It's important in a team event to avoid a double game swing. That's a game making each direction. When in doubt, it's usually right to "bid one more". Take a look at this exciting hand.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)

<b>Hand #39</b> <b>Dir N</b> <b>Vul N/S</b>	♠ A103 ♥ 1065 ♦ A84 ♣ Q974					
♠ 6 ♥ 974 ♦ KJ1093 ♣ K852	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 54 ♥ AKQJ832 ♦ 6 ♣ J106	<b>West</b> 5♥	<b>North</b> Pass 5♠	<b>East</b> 4♥ All Pass	<b>South</b> 4♠
	♠ KQJ9872 ♥ ♦ Q752 ♣ A3					

**BIDDING:** East opened an aggressive 4♥ preempt and South overcalled in spades. West wasn't sure who could make what but didn't like his hand for defense so he raised his partner. North had the same problem and closed the auction with 5♠.

**PLAY:** West led a heart and declarer saw three possible losers: two diamonds and one club. Although it wasn't certain, South felt his best bet was to find West with both minor suit kings. He ruffed the opening heart lead, led a spade to dummy, ruffed a second heart, and then repeated this drawing trumps and eliminating hearts from both hands. He then led ace and another club and West was fixed. He had to win the club or declarer would only lose two diamond tricks. But, after winning the club he was end-played. He had to lead a diamond away from his king or lead another club allowing declarer to discard two diamonds on the good clubs. South was lucky but took advantage of the situation.

At the other table, North-South were down one in the same contract when declarer played East to hold the king of diamonds. Note that East-West have four losing tricks in a heart contract.

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## Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2023 only

2023/12/4	71.43%	Dick Dubroff & Mike Gross(social meets duplicate)
2023/11/19	73.41%	Darryl Bremner & Kirk Kimmell
2023/9/30	73.01%	Sallie Boge & Barry Kurz
2023/9/30	70.00%	Dick Dubroff & Mike Gross(social meets duplicate)
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



### #149 – A PRACTICAL CERTAINTY

	♠ 8 ♥ 862 ♦ 7543 ♣ QJT62	
♠ QJT9 ♥ 43 ♦ KJT ♣ A943	North West      East Declarer	♠ 765432 ♥ ♦ 986 ♣ K875
	♠ AK ♥ AKQJT975 ♦ AQ2 ♣	

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♥	All Pass

2♣ showed a strong hand, 2♦ was weak, 4NT asked for Key Cards (which are the Aces and the King of trumps), 5NT asked for *specific* Kings (not the number of Kings), and 6♥ said “no side-suit King”.

When this deal came up in a team game, both the South players had visions of a grand slam if only North would be obliging enough to hold the ♦K. When that turned out not to be the case, they settled for the small slam. The first Declarer won the opening ♠Q lead, drew the missing trumps, cashed the ♦A (just in case West had the singleton King), crossed to Dummy with a trump, and led up to his ♦Q. That was down one when West produced the King. “Not a bad slam”, announced Declarer, “it just needed a finesse”

The second Declarer also did some finessing, but she brought home her contract with ruffing finesses in Clubs. She won the ♠A, led the Heart *Seven* to Dummy’s Eight, and ran the ♣Q around, pitching a Diamond from hand. West took his Ace and fired back a Spade, but Dummy ruffed Declarer’s winner, and the ♣J was played next. East covered this and Declarer ruffed *high*. Now Dummy’s Heart Six provided an entry to the Club Ten, on which was pitched the ♦Q. Declarer needed three entries to the board for this line of play to work, and had to be careful with those trump spots. In fact, switch the Five and Six of trumps and the contract does not make (for lack of a third Dummy entry).

Why is it better to take the ruffing finesses in Clubs than to rely on the Diamond finesse? The Diamond finesse is a 50% proposition. However, the ruffing finesses require only that East has one or both of the missing high Clubs, which is approximately a 75% chance. In reality, though, it’s a practical certainty as surely West’s opening lead would be a high Club if he held both of them.



## #150 – WRONG QUESTION

	♠ 9542 ♥ AQJ64 ♦ AT8 ♣ 7	
♠ K ♥ K832 ♦ QJ97 ♣ 8652	North West      East Declarer	♠ JT8 ♥ T9 ♦ K6542 ♣ JT9
	♠ AQ763 ♥ 75 ♦ 3 ♣ AKQ43	

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Once North opens the bidding it is hard for South to stay out of slam. Not that it's a bad slam but it does require a little bit of luck in one or both of the major suits. But good players make their own luck!

West leads the ♦Q, won in Dummy. There are two ways to play the trump suit ... either Declarer can take a first round finesse, which is the best way to play the suit for no losers ... or Declarer can cash the ♠A first, and later lead towards the Queen, a line of play designed to maximize the chances of escaping with only one trump loser (as it caters for singleton King offside). Which line of play do you adopt (we'll pretend that you have not already peeked at the E-W hands)?

Actually, that's the wrong question, the right question is *when* should Declarer play trumps. At Trick 2 Declarer does not know what is the objective in the trump suit. That depends upon the Heart suit:

- If the Heart finesse loses, then Declarer must play the trump suit all out, finessing the Queen on the first round and hoping that the King is doubleton and onside.
- If the Heart finesse wins, then Declarer has some leeway and can improve the chances of not losing *two* trump tricks, by cashing the Ace and later leading towards the Queen.

It's not a difficult hand when Declarer realizes that the success or failure of the Heart finesse will allow the trumps to be played in optimal fashion. On the actual layout, the play goes: Diamond lead won in Dummy, Diamond ruff, successful Heart finesse, and a Spade to the Ace, dropping the King with great aplomb and holding the trump losers to one. Making 12 tricks.



# #151 – A NASTY SURPRISE

♠ Q75  
♥ Q3  
♦ K53  
♣ KQT96

N-S Vulnerable

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

♠ T93 ♥ 742 ♦ J86 ♣ 8542	<i>North</i>	♠ AKJ8 ♥ JT98 ♦ QT9 ♣ J7
	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	
	<i>Declarer</i>	

After this auction, the failure to use Stayman suggests that the defense attacks one of the major suits, unless there is a compelling alternative. In a recent team game, both West players led a Spade, but only one of the East players was extraordinarily devious.

♠ 642  
♥ AK65  
♦ A742  
♣ A3

It looks like a most straightforward deal. West leads a Spade, East takes his four tricks in the suit and, with no reason to take the Club finesse, Declarer plays that suit from the top and takes the rest. And that's exactly what happened at the first table. Making 9 tricks.

At the second table, East did some counting. He had 12 HCP, Declarer purported to have 15-17, and there were 12 in Dummy. That left West with one point or none. East also counted 10 tricks for Declarer, as he would surely be playing the Clubs from the top. That being the case, it seemed obvious to cash the Spades and give up, as happened at the other table. How did East trick Declarer into taking the losing Club finesse?

East won the opening lead with the ♠J, cashed the ♠K and ♠A and, instead of finishing off the Spades, shifted to a Heart! Declarer reasonably concluded that West has led from ♠T983, and that East had started with ♠AKJ. In that case, it was essential to develop a fourth Club trick without letting West gain the lead. There was a simple solution. Declarer would cash the ♠A and finesse the Club, making sure of 9 or 10 tricks. But Declarer got a nasty surprise when that devious East fellow won his ♣J and promptly cashed the last Spade for down one!



## #152 – DUMMY REVERSAL

♠ 8642 ♥ KQ9 ♦ KJ6 ♣ AKQ		
♠ AQJT53 ♥ 542 ♦ T42 ♣ 4	North  West      East  Declarer	♠ K97 ♥ 6 ♦ 9873 ♣ J9853
♠ ♥ AJT873 ♦ AQ5 ♣ T762		

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♠	3♠	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	4NT	Pass
5NT	Pass	7♥	All Pass

N-S do well to reach 7♥. North's 3♠ said "Good hand with Heart support", South's Redouble showed a control in Spades, 4NT asked for Aces, and the 5NT response said "Two Aces and a void". That void was clearly in Spades, so North took a shot at the grand slam.

Trusting that the ♠A was not cashing, West led a trump, at which point Declarer could see 12 top tricks. The 13<sup>th</sup> might come from the Club suit (if the Jack would come down in three rounds), or, if trumps were 2-2 then the 13<sup>th</sup> trick would come from a Club ruff in Dummy. As you can see, both these lines of play were doomed to failure, but there was another line available, in the form of a so-called dummy reversal. Instead of counting six trump tricks in her hand plus maybe a single (Club) ruff in Dummy, Declarer reversed her thinking and went for no fewer than four Spade ruffs in her own hand.

Here's how the play started: opening trump lead won in Dummy, Spade ruff, trump to Dummy (East showing out, and putting paid to any ideas of a Club ruff in Dummy) and another Spade ruff. Back to Dummy with a Club, another Spade ruff, back to Dummy with the ♦J, and a fourth Spade ruff. Declarer had negotiated all the required ruffs but still had to get back to Dummy to draw that last enemy trump. As there were more Diamonds out than there were Clubs, Declarer reckoned that returning to Dummy with Diamonds was less likely to run into a defensive ruff. And so it was, with the dummy reversal bringing in 13 tricks.

**P.S.** If trumps had been 2-2 then Declarer would have abandoned the dummy reversal, counting up to 13 tricks with six trumps plus six side-suit tricks plus one ruff in the short hand. But when the dummy reversal became necessary the arithmetic changed to only three trump tricks (in Dummy) plus six side-suit tricks plus four ruffs in the long hand.





**Please see schedules on page 1**



**AMERICAN CONTRACT  
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —