

SOMERSET COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2009

Chairman's Report

This year's competition season has flown by. Overall the events seem to have run well, and it has been pleasant to receive thanks from members who have appreciated the effort put in by Committee members to run these events to a high standard.

A couple of years ago the EBU brought in its Best Behaviour @ Bridge policy to try and improve competitors' behaviour at the table. My perception is that behaviour has improved as a result, but I am afraid recently my mail bag has indicated there have been a number of instances of poor behaviour at the table in county events. No matter how well the county events are organised, members will not want to participate if the very small minority cannot demonstrate good manners to their competitors. So in the heat of the moment please try to address your partner and your opponents in the way you would expect to be addressed yourself.

Over the last few months a lot of time has been spent on rewriting the SCBA's Constitution. This has had to be done to introduce Pay to Play from April 2010. But it was also timely, as the Constitution had not been updated for over ten years. The law has moved on, and we have had to take account of the Human Rights Act and how to remain exempt from the provisions in the Gaming Act in particular. Did you know Duplicate Contract Bridge is outside the terms of the Gaming Act as it is defined as a game of skill and not chance? Tell that to my partner after Board 24 cost us a win in the Club Pairs the other night!

The Constitution provides the foundation on which the SCBA can be run for its members' benefit, and I would like to thank those who have responded to the draft. The final draft has now been posted on the SCBA website. It has been sent to the EBU for their approval and it will then need to be approved by at least forty SCBA members at our AGM on 5th July 2009. I know AGMs are not most people's cup of tea, but we really need your support for the new

Constitution at this year's AGM. Proxy votes are not allowed, so only those attending the meeting can vote. Please do your utmost to attend and stay for the bridge event afterwards.

Finally I would like to thank Anne Harris and Colin Simcox for organising and running the entire EBU Club Director's course over four training days. The first two days saw up to thirty members of affiliated clubs in attendance, due to a concession from the EBU that allowed us to invite non EBU members. This is just the type of support we need from the EBU to make their desired objective of providing training and infrastructure support for our clubs come alive. And as a result I understand that the EBU and the SCBA now have four new members. I am also delighted to hear the final Assessment day in June will be attended by John Pain, who use to be our tournament director at the West of England Congress before taking up a post at the EBU. John will be helping Anne and Colin out on the Assessment day, and no doubt be assessing their performance as well!

Michael Whittaker

The County's Charity

£1834.20 has been raised for the Motor Neurone Disease Association, this year's SCBA supported charity.

The Michael Coda Cup was this year's final charitable event. A few people give up a lot of their time each year to make this particular event enjoyable for all of us who play in it, as well as helping to raise money for the county's charity. So thank you Ken and Ann Bawdon for the excellent administration of this year's event, and to Anne Harris for writing the commentary with the late Paul Wickham shortly before his death

A number of prizes, kindly sponsored by the Wilton Bridge Club, will be awarded to the successful participants at the AGM.

If any member would like to suggest an appropriate charity for the SCBA to support next year, please contact Sheila Coda. The charity, or a branch of it should ideally have a strong Somerset connection.

Recent Successes in County and National Events

Full details of all the county event results can be found on the SCBA website at www.somersetbridge.org.uk.

Congratulations to all of the following:

County Swiss Pairs: 1st John and Shirley Durrant, 2nd Colin Simcox and Frank Coltman, 3rd Bob Warrender and Dave Latchem.

Michael Coda Cup: 1st Marianne Lewin and Norman Bishop, 2nd Gina Howard and Bill Rowe, 3rd Elaine Payne and Peter Marshall.

3 Tier Pairs: 1st Colin Floyd and Steve Tomlinson, 2nd Shirley Durrant and Rachael Brown, 3rd Marion Blackhall, Tom Gibbard. In the restricted section: 1st Daphne Greatorex and Brian Fryer, 2nd Christine Hannam and Rita Martin, 3rd Joan Murray and Sue May.

Mixed Pairs: 1st Jenny Farrington and Michael Thomas, 2nd Ann Allsopp and Colin Juneman, 3rd Robin and Judy Belcher.

Championship Pairs: 1st Graham Heal and Colin Juneman, 2nd Bob and Jacky Baker, 3rd Alan and Jette Bailey. The three pairs that will represent Somerset in the final of the Corwen are Graham Heal and Colin Juneman; Colin Simcox and Rachael Brown; Caroline MacPherson and Bill Rowe.

The Langport team of Gina and David Howard, Caroline MacPherson and Bill Rowe have reached the 5th round of the Nicko.

The Taunton team of David Porter, Tom Gibbard, Chris Jones and Colin Flood have reached the 4th round of the Nicko Plate.

Colin Juneman and Roger Sweet with team mates from Avon have reached the 4th round of the Gold Cup and will now play the 11th seeds.

Graham Heal and Roger Sweet have qualified for the final of the National Pairs.

Nora and Nigel Mallett finished 2nd and Sheila Coda and Heinz Brunsch 8th overall in the BGB Spring Sim Pairs.

In the Western League, Somerset won all three matches against Cornwall, the A division by 12-8, B Division by 19-1 and the C Division by 13-7.

Directors Corner

Insufficient bids seem to happen quite regularly at the clubs that I play at. How often has the bidding gone 1C - 1S - 1H simply because you didn't notice the 1S overcall? And what happens next? Well, I find that in most cases the Director is not called, and the 1H bid is simply replaced with 2H. The problem here is that both sides may actually be missing an opportunity to which they are entitled.

Firstly, the next player can always accept the insufficient bid (Law 27A), that is to say, they can insist that the insufficient bids stays. In the above example, the next player knows that the insufficient bid of 1H is likely to be replaced by 2H if they don't accept 1H. So, if they accept the 1H bid, there is now room to bid (say) 2D if they wanted to. You should always consider accepting an insufficient bid - don't just assume that RHO can make their bid good.

Secondly, by not calling the Director, the player making the insufficient bid may not be doing themselves a favour. Consider if you have a minimum hand with only 4 hearts, and intended to respond 1H to 1C (as above). You missed the 1S overcall. You have this suspicion that there will be a problem if you pass, so reluctantly replace your (insufficient) 1H bid with 2H, as you've seen other people do this before. This puts partner in a difficult position. Even with minimum values, how many players would pass if the bidding went 1C - 1S - 2H - P ... ? It looks pretty forcing to me. So you bid again, end up in a poor contract, and get a bad result. What if you had called the Director? Under new regulations - Law 27B1(b) - you can make an alternative call that has the *same or more precise meaning* as the insufficient bid. Do you play negative (Sputnik) doubles in this situation? Many players do. So long as it would guarantee 4 (or more) hearts, and 6 HCP or more (irrespective of whether it shows 4

diamonds as well), you would be allowed to double, without penalty. So partner, who actually has a 4-1-3-5 hand shape, could (say) bid 1NT, and all would be well.

The moral of the story is that the Director should always be called when there is an insufficient bid.

Colin Simcox

Learning from Colin

The Tollemache is the inter-county competition for teams of eight. It takes place over a weekend at Hinckley in Leicestershire. Each year the Somerset team travels there with hope and returns wounded but defiant.

The Somerset team this year contained three Colins, a source of confusion and welcome ambiguity at times. On the arrival of our car, Colin Juneman correctly predicted that the only hotel room to be ready would be mine (based on the two successful Colins in the other car).

There were 37 counties participating and we were drawn in a group of nine, playing 12 board matches against each other team. The cross-imp scoring is vicious – a bad board can cost 50imps.

The standard of bridge is generally high but playing nearly 100 boards mistakes do happen. Here is one hand, which worked well for Somerset. At favourable vulnerability you hold ♠ 9 8 7 4 3 2 ♥ A 7 6 ♦ 8 6 2 ♣ 5. It's your bid third in hand. One of the Notts players opened a weak two spades. This was doubled for take-out by Colin Simcox, and Frank Coltman (his partner) was delighted to pass this holding ♠ K Q J 10 5 ♥ Q 9 3 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ 6 4. Two spades doubled went four down for an enormous 1100 penalty. At our table, I passed the weak hand, learning from Colin Juneman, who mentioned in one of the intervals that he and Graham Heal don't open a weak two without one of the top three honours. Tony Sowter for Notts opened Colin S's hand 2♦ holding ♠ A 6 ♥ K 5 ♦ A K 7 ♣ A Q 10 9 8 3. Given a free run, they cantered into six spades. Tony was given a choice of slam contracts when his partner bid 5NT and as he said cheerfully afterwards six spades was probably the best chance! However, with the trumps breaking 6-0 and the club honours

offside, it went three down for a huge swing to Somerset. Well, this was Somerset's best match and we did beat Notts 20-0. Overnight we were clearly in contention for one of the two qualifying spots. In the end we won four matches, drew one and lost three finishing a respectable fourth, annoyingly pipped by Notts who finished third.

Amidst a number of less successful hands, the highlight for me was this one:

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

Eric Cummings (east) opened 1♦. I responded 1♠, then 3♥ was overcalled and 4♥ from Eric. What's this? Probably spade support; whatever, I felt I was good for my initial response and chose to bid 5♣. Eric raised to six and north, with a long string of hearts, led a low diamond won with the ace in dummy. Oh dear, plenty of potential tricks but two aces missing including the ace of trumps.

In an earlier match, Colin Juneman had made 6NT missing two aces (the defender winning trick one with one of the aces failed to switch correctly and it was all over). So how could I learn from Colin again? Well there seems no chance here and rather despondently I played the Q♣, which held the trick. Now, there is just a chance ... if north started with a singleton trump. I'll probably go an extra one off but it's worth a try. Play K♦ discarding a heart. North shows out, but doesn't trump! So, the other two hearts go on the Q,J♦. Some care is needed in trumps bearing in mind they are 4-1 – when south wins the third club, the diamond or heart ruff must be taken with the 6♣. The A♠ then provides the entry to draw the last trump with the jack, before cashing the winning spades.

Roger Sweet was unlucky on this hand (normally not a source of distress, but this time we're in the same team!). As west, he used Blackwood after Mike Whittaker had bid 4♠, stopping in 5♠ with two aces missing. However, the defence went a club to the ace, club ruff, ace of hearts.

Overall it was a tough but enjoyable event – and thank you for the help, Colin (you know which one I mean).

Colin Flood

Club Directors Training Courses

Twenty six members of SCBA's affiliated clubs started out on their journey to qualify as an EBU Club Director when they attended the Part 1: Essentials training day in Taunton in February. Another four members joined them for Part 2: Book Rulings in March.

The final two parts of the course will be Part 3: Judgment Rulings (dealing with unauthorised information, misinformation and adjustment to scores) on Tuesday 9th June with Part 4: Assessment on Tuesday 23rd June. Both parts will be held at Staplegrove Village Hall, Taunton from 10am to approx 4.15pm. Anticipated cost is not more than £20 pp per day.

There are a few places still available for the June training days for SCBA and EBU members who may have already started the club director's course elsewhere and would now like to finish it off. Both Part 2- Book Rulings and Part 3- Judgment Rulings of the club director's course must have been attended before the Part 4 Assessment can be taken (although Judgment Rulings may be attended before Book Rulings). Please e-mail Anne Harris ayh1981@yahoo.com if you are interested in attending one or both of the June training days or require further information.

Anne Harris

County Selection

A number of members have asked what they need to do to be considered for county team selection. The obvious answer is to do well particularly in team competitions especially green pointed ones, and the main county events. Further guidance is available in the County Selection Policy published on our web site.

It can help to catch the selectors' eye by performing well if you are playing against any of them! I am not a county team selector anymore, but this hand from a recent team of four event caught my eye, both in the bidding and then the play.

The bidding was:

N	E	S	W
	1NT ⁽¹⁾	P	2H ⁽²⁾
* ⁽³⁾	2S ⁽⁴⁾	2NT ⁽⁵⁾	P
3C ⁽⁶⁾	P	3H ⁽⁷⁾	P
4H ⁽⁸⁾			

- (1) 12-14
- (2) Transfer to spades
- (3) Good values with at least 4 hearts
- (4) Completes the transfer
- (5) Lebensohl type bid, asking partner to bid 3C
- (6) Does as told.
- (7) Confirms heart fit with invitational values as partner's original free double assumed to be around a minimum of 15 HCP
- (8) Pushing for the vulnerable game, slight extra, good controls and sitting over the 1NT opener should help.

The North/South bidding sequence was interesting. It is not easy to get to game over a 1NT opening, but the use of Lebensohl ensured the bidding sequence was well controlled. A direct 3H bid by South would have been purely competitive, rather than including the invitational values shown through bidding 3H via Lebensohl.

These were the hands:

Declarer(South)

S xx
H 98xx
D Qx
C KJxxx

Dummy (North)

S AQJ
H Q10xx
D A10xx
C Ax

At first sight the contract did not look too promising. Declarer quickly assessed that West would have to hold the JH to have any chance. After a small diamond lead East won the KD and returned a diamond. After winning the QD declarer led a low heart towards dummy. West won with the KH and led a spade. With the assumed holding of the JH, West cannot now hold the KS or any other honour card because of East's 1NT opening bid. Declarer won the

AS, cashed the AD and discarded a spade in his own hand. He now took a ruffing finesse in spades. Then the JS was ruffed in hand, and a further heart led towards dummy's 10H. When the JH appeared declarer was effectively just left to clear the trumps and take the finesse of the QC to bring the contract home. Lucky! Perhaps but good players also make their own luck.

Michael Whittaker

WAR AND PEACE

My mind returns – ah! Memory dear! – to happy days of yore
When peace was found at Brentwood amid the clash of war
The firelight flickers on the walls, the shaded lamp is set
The cards lie circled on the baize. Ah! How can I forget
The sense of rest and peacefulness amid the clash of war
Emily tis you and I to play against the other two
Emily looks pleased, she knows she has a partner good and true
Did I do this? Says Maud, and since we all agree she did
Six hearts, she cries, it is a psychic bid
I'll double, says Miss B, whereon she settles in her chair
While Kitty Woodward looks at a yarborough fair
Emily leads out the ace of trumps and down upon the table
Goes Kitty's hand as she explains she really wasn't able
To back Maud up or take her out.
The game goes on, and anger rises quick
When Kitty sees her partner with an unrepentant flick
Upon the table place the two of clubs (tho hearts were lead)
What are you doing Maud she cries "have you gone off your head
I naturally thought, says Maud all poise and dignity
That since I hadn't got a heart you'd have the lot, you see
Then Kitty rises in her wrath, I'll never play again
With one who makes a psychic bid like that – it just won't gain

To add to all the trouble, in the middle of the fight

Miss B puts down the score and says she thinks they were twelve light

My dear Kitty Maud exclaims if you have kindly done

I'll get the book and show you what it says in Culbertson

We fan our cards, the game goes on, the modest bid is made

The firelight flickers on the walls, the shaded lamp is set

The cards are fluttering on the baize. Ah how can I forget

When we played bridge and Brentwood in happy days of yore

The Newsletter aims to keep Somerset bridge players up to date with the county scene. We would like to include short articles from you about events and people in your club. We would also like to receive any funny or educational bridge related tales that you could share with us. My e-mail address is yourfamilyhistory.rachael@googlemail.com
Rachael Brown