



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – February 28, 2022

Top Online 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	45.22	1	Suzanne Edwards	15.45	1	Marilyn Rootham	7.74
2	Cindy Mahn	29.21	2	Brian Kirkconnell	14.21	1	Lynn Campbell	7.74
3	Margot Stockie	28.37	3	Grant Roberts	12.24	3	J. Lewis Corbin	7.43
4	Edith Ferber	26.41	4	Lissa Lowes	11.33	3	Brian Gaber	7.43
5	Robert Griffiths	24.74	5	Jim Hardy	11.28	5	Barb Neibert	7.18
6	Mike Peng	23.10	6	Lori Cole	11.12	5	Anita Hanson	7.18
7	David Wilson	19.81	7	Judy Beauchamp	9.96	7	Ginny Alviano	6.63
8	Moira Hollingsworth	18.87	8	Barbara Arthur	9.93	8	Ginny Scott	6.53
9	Stephen Young	18.28	9	Andy Martinek	9.72	9	Rick Arthur	6.29
10	Sandy Graham	14.73	10	Bev Hitchman	9.38	10	Steven Allen	6.00
11	Neil Jeffrey	14.04	11	Jim Dalgliesh	9.26	11	Reinhold Kauk	5.93
12	Colin Harrington	13.52	12	Kevin Latter	9.14	12	Joe Blake	5.84
13	Mary McClelland	12.90	13	Brenda Semple	8.81	13	Louise Dawdy	5.76
14	Kathy Russell	12.17	13	Nanci Phelan	8.81	14	Belinda Burt	5.32
15	John Vandergrift	11.43	15	Isabel Hetherington	8.64	15	Linda Rush	5.30
16	Malkin Howes	11.32	16	Lynda Burnett	8.42	15	Molly Worden	5.30
17	Wayne Schroeder	11.05	17	Sue Moses	8.24	17	Nancy Cattanach	5.29
18	Liz McDowell	10.91	18	Jack Cole	7.75	18	Elinor Girouard	5.22
19	Tom Ramsay	10.05	19	Susan Kerrigan	7.68	19	Sue McDonald	5.14
20	John Hanemaayer	9.90	20	Paul Latimer	7.58	20	Joani Horvath	4.98
21	Susan Lawton	9.78	21	Carolyn Baechler	7.52	21	Gordon Hunter	4.96
22	Neil Coburn	9.55	22	Cheryl Kip	7.51	22	Julia Prendiville	4.89
23	Ted Boyd	9.33	23	Tony Verhoeven	7.42	23	Liz Graham	4.80
24	Bruce Roberts	9.33	24	Barbara Lindsay	6.96	24	Martin Jones	4.73
25	Adrian Record	8.73	25	Joan Slover	6.95	25	Jane Wilson	4.67

What's up with Strats?

Contributed by Mike Peng

Following up on Joan's article last week, let's start with how strats work.

Strata (aka strats or stratum, singular) are designed so that each pair's results in a game (or tournament) are compared against others within the same stratum for masterpoint (MP) awards.

With the virtual online games, BBO is programmed so that each of the three strata have similar number of pairs competing for MP awards. Therefore, the breakpoints for each stratum are based on the participants in each game and are different for each game.

Here's an example of the ACBL Live results from a recent game involving 13 North-South pairs.

#61809 499er Fri Grand River Kitchener 1pm					
MP Limits: 501/256/139					
Club Rating Point					
Tables: 13					
Recaps (Section A – N/S)					
Pair	Section			Score %	MPs
	A	B	C		
1	4			153.00	53.12 0.36 black (SA)
2			1	145.50	50.52 0.30 black (SC)
3				128.00	44.44
4		2		164.50	57.12 0.73 black (SB)
5			2	143.00	49.65 0.21 black (SC)
6				143.50	49.83
7		3		155.50	53.99 0.52 black (SB)
8		1		169.00	58.68 1.04 black (SB)
9				131.50	45.66
10				136.00	47.22
11				145.50	50.52
12				110.50	38.37
13	5			146.50	50.87 0.21 black (SA)

Let's start with Strat C and work towards Strat A.

Strat C includes the 5 pairs with the fewest MPs - with the average MPs up to 139. (Since 13 pairs don't divide evenly by 3, Strat C gets five pairs (while B and A get four pairs each), making more awards available to Strat C.) There are two pairs that received MP awards (Pairs #2 and #5). Note that Pair #11 tied with Pair #2 yet did not receive any MP awards, since that pair is in a higher stratum so did not qualify to receive Strat C awards.

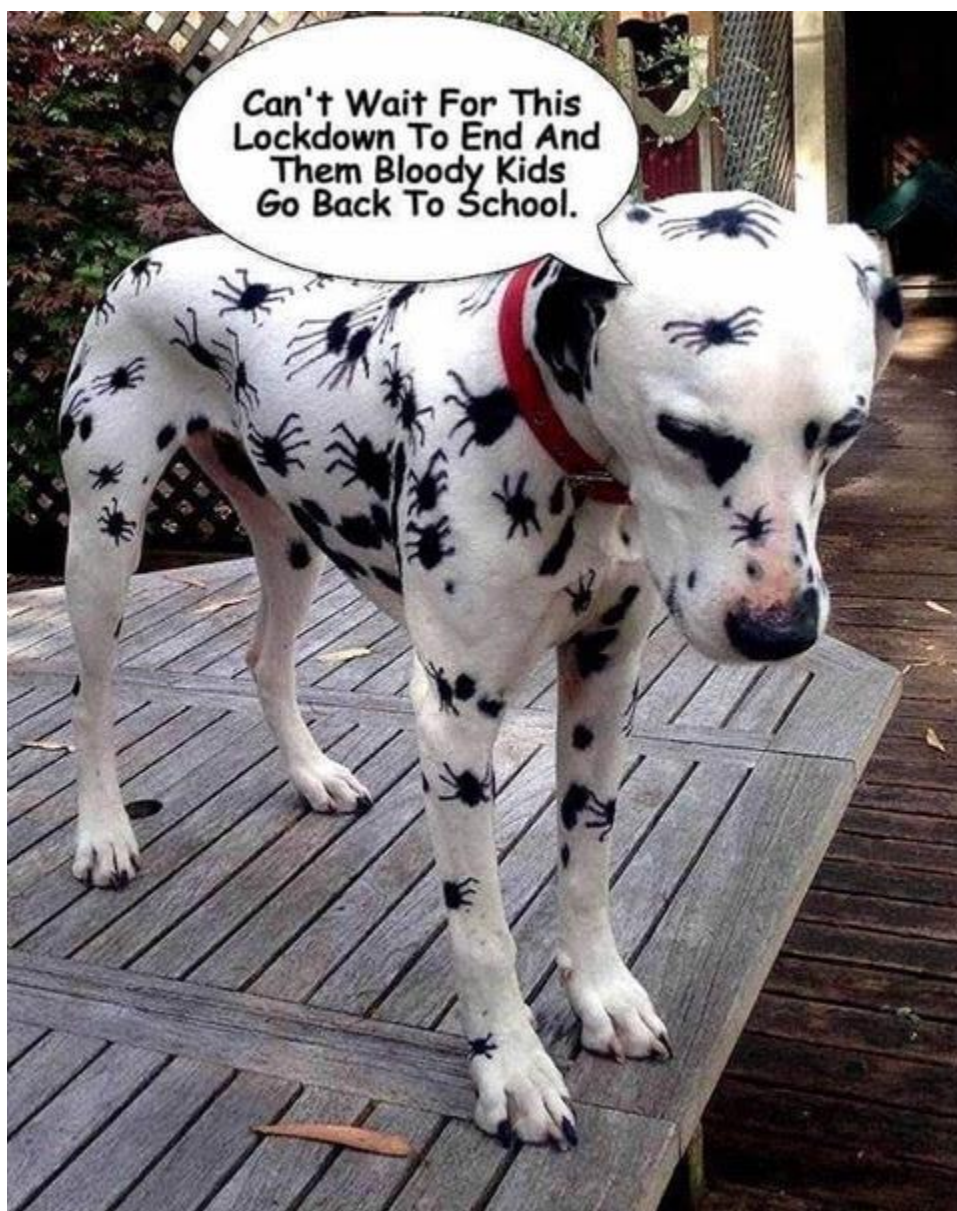
Strat B includes the nine pairs with the fewest MPs, with the average MPs up to 256. Had these nine pairs competed in their own tourney of nine tables, the top three pairs would have received MPs of 0.63, 0.44, and 0.32 respectively. As it turns out in this game however, the top three overall finishers are from Strat B (Pairs #8, #4, and #7).

Guess what? These pairs received the upsized MP awards based on the entire field of 13 pairs. The masterpoints awarded to each pair is the greater of:

1. the result in their own stratum; or
2. the overall standings.

Strat A includes all 13 pairs, but note that only the fourth- and fifth-place finishes (Pairs # 1, and #13) received MP in this strat. Why is this? Well, as mentioned above, the overall top three finishers are from Strat B. Thus, the top finishers in Strat A don't get the benefit of competing only in their own stratum since they are competing against the entire field.

So, what's the take away? Pairs should "play up" in games with higher MP limits, since their results are compared with other pairs within their own stratum. However, if those pairs in a lower stratum do well in a game, they get the benefit of masterpoint awards for the higher table counts, so there is no downside! As you accumulate masterpoints, you will eventually be bumped into a higher game so why not do it sooner rather than later?





Just Like Spring, Counting is Coming Soon

A five-week course on counting is just what you'll need when you get back to playing face-to-face bridge. Dianne Aves will be teaching this course, based on her recently-published book *Counting at Bridge*. Knowing when and how to count can make a big difference in your play as declarer and as defender. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

COUNTING TIP

As a defender, do you know what you are supposed to be doing while declarer is making her plan? Both defenders should be trying to figure out about how many high card points (HCP) their partner has. Figuring this out involves counting of course. From the auction, estimate the number of points the offence has. Add that to your own HCP and subtract the total from 40. As an example, if you estimate that declarer and dummy have about 25 HCP for their 3NT game and you have 10 HCP, your partner has about 5 HCP. Once partner shows up with an ace, you cannot expect much more. Declarer must have the missing honours, except for maybe a jack. This should help you to defend better. This is a small example of the kind of thing you will learn to do routinely in the five-week counting course.



The Answer Lady

OK, so our answer lady, Susan Lawton, is still not getting enough questions from our newer players. Here are some possible reasons.

- You already know exactly what to bid and play and never make mistakes. 😊
- You are too shy/ don't want to bother Susan.
- You can't remember exactly how your disaster came about so you don't know what questions to ask.*

Whatever the reason, Susan is patiently waiting by her computer for your questions. Please to email Susan (suzan2420@yahoo.ca) about your bidding or play problems, and she will be happy to try to help you out. Susan's free service is an excellent way to improve!

*You can see exactly what happened on every hand you ever played at our club by going to grandriverbridgeclub.com; clicking on Results down the left-hand side; clicking on GRBC Game Results at the top of the next page; and then clicking on Results on the right-hand side of the appropriate game. Once that game has loaded, you will see the standings at the top and, if you scroll down, you will see every board that was played in that game. By locating your and your partner's name for any given board and clicking on Replay, you will be able to see what everyone bid. Furthermore, by clicking on Next, you will be able to follow the entire card play sequence.

TIME YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSONS!

Our Beginner 1 cohort has graduated and is currently participating in coaching sessions. Beginner 2 classes will begin on Thursday, March 10.



Beginner 2

Beginners 2 is a continuation of Beginners 1. All concepts are reviewed and reinforced. Bidding is emphasized, including take-out doubles and responses and ace-asking conventions. The principles of declaring no trump and suit contracts will be covered.

Level: **Beginner**

Instructor: Allen Pengelly

Dates: Thursdays, March 10, 17, 24, 31, & April 7

Mode: ONLINE

Current Enrollment: 4

Fee: \$75 (uses the same textbook as Beginners 1)

*In anticipation of our grand re-opening on March 14, the following **face-to-face lessons** are now available for registration.*

Click [here](#) to register. Click [here](#) for information regarding payment.



Playing in our Face-to-Face Games

In-person bridge will soon make a welcome return to our club. This workshop is intended to ease newer players into the mechanics of playing in face-to-face games. We will learn about in-person registration, bidding, alerts, table movements, calling the director, scoring with BridgeMates, and (as time permits) review the basics of duplicate bridge scoring.

Level: **Beginner/Novice**

Instructor: Ted Boyd

Date: Saturday, March 12, 10:00 am – noon?

Mode: Face-to-Face

Current Enrollment: 9

Fee: FREE



Play of the Hand (Suits)

In an 18-board club game, you are likely to be declarer on four or five boards. You need to learn techniques to help you become a better declarer. First, you need to be aware of your goal. Second, you must learn how to make a plan. And third, you must learn how to implement your plan. In this five-week course, you will learn how to make a plan right after the opening lead has been made, and you will also learn how to minimize your losers so that you can make your contract and maybe even make overtricks.

A second course, Play of the Hand (No Trump) will be offered later.

Level: **Novice**

Instructor: Dianne Aves

Mode: Face-to-Face

Dates: Tuesdays, March 15, 22, 29, April 5, & 12, 9:30 am until noon

Current Enrollment: 3

Fee: \$95 for members, \$105 for non-members (includes \$20 textbook & HST)



Intermediate Bidding, Part 1

This course and its separately-enrolled continuation, Part 2, focus on Standard American bidding. Opening bids, responses, and rebids will be briefly reviewed. Topics covered in more detail will be forcing and non-forcing bids, competitive bidding, doubles, and balancing. Each lesson will conclude with some hands illustrating the lesson's topics, for practice in bidding and play. A few topics regarding play and defence will also be included, but the main goal of the course is to make attendees comfortable and confident with standard bidding conventions.

Regular partners may find it advantageous to attend as a pair.

Level: **Intermediate**

Instructor: Neil Jeffrey

Dates: Tuesday, March 15, 22, 29, & April 5, 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Mode: Face-to-Face

Current Enrollment: 5

Fee: \$70 for members/ \$80 for non-members (includes handouts and HST)

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**
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FOR INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS



Taking Different Views

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

South Deals N-S Vul	♠ Q 9 5 ♥ — ♦ K J 6 2 ♣ Q J 9 7 5 4	
♠ J 10 ♥ A J 7 4 3 ♦ A 9 8 7 4 3 ♣ —		♠ K 8 6 4 2 ♥ K Q 9 2 ♦ 10 5 ♣ K 6
	♠ A 7 3 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ Q ♣ A 10 8 3 2	

This hand is from the 1985 World Team Championships between Brazil and USA. It seems that even the top players can take wildly-different views about their hands.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	5 ♥	All pass

At this table, E/W had the auction to themselves. East's jump to 4♥ was a bit aggressive but he certainly didn't think that his passed-hand partner would be looking for a slam. The 5♣ bid was a cuebid, showing a club control – and if East had been able to cuebid diamonds, West would have taken a shot at 6♥.

But 5♥ was too much for West to handle; he couldn't cope with the 4-0 heart split, having to ruff out his diamonds and draw trumps. 5♥ went down one and E/W felt they had overbid their 21 HCP.

The story was a bit different at the other table.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1 ♥	2 ♣	4 ♥	5 ♣
5 ♥	Pass	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All pass

At Table 2, West chose to open his shapely 10 HCP. Now North, who might not have opened his 9-HCP hand, had enough for a 2♣ overcall. The wheels began turning.

After a competitive auction to the same 5♥ contract as at Table 1, South decided to take the sacrifice and bid 6♣. This was doubled and passed out.

East led the ♥K; North trumped it and led the ♣Q, which East smoothly ducked. At this point, North had to choose between finessing, that is playing for a 2-0 trump split, or going up with the ace, playing for a 1-1 split. Sadly for North, he played the ace, leaving himself with a club loser and a diamond loser, and going down one. He could have made his 12 tricks if he had guessed the clubs right.

So, N/S were silent at Table 1 and almost made a club slam at Table 2. Taking different views.

 **Bridge is not for those who crave certainty.**





Dear David

The Man with the Axe



In faraway lands, a long, long time ago there existed a group of four kingdoms (spoiler alert) ostensibly ruled by kings. What their subjects didn't know was that a quartet of extraterrestrial interlopers were the real rulers of the kingdoms. They were known as the aces. The aces set down the rules that were meant to be followed by everyone, including the four kings, under threat of dire consequences.

D		21		N North		W N E S	
		♠ AQ432		♠ 2♥ P 2NT		P 3♥ P P	
		♥		P		P	
		♦		P		P	
		♣		P		P	
W West		E East		S South		Select cards to play for all 4 players	
♠		♠ 6		♠ 7		3♥ N NS: 3 EW: 5	
♥ K85		♥ 96		♥ J			
♦		♦ 7		♦ J			
♣ J8		♣ 6		♣ Q10			

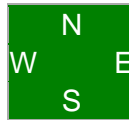
It matters not how the players got to this point. The only issue that matters is what "rule" exists to cover this situation. The ace of clubs (a particularly nasty and hairless ET) decreed to the four kings that everyone must ALWAYS cover an honour with an honour. What will happen if West doesn't cover the ♥J with the ♥K on this hand? Declarer will just lead another heart from the South hand and E/W will get no more tricks. But if the king of hearts obeys the edicts of his masters by covering the first heart, his lowly ♥8 will turn out to be a trick for his side. There are times that it is wrong to cover, but that is a discussion for another day. In this instance, it was clearly wrong not to cover. Thus, the ace of clubs decreed the ultimate penalty. He ordered that the king of hearts be beheaded by the man with the axe, since only a king can punish another king.

Upon his death, his feckless son, the jack of hearts, who was indirectly responsible for his father's demise, became the new ruler of the kingdom of hearts. The new king's only contribution to the four kingdoms was to make sure that henceforth everyone in the land would always cover an honour with an honour.

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

#61

♠ 9 4 3
 ♥ A 8 6 3
 ♦ A K 7
 ♣ 8 7 5



♠ A K Q J 10
 ♥ K J 9
 ♦ 9 8 4
 ♣ A 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 N ¹	Pass	4 ♣ ²
Pass	4 ♦ ³	Pass	4 ♥ ⁴
Pass	5 ♥ ⁵	Pass	6 ♠

All pass

1. Limit Raise
2. 18+HCP, club control, no shortness
3. Diamond control
4. Asking bid
5. Heart control

West led the ♣10 to East's ♣J and my ♣A. Then I led the ♠A from my hand and everyone followed. I continued with the ♠K at Trick 3, West discarding a club. I then played out the rest of my trumps. West discarded two more clubs and a diamond, while East followed three more times and then discarded a club. For my part, I threw away two clubs from dummy. What now?

SOLUTION

After six tricks, here is the situation.

♠
 ♥ A863
 ♦ AK7
 ♣



♠
 ♥ KJ9
 ♦ 984
 ♣ 3

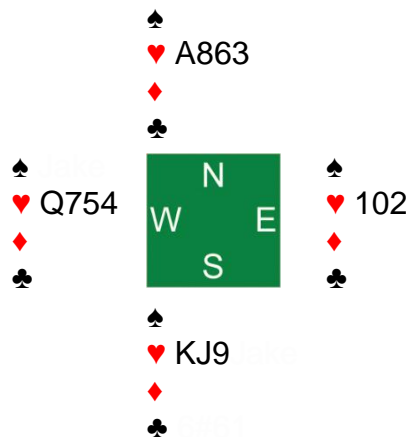
You need six more tricks and the only way to do this is to take four heart tricks. You have to find the ♥Q! Unless one of the opponents accidentally drops his ♥, you are going to have to do some detective work. From the play of the spades, you know that West started with a singleton spade. Chances are, therefore, that he has more hearts than East, and that makes it more likely that he holds the ♥Q. Fortunately, there is a powerful new weapon that allows you to win all four tricks in this situation, namely Jake's Coup. Have you heard of it? Probably not, since I am just introducing it now 😊. For Jake's Coup to work, the following conditions must apply.

1. You are missing the queen and ten in the suit you want to coup.
2. The queen is located offside of a normal finesse.
3. The ten is singleton or doubleton and located opposite the queen.
4. Except for the queen and ten, the number of high cards you are holding is equal to the number of tricks you need to win plus one (because two of your high cards are used up in order to deal with the queen).
5. There may also need to be an entry to the hand with more cards in the suit.

The procedure to play is as follows.

1. Play the high card from the hand that holds the jack (smothering the ten if it is a singleton). In this case it is the ♥K that you lead first.
2. Next, lead the jack.
 - If the jack is not covered by the queen, float it around (smothering the ten if it is still out).
 - If the jack is covered by the queen, take it (smothering the ten if it is still out).
3. Smile.

Back to the original hand, here is the heart suit distribution.




As you can see, the layout is perfect for Jake's Coup. Here are the specifics for this hand.

- Cash the ♥K and continue with the ♥J.
 - If West covers, take the trick with the ♥A (smothering the ♥10), and lead back a heart. Then enter dummy with a diamond and cash the last heart.
 - If West doesn't cover, float your ♥J around, smothering the ♥10. Now lead the ♥9 towards dummy.
 - If West covers, take the trick with the ♥A and cash dummy's last heart.
 - If West doesn't cover, finesse the ♥Q once more.

No matter how West defends, you always can coup the hearts to make your contract (five spades, four hearts, two diamonds, and one club).

Here is the full deal.

	♠ 943	
	♥ A863	
	♦ AK7	
	♣ 875	
♠ 8		♠ 7652
♥ Q754		♥ 102
♦ J632		♦ Q105
♣ 10642		♣ KQJ9
	♠ AKQJ10	
	♥ KJ9	
	♦ 984	
	♣ A3	

As you can see, a conventional finesse of the ♥Q or the ♥10 doesn't work.



Our Low-Cap Games

If you have under 100 points, please plan to come out on Mondays at 12:30 pm and support our new 99er game. And if you have under 20 points, please play in our 19er game on Thursday nights at 6:30 pm.

Our club likes to offer low-masterpoint games so that our newer players can use them as scaffolding to climb to ever-greater heights. Happily, our 19er and 99er games are getting bigger, but they can still use more of your support.

If you need a partner, contact [Cheryl Kip](#), our membership lead.

Educational Foundation Week Games

From Friday to Sunday, you can support the work of the ACBL Educational Foundation (think BridgeWhiz, the “First Hands” series, and student travel to the Collegiate Bridge Bowl) and at the same time earn double regular club black points. There will be a \$2 surcharge.

New 999er Game in the Works

Effective Saturday, March 5, our club will be adding an online 999er game on Saturday afternoons.

Coming Virtual Events

- Friday, February 25, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Friday, February 25, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$7**
- Friday, February 25 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$7**
- Saturday, February 26, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Sunday, February 27, 10:00 am, **499er game (18 boards) \$7**
- Monday, February 28, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Monday, February 28, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Monday, February 28, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$5**
- Tuesday, March 1, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Tuesday, March 1, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, March 2, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, March 2, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Wednesday, March 2, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, March 3, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, March 3, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, March 3, 6:30 pm, **19er game (18 boards) \$5**
- Thursday, March 3, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) \$5**

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 generally cover an honour with an honour at our **club**.