

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 27 Number 2 – February, 2025



February 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 2/12 & 2/19)

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 299ers only pairs(if attendance warrants)(NO game on 2/12 & 2/19)

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus(NO meeting on 2/12 & 2/19)

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 5,332.13 Steve Babin
- 2 3,744.39 Eunice Patton
- 3 3,743.15 Zach Freehill
- 4 3,596.27 Cindy Moore
- 5 2,802.49 Mike Tomlianovich
- 6 2,715.12 Lori Moore
- 7 2,666.41 Ann Schuyler
- 8 2,287.18 Joyce Clay
- 9 2,085.67 Ron Emmett
- 10 1,773.88 Jeff Furler
- 11 1,501.73 Steve Wulfers
- 12 943.53 Barb Neuges
- 13 890.72 Larry Ziegler
- 14 890.66 Sallie Boge
- 15 888.32 Dave Freehill
- 16 847.08 Fred Spitzzeri
- 17 638.70 Rick Dalton
- 18 629.37 Chris Zogg
- 19 620.69 Mary Cralley
- 20 551.20 Pat Lebeck
- 21 522.69 John Cralley
- 22 511.69 Kay Marvin
- 23 504.28 Gene Byers
- 24 365.28 Joyce Werner
- 25 342.85 Glee Cumbow

More players:

- 14,418.68 Chris Benson-LeRoy
- 6,134.87 Ron Sholes-Springfield
- 5,977.14 John Seng-Champaign
- 5,275.97 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
- 5,006.14 Paul Lindauer-Chicago
- 4,249.55 Mary Allen-Peoria
- 4,163.46 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
- 4,062.25 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
- 3,898.60 Carole Sholes-Springfield
- 2,850.03 Chuck Young-Peoria
- 2,810.73 Hank Hoffman-Morton
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign
- 2,551.36 John Maloney-Champaign
- 2,339.43 Bill Bulfer-Peoria Heights
- 2,192.20 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
- 1,824.07 Camilla Rabjohns-Peoria Hgts
- 1,610.52 Wes Seitz-Champaign
- 1,280.76 Bill Strauss-Urbana
- 1,260.35 Darryl Bremner-Clinton
- 1,198.52 Bill Thompson-Fortmeyer B,FL
- 999.40 Connie Tucker-Champaign
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
- 798.62 Melda Richardson-California
- 751.15 John Ford-Harvard,MA
- 699.10 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
- 661.62 Barry Mayworm-Princeton
- 625.89 Lane O'Connor-Naperville
- 616.46 Lynn Steffen-El Paso
- 563.30 Martha Schuster-Peoria
- 553.29 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

Complicated conventions can cause trouble at the table, but if properly employed, they can help you find your best contract. Take a look at Roman Keycard Blackwood in action.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #31	♠ AKJ97				
Dir	E				
Vul	N/S				
	♥ 7				
	♦ AJ92	West	North	East	South
	♣ AJ5			Pass	1NT
♠ 54		Pass	2♥*	Pass	3♠
♥ KJ102		Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
♦ 865		Pass	5♥	Pass	6♣
♣ 10987		Pass	6♦	Pass	7♠
		Pass	7♣	All Pass	
	♠ Q862				
	♥ AQ84				
	♦ KQ3				
	♣ K2				
	♠ 103				
	♥ 9653				
	♦ 1074				
	♣ Q643				

*Jacoby Transfer

BIDDING: As soon as South opened 1NT, North was thinking about a grand slam. South's jump to 3♠ really got North excited because this showed a maximum no-trump with four spades. This partnership used Roman Keycard Blackwood and South's 5♦ response showed one keycard (keycards= 4 aces + trump king). 5♥ asked if South held the trump queen and the 6♣ response said "yes, and I also have the king of clubs". Next the 6♦ asked about the diamond king and the 7♦ response showed the king of diamonds along with the queen. North could now count twelve tricks with several ways to find another so he bid the grand slam.

PLAY: West led the ten of clubs and it only remained for declarer to draw trumps and ruff dummy's third club in his hand for the thirteenth trick. Note there are only twelve tricks in a no-trump contract.

It's true many players in the North seat might just leap to the grand slam after discovering South had four spades and a maximum hand, but if South held Kxx(x) of diamonds with his values in the other suits, the slam might fail. Roman Keycard is a powerful convention but I urge you to study it carefully before adding it to your convention card.

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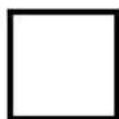
IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

You need skill to be successful at the bridge table but it also helps to have a little luck. Take a look at this one.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #32 ♠ A972
 Dir E ♥ KQ54
 Vul none ♦ 965
 ♣ 75

♠ 543
 ♥ A3
 ♦ A873
 ♣ A1098



♠ KQJ
 ♥ J98762
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ K2

♠ 1086
 ♥ 10
 ♦ KJ42
 ♣ QJ643

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
DBL	2NT*	3♣	3♥
4♣	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

*Limit plus raise

BIDDING: This was a typical matchpoint (pairs) sequence with each side fighting for a plus score. South opened a rather weak hand but had six hearts. Holding three aces West felt obligated to make a takeout double and North's jump showed ten or more support points with four or more hearts. East thought he had just enough high card points to enter the auction and South showed a minimum hand by trying to stop at 3♥. West wasn't through and carried on to the four level. North's pass showed no extras and South with little defense and expecting 4♣ to make, bid 4♥ hoping to go down only one trick.

PLAY: West was in trouble right away. He hated to lead an ace and certainly didn't want to underlead one; he finally settled on the club ace. East discouraged with the club three but West continued the suit. After winning the king, declarer led a low heart toward dummy. West made another mistake by playing low as the king won the trick. Next declarer played four rounds of spades discarding a diamond as West ruffed. Making 4♥ was a top result.

There were many mistakes on this hand. West ignored his partner's discouraging card at trick one and then failed to win the first heart trick. Since it was very likely South held six hearts, dummy's spade suit was a threat. However, it's difficult to blame West too much because it's not clear that switching to the ace of diamonds would succeed. Of course, with spade values East might have played an unusually high club (queen) at trick one to encourage a shift to the higher of the other suits. One thing was clear, East did not want clubs continued.

Note that East-West can make 4♣ for +130 so South was right to bid on. Perfect defense would beat a 4♥ contract two tricks.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

It's nice to be lucky but you still need to be able to take advantage of it. Here is a good example of just that.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #33	♠ Q108				
Dlr E	♥ K8				
Vul none	♦ AQ1063		West	North	East
	♣ AK7				Pass
♠ J654		♠ 973	Pass	2♦*	Pass
♥ 4		♥ A1032	Pass	2NT	Pass
♦ KJ72		♦ 985	Pass	4♣	Pass
♣ J1092		♣ 654	Pass	4NT	Pass
	♠ AK2		Pass	6♥	All Pass
	♥ QJ9765				
	♦ 4				
	♣ Q83				

*Game forcing

BIDDING: This North-South partnership plays a 2/1 system. South's rebid of 2♥ did not show a six-card suit but was a waiting bid to see where North was headed. After North's 2NT rebid, South showed his extra heart and North cooperated by cue bidding 4♣ in support of hearts. South showed the spade control and that was all North needed to hear. A quick check of aces with Blackwood and the small slam was reached.

PLAY: West led the jack of clubs and declarer saw his only concern was the trump suit. Accordingly, he won the club in his hand and led a low heart toward dummy to guard against a singleton ace in the West hand. East won the ace and returned a club to dummy. A second heart to his queen uncovered the bad break. To pick up East's trumps, South had to reduce his number of hearts to the same as East. This meant ruffing two of dummy's diamonds and also finding East with 3=4=3=3 distribution. There was no alternative so he led a diamond to the ace and ruffed a diamond. Then he led a club to dummy followed by another diamond ruff. Now he played the ace and king of spades followed by the deuce to dummy's queen. East had to follow to all of these cards and the lead was now in dummy with declarer's J9 of hearts over East's 103. Another successful slam in the score card.

Note the trump coup will not succeed if declarer doesn't reduce his trumps to the same number as East.

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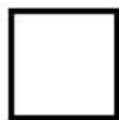
IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

Defense can be difficult but it's a lot easier if you use the basic technique of counting. Look at this simple part score contract that resulted in a top score for declarer.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #34 ♠ J974
Dir W ♥ J10
Vul none ♦ AJ843
♣ J6

♠ KQ1052
♥ Q95
♦ 62
♣ K97



♠ A6
♥ A864
♦ K975
♣ Q84

♠ 83
♥ K732
♦ Q10
♣ A10532

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

BIDDING: This is a simple auction with North-South ending in a part score.

PLAY: West led the spade king won by South. As is usually the case, declarer saw that it would be easier to establish the hand with the long trumps so he fired back a spade at trick two. West won and played a heart to the king and ace. Declarer guessed trumps correctly by playing the top two rounds and exited with a heart to West's queen. Saying later he was afraid to switch to a club in case South held the ace and queen, West got out with the heart nine. Declarer trumped this in dummy, led a diamond to his hand, and played the eight of hearts discarding a club from dummy. He then conceded a club and scored +130 for making four. A diamond partial was the popular contract but most defenders took one spade, one heart, and two clubs for -110. How should West know he could safely switch to a club? Declarer had shown up with the ace of spades, the ace of hearts, the king of diamonds, and a balanced hand. If he had also held both club honors, he would have opened INT.

Note there was nothing difficult about this hand but that's what makes matchpoints (pairs) a different game from rubber bridge or team games. Each overtrick or undertrick can be as important as getting to the right contract. To be successful, you must remember the auction and count the high cards in declarer's hand.

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**Bloomington-Normal 70% club
Year 2024 only**

2024/12/22	78.97%	Cheris Larson & Cindy Moore(virtual club mentee-mentor)
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

#45 – FIND THE LADY

♠ KJT3 ♥ AQJ ♦ AJ95 ♣ J4	<i>North</i>	♠ 7 ♥ 42 ♦ Q86 ♣ AQ98765
♠ 9862 ♥ 98653 ♦ 7 ♣ KT2	<i>West</i> <i>East</i>	
	<i>Declarer</i>	
		♠ AQ54 ♥ KT7 ♦ KT432 ♣ 3

With both sides vulnerable, East opened 3♣ (a weak bid, usually made with a 7-card suit), and South wound up declaring 6♠.

East's Ace won the opening Club lead and the next Club was ruffed by Declarer. Trumps were drawn in four rounds, East following once and then pitching three Clubs. Now all that remained was for Declarer to avoid losing a trick to the ♦Q. Was it a guess, or was it a certainty?

When the hand was actually played, our Declarer was familiar with the idea that, with a 9-card fit, it was customary to cash the Ace and King (playing for the Queen to drop in two rounds) rather than finessing. But (unfortunately) he remembered that East's bidding had shown a long Club suit, and this persuaded him that West was therefore more likely to hold longer Diamonds. Accordingly, he cashed the ♦K, planning to finesse on the next round if West

followed with a low Diamond. Poor Declarer got a nasty shock when, instead, West showed out and it was *East* who turned out to have the Diamond length. Down two (East still has a Club winner and the trumps are all gone) in a cold slam!

Declarer should have gone fishing for extra clues before taking the crucial Diamond guess. If (after drawing trumps) he cashes three Hearts first, East will show out on the third round. Now Declarer has a perfect count on the hand. East started with one Spade, two Hearts and (based on the bidding and the play) seven Clubs. That means East has three Diamonds, and leading a Diamond to Dummy's Ace, and finessing on the second round, is guaranteed to succeed.



#46 – “NICE TRY, PARTNER”

♠ J7532
♥ 3
♦ 9765
♣ J62

	North	
West		East
	Declarer	

♠ AK864
♥ AJ952
♦ 83
♣ 8

♠ T9
♥ KQ76
♦ AKT
♣ AT94

E-W Vulnerable

East	South	West	North
1NT	2♠	3♠	4♠
Dbl	All Pass		

Opposite a 15-17 1NT, West had the HCP for game and cue-bid 3♠, hoping that East had something in Spades and could bid 3NT. Does North's 4♠ seem a bit nutty? Or completely so? It was neither, North expected that 4♠ doubled would be a good sacrifice against an E-W game.

Yes, North fully expected that 4♠ would go down and South went out of his way not to disappoint her. The play went like this: ♣K and ♦K and ♦A were cashed; Club ruffed by Declarer; trumps drawn in two rounds; Heart ruff; Diamond ruff; Heart ruff; Diamond ruff; Heart ruff. If you have worked your

way through this orgy of ruffing you will see that Declarer had by now scored 9 tricks and had finally established that long Heart in his hand. That was the good news. The bad news was that all the trumps were now gone, the lead was in Dummy, and there was no way back to Declarer's hand to score that long Heart. Down one!

North politely said "Nice try, Partner" which in this case loosely translates to "You blundering imbecile!" A nicer try by Declarer would have been to use his trump entries to better effect. After ruffing the Club, Declarer should cash the ♥A, ruff a Heart, return to hand with a trump and ruff another Heart. This subtle change in timing solves the entry problem and now, by the time that the Hearts are finally ruffed out, there will still be a way back to Declarer's hand (via another ruff). Making four! "Nicely played, Partner!"



#47 – A SMOOTH DUCK

♠ QT754
♥ AQT9
♦ 64
♣ 83

♠ K63	North	♠ J2
♥ 63	West	♥ K8542
♦ KT982	East	♦ A5
♣ T52	Declarer	♣ 9764

♠ A98
♥ J7
♦ QJ73
♣ AKQJ

Both Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Some N-S pairs might blunder into 4♠ (down one), but our own N-S stumbled instead into 3NT. West led a Diamond (the Ten is standard from that holding) won by East's Ace. Then a Diamond to the Queen and King, and a third Diamond. Declarer won that, lost the Heart finesse, but now had 9 easy tricks (a Spade, 3 Hearts, a Diamond, 4 Clubs).

The defense could have done better! It was fine to lead and continue Diamonds, but East missed a chance when Declarer took that Heart finesse.

Yes, indeed, East should smoothly duck that trick! When Declarer repeats the Heart finesse, East pounces with the King and shoots back a Club. With no entries to Dummy's Hearts, Declarer is up the creek and down one.

Next, suppose that, when the Heart finesse is taken, East ducks, but this time not smoothly. Now a resourceful Declarer may smell a rat, in which case he can make the contract anyway. He wins the second round of Hearts with the Ace, and cashes the Clubs. By now West is down to ♠K6 and ♦82. Declarer has ♠A98 and ♦7 and will exit with the Diamond. After taking his two Diamonds, West is forced to play Spades, and if Declarer guesses correctly he will play the ♠Q and make his contract.

Post Script: Of course, it would be quite improper for East, when *not* holding the ♥K, to fake out Declarer by hesitatingly unduly on the first Heart, simulating a non-smooth duck. Such shenanigans are OK for poker, but not for bridge.



#48 – THE CUSTOMARY RETORT

♠ 32 ♥ Q832 ♦ AK52 ♣ K43	North	♠ J8 ♥ 765 ♦ QJT4 ♣ QJT2
♠ KQT97 ♥ 4 ♦ 98763 ♣ 75	West East Declarer	
♠ A654 ♥ AKJT9 ♦ ♣ A986		

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

After that bold leap to 6♥, West leads the ♠K. Declarer can count 10 top tricks (consisting of 5 trumps and 5 side-suit winners). Our question to you is “Where are the other two tricks coming from?”

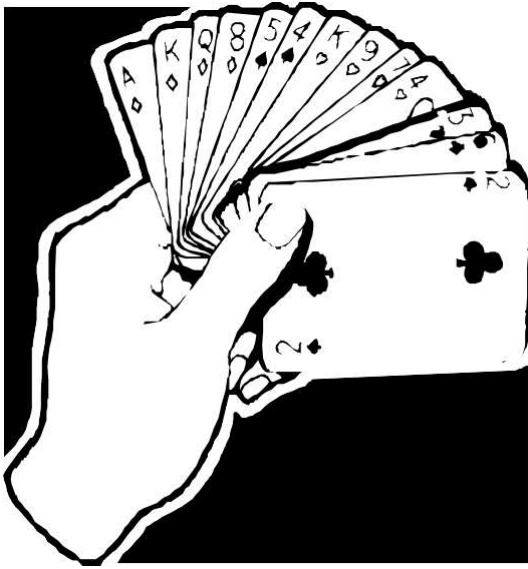
Will it help Declarer’s cause to ruff two Diamonds? No, those ruffs are in the “long hand”. Declarer’s five trumps have already been included in the trick total, and using two of them for ruffing does not create two extra trump tricks. But getting a couple of ruffs in the “short hand”, well that is an entirely

different kettle of fish. That’s right, Declarer can make his contract is by arranging two Spade ruffs in Dummy.

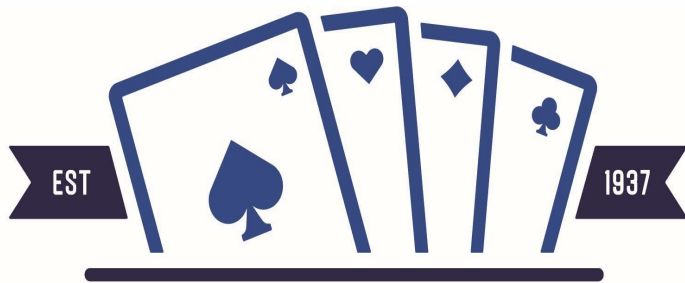
Getting those ruffs must be done early in the play. It won’t do to draw two rounds of trumps (hoping they are 2-2) and then to lose a Spade. In that case, East will win the Spade and fire back another trump, holding the Spade ruffs to just one. It’s OK to draw just one round of trumps, but then the Spade trick must be conceded. Now, whatever the defense does, Declarer gets those two ruffs in the short hand for a total of 12 tricks.

It was fortunate for Declarer that Dummy showed up with the ♥8! If you were to exchange Dummy’s ♥8 with East’s ♥7, then the slam fails (East can over-ruff one of the Spade tricks). When East curses his rotten luck in being dealt that inadequate ♥7, the customary retort is “But we would never have bid the slam without the ♥8”





Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —