



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

[Website](#)

ALERT – December 12, 2022

Click [here](#) to access our regular game schedule.

Special events this week at our club



- Tuesday, December 13, **noon**, Potluck lunch, 1:00 pm open game time
- Friday, December 16, **noon**, Potluck lunch, 1:00 pm 499er and 199er game time

These two Christmas parties/ games are the highlight of our year. The sign-up sheets have been posted at the club, but if you can't sign up in person just email [Dave Quarrie](#). Please note that there will be two sections on Friday afternoon – 199er and 499er.

- **Delicious food (please make sure yours is NUT-FREE)**
 - **Fun with your friends**
 - **Extra masterpoints at no extra charge**
 - **Door prizes**
-



New Volunteer Librarians

A warm welcome to Louise Dawdy and Elaine Doyle who have volunteered to take care of our extensive library of bridge books, novels, and jigsaw puzzles.

Monday Morning Bridge Labs

Contributed by Kathleen Harris

The Grand River Bridge Club offers many opportunities to improve your skill when playing bridge. I have taken a few of them such as taking Beginners 1 and Beginners 2 lessons and kibitzing. The courses were great – starting with the basic structure of the game, leading to learning more skills but also trying to use the concepts as well.

I had been meaning to learn how to play bridge for a long time, and one phrase that I relate to is: No pain no gain. Lots of discomfort for sure. There is no resting in this game! I had lots of reasons to learn how to play bridge: challenging myself; socializing; and just for the sake of keeping life interesting. This is my quest to learn bridge.

I recently came across a quote that expresses how I look at bridge: “If bridge is just a game, then the Grand Canyon is just a hole in Arizona”. As an aside, I was amazed to see how many books have been written about bridge, and this quote shows the expanse of the literature on the subject.

At my beginners’ lessons I learned that Monday mornings at the club were a good time to learn more by watching others play bridge (kibitzing). For me, this has been a good next step to learning bridge, yet a humbling experience when you realize that you have just started to learn. Training for anything involves being shown what to do, then watching the process and then trying it yourself. I have dropped into these sessions a few times to watch and listen to the players talking about the strategy of the game.

Kibitzing is a lot less stressful than jumping into playing with more-experienced players and the analysis is useful to watch. The players discuss each play – such as, was the bidding correct, contract made or not, and which cards were played. Did the partners communicate with each other accurately? What does that card mean and what is Stayman? Learning the terminology is definitely an important part of learning bridge – a whole other language. There is lots to memorize on your way to knowing what message your partner is trying to convey.

The friendly atmosphere at the bridge labs and the willingness to help on the part of the lab leaders has been really wonderful. I have learned a lot by watching others bidding and using strategy to make their contract. Sure, the computer games on the Internet are good, but it is not the same as playing with others at the club.

The more times you can play the better – it is quite addicting BTW. Life is like a book with many chapters - and learning bridge is one of them - like a wonderful journey which has no end, so enjoy the ride wherever it takes you.



2022 Fall Team League – Open Division Winners

Congratulations to Adrian Record, Mark Sabino, Jennifer Verdam-Woodward, and Pat Fung (team captain). Missing are Marcel Villeneuve and Jan Waters.



The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the “The Answer Lady”, I have been responding to questions from “newer” players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players’ questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

Question

My partner and I played this hand in a recent face-to-face game. We ended up in a 3♥ contract and made 4♥. We were somewhat disappointed that we missed game and wondered if there is a way to bid the hand more accurately to end up in the right place.

	N [redacted] ♠ 4 ♥ KJ76542 ♦ 4 ♣ AK72	W [redacted] N [redacted] E [redacted] S [redacted] P 3♥ P P P
	W [redacted] ♠ J1073 ♥ AQ ♦ AKQ95 ♣ Q8	E [redacted] ♠ 95 ♥ 1098 ♦ 10873 ♣ 10964
	S [redacted] ♠ AKQ862 ♥ 3 ♦ J62 ♣ J53	3♥ N NS: 0 EW: 0

Answer

I had a chance to look at your hand along with your great question. Because it was a face-to-face game, I am limited in my capacity to view the board in the same way as I can for online games – that is, I am unable to see the bidding sequence, the opening lead, and the play of the hand. It was thus necessary to make a few assumptions and have further discussion with the player to confirm bidding and how the contract ended up in 3♥.

As you can see by the hand shown below, it is a distributional hand and the dealer is East who has essentially a bust hand, not a single point.

One South opened the bidding with 2♠ and that is where the contract was played, making an overtrick. Other Souths chose to open the hand with a 1♠ bid with their 11 HCP and six spades, a more accurate reflection of the strength of the hand.

West with 18 points then chose to bid 2♦ or 3♦ depending upon South's choice of first bid. Not to be outdone, North jumped into the competition and mentioned their hearts having seven of them, no support for partner's spades, and shortness in West's diamonds.

For the majority of pairs, the contract remained at 3♥. Yes, double dummy indicates that you should be able to make 5♥, but no one made that and only one pair went to 4♥ and was successful. Perhaps they were forced up to game? Many others like you and your partner stayed at the three-level: some made the overtrick, while others achieved just 3♥.

I think it is quite reasonable to remain at 3♥ and play it there. South never supported North's hearts and North has only one spade, so there is a misfit. Yes, North has seven hearts, but those hearts are not all that solid - with only two of the top five honours. The AQ10 of hearts are missing. If it had been a more robust heart suit, for example AKQxxxx, I think 4♥ could be a reasonable bid.

(I should also point out that North's 3♥ bid would be forcing in some circumstances depending on your partnership agreements. I will be discussing forcing bids over the next couple of weeks.)

The play of the hand requires careful thinking. The lead would likely be the ♦A, won by West and followed by a second diamond which you would ruff. Then you have to knock out the top hearts. In order to do that, you have to lead a small heart, not the jack or king. West will win that trick and then likely lead another diamond which North would again win with a ruff. North must then again lead a small heart, not the K or J. If the K or J are led you risk losing a heart trick to the ♥10 down the road.

The pair that bid and made 4♥ had to follow that careful play of the hand. If at any point, a spade is led by West, North's task becomes even more challenging as only two spade tricks are available before West jumps in with a ruff on the third spade. In your favour, the clubs split nicely, with the ♣Q falling on the AK, but that is not evident until the play unfolds. With all these variables and unknowns, it's really a guess whether 4♥ is a sure thing. Sometimes, it can work in your favour to remain in a part-score and in this instance, with all those potential risks, you weren't truly hurt by remaining at the 3♥ level, with a second-top board.



**Just Got Through
Another Month-End**

TIME YOU LEARNED OUR LESSONS!

For more information and to register for January 2023 beginner lessons, click [here](#).



The Basics of Bridge Defence

This five-week course presents all the basic concepts of good defensive play. It is intended for players of all levels who have not yet taken a defensive course.

The course focuses on five aspects of defence: **opening leads**; **third seat play**; **signals**; **second seat play**; and **discards**. Each lesson covers one aspect of defence for both no trump and suit contracts, and includes playing hands to enhance understanding. Specific topics include Rule of 11 on no trump leads; when to cover an honour; when to play high in second seat; when to play low in third seat; splitting honours; count, attitude, and suit preference signals; and defensive strategies (for example, active versus passive, cutting declarers' communications, and forcing defence).

Lesson hand-outs and hand records will be provided. Although not required for the course, a companion textbook is recommended (*Eddie Kantar Teaches Modern Bridge Defence*, which may be purchased from Amazon).

The Basics of Bridge Defence is designed as a complete five-week course, and students are encouraged to take all five lessons. Nevertheless, it will be possible to take individual lessons on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Instructor: Stephen Carpenter

Level: **Novice/Intermediate**

Mode: ONLINE

Dates: Wednesday, January 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Cost for the course: \$75 members/ \$85 non-members

Cost for individual lessons: \$20 members/ \$25 non-members

For more information and to register for this lesson or any other lesson for ongoing players, click [here](#).

If you have any questions or comments, please email [our teaching lead](#).

Hand Discussion Chat Thursday Mornings in December

Directly following the 99 and 499 online games on Thursday mornings, you can join a friendly chat on Zoom (hosted by Lori and Jack Cole) to talk about the more interesting hands of the morning. All 99 and 499 players are welcome. The Zoom link will be posted in the BBO chat near the end of the game.



Bob's Last Hand

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

Last hand??? Yes, it has been fun but I think that it's time to give it a rest. There are lots of other bridge hands out there. To all of my readers who have thanked me over the years, I love you both. I started these hands years ago when I was running the Thursday mentored game and I was looking for little lessons to spread around. I think that I have spread enough of it around.

The Last Hand

Board 7	♠ A K Q J 9	
South Deals	♥ 8 7 6 5	
Both Vul	♦ —	
	♣ A 4 3 2	
♠ 10 4 3 2	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 8 7 6 5
♥ —		♥ A K Q J 10
♦ A 7 6 5 4 3 2		♦ —
♣ 7 6		♣ Q 10 9 8
	♠ —	
	♥ 9 4 3 2	
	♦ K Q J 10 9 8	
	♣ K J 5	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦
Dbf	4 ♦	Pass	5 ♣
Pass	6 ♠	Dbf	Pass
Pass	Rdbl	Pass	7 ♠
Dbf	All pass		

Over 50 years ago, Victor Mollo published *Bridge in the Menagerie*, a book that told stories about bridge hands and people, always with a twist. The hands were elaborately constructed and brought to life with a great cast of eccentric characters. This hand is from the seventh book in the Menagerie series.

Sitting down to start a team game, South wanted to sit North but his partner was already there and wouldn't switch. South was very unhappy about this and, in a huff, opened 1 ♠, his void suit. His partner made a game-forcing jump shift to 3 ♣. South next tried his real suit, bidding 3 ♦ which was doubled by West. Next, North cuebid 4 ♦ and South tried to retreat to 5 ♣. That was enough for North to jump to 6 ♠ which was doubled by East (who wondered why everybody was bidding so much). This was passed back to North, who thought he was full value for his bidding and redoubled.

South was worried that he might go down three or four tricks redoubled for a truly huge minus score. He wanted to escape to a less-horrible contract but was afraid that any further bid might be misconstrued by North as showing strength and he might end up in 7♠ redoubled. So, he decided to dodge the redouble by bidding 7♠ himself, since 7♠ doubled down four would be less horrible than 6♠ redoubled down three.

So, he bid 7♠, which was doubled by West who found himself on lead starting with a small spade. The play was simple. South drew four rounds of spades, played a club to his jack, then led diamonds until West had to cover and see his ace ruffed out. In all, South won five diamonds, five spades, and three clubs to make his doubled grand slam.

The only opening lead that could have defeated the grand slam would be a very unlikely small diamond which would remove North's fifth spade needed to ruff out West's ♦A.

That was the play at one table. At the other table, South was not upset about his seat position and opened just a slightly-pushy 1♦. West passed and North bid 1♠. East made a take-out double, passed to West - who squirmed. He couldn't expect to defeat 1♠ but didn't know what else to do but pass. One spade doubled was the contract at Table 2.

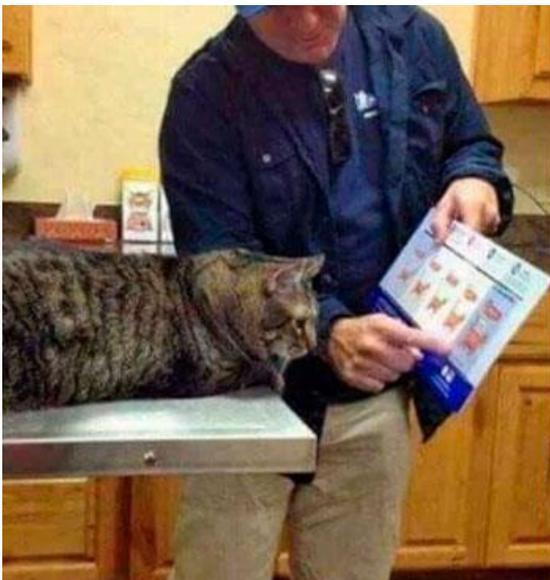
This time, East took the first four heart tricks while West threw both of his clubs and two small diamonds. East next gave West a club ruff and West returned a small diamond.

North could have made his contract by ruffing the diamond, drawing trumps and taking his two club tricks, but he was afraid from the auction that West might have six spades, so to keep control he threw a club and was shocked to see East ruff the diamond and return another club for West to ruff.

So, at one table the contract was 7♠ doubled, making seven, and at the other it was 1♠ doubled, down 1.

Having the right hand on lead can make all the difference.

🙄 If you would prefer that Bob continue his column, he can be reached at grifro@gmail.com.



**Here's a veterinarian
showing a cat how fat he is**

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Not Another One!

This hand came up in a team game.

W	N	E	S	E East
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	♠Q1098432
Pass	3♣	Pass	4NT	♥J73
Pass	5♣	Pass	7♣	♦6
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	♣109

The opponents have quickly reached a grand slam in clubs and you have to find a lead. Opening leads fall into two categories - active and passive. An active lead is one that is hopeful of developing tricks in the suit. A passive lead is designed to be least likely to give away a trick. If you have AK2 or KQ2 or QJ2 (for example), you can make an “active” lead. Leading the 2 from KJ82 is also an “active” lead. If you lead the 9 from 982, that would be a “passive” lead. There are no specific rules governing when to go active or passive against part-scores or games, but the rules are a little different when you defending against slams.

When your opponents breeze into a slam, they have most of the assets. Leading the 2 from KJ82 will often lead to giving the opponents their slam-fulfilling trick. Making a passive lead will force declarer to find his tricks on his own. It is even more critical **not** to make an active lead against a grand slam. That being said, what would you lead as East on this hand? A club seems passive. A diamond or heart lead could cost if partner has Qxx in either suit. The absolute worst lead would be a spade. It might give up a trick to the spade jack. Even if partner has the spade king, you will most likely never take a trick with your spade queen. Now that I have convinced you not to lead a spade, I will tell you that only a spade lead beats 7♣!

The screenshot shows a bridge hand interface with the following details:

- North:** ♠A5, ♥104, ♦AKQJ, ♣AK653
- West:** ♠, ♥Q962, ♦10987543, ♣87
- East:** ♠Q1098432, ♥J73, ♦6, ♣109
- South:** ♠KJ76, ♥AK85, ♦2, ♣QJ42
- Bidding:** W: Pass, N: 2♣, E: Pass, S: 2♦; W: Pass, N: 3♣, E: Pass, S: 4NT; W: Pass, N: 5♣, E: Pass, S: 7♣; W: Pass, N: Pass, E: Pass, S: Pass.
- Score:** 7♣ North, 0 South.

The opening lead was the ♠10 and down they went. As you can see, only a spade ruff stops declarer from taking his 13 top tricks. The other table was in 6NT making seven. I am not showing you this hand to highlight the fact that there are exceptions to the rule. Indeed, a spade lead, by far, is the worst lead you could make on this hand. I will try to tell you why it is BY Far the worst lead.

A double of the opponents' slam shows a void in some suit and asks for a lead of your longest suit. Here it's an easy choice. Sometimes you have two long suits and have to guess which suit to lead. With this agreement, partner's failure to double DENIES a void. Sometimes you double a small slam with only that ruff in your pocket, knowing that partner probably has a side trick because the opponents stopped in the small slam. The rewards for beating them far outweigh the risks. We inadvertently won 17 IMPs on this board because of our teammate's "bad" lead.

Ten Reasons Why Bridge is Better than Sex

- Your partner doesn't become upset about people you played bridge with long ago.
- It is perfectly acceptable to hire a pro to play bridge with you once in a while.
- There are no bridge-transmitted diseases.
- Nobody expects you to play bridge with the same partner for the rest of your life.
- You can still do it in your eighties and people won't gasp in horror if they find out.
- A man doesn't need a lot of finesse to be successful at bridge, but he does need some squeezes.
- The phrase "could be short" carries no negative connotation.
- You don't have to hide your *Bridge Bulletin*.
- The phrase "fast arrival" is not regarded negatively.
- If your partnership agrees on two over one, that's not an orgy.

Contributed by Barbara Arthur

For Intermediate *Jake's*
Play a Bad Hand Well

#101



- ♠ AK
- ♥ AJ965
- ♦ K105
- ♣ J65

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

You are South, and it's your turn to call. What should you bid?

SOLUTION

This hand came up in the recent NAP District 2 Finals. You have various options, such as pass, double, 3NT, 4♣, or 4♥, etc.

Because my partner and I use Puppet Stayman over our 1NT openings, I opened 1NT with a five-card heart suit, but we weren't able to find our 5-3 heart fit due to West's disturbance. After West's second disturbing bid, I chose to call 3NT based on my estimation of the tricks we could take: two spades, two hearts, one diamond, and four clubs (my partner's 3♣ bid was natural). It turned out that because West was void in hearts, I was able to get an extra heart trick. This resulted in a top board.

Board	Result	We	They	We	They
3	3NTS+1	430		100%	0%
3	4♠Wx-1	200		88.9%	11.1%
3	3♠W-1	100		66.7%	33.3%
3	3♠W-1	100		66.7%	33.3%
3	3♠W-1	100		66.7%	33.3%
3	4♥S-2		100	44.4%	55.6%
3	2♠W=		110	27.8%	72.2%
3	2♠W=		110	27.8%	72.2%
3	3♠W=		140	5.6%	94.4%
3	3♠W=		140	5.6%	94.4%

Assume you landed in 3NT and received the opening lead of the $\heartsuit J$, which East encouraged with a small diamond. Plan the play.

\spadesuit 762
 \heartsuit K72
 \diamondsuit 98
 \clubsuit A10932

 \spadesuit AK
 \heartsuit AJ965
 \diamondsuit K105
 \clubsuit J65

Duck the $\heartsuit J$! West will continue with another diamond and East will most likely take it with his $\heartsuit A$ and play another diamond to your $\heartsuit K$. West will show out and discard a spade. Now that East has established his diamonds, you need both the $\clubsuit K$ and $\clubsuit Q$ to be in the West hand (such that East can't gain the lead). Since you have no way to make your contract other than establishing your long suit (clubs), your plan must be based on this assumption. You lead the $\clubsuit J$ from your hand, and if West covers you duck! Now West will lead a spade. Take it with your $\spadesuit K$ and lead another club with the intention of finessing West's $\clubsuit K$. In the event, West does hold $\clubsuit KQx$, so you are able to collect four club tricks. As you cash your good clubs, watch carefully what East discards - because you are planning to finesse East's $\heartsuit Q$ (even if the $\heartsuit Q$ is offside, you are safe). When you cash dummy's $\heartsuit K$, you learn that West is void in hearts, allowing you to collect three heart tricks for an overtrick (If East were foolish enough to discard two hearts on the run of the clubs, you would make all of your hearts, but unfortunately my East wasn't so obliging).

 If West's opening lead had been a spade (for example, the $\spadesuit Q$), the play would be slightly different. The main difference is the club play. When you lead the $\clubsuit J$ from your hand, if West covers take it with your $\clubsuit A$ and fire back the $\clubsuit 9$ from the dummy right away to knock out the $\clubsuit K$ while you still have a spade stopper. West will take the third club lead, and he may continue his spade attack or he may switch to diamond.

1. If West leads the $\spadesuit J$, you take it with your $\spadesuit A$ and get back to the dummy with the $\heartsuit K$ (learning that West is void in hearts). You cash two more winning clubs, watching East's discards and choosing your own discards accordingly. Here is the likely situation after the heart finesse.

\spadesuit 7
 \heartsuit 2
 \diamondsuit 98
 \clubsuit
 \spadesuit 109
 \heartsuit
 \diamondsuit xx
 \clubsuit

 \spadesuit
 \heartsuit 108
 \diamondsuit AQ
 \clubsuit
 \spadesuit
 \heartsuit J9
 \diamondsuit K10
 \clubsuit

Now you cash the $\heartsuit J$ and play the $\heartsuit 9$, throwing East in. He is endplayed and must give you a diamond trick, making four.

2. If West leads the ♦J, East will most likely encourage but not overtake with his ♦A. As you already can count nine tricks (two spades, three hearts, four clubs), you should take this trick with your ♦K, which will be your tenth trick. Again, making four.

Here is the complete deal.

♠ 762		♠
♥ K72		♥ Q10843
♦ 98		♦ AQ6432
♣ A10932		♣ 87
♠ QJ1098543	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	♠
♥		
♦ J7		
♣ KQ4		
		♠ AK
		♥ AJ965
		♦ K105
		♣ J65

It's hard to get a good result if you're in the wrong contract!

Trash panda headed to the promised land



Top Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since the beginning of November.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	Mike Peng	21.46	1	Martin Jones	8.39	1	Nancy Cattanach	5.06
2	David Baker	16.67	2	Suzanne Edwards	8.30	2	Rick Arthur	3.99
3	Margot Stockie	14.23	3	Barbara Arthur	6.38	3	Chris Beck	3.60
4	Ted Boyd	13.82	4	Douglass Grant	5.83	4	Belinda Burt	3.43
5	Moira Hollingsworth	11.56	5	David Dennis	5.67	5	Randall DeKraker	2.70
6	Neil Coburn	10.62	6	Roy Dandyk	5.31	5	Robert Darby	2.70
7	Colin Harrington	10.52	7	Bob Livermore	4.49	7	M J Hartleib	2.61
8	Liz McDowell	9.82	8	John Kip	4.31	8	Jane Wilson	2.41
9	Cindy Mahn	9.55	8	Cheryl Kip	4.31	9	Brian Gaber	2.19
10	Dianne Aves	8.36	10	Joan Slover	4.26	9	Audrey Cook	2.19
11	Edith Ferber	8.09	11	Bev Hitchman	4.16	11	Debbie Miethig	2.07
12	Bob Griffiths	7.75	12	Lynda Burnett	4.08	12	Elaine Doyle	1.95
13	Neil Jeffrey	7.23	13	Robert Gilck	4.06	13	Donna McKay	1.93
14	John Vandergrift	5.79	14	Renate Boucher	4.03	14	Don O'Bright	1.82
15	David Longstaff	5.47	15	Shelley Metcalfe	3.99	14	Richard Wehrle	1.82
16	Diane Jamieson	5.22	16	Salvatore Pace	3.79	16	Louise Dawdy	1.78
17	Frank Fischer	5.06	17	Brian Kirkconnell	3.75	17	John Aldridge	1.75
18	Wayne Schroeder	5.04	18	Jim Dalgliesh	3.74	18	Molly Worden	1.68
19	Steve Carpenter	5.02	19	Sue Peterson	3.67	19	Carol Robinson	1.67
20	Bonnie Kains	4.70	20	Gordon Hunter	3.61	19	Trent Robinson	1.67
21	Malkin Howes	3.97	21	Don Beck	3.60	21	Carol Gerber	1.56
22	Dave Embury	3.81	22	Lori Cole	3.55	21	Judy Johnston	1.56
23	Scott Hills	3.73	23	Kevin Latter	3.53	23	Sue Andersen	1.51
24	Sandy Graham	3.59	24	Stephen Nantes	3.50	23	Jane Rushby	1.51
25	Adrian Record	3.37	25	Judy Widdecombe	3.49	25	Joan Hartviksen	1.48
			25	Vivian McLellan	3.49			

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- ♠ Log in to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder Advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. OR
- ♥ Log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab.

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead.

We have fun in **spades**.
 We play with all our **hearts**.
 We treat our members like **diamonds**.
 It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at our **club**.