

# CLUB FOCUS

Volume II, Issue V

September 2009



ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

## HAVE YOU DECIDED ON AFFILIATION YET? IF SO, PLEASE SEND YOUR AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS IN NOW!!!

If you require any advice or information, or for some reason have not received your Pay to Play pack, please either phone our helpline on 01296 317200 or email us at [paytoplay@ebu.co.uk](mailto:paytoplay@ebu.co.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you.

**DON'T DELAY, RETURN TODAY!**

## ASK US - THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW

If you need any information about Pay to Play phone us on 01296 317200 or contact us at [paytoplay@ebu.co.uk](mailto:paytoplay@ebu.co.uk) for the correct information about universal membership and the EBU.

**PLEASE DO NOT RELY ON UNOFFICIAL DOCUMENTS!**

## Editorial

The bridge world warmly welcomes the launch of BingoLotto, an interactive TV game. Sports and recreation across the UK are set to benefit from this entertaining new TV game. Participants will be able to buy a £2 Gamecard at the check-outs at every Tesco store throughout Britain, and each Gamecard will raise 40 pence for good causes. BingoLotto, hosted by Ulrika Jonsson, will air on Virgin 1 every Sunday evening and started on 13 September 2009.

The BingoLotto TV game has run in Sweden since 1991, where it has raised almost £1bn for charities and sports organisations. At least 20% from each Gamecard sold in Great Britain will be distributed to sport, recreation and voluntary projects up and down the country through CCPR. Profits will be channelled to the governing and representative

bodies of sport and recreation, including the English Bridge Union and will be used in particular areas, such as education and development of the game in clubs.

Tim Lamb, CCPR chief executive, believes the investment distributed to CCPR members can make a big difference to community sport and recreation:

"It is CCPR's role to protect, promote and provide for its members, and BingoLotto proceeds have the potential to contribute to all three of our aims. The financial environment for clubs is still very tough and this new funding stream will hopefully give them a much-needed boost."

Remember, tickets are available at all Tesco stores and each ticket bought will help the EBU to put funds into promoting the game we all love.

For further details of the scheme, visit [www.bingolotto.tv](http://www.bingolotto.tv)

### Matt Betts and Krys Kazmierczak

Club Focus would like to congratulate the England Seniors team for winning Gold in Sao Paulo at the World Champions! Well done! A full report will be included in English Bridge.



## Limerick Competition

Congratulations to Keith Harrison from Surrey, the winner of the Dorset-themed Limerick competition we set in the July issue of *Club Focus*. Keith put together the following entertaining lines:

*There was a young lady from Poole  
Who enrolled at the local bridge school.  
When someone said "squeeze"  
She went weak at the knees  
And thought "This game's decidedly cool!"*

Keith's prize, a copy of *The Golden Rules of Competitive Auctions* by Julian Pottage and Marc Smith, will be on its way to him shortly. Many thanks to him and everyone else who sent in entries for the competition. Limericks for our next competition must have a Bridge theme and include the name of a place in the (Bridge) County of Essex. Why not put your rhyming skills into practice with such wonderful place names as Mountnessing, Hungry Hall, Barking, Ugley, Forest Gate, Tilty and Mucking. Entries should be in to the address on page five by 16 November 2009. The winner will receive a copy of *Winning Bridge at Home* by Tony Forrester.

\*Visit the EBU Shop ([www.ebu.co.uk/shop](http://www.ebu.co.uk/shop)) for many useful bridge books!

### Bridge Quote

We had a partnership misunderstanding. My partner assumed I knew what I was doing. - Anon

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## Pay to Play Progress

The EBU is progressing steadily towards Universal Membership through Pay to Play, due to come into effect at the beginning of April 2010. Most clubs have now returned their affiliation application forms but some are still outstanding. We understand that some are delayed because clubs have yet to meet to make a decision, but in some cases the paperwork is simply languishing in a drawer somewhere. If your club has made its decision and has not returned its forms yet, please could club officials ensure that it does so as soon as possible.

We will be asking each club to provide the club members' details early in 2010. However, no doubt you will want to start collecting the information from your members now, and many of you are asking about the format required.

Ultimately, we will want the information in a specified 'XML' format, and we will be providing clubs with a gadget to convert information from other electronic formats into the required format.

### 1. If you are a Scorebridge user:

You can update your Scorebridge player database. However, there are certain required items of information (such as House No.) which are not held in this database. The gadget which we will supply will help you to retain this additional information in a linked file.

### 2. If you are not a Scorebridge user, or if you maintain a database independently of Scorebridge:

Please collect the information using either Excel or Access, or similar spreadsheet or database application. The gadget supplied will read information from a 'csv' file, which can be generated by either application.

The EBU will require the following membership information from your members as a minimum:

- a) First name
- b) Surname
- c) House No/House Name/Flat No
- d) Post Code
- e) Gender
- f) Date of birth (only required if under 22)

Please note that even if your players are current EBU members, we need to have these details to confirm (a) that you have the correct EBU numbers for your players and (b) that we have the correct information about them.

Although not a strict requirement, it would also be very useful to have:

- g) Title, e.g. Mr/Mrs/Dr, etc
- h) Contact telephone number
- i) Contact e-mail address
- j) EBU number (if current or former member of EBU)

Your club members do have the option to remain 'anonymous', if they do not wish to disclose such information, but they will receive none of the benefits normally due to EBU members, and will nevertheless not be exempt from the Pay2Play fee. We will explain at a later date how you should deal with such 'anonymous' players.

We recognise that you will not necessarily have all this information stored already, and that you may need to obtain this from your members. It may help you to have forms for your members to fill in, and so in the box below is such a form. It is a suggestion only – you do not have to use this form, or you may choose to amend it to your own specification.



## Member's Personal Details

Please help your club secretary to prepare for the implementation of Pay2Play, by completing and returning the details below. Although not essential, contact details (telephone number & e-mail address) would help to maintain good communication.

Title ..... \*(M/F) .....

\*First Name ..... \*House Number .....

\*Surname ..... \*Full Postcode .....

Tel. (inc. STD) ..... <sup>1</sup> EBU Number .....

e-mail ..... <sup>2</sup> d.o.b. ....

\* Items marked are required. Other details would nevertheless be useful.

<sup>1</sup> If current or former member of EBU, please supply number if known.

<sup>2</sup> date of birth is required for players under 22 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, The English Bridge Union will not disclose your name, address, or any other personal details except to the County Association of the Union to which you will be affiliated.

## Bidding Tools: Gambling 3NT

In the last few issues we have been looking at the responses to opening bids of 1NT and 2NT. In this issue we are going to examine the 3NT opening. Nowadays hardly anybody opens a "natural" 3NT (which would show a balanced hand with 25-27 high card points), since this is very rare and leaves no room to explore major-suit fits. Strong balanced hands can be shown in other ways, e.g. by opening a game-forcing 2♣ first. Most players now use the 3NT opening as a pre-emptive bid, to show a hand with a long solid running minor suit and little or nothing in the other suits. You might have opened pre-emptively with 4 of the minor, but the gamble is that if partner has the right cards, 3NT might be a good contract. The bid does not come up very often, but it can be very useful when you have the right hand.

### Requirements for a Gambling 3NT

Your suit must be solid – this means seven cards headed by the AKQJ. With eight cards in the suit you may drop the requirement for having the jack. Partnership agreements vary with regard to the rest of the hand, but the most common agreement is that you should have not more than a queen outside of the long suit: e.g. ♠J98 ♥10 ♦AKQJ963 ♣53, or ♠Q8 ♥104 ♦6 ♣AKQ98653.

The purpose of the bid is threefold:

- 1) Pre-emptive – to make it difficult for the opponents to find a fit in a major.
- 2) Descriptive – it tells your partner exactly what you have.
- 3) Gambling – if partner has a suitable hand, you might have a good shot at making 3NT.

### Responses to the Gambling 3NT

The principal value in opening the gambling 3NT is that responder knows precisely what opener's hand is – you should be able to make a decision quite easily without asking any questions. Most of the time the decision will just be whether you want to play in 3NT or in partner's minor suit, but very occasionally you will want to bid game, or even slam in partner's suit, or possibly bid your own suit (though it's extremely unlikely that your suit will be better than partner's!)

Pass! Knowing that partner has a sure source of 7 tricks, you only need two tricks yourself for 3NT to make. However, you also need to know that the opponents aren't going to make 5 tricks in their suit first! In theory you should have all the side suits stopped in order to pass, but are you prepared to accept the gamble if one of the stops is a little thin?

4♣ 'Pass or Correct'. This simply says that you don't fancy playing 3NT, and that you'd rather play in partner's minor. Opener should 'Pass' if clubs is the suit, or 'Correct' to 4♦ if it's diamonds. Even if you know that partner's suit must be diamonds, you should still bid 4♣, as 4♦ has another meaning.

5/6/7♣ Also 'Pass or Correct'. Opener passes with clubs, or converts to diamonds at that level.

4♥/♠ Natural with a long suit – to play.

Only very rarely, when you are exploring a slam, might you need to know a little more about partner's shape. More advanced partnerships might like to add the following conventional responses to their armoury:

4NT Not asking for Aces – you know partner has precisely one! This bid asks partner if he has extra length in the suit. 'Partner, we have 11 tricks, assuming that you have 7, but if you have 8, I want to play in small slam'.

5NT Similarly, this asks partner to bid the Grand Slam if he has the extra card.

4♦ What is your shortage? Opener replies:

4♥/♠ Singleton or void in ♥/♠

4NT No shortage, i.e. 2 cards in each of the other three suits (7-2-2-2)

5♣/♦ This is my suit, i.e. my shortage is in the minor I didn't bid

Note that you bid the major in which you have the shortage, but bid the minor in which you don't have the shortage. This is to avoid taking the bidding above 5♣ when that might be your best final contract.

### Examples

Let's look at some examples to clarify the above. Your partner has opened 3NT (Gambling) and you hold:

1) ♠A73 ♥A952 ♦A963 ♣53

Pass. 3NT is certain to make with an over-trick. Replace one of the red-suit aces with a king and it's still a very good bet.

2) ♠AK1076 ♥103 ♦QJ963 ♣5

Bid 4♣ which has a good chance of making, whereas 3NT hasn't.

3) ♠A10432 ♥87 ♦964 ♣AKQ

Bid 5♣ which partner will convert to 5♦, which should make after opponents take the first two tricks in hearts.

4) ♠J83 ♥AKJ109762 ♦10 ♣5

Bid 4♥ - it's likely to be easier to make ten

tricks in hearts than 11 in clubs or diamonds.

5) ♠AK8 ♥A963 ♦106 ♣A753

You have 11 top tricks if partner has seven diamonds. Bid 4NT to ask him to bid 6♦ if he has eight diamonds.

6) ♠A ♥QJ52 ♦AKQJ ♣8753

Bid 4♦ to find out where partner's shortage is. If he is short in hearts then slam is on.

Footnote: The name Gambling actually refers to the original version of the convention, rarely played these days, where a requirement was that the opener should have stoppers in at least two of the outside suits, whereas the modern style is to have at most a queen outside.

## Bridge Tales

An Expert was pestered by Hubby who produced a 4-2-3-4 hand (4-4 in the black suits) with 16 points.

Hubby: 'What would you open with this hand?'

Expert: '1♠'

Hubby: 'Now hold on. Why not 1♣? Keep the bidding low.'

Expert: (*rather bored*): 'OK. 1♣ if you insist.'

Hubby: 'Partner responds 1♥. What do you bid now?'

Expert: '1♠.'

Hubby: 'Why not 1NT? You have 16 points and a balanced hand, don't you?'

Expert: (*even more bored*): 'OK. 1NT.'

Hubby: 'Right. Now partner raises to 2NT. What now?'

Expert: (*weakly*): '3♠?'

Hubby: 'But surely you and partner are both balanced, so why tell them what not to lead?'

Expert: (*giving up the unequal struggle*): 'OK. 3NT.'

Hubby: (*with a sigh*): 'I thought so. You would bid just like I did. 3NT is one off, but 4♠ is cold. Would you believe that my wife had the cheek to criticise my bidding?'

Andrew Kambites

## Learning Curve

In the last *Club Focus* I wrote about how I came to take up bridge nearly three years ago by enrolling on a beginner's course taught by an EBU teacher at the Wimbledon Bridge Club. The lessons have been fantastic and have opened up the wonderful world of bridge to me.

This month, out of curiosity, I've been searching on the internet to see if there might be a Patron Saint of Bridge. At first I thought it might be St Michael, The Patron Saint of Cue Bids. But he appears to be too busy looking after those in peril on the sea and middle class shoppers. The Patron Saint of bridges and bridge builders is St John Nepomucene. However, bridge and bridge building are clearly not quite the same thing.

As there would appear to be a vacancy for the role, I believe my teacher at the Wimbledon Bridge Club, Giorgio Provenza, would be ideal. He certainly has the patience that is said to be the main requirement of the job, and the fact that he has transformed our beginners' group into something resembling bridge players is nothing short of a miracle.

Giorgio inherited us from the late Gwyneth Sather, another wonderful bridge teacher with an enthusiasm for defence. Gwyneth sadly passed away in 2008 and Giorgio took over the class. Giorgio's strength is his bidding and, in particular, slam bidding. We certainly need a lot of guidance to keep us on the straight and narrow. Left to our own devices, some of our bidding can become a little inventive. We have been following the EBU programme of teaching, which is excellent. In theory it should be possible for us to sit down at a table and play bridge with any partner who has followed the same course and find ourselves singing from roughly the same Acol Hymn Sheet. So much for the theory!



Whilst going round Mexico City just before Easter Freda and I stopped for a rest. The cards were too big to play with though!

**Bill McCarthy, Secretary, Thame Bridge Club**

In practice, there are those of us in the class who won't open 1NT with a four card major and those of us who won't open 1NT without one. "What does balanced mean again??" Giorgio remains calm and patient. At last we get it - at least until next week! Remind me what an Acol opening bid of 2C means? 23+ points?? 8 Playing tricks?? Strong and forcing?? Not at our table, where it's "Stayman" asking partner to bid a four card major. My all-time favourite bidding sequence was Pass-Pass-Pass-Double! (showing support for all the unbid suits) which had me spluttering into my bidding box with laughter. Giorgio is unperturbed and spends more time on the use of the Double card. Progress may be slow, but we will get there in the end.

I am happy to report that there has been no repetition of the opening "Double" but plenty of subsequent attempts to double our own partners. Well, sometimes they are asking for it, aren't they?!

As the double card is so seldom used to mean penalties in modern bidding, I would like to propose to the EBU that the bids our class have invented be adopted into the game. As soon as I get the go-ahead, I'm going to start work on my new system, the "Precision Double". I hope I won't give too much away if I tell you that an opening Double will signify an unspecified number of points depending on what day of the week it is, and support for all the unbid suits.

But I digress. Our little group has been learning bridge on Friday mornings for nearly three years. We feel ready to remove our L-Plates and reverse into the general club sessions. ....

**Elisabeth Bingham**

## Club Committee

### Club Committee Regional Representatives

Need some advice regarding club matters? Why not try contacting one of your helpful volunteer Regional Representatives from the Club Committee (details below) or Kryss, the EBU Club Liaison Officer on [kryss@ebu.co.uk](mailto:kryss@ebu.co.uk) or 01296 317 206.

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London

### Tournament Director Courses

We are looking for clubs to host our popular Club Tournament Director courses for 2010. There are four courses in the series: Essentials, Book Rulings, Judgement Rulings and Assessment, with the courses usually held about a month apart. In return for waiving room rent the club gets an allocation of free places. We're particularly looking to hold courses in areas where they haven't been held for some time. So venues in the Bristol area, Cambridge, Kent, Manchester, Liverpool, York, Newcastle are all possibilities. But if there is a demand of at least 6 people in your club and/or locality, courses can be set up.

Annual fixtures include Brighton (where the course is run over 4 consecutive days at the Summer Meeting) and EBU HQ in Aylesbury. Plans are already in hand to set up courses in Chobham, Surrey and Wymondham, Norfolk. For further details email [john@ebu.co.uk](mailto:john@ebu.co.uk).

## Junior Teach-In

Once a year a strange event called the Junior Teach-In takes place at Loughborough University. Young bridge players and would be bridge players drag anyone they can bully or bribe to bring them to the EBU's annual Junior Teach-In.

Around 70 young people from 9-19 turn up and bring with them grandmas and granddads, mums and dads and assorted hangers-on. Everyone joins in and as the photographs on the EBU website show, everyone has fun and no one is allowed to get away without joining in.

All the tutors devote their time for free, and the same suspects have been mostly turning up for years. Cedric Cockcroft, fresh from his move to Derbyshire, teaches a group of complete beginners their first lessons in bridge itself as they progress from Minibridge. They make incredible progress starting with replies to 1NT and learning the basics of bidding.

This year we split the Improvers group into three sections, one taught by Phil Godfrey, one by Marryat Stevens and one by Sarah, my wife. All these groups concentrate on getting the basic structures of bidding sorted out and the importance of planning in all that we do. Dave Armstrong whizzed round all the groups with a talk on "Declarer's Castle" – sounds like something out of Dungeons and Dragons.

Allan Shillitoe and Michael Byrne looked after the high flying Top Guns and Ace Experts. They were out talent-spotting for the future junior international teams and Under 21 Squad as the two-year build up to the European Youth Championships for 2011 begins.

It's not all hard work – lots of sessions of bridge and the inevitable speedball; rounders and swimming on Saturday afternoon were much enjoyed. Prizes were given for good work, good participation and even now and again for winning the bridge.

We are very lucky to be able to go to Loughborough University. The venue is safe, and the staff are amazingly helpful and friendly. I wouldn't miss the weekend ever. See you all next year!

**Mike Amos, Youth Officer**



## Forthcoming EBU Events

2009 Autumn Congress, 23 - 25 October, Birmingham

EBU Seniors Congress, 6 - 8 November 2009, Daventry

**For more information and future events, please email [comps@ebu.co.uk](mailto:comps@ebu.co.uk) or see the EBU website.**



## Contact 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](mailto:clubfocus@ebu.co.uk) or post to: **Club Focus, English Bridge Union, Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ.** Deadline for submissions is 16 November 2009. **Next edition - December 2009**

## Really Easy Congress

Once the hustle and bustle of the first week-end at the Brighton Summer Meeting has died down, the congress sees a number of new events starting during the mid-week period. The Seniors Congress attracts around 50 tables each year, but Education is slowly closing the gap! Uppermost in our minds is the Really Easy Congress which for many people is the entry point into the world of tournament bridge.

This year we had 32 tables (a record) arrive on Monday for a varied programme of lectures and play sessions. Each year we have guest tutors, who are usually bridge teachers, and this year Diana King and Phil Green from Trowbridge were our guests. The seminars are surprisingly popular and nearly everyone attended their session on Aspro defence to 1NT on Monday afternoon.

One of the purposes of the congress is to give people a taste of the different types of bridge they will meet when they go to an event outside of their clubs – so besides the normal pairs competitions we also ran a teams-of-four on Tuesday evening and a short five-round Swiss Pairs event on Wednesday. The beauty of running a Swiss Pairs on the last day is that it allows those who wish to leave early to do so without spoiling the movement for the rest. Imagine the chaos in a normal pairs event where pairs want to leave with several rounds still to play.

On Tuesday morning Andrew Kambites gave one of his popular lecture/play sessions, and again nearly everyone attended. Controlling a class of 16 or 20 is one thing – it's a rather different matter when you have 120 straining to hear your every word.

Most people enjoyed it very much. One or two commented on the state of the décor in Hall 7, which is where we played. But most didn't notice, preferring to concentrate on the cards.

Hopefully the number will grow again next year (August 9 to 11), and we are looking at the possibility of splitting the event into a 'First Time' event and a 'Next Step' event. This ought to help address the issue about speed of play and also the growing problem of trying to accommodate everyone for the lectures. **John Pain**

## Club Events

Heather Dhondy Autumn seminars at South Bucks Bridge Centre will take place on four consecutive Thursdays from 10h00 – 12h30 from 29 October.

Julian Pottage at SBBC seminar will be as follows: Thursday 18 February 2010.

For more information, please see: [www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/miscellaneous/clubevents.htm](http://www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/miscellaneous/clubevents.htm)