



Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 2 – February, 2024



February 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 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 1/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal only
paid up ACBL members only



- 1 5,061.75 Steve Babin
- 2 3,737.01 Zach Freehill
- 3 3,573.26 Eunice Patton
- 4 3,387.55 Cindy Moore
- 5 2,687.17 Mike Tomlianovich
- 6 2,514.54 Ann Schuyler
- 7 2,500.37 Lori Moore
- 8 2,037.22 Joyce Clay
- 9 1,999.24 Ron Emmett
- 10 1,693.54 Jeff Furler
- 11 1,401.55 Steve Wulfers
- 12 908.82 Barb Neuges
- 13 887.28 Dave Freehill
- 14 856.95 Sallie Boge
- 15 786.51 Fred Spitzzeri
- 16 737.34 Larry Ziegler
- 17 604.82 Mary Cralley
- 18 571.81 Chris Zogg
- 19 570.02 Rick Dalton
- 20 509.93 John Cralley
- 21 482.62 Gene Byers
- 22 469.29 Pat Lebeck
- 23 411.62 Marilyn Byers
- 24 399.22 Kay Marvin
- 25 365.28 Joyce Werner

more players:

- 13,975.54 Chris Benson-LeRoy
- 6,359.01 Larry Matheny-Ft Collins CO
- 6,050.18 Ron Sholes-Springfield
- 5,775.85 John Seng-Champaign
- 5,024.61 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
- 4,783.40 Paul Lindauer-Chicago
- 4,034.03 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
- 4,006.47 Mary Allen-Peoria
- 3,997.47 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
- 3,893.05 Carole Sholes-Springfield
- 2,783.84 Hank Hoffman-East Peoria
- 2,685.27 Chuck Young-Peoria
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign
- 2,506.19 John Maloney-Champaign
- 2,129.61 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
- 2,088.04 Bill Bulfer-East Peoria
- 1,543.86 Wes Seitz-Champaign
- 1,243.00 Bill Strauss-Urbana
- 1,106.99 Darryl Bremner-Clinton
- 1,058.45 Bill Thompson-Estero,FL
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
- 818.32 Connie Tucker-Champaign
- 779.23 Melda Richardson-California
- 666.95 John Ford-Harvard,MA
- 637.37 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville
- 568.57 Barry Mayworm-Princeton
- 505.49 Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria
- 487.57 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

When declaring a hand it's important to maintain control but when the trumps mis-behave, that can be difficult. Setting a goal for the number of tricks you need is one method of handling a bad situation.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)

Hand #40 Dir E Vul E/W	♠ QJ86 ♥ AQ93 ♦ ♣ AQ1074	West	North	East	South
♠ 7 ♥ 10542 ♦ K87652 ♣ 65	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ AK43 ♥ J6 ♦ AQJ43 ♣ 92	3♦* Pass	1♦ Pass 4♠ All Pass	Pass 3♣

*Weak

BIDDING: After West's preemptive raise, North made a takeout double. South showed his spade suit and North raised to game. This was a team event where it pays to bid the games.

PLAY: West's diamond lead was ruffed in dummy. The game looked safe as long as the trumps behaved. Declarer led the queen of spades which held the trick. Declarer noted the fall of the spade seven from West and suspected the 4-1 trump break. Since declarer only needed ten tricks, he simply started cashing his clubs and hearts allowing East to win his three spades. This limited the defense to just those three tricks and N-S chalked up their game. At the other table, declarer led a second spade and lost control with the 4-1 trump break.

In a team game it is correct to ensure the success of the contract. Playing a second round of trumps hoping to make an overtrick may be best in a pairs event, but in a team game it is most certainly not.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

The successful declarer will always look for ways to avoid taking a finesse. The following hand demonstrates how important it is to read the opponents' cards and play accordingly.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #41 Dir E Vul E/W	♠ AK2 ♥ A5 ♦ AKJ6 ♣ QJ73	♠ Q7 ♥ 10943 ♦ Q7 ♣ 96452	West North East South	
♠ ♥ KQ762 ♦ 109542 ♣ A108	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ J10986543 ♥ J8 ♦ 83 ♣ K	Pass 6♣ All Pass	Pass 4♠

BIDDING: South had a weak suit but it was eight long so he preempted at the four-level. North simply bid when he hoped they could make.

PLAY: West led the king of hearts hoping to score a trick in that suit along with his ace of clubs. Declarer was disappointed to receive the only lead to give him any trouble. He won the ace and studied the problem. It looked like he would have to rely on the diamond queen being in the West hand. However, when he drew trumps, West discarded the club ten telling everyone at the table that he held the ace. Declarer then realized he didn't need the diamond finesse. He ran all of his trumps coming down to a four card ending. Since West had to keep the ace of club along with the queen of hearts, he could only keep two diamonds. Declarer next played the top two diamonds and was rewarded when the queen came down in the East hand. The losing heart and club were deposited on the jack and six of diamonds as North-South made their slam with an overtrick.

Obviously, those who relied on the diamond finesse were not so happy.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY
with Larry Matheny

One of the most expensive losses in a team game is a double game swing. Yes, that means your opponents bid and made game at both tables. Take a look.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)

Hand #42 Dir W Vul E/W	♠ AJ87 ♥ 2 ♦ QJ9654 ♣ K6					
♠ K109643 ♥ QJ105 ♦ 3 ♣ A2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ ♥ A9763 ♦ 1072 ♣ QJ987	West 1♠ Pass	North 2♦ 3NT	East DBL* All Pass	South 2NT
	♠ Q52 ♥ K84 ♦ AK8 ♣ 10543					

*Negative double

BIDDING: Everyone bid a lot on this hand. After overcalling, North continued on to game when South invited.

PLAY: West led the queen of hearts ducked to South's king. Declarer took the spade finesse and soon had nine tricks: 2 spades, 1 heart, and six diamonds. N/S scored +400 for their game and were pleasantly surprised when they compared scores with their partners. At the other table, E/W bid and made four hearts for +620. Their total score of 1020 was worth 14 IMPs and allowed them to win the match.

It's not that anyone did anything terribly wrong but West might have bid more aggressively after his partner showed a heart suit. But, with unfavorable vulnerability, perhaps West felt he had bid enough with this ten high card points.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY
with Larry Matheny

This hand demonstrates that sometimes you just have to pass and take your plus score. You may want to double the opponents, but you have to remember your partner is across the table.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

<p>Hand #43 ♠ 10653 Dir E ♥ 1076 Vul E/W ♦ 1043 ♣ 854</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ J932 ♦ QJ7652 ♣ 63</p>	<p>West North East South</p> <p> 3♠* Pass 1♣</p> <p>DBL Pass 5♦ DBL</p> <p>DBL All</p> <p> Pass</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p>♠ QJ9874 ♥ A4 ♦ 9 ♣ AKQ9</p>
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*Preemptive

BIDDING: Holding a powerful hand, West made a takeout double of South's opening bid. Taking advantage of the favorable vulnerability, North made a weak jump raise. South bid game hoping to make it if North held a spade honor plus he suspected E/W might have a game. West couldn't stand it and doubled again hoping to defend. However, East correctly read this bid as another takeout double and bid her diamond suit. South doubled expecting to win three top tricks.

PLAY: South quickly cashed two clubs and a heart to defeat the contract. In an auction like this, West must realize his second double is also for takeout. It would be difficult to pass and defend but it was his last chance for a plus score. West must recognize that the ace/king of the opponents' spade suit would be better used in defense.

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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



#153 – DETECTIVE WORK

♠ AJ7
♥ 8542
♦ 876
♣ A93

♠ Q42	North	♠ 6
♥ QJ963	West	♥ K7
♦ K92	East	♦ AQJ543
♣ Q7	Declarer	♣ 6542
♠ KT9853		
♥ AT		
♦ T		
♣ KJT8		

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		Pass	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

East's 2♦ was a Weak Two, showing six Diamonds and less than opening values. N-S push on to 4♠, a contract which is in danger of losing a trick in each suit. On the other hand, with a bit of sleuthing, you might even make an overtrick.

West leads a low Diamond to East's Ace, and you ruff the ♦Q continuation.

Do you know who has the ♠Q? Not exactly, but you do know who is more likely to hold that card. East started with six Diamonds and West with only three. That leaves more space in the West hand for Spades, and he is therefore more likely to hold the Queen. So, you cash the ♠K, finesse the ♠J successfully, and draw the last trump with the ♠A. Now the contract is assured, but can you make an overtrick?

There wasn't much sleuthing in that Spade guess, you just had to remember the implications of the E-W bidding. But to find the ♣Q you will need to do some detective work. Before trying to guess the ♣Q, you can learn more about the hand by playing on Hearts. You cash the ♥A, and exit a Heart. Lo and behold, East plays the King on this trick and exits with the ♦J which you ruff. That's the final clue, the mystery is now solved. East has shown the ♦AQJ and the ♥K, that's 10 HCP. Also, East claims (in the bidding) to have less than opening values. So, he can hardly have the ♣Q, that would take him up to 12 HCP, which, coupled with a good 6-card suit, is an opening one-bid in anyone's book. So, you run the ♣J around, then repeat the finesse, and end up with 11 tricks.



#154 – DECISION AT TRICK ONE

♠ 32 ♥ KQ9 ♦ Q9832 ♣ A32	♠ 98 ♥ 82 ♦ A765 ♣ QJ985
♠ AKT76 ♥ JT763 ♦ 4 ♣ 76	♠ QJ54 ♥ A54 ♦ KJT ♣ KT4

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	2♣	2♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

West's 2♣ was a Michaels Cue-Bid, showing 5-5 (or better) in the majors. North's 2♥ said "I have something in Hearts and a decent hand", and South took a shot at 3NT. What would you lead from the West hand? And how would you declare 3NT?

It would not be a good idea for West to lead a high Spade here. He has no entries outside the Spade suit, and playing Spades from the top would serve only to cut the communications between East and West. The best chance for getting the suit going is for West to lead his fourth-best Spade, hoping that East can profitably lead a Spade through Declarer later in the play. So, West leads the Spade Seven, East plays the Eight, and the key point in the play has already arrived. As Declarer, what would you play on this trick?

If you grab that first Spade trick with your Queen, then you must hope that *West* has the ♦A, because if East has that card he will fire back a Spade through your inadequate holding. Conversely, if you duck the first Spade, the defense will persist with Spades, knocking out your stopper. In that case, you must hope that *East* has ♦A, and that West's last Spade is therefore shut out.

So, to play the Spades correctly at Trick 1, it is necessary to deduce who has the ♦A. And the answer is? Yes, East must have it. West is marked with the ♠AK from the play at Trick 1, and can hardly have the ♦A as well. Remember, he passed originally, and would not have done so with Ace-King, Ace and 5-5 distribution. It's like they always say: "It pays to think at Trick 1, it may be too late at Trick 2"



#155 – A CLUB FINESSE

♠ KQ952
♥ 965
♦ 42
♣ AQ9

♠ -- ♥ KT832 ♦ KJ5 ♣ JT873	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ QJ4 ♦ QT9863 ♣ K54
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♠ AJT8763
♥ A7
♦ A7
♣ 62

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
2♠	5♦	5♠	2♦
Pass	Pass		Pass

The inventor of the Weak Two had in mind a better suit than East's puny specimen. As for West, he anticipated a 4♠ bid from North so he pre-sacrificed in 5♦. Undeterred, North bid 5♠ which is where South played it.

Against 5♠, West decided to lead a Diamond. The standard lead from that holding is a low Diamond, but West chose the King, expecting it to hold the trick. By retaining the lead and getting a look at Dummy, West hoped to find the best continuation. That was good thinking by West, but it came to naught when Declarer won the ♦A.

The missing trump was drawn, the finesse of the ♣Q lost to East's King, and now Declarer was saddled with an inescapable Heart loser. That was down one and N-S were left to rue that they had not "taken the money" by doubling 5♦.

Declarer was right to finesse in Clubs, but he took the wrong finesse. He has an extra chance if he finesses the Nine instead. If this loses to the Jack or the Ten, Declarer will later finesse the Queen, making 11 tricks if this works. And if the finesse of the Nine holds, or if it draws the King, then Declarer again has 11 tricks. A first-round finesse of the ♣Q works only when West has the King ... but the deep finesse works when West has the King or when West has both the ♣J and the ♣T. Two chances are better than one.



#156 – DASTARDLY DECEPTION

♠ Q4 ♥ J93 ♦ AQJ5 ♣ 7643		
♠ K852 ♥ K862 ♦ 9 ♣ A985	North West East Declarer	♠ AT973 ♥ T75 ♦ 842 ♣ T2
♠ J6 ♥ AQ4 ♦ KT763 ♣ KQJ		

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

When this was played in a team game, 3NT was reached at both tables, and both West players failed to find the lethal opening Spade lead. Instead, they led their fourth-best Heart, and we can report that one Declarer made her contract, the other didn't. Here's how.

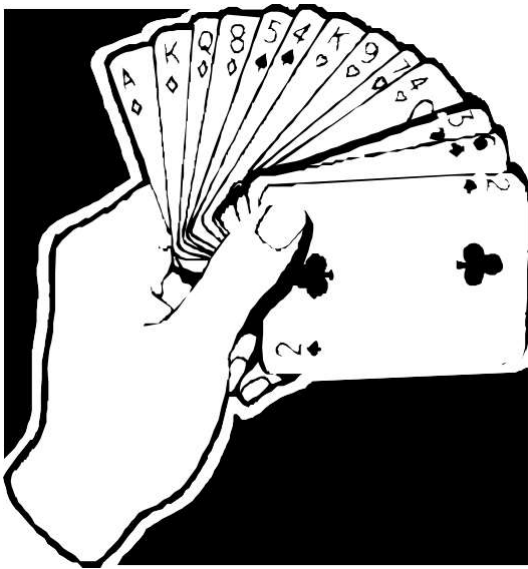
At Table 1, the opening Heart trick went: Two, Nine, Ten, Queen. Declarer could count just seven top tricks and at Trick 2 he played the ♣K in an attempt to set up two more. It was a futile effort, of course. West took his Ace and, not wanting to give Declarer a third Heart trick, he shifted to a Spade. Down two.

At Table 2, Declarer was more resourceful. She realized that, if she took that first trick with the ♥Q, the defense would probably find the Spade shift. So, in an attempt to muddy the waters, she squandered the ♥A! Now Declarer played a Club to West's Ace. Picturing East to have started with ♥QTx and Declarer with ♥Axx, West continued with a low Heart to East's supposed Queen. But it was Declarer who produced that card, and who promptly claimed nine tricks.

That was dastardly play by Declarer, but could West have seen through the deception? To West it seemed that Declarer might well have held something like: ♠Axx, ♥Axx, ♦Kxxx, ♣KQJ. Would Declarer not hold up in Hearts with such a hand? Not necessarily, if she did she might fall prey to a deadly Spade shift, allowing West to win his King and revert to Hearts for down one.

Postscript: There is a signaling device that could have saved E-W. It's the Smith Echo, whereby at Trick 2 East gives his attitude to the opening lead ... he plays a high Club to say "I like the opening lead" ... and a low Club to say "I don't" Here the message will be "I don't", so East plays the Two, after which West will presumably shift to a Spade. Or maybe not as, after the play to Trick 1, he might already have lapsed into auto-pilot mode.





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —