



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

[Our Website](#)

ALERT – March 6, 2023

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

Looking Ahead

- ♥ **Tonight's (March 3) open game will move online due to the pending blizzard.**
- ♥ The Thursday morning BBO 99er game is now the **Thursday morning BBO 199er game.**
- ♥ [Barrie Sectional Tournament](#), Saturday March 4 – Sunday, March 5
- ♥ Effective March 9, there will be a **f2f 499er game on Thursday afternoons.**
- ♥ All of our f2f games during the week of March 21-24 will be **Membership Games.** Membership games award extra masterpoints at no extra cost – but only to paid-up ACBL members (membership in our club is irrelevant). Please note that *both* partners need to be paid-up ACBL members. If you are not already an ACBL member, you can remedy that [here](#) (please be sure to mention our club so that we can earn more up-graded club championship games for our members).
- ♥ All of our f2f games during the week of March 27-April 2 will be **Royal STaC games** (extra masterpoints [25% each black, silver, red, and gold], \$2 surcharge).
- ♥ [Spring Sectional – Buffalo Bridge Center, Amherst, NY](#). Friday, March 31 – Sunday, April 2
- ♥ [Toronto Easter Regional](#). Tuesday, April 4 – Sunday, April 9
- ♥ **Barbara Seagram** will be at our club on Wednesday, May 3. Hold this date!



Calling All 499ers

Effective Thursday, March 9, we will be adding a second **f2f 499er game**. It will start at 1:00 pm and run concurrently with the open game. Please come out and support your new game!



Friendly February

Our Bring a Friend month was a roaring success with something like 50 new-to-our-club or new-to-our-club-since-Covid players turning up to check out our premises. We are all so pleased that you came to our club, and we hope you had a wonderful time. You all come back now, you hear!

Getting Alerted

Did you know that you don't have to be a member of our club to get the Alert? If you know someone who might enjoy our newsletter (maybe that person took advantage of Friendly February?), please email Malkin with the person's name and email address.

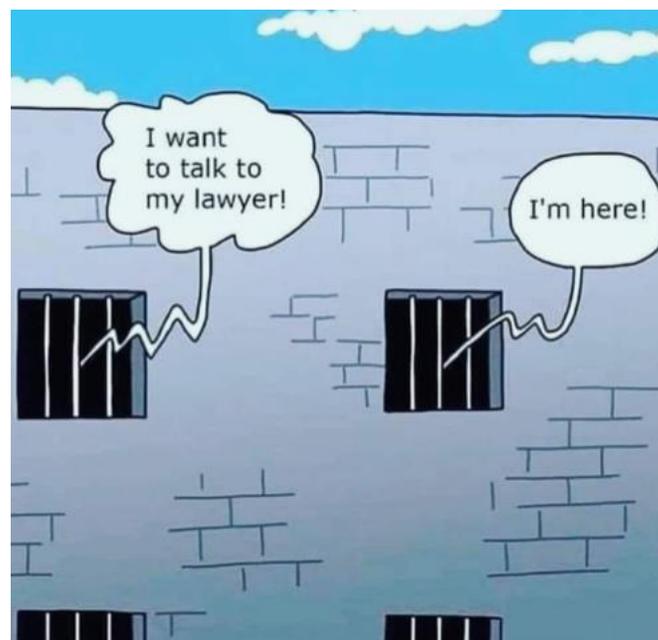
More Masterpoints for In-Person Games!

Contributed by Kathy Russell, Games Committee Chair

If you look at your results on ACBL Live for Clubs and Pianola, you may have noticed that they've started to show different masterpoint awards. Starting Monday February 27, ACBL implemented a change in their "Masterpoint Engine" to support in-person (or F2F) bridge. For regular club games that play more than 18 boards, the masterpoints are multiplied by the number of boards divided by 18, to a max of 1.5. So, from now on a 24-board game will get a 24/18 or 1.33 multiplier and 27 boards will get the max 1.5.

The ACBL, however, is not updating ACBLScore (the program that clubs use to run the games and send results to the ACBL). Since Pianola gets its information from ACBLScore, Pianola will not reflect the multiplier. For now, the multiplier applies only to regular club games, but the ACBL is planning a future enhancement to apply the multiplier to all games.

The bottom line is - come on out to a F2F game and get more points for your money!





The Bean Counter

Contributed by Steve Allen, Treasurer

In the October 21 ALERT, the Beaner told you that the ACBL charges \$1 US for each BBO and F2F table and then it's converted to Canadian dollars using a fixed currency exchange rate of x1.27. That was definitely a bargain since exchange rates were about x1.33 back then.

Bad news in November/December: The ACBL (aka Scrooge) increased the cost per BBO/F2F table to \$1.10 US, and the fixed currency exchange rate to x1.36. Thus **all of our BBO & F2F table count costs increased by 118%** (see Math1).

Bad news in January: The ACBL slapped on a surcharge of \$4 US to the BBO table count cost, making it \$5.10 US in total ... that's **an additional increase of 464%** (see Math2).

[The ACBL wants to see the world return to the way duplicate bridge was played before Covid. This surcharge really screws bridge clubs that are mainly online with few F2F games. I'm sure you've seen the price increase on some other clubs' BBO entry fees!]

Good news in January: Bridge clubs can avoid that 464% BBO-only surcharge as long as we have enough F2F games to satisfy ACBL's desire for more F2F'ing. Our first 50 BBO tables are free of the surcharge. For the rest, we get three free (no surcharge) BBO tables for each F2F table (see Math3). Thus, it depends on a ratio of BBO to F2F table counts. How did we do in January and February? We avoided any surcharge, thanks to ample F2F table counts. Yay! Whoop whoop! And we should avoid it in the months ahead unless I have jinxed us now that I've typed it. Can I hear another whoop?

Math1 - Previous \$1.00 X 1.27 Nov/Dec \$1.10 X 1.36) = 118% (BBO & F2F)

Math2 - Nov/Dec \$1.10 X 1.36 January \$5.10 X 1.36) = 464% (BBO only)

Math3 - **If #F2F_tables ≥ (#BBO tables less 50) divided by 3 then no surcharge**

The bottom line from your point of view? Come on down and play in our club's f2f games.



Greetings from Mexico

William Christian wants you to know that he and his partner (Helen Rivas-Rose) came second in the open pairs at this tournament on March 1.



Mrs. Matilda Phelps

Contributed by Elaine Doyle, Librarian

Hello from one of your librarians! I went into the club last Friday and visited our library for a little reorganization and to shelve our latest donation of fiction books. Thank you, Jim Dalglish! And I noticed a big upgrade to our jigsaw puzzles since January. Thank you for those donations! Just so you know, I must confess to ulterior motives in looking after the books and puzzles. Mrs. Matilda Phelps is my alter ego. I'm a lifelong bibliophile, and spending time rummaging through a bunch of books is happiness to me. You never know what you'll find that you get to read next!

Here are a few snaps of some treasures you might not know we had.



By the way, you can tell I'm not a real librarian, because no librarian would ever shelve her books on their end papers. I don't care, I'm hoping that those of us who don't bend so well but can still see can read the titles of the books on the bottom shelf. I really have to get progressives!

So about the bridge books. I picked up *Declarer Play the Bergen Way*, by Marty Bergen. Ten-time national champion, it says so on the dust jacket. I love this guy and am a devotee of Bergen raises and the Law of Total Tricks. Chapter 15 says "Don't Rely on Good Splits". I would have put a couple of exclamation marks after that title!

Do you have a favourite bridge book? Or one you're working through and is helpful? I'd like to hear about it. And, we need more bridge book donations. *Points Schmoints* is next on my reading list. Anyone got a copy to donate?

Kindest regards,
Elaine Doyle (Dee Dee1)

PS. I promise to bring my book back soon.

ChatGPT Bridge Advice

Contributed by Jake Liu

If you haven't been paying attention lately, there's a new chatbot in town. Chatbots are computers that provide answers to user questions and allow users to interact in a conversational way. ChatGPT has taken it to the next level as humanity steps into a new era of artificial intelligence. So, just for fun I asked ChatGPT how to improve my bridge playing skills. Its answer came back in about 30 seconds. Here it is.

Bridge is a complex card game that requires a combination of strategic thinking, memory, and communication skills. Here are some suggestions for improving your bridge playing skills:

1. Play frequently: The more you play bridge, the more you will improve your skills. Consider joining a local bridge club or playing online.
2. Analyze your games: After each game, take the time to review your performance and identify areas for improvement. Look for patterns in your play and consider how you might approach similar situations differently in the future.
3. Study the game: There are many resources available for learning bridge, including books, online tutorials, and classes. Take advantage of these resources to deepen your understanding of the game.
4. Find a mentor: If possible, find an experienced bridge player who can provide guidance and feedback on your play.
5. Practice with different partners: Playing with different partners can expose you to different styles of play and help you develop your communication skills.
6. Learn from mistakes: Don't be discouraged by mistakes. Instead, view them as opportunities to learn and improve.
7. Stay focused: Bridge requires concentration and focus. Avoid distractions during play and try to stay mentally alert throughout the game.

Remember, improving your bridge playing skills takes time and practice. Be patient with yourself and enjoy the journey.

Tournament Report from Unit 249

Contributed by Ted Boyd, Unit Tournament Chair

Three sectional tournaments were offered within our unit in 2022 as players wished to return to the face-to-face experience. They were: Tillsonburg (August 6 and 7), St. Thomas (September 9 and 10), and London (October 22 and 23). Table counts compared to previous attendance increased as the year progressed from 50% to 62%. The unit incurred a total loss for the three sectionals of \$3,140.

The following sectionals have been approved for 2023.

- Sarnia on June 3 and 4 at Randy Breuer's club
- Tillsonburg on August 5 and 6
- Goderich on August 26 and 27
- St. Thomas on September 9 and 10
- London on October 20 and 21

Guelph, Stratford, and Cambridge will not run sectional tournaments in 2023.

The Kitchener regional tournament will run from July 4 – 9, 2023 at Bingemans. A flyer will be on the ACBL website and available at GRBC shortly. In order to encourage F2F play, the unit's tournament committee is planning to offer events for \$15 per session per person. Recently, the regional game directors have been using the Square, a digital entry form which we use at the GRBC. Our regional will use the Square and will be cash free, in that only credit and debit cards will be accepted for entry fees.

The ACBL has announced a "Local Sectional" to encourage FTF play. Any ACBL club can request a Club Sectional which will award silver points, have a maximum table count for a session of 25 tables, and be run by a tournament assistant director. No sanctions have been issued for sectionals within our unit at this point.

Did You Know?

Contributed by Mark Obermeyer

BBO has the ability to see and talk to folks at the table without Zoom. You can set up a table and invite others to join, then enable both video and voice capabilities with minimal effort. This is often good for teaching as you can discuss the bidding and play with all four players. Double dummy analysis is also an option. Furthermore, you can subsequently bring in the hands you have created through DEAL ARCHIVE.

I would be happy to walk you through the process on request. You can reach me at obermeyer.mark@gmail.com.

PS I am looking for a regular partner who plays 2/1 to play with me in the open or 499er games.

Spring Team League Standings after Week 1

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

- Baker - 20
 - Fung - 16
 - Hanemaayer - 10
 - T. Boyd - 10
 - Jamieson - 4
 - S. Boyd - 0
-

Frank Fischer Turns 90



We had a small celebration at the club on Tuesday to mark Frank's 90th birthday. Photo credit: Diane Bourdeau

Job Opportunity

Contributed by Diane Jamieson

As we expand our f2f games, our bridge club is going to need more and more game directors. Would you be interested in becoming one? Apart from making it possible for you to join this modestly-reimbursed profession, the skills and knowledge you will pick up in your training will make you a better player with an improved understanding of the rules of the game. And you will of course be a big help to our club.

Club director training is being offered in Mississauga from Friday to Sunday, April 21-23.

For more information, please contact me (jamiesond@bell.net) or Martin Hunter (martinhunter@rogers.com).

TIME YOU LEARNED OUR LESSONS!

IN THE CARDS

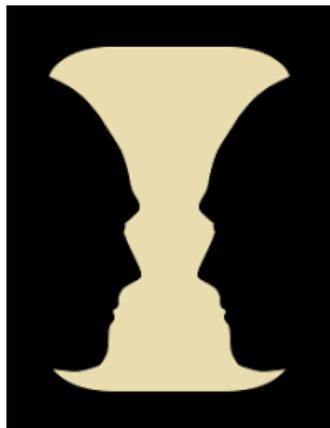
- **No Trump Interference (Cappelletti, DONT, and Meckwell)**. \$20 members/ \$25 non-members. Instructor: Malkin Howes. Level: **Intermediate**. ONLINE. Current Enrollment: 5

NEW DATE: Monday, March 27, 9:30 am – noon

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

- **Beginners 2**. \$75 (uses the same text as Beginners 1). Instructor: Sue Moses. IN PERSON. Saturday mornings, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, March 4, 11, 18, 25, & April 1. Level: **Beginner**. Current Enrollment: 12.

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



Two Over One (Extension to Standard American)

“How did we miss that slam?”

Well, likely because you were not using 2/1 Game Force! 2/1 is an extension to Standard American that gives you more bidding room to find the optimum game contract and difficult-to-bid slams. In 2/1, a response at the two-level promises 12+ points (instead of 10+) and commits the partnership to bid at least to game (much like Jacoby 2NT).

2/1 is not a whole new system, but rather a modification that applies to only certain auctions where it improves bidding accuracy. Topics discussed in this workshop include 2/1 bidding, forcing no trump bids, Bergen Raises, and control bidding to find slams. Participants will be given lots of hands to practise the new bidding concepts. Regular partners may benefit if they attend as a pair.

Why not learn the bidding system used by two thirds of the players at the World Championships?

Instructor: Stephen Carpenter

Mode: IN PERSON

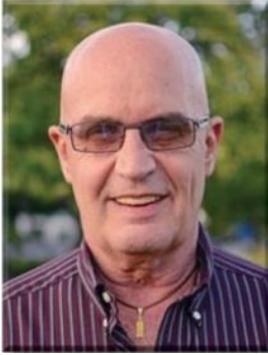
Level: **Novice/Intermediate**

Dates: Tuesday mornings, March 21 & 28, 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Cost: \$40 members/ \$50 non-members

Current Enrollment: 3

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Reverse Drury – A cure for old-timers' disease

No hands this week. I recently played for six days in the St. Catharines' regional tournament. For the first time since I was a toddler, I was asleep before midnight every night due to exhaustion. It might take a while to get used to playing two sessions a day for a week in these post-Covid times. Or maybe I'm getting older, who knows?

There are a great many innovative ways to bid hands nowadays, and many people use their pet conventions to describe different hand types. When first you learned our game, you were taught that when one of a major is raised to three of a major, it shows three-plus cards in that major (some insist that it shows four cards in that major) and 10 or 11 high-card points. However, many players like to play that as a weak pre-emptive raise so they need another way to show that hand, especially now that people open all manner of weak hands in third- or fourth-seat. Reverse Drury occurs when partner opens one of a major in third- or fourth-seat. Responder's bid of two clubs shows the three-card-plus major and a 10-11 HCP hand. If opener rebids his suit, it shows a weakish opener with 11-13 HCP and you can stop there without venturing to the three-level. If opener bids anything else, it shows a better hand and perhaps a game is within reach. If you want to know more, you can search online.

So, Reverse Drury is a useful little convention that allows you to investigate without getting too high. The downside is that when you have played a lot of bridge and it doesn't come up too often, you might bid 2♣ with five-plus clubs and fewer than three cards in the major. OOPS. The scramble that ensues after partner alerts 2♣ is frightening. With that in mind, here is my story.

I played Reverse Drury with Colin Harrington for many years. Whenever I bid 2♣, he would say "Alert". When asked for an explanation, he would happily supply it with the proviso "...but he always forgets." Cue the genial laughter. So, I am playing with Dave Longstaff in St. Catharines and I forget the convention. Not once. Not twice. THREE TIMES!

When the story was repeated in the designated after-game drinking room amongst our group from Grand River, it was greeted with much hilarity. So, it got me thinking. Since partner does not have to jump to show a good hand after 2♣, why not play 2♣ as either a limit raise OR a club suit with 10-11 HCP? If is the club hand, responder can just rebid 3♣ after opener's rebid. Fantabulous! We can cheaply show two types of hands and thumb our nose at the old-timers.

Sounds like a win-win to me.

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

No. 107

♠ AKJ10865

♥ 10

♦ Q62

♣ J9



♠ 7

♥ AKJ7432

♦ AJ54

♣ 7

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠s	Pass	4♥
All pass			

I was sitting South declaring a 4♥ contract. West led the ♣A, East encouraging. West then led the ♣10 to dummy's ♣J, covered by East's ♣Q, and I took the trick with a small trump. If you were in my shoes, what would you do now?

SOLUTION

When you have distributional hands, chances are your opponents' hands are distributional too. You've lost a club and it is almost certain that you will lose one trick to the ♦K as well. So, in order to make your contract you can lose only one trump trick. If trumps are 5-0, you have almost no chance. If trumps are 3-2, you can't go wrong. But what about 4-1?

You need to find a way to play for a 4-1 split that will give you the best chance of losing only one trump trick. Here is how.

You play a small heart, let's say the ♥3, to dummy's ♥10. One of the opponents will win their ♥Q. Chances are it will be West, given the bidding, and that should make you happy since West can probably not do you any damage. East, as per your assumption, will follow suit in hearts.

West will probably exit with a club (although it doesn't matter what he does). You ruff in your hand and draw the last three outstanding trumps with your ♥AKJ. Now enter dummy with a spade and discard a diamond on dummy's other top spade. You still have to lose the ♦K - but that's okay in that you have made your contract.

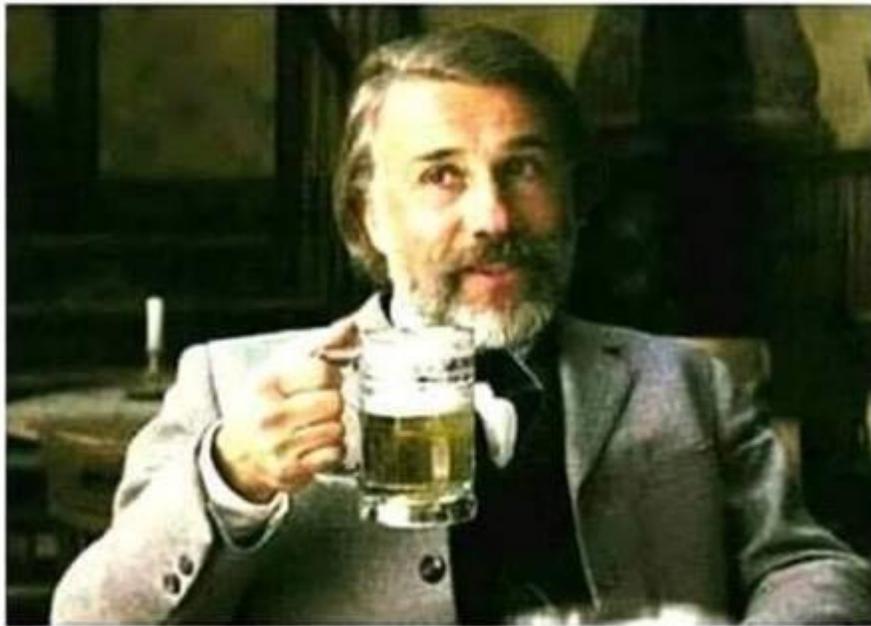
Here is the complete hand.

	♠ AKJ10865	
	♥ 10	
	♦ Q62	
	♣ J9	
♠		♠ Q9432
♥ Q985		♥ 6
♦ K9873		♦ 10
♣ AK105		♣ Q86432
	♠ 7	
	♥ AKJ7432	
	♦ AJ54	
	♣ 7	



As you can see, if you had played hearts any other way you would have lost two tricks in that suit.

Life is all about perspective.



The sinking of the Titanic was
a miracle to the
lobsters in the ship's kitchen.

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 January.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	26.98	1	Suzanne Edwards	19.86	1	Rick Arthur	10.03
2	Mike Peng	25.00	2	Shelley Metcalfe	16.81	2	Nancy Cattanach	7.66
3	Ted Boyd	18.94	3	Barbara Arthur	14.30	3	Brian Gaber	6.66
4	Colin Harrington	14.35	4	Cheryl White	13.16	4	Belinda Burt	6.37
5	Edith Ferber	13.92	5	John Kip	12.95	5	Debbie Miethig	5.97
6	Neil Jeffrey	13.86	6	Lori Cole	11.36	6	Louise Dawdy	5.36
7	Sandy Graham	11.83	7	Roy Dandyk	11.09	7	Audrey Cook	5.32
8	Liz McDowell	11.82	8	Cheryl Kip	10.90	8	Paul Raymond	5.30
9	Dave Longstaff	11.65	9	Jack Cole	10.29	9	Don Slowinski	4.96
10	Bob Griffiths	10.08	10	Lynda Burnett	10.24	9	Ben Cornell	4.96
11	Mary McClelland	9.79	11	Adriaan Kempe	10.17	11	Molly Worden	4.58
12	Neil Coburn	9.19	12	David Dennis	9.51	12	Elaine Doyle	4.38
13	Malkin Howes	9.10	13	Renate Boucher	9.05	13	Kathy Chandler	3.69
14	Stephen Young	8.98	14	Barbara Lindsay	8.63	14	Casi Zehr	3.67
15	Kathy Russell	8.85	15	Virginia Alviano	8.22	15	Jane Wilson	3.37
16	Margot Stockie	8.53	16	Susan Durance	8.15	16	Valirie Binkle	3.07
17	Dave Quarrie	8.50	17	Jim Dalgliesh	7.85	17	Chris Beck	3.06
18	John Hanemaayer	7.51	18	Marlene Dopko	7.69	18	Pat Northey	2.77
19	Wayne Jordan	7.40	19	Martin Jones	7.56	19	Richard Prendiville	2.75
20	Moira Hollingsworth	6.68	20	Jean White	7.06	20	Jeannie Leforge	2.56
21	Diane Bourdeau	6.55	21	Kevin Latter	6.88	21	MJ Hartleib	2.37
22	Ronna Hoy	6.28	21	Salvatore Pace	6.88	22	Pauline Copleston	2.32
23	Bonnie Kains	6.23	23	Robert Giilck	6.38	23	Julia Prendiville	2.04
24	Scott Hills	6.14	24	Nanci Phelan	6.35	24	Donna McKay	2.00
25	Diane Jamieson	6.03	25	Douglass Grant	6.05	25	Stu Cowan	1.94

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**.

We are starting a new f2f 499er game at our **club**.