

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 10 – October, 2024



October 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(STaC week game on the 30th; club appreciation game(s) TBA)

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 9/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal only
paid up ACBL members only



- 1 **5,249.98 Steve Babin**
- 2 **3,789.87 Zach Freehill**
- 3 **3,709.40 Eunice Patton**
- 4 **3,541.04 Cindy Moore**
- 5 **2,785.33 Mike Tomlianovich**
- 6 **2,647.62 Lori Moore**
- 7 **2,614.08 Ann Schuyler**
- 8 **2,208.28 Joyce Clay**
- 9 **2,064.14 Ron Emmett**
- 10 **1,756.04 Jeff Furler**
- 11 **1,468.96 Steve Wulfers**
- 12 **931.77 Barb Neuges**
- 13 **902.16 Stevie Joslin**
- 14 **888.32 Dave Freehill**
- 15 **880.38 Sallie Boge**
- 16 **848.90 Larry Ziegler**
- 17 **827.86 Fred Spitzzeri**
- 18 **618.97 Mary Cralley**
- 19 **618.40 Rick Dalton**
- 20 **612.21 Chris Zogg**
- 21 **540.66 Pat Lebeck**
- 22 **521.49 John Cralley**
- 23 **496.46 Gene Byers**
- 24 **488.35 Kay Marvin**
- 25 **425.67 Marilyn Byers**

Moreplayers:

- 14,285.50 Chris Benson-LeRoy**
- 6,121.97 Ron Sholes-Springfield**
- 5,920.17 John Seng-Champaign**
- 5,242.29 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria**
- 4,961.60 Paul Lindauer-Chicago**
- 4,170.62 Mary Allen-Peoria**
- 4,090.49 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida**
- 4,054.20 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI**
- 3,898.14 Carole Sholes-Springfield**
- 2,810.73 Hank Hoffman-Morton**
- 2,790.32 Chuck Young-Peoria**
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign**
- 2,540.19 John Maloney-Champaign**
- 2,276.64 Bill Bulfer-Peoria Heights**
- 2,170.77 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon**
- 1,583.38 Wes Seitz-Champaign**
- 1,258.77 Bill Strauss-Urbana**
- 1,215.60 Darryl Bremner-Clinton**
- 1,169.91 Bill Thompson-Fortmeyer B,FL**
- 936.77 Connie Tucker-Champaign**
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA**
- 789.90 Melda Richardson-California**
- 726.34 John Ford-Harvard,MA**
- 682.01 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria**
- 632.99 Barry Mayworm-Princeton**
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville**
- 578.82 Lynn Steffen-El Paso**
- 542.94 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

Bridge is a fascinating game because it offers so many different challenges. Here is a hand that is interesting for the declarer as well as the defenders.

Scoring: Teams (IMPs)

Hand #15 Dir E Vul none	♠ K82 ♥ J843 ♦ QJ764 ♣ 10	♠ QJ96 ♥ Q106 ♦ AK10 ♣ 952	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 105 ♥ AK9752 ♦ 8532 ♣ 4	West North East South All Pass
	♠ A743 ♥ ♦ 9 ♣ AKQJ8763				2♥ 5♣

BIDDING: It's difficult to know exactly what to bid with the South hand, but in a recent team game I jumped to 5♣ over the weak 2♥ bid. I wanted to jam the auction as much as possible and, of course, hoped to make the contract.

PLAY: West led a top diamond and then switched to a heart. I ruffed the heart, led a club to dummy's ten, and played the diamond queen pitching a spade loser. West won and returned a spade which I won in my hand. I drew trumps and went to dummy with a spade to discard my remaining spade loser on the jack of diamonds. That was easy.

If West starts with a heart lead instead, the hand can still be made. You simply ruff and lead a diamond. West must win and the play develops as with the diamond lead.

However, the defense can prevail. If West starts with the unlikely opening lead of a spade and then plays a second one at his next opportunity, I can no longer make the hand. It looks like West can be squeezed in spades and diamonds, but the second spade breaks it up. So while it's usually right to lead your partner's suit or try first to cash an AK, sometimes it doesn't work.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

This hand is another example of avoiding finesses. Take a look.

Scoring: Teams (IMPs)

<p>Hand #16 Dir S Vul none</p>	<p>♠ Q52 ♥ 3 ♦ 764 ♣ J109762</p>	<p>♠ 4 ♥ A7652 ♦ KQ108 ♣ Q54</p>	<p>West North East South</p>	<p>2♣ 4♠</p>
<p>♠ K6 ♥ J1094 ♦ J9532 ♣ A8</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>♠ AJ109873 ♥ KQ8 ♦ A ♣ K3</p>	<p>Pass 2♦ Pass</p> <p>All Pass</p>	

BIDDING: This partnership shows controls (aces and kings) in response to a 2♣ opener. The 2♦ response denied an ace and promised zero or one king so South knew game was high enough.

PLAY: West led the jack of hearts won by East. A spade was led at trick two and if declarer like finesses, here is his first opportunity. This would lose to the king and later South would have to guess the club finesse to make the hand. However, this declarer thought it unlikely East had underled the spade king so he rose with the ace. Next he played the diamond ace followed by the king and queen of hearts pitching two diamonds from dummy. With the red suits stripped, he now threw West in with the spade king. West had to either lead a club or give declarer a sluff and a ruff.

Of course South can always make the contract by guessing clubs, but that is a 50% proposition. If East made a sneaky play of a spade away from the king at trick two, you still make the hand with a club guess.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

When you play in a pairs event with matchpoint scoring you need to keep an eye out for the overtricks. Sometimes it can even mean risking the contract.

Scoring: Matchpoints (pairs)

<p>Hand #17 Dir S Vul none</p>	<p>♠ 106 ♥ Q73 ♦ J1082 ♣ Q752</p>	<p>♠ KQJ ♥ 984 ♦ A64 ♣ 10986</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>♠ 975432 ♥ J10 ♦ Q53 ♣ 43</p>	<p>♠ A8 ♥ AK652 ♦ K97 ♣ AKJ</p>	
	West	North	East	South		
				2♣		
	Pass	2♦	Pass		2NT	
	Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♥		
	Pass	4♥	All Pass			

*Puppet Stayman

BIDDING: After North's waiting bid of 2♦, South's rebid of 2NT showed 22-24 HCP. This auction could conceal a five card major so North used Puppet Stayman to discover if South held five hearts and game was soon reached. (Puppet can uncover four and five card majors.)

PLAY: Declarer won the opening spade lead and assuming hearts behaved, should only lose one spade and two diamonds. He next looked for ways to improve on that. The diamond finesse was obvious and discarding a loser on the queen of clubs was also a possibility. The problem was insufficient entries to dummy. After playing the ace and king of hearts, he followed with the ace, king, and jack of clubs. This would succeed whenever the clubs divided 3-3 or when the person with only two clubs did not hold the last trump. Having survived, South drew the last trump with dummy's queen and discarded his losing spade on the club queen. He followed with the jack of diamonds and soon had twelve tricks.

Note that declarer would go down only if the third club was ruffed and he had two diamond losers along with the spade. This is not a play you would make in a team game where overtricks are of lesser value.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

Preempts sometimes work but every now and then they turn around and bite you. Take a look at this one from a recent team game.

Scoring: Team Game (IMPs)

Hand #18 Dir S Vul none	♠ 1096 ♥ K1076 ♦ 752 ♣ 873					
			West	North	East	South
♠ KQJ8732 ♥ 92 ♦ 64 ♣ 62		♠ ♥ QJ8543 ♦ 1083 ♣ KQJ10	3♠ All Pass	Pass Pass	1♣* 3NT	
	♠ A54 ♥ A ♦ AKQJ9 ♣ A954					

*Precision Club

BIDDING: I was sitting in the West seat and after South opened a strong club, I jumped to 3♠. South looked at his eight likely tricks and bid 3NT.

PLAY: I led the king of spades and declarer saw that he had nine tricks if he could only get to dummy. He won my spade lead and ran his diamonds. Next he unblocked his ace of hearts and then played ace and another club. My partner had no choice but to win the trick. He could cash two more club tricks but eventually had to lead a heart to dummy's king and declarer had his game. Unfortunately, at the other table my team mate opened the South hand with an off-shape 2NT and that ended the auction. He found the same play but since they were not in game, we lost a lot on this hand.

This example is not meant to suggest you avoid preempting but rather understand that the action can sometimes create a result that otherwise might not have occurred.

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**Bloomington-Normal 70% club
Year 2023-24 only**

2024/9/9	70.00%	Mike Tomlianovich & Steve Babin
2024/9/2	72.62%	Cindy Moore & Mike Tomlianovich
2024/8/28	70/83%	Chris Benson & Steve Babin
2024/8/26	71.05%	Clarene Arnold & Jerry Grandon(social meets duplicate)
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

#29 – TAKE FOUR

This week you are playing E-W, and as the problem is a tough one you get four attempts to beat the contract.

	♠ 876 ♥ K32 ♦ AK98 ♣ J92	
♠ AJT43 ♥ JT4 ♦ Q54 ♣ 73	North West East Declarer	♠ KQ9 ♥ Q65 ♦ T7632 ♣ 65
	♠ 52 ♥ A987 ♦ J ♣ AKQT84	

E-W Vulnerable

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

North's bid was a Negative Double, showing the unbid suits. She usually has 4 cards in the unbid major for that bid, but was stuck for a good alternative. Anyway, South lands in 4♥, and you are on defense. Can you beat this precarious contract?

Take 1: Spades are led, Declarer ruffing the third round. The ♥8 is ducked around to East's Queen. But East has no Spades left, and it's easy for

Declarer to win whatever is returned, draw trumps and claim the rest. Cut!

Take 2: The defense has a certain trump trick and they must make sure that it is *West* who wins that trick. This allows Spades to be continued, causing Declarer to lose trump control. So, when the ♥8 is led, West must hop up with the Ten, forcing Declarer to play Dummy's King. Now a Heart to Declarer's Ace and a low Heart to East's Queen. Again the wrong defender has won the Heart trick. Cut!

Take 3: OK, suppose West plays his ♥T on the first round, forcing Dummy's King, but then, on the second round, East cleverly jumps up with the Queen. No, that won't work either, Declarer simply lets the Queen win. Cut!

Take 4: As before, West plays the ♥T, and East must do his part by dropping the ♥Q under Dummy's King! Great defense! This guarantees that West wins the defense's Heart trick and he is the one who can play Spades. Down one!

That would be an awfully hard defense to find at the table, don't you think? In fact, it's tough enough even when looking at all four hands. But a thing of beauty nonetheless, all the more so as it gave both defenders a starring role.



#30 – COUNT SIGNALS

Count Dracula may have been a scary fellow, but Count Signals can be the defenders' best friend, as illustrated in this week's deal. You are West, so try looking at just the N-W hands and see if you can beat 5♠ doubled.

	♠ 65 ♥ ♦ K98762 ♣ KQT96	
♠ Q ♥ AKT43 ♦ AJ54 ♣ A53	North West East Declarer	♠ 874 ♥ QJ962 ♦ QT ♣ 842
	♠ AKJT932 ♥ 875 ♦ 3 ♣ J7	

None Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
3♠	Dbf	4♠	5♥
Pass	Pass	5♠	Pass
Pass	Dbf	All Pass	

You lead a high Heart, ruffed in Dummy. Then a Club is played to Declarer's Jack. Do you win this trick? And how do you propose to set the contract?

You could grab your ♣A and lead your trump. That will stop a second Heart ruff in Dummy. The danger is that, after drawing trumps, if Declarer has a second Club, she will be able to run the Clubs, pitching away all her red suit

losers.

Does that mean you should duck the first Club trick? Not necessarily, that could also be fatal. Declarer's Jack might be singleton in which case, if you duck, Declarer ruffs another Heart in Dummy, returns to hand with a Club ruff, and draws trumps. Her shape is likely to be 7=3=2=1, and she can now build her 11th trick by leading a Diamond towards Dummy.

So, the success of the defense depends upon West guessing whether Declarer started with one or two Clubs. But no guessing is required for those defenders who give count signals when Declarer leads a suit. If E-W are using this valuable tool then, on the first round of Clubs, East plays low to show an odd number (of Clubs), and high to show an even number.

On the actual deal, East plays the Two, so West knows that Declarer's ♣J cannot be singleton and that he can safely duck that trick. After winning the ♣J, Declarer ruffs another Heart in Dummy, but can score no more than 10 tricks. If East started with ♣8742, he would play the Eight on the first round of Clubs (high to show an even number), from which West deduces that the ♣J is singleton (Jxx is possible but less likely) and that the ♣A must be grabbed and a trump returned.



#31 – THE SAFE HAND

♠ K543
♥ AT
♦ A97
♣ 8543

♠ J92	<i>North</i>		♠ AQT8
♥ J94	<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>	♥ K7532
♦ J652			♦ T84
♣ J62	<i>Declarer</i>		♣ 9

♠ 76
♥ Q86
♦ KQ3
♣ AKQT7

Both Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

3NT is the normal contract and 9 top tricks are available. But this event was duplicate bridge where it's not always enough just to make your contract, it's also important to make overtricks. So, the question for you South players is "How do you make 10 tricks after an opening Diamond lead?"

Hearts are the best place to get that extra trick and there are two ways to tackle the suit ... either finesse the Ten hoping that West has the Jack ... or lead towards the Queen hoping that East has the King. As you can see both plays work and will earn that valuable overtrick. But playing East for the ♥K

is dangerous! If it turns out that West has the King then he can shift dramatically to the ♠J and South's cold contract is down one! The correct play is to win the opening lead in hand and finesse the ♥T, forcing East to win the trick. On this deal, East is the "safe hand", the one that cannot make the deadly Spade shift through Dummy's King.

Post Script When Declarer led a Heart towards Dummy's AT West could have made a brilliant and spectacular play! If he rises majestically with the Jack then Declarer will fear that West started with the King as well. If that's the case then the 10th trick cannot be developed without letting the danger hand gain the lead and the play of the ♥J might persuade a nervous (aka chicken) Declarer to settle for 9 tricks. But a bold Declarer will go for the gusto, playing a second round of Hearts and risking the contract for the precious overtrick.



#32 – SECOND HAND HIGH

“Second hand low” is common advice, but this is a hand where it pays to ignore that recommendation.

♠ K ♥ 96 ♦ AJT98 ♣ J9764

E-W Vulnerable

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

♠ JT98 ♥ 432 ♦ K6 ♣ K853	<i>North</i>	♠ A762 ♥ JT87 ♦ Q75 ♣ QT
	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	
	<i>Declarer</i>	

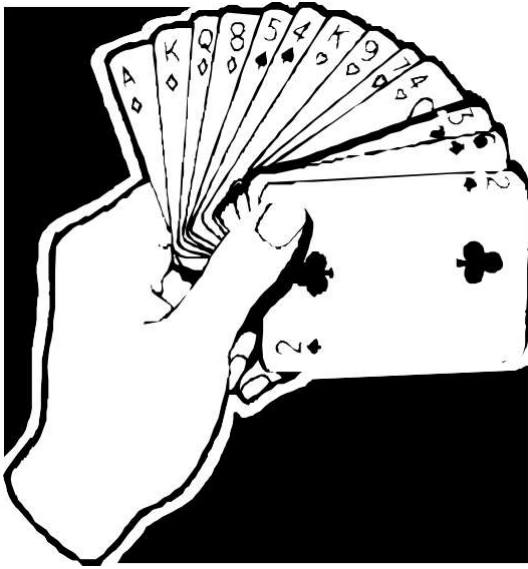
North saw no reason to mess about showing the minors, so she jumped straight to game in the most likely contract. West had the obvious lead of the ♠J, won by East’s Ace. Back came a Spade and Declarer could see 9 tricks if she could bring in the Diamonds. She finessed the ♦J, losing to the Queen. The defense cashed their Spades, but Dummy’s Diamonds were good. Declarer’s 9 tricks were a Spade, three Hearts, four Diamonds and a Club. Somebody goofed, who was it?

♠ Q543 ♥ AKQ5 ♦ 432 ♣ A2

Yes, indeed, West was the goofster. We are always told “second hand low, third hand high” but (as usual) there are exceptions and this was one of them. When Declarer led that first round of Diamonds, West must hop up with the King! This alert play makes it impossible for Declarer to bring in the Diamonds for four tricks. If she takes the ♦A on the first round then East will duck the second round of Diamonds ... and if Declarer ducks the first round then the best she can do is to score three Diamonds, which is not enough.

It’s a recurring theme. Dummy has AJTxx or AT9xx or some such holding ... Dummy has no side-suit entries ... West has the Queen or the King ... and the winning play by West to play “second hand high” in order to jam Declarer’s communications.





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —