



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – October 30, 2023

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

Looking Ahead

- ♥ Don't forget our **new 99er game on Saturday mornings** at 9:00 am. **PLEASE NOTE THE EARLIER START!!!!**
- ♥ [Spooktacular Buffalo Regional](#), Tuesday, October 24 - Sunday, October 29
- ♥ Don't forget our **new 649er game** on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 pm.
- ♥ Starting on Sunday, October 29, the week's F2F games are **Club Championship games** = extra masterpoints, no extra charge.
- ♥ The Answer Lady will be giving a **mini-lesson on one-level overcalls** at the bridge lab on Monday, November 6.
- ♥ [Niagara Regional](#), Tuesday, November 7 – Sunday, November 12
- ♥ **The Swiss Teams game on Tuesday night, November 7; the open game on Wednesday night, November 8; and the open game on Friday night, November 10 have all been cancelled** because so many players are going to the Niagara Regional.
- ♥ Saturday, November 11, **Beginner 2 lessons commence**
- ♥ The F2F games during the weeks starting November 12 and 19 will be **Club Championship games** = extra masterpoints, no extra charge.
- ♥ Saturday, November 18, **NAP District 2 Finals**
- ♥ **Local Sectional at our Club**, Saturday, November 25 and Sunday, November 26. PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. More information next week.



Congratulations

to the following local players who earned masterpoints at last weekend's London sectional.

- **Adrian Record and Bob Griffiths**, 6th in A, Saturday A/X Pairs
- **Moira Hollingsworth and Sharon King**, 3rd in X, Saturday A/X Pairs
- **Bev Hitchman and Sheila Charters**, 4th in D, Saturday B.C.D Pairs
- **Jennifer Verdam, Adrian Record, Cindy Mahn, and Bob Griffiths**, 3rd, Sunday Bracketed Teams 1
- **David Longstaff, Edith Ferber, Kathy Russell, and David Baker**, 4th, Sunday Bracketed Teams 1
- **Thea Davis, Margot Stockie, Sharon King, and Danielle Gosselin**, 1st, Sunday Bracketed Teams 2

Many of our bridge players have other talents too! Here are three quilts on display last weekend at the quilt show at RIM Park.



This quilt was by Donna McKay.



These two quilts are by Debbie Miethig.



Joan Slover, who sent in these photos, wonders where they find the time.



Hallowe'en is Coming!

Next week's Tuesday afternoon F2F game would be a good time to dress up in orange and black colours. Also, if you're a baker, please consider bringing in an orange and black treat. And feel free to dress up. Paul Latimer says he might glue on a beard and go as an orange and black Baker....



Inaugural 649 Game

We had a decent (five full tables) turnout for our first Wednesday afternoon F2F 649 game. Everybody had a good time, and we expect that the numbers will increase going forward.
Photo credit: Cheryl White

Those who can make you
believe absurdities can
make you commit
atrocities.

Voltaire



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! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

This week’s column continues the discussion around minor suit opening bids.

Question

I have been reading your columns on minor suit openings with interest. Those columns have sparked further discussion with my partners, and we now have several questions. In your October 16, 2023 column, you mentioned the short club bid. How often is that short club bid used? We have heard from a few people that they simply do not like the short club opening bid, as in 1♣: “could be short”. Apparently, 94% of the time a 1♣ opener has at least three clubs. In our bridge learnings, we were advised to bid 1♣ with three clubs and three diamonds. With two clubs and three diamonds, it would be best to open with 1♦, in this case not promising four diamonds.

The other question that entered our discussion...what exactly is a better minor?

Signed, An Answer Lady Column Reader

Answer

Good morning column reader. I am so glad to hear you are following along with my weekly columns and please keep those questions coming! I am also pleased when a particular topic sparks further questions.

The better minor is normal Standard American playing five-card majors. The better minor approach is the one taught in our club's beginning lessons and is most frequently used. From the description above, you are likely using the better minor approach. Opening a better minor always promises at least three cards in the bid suit, either clubs or diamonds.

- With three clubs and three diamonds, no five-card major, and fewer than 15 HCP, you would open 1♣.
- With two clubs and three diamonds, no five-card major, and fewer than 15 HCP, open 1♦.
- With four clubs and four diamonds (equal length), no five-card major, and fewer than 15 HCP, bid 1♦.

The short club bid can also be part of normal Standard American playing. When pairs use that short club bid, and open 1♦, they are promising at least four diamonds, but as few as two clubs. With a hand distribution like 4432, they would bid 1♣. It must be announced as *could be short*, as you note. With a shape like 4342, pairs using a short club would open the bidding with 1♦, promising at least four diamonds. You will find players in our own GRBC games who use the short club, announcing “could be short”. It has worked for them for many years.

Choosing which approach to use is personal preference and would involve partnership agreement. Whichever route you decide, short club or better minor, it must be recorded on your convention card. Here is how the two approaches are disclosed on the convention card.

If you play "Better Minor" your Convention Card will be filled out like this:

MINOR OPENING				
Expected Min. Length	4	3	NF 0-2	Conv.
1 ♣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 ♦	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you play "Short Club" your Convention Card will be filled out like this:

MINOR OPENING				
Expected Min. Length	4	3	NF 0-2	Conv.
1 ♣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 ♦	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





Bean There Done That

Contributed by Steve Allen, Treasurer (GrandRiverBridgeClubTreasurer@gmail.com)

It is Hallowe'en next week, and I am reminded that zombies will walk the streets, hungry for the sweet taste of brains. On every night of the year, bridge zombies wander the virtual world looking to get a slice of the sweet master points that are ripe for the harvesting in BBO bridge games. Sometimes their meandering brings them physically into our Club House to terrorize our F2F games.

Bridge zombies (Latin name: *pontis immortalis*) resemble ordinary bridge players, so it's really hard to tell the difference from the rest of us. Oh my ... are you a bridge zombie? Is he? What about her? How does one spot a bridge zombie? It is not someone who is grotesquely disfigured and could be casted in a Michael Jackson music video. Their distinguishing characteristic is that they are not members of GRBC and they don't know the fun and social community they are missing by being a "visitor". They are drawn to roomfuls of highly-advanced brains with fantastic memory abilities and card sense. They're always hungry.

We shouldn't pity bridge zombies. They don't know what they are missing; they only know dead. They don't have a home and wander aimlessly. They return to our games over and over as non-members. Don't get me wrong, we appreciate their attendance in our games. So, the next time someone trumps your ace on the opening lead, think to yourself: has s/he eaten any brains today? Did s/he just take a bite out of yours?

For \$70 now or \$35 in January, there is a cure!



Time You Learned our Lessons!

No Longer in the Cards

- The **Hand Evaluation** and **Responding to Invitational Bids** workshops have been cancelled due to lack of interest.
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Still In the Cards

- **Beginner 2 Course**, starting Saturday, November 11, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. Instructor: Sue Moses. In our teaching room. Cost \$75. Current Enrollment **20 BEGINNER**
WARNING: Enrollment is limited to 24 students – only four spots left!
Click [here](#) to register.
 - **Scoring Matters** ONLINE workshop, Tuesday, November 14, 9:30 am – noon. Instructor: Jack Cole. ONLINE. Cost \$20 members/ \$25 non-members. Level: **BEGINNER/ NOV-ICE**. Current Enrollment: 3
Click [here](#) to register.
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Continuing

- **Newcomer bridge labs** every Monday morning, 9:00 am – 11:30 am, except on holiday Mondays. Mini-lesson on **one-level overcalls** by The Answer Lady on Monday, November 6 – no extra charge! \$8 members/ \$10 non-members.
Subsequent mini-lessons are as follows: **Pre-empts** with Cindy Mahn on November 13, **Initial Hand Evaluation** with Malkin Howes on November 20, and **Planning the Declarer Play in Suit Contracts** with Dave Quarrie).
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Recorded Lesson

Get That Extra Trick by Playing Card Combinations Correctly, two-hour digital workshop by Stephen Carpenter. Pay \$10 in any of the [usual ways](#), and ask [Malkin](#) to send you the link.



FOR INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS



Maggie’s Unorthodox Lead

Maggie has been busy with her career as well as her treatment for severe nomophobia, but we were recently able to have a session at a Toronto club game. This hand came up early in the session. I was North, she was South, playing against a thoughtful expert who sat East and opened 1NT in second seat. After a Stayman sequence, he became declarer in 3NT.

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

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

♠ 10 7 4 2
♥ 8 3
♦ Q J 10 7
♣ A 6 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 N	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 N	All pass		

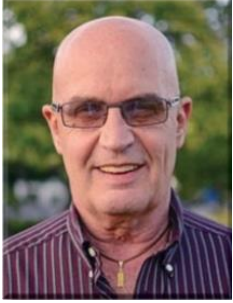
Maggie, on lead, picked out the ♦7, her fourth best, and our savvy expert quickly deduced that the correct play here is the ♦K. His reasoning was that by the rule of 11 (with which anybody reading this is surely familiar), Maggie’s partner (me) had only one diamond that could beat the ♦7. But the intrepid expert knew that I couldn’t have the ♦A because that would leave Maggie with the QJT, a sequence that every novice knows you lead the top of. So, he played the king and was somewhat shaken when I won the ace and returned the suit to Maggie’s three top diamonds. She then put him out of his misery by cashing her ♣A.

Our unhappy expert quickly understood that if Maggie had led the “normal” top of sequence ♦Q with dummy’s been unable to beat the contract. He would cover the ♦Q with dummy’s ♦K. I would win the ♦A and return the ♦6, but his remaining 8 and 9 would prove to be a stopper. And why did Maggie lead the 7 instead of the queen? “Sorry,” she said, “I forgot”.

Why do we have these “rules” that can work out better if you break them? Because for every hand like this where leading a card other than the top of the sequence gains you a trick, there are several where you get more tricks by following the rule.

👉 Maggie and I caught a break here, but the unlucky expert will look forward to playing us again – because players who break rules usually hurt themselves more than the opponents.

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Risk/Reward

After you have played about a zillion hands (as I have), you think you have the tools to successfully negotiate any hand that comes your way. Then along comes yet another hand where “The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind.”

♠ A
♥ AKQ32
♦ KQ109876
♣ A

I imagine you could make as many as 13 tricks in diamonds if partner has the ♦A, or as few as nine tricks if you lose two diamonds and two hearts. I don’t have the right tools in my bidding box to find out if partner has what I need to make a slam.

Undaunted (some may say “blindly”), I open a strong 2♣. Partner’s response of 2♥ shows no aces or kings. Even if he had made a positive response, I would have no way of knowing whether he has the diamond ace or a fit with my red suits. At this point, since all non-jump bids are not forcing in my system, I am left to guess whether to bid game or slam. With as little as the ♥J and ♦J, slam is probably cold. Since this is a team game and the reward for slam is so much greater, I try blasting to 6♦.

♠ J962
♥ 54
♦ 32
♣ J9532

Alas – two jacks, but not the ones I hoped for. I needed hearts to split 3-3 since I couldn’t ruff one without getting over-ruffed. So, I tried to ruff the third round of hearts in order to be able to finesse the ♦T. It turned out that the ♦J was singleton all along, but the hearts split 4-2, so I never had a chance.

When we compared scores after the round, we discovered they were also in six diamonds at the other table, with one little difference. The hand on opening lead had something like ♠KQ754 ♥76 ♦A654 ♣KQ104, and so our team-mate doubled based on all those wonderful black winners. If dummy had held the ♦J, it would have made. So, we were -50 and our partners were +100 – a net gain of two IMPs!

Fortune sometimes favours the bold, or the lucky.

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 September.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	40.92	1	Lynda Burnett	15.50	1	Russel Kerr	8.14
2	Cindy Mahn	24.96	2	Jim Dalgliesh	11.22	2	Sharon Nesbitt	7.78
3	Mike Peng	23.31	3	Cheryl White	10.57	3	Randall DeKraker	7.13
4	Edith Ferber	21.61	4	Janice Pengelly	9.80	4	Jane Wilson	5.10
5	Ted Boyd	19.83	5	David Dennis	9.23	5	Audrey Cook	4.76
6	Scott Hills	17.07	6	Lori Cole	8.95	6	Mark Sherwood	4.72
7	Bob Griffiths	15.31	7	Elinor Girouard	8.69	7	Doug Fickling	4.33
8	Stephen Young	14.34	8	Nancy Cattanach	8.65	8	Debbie Miethig	4.28
9	Roy Dandyk	13.16	9	Martin Jones	8.40	9	Pat Northey	4.17
10	Moirra Hollingsworth	12.55	10	Bob Giilck	8.24	10	John Aldridge	4.10
11	Neil Jeffrey	11.72	11	Sue Moses	7.94	11	Paul Raymond	4.00
12	Neil Coburn	10.37	12	Jack Cole	6.93	12	George Rybiak	3.85
13	Kathy Russell	10.30	13	Barbara Arthur	6.45	13	Richard Rybiak	3.47
14	Margot Stockie	10.17	14	Judy Beauchamp	6.30	14	Brian Gaber	3.43
15	Suzanne Edwards	9.81	15	Regina Williams	5.86	15	Sonja Miner	2.97
16	Malkin Howes	9.02	15	Denis Williams	5.86	16	Louise Dawdy	2.92
17	Liz McDowell	8.62	17	Bev Hitchman	5.85	17	Ben Cornell	2.86
18	Bonnie Kains	8.34	18	Andy Wilson	5.40	17	Don Slowinski	2.86
19	Steve Carpenter	7.64	19	John Kip	5.29	19	Andrew McNaught	2.85
20	Ed Hills	7.55	20	Kim Wakeford	5.22	20	Jim Fox	2.82
21	John Hanemaayer	7.40	21	Anita Hanson	5.08	21	Peter Gaasenbeek	2.69
22	Susan Lawton	6.69	22	Rick Arthur	4.86	22	Joan Stroud	2.45
23	Wayne Schroeder	6.17	23	Renate Boucher	4.74	23	Carol Gerber	2.43
24	Thea Davis	5.94	23	Donald Rieger	4.74	24	Judy Johnston	2.43
25	Sharon Boyd	5.69	23	Peggi Rieger	4.74	25	Pat Pietrek	2.39

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- For both online and f2f games, log on 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. *When you use Partner Finder, it will allow folks to see your contact information. If you have posted a Partner Finder ad, kindly remember to check your phone and email and, when you've found a partner, delete your ad. Someone who replied to your ad may be waiting for a response.*
- For online games only, log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab (or look to see if someone else has already registered there).

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead. Please let her know what sort of game/partner you are interested in – your playing level, your available time slots, F2F and/or online, and any other pertinent information.

We have fun in **spades**.
 We play with all our **hearts**.
 We treat our members like **diamonds**.
 We have quilters (not quitters) at our **club**.