

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 26 Number 12 – December, 2024



December 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 (NO GAME on Christmas nor New Year's Day)

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

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus (NO MEETING on Christmas nor New Year's Day)

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

Online(BBO) bridge available at:

Tuesdays, 6:50pm – 749ers only 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 11/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal
paid up ACBL members only



- 1 **5,285.94 Steve Babin**
- 2 **3,743.15 Zach Freehill**
- 3 **3,733.07 Eunice Patton**
- 4 **3,579.20 Cindy Moore**
- 5 **2,796.18 Mike Tomlianovich**
- 6 **2,676.72 Lori Moore**
- 7 **2,633.78 Ann Schuyler**
- 8 **2,240.46 Joyce Clay**
- 9 **2,078.11 Ron Emmett**
- 10 **1,773.88 Jeff Furler**
- 11 **1,485.80 Steve Wulfers**
- 12 **938.44 Barb Neuges**
- 13 **889.28 Sallie Boge**
- 14 **888.32 Dave Freehill**
- 15 **866.02 Larry Ziegler**
- 16 **840.34 Fred Spitzzeri**
- 17 **630.57 Rick Dalton**
- 18 **623.54 Chris Zogg**
- 19 **620.69 Mary Cralley**
- 20 **548.33 Pat Lebeck**
- 21 **522.69 John Cralley**
- 22 **505.18 Kay Marvin**
- 23 **500.72 Gene Byers**
- 24 **365.28 Joyce Werner**
- 25 **340.07 Glee Cumbow**

More plays:

- 14,353.56 Chris Benson-LeRoy**
- 6,129.07 Ron Sholes-Springfield**
- 5,953.85 John Seng-Champaign**
- 5,255.99 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria**
- 5,000.06 Paul Lindauer-Chicago**
- 4,219.67 Mary Allen-Peoria**
- 4,119.99 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida**
- 4,056.56 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI**
- 3,898.32 Carole Sholes-Springfield**
- 2,825.12 Chuck Young-Peoria**
- 2,810.73 Hank Hoffman-Morton**
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign**
- 2,550.71 John Maloney-Champaign**
- 2,314.11 Bill Bulfer-Peoria Heights**
- 2,176.72 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon**
- 1,772.77 Camilla Rabjohns-Peoria Hgts**
- 1,600.77 Wes Seitz-Champaign**
- 1,271.90 Bill Strauss-Urbana**
- 1,241.34 Darryl Bremner-Clinton**
- 1,180.33 Bill Thompson-Fortmeyer B,FL**
- 978.51 Connie Tucker-Champaign**
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA**
- 798.62 Melda Richardson-California**
- 736.96 John Ford-Harvard,MA**
- 696.19 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria**
- 659.63 Barry Mayworm-Princeton**
- 625.63 Lane O'Connor-Naperville**
- 595.24 Lynn Steffen-El Paso**
- 552.06 Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria**
- 517.64 Martha Schuster-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

Here is another hand where the necessary information is available if you know where to look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #23 Dir E Vul E/W	♠ AJ103 ♥ AK63 ♦ K2 ♣ 1084	♠ 82 ♥ 104 ♦ AQJ874 ♣ A93	♠ 965 ♥ Q875 ♦ 93 ♣ J765	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ KQ74 ♥ J92 ♦ 1065 ♣ KQ2	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>DBL</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South			2♦	Pass	Pass	DBL	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South																			
		2♦	Pass																			
Pass	DBL	Pass	3♠																			
Pass	4♠	All Pass																				

BIDDING: Most would open the East hand 1♦, but he decided on a weak two bid. My partner in the North chair made a takeout double and I jumped to show a hand worth 9-11 points. Although his diamond king was of doubtful value, North carried on to game.

PLAY: East won the first two diamonds followed by the ace and another club. Since he had opened with a weak two bid, it was now clear East should not hold another honor card. I won the king of clubs and drew trumps. I could ruff my last diamond in dummy but I still had a potential heart loser. I cashed the club queen and stopped to see what I knew about the East hand. He had shown up with two spades, six diamonds, and at least three clubs. I knew the heart queen was in the West hand so my only hope was that East started with the singleton or doubleton ten of hearts. Accordingly, I led the jack of hearts from my hand and West covered with queen as I won the ace. I next played the king of hearts and was happy to see the ten drop on my right. My heart nine was good and the contract was safe.

There was nothing difficult about this hand; in fact, East made it too easy by showing me where his high cards were rather than making me find them. Once you realize a doubleton heart queen in the East hand is not possible, the rest is easy.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

One important aspect of playing in a pair event is that each hand is of equal value. Succeeding at the one-level can reward you with a larger score than making a grand slam. Of course, you have to succeed.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #24 Dir E Vul E/W	♠ 1062 ♥ AQ963 ♦ 9 ♣ Q874	♠ A84 ♥ KJ72 ♦ K62 ♣ K103	♠ KQ7 ♥ 8 ♦ AJ854 ♣ A965	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>		<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South			1♣	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT	All Pass			
West	North	East	South																			
		1♣	1♦																			
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT																			
All Pass																						

BIDDING: After South's 1♦ overcall, North made a constructive (but non-forcing) 1♥ bid. South ended the auction with 1NT.

PLAY: West suspected South was prepared for a club lead so he optimistically led his poor spade suit. East won the ace and continued the suit. Declarer won with his king and could count only five tricks: 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond, and 1 club. He also realized East very likely held the three outstanding kings to justify his opening bid. Therefore, the most likely source of additional tricks was in the club suit. His only play for three clubs tricks was the elusive "intra-finesse". He led a low club and played the eight from dummy. East won the ten and continued with a third spade. South won and went to dummy with his only entry, the ace of hearts. Next he led the queen of clubs from dummy and won the ace as East covered with the king. When the club jack fell on his left, he had seven tricks and a good matchpoint score.

Take careful notice of the play in the club suit. Playing West to hold either JX or 10X was the only way to win three tricks. Also notice that declarer did not err by taking the losing heart finesse. Using the auction to place the opponents' high cards is very important.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

There are many conventions available for you and your partner but you still need good judgment. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

<p>Hand #25 ♠ AKQ43 Dir N ♥ 963 Vul E/W ♦ Q73 ♣ A10</p> <p>♠ 10 ♠ J76 ♥ A1054 ♥ QJ72 ♦ 854 ♦ 6 ♣ QJ987 ♣ 65432</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <p>♠ 9852</p> <p>♥ K8</p> <p>♦ AKJ1092</p> <p>♣ K</p> </div> </div>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">West</th> <th style="width: 15%;">North</th> <th style="width: 15%;">East</th> <th style="width: 15%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>6NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>All</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	2♦		Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠		Pass	4♣	Pass						4NT		Pass	5♦	Pass	5♥		Pass	6♠	Pass						6NT		All					Pass			
	West	North	East	South																																															
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BIDDING: Sitting South, after my partner raised diamonds, I set spades as the trump suit. Next she cue bid clubs and I bid 4NT. We use Roman Keycard Blackwood (four aces + trump king) and her 5♦ bid showed three keycards. I then bid 5♥ to ask if she held the spade queen. Her leap to 6♠ showed the queen but no outside king. I could now count thirteen tricks (five spades, six diamonds, and two clubs) but the opponents held the heart ace. I next bid 6NT to protect the heart king from the opening lead.

PLAY: West did not lead the ace of hearts so I took all thirteen tricks. Note that 6♠ is doomed with a heart lead. The convention helped us get to the slam but realizing the danger of a heart lead saved it.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

Conventions are important and here's an example of using the right tools to stay out of trouble. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #26 Dir N Vul E/W	♠ A63 ♥ KQ6 ♦ J1098 ♣ KQJ					
♠ 10 ♥ J109752 ♦ 2 ♣ 98763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 54 ♥ A43 ♦ A7653 ♣ 1052	West Pass All Pass	North 1NT 4♥	East Pass Pass	South 4♣* 4♠
	♠ KQJ9872 ♥ 8 ♦ KQ4 ♣ A4					

*Gerber

BIDDING: South was interested in slam as soon as he heard his partner's 1NT opening bid. His leap to 4♣ was the Gerber convention asking for the number of aces. The 4♥ response showed only one so South reluctantly signed off in game.

PLAY: With no attractive lead, West led his singleton diamond and hit pay dirt when his partner won the ace. East returned the seven of diamonds requesting a heart return (higher of the other two suits). West ruffed and East won the heart continuation but West had no more trumps so declarer scored up the game. The pairs who first bid their spade suit and then used Blackwood ended up in 5♠ down one on the same defense. Those unsuccessful pairs were certainly unlucky, but the South hand needs only to discover the number of aces and the Gerber convention was invented just for that purpose.

The Gerber convention is generally used after a 1NT or 2NT opening bid. It may also be used after a jump in NT.

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Bloomington-Normal 70% club Year 2024 only

2024/11/4	71.53%	Cindy Moore & Mike Tomlianovich
2024/10/29	71.25%	Donna Uhlenhop & Jane Franklin(social meets duplicate)
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)



BRIDGE BITES

from: The American Contract Bridge League

By: Brian Gunnell



#37 – THE TRUMP COUP

This week's deal contains a little bit of magic whereby a "certain" trump loser evaporates into thin air thanks to some well-timed Declarer play.

	♠ T9 ♥ AQJ ♦ A543 ♣ AQ52	
♠ 2 ♥ T83 ♦ JT96 ♣ JT984	<i>North</i> <i>West</i> <i>East</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ K765 ♥ 9654 ♦ Q72 ♣ K7
	♠ AQJ843 ♥ K72 ♦ K8 ♣ 63	

Against your 6♠ contract West leads the ♣J. You finesse the Queen but that loses to the King and East returns a Club to Dummy's Ace. It was a fine slam but it got worse when that Club finesse lost. Now you must pick up the trump suit for no losers. You run the ♠T and it holds. You say a silent "Yippee!" but that quickly changes to "Rats!" when you repeat the finesse and West shows out. How will you overcome this setback?

East still has ♠K7 but there are no Spades left in Dummy with which to repeat the finesse. That might seem like a certain trump loser but you have a resource, it's known as a Trump Coup. For this to work you must shorten your trumps down to two (the same length as East) and also make sure that you win the 11th trick in Dummy. If you can do that, then when you lead from Dummy at Trick 12, East will be forced to ruff in front of you, thereby losing his "sure" trump trick.

So, after the second trump finesse wins, the play goes: ♦K; ♦A; Diamond ruff; over to Dummy's ♥Q; Club ruff; back to Dummy's ♥J. The ♥A is now cashed and at Trick 12 Dummy leads a Club (or Diamond) and East is forced to ruff in front of you. Great stuff! Be sure to realize that you needed *both* those ruffs in your hand, if you had not shortened your trumps to the right length then there would have been no Trump Coup.



#38 – THE ANTI-BATH COUP

♠ KJT
♥ 865
♦ 72
♣ AQT96

♠ 962	North	♠ 8743
♥ KQT94	West	♥ 73
♦ JT8	East	♦ KQ953
♣ 42	Declarer	♣ K3

♠ AQ5
♥ AJ2
♦ A64
♣ J875

The Bath Coup is well known by now:

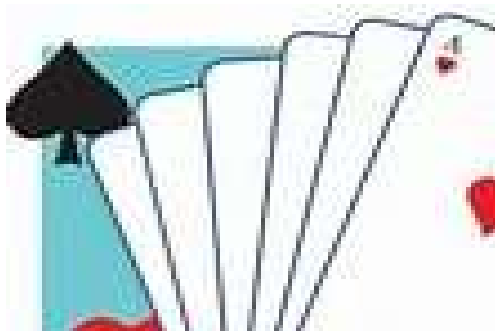
865
KQT94 73
AJ2

West leads the King and Declarer craftily ducks. Now if West continues he gives Declarer a second trick in the suit. The rule for East here, when holding Jxx, is to *encourage* with his higher spot card, hopefully that agreement will save West from the ignominy of the Bath Coup.

However, in the diagram above, Declarer pulled off what has been termed as the “Anti-Bath Coup”. Against 3NT, West led the ♥K and Declarer could have ducked this trick in order to lure West into a Bath Coup. But Declarer could see that a Diamond shift might be fatal, so in order to muddy the waters he played the ♥J on the first trick! Our (gullible) West assumed that Declarer

had started with ♥AJ doubleton and continued Hearts, won by Declarer’s Ace. The Club finesse was lost, but East was out of Hearts and Declarer had 9 tricks. Of course, a Diamond shift at Trick 2 beats the contract, but Declarer’s clever false card diverted West from the winning play.

Yes, West erred grievously! After that first Heart trick (King, Five, Three, Jack), he should have smelled a rat. Where was the Two? East would not play the Three from 732, instead he would play his lowest card saying “I don’t have the Jack!” So, an alert West (and one who trusted his Partner to signal correctly) could have figured out that Declarer had false-carded. But, in the heat of battle, such clues can be missed!



#39 – THE MERRIMAC COUP

Historians of the Spanish-American War will have no difficulty figuring out how this week's coup got its exotic name. For the rest of us there is Google.

♠ A6
♥ 754
♦ 763
♣ KQT96

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

♠ 432	North	♠ KJT9
♥ QT82	West	♥ AJ3
♦ 954	East	♦ JT8
♣ 872	Declarer	♣ A54

Against 3NT, West leads his 4th best Heart, and routine defense by East is to win the Ace and return the Jack. Declarer's King wins that and Clubs are played. East can take his ♣A when he likes, West gets a couple of Hearts, but that is all there is for the defense. 9 tricks for Declarer.

♠ Q875
♥ K96
♦ AKQ2
♣ J3

Let's replay the hand, this time with a wide-awake East at the table. He can see those ominous Clubs in Dummy and must knock out the ♠A before Declarer can set up the Clubs. That's right, a Spade shift is required at Trick 2. But shifting to the ♠J does not get the job done. Declarer will hop up with her Queen, saving Dummy's ♠A entry for later. What is needed is the

spectacular shift to the ♠K, that *does* knock out Dummy's entry (if the ♠K is ducked then East simply continues with another Spade). Nicely done! East's sacrifice of the ♠K (the Merrimac Coup) shuts out the Clubs and is the only way to set the contract.

Of course, after the ♠A has been dislodged, East must keep up the good work by ducking one round of Clubs, in order to complete the job of shutting out the Club suit. Why not duck a second round in case Declarer started with three Clubs? West will help out by giving a count signal, playing the ♣2 on the first round. This "low-high" tells East that West started with an *odd* number of Clubs and therefore that Declarer does *not* have three. Ducking the second Club would be fatal as it happens, allowing Declarer to scamper home with two Spades, a Heart, four Diamonds and two Clubs.



#40 – THE SCISSORS COUP

This deal features the Scissors Coup, so-called because it cuts communications between the two defenders.

♠ J95 ♥ AKJ7 ♦ 43 ♣ AT87		
♠ A4 ♥ T ♦ AJT65 ♣ KQJ52	North West East Declarer	♠ 2 ♥ 8643 ♦ KQ987 ♣ 643
♠ KQT8763 ♥ Q952 ♦ 2 ♣ 9		

Both Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dbl	4♦	4♠
5♦	Pass	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East's 4♦ was preemptive, showing long Diamonds and not much else.

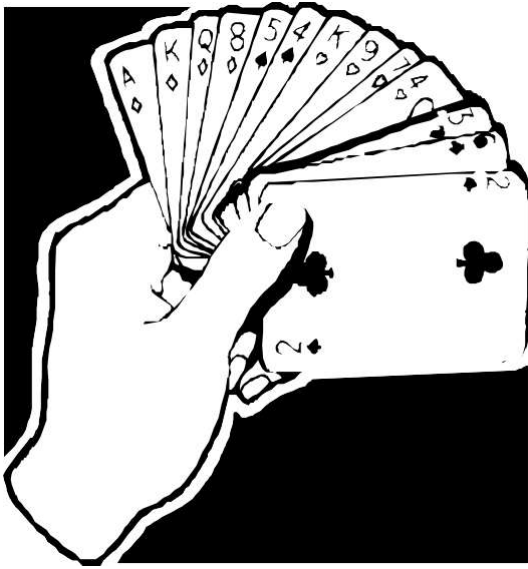
As West, what's your opening lead? It would be reasonable to lead ♠K, attempting to set up a Club trick while you still have the ♠A entry. That doesn't work on the actual deal because of Declarer's Club singleton. A more promising plan might be to lead the singleton Heart, later winning the ♠A, then *underleading* the ♦A to East's hoped-for ♦K, and getting a Heart ruff for down one. As you can see, that plan is the winner. Well, not quite,

because there is a clever counter-measure. How can Declarer deprive West of his ruff?

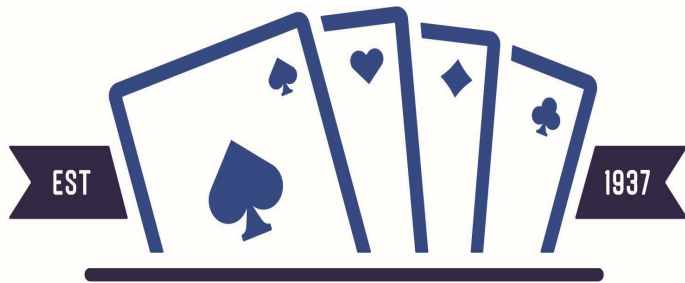
Enter the Scissors Coup. Declarer wins the Heart lead in Dummy, and before touching trumps she cashes ♣A and leads another Club, *pitching a Diamond* when East plays low. By this maneuver Declarer trades a Diamond loser for a Club loser, in the process thwarting West in his plan to reach East with the ♦K. Now, with the defensive communications snipped, Declarer loses only the ♠A and a Club (but there is no Diamond loser and no Heart ruff).

Post Script: As West you no doubt found that well-thought-out Heart opening lead. Then as Declarer you made a clever play to bring home the 5♠ contract. Next, imagine that you hold the East cards, but with the ♣6 replaced by the ♣J. Now, after Dummy's ♣A has been cashed, when a second Club is played, we are quite confident that you would alertly hop up with that ♣J, foiling the Scissors Coup. Nice play!





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —