

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 9 – September, 2024



September 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(NABC promo game on the 18th)

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 299ers only pairs(if attendance warrants)

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus

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

See local tournament schedule later in this newsletter.

Online(BBO) bridge available at:

Tuesdays, 6:50pm – 749ers 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 8/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal only
paid up ACBL members only



1	5,214.73	Steve Babin
2	3,738.83	Zach Freehill
3	3,698.64	Eunice Patton
4	3,526.35	Cindy Moore
5	2,765.78	Mike Tomlianovich
6	2,611.74	Lori Moore
7	2,601.74	Ann Schuyler
8	2,186.74	Joyce Clay
9	2,051.69	Ron Emmett
10	1,748.15	Jeff Furler
11	1,461.71	Steve Wulfers
12	929.85	Barb Neuges
13	902.16	Stevie Joslin
14	887.28	Dave Freehill
15	877.13	Sallie Boge
16	846.50	Larry Ziegler
17	822.68	Fred Spitzzeri
18	616.67	Mary Cralley
19	609.84	Rick Dalton
20	609.16	Chris Zogg
21	530.64	Pat Lebeck
22	519.46	John Cralley
23	492.84	Gene Byers
24	475.62	Kay Marvin
25	421.78	Marilyn Byers

Moreplayers:

14,230.18	Chris Benson-LeRoy
6,115.16	Ron Sholes-Springfield
5,890.37	John Seng-Champaign
5,206.64	Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
4,941.45	Paul Lindauer-Chicago
4,158.48	Mary Allen-Peoria
4,070.62	Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
4,051.98	JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
3,898.14	Carole Sholes-Springfield
2,807.22	Hank Hoffman-Peoria
2,780.44	Chuck Young-Peoria
2,654.93	Margaret Hansell-Champaign
2,534.80	John Maloney-Champaign
2,259.11	Bill Bulfer-East Peoria
2,161.59	Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
1,574.48	Wes Seitz-Champaign
1,258.77	Bill Strauss-Urbana
1,204.88	Darryl Bremner-Clinton
1,156.21	Bill Thompson-Estero,FL
921.72	Connie Tucker-Champaign
893.60	Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
787.74	Melda Richardson-California
720.99	John Ford-Harvard,MA
679.30	Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
625.63	Lane O'Connor-Naperville
623.05	Barry Mayworm-Princeton
572.95	Lynn Steffen-El Paso
539.50	Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria





IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

with Larry Matheny (in memorium)



The next 4 columns appear on the next 4 pages:

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

It's no secret that different hands create different auctions so you need a variety of bidding tools. For example, it is not essential to use Blackwood for all slams. In fact, it can get you into trouble. Here is a typical example.

Scoring: Matchpoints (pairs)

Hand #11 Dlr N Vul E-W	♠ A104 ♥ Q63 ♦ KJ85 ♣ KJ6																							
♠ J32 ♥ AK75 ♦ 1032 ♣ 1074	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 7 ♥ 10984 ♦ 9764 ♣ 8532	♠ KQ9865 ♥ J2 ♦ AQ ♣ AQ9	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 0 10px;">West</th> <th style="padding: 0 10px;">North</th> <th style="padding: 0 10px;">East</th> <th style="padding: 0 10px;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦*</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South		1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦*	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South																					
	1♣	Pass	1♠																					
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦*																					
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦																					
Pass	4♠	All Pass																						

*New Minor Forcing

BIDDING: After North rebid 1NT, South used the New Minor Forcing convention to find out about spade support. North's jump to 3♠ showed three card support and a maximum hand. South was now interested in slam but realized they could be missing the top two honors in hearts. Therefore Blackwood was **NOT** the answer. This partnership's cue bidding style was to show either first or second round controls. And, to avoid ambiguity about which suit they had agreed (a 4♣ cue could be confusing), South cue bid diamonds. When North could not cue bid a heart control, South knew they were high enough.

PLAY: West won the first two heart tricks and South claimed the rest. What is so interesting about this hand is that in a local game, seven of the ten North-South pairs bid either 6♠ or 6NT. Six went down and one pair was successful. I'm still not sure what happened with that defense since West was on lead.

To oversimplify the issue: When you want to know **HOW MANY** aces partners has, use Blackwood. When you want to know **WHICH** aces partner has, start cue bidding.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

As declarer, it's often correct to draw trumps right away but sometimes it's better to put them to good use. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (pairs)

Hand #12 Dir E Vul N-S	♠ KQ5 ♥ Q875 ♦ 62 ♣ A632					
♠ A4 ♥ 106 ♦ KQ43 ♣ QJ1094	♠ 8763 ♥ 942 ♦ 1085 ♣ K87	♠ J1092 ♥ AKJ3 ♦ AJ97 ♣ 5	West 2♣ Pass All Pass	North DBL* 3♥	East Pass Pass Pass Pass	South 1♦ 2♥ 4♥

*Negative Double

BIDDING: After I opened the bidding, West made a rather poor overcall. A two-level overcall should show a much better suit and/or a better hand. My partner made a negative double showing one or both of the majors and we quickly reached game.

PLAY: West led the queen of clubs and I could count nine tricks: 3 spades, 4 hearts, 1 diamond, and 1 club. I could get a tenth by simply ruffing a diamond in dummy or a club in my hand, but this was matchpoint scoring so I looked around for an overtrick. I won the club in dummy and played one round of trumps. I then played a spade won by West. He continued clubs and I ruffed in my hand. Next I played a second round of trumps followed by three spades discarding a diamond from dummy. It didn't matter if the person with the last trump had been able to ruff, the diamond was a loser anyway. I then started cross-ruffing diamonds and clubs. The opponents won the last trick with the diamond king and the last trump.

Note if you draw two rounds of trumps before leading spades, the person with the spade ace might also hold the last trump and return it reducing your ruffing power.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

As declarer, when you discover one opponent has six cards in a suit and the other only two, it is usually correct to finesse the player with length for a specific card. However, sometimes you can avoid the finesse altogether. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (pairs)

Hand #13 Dlr N Vul E-W	♠ K876 ♥ K97 ♦ K82 ♣ AJ8				
		West	North	East	South
♠ QJ1054			1♣	3♦	3♥
♥ 105		Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
♦ 105		Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
♣ 976432		All			
		Pass			
	♠ 3 ♥ 1052 ♦ AQJ9643 ♣ Q10				
	♠ A92 ♥ AQJ8643 ♦ 7 ♣ K5				

BIDDING: South had an easy 3♥ call over East's preempt and after his partner raised, used Roman Keycard to discover North had two of the three outstanding keycards (4 aces + heart king). South bid the slam hoping his partner had very little wasted values in diamonds.

PLAY: West led the ten of diamonds followed by a second one ruffed by declarer. It looked like South would have to take the club finesse in order to discard his spade loser, but first he decided to find out more about the hand. After drawing trumps, he played the ace and king of spades and ruffed dummy's last diamond. He now had a count on the opponents' hands. East originally held one spade, three hearts, seven diamonds, and therefore only two clubs. That made the odds 6-2 that West held the club queen. But the finesse was unnecessary. Declarer merely played the rest of his hearts and came down to the AJ8 of clubs in dummy and the spade 9 and K5 of clubs in his hand. He next played the club king followed by the five. When West followed to the second club, declarer knew the remaining card in West's hand was the spade queen so it was easy to play the club ace dropping the doubleton queen in East's hand.

Of course if West held the club queen, he would be squeezed in the three-card ending. The successful declarer will always look for ways to avoid taking a finesse.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

The ability to preempt the opponents is a valuable tool. However, a lot of partnerships take this to an extreme with their "destructive" style. Sometimes the results are not what they had hoped for. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (pairs)

Hand #14 Dlr W Vul none	♠ J ♥ Q75 ♦ KJ862 ♣ AQ107					
♠ A10432 ♥ 32 ♦ Q1043 ♣ 85	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ KQ985 ♥ K10 ♦ 75 ♣ J942	West 2♠ All Pass	North DBL	East 4♠	South 6♥
	♠ 76 ♥ AJ9864 ♦ A9 ♣ K63					

BIDDING: This E/W pair use very light preemptive bids as indicated by West's 2♠ opening. North was aware of this style and made a somewhat light takeout double. East leaped to the four level in an attempt to further muddy the waters. Not wanting to be pushed around, South bid the slam hoping his partner held no more than one spade.

PLAY: Declarer ruffed the second spade, took the heart finesse, and quickly wrapped up twelve tricks. Not surprising, holding only 25 HCP no other N/S pair reached the slam. E/W took their zero in stride and moved to the next table ready for the next hand. Such tactics are not uncommon in matchpoint (pairs) events, but those using ultra light overcalls, opening bids, and preempts must pre-Alert their opponents before the round begins.

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Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2023-24 only

2024/7/22	70.83%	Eunice Patton & Jeff Furler
2024/7/15	77.44%	Jackie Schmidt & Kay Ann Criswell(social meets duplicate)
2024/7/1	75%	Gaye Hoselton & Bob Bray(social meets duplicate)
2024/5/29	72.49%	Cindy Moore & Jeff Furler
2024/5/20	71/05%	Helen Basehore & Gaye Hoselton(social meets duplicate)
2024/4/29	70.24%	Steve Wulfers & Steve Babin
2024/4/8	72.28%	Tom Teeters & Steve Wulfers
2024/4/3	70.14%	Cindy Moore & Jeff Furler
2024/3/13	76.04%	Chris Benson & Steve Babin
2024/3/5	72.22%	Clindy Lake & Terry Huebsch(749ers)
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



#25 – FISHING FOR CLUES

As the play-of-the-hand develops Declarer is constantly on the look-out for the clues which will point to the right line of play. But these clues don't always come gift-wrapped, sometimes Declarer must go fishing.

♠ 5 ♥ QJ63 ♦ AJ7432 ♣ A8	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ 76 ♥ 92 ♦ Q85 ♣ KQJ632
♠ A98432 ♥ 84 ♦ ♣ T9754		
	♠ KQJT ♥ AKT75 ♦ KT96 ♣	

E-W Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Against 6♥, West tries a Heart lead and Declarer draws trumps in two rounds. It's a fine slam but not quite iron-clad. There's a Spade to be lost, and the key to success is not to lose a Diamond. How would *you* play the hand, looking only at the N-S cards?

If Diamonds are 2-1 then Declarer is home free, but suppose that the suit is 3-0. Now, Declarer has a guess. If he thinks that *West* is more likely to hold three Diamonds then he'll play his ♦K on the first round, later finessing against West's Queen if East does indeed show out. Conversely, he'll play Dummy's ♦A first if he suspects that *East* might have the three Diamonds. Which do you choose?

At this point it's a complete guess, so, before playing on Diamonds, Declarer goes fishing. He concedes a trick to the Spade Ace, and let's say that West returns a Club. Declarer ruffs that, then cashes Spades, and reels in a whopper of a clue when East shows out on the third round! Ha! Now Declarer knows that East started with four cards in the majors, and West with eight. The odds have changed dramatically! If one of the defenders has three Diamonds it's surely East. So Declarer plays Dummy's ♦A on the first round, and says a silent "Yippee!" when West shows out. 12 tricks if Declarer delays the Diamond play and first looks for clues in the other suits.



#26 – INTRODUCING DR GOODLEAD

This week we feature a terrific opening lead, found in real life by John Brady of Jacksonville, FL (known to some as Dr Goodlead).

	♠ QJ96 ♥ J974 ♦ 9 ♣ K874		
♠ KT5432 ♥ A5 ♦ A76 ♣ 52	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ ♥ 86 ♦ T5432 ♣ QJT963	
	♠ A87 ♥ KQT32 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ A		

N-S Vulnerable

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

Imagine yourself as East, if you will, looking at the N-E hands. West, the good doctor, leads the Spade Ten. A strange-looking lead, don't you think? It's not fourth best, not top of a sequence. Has the doctor's legendary common-sense finally deserted him?

While you are puzzling over that bizarre opening lead, Dummy plays the ♠Q and you gleefully ruff. What next, Mr East? West found a grand opening lead, and life would be even grander if only you could get back to West's hand for a second ruff. If that is to happen, West must have ♦A or ♣A. Any clues as to which?

The opening lead is your much-needed clue. West led an unnecessarily *high* Spade, and is trying to tell you something. Yes, he is advertising the Ace in the *higher*-ranking side-suit! So, after ruffing, you shoot back a Diamond to West's Ace and get your second Spade ruff. Down one!

Doctor G's lead from ♠KT5432 was not without risk, but he saw no appealing alternative, and he reasonably concluded that East had no more than two Spades (due to non-support in the auction). He didn't necessarily expect a void, but singleton was also a possibility (in which case West would later win the ♥A and give East a second-round Spade ruff).

What just happened was a *Suit Preference* signal, whereby, in certain situations, the play of a high card says "I have the higher-ranking suit", vice versa with a low card. This defensive signal is a rare bird on opening lead, it usually comes later in the hand and even then only in specialized situations. Dr Goodlead gave us the caviar, we'll have some meat-and-potatoes examples in later Bridge Bites.



#27 – THREE DEGREES OF BACON

This week's hand features an astonishing defense by West - we'll get to the winning play by degrees.

	♠ AT2 ♥ Q6 ♦ KQJT73 ♣ 84	
♠ 765 ♥ 542 ♦ 54 ♣ AQJ96	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ KQJ93 ♥ A3 ♦ 982 ♣ K73
	♠ 84 ♥ KJT987 ♦ A6 ♣ T52	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
			1♠
Pass	2♠	3♦	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

E-W did well not to compete to 3♠ (that contract is down one if N-S get their Diamond ruff). Instead, E-W are required to defeat South's 3♥ contract. Will they? West's lead is a Spade, won in Dummy.

In the first degree, you are **Declarer**. With that running Diamond suit you have loads of winners, but the danger is that E-W will get five tricks first. You can try for a Club ruff in Dummy, but alert defenders will switch to trumps (being sure to hold up the ♥A until the second round). Nonetheless, at Trick 2, you lead a Club hoping that something good will happen.

In the second degree, you are **East**, trying to thwart Declarer. Dummy's ♠A wins the first trick, and a Club is led, won by West's Jack. West shifts to a trump, and you have a dilemma:

- If Declarer has the ♣A, and West the ♦A, then the winning defense is to take the ♥A immediately and play another Heart, stopping the Club ruff.
- If Declarer has the ♦A, and West the ♣A, then the winning defense is to duck the first trump, win the next Club, cash ♥A and then a third Club.

To bring home the bacon the defense must go to the third degree. This time, you are **West**, trying to help East to thwart Declarer. Same start, but instead of routinely winning the ♣J at Trick 2, you do some thinking. Declarer did not play Clubs like someone holding the ♣K, so East surely has that card. In that case you can afford to squander the Ace! This brilliant stroke solves East's dilemma, telling him what he needs to know. How many Wests would find that truly remarkable play? None that we know of!



#28 – WE’VE GOT YOU SURROUNDED

♠ T9532
♥ A92
♦ 8
♣ KJ32

N-S Vulnerable

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

♠ J ♥ K76 ♦ KQJ642 ♣ T98	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ QT85 ♦ T973 ♣ AQ75
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Perhaps East should have tried 5♦ over 4♠, that would be a cheap sacrifice if 4♠ is making. Instead, she guesses to defend and must find a nice defensive play if she is to justify her shyness in the bidding.

You are that shy East, so try looking at only the N-E hands. West leads the ♦K, won by Declarer’s Ace. A Diamond is ruffed in Dummy, followed by a Spade to Declarer’s Ace. Then a Club to Dummy’s Jack and your Queen. What next?

At this point, you cannot play a Club or a Diamond without blowing a trick, so you must shift to a Heart. Which Heart? It seems routine to play a low Heart, but let’s stop and think. If Declarer has the ♥K it won’t matter what you do, so let’s assume that West has the King. If West has the ♥J to go along with that King then you can shift to any old Heart, again it won’t matter. So the case to worry about is the one you see looking at all four hands.

Look what happens if you shift to a low Heart. Dummy plays low, West must play the King, losing to the Ace. That’s only one Heart loser for Declarer. The required shift is the Heart *Ten!* Your Ten and Eight have Dummy’s Nine “surrounded” and that’s what makes the surprising shift to the Ten the winning play. The Ten is covered by the Jack, King and Ace, after which East’s Q8 sits over Dummy’s 92, providing two Heart tricks for the defense.

Surrounding plays don’t happen every day, and are easy to miss in the heat of battle. But now that you are an expert on the subject you will no doubt spot this one right away:

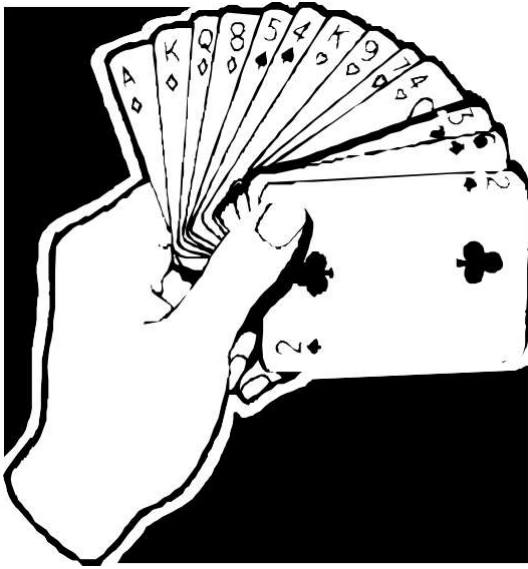
Dummy T65

West A432 East KJ9

Declarer Q87

East’s J9 surround Dummy’s Ten and it is a shift to the *Jack* which is the winning play, picking up the whole suit.





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —