

Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter

Volume 27 Number 4 – April, 2025



April 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:

NO WEDNESDAY GAMES UNTIL APRIL 30!

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – open pairs

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

Wednesdays, 12:30pm – social plus

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

Online(BBO) bridge available at:

Sundays, 6:50pm – mentee-mentor 2nd & 4th

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 3/7/2025 – residents of Bloomington-Normal
paid up ACBL members only



- 1 5,365.90 Steve Babin
- 2 3,761.41 Eunice Patton
- 3 3,743.15 Zach Freehill
- 4 3,611.47 Cindy Moore
- 5 2,805.54 Mike Tomlianovich
- 6 2,730.91 Lori Moore
- 7 2,675.70 Ann Schuyler
- 8 2,327.62 Joyce Clay
- 9 2,099.41 Ron Emmett
- 10 1,776.38 Jeff Furler
- 11 1,522.47 Steve Wulfers
- 12 946.25 Barb Neuges
- 13 913.15 Larry Ziegler
- 14 900.54 Sallie Boge
- 15 888.32 Dave Freehill
- 16 850.77 Fred Spitzzeri
- 17 655.23 Rick Dalton
- 18 635.44 Chris Zogg
- 19 626.87 Mary Cralley
- 20 562.86 Pat Lebeck
- 21 529.50 Kay Marvin
- 22 528.87 John Cralley
- 23 505.92 Gene Byers
- 24 365.28 Joyce Werner
- 25 347.58 Glee Cumbow

More players:

- 14,486.19 Chris Benson-LeRoy
- 6,144.49 Ron Sholes-Springfield
- 6,010.05 John Seng-Champaign
- 5,284.24 Leonard Kaufman-Peoria
- 5,008.44 Paul Lindauer-Chicago
- 4,280.25 Mary Allen-Peoria
- 4,211.47 Terry Goodykoontz,Florida
- 4,066.56 JoAnn Schroeder-Appleton,WI
- 3,900.57 Carole Sholes-Springfield
- 2,859.69 Chuck Young-Peoria
- 2,654.93 Margaret Hansell-Champaign
- 2,551.36 John Maloney-Champaign
- 2,371.48 Bill Bulfer-Peoria Heights
- 2,204.74 Marilyn Stickel-Lacon
- 1,871.36 Camilla Rabjohns-Peoria Hgts
- 1,621.11 Wes Seitz-Champaign
- 1,286.48 Bill Strauss-Urbana
- 1,282.29 Darryl Bremner-Clinton
- 1,220.73 Bill Thompson-Fortmeyer B,FL
- 1,017.15 Connie Tucker-Champaign
- 893.60 Ray Dostal-Independence,IA
- 798.62 Melda Richardson-California
- 767.50 John Ford-Harvard,MA
- 703.63 Kirk Kimmel-Peoria
- 661.62 Barry Mayworm-Princeton
- 661.62 Lynn Steffen-El Paso
- 625.89 Lane O'Connor-Naperville
- 602.56 Martha Schuster-Peoria
- 555.84 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 exciting when both declarer and the defenders are pushed to their limits to succeed. Here is a hand where good defense prevailed.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #39 ♠ KQ7
Dir S ♥ A
Vul E/W ♦ K93
 ♣ KQJ964

			West	North	East	South
♠ 1052		♠ A984				
♥ 10873		♥ 9				3♥
♦ J2		♦ A107654	Pass	4♥	All	
♣ A532		♣ 107			Pass	
	♠ J63					
	♥ KQJ6542					
	♦ Q8					
	♣ 8					

BIDDING: South had a normal preempt and North had enough high cards to expect the game to make.

PLAY: At most tables South was successful in 4♥ losing only three aces. However, at this table West decided to lead his jack of diamonds and things got really interesting. East encouraged as declarer won the queen. Next South led a heart to dummy's ace and tried to get back to his hand with a small spade toward his jack but East was alert and rose with the ace. East had a count on declarer's hand and led a low club to West's ace. Now a second diamond to the ace followed by a third diamond forced declarer to ruff with a high trump. The heart ten had been promoted and the defense now had a trump trick to go with their three aces. This hand was not going to succeed against best defense.

The old "second hand low" rule did not apply here. If East ducked the first spade, declarer would win the jack and draw trumps.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

It's important to know how to play the various card combinations. Try this one.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #40 Dlr S Vul E/W	♠ AQ53 ♥ 10762 ♦ 104 ♣ 987																				
♠ 10764 ♥ 85 ♦ K97 ♣ KJ42	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ K98 ♥ 9 ♦ A86532 ♣ Q53	<table style="margin: 0 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></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♥</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♥	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass					
West	North	East	South																		
			1♥																		
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥																		
All Pass																					
	♠ J2 ♥ AKQJ43 ♦ QJ ♣ A106																				

BIDDING: South bid game after North's raise.

PLAY: West led a low trump and declarer stopped to count his losers. He saw one possible spade loser along with two in both diamonds and clubs. The only suit that offered any hope was the spade suit. So declarer won the heart lead followed by another to dummy's ten. He then led a low spade from dummy and East had no good answer. Finally he won the king and shifted to a club. Declarer won the ace, unblocked the spade jack, and then led another trump to dummy. Next he discarded two of his losers on the spade ace and queen.

It is important you see that no other spade play by declarer would have succeeded. Also, note that if East ducked the first spade lead, declarer would win the jack and follow with another to the ace. A third spade from dummy would allow South to ruff East's king and later discard a loser on the spade queen. He would lose only three tricks.

Also notice how lucky declarer was. An opening club lead (or two rounds of diamonds and then a club shift) would defeat the contract. West chose the wrong time for a trump lead.

IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

There is no doubt having the right convention on your card can help with difficult bidding problems. Here is a great example.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #41 Dir S Vul E/W	♠ AJ75 ♥ QJ83 ♦ 2 ♣ A532					
♠ 986 ♥ ♦ AQ1075 ♣ J10984	♠ 104 ♥ 972 ♦ KJ964 ♣ K76		West Pass Pass All Pass	North 4♦* 5♥	East Pass Pass Pass	South 1♥ 4NT 6♥

*Splinter bid

BIDDING: South had no slam ambitions until he heard his partner leap to 4♦. Knowing North held game values with four hearts and a singleton or void in diamonds made the South hand look great. After checking on aces, South bid the slam.

PLAY: West led the ace of diamonds and South soon claimed the rest. It's great to make a slam with a combined total of only 26 high card points. Of course it's possible to bid the slam without the splinter bid but it would be difficult. Holding a small doubleton in a side suit is often a danger sign.

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IMPROVE YOUR PLAY with Larry Matheny

When you play matchpoint bridge every overtrick is important. This is true even when you are in a slam. Take a look.

Scoring: Matchpoints (Pairs)

Hand #42 Dir E Vul E/W	♠ A1098 ♥ 865 ♦ Q10974 ♣ K					
♠ QJ32 ♥ ♦ K653 ♣ QJ1063	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠ 654 ♥ J42 ♦ J8 ♣ 98752	West	North	East	South
					Pass	2♣
			Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♥
			Pass	4♥	Pass	6♥
			All			
			Pass			
	♠ K7 ♥ AKQ10973 ♦ A2 ♣ A4					

*Controls: one ace and one king

BIDDING: This partnership shows controls (aces and kings) in response to a strong 2♣ opening bid. After discovering heart support to go along with an ace and a king, South bid the slam.

PLAY: West led the queen of clubs and declarer quickly saw his only loser was a diamond. Unless the diamond king was singleton or the queen-jack of spades doubleton, the only way to make the overtrick would be a squeeze. South saw that if the West held the diamond king along and length in the spade suit, he could be had. After winning the club lead, declarer drew trumps, played the diamond ace and the club ace, and then ran the rest of his hearts. On the last heart, poor West had to come down to three cards from a holding of ♠QJ3 and ♦K. Behind him dummy held ♠A109 and ♦Q so whatever West decided to do would yield the thirteenth trick. Note that cashing the diamond ace early makes the ending clear to declarer.

Also notice that the squeeze will not work against East because he discards after dummy. And those pairs who played in 6NT enjoyed the same squeeze opportunity.



Bloomington-Normal 70% club Years 2024-2025 only

2025/3/10	75.42%	Tom Teeters & Steve Wulfers
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

#53 – TIMING IS EVERYTHING

	♠ T	
	♥ 9765	
	♦ A9632	
	♣ AKQ	
♠ KQJ9653	North	♠ 4
♥ T8	West	♥ KQJ
♦ 85	East	♦ KQJT4
♣ 54	Declarer	♣ T763
	♠ A872	
	♥ A432	
	♦ 7	
	♣ J982	

E-W Vulnerable

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

West's 2♠ (showing long Spades and not much else) pushed N-S into the precarious contract of 4♥. Look at what happened in actual play, and then figure out how you would have done better as Declarer.

West led the ♠K, won by Declarer's Ace. With six side-suit tricks it would be necessary to score four trump tricks, and as the trump suit was so weak it

was apparent that some ruffing would be required. One line that would clearly not work would be to get the enemy trumps out of the way first, that would leave Declarer a trick short (scoring only three trump tricks). So Declarer cashed the ♥A at Trick 2, and then, leaving three enemy trumps at large, he played on the side-suits. His general plan was to let the opponents take their trumps whenever they wished, but that was all they would get. He started with Dummy's high Clubs, but West ruffed the third round and played another Spade. Dummy ruffed, East over-ruffed and cashed her high Heart, leaving Declarer with just 9 tricks.

Declarer needed to time the play better if he was to score 10 tricks. At Trick 2 he must duck a trump! Now, he wins the Diamond return, plays the Ace of trumps and (leaving one enemy trump at large) goes about his business of cashing winners and cross-ruffing. Altogether Declarer has 11 potential tricks via the ♥A, four ruffs and six side-suit winners, but that enemy trump will rub out one of those tricks and reduce the total to 10. Making 4♥, thanks to careful timing.



#54 – A ROAD MAP

	♠ T ♥ 9765 ♦ A9632 ♣ AKQ	
♠ KQJ9653 ♥ 8 ♦ J8 ♣ 543	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ KQJT ♦ KQT54 ♣ T76
	♠ A872 ♥ A432 ♦ 7 ♣ J982	

E-W Vulnerable

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

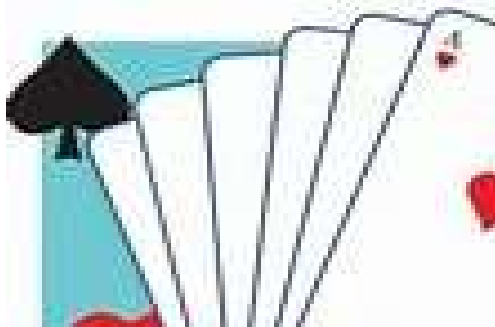
If the N-S hands look familiar, that's because they were featured in last week's Bridge Bite. But the E-W hands have been changed, and East, who now has four trumps, could not resist doubling 4♥. That was not a wise move, as we are about to see.

Last week, in the absence of a Double, Declarer played for 3-2 trumps, and as that turned out to be the case, 10 tricks could be made by winning the Spade lead, and ducking a round of trumps at Trick 2. Declarer could win the

return, draw just one more round of trumps and, leaving one trump at large, could cash winners and cross-ruff his way to 10 tricks.

But this week Declarer has to make 10 tricks after East has doubled. Now it seems likely that East has 4 trumps and ducking a trump at Trick 2 will not work. East wins and returns a trump, and will later get in (with a Spade over-ruff or a Club ruff), draw another round of trumps and leave Declarer a trick short. So, guided by the Double, Declarer does not duck a trump at Trick 2. Instead, she cashes the ♥A and goes for three Diamond ruffs in her hand (confident that West is now out of trumps and cannot over-ruff). The play goes: ♠A; ♥A; ♦A; Diamond ruff; ♣A; Diamond ruff; ♣K; ♣Q; Diamond ruff. That's 9 tricks and when the ♣J is played next, there will be a 10th trick, one way or another.

No doubt East's Double seemed like a good idea at the time, but in fact it only served to give Declarer a road map to the winning line of play, by alerting him to the likely 4-1 trump split.



#55 – THAT SINKING FEELING

♠ AK42 ♥ ♦ 764 ♣ AKT654	North West East Declarer	♠ ♥ QJ9543 ♦ J82 ♣ QJ98
♠ 765 ♥ T762 ♦ KQT95 ♣ 3		
♠ QJT983 ♥ AK8 ♦ A3 ♣ 72		

The auction has not been recorded for posterity, but we can say that N-S must have bid quite superbly in order to reach the excellent contract of 7♣. “Nicely bid, Partner! A cold grand slam with only 28 combined HCP!” enthused Declarer when Dummy was tabled after the opening lead of the ♦K. Declarer was quite right, the slam was cold, but not the way that he played it. Of course, you can do better. How do you propose to make 13 tricks?

Declarer didn’t bother to count his tricks, perhaps feeling that it would have been rather unsporting to waste time when he had so many trumps and Club winners. At Trick 2, he played a trump to Dummy’s Ace and, when East showed out, Declarer paused for thought (one trick too late!). It was then that he got that awful sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, realizing that he could no longer get two ruffs in Dummy because of the shortage of entries back to his hand. Getting only one ruff would leave him a trick short, so he

tried to set up the Clubs, but that lifeline failed him when the suit was 4-1. Down one!

“Rotten luck”, sympathized North, in soothing tones. “If Spades or Clubs had broken reasonably you would have made your slam”. What North politely refrained from saying was “Why on earth didn’t you win the opening Diamond lead, cash the Hearts (pitching Diamonds), ruff a Diamond *high*, get back to hand with a trump, ruff a Heart *high*, cross back with another trump, and draw the last trump?”



#56 – FINESSE FATALE

♠ J94 ♥ 5 ♦ AJ643 ♣ 7542	North	
♠ K53 ♥ KQT2 ♦ Q9872 ♣ J	West	East
♠ AQT876 ♥ 763 ♦ 5 ♣ AKT	Declarer	♠ 2 ♥ AJ984 ♦ KT ♣ Q9863

E-W Vulnerable

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

N-S reached their Spade game one baby step at a time and West led the ♥K. Seeing the danger of Heart ruffs in Dummy, East overtook with his Ace and smartly shifted to a trump. That was sensible defense, now what would be sensible Declarer play?

It may seem routine to finesse the Spade, but that would be fatal. West wins his King and returns another trump. Oops! Now Declarer has only one Heart ruff in Dummy and is down one! The correct play is easy enough if Declarer counts his tricks. He has three side-suit winners, and if he can get *two* Heart ruffs in Dummy, then he can make do with just five trump tricks in his own hand. Ten easy tricks, but only if Declarer makes certain of both ruffs by hopping up with the ♠A at Trick 2. The full line of play is: ♥A; ♠A; Heart ruff; ♦A; Diamond ruff; Heart ruff; Diamond ruff; then play on trumps.

As Declarer was engineering those Heart ruffs he did well to return to hand with Diamond ruffs. If he had attempted to use the ♠A and ♣K as his entries then he'd have got a nasty shock when West ruffed the second Club for down one.

How about an opening trump lead? Does that set 4♠? Actually, no! Declarer wins and plays a Heart. If East wins that trick he cannot play another trump, and Dummy gets the two ruffs ... and if West wins he can lead a trump to stop the second ruff, but only at the expense of his natural trump trick. A Club opening lead is no better for the defense because, although the defense is able to arrange a Club ruff, that comes at the expense of their natural Club trick.



Please see schedules on page 1



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

— DEALING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES —

