



Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 3 – March, 2024



March 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 2/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal only
paid up ACBL members only



- 1 5,075.78 Steve Babin
- 2 3,737.01 Zach Freehill
- 3 3,606.13 Eunice Patton
- 4 3,399.18 Cindy Moore
- 5 2,693.23 Mike Tomlianovich
- 6 2,523.17 Ann Schuyler
- 7 2,510.71 Lori Moore
- 8 2,052.00 Joyce Clay
- 9 2,006.22 Ron Emmett
- 10 1,695.04 Jeff Furler
- 11 1,404.16 Steve Wulfers
- 12 914.15 Barb Neuges
- 13 887.28 Dave Freehill
- 14 857.93 Sallie Boge
- 15 793.40 Fred Spitzzeri
- 16 747.45 Larry Ziegler
- 17 606.22 Mary Cralley
- 18 576.31 Chris Zogg
- 19 574.07 Rick Dalton
- 20 509.93 John Cralley
- 21 486.72 Gene Byers
- 22 481.56 Pat Lebeck
- 23 414.74 Marilyn Byers
- 24 403.30 Kay Marvin
- 25 365.28 Joyce Werner

more players:

- 14,006.92 Chris Benson-LeRoy
- 6,381.03 Larry Matheny-Ft Collins CO
- 6,056.65 Ron Sholes-Springfield
- 5,785.06 John Seng-Champaign
- 5,050.86 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
- 4,803.28 Paul Lindauer-Chicago
- 4,034.45 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
- 4,032.06 Mary Allen-Peoria
- 4,016.01 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
- 3,895.80 Carole Sholes-Springfield
- 2,788.72 Hank Hoffman-East Peoria
- 2,687.79 Chuck Young-Peoria
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign
- 2,506.19 John Maloney-Champaign
- 2,133.84 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
- 2,104.45 Bill Bulfer-East Peoria
- 1,549.11 Wes Seitz-Champaign
- 1,242.89 Bill Strauss-Urbana
- 1,123.41 Darryl Bremner-Canton
- 1,108.71 Bill Thompson-Estero,FL
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
- 834.70 Connie Tucker-Champaign
- 782.62 Melda Richardson-California
- 670.19 John Ford-Harvard,MA
- 642.09 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville
- 573.43 Barry Mayworm-Princeton
- 507.49 Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria
- 493.65 Lynn Steffen-El Paso





IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

with Larry Matheny



The next 4 columns appear on the next 4 pages:

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY #44 with Larry Matheny

Suit management is more than just finessing. You must be able to look at the entire hand and not just the suit you are about to play. Here is an instructive example.

Scoring: Matchpoints

Hand #44 Dir N Vul E-W	♠ J1054 ♥ KQ7 ♦ QJ102 ♣ K6					
			West	North	East	South
♠ 9832	♠ K			1♦	Pass	1♠
♥ 1053	♥ J962		Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
♦ A7	♦ 865		All			
♣ J1092	♣ AQ743		Pass			
	♠ AQ76 ♥ A84 ♦ K943 ♣ 85					

BIDDING: North held a poor collection of cards but they included twelve high card points and he felt obligated to open 1♦. South had an easy jump to 4♠ after North's raise.

PLAY: West led the jack of clubs and declarer was in trouble. The defenders took the first two club tricks followed by the ace of diamonds. Declarer won the second diamond in dummy and had to find the king of spades in the East hand. Obviously the spade finesse must be taken but what card should declarer lead from dummy? The correct card should be a low spade to protect against the singleton king in the East hand. However, if there are no more entries to dummy, declarer must play a high spade to stay in the North hand if East fails to play the king.

In a local duplicate game, eight pairs reached the contract of 4♠ and four of them failed by one trick because they led a high spade. That nine of spades is a very valuable card.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY #45 with Larry Matheny

The good declarer learns to use his entries to dummy wisely. Here is a good example of how important it is to study the entire hand before playing.

Scoring: Matchpoints

Hand #45 Dir N Vul E-W	♠ QJ4 ♥ 98743 ♦ 843 ♣ 74		West Pass Pass All Pass	North Pass 3♦* Pass	East Pass Pass Pass	South 2NT 4♥
♠ K1032 ♥ K ♦ K92 ♣ J10962	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 9865 ♥ J106 ♦ Q75 ♣ K53				
	♠ A7 ♥ AQ52 ♦ AJ106 ♣ AQ8					

*Jacoby Transfer

BIDDING: The South hand is a classic 2NT opener showing 20-21 high card points and a balanced hand. North was very weak but decided his hand was more valuable in a heart contract. South's leap to game showed four hearts and a maximum. This took North off the hook on whether to bid game or pass a 3♥ response.

PLAY: West thought he made a safe lead of the jack of clubs but it was into declarer's AQ combination. Declarer counted a possible spade loser, one or two heart losers, and possibly two more in the diamond suit. Since he needed to use his entries to dummy to lead diamonds and spades, he played the heart ace at trick two. Although it might seem lucky when the king dropped on his left, the only time it is correct to take a heart finesse is when there is specifically KX in the East hand. With so few entries, his play was correct. After cashing the heart queen, South played his other top club followed by a club ruff in dummy. Declarer next led a diamond from dummy and played the jack from his hand. Poor West won the king but was in a bad situation. He had no more hearts and a club return would give South a ruff/sluff, so he made his best return of a diamond. South won this in his hand and played his other good diamond. Now he needed to get to dummy to take the spade finesse so he ruffed the 13th diamond in dummy to lead a spade. The finesse lost but declarer made his contract losing one spade, one heart, and one diamond.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY #46 with Larry Matheny

There is no doubt that defense can be very difficult. However, a well reasoned plan of attack can also be rewarding. Sometimes it all comes down to who holds the nine of trumps. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints

Hand #46 Dir N Vul E-W	♠ 1076 ♥ Q9752 ♦ A ♣ KQ106		West North East South	
♠ 943 ♥ 6 ♦ 9874 ♣ A9832	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ QJ ♥ AK843 ♦ 10632 ♣ J4	Pass Pass All Pass	Pass Pass Pass 1♠ 4♠
	♠ AK852 ♥ J10 ♦ KQJ5 ♣ 75			

*Drury

BIDDING: Both North and East had near openers but chose to pass. After hearing South open 1♠, North's passed hand bid of 2♣ was the Drury convention. This showed spade support with near opening values. The advantage of this convention is that North did not have to jump to the three level to show his hand. This is particularly helpful when South opens light in third seat. South liked his fourteen high card points and jumped to game.

PLAY: West led his heart and East knew from the missing cards that it was a singleton. East was reluctant to establish North's heart queen for a later discard so at trick two he returned a low heart for his partner to ruff. Declarer quickly wrapped up his game losing only two hearts and one club.

The flaw in East's thinking was that a discard was unlikely to help declarer. Since West would undoubtedly have bid over 1♠ if he held seven diamonds, the only singleton South could logically hold would be in clubs. If that was the case, the contract could not be defeated because South would simply discard his club on the third round of hearts. Therefore the only way to beat the hand was to find West with the right spade holding. Note that after winning the first two hearts, a third round allows West to ruff with the nine. If declarer ruffs the third heart with a high honor, he later loses a trick to the spade queen.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY #47 with Larry Matheny

Matchpoints (pairs) is a very different game. Your goal isn't to just make or defeat a contract, rather you must strive for the largest plus or smallest minus possible. Sometimes you might even risk the contract.

Scoring: Matchpoints

Hand #47
 Dir N
 Vul E-W

♠ J97
 ♥ 532
 ♦ K965
 ♣ 542



♠ AK6
 ♥ AKQJ107
 ♦ A10
 ♣ K3

♠ 10543
 ♥ 864
 ♦ J42
 ♣ Q87

♠ Q82
 ♥ 9
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ AJ1096

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

* Second Negative

BIDDING: South had a huge hand but his partner showed only 0-4 high card points with his two bids. South had 9+ tricks in his hand so offered 3NT but North sought the safety of a trump suit by bidding 4♥.

PLAY: West had no obvious lead so tried to risk nothing by leading a trump. Declarer won this in his hand and noted that dummy's eight of hearts was now an entry. South saw that he only had three losers, one spade, one diamond, and one club, so his task was to find a way to make an overtrick. Although the opponents' spades divide 3-3 only 36% of the time, this seemed his best chance. So he drew one more round of trumps and then played ace, king, and another spade. He was rewarded when the spades behaved and he was able to enter dummy with the heart eight and discard his small diamond on the last spade. He would have gone down in a cold contract if one of the opponent's had a singleton (or void) in spades, but it was a slight risk.

Note that the opponents could not have prevented the overtrick. If West leads a diamond at trick one, declarer wins the ace and later leads the ten to establish the jack for a discard for his losing spade. At rubber bridge or in a team game, declarer would probably just claim ten tricks after the opening lead.



Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2023-24 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

#1 – IT’S ELEMENTARY

Crime in London appeared to be taking a vacation, and Sherlock Holmes found himself on opening lead at the Baker Street Bridge Club:

♠ A65, ♥ 92, ♦ T95, ♣ Q9654

<i>Holmes</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Watson</i>	<i>East</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Let’s eavesdrop on the post-mortem in Holmes’ 221B bachelor quarters.

Watson: Dash it, Holmes, why not lead the unbid suit? I must have Hearts.

Holmes: Indeed, dear chap, you had four, but so did declarer.

Watson: We know that now.

Holmes: And I knew it before I made my lead.

Watson: An Englishman doesn’t peek.

Holmes: No, it was the curious matter of your bidding.

Watson: But I didn’t bid.

Holmes: Yes, that was most curious. My 6-count and the opponents’ bidding told me that you had a decent hand. And yet you did not overcall 1♥. Clearly you had less than 5 Hearts. The auction also told me that West had less than four Hearts and East less than 5. Thus, the Hearts were 2-3-4-4 around the table.

Watson: Very clever. I suppose you also knew that West had three Clubs.

Holmes: Yes, Watson.

Watson: You *did* know?

Holmes: It seemed most likely. I had five and East had at least two.

Watson: He did?

Holmes: If he was 3=4=5=1 he would raise Spades. With 2=4=6=1 he would rebid Diamonds. Ergo, he had at least two Clubs.

♠ KQJ
♥ 8754
♦ J63
♣ AJ3

♠ T972	<i>Watson</i>	♠ 843
♥ AKJ	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	♥ QT63
♦ Q84	<i>Holmes</i>	♦ AK72
♣ K87		♣ T2

♠ A65
♥ 92
♦ T95
♣ Q9654

Watson: So, if East had two Clubs and West had four then I would have had just two. With that I would no doubt make a Takeout Double of 1♣.

Holmes: By George, I think he’s got it!

Yes, of course, Holmes did not lead the unbid Hearts, he led through West’s Club suit. But how on earth did he know to lead the *Queen*, the only card in his hand which beats the contract? That’s a story for another day.



#2 – TOO EASY

This week's Declarer got to a great slam but he forgot to make his contract. It was just too easy.

	♠ T854 ♥ ♦ KQJT52 ♣ AKQ	
♠ J96 ♥ A9543 ♦ 63 ♣ T43	North West East South	♠ 3 ♥ KQJT76 ♦ A98 ♣ 962
	♠ AKQ72 ♥ 82 ♦ 74 ♣ J875	

None Vulnerable

South West North East

2♥

2♠ 4♥ 6♠! Pass

Pass Pass

West leads the ♥A and, when Dummy goes down, who would blame Declarer for thinking “Yippee! What a terrific slam, and on just a combined 25 HCP! Nicely bid, pard!”

Declarer ruffs that ♥A opening lead and, without pausing for thought, cashes the ♠A and ♠K. When East shows out on the second round of trumps, Declarer ponders awhile (it's a bit late now!) before realizing that “Oops!” and not “Yippee!” is the appropriate exclamation. Yes, indeed, Declarer has goofed mightily. He cannot draw the last trump (that would let the defense score a Heart and a Diamond), so he ruffs a Heart on the board and exits with the ♦K. But that doesn't work, either. East wins the ♦A and returns a Diamond which must be won in Dummy. Now Declarer has no way back to his hand to draw that last enemy trump. He'll cash a Diamond and lead another one, but, when East follows to the third round, Declarer will know that his goose is cooked. Whether he ruffs high or low, West's ♠J will score a trick. Down one!

Of course, the winning line is to ruff the opening Heart lead, cross to the ♠A, *ruff another Heart*, and *then* draw trumps. Now is the time for that yippee. Trick 1 was the time for thinking.



#3 – THE POWER OF TENS

♠ A97 ♥ K976 ♦ A874 ♣ A6	
♠ J43 ♥ J3 ♦ KQ62 ♣ J873	North West East South
♠ KT6 ♥ AQT ♦ T95 ♣ T954	♠ Q852 ♥ 8542 ♦ J3 ♣ KQ2

None Vulnerable

North East South West
 1NT Pass ??

Put yourself in the South chair. Your partner opens a 15-17 1NT and you have to decide whether to invite game, or whether to bid 3NT all by yourself.

The usual benchmark for going to game unaided is “a good 9 or better”. One thing that makes South’s 9-count not so good is the square shape (3-3-3-4), you can almost subtract a HCP for that alone. Does this make South’s hand a “bad 9”? No, not at all, look at that awesome array of intermediate cards! All those lovely Tens may not count for anything on the

4-3-2-1 HCP scale but they certainly count for something in the play of the hand, especially in No Trump contracts. So, South disregards the dismal distribution and, rejoicing in those splendid Tens, goes directly to 3NT.

Declarer has a minimum 1NT opening (and would have declined a game invitation) but, even so, 3NT is a fine contract. The black Tens protect Declarer against the enemy suits and the red Tens help Declarer to build tricks in his own suits. It will be 10 tricks on most lines of play, but check out what happens if all of South’s Tens are swapped with East’s lowest spot card in each suit. Now it’s hard to see how Declarer can scrape up more than 7 tricks! Here’s to those Tens, the most underrated cards in the deck!



#4 – WAKE-UP CALL

On defense, when leading a suit, we follow certain conventions such as “top of a sequence” or “fourth best”, all the better to help partner figure out our holding in the suit. But, once in a while, we lie. Consider this deal:

North	♠ J87
West Dummy	♥ 65
	♦ K973
South	♣ KQ62
♠ 643	
♥ A43	
♦ T8642	
♣ A7	

Both Vulnerable

South West North East
 Pass 1♠ 3♥ 3♠
 4♥ 4♠ All Pass

Against 4♠ our partner leads the ♥2 and we win the trick with the Ace. Have you figured out partner's holding in the Heart suit? Of course not, it's impossible, the lead makes no sense whatsoever! Partner's Two is clearly non-standard, it cannot be 4th best when he is known from the bidding to have at least a 6-card suit. What's he up to? He's issuing a wake-up call, requesting us to think outside the box. He doesn't want us routinely to

continue Hearts, he has something else in mind. What could that be? No doubt he can ruff a minor suit! But which one? Surely not Clubs, that would give Declarer seven of them. Partner must be void in Diamonds!

	♠ 52	
	♥KQJT972	
	♦	
	♣ 9854	
♠ AKQT9	North	♠ J87
♥ 8	West East	♥ 65
♦ AQJ5		♦ K973
♣ JT3	South	♣ KQ62
	♠ 643	
	♥ A43	
	♦ T8642	
	♣ A7	

North's “alarm clock lead”, as it is known, alerts us to the winning defense. A Diamond is ruffed at Trick 2, then a Club returned to our Ace, after which a second ruff. Down one! Those alarm clock leads won't come up very often but they are great fun when they do!





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —

