



THE BRIDGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

26776 W. 12 Mile Road Southfield, MI
248-356-6254

www.mibridgeconnection.com

Winter, 2016

BRIDGE CONNECTION SCHEDULE

- ACBL-wide International Fund Game (Saturday aft. Feb. 6, 12:30):** 100% sectional rated; stratified; 50% red/black points.
- Super Bowl (Sun. Feb. 7):** Closed.
- Southfield (Bridge Connection) Sectional (Feb. 11-14):** Closed for all games.
- Club Championships: (Mon. Feb. 15 - Sun. Feb. 21):** Higher masterpoints for overall finishers; stratified; regular entry fee.
- ACBL-wide Senior (55+) Pairs (Monday aft. March 7, 2016, noon):** Stratified; 80% sectional rating; black points.
- Easter Sunday (Mar. 27):** Closed.
- Southfield (Bridge Connection) Sectional (Mar. 31 – Apr. 3):** Closed for all games.

MBA TROPHY WINNERS

Congratulations to both Jonathan Fleischmann (B) and Brad Dracka (C) who repeated winning the MBA's Beverly Bluth and Willie Winokur trophies, respectively. Jonathan had quite a year in 2015 – he also won the 2015 Grant Marsee Trophy awarded to the Michigan player winning the most masterpoints for the year. He won more than 900! Bert Newman was second in this race. ♠

CLUB'S WEB SITES

We get a lot of calls that can easily be answered by going to one of our web sites:

1. www.bridgewebs.com: This web site gives you our schedule info plus travelers from all of our games. Click on "Find a Club" and work your way to our site. Click on "Latest Results" to get results of our most recent game. To use the inter-active double dummy feature, click on your name, "play it again" and then the desired contract.
2. www.mibridgeconnection.com This site will give you our complete schedule of games together with all special games and closings for the next three months. Results of all of our games are also posted. ♠

LIFE MASTER MILESTONES

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

Platinum Life Master (10,000)

Norm Bolton

Gold Life Master (2,500)

Steven Jacob

New Life Master

Josie Doherty

Randy Rodnick

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT ON: ALLAN AND PATTY BECKER



(Ed. Note: The Beckers have been loyal Bridge Connection players for many years. Patty was treasurer of the 2008 Detroit NABC. Here's their story.)

The Beckers are both native Detroiters who met in the 1970s when both were active in Democratic Party politics. They have been married for 44 years and have been playing bridge together all that time. In fact, bridge was one of the “things in common” that attracted them to each other.

They separately learned bridge during their college years from fellow students. Initially, they played at the old Metropolitan Bridge Club in Oak Park. However, volunteer political work and family (daughter Julie was born in 1974) took priority. They earned their first tournament points at an Oak Park sectional in 1980. At the 1982 Motor City Regional, they won a trophy for earning the most master points for players with fewer than 20 points – that was the level defined as “novice” back then. They were hooked.

Through the 1980s, Allan and Patty worked toward earning Life Master status. There were no stratified games and no knockouts back then. Once they passed 50 points, limited games were no longer available at clubs so they had to play against better players all the time. They played on weekends since they were working full-time. Finally, in the summer of 1989, they made Life Master with identical records – almost never having played with anyone else and never having earned any masterpoints with another partner. Their daughter also worked as a caddy at the tournaments.

Professionally, Patty is a demographer; Allan has a doctorate in physics but left the field around 1970 and became an expert in what's now called workforce development. Later he developed expertise in social program evaluation. In 1989, Patty and Allan set up their own consulting business, APB Associates serving primarily governments and non-profit agencies. They still have an office about half a mile from the Bridge Connection. Allan considers himself retired, but Patty still works.

The Beckers have three daughters (two from Allan's first marriage) and six grandchildren. Anyone who has ever played against the Beckers has noticed Patty doing her needlework – most of it goes to their grandkids. Their granddaughter Leah caddied at MBA tournaments for several years but is now living in Kalamazoo.

Allan and Patty are within striking distance of their current bridge goal – becoming Gold Life Masters, hopefully by the end of 2016. In their semi-retired life, they usually play three or four times a week at the Bridge Connection. “Why go anywhere else,” says Patty, “when we have this beautiful club and we live right across the street?”

The Beckers plan to remain in Southfield and play at the club as long as they can live independently. With a little bit of luck, that will be for many, many years. ♠

MISC. “TRASHY” ITEMS

A reminder that there is a bin to collect deposit pop cans immediately to the right of the refrigerator. Also, we recycle all paper and plastic products. So, for example, do NOT throw away plastic water bottles but place them in the “container” bin next to the fridge.

Also, remember we do NOT have a garbage disposal, so please take your dishes to the sink area and scrape them clean in the trash basket BEFORE putting them in one of the soapy containers. ♠

MONTHLY MASTERPOINT LEADERS

OCTOBER:

A. Bill Melander	12.28
Jack Shartsis	10.33
B. Richard Menczer	8.73
C. Stan Jacobson	4.09

NOVEMBER:

A. Owen Lien	9.33
Bert Newman	7.79
B. Brad Dracka	5.30
C. Jerry Bloom	3.37

DECEMBER:

A. Bob Mendelson	19.61
Jack Shartsis	19.04
B. Dan Sutherland	16.22
C. Thom Allen	14.82

MISTAKEN BID VS. PLAY

In recent games, our directors have noticed an increasing amount of confusion over the application of the Laws to a mistaken bid versus a mistaken play of a card – many players believe the application of the Laws is the same for both – not so! Let's take a look at them.

MISTAKEN BID

All of us have on occasion pulled the wrong card from the bidding box. If this happens to you, call the director immediately. The director will likely take you away from the table and ask you what you intended to bid. If, in the director's opinion, your response, and your hand, clearly indicate you made a mechanical error and pulled the wrong card, *and your partner has not yet made a call after your erroneous bid*, the director will likely permit you to change your call without penalty.

If you wish to change your call from a different section of the bidding box (e.g., changing a pass to a bid), you are unlikely to get any sympathy from the director. And, keep in mind that if your left hand opponent has bid after your erroneous call, and you change your call, he can change his call, also without penalty, and without giving unauthorized information to his partner.

MISTAKEN PLAY

The Laws are considerably less forgiving for a mistaken play. Once declarer places a card face up, on *or near* the table, that card is considered a played card, even if pulled out of his hand in error. It is irrelevant whether either or both defenders see the card.

Further, if declarer maintains a card in such a way as to indicate it has been played (even if it is not on or near the table), it is a played card. However, if declarer simply detaches a card from his hand, it is not considered played.

Once declarer calls for a card from dummy, that card is also considered played, even if in error, unless declarer changes the designation *without pause for thought*.

For defenders the rules are even stricter – a card placed in a position so partner *can see it* (note partner does not actually *have* to see it), it is considered played and cannot be retracted for any reason.

There is one small exception we should note: if a card slips out of a defender's hand by accident, that card becomes a penalty card and if it is lower than a ten, there are no lead penalties associated with it. Also, this card needs to be played only when the offender wishes to play a card in that suit lower than an honor. When a card hits the table in this type of situation, call the director immediately since the penalty card laws are obviously different when this occurs. ♠

BRIDGE CONNECTION REGULARS - TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Denver NABC

Blue Ribbon Pairs: Owen Lien (3rd overall)

Whitehead Women's Pairs: Sondra Schubiner (11th overall)

Senior Mixed Pairs: Dennis Kastle (4th overall)

Super Senior Pairs: Bert Newman/Bill Melander (2nd overall) – 3rd year in a row they placed second!

Opening Educational Foundation Pairs: Bob Katz/Mike Alioto (1st)

Motor City Regional

For the third straight year, Sheldon Kirsch won the most masterpoints (80.65), taking home the William Mouser trophy.

Other winners of their stratum in two or more session events are:

Mon. Open Pairs: Bob Ondo/Grant Petersen (1A); Steve Kaplan Shelley Boschan (1C)

Mon./Tues. K/Os: Jonathan Fleischmann, Sheldon Kirsch (1)

Tues. Open Swiss: Bob Katz, Frank Treiber, Bob Crafton, Mike Alioto (1A)

Sandy Birnholtz, Chas. Federman, Grant Petersen (1X)

Sylvia Stein Open Pairs: Bev Gardner/Suzy Burger (1A); Michael Kraut (1Y)

Wed./Thurs. K/Os: Owen Lien, Brenda Bryant (1)

Thurs. Open Swiss: Sheldon Kirsch, Jonathan Fleischmann (1A); Mike Kaleel, Dick Menczer, Neal Strand (1Y)

Thurs. Gold Rush Swiss: Thom Allen, Bob Ondo

Fri. Open Pairs: Bev Gardner/Suzy Burger (1A); Grant Petersen (1X)

Fri./Sat. K/Os: Bill Melander

Sat. Open Pairs: Alan and Patty Becker (1X)

Sat. Gold Rush Pairs: Rita Levin/Anita Green

Maddox Swiss Teams: Mike Kaleel, John Dreifus, Steve Winokur, Steve Shumer (1/2C)

November Sectional

Sheldon Kirsch led the field winning 40.00 masterpoints

December STACs

Mon. Aft.: Ed Bloom/Mari Kaftan (1B, 2A)

Mon. Eve.: Dan Schiffer (1C)

Sat. Aft.: Bill Melander/Owen Lien (1A)

New York City Regional (December)

Jonathan Fleischmann won second most masterpoints (60.28)

BIDDING FORUM

The following instructional hand came up in the recent Holiday Party noon game.

You hold, not vul vs. vul:

♠ A 10

♥ AKQxxx

♦ void

♣ Axxxx

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

Exactly what factors influenced your call?

Would you consider bidding no-trump?

Why or why not?

Ron Horwitz, editor

DISCARDING SIGNALS

An essential part of defensive play is being able to signal to your partner clues as to which cards you have in your hand. We all know that discarding a high card in a suit (under standard carding methods) usually indicates that you want the suit led or that you have a high card(s) in that suit. What players often forget is that they can give negative inferences as well by playing low cards in other suits.

How do you know when to signal high or low? Listening to the bidding, following the play and carefully analyzing dummy are all a big help.

Here's a case in point from one of our afternoon games.

You hold ♥KQ83; dummy, in front of you, holds ♥J96. You know from the bidding and previous play that hearts are 4/3/3/3 and that declarer holds the ace.

Should you discard the ♥8 to let partner know you have high cards in hearts or should you give a negative signal in another suit?

What is the key missing card? Yes, it's the heart 10. If declarer has it, nothing will prevent him from getting two heart tricks on the combined holding. BUT, if partner has the 10, you need the 8 to control the third heart trick. If you signal with the 8, declarer can insert the 6 to force either the king or queen, playing your partner for the 10. So, you must also place the heart 10 in partner's hand and discard low from another suit.

This is what makes our game so fascinating. Try to explain to non-bridge players why we get so concerned about 7s, 8s, or 9s! ♠

BIDDING FORUM

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You hold, not vul vs. vul:

♠ A 10
♥ AKQxxx
♦ void
♣ Axxxx

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

The field chose to bid four hearts, which with a trump lead, goes down at least one (dummy had singleton ♥J and a singleton club). However, you have five rock-solid tricks for partner who says she has six losers in her hand with her non-vulnerable four diamond bid.

So, your only concern is how solid is the diamond suit. If someone has a method to find this out, we'd love to know it. Your clue is that IF partner truly has a six loser hand and you have five of them covered, just bid six despite your void.

It is tempting to bid no-trump, but you have no guarantee of an entry to partner's hand in no-trump.

The winning bid is six diamonds since partner has eight diamonds to the KQJ109875 (!). However, just bidding five diamonds which, since it makes six, gives the same score as four hearts making. So that would be good enough for an excellent score on the board. Only one pair bid the diamond slam. Would you have the guts to do it with your diamond void? ♠

Ron Horwitz, Editor

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Bridge Connection regulars did very well in recent tournaments:

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