



THE MICHIGAN BRIDGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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Spring, 2016

BRIDGE CONNECTION SCHEDULE

Club Championships (Mon. April 11 – Sunday April 17): Higher masterpoint awards for overall finishers in all strata; regular entry fee.

Passover (Friday evening April 22) – Closed.

Mother's Day (May 8): Closed.

Farmington Hills Regional (Mon. May 9 – Sun. May 15) – closed.

Memorial Day (Mon. May 30) – open.

World-Wide Bridge Game (Sat. June 6 12:30pm): 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. There will be a side game for those choosing not to play in the worldwide pairs.

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

Southfield Sectional (June 23-26) – closed.

July 4 – open.

ACBL-wide International Fund Game (Wed. evening July 15): 100% sectional rated; stratified; 50% red/black points. ♠

LIFE MASTER MILESTONES

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

Diamond Life Master (5,000)
Stacey Tessler

Ruby Life Master (1,500)
Norm Bash

Silver Life Master (1,000)
Marilyn Nathanson

New Life Master
Denise Brown ♠

MICHIGAN STATE SECTIONAL REPORT

Congratulations to Marty Hirschman for a very impressive performance in the just completed Michigan State Sectional at The Bridge Connection.

Marty led the field amassing 43.87 masterpoints with FOUR first place finishes (Th., Sat. and Sun. Swiss Teams and Friday morning open pairs) and a 3rd overall in the Friday afternoon open pairs. ♠

CORRECTION

Apologies for omitting Bob Shubow's name in the December STAC results. He placed first in District 12 in stratum C in the Monday evening STAC. ♠

**PLAYER SPOTLIGHT ON:
SHELDON KIRSCH**

(Ed. Note: Sheldon Kirsch has had an incredible run of success at the bridge table over the past few years. With his retirement, he has become a regular at the Connection.)



Sheldon Kirsch

Sheldon is a native Detroitter who received two degrees in Mathematics from Michigan State.

He taught high school math for a year and then, drawing on some computer courses he took at MSU, landed a job with Burroughs Corp. After three years there, he moved to a consulting firm. Then, through a series of corporate relationships, he ended up with Comerica Bank from which he retired as a vice-president.

He learned bridge in his freshman year at MSU. He began reading the classic bridge books but didn't start playing tournament bridge until his late 20s. After he got married and a son came along, family and job took precedence, so a bridge hiatus began.

Fifteen years later it seemed like a good time to attack bridge again. His bridge successes really accelerated as a result of his partnership with Mary Smith. They won many events at sectionals and regionals.

Then in 2007 he was on the winning Grand National Flight A Team with Bob Cappelli, Mike Alioto, Barry Lippitt and Frank Sensoli. Another highlight came right here in the 2008 Detroit NABC where Sheldon and Morrie Kleinplatz won the Silver Ribbon Pairs. They still consider each other to be their best partner.

In 2015, Sheldon became a Diamond Life Master (5,000 masterpoints) and won over 500 masterpoints in the year. He also won the Mouser Trophy (most masterpoints at the Motor City Regional) for the third consecutive year and the Stein Trophy (most masterpoints in MBA tournaments) for the first time.

Sheldon's non-bridge activities include bird watching (he has seen over 500 species in North America) and the guitar. He writes his own music which you can hear at skkguitar.com.

His parting thought is to "kick the cheaters totally out of organized bridge. And let's keep this game the greatest card game on Earth." ♠

**MONTHLY MASTERPOINT
LEADERS**

JANUARY:

A. Jack Shartsis	15.24
Bill Melander	11.46
B. Bob Mendelson	10.93
C. James Wedell	3.99

FEBRUARY:

A. Debra Eaves	12.48
Bert Newman	11.42
B. Bob Mendelson	10.83
C. Milt Siegel	5.64

MARCH:

A. Bob Crafton	15.43
Bill Melander	13.77
B. Bob Raf	12.06
C. Jamie Meyer	5.86

FAVOR: Please take all used dishes and silverware to the kitchen sink area. We do not have a garbage disposal, so please scrape all dishes clean in the trash baskets before placing the dishes in the sink or tub filled with dishwasher water. ♠

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITORS

Julie Arbit, a former Connection director and frequent player, together with Jordan Kaye, another BC player, won a special tournament to represent the USA in the World Youth Team Championships to be held this August in Italy.

They are on the USA2 under 26 team. This is Julie's second trip representing the USA in international competition. She played in Turkey in 2014.

Julie and Jordan were also competitors in the March, 2016 ACBL Bridge Bulletin's "The Bidding Box." ♠

YE OLDE STOPPE CARD

(Ed. Note: this issue we will depart from our Laws discussion and review the use of the "STOP" card.)

In your bidding boxes is a red card with "STOP" on it. Players should use the card to protect their rights *and* the opponent's prior to making any subsequent bid that skips one or more levels of bidding.

Place the stop card on the table so that LHO sees it (the skip bidder is responsible for gaining LHO's attention). Make the skip bid and replace the card in the bidding box.

Remember: it is each player's responsibility to always maintain appropriate tempo, including after a skip bid is made.

The idea is that the next player has some extra time to consider their action and can call without undue hesitation. If you hesitate and then pass, you are putting your partner under significant pressure to fully justify any call and show that he was not influenced by partner's hesitation.

That is why you should always, even if no stop card is placed on the table, wait ten seconds or so before placing your bid on the table after a skip bid is made.

If a player uses a stop card, *it should be used every time that player skips one or more levels of bidding* – be it an opening bid, overcall, response or whatever.

There is no penalty for failure to use the stop card. Under these circumstances, the next player is still expected to break the tempo of the auction as though the stop card was displayed. This break in tempo puts no constraints on partner's actions.

If an opponent places a stop card on the table and then fails to skip a level of bidding, call the director immediately to protect your rights. ♠

HIGHEST BOARD SCORE???

What is the highest score you recall seeing on a given board? Your editor quizzed several experienced players and most said 2,000.

However, in one of our recent afternoon games, a score of 2,720 was recorded for one spade doubled and redoubled, making 6!! The trouble developed when, after an opening one spade call, LHO chose to make an ill-chosen (obviously) takeout double which opener's partner redoubled.

At that point, even if the doubler's partner chose to take a call, a double of any bid would result in a four figure penalty – but not, however, as great as 2,720! ♠

A WORD ABOUT YOUR % GAME ON THE BRIDGEMATE

Reminder: as our "snow-birding" players are gradually returning to our games, we will be running more multi-section games. There's been some confusion when we have a multi-section game about a pair's ending % game and rank that is read when the "rank" button is pushed on your Bridgemate.

First of all, remember in multi-section games we matchpoint *across the field*. So the final posted results, including your ranking and % game, will be determined by those matchpoints.

If you check your Bridgemate at the end of a game to get your ranking and % score, what you will see on the Bridgemate is for *your section only* as if there was no across-the-field matchpointing – it does not reflect the across-the-field matchpointing which likely will result in an entirely different % score.

So, do not be surprised in multi-section games when you look at the final results sheet and see a different % and section placing than you did on your Bridgemate. ♠

DON'T FORGET

Copies of prior game's results and hand records are in the binders on the window ledge by Table #1. ♠

ACBL ANNUAL MASTERPOINT RACES

Eight Michigan players made the Barry Crane Top 500 list for 2015 and ALL are BC regulars. Jonathan Fleischmann led the pack with 1,044 masterpoints. The others:

2. Bert Newman (1,006)
3. Bill Melander (678)
4. Frank Treiber (654)
5. Ed White (637)
6. Owen Lien (606)
7. Jack Shartsis (549)
8. Sheldon Kirsch (542)

Three BC regulars placed in the 2015 Mini-McKenney races:

1. Bob Ondo (22nd 20-50 mps.)
2. Brad Dracka (2nd 100-200 mps.)
3. Jonathan Fleischmann (4th 1000 – 2500 mps)

We were shut out in the Ace of Clubs races. ♠

LAYIN' DOWN THE LAW

The Zero Tolerance Policy was adopted by the ACBL to create a more pleasant atmosphere in which to play bridge. Our club has adopted the ACBL's policy for precisely that reason. Our goal is to promote commendable behavior and to eradicate improper behavior.

Being a good host at your table, greeting players in a friendly manner, following bridge protocol (such as EACH partner having identical convention cards filled out) are examples of the former. Badgering, rudeness, insinuations, negative comments, constant and gratuitous lessons at the table are examples of the latter and *will not be tolerated at The Bridge Connection*.

Most of our players come several times a week – not just once or twice a year. Because we know our players so well, we hope not to impose the harshest penalties just because they may have an occasional bad day.

However, we *do* intend to enforce our ZT policy to the fullest. If there is a ZT issue at your table, pull out the “ZT” yellow card and place it on the table. If the offensive behavior persists, call the director immediately.

Our directors are authorized to impose a matchpoint penalty on players who *continuously* have to be warned. After this comes a 30 day suspension from the club, then three months, six months and a year.

We are taking our responsibility seriously. Unfortunately, we recently had to impose a 30 day suspension on a pair for repeated ZT violations in our club.

The best remedy to avoid ZT penalties is really quite simple: be a gracious player and treat your partners and your opponents with respect. Save your comments for when you are away from the table.

And, while we are at it, don't forget to turn your cell phones off once the game begins. We have had to impose several matchpoint penalties recently on pairs when one of their cell phones rang.

Matchpoints are tough enough to earn – don't lose them via penalties! ♠

BIDDING FORUM

Here's the hand from our last issue:

You hold, not vul vs. vul:

♠ A 10
♥ AKQxxx
♦ void
♣ Axxxx

Playing matchpoints, partner, who is dealer, opens 4 diamonds (of course!). Your call?

The first thing to note is that you have five quick tricks in your hand, including first round control in all unbid suits, which makes it quite attractive.

Next, is to think about what partner likely holds to bid *four* diamonds. Several partnerships have specific understandings about their pre-empts, particularly so they do not go beyond three no-trump.

However, under standard, traditional bidding methodology, partner's bid, not vulnerable, says she has three losers and is ready to go down 500 opposite a vulnerable game.

When you add your five quick tricks to her three losers, you are up two. Since partner opened four, that means you should make a small slam. But where?

Should you trot out a four heart (not forcing) bid, remembering that major suits are worth more than minors? The problem is partner does not guarantee holding any hearts, and from her bid and your hand, it sure smells like the hand has messy distribution.

Well then, what about no-trump, since it counts higher than the majors? The issue here is with your void in diamonds you may never be able to get to partner's hand. And, if partner is missing a top honor, you'll need to get to her hand twice – once to knock out the missing honor and then a second time to run the diamond suit - a virtual impossibility on the auction.

The answer? Content yourself by bidding six *diamonds*! Yes, even with your void, that promises to be the best place to play the hand, given your five quick tricks.

The result? Bidding six diamonds gives you a top score. Partner's hand:

♠ xxx
♥ J
♦ KQJ1098xx
♣ x

Ron Horwitz, editor

