



THE MICHIGAN BRIDGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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Spring, 2015

BRIDGE CONNECTION SCHEDULE

STACs (Sectional Tournament at Clubs):
All games Monday April 13 – Sunday April 19; *SILVER* points, 100% sectional rated; stratified; open pairs; Friday evening April 17 is a Swiss Team STAC.

Club Championships (Monday May 4 – Sunday May 10): Higher masterpoint awards for overall finishers in all strata; regular entry fees.

Mother's Day (Sunday May 10) - open.

Farmington Hills Regional (Monday May 11 – Sunday May 17): closed for ALL games.

0-1000 Swiss Teams: May 18 – Beginning Monday May 18 and every Monday thereafter at 11:30am, a Swiss Team game for players with 0-1000 masterpoints.

Memorial Day (Monday May 25) – open.

Worldwide Bridge Contest: Sat. afternoon June 6: ½ red/black points at 100% sectional rating; special souvenir hand analysis booklet. Open pairs; masterpoints will be awarded for club results but you will compete against thousands of pairs worldwide for additional masterpoints. We will have a side game for those choosing not to play in the WW Pairs.

Farmington Hills Sectional (Th. June 25 – Sun. June 28): closed for all games.

Saturday July 4th – open

ACBL-wide International Fund Game:
Wed. eve. 7:30pm, July 15 – 100%
sectional rated; stratified, 50% red/black points. ♠

LIFE MASTER MILESTONES

Please join us in congratulating the following Bridge Connections players for achieving new Life Master Milestones:

Gold Life Master (2,500)
Rose Burke

Silver Life Master (1,000)
Lynda Thal

New Life Master
Robert Palmer ♠

MONTHLY MASTERPOINT LEADERS

JANUARY:

A. Bill Melander	15.18
Dick Menczer	14.33
B. Bob Raf	10.25
C. Susan Woodrow	7.62

FEBRUARY:

A. Jack Shartsis	11.10
Bert Newman	10.97
B. Bob Raf	10.23
C. Marilyn Nathanson	5.36

MARCH:

A. Jack Shartsis	14.88
Sandy Birnholtz	11.96
B. Bob Raf	9.71
C. Marilyn Nathanson	7.48

SECTIONAL RESULTS

Valentine Sectional: Bridge Connection regulars grabbed 14 of the top 15 masterpoint winner slots at the February Valentine Sectional. Marilyn and Myles Maddox led the masterpoint winners with 31.69 mps. each (I guess it pays to be featured in the club's Newsletter). The Maddoxes won two open pairs events and were second in the Sunday Swiss.

Michigan State (March): Our (more or less) players grabbed all 10 of the top masterpoint winner slots. Leading the pack with 30.65 masterpoints, was Ed White, a frequent player in our afternoon games. Ed won the Sat. Swiss and Friday afternoon open pairs and placed in the overalls in several other events. ♠

AARP AND BRIDGE

The ACBL has recently decided to begin targeting the over-50 crowd for its marketing efforts. As a result, the March, 2015 issue of the national AARP Bulletin had an extensive article on "A Bridge to Brain Power." The article discussed how playing bridge can help you keep sharp long after retirement.

Prominently featured in the article is our own Bill Melander. Dr. Melander's claim to fame is that at age 82 he became the oldest ACBL member to win a national championship. And, he did it again four years later!

Those who know Bill know that he captured his true feelings when he said, "Bridge is the equivalent of a narcotic high." "Through bridge," he said, "he keeps socially engaged and cognitively challenged – two important attributes of aging gracefully." ♠

NEW ORLEANS NABC NEWS

Several Bridge Connection regulars did very well at the recent Nationals in New Orleans:

1. Jonathan Fleischmann was on the winning team, captained by Don Rumelhart, in the 0-10,000 K/Os.
2. Dennis Kastle, playing with Roger Bates, thought he won the Lebhar IMP Pairs. But because of an appeal which did not involve him, he slipped to 2nd overall. Dennis and Roger were also 7th in the Silver Ribbon Pairs.

3. Sondra Schubiner playing with Ken Kranyak was 4th in the Rockwell Mixed Pairs.

5. Bob Katz, Frank Treiber, Julie Arbit and Jordan Kaye were 6th in the 0-10,000 Swiss Teams. ♠

CAN I HAVE A REVIEW?

(Ed. Note: We are continuing our discussion of common situations when the director is called to the table. Our hope is that if players understand how the Laws apply to these cases, they will be better prepared to handle them at the table and will understand why the director ruled the way he did.)

This column will examine player's rights to ask for a review of the bidding or an explanation of a call.

Review of the bidding: The Laws are very explicit on this topic. The declarer, or either defender, may ask for a review of the bidding or an explanation of an opponent's call *before the opening lead is faced or before playing to the first trick*. Declarer may do so until he plays from *either dummy or his hand*. This is why making a face-down lead is important. Reviews should include "alerts."

By the way, once an opening lead is made face-down, it can only be retracted with the permission of the director.

Explanations: The defenders and declarer (note absence of dummy) retain the right to request an explanation of a call throughout the play, each at his own turn to play.

However, the Laws state clearly that it is improper to ask a question solely for partner's benefit. A common example of an improper request is, after making a lead directing double, to ask for a review to be sure partner saw the red card.

Lastly, after it is too late to have a complete review of the auction, either defender or declarer is still entitled to be informed as to what the contract is and whether, but *not* by whom, it was doubled or redoubled. ♠

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT ON:

DAN SUTHERLAND

(Dan is a relatively new player at our club, but his domineering physical presence makes him easily recognizable. He is also, in everyone's opinion, one of the nicest players, setting a great role model for other newer players.)



Dan Sutherland

Dan is a native Detroiter, the youngest of 11 children, born on Thanksgiving Day. Not surprisingly he was a star athlete in high school in three sports: football, basketball, and his favorite, baseball where he was an All-League pitcher. As a pitcher he had two no-hitters to his credit and another game in which he faced the minimum 21 batters (seven innings). The latter was accomplished by picking off a runner who had just singled.

He got his bachelor's degree from U-M Dearborn where his co-op position in finance at Ford Motor Company led to full-time employment of 32 years. He subsequently got an MBA from U-D and retired from Ford as Controller of Marketing and Sales in Europe.

After he retired, he turned his attention to his major sports interest – golf. Dan started playing golf at age eight on Belle Isle. Upon retirement he got active in golf administration and is currently president of the Michigan Publinx Senior Golf Association.

Ironically, it was golf that stirred his interest in bridge. At the MPSGA he met Thom Allen who mentioned he wanted to become a bridge life master. Dan thought that sounded like a reasonable goal and he and Thom began playing in the back room at the old Bridge Connection.

He actually learned the rudiments of bridge at home where there was always a hearts, bridge and/or chess game going on to keep the 11 kids out of mischief. His father taught him the basics of bridge and his sister and brother-in-law, both of whom are now Life Masters, introduced him to gadgets and local tournaments.

Dan was one of those rare players who accumulated all of their colored points and needed only black points to become a Life Master. He "went over" at a club game at the Bridge Connection. Dan is a Bronze Life Master. He won the Mini-McKinney for his masterpoint category in both 2013 and '14 and the Ace of Clubs in 2013.

Dan gives credit to Willie Winokur and Grant Petersen for dragging him and Thom out of the shadows and into playing regularly in the open game. He experimented with a bunch of bidding systems until asking Willie which he thought was best. Willie, as usual, gave an illuminating answer: "Play the system your partner understands." So now, Dan plays a pretty standard two over one.

However, old habits are hard to break. For someone who grew up with opening four card majors and standard bidding, Dan still has trouble recognizing or remembering Drury or New Minor Forcing, even when his partner alerts his call.

Dan married his high school sweetheart and has two children and two grandchildren who are already under the tutelage of "Grampa" (sic) Dan learning bridge.

He has retained his interest in most sports, but says he cannot think of a better way to enjoy spare retirement time than playing duplicate bridge. The learning opportunity is endless and the friendships he has developed are priceless. ♠

BIDDING FORUM

Here's a hand from one of our afternoon games for you and your partner to bid. Hands with distributional values are always tough and this one was no exception. A grand slam in either hearts or diamonds is ice cold (the missing hearts are perfectly placed) but not a single pair bid even a small slam and two pairs languished short of game. South deals and West overcalls one spade and East raises spades.

Cover up one of the hands, grab your favorite partner, and go to it!

South: ♠A96
♥AJ932
♦A8765
♣ void

North: ♠K8
♥Q84
♦K10932
♣1095

DECLARE OR DEFEND?

Bob Jones, the bridge columnist for the Detroit Free Press, often has columns entitled "Declare or Defend?" However, for some reason, he did not use that approach for the following hand which appeared in the Free Press on Feb. 27th:

Neither vulnerable. West deals.

	♠ 73	
	♥ AQJ2	
	♦ A10 98	
♠ AKJ10 85	♣ A82	♠ Q964
♥ 6		♥ 4
♦ 764		♦ KQ5
♣ J10 9	♠ 2	♣ Q7654
	♥ K10 98753	
	♦ J32	
	♣ K3	

Bidding:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♠	Dbl	4♠	5♥ (All pass)

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

The columnist took declarer to task for failing to make his contract. On the opening lead, East played the six, apparently showing count. Spades were continued at trick two, declarer ruffing. Declarer pulled trump and proceeded to go down a trick by taking the percentage line of two diamond finesses, assuming the king and queen would be split between West and East. However, after West continued spades at trick two, the contract is ice cold. What declarer should have done was to strip the clubs before taking the first diamond finesse, thereby endplaying East after the first diamond finesse, leaving East with no safe exit.

However, the contract should always be beaten. Do you see how?

At trick one (most contracts are lost by either side due to careless play at trick one), East should play the NINE of spades (or for even more dramatic effect, the QUEEN – yes, we know that playing the queen conventionally shows the jack, but West should be able to work that through). Now the burden is on West to stop and think why, given the auction, East played such a high spade. East's jump raise together with South's free bid at the five level, strongly suggest that South has only one spade. Therefore it is unlikely that East is asking for a spade continuation.

So, the spade nine, an unnecessarily high card, must be a suit preference signal, asking for the higher ranking of the two remaining suits (clubs and diamonds). Therefore, West should lead a diamond at trick two. This way, assuming South ducks the first diamond, when East wins that trick, he has a safe "out" card by returning a spade. South should still strip the clubs, as a matter of good technique, but it is too late. South has no choice but to take a second diamond finesse which fails and down he goes!

By the way, South should have a gut feeling that both diamond honors are with East since if they were split, West might very well have opened one spade, not two. ♠

OUR DIRECTORS:

Monday and Saturday afternoons: Jonathan Fleischmann

Tuesday – Friday afternoons: Brad Dracka

Evenings: Mike McGaw

Ron Horwitz, Editor