



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – May 2, 2022

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 March.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	28.04	1	Stephen Nantes	14.24	1	Nancy Cattanach	8.24
2	Robert Griffiths	24.24	2	Suzanne Edwards	13.57	2	Belinda Burt	7.93
3	Mike Peng	22.65	3	Brian Kirkconnell	13.10	3	Martin Jones	7.73
4	Cindy Mahn	21.45	4	Cheryl White	9.75	4	Louise Dawdy	7.42
5	Moirra Hollingsworth	16.71	5	Shelley Metcalfe	8.83	5	Virginia Alviano	6.71
6	John Vandergrift	14.79	6	Tony Verhoeven	8.65	6	Molly Worden	6.41
7	Colin Harrington	14.65	7	Barbara Arthur	8.61	7	Jane Wilson	6.19
8	David Longstaff	12.23	8	David Dennis	8.05	8	Richard Wehrle	5.95
9	Malkin Howes	11.96	9	Dave Leitch	8.02	8	Don O'Bright	5.95
10	Margot Stockie	11.57	10	Lynda Burnett	7.73	10	Susan Durance	5.90
11	Tom Ramsay	11.41	11	Nanci Phelan	7.36	11	Marg Sanderson	5.86
12	Liz McDowell	11.37	12	Sue Voll	6.96	12	Elinor Girouard	5.54
13	Dianne Aves	10.96	13	Andy Wilson	6.92	13	Gordon Hunter	5.19
14	Bruce Roberts	10.42	14	Adriaan Kempe	6.24	14	Ginny Scott	5.08
15	Kathy Russell	10.41	15	Barb McKay	6.16	15	Sue McDonald	4.92
16	Sandy Graham	10.39	16	Marlene Dopko	6.10	16	Joe Blake	4.80
17	Neil Jeffrey	10.01	17	Isabel Hetherington	6.09	17	Shirley Clarke	4.60
18	Scott Hills	9.97	18	Kathleen Burns	6.08	17	Christine Kelly	4.60
19	Ted Boyd	8.87	19	Lori Cole	5.74	19	Reinhold Kauk	4.43
20	Stephen Young	8.58	20	Margie Whyte	5.68	20	Kim Wakeford	4.36
21	Neil Coburn	8.34	21	Paul Latimer	5.48	21	Audrey Cook	4.10
22	Steve Carpenter	8.02	22	Betty Wendling	5.43	22	Jeannie Leforge	3.86
23	Peter Peng	7.89	23	Joan Slover	5.33	23	Brian Gaber	3.60
24	Diane Jamieson	7.54	24	Susan Kerrigan	5.13	24	Valirie Binkle	3.59
25	Edith Ferber	7.24	25	Sandra Jonasson	4.89	25	Steven Allen	3.53

Royal STaC Games – For F2F Games Only

This week, our Friday, April 29 499er face-to-face game will participate in the ACBL's Royal STaC week. The Guelph Club is also participating in Royal STaC week, and its Friday F2F game will be a Royal STaC game.

The points awarded will be 25% black, 25% silver, 25% red, and 25% gold, and there will be a \$2 surcharge. These games will be played in clubs across ACBL's District 2 – Ontario, Manitoba, and Bermuda, so the field will be large and masterpoint awards for doing well will be substantial. The entry fees will be \$2.00 higher than usual.

Stardust Week for Online Games

Our online games (and Guelph's online games, as well) are the latter part of the ACBL's Stardust Week (from Friday, April 29 through Sunday, May 1) with double masterpoint awards, including 25% gold. BBO fees will be BBO\$7.

District 2 Special Online Game for 199er Players

District 2 offers a special game once a month for new(er) players on the fourth Saturday of every month. The next one on Saturday, April 30 at 10:15 am is a special Stardust Game - double regular points, 25% gold points. This is a wonderful opportunity to play with new(er) players from around the district (all of Ontario, Manitoba, and Bermuda) and win gold points. Because it is not your "local" club, you will need to pre-register your and your partner's BBO names with DarleneScott@me.com at least one day ahead. Registration will open two hours prior to game time: go to Virtual Clubs/ All Clubs/, type VACB270793 in the top right-hand search box, and register in the normal way (but at least 30 minutes prior).

ALL GAMES ARE ONLINE UNLESS DESIGNATED FACE-TO-FACE.

Coming Events

- Friday, April 29, 1:00 pm, 499er game (24 boards) (\$9 members/ \$11 non-members) **FACE TO FACE**
- Friday, April 29, 7:00 pm, open game (24 boards) BBO\$7
- Saturday, April 30, 10:15 am, Special 199er Stardust Game, BBO\$6
- Saturday, April 30, 12:30 pm, 999er game (24 boards) BBO\$7
- Saturday, April 30, 1:00 pm, 199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$7
- Sunday, May 1, 10:00 am, 499er game (18 boards) BBO\$7
- Monday, May 2, 9:00 am, Bridge Lab (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE**
- Monday, May 2, 12:30 pm, 99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5
- Monday, May 2, 1:00 pm, open game (24 boards) BBO\$5
- Monday, May 2, 7:00 pm, 499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5
- Tuesday, May 3, 12:30 pm, 199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5
- Tuesday, May 3, 1:00 pm, open game (24-28 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE**
- Wednesday, May 4, 1:00 pm, 499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5
- Wednesday, May 4, 6:45 pm, 199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5
- Wednesday, May 4, 7:00 pm, open game (24 boards) BBO\$5
- Thursday, May 5, 9:30 am, 99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5
- Thursday, May 5, 1:00 pm, open game (24 boards) BBO\$5
- Thursday, May 5, 6:30 pm, 19er game (18 boards) BBO\$5
- Thursday, May 5, 7:00 pm, 999er game (24 boards) BBO\$5



How I Spent my Spring Vacation

Contributed by Bob Griffiths

Our Gatlinburg planning was on and off. With each new Covid scare we would almost, but not quite, decide to stay home and put off the trip until April 2023. Even when we had all agreed to go this year, I don't think that we actually believed it would happen until we were rolling.

We gathered Saturday at noon - Margot Stockie, Dave Longstaff, Adrian Record, Dave Baker, Jennifer Verdam-Woodward, and myself. We gave ourselves lots of time for a relaxed two-day drive to Gatlinburg, stopping Saturday night in Middleton, Ohio, just north of Cincinnati. That left an easy leg to Gatlinburg on Sunday. Thanks to Margot, we had a pot of soup for dinner shortly after we arrived.

The tournament was smaller, probably around 50% of the table count from pre-Covid days. There was the usual variety of games - morning, afternoon, dinnertime and evening, but with fewer sections than we remembered. With six people in our group, each day four of us would play in the bracketed team game while the other two would find a pairs game. While we did not win any events this year, we mostly avoided disgracing ourselves. That's our story and we are sticking with it.

Mornings were varied - lots of hiking, shopping or reading. One fanatic even managed to get up and use the exercise room every day at sunrise. A warm cozy bed gone to waste. Most of the time between games we spent searching for Baker's hat, occasionally resting with a small glass of wine. I won't mention what Longstaff was searching for. We shared the cooking and ate very well, having only two restaurant meals during the whole trip - one on the way south in Middleton and one on the way home. By the way, beware of Mexican restaurants in Williamsburg, Kentucky. Our small survey indicated that one in three people who eat there get nasty food poisoning.

This trip really reminded us how much we missed just hanging out with our bridge friends. Online bridge helps, but is nothing compared to genial meals combined with teasing each other between games. And searching for Baker's hat.



Congratulations to **Dianne Aves and Moira Hollingsworth** for coming fourth overall in the District 2 Royal STaC open game last Tuesday afternoon. Click [here](#) for full results.

Congratulations to **our club** for being listed as #30 on the Top 50 Clubs list (page 34 of this month's *Bridge Bulletin*).

From the Archives – It's All Relative

One of our players wrote to ask why he got a bottom board when it got passed out. He had assumed that passed-out boards automatically got an average score.

Let's say that a board is played ten times and gets passed out only once. At every other table, East/West gets a positive score (either by making a contract or by setting their opponents). As a result, North/South gets fewer points than everyone else and thus a bottom board.

The bottom (get it?) line is – when a board is passed out, it is often hard to know who's better off – since it totally depends on what happens at other tables.



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 on a weekly basis, essentially a column for the beginner player! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

Last week's column revolved around responder bids after a 2♣ opening and the use of Jacoby transfers after a bid of 2NT. The hand in questions was played in 2NT by East, with East/West going down one. An alternate choice was suggested whereby West transferred to spades after East's opening 2NT and leaving the contract in either 3♠ or 4♠. West's minimal points/strength and six spades made this the preferred option.

This column sparked several questions. I perceive that to be a good thing! Our members are obviously reading my column and following along with the discussion. So rather than present a new question and a new topic this week, I've elected to share the questions generated by last week's column and provide further clarification. To refresh everyone's memory, here is the hand from last week.

19 D	N North ♠ A ♥ 1062 ♦ AQ52 ♣ J9532	W N E S P P 2♣ P 2♦ P 2NT P P P
	W West ♠ J98765 ♥ J94 ♦ 86 ♣ 84	E East ♠ K42 ♥ AKQ3 ♦ K1097 ♣ AK
	S South ♠ Q103 ♥ 875 ♦ J43 ♣ Q1076	2NT E NS: 0 EW: 0
Rewind Previous Next Options GIB Play		Bridge Base

Question 1

In responding to East's 2♣ bid, you noted that West has two points. I agree that West has two HCPs, but with length in spades don't they in fact have four points?

Answer 1

I would encourage you to count **only** HCP's. You want to be extremely cautious and accurate in describing your hand; otherwise, opener may get carried away - thinking you will be headed to game or even slam. So, with just two jacks, that is two points, that's a **very** weak hand and it's important to let your partner know that.

Question 2

If I were West, I would also have responded 2♦ as they did – since I don't have enough points nor a "good" suit to respond 2♥ or 2♠. You suggested West consider bidding 2♥. This confuses me, as East could easily and incorrectly take that bid for its standard meaning to wit: "I have 5+ 'good' hearts and 8+ HCPs". If they did, we'd really mess up. What am I missing?

Answer 2

As you have surely discovered by now, everything in bridge is about **making choices** (there are many to be made), **communication**, and **partnership agreements**. How can I best describe my very weak hand after my partner has shown a very strong hand? In her intermediate bridge course, Liz McDowell taught me the 2♥ bid - showing less than three points (a "bust hand"). That is the approach I use with most of my partners, as I outlined in last week's column. The 2♥ bid is an artificial bid, just as the 2♣ and 2♦ bids are. It says nothing about hearts, **and so it is alertable**. My partners and I know what that 2♥ bid means because we have "agreed" that it shows less than three points. Some partnerships do use a bid of 2♥ to show a heart suit, 5+ hearts, and 8+ points. Similarly, a bid of 2♠ would show 5+ spades and 8+ points. Those players that use the 2♥ bid to show a good heart suit must find another means to tell their partner "I have very few points".

Because I have used the 2♥ to show an extremely weak hand, I have to find another way to show a good heart suit. I don't want to jump to 3♥, since that takes up bidding room and gets the auction up too high too soon. So, I use a bid of 2NT after 2♣ to show that good heart suit - 5+ hearts, and 8+ points – **and so it is alertable**. Now my partners know the strength and shape of my hand. After a 2♣ opening, a 2♦ bid is "waiting" and a 2♥ bid is weak (that is, a bust hand), while 2NT shows a good heart suit. It's **our** agreement, but others have different agreements. In several of her books, Barbara Seagram describes an alternate approach to strong 2♣ responses. A search of the Internet will produce other options for you to consider. Whatever route you decide to take, a **thorough** discussion and **agreement** with your partners is needed to show how you will deal with those responder weak hands after a strong 2♣ opening. It's also important to record those agreements on your convention card and be prepared to explain what your bids mean. Most certainly, your opponents will ask.

Question 3

With so many points, it seems unlikely E/W would normally fail to get eight tricks for the 2NT contract. It must have been the result of N/S having nine clubs and the ability to run them after easily forcing out the ace and king of clubs from East. The reason I mention all this is the distribution that caused E/W headaches is very unusual. Sometimes, there's nothing you can do about that and it's best to do exactly the same thing in the future. A high percentage of times it would work out better.

Answer 3

I would agree that in most situations a 2NT hand with 22 points would be a shoo-in to make, and an advanced player could potentially make 2NT on this hand. You also hit the nail on the head: after knocking out the ace and king of clubs, the opponents would be able to take three club tricks. East would then struggle to discard cards as opponents played the clubs - a failure to keep the right cards could add a further challenge.

It is just such a difficult task playing a hand where you as Declarer have to keep leading from your hand towards the board. There is very little in that dummy, other than the ♥J and the ♠J, to your advantage or to lead towards. That is why the best place for this contract is in spades.

Conventional Wisdom

This is the fourth in a series of columns on convention cards. Today, we will look at the rectangle entitled **NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS**.

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS		
1NT _____ to _____	3♣ _____	2NT _____ to _____ Puppet Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ to _____	3♦ _____	
5-card Major common <input type="checkbox"/>	3♥ _____	Transfer Responses:
System on over _____	3♠ _____	Jacoby <input type="checkbox"/> Texas <input type="checkbox"/>
2♣ Stayman <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3♠ _____
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input type="checkbox"/>	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>	3NT _____ to _____
Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Smolen <input type="checkbox"/>	Conventional NT Openings
2♥ Transfer to ♠ <input type="checkbox"/>	Lebensohl <input type="checkbox"/> (____ denies)	
2♠ _____	Neg. Double <input type="checkbox"/> : _____	
2NT _____	Other: _____	_____

Obviously, it is possible to get quite fancy with your no trump bidding, but for now the goal of this column is to outline the basics (you can always add bells and whistles later). If you would like information about some of the fancier conventions, you should ask the [Answer Lady](#). I will plan to double back later on and talk about some of the things we are skipping over on this first pass.

Left-Hand Column

- **Under the blue 1NT**, write “15-17”. The reason there are two lines is that some partnerships like to have different ranges depending on their vulnerability.
- **Tick the 5-card major common box.** It is old-fashioned not to bid one no trump with a five-card major and a balanced hand.
- **Tick the 2♣ Stayman box.** Puppet Stayman is for later.
- **Tick the 2♦ Transfer to ♥ box.** Forcing Stayman is for later.
- **Tick the 2♥ Transfer to ♠ box.**
- **Beside 2♠**, write “Transfer to clubs” (correctible to diamonds).
- **Beside 2NT**, write “Invitational” or “8-9 HCP”.

Middle Column

Leave blank for now.

Right-Hand Column

- **Beside 2NT**, write “20-21”.
- **Beside 3NT**, write “25-27”.

Don't worry about the rest for now. If you have questions, please write to [Malkin Howes](#).



TIME YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSONS!

If you and your friends have a burning desire to take lessons on a particular topic – online or face to face - please email [Malkin](#), our lesson lead, and she will see what she can do.

We currently have a group that may be interested in lessons on the **Precision bidding system**. Watch this space!

It would also be possible to offer a free workshop on face-to-face play if there were enough interest.

In the meantime, we have these recorded lessons available.

Recorded Lessons

The following recordings are available for \$10. To order one or more of them, send in your payment specifying what it is for (click [here](#) for information on how to pay).

- John Hanemaayer's **novice** workshop on **Filling out your Convention Card**
 - Stephen Carpenter's defence workshop on **Killer Signals**
 - Jack Cole's **novice** workshop on **Playing in our Online Games**
 - Stephen Carpenter's defence workshop on **Opening Leads**
 - Jack Cole's **novice** workshop on **Scoring Matters**
 - Stephen Carpenter's defence workshop on **Third Seat Play**
 - Stephen Carpenter's defence workshop on **Second Seat Play**
 - Stephen Carpenter's defence workshop on **Discards and Strategies**
-





Poor Balance

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

Board 12	♠ J 9 2										
West Deals	♥ J 9										
E-W Vul	♦ A 5 4 3										
	♣ K 9 4 3										
♠ K 10 8 7 6 3	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K 10 7 6 4		♥ Q 8 5									
♦ Q		♦ 10 8 7 2									
♣ —		♣ 10 8 6 2									
	♠ 5 4										
	♥ 3 2										
	♦ K J 9 6										
	♣ A Q J 7 5										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	2 ♣
4 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

Who hasn't had the chance to pass out an opponent's bid at the one level, made a balancing bid, and then regretted it as the opponents went on to a much better contract? Here's an extreme example.

This hand is from a pairs game in the 1970's. N/S were French international experts, while EW were intermediate players trying out their new system which included a strong forcing 1♣ bid for all hands 16 HCP or more.

West dealt and opened with 1♠. The hand has only 12 HCP, but great playing strength if a major suit fit could be found. After North's pass, East should have made the normal bid of 1NT after which West might have shown his strength by jumping to 4♥, leaving further decisions up to East. But after the 1♠ bid, East thought to himself, "We play the big club, my partner did not open 1♣ so he has fewer than 16 HCP. Since I have only eight HCP, we couldn't possibly have a game." So, he passed 1♠.

The French expert sitting South chose to balance with 2♣, unaware that he was opening a can of worms. West, re-evaluating his gentle approach to the hand, decided now to take charge and jumped to 4♥, giving East the choice of majors.

This made East wake up and rethink his hand. It was still only eight HCP, but all of his high cards were in the suits that his partner was bidding so fiercely. Even an inexperienced player could see that his hand was worth way more than the eight HCP that he first valued it at. East finally decided that if West could jump to game when expecting nothing from his partner, then bidding the heart slam was a reasonable gamble. 6♥ easily came home, and South regretted not letting West play in his little one-level contract.



Balancing when the opponents have stopped in one of a major is usually (but not always) right.



Dear David

Slow and Steady – Because it's Not a Race

Sharon King (partnered with Moira Hollingsworth) asked me how they should have bid this hand, even though they were the only ones in a five-table game to bid a slam.

15 D	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 9 ♥ ♦ KQ843 ♣ KJ108732	P	2♠	P	1NT 3♣
W West		P	4♦	P	4♥
♠ QJ106 ♥ AK ♦ 10965 ♣ Q94		P	5♣	P	6♣
		P	P	P	
	S South				
	♠ A532 ♥ QJ872 ♦ AJ7 ♣ A				
					6♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0

When responder bids a new suit as an unpassed hand, it is forcing for one round. After 1NT - 2♠ (transfer to clubs) - 3♣, 3♦ is natural and forcing. Partner will probably bid 3♥ or 3NT. At this point, a diamond rebid shows at least five diamonds with even longer clubs (because with five-five in the minors, partner would have transferred to diamonds and then bid 4♣). Now the three aces and ruffing value in clubs make this hand worth a cuebid of 4♠. At this point, nothing will stop you from bidding to at least 6♦, but can you reach 7♦? If responder now bids 5♥, it must be a grand slam try with a heart void (no RKCB bid). Although the ♥QJ of hearts are useless, the aforementioned four controls (three aces and second-round club control) suggests that 7♦ is reasonable.

The point of all this is that 3♦ must be forcing (new suit by an unpassed hand) and saves room to slowly investigate possible contracts. Here is my suggested auction.

1NT	2♠
3♣	3♦
3NT	4♦
4♠ (agrees diamonds)	5♥ (showing control)
7♦	Pass

All that being said, it is usually a bad idea to bid a grand slam when playing in a small club game unless it is clear-cut. Bidding and making a small slam usually nets you a very good score - a top in this instance. If you end up in diamonds on this hand, good declarer technique will result in your taking all 13 tricks.

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

#70

♠ J 5
 ♥ Q 8 7 5 2
 ♦ A 4
 ♣ A K 9 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 7 6 4 3
 ♥ K
 ♦ 7 6
 ♣ Q J 10 2

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

West led the ♣3. Plan the play.

SOLUTION

At a first glance, it looks as if you have only three losers - a spade (♠A), a heart (♥A), and a diamond. Is that really it, though?

At second glance, as part of your CRAM (**C**ount, **R**evise the bidding, **A**nalyze the lead, **M**ake a Plan) analysis, you may notice something suspicious. When you are analyzing the lead, you should observe that even though the opponents have good diamonds, West led a club. Why? Chances are the ♣3 is a singleton.

If this is true, it is almost certain that the opponent holding the ♠A will grab it the minute you start drawing trump and organize a club ruff for the setting trick. So, you must make a pre-emptive strike.

There is probably nothing you can do about the club ruff. But you can - and should - do something about your diamond loser. You need to get rid of it before the mice get at it - and the only way you can do this is to establish a high heart in dummy as a parking place for your hand's diamond loser. Therefore, take the opening lead with dummy's ♣K and lead a small heart from the board right away at Trick 2.

In an ideal world, East will hold the ♥A and duck this trick, thereby eliminating your heart loser, but we live in a real world and West will take the king with his ♥A.

At this point, West's best defence is to lead a diamond. Let's say he leads the ♦Q at Trick 3. You pop up with dummy's ♦A, and immediately cash dummy's ♥Q, discarding your hand's diamond loser on it.

Now you can tackle trump. Lead the ♠5 from the board at Trick 5. No surprise, East will take it with his ♠A and give West his club ruff.

At Trick 7, West's best defence is to return another diamond, but you can ruff it, draw the rest of the outstanding trumps, and claim.

Here is the full deal.

	♠ J 5	
	♥ Q 8 7 5 2	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ A K 9 5	
♠ 10 9		♠ A 8 2
♥ A 10 4 3		♥ J 9 6
♦ Q J 10 9 8 2		♦ K 5 3
♣ 3		♣ 8 7 6 4
	♠ K Q 7 6 4 3	
	♥ K	
	♦ 7 6	
	♣ Q J 10 2	

Timing is critically important in bridge, as well as when it comes to catching trains.

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 [Cheryl Kip](#), our membership lead.

We have fun in **spades**.

We play with all our **hearts**.

We treat our members like **diamonds**.

We are lucky to have an answer lady at our **club**.