

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 27 Number 1 – January, 2025



January 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 New Year's Day)

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

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus (NO MEETING on 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 12/7/2024 – residents of Bloomington-Normal
paid up ACBL members only



1	5,304.17	Steve Babin
2	3,743.15	Zach Freehill
3	3,737.59	Eunice Patton
4	3,585.64	Cindy Moore
5	2,800.27	Mike Tomlianovich
6	2,702.65	Lori Moore
7	2,660.90	Ann Schuyler
8	2,264.80	Joyce Clay
9	2,078.11	Ron Emmett
10	1,773.88	Jeff Furler
11	1,491.81	Steve Wulfers
12	940.99	Barb Neuges
13	890.66	Sallie Boge
14	888.32	Dave Freehill
15	888.41	Larry Ziegler
16	843.17	Fred Spitzzeri
17	632.73	Rick Dalton
18	626.04	Chris Zogg
19	620.69	Mary Cralley
20	551.20	Pat Lebeck
21	522.69	John Cralley
22	505.18	Kay Marvin
23	500.72	Gene Byers
24	365.28	Joyce Werner
25	341.12	Glee Cumbow

More players:

14,379.77	Chris Benson-LeRoy
6,133.77	Ron Sholes-Springfield
5,965.31	John Seng-Champaign
5,262.10	Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
5,005.54	Paul Lindauer-Chicago
4,239.89	Mary Allen-Peoria
4,138.22	Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
4,058.03	JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
3,898.60	Carole Sholes-Springfield
2,835.94	Chuck Young-Peoria
2,810.73	Hank Hoffman-Morton
2,654.93	Margaret Hansell-Champaign
2,550.95	John Maloney-Champaign
2,330.42	Bill Bulfer-Peoria Heights
2,180.56	Marilyn Stickel-Laon
1,807.45	Camilla Rabjohns-Peoria Hgts
1,605.47	Wes Seitz-Champaign
1,276.76	Bill Strauss-Urbana
1,250.92	Darryl Bremner-Clinton
1,190.34	Bill Thompson-Fortmeyer B,FL
987.80	Connie Tucker-Champaign
893.60	Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
798.62	Melda Richardson-California
747.27	John Ford-Harvard,MA
698.37	Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
661.62	Barry Mayworm-Princeton
625.63	Lane O'Connor-Naperville
614.42	Lynn Steffen-El Paso
552.06	Rich Hagenhauer-Peoria
531.96	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

When playing in a matchpoint (pairs) event, overtricks are very important. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #27 Dlr N Vul E/W	♠ 103 ♥ A986 ♦ A98 ♣ 9876	♠ 654 ♥ 43 ♦ 107653 ♣ Q52	♠ AKQJ9872 ♥ KQ2 ♦ 4 ♣ K				
				West	North	East	South
					Pass	Pass	2♣
			Pass	3♣*	Pass		6♣
			All Pass				

*Control showing

BIDDING: Holding a hand with around nine winners, South opened with a strong, artificial 2♣. This partnership uses control showing responses (ace=2, king=1) and 3♣ showed four. This meant either two aces, one ace and two kings, or four kings. It was easy to determine North's holding so 6♠ was quickly reached.

PLAY: West led the diamond king and declarer immediately saw his only loser was a club. If East held the club ace, declarer could try to score his king by sneaking a club past him. Or, he could find the hearts 3-3 and discard his club on the last heart. However, there was a better plan. If the person who held four (or more) hearts also held the ace of clubs, he could be squeezed. Accordingly, after winning the first trick South ran all of his trumps coming down to a four-card ending. Dummy kept four hearts and declarer three hearts and the king of clubs. Since West was unable to keep four hearts and the ace of clubs, he eventually pitched his ace hoping his partner held the king. This gave South his overtrick and a good score.

There is often more than one way to play a hand and the careful declarer will look for the best chance to succeed.

Copyright ©2007 Larry Matheny.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

To be a good declarer you must know how to play many different suit combinations. However, making the percentage play is not always that easy. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #28 Dir N Vul E/W	♠ K8732 ♥ J9 ♦ Q932 ♣ J9					
♠ A10 ♥ 108643 ♦ 874 ♣ 852	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ Q ♥ AQ752 ♦ J106 ♣ 10643	West Pass	North Pass 4♠	East Pass All Pass	South 1♠
	♠ J9654 ♥ K ♦ AK5 ♣ AKQ7					

BIDDING: South held a great hand but a weak spade suit. North jumped to 4♠ to show a weak hand with long spades. Such a leap usually contains a singleton or void but North felt this was the most descriptive bid with this hand. Fortunately, this partnership also agrees that this jump denies an ace so South was comfortable passing. Several pairs used Blackwood to discover they were missing two aces and now they had to make 5♠.

PLAY: West led a low heart won by East with the ace. South ruffed the heart continuation and his only problem was how to play the spade suit. Declarer led a low spade from his hand and West followed with the ten. Now what? Let's look at the possible spade holdings in the West hand: AQ10, A10, Q10, and 10. You can't go wrong with the first one; you either win with the king or duck and get back to your hand and lead toward the king again. And, with the singleton 10 on your left, you always lose two tricks. That leaves A10 and Q10 for us to ponder. This seems to be a 50-50 proposition on whether to duck or play the king. Assuming the bidding hasn't helped you locate the ace, the only other variable is the person in the West seat. If he "hitches" before playing the ten you might consider playing the king. Or, if you feel he would always rise holding the ace, you can duck. This is where your table presence comes in. It's your call.

While this should be a 50-50 guess, in a recent club game 10 pairs made five, 2 pairs made only four, and 1 pair went down one. Were those 10 pairs lucky, didn't know any better, or did West help them out? I wish I knew.

Copyright ©2007 Larry Matheny.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

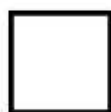
As declarer, one of your most important tasks is to locate the opponents' honor cards. However, there are hands when played properly that will succeed no matter who holds the missing high cards. Take a look at this hand.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #29
Dlr W
Vul N/S

♠ 975
♥ A4
♦ 1052
♣ J8543

♠ KQJ104
♥ J953
♦ KQ3
♣ K



♠ 8632
♥ Q10762
♦ 874
♣ 10

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♠*	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

♠ A
♥ K8
♦ AJ96
♣ AQ9762

*Weak

BIDDING: After East's preemptive raise, South bid 4♣. Entering the auction vulnerable at the four-level showed a good hand so North made a brave raise to game. South was tempted to bid more but didn't want to punish his partner for competing.

PLAY: West led the king of spades won by South. Declarer saw he had two possible diamond losers and perhaps another in the club suit. He thought if either opponent was void in clubs it would be East so he laid down the ace and was relieved to see the king fall. The bidding made it likely that West held both diamond honors but declarer saw that it didn't matter. He played the king and ace of hearts followed by a spade ruff with a high trump. He then led a club to dummy to ruff the last spade high in his hand. He next led a low club to dummy followed by a diamond to his nine. West won but was end-played. He could return a diamond into South's AJ or lead another suit allowing declarer to discard a diamond from dummy as he ruffed in his hand. Since no one bid the slam and no one was +630 in a (very) lucky 3NT, making the overtrick for +620 was a good result.

Since the goal was to lose only one diamond trick, taking two diamond finesses would have succeeded if East held one of the two missing honors (75% of the time). However, the elimination and end-play was a winner no matter who held the king or queen. Look for ways to avoid finesses.

Copyright ©2007 Larry Matheny.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

The successful declarer will look for ways to avoid finessing. Here is an example where one finesse is better than two..

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #30 Dir N Vul N/S	♠ A87 ♥ KQ872 ♦ J42 ♣ 87		West North East South	
♠ Q96 ♥ 5 ♦ Q10983 ♣ KJ42	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 10542 ♥ 96 ♦ K765 ♣ 653	Pass Pass 2NT* All Pass	Pass Pass 1♥ 6♥
	♠ KJ3 ♥ AJ1043 ♦ A ♣ AQ109			

*Heart raise

BIDDING: North's passed-hand jump to 2NT showed a five-card heart raise with 10-12 support points. South felt there must be a good play for slam and promptly bid it.

PLAY: With no attractive lead, West finally decided on the ten of diamonds. Declarer saw that the hand offered several ways to succeed. There was the spade finesse and the club finesse. Or two finesses in the club suit could work. Playing East for any two honors offered a 75% line of play. However, examining the problem more closely, declarer saw a better play. After winning the diamond ace he went to dummy with a trump to ruff a diamond in his hand. Another heart to dummy drew the last trump and then he ruffed dummy's last diamond. Now a spade to the ace and a low club to his queen left West in a bad situation. He had to either lead a black suit into the South hand or lead a diamond providing a "sluff and ruff" for declarer. Either way, South had his twelfth trick.

Note that declarer could have played a club to his nine or ten instead but playing to the queen gave him a chance to make seven if the club king and the spade queen were both in the East hand. This was a pairs event so overtricks were important.

Copyright ©2007 Larry Matheny.



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



#41 – THE DEVIL’S COUP

You could play a lifetime of bridge without pulling off a Devil’s Coup, but it’s worth a look purely for its entertainment value.

♠ AT4 ♥ Q954 ♦ KJ96 ♣ A7	North West East Declarer	♠ Q8 ♥ JT63 ♦ 753 ♣ J632
♠ J73 ♥ A872 ♦ T82 ♣ Q54		♠ K9652 ♥ K ♦ AQ4 ♣ KT98

It looks like Partner has overbid again because you find yourself in the dreadful contract of 6♠. West cashes the ♥A at Trick 1 and now the success of your slam depends upon losing no trump tricks, missing QJ873. The chances of one defender holding QJ doubleton are pretty remote (8%, actually) and you can do better by *not* drawing trumps.

At Trick 2, you ruff the Heart continuation, cash three Diamonds (ending in Dummy), ruff another Heart, cash ♠A and ♠K, and ruff a Club, reaching this position, with the lead in Dummy:

you score the last two tricks with the ♠A and there is now a finesse position against

To bring off this small miracle, West’s 3=5=3=2 and he had to hold one of the better odds than the aforementioned 8%, so much more fun!

♠ J73 ♥ 7 ♦ ♣	♠ AT ♥ Q ♦ 9 ♣	♠ Q8 ♥ J ♦ ♣ J
	♠ K96 ♥ ♦ ♣ T	

Do you see how to win the rest of the tricks? Sure you do! You ruff Dummy’s ♥Q (even though it is a winner!) and, when the ♠T is led, the defense is toast. *If West ruffs low* then Dummy overruffs and ♠K ... *if West ruffs high* then Dummy overruffs and East’s Queen! Devilish indeed!

distribution had to be precisely 3=4=3=3 or missing Spade honors. We don’t know if that offers but we are sure that bringing off the Devil’s Coup is



#42 – THE STRIPTEASE COUP

	♠ AQ765 ♥ 53 ♦ Q4 ♣ 9854	
♠ JT943 ♥ KQT4 ♦ 65 ♣ A3	North West East Declarer	♠ 82 ♥ 9876 ♦ JT982 ♣ K7
	♠ K ♥ AJ2 ♦ AK73 ♣ QJT62	

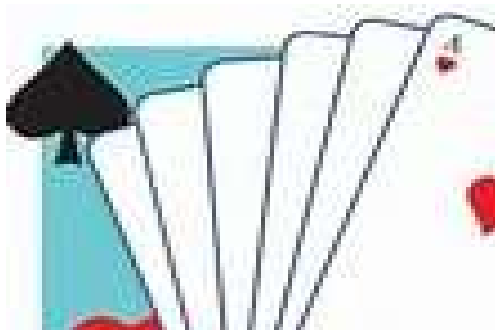
We round out our series on bridge coups with a personal favorite.

After West has overcalled in Spades, South finds herself in 5♣, a contract which appears doomed when West's opening lead is the ♥K. Declarer cannot play on trumps immediately because the defense has three cashing tricks ... she cannot pitch her two Heart losers on the top Spades because East will ruff the third round ... and she cannot pitch Dummy's Heart loser on the Diamonds because West will ruff the third round.

But Declarer has a resource, let the striptease commence! Declarer's ♥A wins the first trick, the ♠K is unblocked, then over to Dummy's ♦Q. The ♠A is cashed (Declarer pitching a Heart, of course), and now, when Dummy's ♠Q is played, East must ruff to prevent another Heart pitch. He cannot ruff high (Declarer would pitch the Heart anyway) so he ruffs low and is overruffed.

Next, Declarer plays his high Diamonds and this time it is West who is forced to ruff in order to prevent the Heart pitch. West must also ruff low and is overruffed by Dummy.

After those two low ruffs, both defenders have bared down to a singleton trump honor, so Declarer can lead a trump and enjoy the sight of the Ace and King tumbling down on the same trick! This was actually a double Striptease Coup as both defenders were divested of their protective small trump.



#43 – THRUST AND PARRY

East made a couple of fine defensive plays on this deal, but Declarer parried with some good plays of her own, and eventually prevailed.

♠ 652 ♥ Q543 ♦ 42 ♣ QJT3		
♠ KQJT93 ♥ 762 ♦ 5 ♣ 842	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ A98 ♦ T9876 ♣ A976
		♠ A87 ♥ KJT ♦ AKQJ3 ♣ K5

N-S Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West's 2♠ was preemptive, showing a 6-card suit and a weak hand. West leads the ♠K, and Declarer ducks the first round, just in case West was being frisky and bid 2♠ on a 5-card suit. The purpose of that "hold-up play" is to make sure that East is out of Spades when he later gains the lead.

Declarer wins the second round of Spades (East pitches a Club), and must flush out East's Aces in order to reach 9 tricks. She leads the ♣K, but East cleverly ducks that, making his own hold-up play in order to shut out Dummy's Club suit. Declarer persists with Clubs and East wins the second

round, then exits with a Diamond. Next comes the ♥K, but again East holds up his Ace, and holds up yet again when Declarer plays the ♥J! East has succeeded in keeping Declarer from reaching Dummy, but only temporarily. Declarer leads another Heart, which East must win. Again, East exits with a Diamond. Declarer cashes the remaining Diamond winners and loses the fifth round to East. East's remaining card is a Club and that gives Declarer her 9th trick. It took a while, but finally, at Trick 13, Declarer reaches Dummy!

Post Script: If Declarer had held three Clubs instead of just two, East would have wanted to duck the second Club and win the third round. How did East know to win the second round instead? His helpful Partner gave him a *count signal*, playing the *Two* on the first round. By playing a *low* Club West showed an *odd* number ... if West had held a doubleton, he would have played his *high* Club to show an *even* number. Nice defense by E-W, albeit in a losing cause.



#44 – CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

If it's not too late already, try looking at just the N-S hands and decide how you are going to play that Spade suit. Where's the lady?

	<i>North</i>		
♠ 4 ♥ 876542 ♦ QJT ♣ T65	♠ A873 ♥ QT9 ♦ 985 ♣ K32	♠ Q65 ♥ AKJ ♦ 72 ♣ AJ987	
	<i>Declarer</i>		
♠ KJT92 ♥ 3 ♦ AK643 ♣ Q4	♠ KJT92 ♥ 3 ♦ AK643 ♣ Q4		

E-W Vulnerable

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

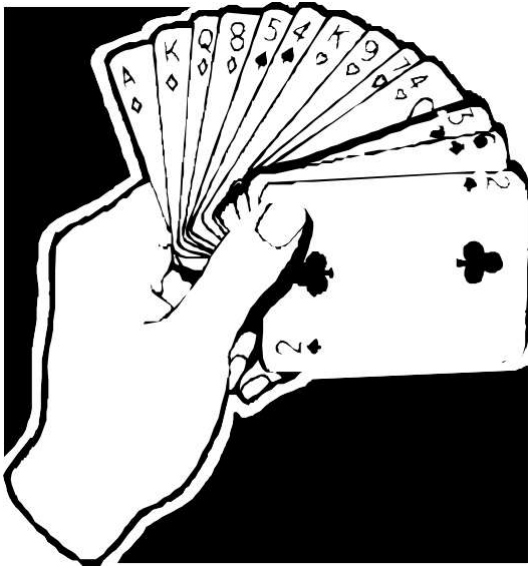
That 1NT opening showed 15-17 HCP, after which the auction inches its way up to 4♠. West leads the ♦Q, which is won by your Ace. You have one loser in each of the side-suits, so to make your contract you must avoid losing a trump trick.

In the play of the Spades you could choose to finesse against West, or to finesse against East, or to play "for the drop" (hoping that the suit is 2-2 or the ♠Q is singleton). The general rule, when holding a 9-card fit, is to play for

the drop, all things being equal that is about a 58% chance.

But why settle for 58% when you can have 100%? Yes, it's time for some counting. N-S have a combined 22 HCP, that leaves E-W with 18. West has already played the ♦Q, leaving precisely 15 or 16 HCP in the East hand. As East has already advertised 15-17 he must have all the missing high cards with the possible exception of one of the missing Jacks. So at Trick 2 you lead a Spade to Dummy's Ace and then, when East plays low on the second round, you finesse the Jack with complete confidence. That's 10 tricks for those who count, but only 9 for the rule-followers.





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —