



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – February 21, 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	37.90	1	Suzanne Edwards	13.67	1	J. Lewis Corbin	7.04
2	Cindy Mahn	24.49	2	Brian Kirkconnell	12.40	2	Brian Gaber	6.97
3	Edith Ferber	23.11	3	Grant Roberts	11.52	3	Ginny Scott	6.53
4	Mike Peng	20.95	4	Jim Hardy	10.56	4	Barb Neibert	6.30
5	Margot Stockie	20.39	5	Lori Cole	10.34	4	Anita Hanson	6.30
6	Robert Griffiths	19.72	6	Lissa Lowes	10.29	6	Virginia Alviano	5.92
7	David Wilson	17.49	7	Judy Beauchamp	9.96	7	Rick Arthur	5.83
8	Stephen Young	15.59	8	Kathy Russell	9.65	8	Marilyn Rootham	5.78
9	Moira Hollingsworth	15.22	9	Barbara Arthur	9.13	8	Lynn Campbell	5.78
10	Neil Jeffrey	13.76	10	Andy Martinek	9.05	10	Louise Dawdy	5.76
11	Colin Harrington	13.20	11	Jim Dalgliesh	8.78	11	Steven Allen	5.56
12	Sandy Graham	12.33	12	Isabel Hetherington	8.64	12	Joe Blake	5.40
13	Mary McClelland	10.94	12	Nanci Phelan	8.64	13	Reinhold Kauk	5.31
14	John Vandergrift	10.52	14	Kevin Latter	8.52	14	Elinor Girouard	5.22
15	Wayne Schroeder	10.15	15	Brenda Semple	8.45	15	Joani Horvath	4.98
16	Tom Ramsay	10.05	16	Lynda Burnett	8.21	16	Liz Graham	4.80
17	Susan Lawton	9.78	17	Sue Moses	7.88	17	Belinda Burt	4.78
18	Liz McDowell	9.06	18	Jack Cole	7.53	18	Martin Jones	4.73
19	Ted Boyd	8.43	19	Carolyn Baechler	7.52	19	Joan Lawson	4.58
19	Bruce Roberts	8.43	20	Bev Hitchman	7.22	20	Charlene Schell	4.57
21	Steve Carpenter	8.30	21	Ton Verhoeven	6.96	21	Julia Prendiville	4.50
22	Neil Coburn	8.05	22	Cheryl Kip	6.80	22	Kathleen Burns	4.48
23	Adrian Record	7.93	23	Paul Latimer	6.68	23	Susan McDonald	4.32
24	Dianne Aves	7.78	24	Sue Peterson	6.47	24	Linda Rush	4.22
25	Malkin Howes	7.64	25	Joan Slover	6.39	25	Audrey Cook	3.98



Michael Plauntz

Contributed by Louise Dawdy

Today we are pleased to welcome Michael Plauntz to GRBC. “Many, many years ago”, Michael and his husband, Dick, as well as his father, took private bridge lessons but found the game to be too frustrating and so it never went anywhere. At the encouragement of a knitting friend (Sheila Charters, no less!), Michael and Dick tried again in the fall of 2019. Although Dick still found it too confusing and frustrating, Michael persisted, and his knitting buddy, Sheila, became his bridge partner. Michael has stuck with it ever since. Michael is a self-employed accountant (CPA, CA) who started his own business in the fall of 2019. He provides part-time controller/ chief financial officer services to mid-sized businesses, as well as working with start-up and scaling businesses through a couple of regional innovation centres to help the businesses get on a solid financial footing. Michael will soon be taking over from Bev Pope as our club’s treasurer.



Michael and Dick have three mini-schnauzers (Jerry, Berny and Erny), which have been a great comfort to them during the pandemic lockdowns. Erny was an addition that came for a “trial visit” on the Friday before the March 2020 lockdowns began, and so he ended up “stuck” with them.

For the past nine years, Michael has volunteered for and sat on the Board for Hospice of Waterloo Region (www.hospicewaterloo.ca). Hospice of Waterloo Region opened a new building in East Waterloo (near RIM Park) in March 2021. It has ten residence beds as well as space to house an array of community programs. Hospice will be celebrating 30 years of providing comfort, care, and support to individuals facing life-limiting illness. Michael also volunteers as part of Hospice’s vigiling team and sits with people who are end-of-life.



Aside from work, bridge, and volunteering, Michael enjoys knitting and has been a member of the KW Knitters Guild since the 1990s. He also belongs to a weekly knitting group, which currently meets on FaceTime, rather than their regular Starbucks location. Michael is known within the guild for his fine lace knitting, and he has completed a number of silk lace wedding shawls – two of which are put away for his nieces. Michael also enjoys



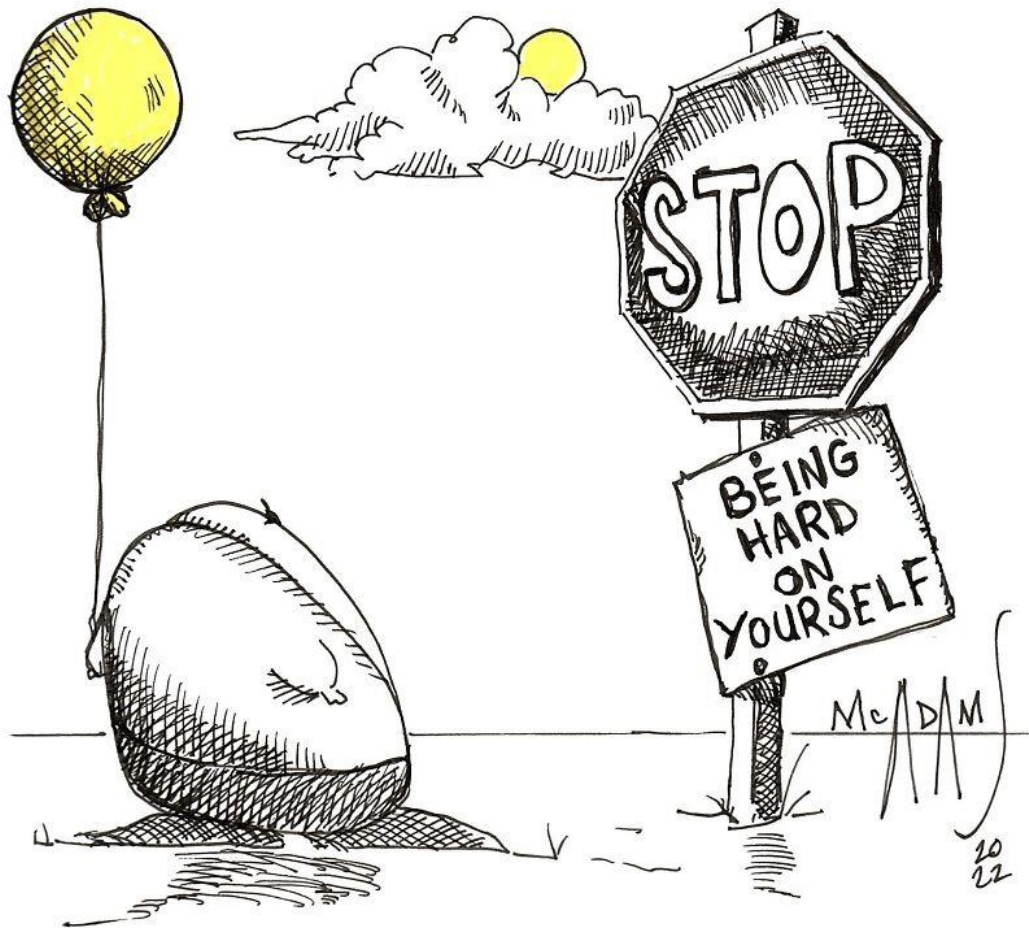
spinning yarn on his Majacraft spinning wheel. Between March 2020 and March 2021, he spun about a skein a month, but has now turned his focus back to knitting. Between the knitting and the spinning, Michael has built up a cache of fibre (Merino wool, silk, alpaca, camel), and yarns in all sorts of beautiful colours - just waiting for the right project.

In terms of helpful bridge tips, Michael highlights all of the GRBC online courses that he has taken throughout the pandemic and how much he has enjoyed them all. He notes how knowledgeable and patient

the instructors have been. The one tip that he hears when playing online is "win on the short side". Michael also found learning and playing keycard Blackwood helpful.

Post pandemic, Michael looks forward to getting back to regular dinners out on Friday nights (restaurant favourites: King Street Trio, Mediteraneo, Kypreos) and picking up breakfast on the way to market on Saturday mornings with Dick. And, as with all of us, he is hoping that all of this will come sooner rather than later.

Welcome Michael! It was a pleasure to make your acquaintance!



Number Rules!

Contributed by Liz McDowell

This was a note from Jane Lemke and her Bridge friends. Below is my attempt at making a summary of the rules (guidelines) from previous columns.

Hi Liz,

Many thanks for your very informative articles in the "Alert". These are great!

A group of us play and learn bridge together, and we discussed the need to summarize these rules (and more) for quick reference. Typically what happens, while playing bridge is that we remember a rule after the fact - - "Oh gosh, I could have used the rule of - - -".

Many thanks,

Jane (and bridge colleagues!)

Rule of 15: Used in fourth seat with 11 HCP and four spades (some values in spades)
Remember to sign off at a low level since your partner has passed and you do not have an opening hand.

Rule of 20: Used in first or second seat with two five-card suits and 10 HCP ($10+5+5=20$)
Remember that you need at least two quick tricks located in your two longest suits.

Rule of 11: Used when defending the opponents' no trump contract
Remember that this is based on the assumption that partner led his fourth-best. Subtract the card led from 11, (knowing partner has at least three higher cards) and then look at dummy's and your own cards in the suit to determine how many higher cards declarer holds.
Caution: never block partner's suit.

Rule of 17: Used when partner opens a weak $2♥$ or $2♠$. You add your HCPs to the number of trumps you hold. If the total is less than 17, there is no game. If the total is 17 or more, bid the game.

Note: Although not every bridge player chooses to use these rules, over the years of playing I have found them to be useful. Remember that if you want to play them, you would be wise to have an agreement with your partner.

This will be my last column regarding "rules" but will leave you with just one more.

Rule of 160: If the ages of your opponents add up to 160.....don't underestimate their ability!



ONLY FOUND IN TEXAS

What's up with Strats?

Contributed by Joan Lawson

Whether you're new to playing bridge or have been playing for many years, at some point most players ask "Am I playing in the right level of game?" Frequently, newer/novice players are cautious about moving up a level since they assume they don't have a hope of doing well against more seasoned players.

Have no fear! The beauty of strats!

In each ACBL-accredited game, whether online or face-to-face, every pair, using their accumulated ACBL masterpoints, is automatically placed in a strat category. This results in a more even playing field.

When you see the results for a particular game and there are sections (or strats) A, B, & C, it just means that the players have been grouped and the results calculated against players in each category. If you're in a lower strat, say B or C, and you do well in a game, you get the benefit of receiving higher masterpoints than you would have received if you had played in a lower game. (Stay tuned next week, for an example.)

So, the next time you are tempted to "play up", just go for it! You will gain experience and grow in your knowledge and confidence if you do!

Watch for more details on this topic in next week's Alert.

The Answer Lady

Last week, we advertised **Susan Lawton's** willingness to answer your bridge questions. To date, Susan has received two questions. While that is a start, it will still be a while before the volume of questions overwhelms Susan. In other words, please feel free 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!



TIME YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSONS!

Here is the last online workshop scheduled at present (although it is possible to take individual lessons in Stephen Carpenter's defence course). Click [here](#) to register. Click [here](#) for information regarding payment.



Bidding Big Hands

Most of us have a love-hate relationship with big hands. They're fun and exciting – but they're at the same time kind of like the Chinese word for "crisis" – part opportunity and part danger. This workshop will give you the tools you need to bid your big hands correctly. You will learn (or reinforce your knowledge of) when to open two clubs, reverse, ask for keycards, jump bid and, most importantly, pass. Up to 12 hands will be played, depending on time.

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

Date: Monday, February 21, 9:30 am - noon

Level: **Intermediate**

Instructor: Malkin Howes



Mode: ONLINE

Current Enrollment: 4

Fee: \$20 for members/ \$25 for non-members

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 **novice** workshop on **Killer Signals**
 - Jack Cole's **novice** workshop on **Playing in our Online Games**
 - Stephen Carpenter's first defence workshop (**Opening Leads**)
 - Jack Cole's **novice** workshop on **Scoring Matters** 
 - Stephen Carpenter's second defence workshop (**Third Seat Play**) 
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In anticipation of our grand re-opening on March 14, the following **face-to-face lessons** are now available for registration. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. Fuller write-ups will appear in subsequent Alerts.

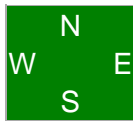
- **Playing Face to Face**, Ted Boyd, Workshop, Saturday, March 12, 10:00 am - noon, FREE
 - **Play of the Hand (Suits)**, Dianne Aves, Five-Week Course, starting Tuesday, March 15, 9:30 am – noon, \$95 for members, \$105 for non-members (includes \$20 textbook)
 - **Bidding for Intermediate Players, Part 1**, Neil Jeffrey, Four-Week Course, starting Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm, \$70 for members, \$80 for non-members (includes handouts)
 - **Basic Bidding**, Cindy Mahn, Five-Week Course, starting Tuesday, April 19, 9:30 am – noon, \$75 for members/ \$85 for non-members (includes handouts)
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• **FOR INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS**



Top or Bottom?

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

Board 11		
East Deals	♠ K Q	
E-W Vul	♥ K 10 6 4	
	♦ 10 8 4	
	♣ A Q J 2	
♠ J 6 4 3		♠ A 7 5 2
♥ 9 7		♥ 8 3
♦ J 9 3 2		♦ A K 5
♣ 10 9 6		♣ 8 7 4 3
	♠ 10 9 8	
	♥ A Q J 5 2	
	♦ Q 7 6	
	♣ K 5	

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

East dealt and passed. South opened 1♥. West passed and North jumped to 2NT. N/S played this as promising a limit raise or better. South showed a minimum balanced hand with a 3♥ bid, and North put his partner into the heart game.

After West led the ♠3, South and East surveyed the dummy, making their plans. All that South wanted from the hand was to avoid losing three diamonds on top of the spade trick he was sure to lose. East could see three very likely tricks, but with 15 HCP in dummy, 11 HCP in his hand, and an opener on his left, his partner would probably have almost no help and three tricks would be E/W's total.

East considered where a fourth trick might be found. His partner could conceivably hold the ♦Q, which might be the setting trick but, even if West held only the ♦J, there was a good chance that South might misguess the situation if East were to win the ♠A and shift to the ♦5 right away. If South's diamonds were Qxx, he would be more likely to assume that East had led from a suit that included the ♦J than from a suit that included the ♦A and ♦K, in which case South would try to make the contract by playing a small diamond, hoping that West would need to play the ace or king to win the trick.

The big problem with leading away from the ♦AK is that South might well hold both the queen and jack of diamonds, one of which he would naturally play on the first diamond lead. In this case, he will easily take at least 11 tricks – five hearts, four clubs, one diamond and one spade – for an undeserved overtrick.

So, in a pairs game where overtricks are very important, the play is probably too risky. Playing IMPs in a team game, however, the overtrick is of little consequence and underleading the ace and king of diamonds might be the only way to defeat the game.

And anyone in a pairs game who did pull this trick out of the bag at Trick 2 would very likely win a top board instead of the bottom he was risking.

 **Are you feeling lucky, punk?**



Dear David

Distributional Bidding

Dear David, the following hand came up in an IMP team game.

	N North ♠ J4 ♥ KQJ ♦ KJ108 ♣ AQ97	W N E S P 1NT P 3NT P P P
	W West ♠ AKQ752 ♥ 108432 ♦ 6 ♣ 4	E East ♠ 109 ♥ 965 ♦ A9742 ♣ 1086
	S South ♠ 863 ♥ A7 ♦ Q53 ♣ KJ532	3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0
Rewind Previous Next Options GIB Play		

With the West hand, the player passed first seat. Over 3NT, he reluctantly passed. After a small diamond lead, 3NT made exactly nine tricks. At the other table, west opened 4♠ and went down one. E/W lost 11 IMPs. Would you suggest that West should bid initially? If so, what? 1♠? 2♠? 4♠? Would you suggest that West bid 4♠ over 3NT?

It makes some sense for East to lead a major (no Stayman) and to lead his shorter major because West has more HCPs. But West's failure to open any number of spades would probably convince East to lead from his juicy diamond suit. There would be a better chance for East to find a spade lead if West had started life in fourth seat and was prevented from showing his spades due to the quick arrival to 3NT.

Any spade opening bid could be right. First of all, it stops the opponents from bidding 3NT. Nowadays, people seem to open distributional eight-point hands with some degree of success. My choice would be 1♠ in order to potentially find a heart fit at a low level. As the cards lie, you can make three of either major, while the opponents can make only three clubs if you get a diamond ruff.

As to the question of whether or not to bid 4♠ over 3NT: it is reasonable to assume they will make game (without a spade lead) and you can expect a bad result because they will likely bid spades at the other table, causing the opponents to avoid 3NT I think you need to bid and hope to minimize the disaster, even if it goes for -500.

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

#60

♠ 5 3
 ♥ A J 10 8 3
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ J 8 7 2



♠ Q 4
 ♥ 2
 ♦ A K Q 7 6 5
 ♣ A K 6 5

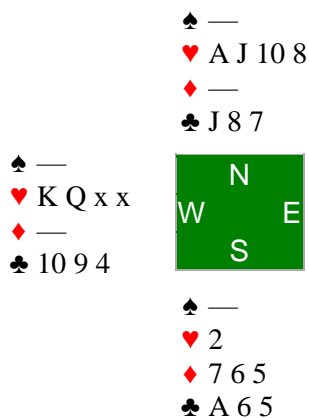
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♠	5 ♦

All pass

- 1) West led the ♠10 which East took with his ♠A and proceeded to cash his ♠K at Trick 2. West followed suit. East then exited with the ♦2 at Trick 3. I drew trump with my ♦AKQ: West followed twice and then discarded a spade, while East followed suit every time. At Trick 6, I tried the ♣K which knocked out East's ♣Q. This was good news and bad news. The good news was that I had located the troublesome ♣Q, while the bad news was that I was going to have to lose a club. What now?
- 2) Once more with feeling. If West had led the ♥K initially (your chances of getting this opening lead are quite high), how would you proceed?

SOLUTION

1) You've already lost two tricks and can't lose any more if you're going to make your contract. But it sure looks as if West originally held four clubs headed by the ♣T9, meaning that you're going to have to lose a club trick if you work on that suit. Is there anything you can do to overcome this problem? Let's analyze the opponents' hands. East has so far contributed the ♠AK, the ♦J, and the ♣Q and may possess the ♠J as well. That's a total of 10 or 11 HCP, the most he can hold for his weak two opener. So, the ♥K and ♥Q must be in the West hand. Here is a reasonable guess for West's holding at this point.



As you can see, if this is the case neither a finesse nor a ruffing finesse would work, but you may be able to squeeze West by cashing your remaining three diamonds. Assuming that West discards two small hearts on the first two diamonds, he is in a pickle when you play your last diamond (at Trick 9).

- If West discards a club, all your clubs are now good.
- If West throws away the ♥Q or the ♥K, you can finesse in hearts and pitch a losing club from your hand on the board's high heart.

2) If West's opening lead had been the ♥K, you should take it with dummy's ♥A and then lead the ♥10 from the board right away, discarding a spade from your hand! Most likely West will take his ♥Q and return a spade (best defence). East will try to cash his ♠A and ♠K, but you can ruff the second spade and collect eleven tricks - two hearts (♥A and ♥J), six diamonds, and three clubs to make your contract.

Here is the full hand.

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

When one door closes, another door opens.



Educational Foundation Week Games

All next week, you can support the work of the ACBL Educational Foundation (think Bridge-Whiz, 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.

Monday Afternoon 0-49 Game Changes to 0-99 Game

Last Monday, our new 99er game attracted FIVE full tables! This is progress!

If you have under 100 points, please plan to come out on Mondays at 12:30 pm and support this game. Let's go for six tables next week!!

Coming Virtual Events

- Friday, February 18, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Friday, February 18, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$5**
- Friday, February 18, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$5**
- Saturday, February 19, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$5**
- Sunday, February 20, 10:00 am, **499er game (18 boards) \$5**
- Monday, February 21, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Monday, February 21, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$7**
- Monday, February 21, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$7**
- Tuesday, February 22, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Tuesday, February 22, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$7**
- Wednesday, February 23, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) \$7**
- Wednesday, February 23, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Wednesday, February 23, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$7**
- Thursday, February 24, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) \$7**
- Thursday, February 24, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) \$7**
- Thursday, February 24, 6:30 pm, **19er game (18 boards) \$7**
- Thursday, February 24, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) \$7**

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 love strats at our **club**.