



Welcome

Welcome to our third issue of Club Focus! We hear from many clubs that one of the most difficult problems they are facing is how to ease the transition from student to club player. Having learnt to play the game, the novice player finds the prospect of playing duplicate in a "serious" Club rather daunting: a roomful of strangers, a high standard of play, the speed of play itself, players all too willing to enforce a multiplicity of complex laws – all of these can be very off-putting to the novice.

The new Partner-Teacher teaching scheme is working well in tackling this issue, see Barry's Blog # 25, but other existing teaching schemes may need different approaches.

The Weald of Kent Bridge Club, which plays in the village of Headcorn, is a very friendly and successful club which has found a good way to help students familiarise themselves with the regular duplicate sessions. Valerie Golding, the Club's Vice-Chairman, is also an EBUTA professional bridge teacher, and once every two months she brings her students along to play in the Club's regular Wednesday afternoon duplicate session. These special sessions are announced to members in advance.

On the day there is a host available. It is declared that "students can do no wrong", i.e. it doesn't matter if they fiddle with the bidding box, hesitate over bids or change their minds about which bid to make. Students sit East-West, so that they don't have the burden of having to score. If necessary, the TD may slow the pace of play a little. Club Members are on their very best behaviour to help the newcomers to enjoy the game in a warm and welcoming atmosphere and guide and encourage them through the complexities they face.

If your club has found another good way to tackle this problem, perhaps by offering mentoring programmes, or other integrative sessions, please write in to tell us how they work. Every club is a bit different, and your approach may just be the one that will suit another club out there which is having difficulty in attracting newly-graduated players to its regular duplicate sessions.

Let us know at the contact details on page 4.

Until the next issue,

Matt Betts and Krys Kazmierczak

Down our Club

Wetherby is an affluent market town in the county of West Yorkshire, not far from Leeds. It stands on the River Wharfe, and has been for centuries a crossing place and staging post on the Great North Road, being mid-way between London and Edinburgh. Wetherby is famous throughout Yorkshire for many things, but what is less well known is that the town boasts one of the largest Bridge clubs in the county!

Unfortunately, some people's perception of Bridge is that the game is a little dusty and complicated. Wetherby Bridge Club knew that something had to be done about that. So, under the guidance of Chairman Geoff Shaw, it decided to hold an open day on 19 January 2008 to help show what a fun and vibrant game Bridge is.

The event was very successful with many visitors enjoying the opportunity to play some Bridge. A number of the committee were also invited to appear on radio, particularly the local Radio Leeds.

Wetherby Bridge Club is based in modern premises adjacent to Sunny Gyms and Sainsbury's on Crossley Street. Three hundred regular members can play on six evenings each week. For more information on the Club, please visit its website: www.wetherbybridgeclub.org.

Do you want to write about your bridge club? Do you want to tell us why you play at your club? Write to us at our address on page 4.

Focal point

Just a reminder that the Strategy Proposal for the Future of the EBU and Duplicate Bridge in England is available on our website. Each affiliated club, county and shareholder have been sent a copy. Please read this proposal along with the pull out section in the April issue of English Bridge. Please contact your county to make your views known. A vote on whether to accept the proposal will be taken at the EBU Shareholders meeting on 4 June 2008.

Bridge Tails



Treacle the cat becomes annoyed by the Ace of Diamonds and pretends it doesn't exist.

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Stop press..

The first newsletter for ReallyEasy.com will be out next month. ReallyEasy.com is targeted for all bridge beginners. If you would like to receive a copy, please let Gill Pain know at Gill@ebu.co.uk.

Bidding Tools: Negative Doubles

It is widely accepted these days that, at the one or two level, it is quite rare that a penalty double of a suit contract is profitable. Hence the widespread use of the take-out double in situations where one of the opponents opens a suit and you have a hand with opening values and something in each of the other three suits.

Let's look at another kind of situation where something akin to a common or garden take-out double might be useful. How often does it happen that your partner has opened 1♣, and you have 7 points in your hand and are just about to bid your nice heart suit, when that awkward opponent on your right decides to bid 1♠? What can you do now? Your hand is, let's say, ♠962 ♥KJ1074 ♦K93 ♣95. You are not strong enough to bid 2♥. Your spades are not good enough to bid 1NT. You don't have enough clubs to raise partner's suit, although it would not be a disaster if partner with 5 or more clubs rebid the suit. The only possibility appears to be to pass. Yet for all you know, you might have a good heart fit with partner. It might be his second suit.

The answer to your problem is to use something called a Negative Double. This is a kind of take-out double, which in this situation promises at least 4 hearts and the values for at least a normal response at the one level. What you are telling partner is that you would have bid 1♥ if the opponent had not interfered.

Some people prefer to play so-called Sputnik Doubles, where traditionally the double after 1♣ - (1♠) promises both hearts and diamonds. However, modern theory prefers to emphasize the importance of the majors, so most players these days use the Negative Double to promise the missing major(s). The hand that makes the double may or may not also have the missing minor. There are variations in the way Negative Doubles are played, so it is important that you agree on a scheme with your regular partner. Try the following scheme to begin with:

1♣ - (1♦) - Dbl shows both majors (with only one major, bid that major)

1♣/♦ - (1♥) - Dbl shows exactly four spades (may also have the other minor)

1♣/♦ - (1♥) - 1♠ shows five or more spades (since a double would show four)

1♣/♦ - (1♠) - Dbl shows four or more hearts (may also have the other minor)

1♥ - (1♠) - Dbl shows both minors

Note that if your right-hand opponent overcalls partner's 1♣ or 1♦ with 1♥, you have two ways of showing spades while staying at the one level, – either by simply overcalling with 1♠, or by making a Negative Double. This allows you to make a useful distinction by using the double to show exactly four spades, and the spade bid to show five or more spades.

If you are just beginning to use Negative Doubles, it is best to play them up as far as overcalls of 1♠ or 2♠ only. Thus, after 1♣ - (3♠), a double would be for penalties! Tournament players often play Negative Doubles up to 3♠. You must make sure that you and your partner agree on the level.



Focal point

Take-out doubles, including Negative and Sputnik Doubles, of natural suit bids at the 1, 2 or 3 levels are not alertable under the recommended EBU Announcing and Alerting Rules. As a corollary: penalty doubles of natural suit bids at the 1, 2 or 3 level must be alerted.

Limerick Competition

The winner of the limerick competition from our March issue is Mike Wenble from Buckinghamshire with the following fine verse:

*Declarers from Luton (in Beds)
Had their partners shaking their heads
Two down in 3N
Again and again
They'd mixed up their blacks and their
reds!*

Mike receives a copy of the book
The Wei to Good Bridge.

The judges also liked the following from a reader not eligible to compete:

*An elderly lady from Potton
Had a partner whose name she'd forgotten.
When he tried to revoke
She exclaimed "Stupid bloke!
No wonder we always come bottom!"*

Thank you very much to Mike and all of those who entered the competition.

Why not have a go at our next competition? Limericks for this should have a Bridge theme and include the name of a place in the (Bridge) County of Berkshire & Buckinghamshire. Plenty of scope there with places like Marlow, Reading and Slough! Entries should be in to the address on page 4 by 15 June 2008. The winner will receive a copy of the British Bridge Almanack by Peter Hasenson.



Did you know?

...Oliver Cromwell banned all card games during his Protectorate as he believed they were connected to the devil. However, after the Restoration of the monarch in 1660, and once Charles II was safely on the throne, card games returned! Thank you Charles!

National Lottery Awards for All Grant II

In our last issue, we wrote about the successful National Lottery Awards for All Grant to Whitley Bay Bridge Club. Since then we have heard news of another successful grant given to the Hitchin Bridge Club, Hertfordshire.

Since February, the club has been able to make use of a new dealing machine funded by a grant from the Awards for All scheme. Last month the club held a demonstration of the new equipment, and the event was attended by County Cllr Nigel Brook, Chairman of the Hertfordshire County Council; Cllr Alan Bardett, Chairman of the NHDC and local Hitchin Cllr Martin Stears, who was the referee for the lottery application.

Margaret Eddleston, President of the Hitchin Bridge Club, outlined the benefits of the equipment: *"The machine enables truly random hands to be pre-dealt and, when used with the detailed hand records and statistical information it produces, this offers more interesting and challenging play and improves players' skills and enjoyment. It can also be used for teaching purposes and helps where members find dealing or shuffling cards physically difficult."*

She also paid tribute to the Awards for All scheme: *"I found the whole process of applying for the grant very straightforward, and the staff at Awards for All were efficient and helpful. I would encourage any local club or community group to make an application if they have a particular project they wish to finance"*.

All the invited guests stayed on after the demonstration to enjoy a friendly game of bridge.

The club was only founded in 2000 and currently has about 80 members.

Do you want to let us know about your local bridge club? Have you achieved something interesting recently? Let us know by writing to us at our address on page 4.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Bill Simpson of the Mansfield Mechanics Bridge Club (Notts), cutting his birthday cake on the occasion of his 100th Birthday.

Focal point

If you are experiencing delays in receiving your issue of Club Focus, you may wish to be added to our mailing list and be sent a copy directly on publication. If so, please write with your email address to the address on page 4. We are sorry, but we cannot send out hard copies.

New knees!



It must be some kind of record! Seven members of Wetherby Bridge Club who have all had knee operations recently met to advise Gill Berry whether she should have one too!

Back Row: **Diane Smithson, Joyce Scott, Gill Berry, Michele Konig, Dorothy Lamb**

Front Row: **Mary Hall, Rosemary Search, Ruth Watson**

Hand of the month

Eileen Martensen from Oxford sent in the following interesting hand which came up at her club recently:

North

- ♠ -
- ♥ -
- ♦ Jxxxxx
- ♣ QJxxxx

West

- ♠ AKQxxxxx
- ♥ Qxx
- ♦ Q
- ♣ x

East

- ♠ xxx
- ♥ AKJxxxx
- ♦ -
- ♣ Kxx

South (declarer)

- ♠ Jx
- ♥ xxx
- ♦ AKxxx
- ♣ A10x

After some lively bidding (S-1♦, W-2♠, N-4NT, E-5♥, S-Dbl, W-P, N-7♦) the final contract reached was 7♦ by South, which made easily. Not bad on a combined 16 count!

Insurance

The EBU is currently negotiating a deal with our insurance brokers for a "Group" policy to cover all affiliated clubs for Public Liability and Employers Liability. The cost for a club with up to 100 members would be in the region of £45 plus premium tax. Costs for larger clubs will be a bit more. All clubs that are duly affiliated to the EBU would be covered under our policy. We would recharge each club the premium and this will probably show a saving of around 45-50% over current policies. Another advantage is that it will be "paperwork free" as the EBU will organise it through our brokers.

Additional coverage, e.g. trophy cover will be available at extra cost directly from the broker.

Prices quoted are current approximations and could vary depending upon the state of the insurance market when the policy is issued.

More information will be added to the website as soon as it is confirmed.

County TD and County Refresher Course

13 - 14 September 2008

These will be held at the Park Inn Birmingham West Hotel, Birmingham Road, West Bromwich B70 6RS.

The **County Course** is open to qualified club directors with at least one year's experience of directing and some experience of organising events at county level. It is preferred that you have the approval of your county association. Successful candidates will gain their County Directors Qualification with outstanding candidates gaining a Pass with Distinction.

The **County Refresher Course** is open to those who have previously been successful on the County Course. Attendees will be unofficially marked to see how they have progressed since doing the County Course.

All inclusive price of £180 covers all course fees and materials, one night DBB, Sunday finger buffet and three servings of tea/coffee.

Forthcoming EBU Events

Spring Bank Holiday Congress - Bournemouth (24 - 26 May)

Yorkshire Congress - Harrogate (30 May - 1 June)

Oxfordshire Congress - Steventon (28 - 29 June)

Riviera Congress - Riviera Centre, Torquay (27 - 29 June)

Summer Seniors Congress - Winter Gardens, Eastborne (4 - 6 July)

Northern Seniors Congress - The Cairn Hotel, Harrogate (4 - 6 July)

More information, please email comps@ebu.co.uk



What the Director said

The Tournament Director was getting a bit frustrated with the pair of elderly clergymen sitting at table 7, who were chatting for a long time between boards and continually holding up the movement. He picked up the microphone and announced: "Our fathers who art at seven. Hurried be thy game."

Andrew Kambites

Focal Point - the laws of Duplicate bridge 2007

The new laws promulgated by the World Bridge Federation take effect in England on August 1st 2008. A new edition of the law book is available from the Bridge Shop - £10. There are major changes to the insufficient bid and revoke laws and several other minor changes. More details in the next Club Focus.

Write to us

We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of Club Focus. Are you interested in writing for the next newsletter? Have you started learning bridge? Have you got any funny stories about bridge? Does your club have any interesting ideas or solutions to common problems which other clubs might benefit from? Would you like to publicise any special events open to non-members and members? Do you have a special pet who likes to play cards? Please let us know!

If you would like to contact us or send us your articles, feedback or comments, please email: clubfocus@ebu.co.uk or post to: **Club Focus, English Bridge Union, Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ.**



Deadline for submissions is 10 June 2008. We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your thoughts.

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Wanted!

Maidenhead Bridge Club is looking for a second-hand Duplimate machine in good working order.

Offers please to Bob Beauchamp, tel. 01628 639014, email:

bob@maidenheadbridgeclub.org.uk

Joke Corner

A bridge duffer was polishing a lamp and... poof! Out popped a genie who said, "I will grant you one wish."

The duffer unfolded a map of the world and said, "Let all of these countries live in peace and harmony."

"You've got to be kidding! I'm only a genie."

The duffer thought for a while and then suggested, "OK, then make me a winning bridge player."

"Hmm..." the genie pondered. "Let me see that map again."



If this newsletter is printed, please don't forget to recycle it afterwards.

Information contained in this edition is correct at time of going to press. Production schedules mean that entries listed or reviewed may change between going to press and publication.