



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – August 1, 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 June.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	42.25	1	Jim Dalglish	13.88	1	Joani Horvath	5.09
2	Ted Boyd	28.26	2	Muzaffar Husain	10.07	2	Nancy Cattanach	5.03
3	Cindy Mahn	22.04	3	Suzanne Edwards	10.06	3	Sue McDonald	4.81
4	Colin Harrington	20.62	4	Bev Hitchman	9.50	4	Virginia Alviano	4.63
5	Moira Hollingsworth	18.77	5	Lissa Lowes	8.47	5	Belinda Burt	4.56
6	Margot Stockie	17.68	6	Cheryl Kip	8.00	6	Rick Arthur	4.18
7	Robert Griffiths	17.04	7	Barbara Arthur	7.46	7	J J Girard	3.36
8	Mike Peng	16.32	8	Jake Liu	7.44	8	Audrey Cook	3.25
9	Liz McDowell	15.53	9	Shelley Metcalfe	7.20	9	Brian Gaber	3.03
10	Edith Ferber	15.21	10	John Kip	6.75	9	Reinhold Kauk	3.03
11	Stephen Young	11.81	10	Andy Wilson	6.75	11	Molly Worden	2.86
12	William Christian	11.50	12	Lynda Burnett	6.27	12	Elinor Girouard	2.85
13	Neil Jeffrey	11.35	13	William Sherman	5.76	13	Carol Gerber	2.59
14	Pat McMillan	9.41	14	Lori Cole	5.72	13	Judy Johnston	2.59
15	Susan Lawton	9.36	15	Kevin Latter	5.56	15	Susan Durance	2.53
16	Frank Fischer	8.48	16	Nancy Millward	5.40	16	Barb Neibert	2.40
17	Dianne Aves	8.25	17	Sue Peterson	5.29	16	Anita Hanson	2.40
18	Kathy Russell	8.22	18	Bob Livermore	5.22	18	Charlene Schell	2.35
19	David Longstaff	8.05	19	Nanci Phelan	5.14	19	Jane Wilson	2.33
20	Neil Coburn	7.86	20	Jack Cole	5.08	20	Debbie Miethig	2.32
21	Sandy Graham	7.66	21	Robert Gilck	5.01	21	Kim Wakeford	2.18
22	Diane Bourdeau	6.80	22	Paul Latimer	4.87	22	Lori Bailey	2.14
23	Sharon Boyd	6.71	23	Judy Widdecombe	4.77	23	Joe Blake	2.11
24	Barbara Kains	6.06	24	Vivian McLellan	4.49	24	Tong Chen	2.08
25	Malkin Howes	6.03	25	Andy Martinek	4.25	25	Steven Allen	1.95

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

North American Pairs

The North American Pairs (NAP) is a set of annual North American championships for pairs contested over two days at the spring ACBL North American Bridge Championships (NABCs). Next year the NABCs will be in New Orleans.

The NAPs are an ACBL-wide grassroots competition to encourage all members (there are three flights) to compete for significant masterpoints and the possibility of a North-American bridge title. In order to compete, players must begin the process by qualifying in a club game – and our club will be offering five chances during the fourth week of both July and August (Monday night 499er, Tuesday afternoon open, Wednesday night open, Friday afternoon 499er, and Friday night open). Click [here](#) for more information. There are extra masterpoints available, some of them red, and there is a \$2 surcharge for these NAP games.

Monday, August 1 Civic Holiday

Business as usual. Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail shall keep the bridgemen and bridgewomen from their appointed rounds.

Coming Events

- Friday, July 29, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) (\$9 members/ \$11 non-members)**
FACE TO FACE NAP GAME
- Friday, July 29, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) (\$9 members/\$11 non-members)**
FACE TO FACE NAP GAME
- Saturday, July 30, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Sunday, July 31, 10:00 am, **499er game (18 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 1, 9:00 am, **Bridge Lab (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members)** **FACE TO FACE**
- Monday, August 1, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 1, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, August 1, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, August 2, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, August 2, 1:00 pm, **open game (24-28 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members)** **FACE TO FACE**
- Wednesday, August 3, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, August 3, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, August 3, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, August 4, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, August 4, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, August 4, 6:30 pm, **19er game (18 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, August 4, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**

Letter to the Editor

I continue to enjoy the series on how to fill out my convention card. I have downloaded the form from the ACBL website to my desktop and make the necessary edits after each article. In your last article, you mention that weak jump shifts not in competition are alertable. This is no longer true. Last year the ACBL issued several changes in alerts and announcements and this was one of them.

Thank you,
Eager Reader



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!

If you have a question, please write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca. You don’t need to send me the actual deal – just tell me the game date and board number and I can take care of the rest.

Question

When my partner and I took our beginning GRBC bridge lessons, we were advised that we could consider pre-emptive bids in any position at the table. An experienced pair we play with has suggested we should reconsider our bidding style and pre-empt only after the opponents bid, otherwise we are pre-empting our own partner. What do you think about that advice? Should we consider it or bid in any position as we were taught in the GRBC lessons?

Answer

The game of bridge has become much more aggressive in terms of bidding over the years, and one area that stands out is those pre-emptive bids. Players now defy all the old rules or guidelines, I was taught that for pre-emptive bids, for example, you need two of the top three honours, you shouldn’t have a four-card major side suit, you can’t pre-empt with a void, you need at least eight HCP to open with a pre-emptive bid, etc. These days, players bid early and aggressively, often guided by vulnerability: less aggressive when they are vulnerable and more aggressive when not, especially when opponents are vulnerable. They know they might go down, say one or two even doubled but still end up with a better score, especially if the opponents are vulnerable and can make game.

Why? For one thing, pre-emptive bids describe your hand very clearly and this information is helpful to your partner. In addition, pre-empts both early and as overcalls are very difficult for the opponents to deal with. When you pre-empt, you raise the bidding level quickly. Opponents have to make decisions before they can exchange information. Sometimes they make mistakes. You have interfered and taken up bidding room. Imagine you open 2♠ with six spades or 3♠ with seven: now the opponents must bid at the three- or four-level, and they may end up too high. Or they may have a game or even a slam contract but find it difficult to describe their hands and get to those contracts.

You wondered about waiting to bid your six- or seven-card suit right away as you might pre-empt your partner. Suppose you have a six-card heart suit and decide to pass at the first opportunity. The opponents then bid 1♠-Pass-2♠-? What will you do now? You can’t bid 3♥, since your hand is not strong enough to bid at that level, especially when vulnerable, so you are forced to pass. The opportunity has been lost and your partner has no idea about your six-card heart suit.

Bridge experts provide guidelines around pre-emptive bidding based on various factors: vulnerability, suit quality, position, scoring type, overall hand quality, etc. Perhaps your “experienced” pair was offering the advice based on “seat position”. One such approach for using seat position as a guide in determining pre-emptive bids is offered by Robert Todd. Robert has a great monthly column for newer players in the ACBL’s *Bridge Bulletin*, “Reasoning with Robert”.

Additional Robert advice can be accessed on his website: www.advinbridge.com. The suggestions below were obtained from one of his lectures at a tournament in November 2016, but the same results are available using an online search. Here are Robert's thoughts on bidding pre-emptively based on seat position.

The table position, or seat, that we are in, is an important factor to consider when deciding whether to pre-empt or not. Let's try to understand how our thinking should change in different seats around the table.

- 1. First Seat: Most aggressive** If our goal is to make life difficult for a player with a very good hand, then the odds are two to one in favor of one of the opponents being the person with the good hand instead of our partner.
- 2. Second Seat: Most conservative** One of our opponents has already passed and thus the player with a good hand is either our LHO or our partner. In other words, you might pre-empt your partner!
- 3. Third Seat: Most varied** When our partner is a passed hand, we are free to make more-tactical bids. In this case, we can open at the two-level with a slightly weaker or a slightly stronger hand than we would in the first or second seat. Go for it!
- 4. Fourth Seat: We do not pre-empt** If we have a weak hand, we will just pass the hand out. A two-level opening in the fourth seat is "to play". It is usually a six-card suit with 11 to 14 HCP and no game interest opposite a passed hand by partner.

As with all things "bridge", partnership agreement is key and will help you decide on how you wish to bid pre-emptively. So have a "chat" with your partner, discuss the options listed above. What will your weak two and three bids look like? When will you decide to bid? While it's great to surprise your opponents, you contrarywise don't want to surprise your partner at the same time!

Dealing with Covid at Our Club

Contributed by Cindy Mahn, President

As you know, we were notified on Saturday, July 23 that an individual from the Friday, July 22 afternoon game subsequently tested positive for Covid. Following this, two more players have notified us that this week they tested positive. We understand that they are recovering well. Out of an abundance of caution, our club's premises got a deep clean this past Sunday. We continue to run our HEPA filters during all of our F2F sessions and, as per Health Canada regulations, we will require our patrons to wear a mask at all times for ten days from the most-recent reported date of potential exposure – that is until Monday, August 1.

After that, masks will once again be optional at our club, but we ask our players to have a mask available so that they can comply if one of their opponents requests them to wear a mask for that round of play.

Thanks again for your continued support in keeping us all safe.



Carol Burrows

Contributed by Casi Zehr

I first became interested in playing bridge about twelve years ago when a friend invited me to take bridge lessons at her house. I did play for several months but then life got in the way. Last year, I finally retired from my job as a Senior Product Manager for a software company in Kitchener, and that's when I decided to take bridge lessons and start playing again.

I'm still in the honeymoon phase of my retirement and am busy trying out lots of exciting things. Probably the most satisfying work has been to be part of a small group of people sponsoring a refugee family from Afghanistan. Our lovely family arrived here at the beginning of June and we have been helping them set up home, look for jobs, enroll in school, and learn all about the delights of Waterloo Region.

I'm a pretty avid veggie gardener and have two community plots and a freezer full of preserved food. In the summer months, gardening and camping take up most of my time, so bridge is more of a fall and winter activity for me. I'm also a fledgling creative writer and have been taking courses in creative writing.

The most useful bridge tip I have learned is that 50% of the game is defence, so I need to keep focussing on how to be a better defensive player.

Conventional Wisdom

*This column discusses conventions, starting with the most useful ones [according to Larry Cohen](#). Today, we will talk about **2NT Asks After Our Weak Two Bids**.*

When your partner opens a weak two bid, add your HCP to the number of cards you hold in that suit. If the total is 17 or more, you should be investigating game. The most common way to investigate game is to bid 2NT. (Responding three of the suit is not invitational – rather it is used to further the pre-empt and make life even harder for the opponents.)

- At our club, some people use 2NT to ask their partner to show a feature (ace or king) in a side suit by bidding that suit; otherwise just repeat their suit. Click [here](#) for a full description of how the feature ask works.
- Others use a convention called Ogust. As usual with bridge, various versions of Ogust have evolved. If you and your partner want to use Ogust, you need to choose among the options outlined [here](#).

2NT asks after our weak two bids can be found in the second-to-the-bottom rectangle on the front of the convention card. First, check the 2NT Force box beside each of the weak two bids (2♦, 2♥, and/or 2♠) that you want to use the 2NT ask with. Then, write the associated convention (feature ask or Ogust) on the line above each one. The 2NT bid is not alertable, nor are the responses showing a feature, but the Ogust responses are all **alertable**.

If you would like to take an online or in-person lesson on how to investigate game following a weak two opener, write to [Malkin Howes](#) specifying your lesson mode preference and possible time lines.

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 in the fall 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. We have one interested person so far.....

We are currently working on the fall lessons schedule and expect to start posting information fairly soon. At present, we are thinking mainly face-to-face lessons. If this is a big problem for you, please email Malkin as above.

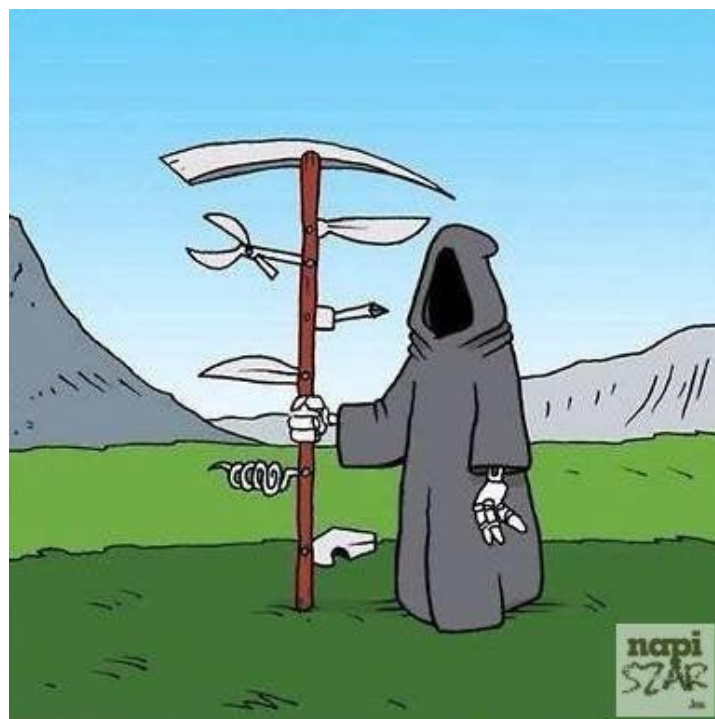
In the meantime, we have these recorded lessons available.

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**
-

The Swiss Reaper



FOR INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS



Take Out the Escape Route

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

This hand is from a team game at the recent Toronto Regional Tournament.

Board 12											
South Deals	♠ K 8 6 4										
E-W Vul	♥ 9										
	♦ A K 7 5 2										
	♣ K Q 8										
♠ Q 10 5	<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		♠ 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q 8 5 4 3		♥ K J 7 6 2									
♦ —		♦ Q J 9 6									
♣ 10 9 7 3		♣ J 6 2									
	♠ A J 9 3 2										
	♥ 10										
	♦ 10 8 4 3										
	♣ A 5 4										
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>								
			Pass								
2♥	Dbl	4♥	4♠								
All pass											

After South's pass, West opened 2♥, doubled by North. East pushed to 4♥ and South bid 4♠. Everybody came close to bidding after this but nobody did, and 4♠ by South was passed out. West led the ♥A then shifted to a club, won in dummy. South tested the spades, playing the king and another, learning that West had a spade trick.

What can possibly defeat this contract now? And what can South do about it?

The only fly that might get into this ointment is the possibility of two diamond losers, which could come only if there was a 4-0 diamond split. South can handle that possibility by playing off all of his side winners before getting to diamonds.

The defence is helpless if South wins the second spade in his hand and plays the ace and another club. If West ruffs either, he can return only a red card, having used his last spade to trump a club.

If West returns a heart, it allows South to throw one of his losing diamonds while ruffing in the dummy. If West has a small diamond to return, playing low from the dummy ensures only one diamond loser. West can win the queen or jack, but the rest of the diamonds will be high.

As it happens, West has to follow to all of the club leads. Declarer, on the board with the ♣Q, can still throw West in with a spade. He will still have no safe return – in the actual case, a losing diamond will be thrown as dummy ruffs the heart.

If South does not play off the clubs before trying diamonds, then the club suit will provide a safe exit for the defenders.



This is known as an end play (it comes near the end of the hand and leaves the opponent who takes the trick with no safe exit card).

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Contributed by David Baker

Two Chances

You hold ♠AJ432 opposite ♠K65 and ♦A432 opposite ♦QJ109. You need six tricks from these two suits and you cannot afford to lose the lead. If you take the club finesse and it loses, you fail. If you take the diamond finesse and it loses, you fail. The third option is to play the AK of clubs. If someone has a doubleton queen, you have five club tricks and one diamond trick. If that doesn't work, you try the diamond finesse and hope for two club tricks and four diamond tricks. The following is a two-chance hand.

		N North		W	N	E	S
		♠ ♥ J1042 ♦ K953 ♣ KQ752	4♠ P 5♣ P P P	4NT P 5♠ P	P P		
W West		S South		E East			
♠ J10987653 ♥ 6 ♦ AQ76 ♣	♠ A2 ♥ Q93 ♦ J82 ♣ J10984			♠ KQ4 ♥ AK875 ♦ 104 ♣ A63			
				5♠ W		NS: 0 EW: 0	

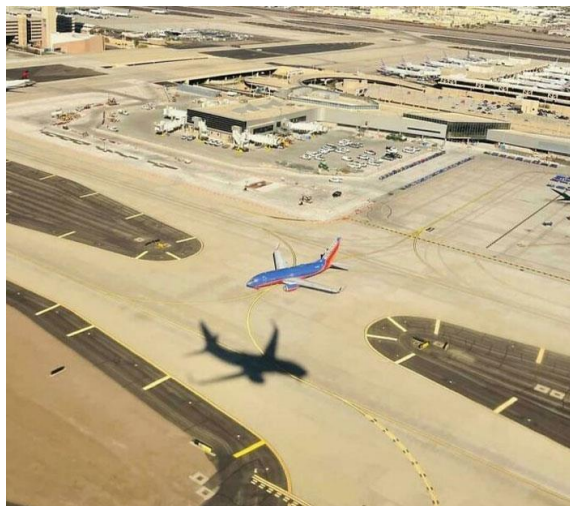
If West has an eight-card suit (as suggested by his opening bid) headed by the ace, there are 11 easy tricks. Where there are 11 tricks, there may be more. It can't cost to ask for aces, unless West opened a wonky 4♠ with an ace-less hand. If he has two aces, declarer may be in line for all 13 tricks if he can develop the heart suit for an extra trick. Alas, partner has only one ace and so you settle into 5♣. The sight of the diamond ace revives your hope of 12 tricks. Let's see how.

The ♣K is won by the ace and you throw a diamond from your hand. As happens so often in this game, you have not paused at Trick 1 to consider your options. There are two routes to taking 12 tricks: a diamond finesse (a 50% chance of success) or a 4-3 heart split (a 62% chance of success).

FYI, an ODD number of missing cards will usually split AS EVENLY AS POSSIBLE - 2-1 (78%) 3-2 (68%). The opposite is true when you have an EVEN number of missing cards - the suit is MUCH LESS LIKELY TO SPLIT EVENLY—3-3 (35%) 4-2 (48%). It is not necessary to remember the percentages. Just remember ODD=EVENLY & EVEN=ODDLY.

Why not throw a heart away at Trick 1? That way, if South ruffs a heart with the ♠2 at Trick 2 or 3, you can over-ruff and still have the diamond finesse in reserve. As the cards lie, when you ruff the third round of hearts, you see that hearts are breaking and the diamond finesse becomes unnecessary. Had you started with drawing trumps at Trick 2 (“get the kids off the street”), South would win and lead a diamond, forcing you to guess whether to finesse or not. Consider all your options before you choose your line of play.

Some Seriously-Confusing Photos



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

♠ 3
 ♥ J6
 ♦ KJ854
 ♣ A6543



♠ KJ65
 ♥ A98543
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ J

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
All pass			

West led the ♦6 to my ♦9, which won the trick as East contributed a small diamond. At Trick 2, I played my ♦Q, which lost to West's ♦A, while East followed again with another small diamond. West then exited with the ♦10 at Trick 3 to dummy's ♦J which won, as East contributed a third small diamond and I discarded a small spade from my hand. At Trick 4, I led the ♠3 from the board and put in my ♠J - which lost to West's ♠Q with East following. At Trick 5, West led the ♥2, which attracted East's ♥Q and my ♥A. At Trick 6, I led a small spade from my hand and ruffed it with dummy's ♥J as both West and East followed suit. At Trick 7, I led the ♦K from the board, and East ruffed in with ♥7. If you were in my shoes, what would you do now?

SOLUTION

At this point, here is what you can see.

♠
 ♥
 ♦ K8
 ♣ A6543



♠ K
 ♥ 98543
 ♦
 ♣ J

You are probably thinking that you should over-ruff, but instead you should discard the ♠K! A loser-on-loser play! If instead you choose to over-ruff the ♥7 with your ♥8, you run the risk of West over-ruffing with his ♥10 or ♥K and then immediately banging down his ♠A. You have already lost a spade trick and a diamond trick. And if you lose two heart tricks to the ♥K and ♥10 along with the ♠A, that comes to five tricks for the bad guys (♠AQ, ♥KT, and ♦A) = down one.

So, what happens if you discard the ♠K instead of over-ruffing East's ♥7 at Trick 7? East will hold the trick and will now play either a spade or a high club (probably the ♣K).

- If East leads a spade at Trick 8, you can ruff in your hand and then play a trump at Trick 9 hoping that both the ♥K and the ♥10 will fall. As it happens, they do fall: in fact, if both of these cards are in the same opponent's hand, you can never make your contract anyway).
- If East leads a high club, for example the ♣K, at Trick 8, you can take it in dummy with the ♣A and ruff a club in your hand at Trick 9. Then you lead a trump, once more hoping that both the ♥K and ♥10 will fall.

Here is the complete hand.

	♠ 3										
	♥ J6										
	♦ KJ854										
	♣ A6543										
♠ AQ1082	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border: none; text-align: center; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <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> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ 974
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 102		♥ KQ7									
♦ A106		♦ 732									
♣ 1072		♣ KQ98									
	♠ KJ65										
	♥ A98543										
	♦ Q9										
	♣ J										

By discarding your ♠K, you killed two birds with one stone!

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 welcome Carol Burrows to our **club**.