

The Kibitzer



Spring 2022 | Volume 69, Number 1

**Rashid Khan
1948-2021**



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DISTRICT 2

GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS

2022

Open Flight	No Masterpoint limits
Flight A	Under 6000 Masterpoints
Flight B	Under 2500 Masterpoints
Flight C	Non-Life Master under 500 Masterpoints (as of Sept. 2021 Bulletin)

Winners of each Flight will represent District 2 in the North American Final, to be played at the Providence NABC in July 2022

Entries at the National Final will be covered by the ACBL or District 2

All players must be paid-up ACBL members and residents of District 2

Teams may consist of 4, 5 or 6 members

Dates:	Saturday, April 16 (& Sunday April 17, if >5 teams enter)
Times:	10:00 am & 3:00 pm / 10:00 am
Cost:	\$84 per team, per session (subject to change)
Place:	Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto, ON (in conjunction with the Toronto Easter Regional)

Back-up Plan: Online in May-June

Teams are required to Pre-register with the DISTRICT CO-ORDINATOR, who may be able to help Individuals / Pairs looking for Partners / Teammates

DISTRICT CO-ORDINATOR

Martin Hunter

martinhunter@rogers.com

905-510-0411



If you do a quick scan through this issue, you'll see something that has not been in these pages for almost two years: tourney ads. The two ads are for tournaments to be held in Unit 255 in the summer: a 0-750 event in Niagara-on-the-Lake in June, and a 299er in St. Catharines in August.

Those are far enough way that they should both be a 'go.' Unfortunately, however, the Toronto Easter Regional, is now officially cancelled. As for other tournaments in Ontario, please keep an eye on your unit's website for announcements through the spring. For Unit 166, it's <http://www.unit166.ca>

Ram Dass, guru of modern yoga, once said, "When someone we love dies, we get so busy mourning what died that we ignore what didn't." Rashid Khan died in late December and although he is no longer with us, what remains is the memory of his passion for both bridge and life. Since then, three other bridge players have passed: Harvey Fogel in late January, Don Brock in early February, and Len Besler in mid-February. All four of them played bridge passionately, each in their own style. Please see the cover story (p. 8) for more on the life of Rashid Khan, but I'd like to take a moment here and tell you about the other three.

Everyone knew him as Len Besler, but to me he was "Les Benler," which, although not technically a spoonerism, is pretty close, and this usually led to lots of joking around at the bridge table, between and during the play of the hands. Len was the consummate gentleman. He was kind, friendly, and jovial—truly a gentle man. He and his wife Carol Anne, pictured here:



were mainstays for many years at MOBridge in Mississauga. Such a wonderful couple. Sometimes you could 'get' Len, and sometimes he could get you, but you would both leave the table smiling. Well, not Len—he sat South. Len was the quintessential club player: someone who makes you feel proud and lucky to be part of the bridge community. Len will be missed.

Don Brock, aka "Donny B." is another west end player who will be missed by many. He accumulated just over 10,000 masterpoints and while he did not win a national championship, which would have given him the title of Grand Life Master, he certainly played like one. One of my fondest memories in bridge was teaming with Don and beating 4 of Canada's alltime best players in George Mittelman, Fred Gitelman, Geoff Hampson, and John Gowdy in a knockout match at the Toronto Regional. Don's partner was Dick Hart and the two of them were rocks. They brought out the best in each other. So solid. Here's a photo of Don and his wife Bev:



But what I will miss most about Don is his sense of humour and passion for stories. He loved to tell stories and he knew many. And at the end of each telling, he would laugh in his own unique way—just an all-out guffaw that often left him breathless. At the table he was studious and focused; away from the table he loved to laugh and exchange bidding problems. "What do you do with this hand," I can hear him say. Don taught me something years ago, a wonderful standard treatment over a two-level agreement of a major. I had opened 1♠ and Don raised me to 2♠. I bid 3♦ and Don raised to 4♦. That propelled us to a nice laydown contract in 6♠. But

it soon became evident that 7♦ was cold. Had I known at the time that his 4♦ bid showed both length and strength (he held ♦A10xxx) then we might have been in the grand.

And then there is long-time Toronto player Harvey Fogel. I knew Harvey only to play against him, so I asked Doug Baxter to share some thoughts about Harvey. Doug wrote, “A classic gentleman and loyal friend. He would periodically call, just to keep in touch. He golfed regularly with Dave Cummings, Harold Baba, Steve Gittens and Larry Cara – and back in the day could really drive the ball – not always straight – but often 250+ yards. No matter the result on the golf course, Harvey most enjoyed a beer with friends after. He had great results at Regional events, winning more than one event at the same Regional – not sure if that was with Lew Richardson or John Arblaster. He graduated from Brock and worked for many years in the systems department for Sears. Anne and I played a friendly online game with Harvey and Sally Macrae. Harvey will be missed.



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The Board of Unit 166 has had many discussions about the Audrey Grant Award for a member of Unit 166 who has made a contribution to the teaching of bridge and the Kate Buckman Award for a member who has made a contribution to others' enjoyment of the game of bridge. Due to Covid and the changing nature of bridge along with the few nominations we received, the Board decided not to award the two Awards in 2022. Nominations for the 2023 recipients are due by Dec. 31, 2022. Please send to David Ellis.



**The next Board meeting is scheduled for
Sat., April 16; time and location TBD.**

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Unit 246 Items of Interest

(Visit www.unit246.com for details)

- 1st time members of the ACBL can apply to the Unit 246 Board for a \$20 rebate for their 2nd year of ACBL membership
- Bridge teachers can list their services on the Unit 246 website free

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The Kibitzer Information

The Kibitzer is available online at www.unit166.ca, every three months: February, May, August, and November. Readers are invited to share their email addresses with the ACBL so that they may receive notification The Kibitzer is ready for viewing.

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IMPORTANT KIBITZER DATES:

Issue:	Deadline:	Posted online by:
Summer 2022	Apr. 15	May 15
Fall 2022	July. 15	Aug. 15
Winter 2022	Oct. 15	Nov. 15
Spring 2023	Jan. 15	Feb. 15

Kibitzer Editorial Policy

The Kibitzer is published to promote bridge and to inform members of ACBL Units 166, 238, 246, 249 and 255 about tournaments and special events, as well as to entertain with deals and articles of interest. It is also a forum for the exchange of information and opinion among the members. Opinions expressed in articles or letters to the Editor are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Unit Boards of Directors or the Editor. The Kibitzer reserves the right to edit or exclude submitted material.



Rashid Khan

Last summer, on July 27, I received a text from my friend Rashid Khan. He had an idea to attend a Blue Jays game since the Jays had just announced that fans could attend home games again. Rashid, a big Jays fan, sprung for three tickets so that I could bring Lennox, my 12-year-old. (Side note: if you want to see a Blue Jays victory, you want to invite Lennox; over his lifetime Lennox has been to ten Jays games and watched the home team win nine times.) As play-by-play announcer Dan Shulman said on air that night, “There were 15,000 of us sounding like 50,000.” It felt like we were part of something historic, and, for me, in more ways than one.



At Sarah's wedding

I knew Rashid was ailing, probably due to the spread of the cancer he had been fighting for over two years. But I didn't

know how bad it was. The text he sent on July 27 seemed urgent, as if he was running out of time. As it turns out he was running out of time. Rashid succumbed five months to the day later. The cancer had spread, and he spent his last few months at home in palliative care. My heart goes out to Rashid's life partner Vera Carpenter and his daughter Sarah and her family.

The initial cancer had affected Rashid's voice a bit—it was difficult to understand him at times. But we talked a lot that night as the Jays pulled out the win. We reminisced over how and when we first met which was way back in March of 1993 in Kansas City. That was the site of the Spring North American Bridge Championships. Rashid was there with his partner Carol Mann, having won the right to represent District I in the North American Pairs Championships. A fellow Canadian introduced us. At one point we both kibitzed Zia, Rashid's bridge hero.

Skip ahead six months to September of 1993. I was beginning a Bachelor of Education degree at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. I had reason to roam the hallways looking for a professor's office when I suddenly came face-to-face with Rashid. Both of us knew we had met the other, but we couldn't place how or where we had met before. A few guesses ensued before we hit upon the bridge connection. “What are you doing here?” “I teach here— what are you doing here?” “I'm going to school!” “There's a Monday night bridge game, would you like to play?” “Sure!” And so, we became regular Monday night pards, regularly beating up on the townies and university professors. Rashid recalled we once had an 80% game.

Throughout '93-'94 we would drive together to play in all the Maritime sectionals. One of the little unspoken thrills of playing bridge face-to-face at Sectionals and Regionals

is discovering new places to eat. Rashid knew all the Indian cuisine hot spots in Atlantic Canada. Originally from Bangladesh, Rashid was a good cook himself. He loved to speak his native tongue with the server and order “off the menu.” I can’t tell you the names, but I thoroughly enjoyed every last one of the “secret” dishes Rashid ordered for the table. Wow did we eat well! And if we were not discussing the rich flavours and ingredients, we would be deep into a bridge hand. Rashid *loved* to talk bridge.



Rashid and Sarah

Rashid was perhaps as passionate for bridge as he was for economics—the course he taught at universities around the country, most recently at McMaster. Maybe *passion* is not the word. Surely there is a stronger word for Rashid’s passion for the game. He would even admit this about himself: sometimes he was *too emotional* about playing bridge. Perhaps it got him into a bit of trouble at times; perhaps you know of him from some unpleasant experience at the table. But I assure you my friend did not have a hint of malice behind any of it. In his defence, if he could not quite explain a convention or system agreement, it may have been a language barrier. If the opponents did something that he perceived as disrespectful, he would by nature, become emotional and things could spiral. But he had such a big heart. He was ethical and happy to share any of his partnership understandings with his opponents. If an opponent made a good play against him Rashid would be the

first to issue a compliment.

If you’ve played your share of duplicate bridge you no doubt have discovered that there are all types of bridge players. One of the archetypical players can best be described as a tiger at the table. However, if you only knew your opponents by how they conduct themselves at the table, then you don’t really know them. You have to get to know a bridge player away from the competitive arena. You’d be surprised at how many of those tigers are really pussycats, happy to engage, joke around, tell stories. But put them back at the green baize, and their game face reappears. Now, Rashid was no tiger at the table—but I do think he was misunderstood. To his credit, he was focused and lived in the moment. All his concentration went into his next bid, his next play.

Sometime in early December we had a Zoom chat and I asked him about a story he had told me eons ago, about a hand he played down East against a top player. Rashid was in 5♦ doubled and his opponent made some remark at how Rashid had no hope to make his contract. The opponent had the audacity to laugh at Rashid’s plight. Rashid pieced together the auction and the remark and played his snarky opponent for an original holding of ♦QJxx. In order to make the hand Rashid had to strip the hand down to a three-card ending. At first glance (see hand diagram) it appears East has two trumps to come, but Rashid could (and did) play a trump to dummy’s 10 in this position:

	Dummy	
	♦K 10 9	
West		East
Immaterial		♦Q J 8
	Rashid	
	♦7 6 5	

When East won his ♦J, he had to play a diamond into dummy’s tenace: a rare endplay in the trump suit.

At the Blue Jays game Rashid and I talked about how his love of baseball stemmed from his love of cricket. He was a good cricket player in his day. When he first came to Canada in his 20s, he was invited to play pickup baseball with some fellow McMaster Dept. of Economics faculty. They had given him a glove to play outfield, but he found the glove cumbersome, so he discarded it, preferring to catch bare-handed, which he did! The others couldn’t believe his ability to catch a baseball bare-handed. Rashid was giddy recalling those memories.



Rashid and Vera on one of their many trips

I asked him about “Bengali Club,” the strong club system that included weak notrump openings and canapé, a system that he modified from Russ Ekeblad, a strong American player who used to frequent the Can-At tourneys in Halifax or Fredericton each summer. Canapé is a style of showing 4-card suits before 5+ card suits. For example, say you pick up this hand:

♠A J 9 7 3
 ♥K Q 10 8
 ♦A 7 6
 ♣4

Most players are opening 1♠. Rashid and Vera are opening 1♥ and rebidding spades at their next turn. This sequence shows spades and hearts but with longer spades; it does not show extra values as would a reverse bid in Standard. Showing your 4-card suit first, you never really lose your secondary fit. Other tables might see the auction go 1♠-2♠ and end there, the heart fit never being disclosed. But what if partner also has four hearts?

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

If you can discover your 4-4 heart fit, you can play in a superior trump fit. If the opponents’ hearts are divided 3-2 you can pitch two diamonds on the long spades and eventually ruff a diamond for 11 tricks. But if spades are trumps, you cannot do that; 10 tricks is the max. Since 4-4 fits tend to play better than 5-3 fits, canapé is all about locating 4-4 fits.

Another benefit is sometimes you catch an opponent in a trap. Five years ago, Rashid and I won a Toronto Easter Regional pair game. I have since forgotten all the deals but one—the last deal of the event. Rashid opened 2♣ which shows 11-15 HCPs, 4+ clubs, and maybe a 5+ major. My RHO overcalled 2♠. I made a negative double and Rashid left it in as he indeed had a side 5-card spade suit. That got us +800 and a room-wide top. At all the other tables Rashid’s hand opens 1♠ and the next player, with five spades, sits in the bushes and stays out of trouble.

Rashid loved his system and he and Vera had a lot of success with it. In 2021, Rashid and Vera played a lot of online bridge. Vera finished in second place overall in the Richmond Trophy race, about 150 masterpoints behind winner Mel Norton. Rashid finished fifth overall. Did I mention Rashid was passionate about bridge? There he was—playing right up to his last couple of months—maybe not quite as often as earlier in the year, but still playing. And still talking bridge.

Rashid won many tournaments, mostly playing matchpoints, his specialty. He won the 2006 Canadian Open Pairs with Brad Bart and he is the third highest masterpoint achiever in Unit 166 (and 24th in Canada all-time) with just under 13,000 mps. He once won a Swiss match versus Eric Rodwell. Rashid doubled a partscore and beat the contract by one trick for +100. At the other table the contract was not doubled. The two-imp difference on the last board was enough to win by one imp. Rodwell personally congratulated him.

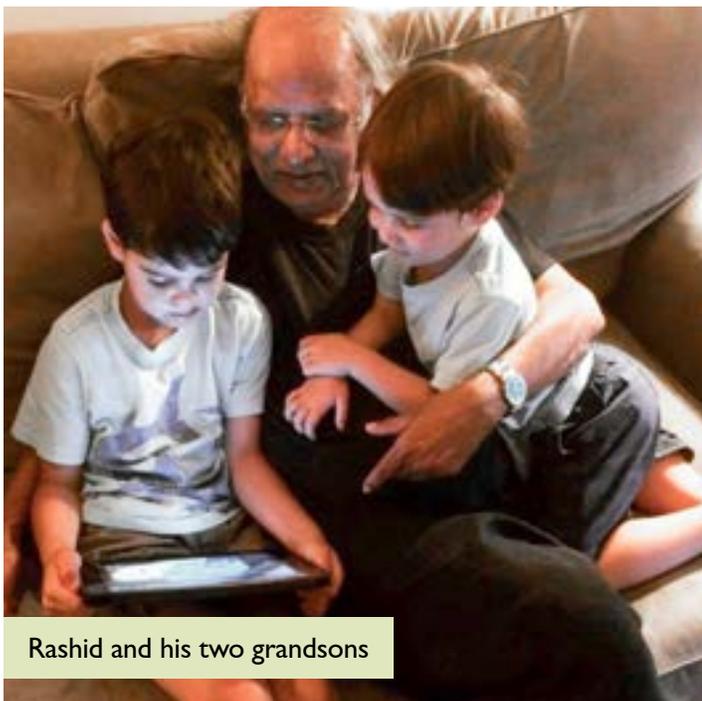
Rashid was not only a good technician but a good teacher. I can say I learned a few tactics from him which I’m happy to share here. If partner is a passed hand you should stretch to make a takeout double. For example, say you pick up:

♠Q J 8
 ♥K 10 8 6
 ♦A 9 7 5
 ♣5 2

Say your partner is a passed hand. When your RHO opens with 1♣, Rashid says you should double. Even now I can hear him describe this bid as “tactical.” You get into the opponents’ auction when others in your seat might not be bidding at all. You probably won’t get into too much trouble either because partner is not going to suddenly bid a game, not as a passed hand.

Then there’s Rashid’s Weak Two bidding for which seatbelts are necessary, i.e., hold tight! He loved to open whenever he could and would often open a 5-card suit. But then he had the system to fall back on. A 2NT bid by Responder is asking: 3♣ by Opener shows a 5-bagger. Then, 3♦ asks Opener to rate their hand: 3♥ being a minimum and 3♠ being a non-minimum. If Opener has a 6-bagger in their suit then they rate their hand right away over the 2NT enquiry: 3♦ is a minimum, 3♥ a medium, and 3♠ a max.

I saw Rashid’s passion for bridge both at and away from the table. His passion for economics was not something I saw a lot of, but I know it was there. He wrote his memoirs for Sarah and she shared it with me—he led a fascinating life in academia. But there was a side of Rashid not too many people saw. I count myself lucky for having witnessed it: a full-on wine-fuelled belting of Van Morrison’s *Into the Mystic*. Rashid was so loud and so into the moment that Van was reduced to backup duties. “And I wanna rock your gypsy soul/Just like way back in the days of old/Then magnificently we will float/Into the mystic.”



Rashid and his two grandsons



At the July 30 Blue Jays game

A generous man, Rashid asked me to help him buy some Blue Jays shirts for Sarah and her husband and their children. He bought a program for Lennox. Just getting to the merch store was a challenge; he lost his breath easily and had to sit down. I imagine our Blue Jays game in late July was probably his last non-hospital outing. But the Jays were making a run the last two months of the season and there was a chance they would make the playoffs, so Rashid was already talking about getting tickets for a playoff game. Again, he wanted to take Lennox and me. (The Jays eventually missed out on the playoffs by one game.)

What I’ll remember always about that last game though was something special and rare. The Jays were up by two runs in the top of the ninth and their closer Jordan Romano was in to pitch. There were two outs, and the Royals had a man on first. The batter hit a flare out over third baseman Santiago Espinal’s head. It looked like it might drop in for a bloop single, or even a double, as Espinal was turned around the wrong way. But, at the last second, Espinal reached out and caught the ball, not with his glove hand *but with his bare hand*. Ballgame. It was a magical moment: the universe conspiring to remind us of a young Rashid playing baseball cricket style all those years ago and making outs with his bare hand.

I am grateful for having gotten to know Rashid, to play bridge with him, and to share a few stories and laughs, especially over delicious Indian cuisine. I will forever hear his high-pitched chortle in recounting the details of a bridge hand. Rashid could play creatively, brilliantly. He played as he lived: with passion. My friend, you will be missed.



For Newer Players

By Robert Griffiths

Everybody Has Bidding Problems

In the 1983 Bermuda Bowl this was the 175th of 176 boards of the 3-day final between Italy and USA. When the board came up, Italy was ahead in the match by just 8 IMPS, less than a game swing.

After South's pass both Wests pushed a bit to open 1♠. North passed and both East players got excited. The American jumped right to Blackwood. When he heard that the pair was missing two aces, he signed off in 5♣ which made just 5.

The Italians, Benito Garozzo and Giorgio Belladonna, had a wee spot of trouble. Belladonna, East bid 2NT. This bid promised a good spade raise with an unspecified singleton in the hand. Garozzo, West, had a variety of asking bids available but he mistakenly bid 3♠. He intended this bid to show an absolute minimum for his opener but by their system, it was a bid asking about the spade suit.

Belladonna had to go a lot of steps to show his amazing spades. His answer to Garozzo's asking bid was 4NT, 6 steps up from the asking bid, showing the length and strength of his spades.

Board 12
South Deals
NS Vul

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

Garozzo, unaware that Belladonna's bid was an answer to the question that his bid asked, saw 4NT and thought, "Blackwood!" He replied 5♦, showing his one keycard in their system.

Belladonna saw the 5♦ bid and thought it was a cuebid, promising the ♦A and denying the ♣A. He bid on to 6♠, thinking that with no wasted values in clubs the slam should be easy.

The Americans cashed their two aces and won 11 IMPS on the hand, putting them into the lead by 3 IMPS. That was enough to win the match and the World Championship.

Garozzo and Belladonna had

been partners for years and had won many World Championships together. But after playing 60 high intensity boards per day for three days, even the best players can have accidents. And even though over the 176 boards, there were hundreds of IMPs won by both sides, what people remember is the 11 IMPs on the second last board that decided the match.

Timing is Everything. Sometimes.

South, in a 4♥ contract with the lead of the ♠10, can count 4 possible losers: 1 spade, 2 diamonds and 1 club. Declarer should see that the strategy of this hand will involve a race.

South needs to lead diamonds towards the queen/jack in dummy twice before the defenders can lead clubs twice. For this to succeed, West needs to have one of the top 2 diamond honours.

If South wins the race, the club loser can be pitched on a high diamond before the bad guys can take their club trick.

Along the way, the timing has to be carefully managed. South has to win the opening lead with dummy's ♠Ae. If South ducks and the defenders switch

to a club, the race will be lost and 4 losers will be unavoidable.

But declarer has to be careful because the only entries to their hand are in the trump suit.

So South wins dummy's ♠A, draws just two rounds of trumps, then leads a diamond towards the board.

Board 12
South Deals
Both Vul

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

East can win the ♦K, but South has the timing now to win a club shift in dummy and cross to hand by leading dummy's last heart. Now South can lead another diamond towards dummy, setting up the ♦Q as a parking spot for his third club.

To make the 4♥ contract, South needs to win the first spade lead, must find at least one of the diamond honours with West and has to delay drawing the last trump because of the need for an entry to hand to lead the second diamond towards the board. All of this can be seen, and planned, at trick one.

Get Rid of The Loser First

This is a hand that was played by Billy Eisenberg over 50 years ago in a competitive game. This was the auction:

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led the ♠6, and Eisenberg, South, tried dummy's ♠Q, but East played the king and South won his ace.

Board 12
South Deals
EW Vul

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

South considered the hand. He had 4 likely losers: 2 clubs, 1 heart and 1 spade.

Eisenberg felt that if West had both the ace and king of clubs, his lead almost certainly would have been a top club, not a spade from a broken suit. So South assumed that East held either the ace or king of clubs and he had already shown up with the ♠K. So, to open the bidding West must have held almost all of the missing high cards, including the ♥K and the ♦Q.

His only chance to make the contract was to get rid of the

spade loser in the dummy. He could do this by winning 3 diamond tricks and throwing dummy's losing spade on the third diamond before going after the trumps.

At trick 2, South backed up his judgment by leading a diamond from his hand to dummy's ♦10. When that won, he was halfway there. Now he played dummy's ♦A, then led a heart to his ace, knowing that the heart finesse was probably pointless. Finally, he played his ♦K, throwing the dummy's spade away.

Now he could play hearts and his only losers on the hand were 2 clubs and one heart.

The only way that South can avoid 4 losers on this hand is by playing exactly as he did. He can't touch hearts until he has set up his ♦K and he needs to save the ♥A as it is the only entry to his hand to cash the third diamond.

Eisenberg had to make a plan based on what he learned at trick one.

Learning as you Play

West dealt and opened 1♥. Here is how my partner and I got to 4♠:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Board 12
South Deals

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

West led the ♣K and South considered. He had a club loser, a diamond loser and could see that there would be a guess in the heart suit to avoid 2 losers there. Normally, one would think that the opening bidder would be more likely to hold the ♥A and that leading towards dummy's king would be the winning play.

But South was in no hurry to play hearts so he won the ♣A and then drew 2 rounds of trumps ending on the board. Next, he led a diamond from the board towards his ♦KQ.

When West won his ♦A, cashed a top club, and returned a small heart, South knew more than he did at the start of the hand. West had shown up with the ♣KQ, the

♠J and the ♦A. If he held the ♥A as well, that would have left East, who had raised hearts with, at most, the ♥Q and two jacks.

It wouldn't be the first time in the history of bridge that a single raise has been made with 4 HCPs, but the odds favour the opening bidder holding 12 or 13 HCPs and responder holding 5 or 6. This inference gives South justification to play the ♥J on West's lead, losing just one heart trick and making his contract.

Playing the diamonds before hearts was important. South could make a more informed guess about the hearts knowing who held the ♦A. If East had held that card it would have been more logical to lead to dummy's ♥K, instead of the jack; West would need one of the red aces for his opening bid.

In Praise of Mini Splinters

Here's a hand from a club game. South generally opened 1♥. After West's pass, North would find a way to make an invitational bid suggesting a heart game. South always accepted the invitation and easily won 12 tricks, thinking that 27 HCP slams don't happen often and are hard to bid.

Two tables easily found the slam; both of the pairs started the auction with 1♥-3♣ with North's jump to 3♣ showing heart support with a low singleton or void in clubs.

After this start, the slam is easy to find. South, who has a good hand, can see that North has no points in clubs or hearts, so they must be in diamonds and spades, where he needs them. After the 3♣ bid, one South player jumped immediately to 4NT, found the needed ♠A and bid the slam.

Board 19
South Deals

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

The play in 6♥ is easy: 5 hearts, 5 diamonds and 2 spades off the top--no need to even ruff a club.

The jump to 3♣ is a mini splinter, a variation on the old Splinter bid. Mini splinters pop up regularly and are a useful tool for hands like this one.



Improving your results

By David Ellis

Have you ever looked at results of a hand that you thought scored well but you ended up with nowhere near a top board? Remember that minors are 20 points each, and majors are 30 points each. Same for notrump but the first trick is 40 points. For example, if you are in 2♦ making two overtricks (+130), you will still lose to another pair who plays 2♠ making one overtrick (+140).

We all know that getting top boards by winning extra tricks or defeating a contract is very important from a scoring point of view. However, in bidding, do you have a philosophy, technique, or convention to maximize your bidding procedures to try to get to the maximum score at each level?

Here are some tips for what to do at each level:

At the 1-level

- With 14 HCPs and a 5-card suit, you can upgrade your hand, treat it like it's 15 HCPs and open INT. Many bridge experts with 4-4-3-2 hands will upgrade a 14-point hand to INT with this hand: ♠87 ♥AQ4 ♦AJ108 ♣KI094 as the diamond suit can take three tricks which is often as many as a 5-card suit will furnish. Think about changing your notrump range to 14-17 HCPs to reflect that. With a trick-taking 4-card suit, open INT on a 4-4-3-2 14-count.
- When your partner opens 1 of a suit and then rebids INT, you should **pass** with a balanced hand of 4-3-3-3, and sometimes with a 4-4-3-2 and 11 HCPs. Naturally with a 5-card suit and 11+ points, you can use a convention such as 2-Way New Minor Forcing or New Minor Forcing.

At the 2-level

- Playing in a 5-2 fit major suit fit is always better than playing in INT if there are no outside entries to the weak hand. So, there are times to rebid your 5-card major rather than leaving your partner in INT.

For example:

North

♠J 4
♥A K 10 4
♦8 7 6
♣K Q 6 4

South

♠K Q 10 5 2
♥7 3
♦J 9 3 2
♣8 3

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	INT	all pass	

In this hand, INT will go down because the opponents will hold off playing the ♠A for one round, making your spades useless.

At the 3-level

- Try not to play at the 3-level in a minor if 3NT is a decent make. Look for stoppers in other suits. 3 of a minor scores +110 while 3NT scores +400 not vulnerable. A big difference!
- Using inverted minors

- For diamonds: 4 diamonds because a 1♦ opening has at least 4 diamonds 96% of time.
- For clubs: 5 clubs because 1♣ opening has at least 4 clubs 83% of time.
- Unbalanced hand with no 4-card major and no distribution for notrump.
- After 1♣-2♣ or 1♦-2♦ indicating 10-12 HCPs with support for the minor and no 4-card major, bidding a new suit under 3NT shows stoppers in that suit to help arrive safely at 3NT.
 - Bid stoppers up-the-line by bidding (showing) a new suit under 3NT. When a 4th suit is bid, it becomes an asking bid requesting partner to bid NT if partner has a stopper in the 4th suit just bid. Otherwise bid 4 of the minor.
 - Stoppers are A, Kx, Qxx, and a soft stopper would be Jxxx.
- When in doubt, in a 2/1 auction, 2♣ is Game Forcing

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	2♣	2♥
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

South's rebid of 2NT shows you have a stopper in hearts
 2NT shows no extra HCPs; it is not a jump showing HCP 18-19
 You cannot pass as you are in a Game Force
 3♣ = repeat minor usually means 6 clubs (a source of tricks)
 You are in Game Force and you must presume that your partner has a stopper in spades
 "Never-Ever" worry about a stopper in a suit that opponents have never bid
Bob Hamman's Rule: "If you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it."

- The Western Cuebid
 This cuebid is a 3-level **asking** bid of the opponent's suit in an attempt to get to 3NT if partner has a stopper in the opponent's suit.

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass	

¹ = asking for a stopper in spades

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	Dbl
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥ ¹

¹ asking for a stopper in hearts
 It is never a jump to the 3-level
 May be used by Opener or Responder with a strong hand
 Is usually after a minor fit is found at the 3 level
 The opponents have bid only 1 suit
 The 2-level cuebid is usually a Limit Raise

At the 4-level

Criteria of when to play 3NT instead of 4 of a Major

In matchpoint scoring, when 10 tricks are available in both 3NT and 4 of a major, the extra 10 points for NT contracts is important. 4 of a major (non-vulnerable) is 420 while 3NT with one extra trick is 430.

- Distributional Considerations
 - a 4-4 major suit fit is better played in notrump when one hand has 4-3-3-3 shape, as there is no sure shortage in a side suit to take advantage of a ruff
 - a 5-3 split is better playing in notrump when there is no singleton or doubleton in the 3-card suit, because you cannot ruff one loser
- With distribution combinations like QJxx or KQx, and if our partner has length and combined length in the opponents' suits, there is risk that the opponents may ruff, but in NT these combinations produce two stoppers.
- Both hands are balanced and have stoppers in all suits.
- Our combined strength is HCP 28-31.

- We have bad trumps, and we can score 9 tricks using other suits if trumps split badly; often happens when we have a 4-4 fit and a minor 5-card suit.
- We are balanced and we have a good suit with outside quick tricks. AKQxx and outside aces produce quick tricks in both contracts, but you might not have enough tricks in a suit contract.
- When we have a solid suit and no stoppers in the other suits, it is better if the partnership does not end up in notrump.
- But even if you meet all the criteria, the major suit game contract can still be better. Sometimes you cannot predict the bad trump split or that you don't have enough stoppers and quick tricks in NT. Good judgement of the above indicators will increase your scores significantly.

North
 ♠7 4
 ♥A K 8 7 3
 ♦K Q J
 ♣Q 6 3

South
 ♠A 10 9 2
 ♥Q J 5 2
 ♦A 9 6
 ♣A K

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	6NT	all pass	

At the 5-level

- Bridge experts feel bidding 5 of a minor is one of the worst contracts in which to play.
- Everyone knows that 3NT scores the same as 5 of a minor and 3NT making at least one overtrick scores much more than 5 of a minor.
- If your partnership has enough HCPs + unbalanced distribution, you should think of a slam in a minor, not just bidding 5.

At the 6-level

- Bidding 6NT scores 10 points better than 6♥ or 6♠ (990 vs. 980).
- When you can bid slam and can count 12 tricks, bid 6NT.

For example, South opens 1♦ and North responds 1♥. Opener rebids 4♥ with 19 HCPs and a balanced hand. North, with 16 HCPs, explores slam with a 4NT bid. South responds 5♦ to show 0 or 3 keycards. North bids 5♠, one level above 5♦ (but not including the trump suit) to ask for the ♥Q.

South has the ♥Q so bids 6♣, to show the ♥Q and the ♣K, showing kings 'up the line.'

North bids 6♦ to show the ♦K.

South bids slam in hearts.

But North realizes there are 12 sure tricks by counting tricks: one spade, five hearts, three diamonds and three clubs. North does not know if South has a fourth diamond, so settles for 6NT because North cannot count 13 tricks in the auction.

So, North bids 6NT to achieve a result that will beat all the pairs in 6♥.



The 1994 World Open Pairs

By David Turner

Ed. Note: David wrote this article sometime shortly after the completion of the world open pairs championships—way back in 1994. We don't have evidence that his article ever got printed. So, adhering to the ol' maxim, *better late than never*, here it is!

In late September 1994, the World Bridge Championships were held in Albuquerque at the New Mexico Convention Centre. I flew down to play the final week with Michael Roche in the Open Pairs, and we were fortunate enough to be the lone Canucks to make the 5-session finals, after 8 qualifying sessions. Since Maureen Culp has been bugging me to write an article for some time, this presented the ideal excuse. My planned full-length article "Wild Bidding at Matchpoints" will have to wait for another occasion.

We went into the finals in 17th place, but a disastrous first session put us out of the running, and we eventually placed 63rd of 78—not so hot. But as you can imagine, over 13 sessions there were some good hands.

The Obligatory Quiz

Get all these hands right, and you would probably finish 17th, behind two wild Dutch guys, and two of the thousands of identical Poles, eventual winners by two matchpoints or so...

1. White vs red, as dealer you hold:

♠xxx ♥x ♦Kxx ♣AKQJxx and the auction goes

1♣ (2♠*) P (6♠)

??

*=Intermediate

What is your call?

2. None vul., in second seat you hold:

♠K10xx ♥A10 ♦KQ98x ♣Ax and the auction goes

(2♠*) 2NT (3♠) 4♠

(P) ??

*=Weak

What is your call?

3. White vs red, as dealer you hold:

♠A9x ♥xx ♦xxx ♣Jxxxx

P (P) 1♥ (INT)

??

What is your call?

4. Both vul., in fourth seat you hold:

♠Jx ♥x ♦QJ9xxx ♣AKJx

(1♠) P (2♥x*) ??

*=game force

What is your call?

5. None vul., as South you hold:

♠Jxxx ♥K109x ♦AQ9x ♣x and the auction goes

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
------	------	------	----

1♠	Dbl.	3♠*	??
----	------	-----	----

*=limit

What is your call?

6. You are West. East opens 1♣, you bid 1♦, partner bids 1♦, you bid 2NT, and partner puts you in 3NT. The opening lead is the ♦8. How do you play the clubs?

♠9 4

♥K 7 2

♦K Q 9 7 4

♣A 8 3

♠J 10 5 3

♥A Q 3

♦A

♣Q 10 9 5 2

7. White vs. red. Partner has just told you not to do anything, just sit there.

You are the dealer and hold: ♠J9xx ♥10xx ♦Qx ♣987x

You pass, LHO passes and partner opens 3♣. RHO doubles.

What is your call?

Answers

1. An excellent inferential save is available: partner is short in spades, and the opponents obviously short in clubs, so partner must have a few clubs. Instant 7♣ from you, The opponents' hands:

(Mike)	(me)
♠KQJxx	♠xxx
♥xxx	♥AKQJx
♦Qx	♦A10x
♣109	♣xx

I felt a little sorry for this guy: hard for him to know that I had TWO losing clubs, and Mike forgot our agreement on the same hand! 1100 away, with THREE cashers vs. 6♠.

2. I think 6♦ is a reasonable risk: it may make even opposite some 5530 or 6520 hands. Mike held:

♠-- ♥KJ9 ♦AJ10xx ♣Kxxxx. It was rather difficult to raise 6♦ to 7♦, but 6♦+1 was worth 25 matchpoints on a 38 top.

3. Mike bid 2♣(!) to "take away Stayman." This worked beautifully, since the opponents in fact had a 4-4 spade fit, but played in 3NT, and went down on club leads. Wow!

4. I think 3♣ is a winning matchpoint call. Who knows how many matchpoints might be saved by a club lead? Interestingly, this turned out to generate a mega-result: The Egyptian opponents played 6♠, ruffed the second club in hand, drew one round of trumps, ruffed a diamond with dummy's last trump, and had to get off dummy. Declarer "knew" my partner was out of clubs (in fact he had two left) and tried to come off dummy with AK of hearts, which I ruffed for one down and all the marbles. This led to some very unflattering comments to me in Arabic, which Nader Hanna declined to translate.

5. Having opened this pile of junk in fourth, I had no hesitation in doubling Gabriel Chagas "like a shot." Sure enough, they were speeding, and we were +380 into a passout at most tables.

6. You can start the ♣Q and run it; or you can start the ♣10 and run it; or play a low ♣ to the ace, and a small one back. Which is best? Influenced by the ♦8 lead I chose the latter, only to see lefty (Chagas) show out. He explained: "I led a high spot (from jack-fifth!) to steer him wrong in clubs." I think he was trolling to get his -380 back from the first board, and he did.

7. The story of the event: It seemed like Mike had a blind spot on the first board every day (and at no other time: he has broad shoulders, needless to say), so I kidded him about being really careful on the first board of the final. Oddly, this was board 2 (we played all the boards in order every set), yet we were given this board first for some reason - ominous! Still, a 3-count, and not vulnerable: how much trouble could you get into?

Well, a 5♣ bid seemed automatic, but, opposite a Turner 3♣ opening in 3rd chair at favourable vulnerability, this went for 1100. The opponents had no 8-card fit, partner's ♦10 stopped that suit from running, so they had 11 tricks only. The answer to "How much trouble could you get into?" turned out to be 0/38. Coupled with another 0 on the actual board 1 (our opponents bid on to the 5-level on doubtful values instead of doubling like everyone else) and this was not the start of our dreams; we never really got untracked...

Oh well - to play 13 sessions with anyone and still be best buddies at the end is quite a tribute to Mike, who was an outstanding partner throughout. Maybe we'll win it next time.

Oh - one more "How do you feel?" story. Gawrys (of Gawrys & Lasocki, the Poles who always win the Toronto Calcutta) opened 4♣ with: ♠x ♥Jxxx ♦x ♣J10xxxxx (he's my idol now), and saw the auction go:

West	North	East	South
4♣	Db1	4♦	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Db1	All Pass	

Gawrys was chuckling to Mike behind the screen (look at these hearts - and you doubled!?) until Mike showed him ♥AQ98x and an ace or two. Turns out (my Polish isn't too hot, but I understood THIS post-mortem only too well!) that 4♣ is NAMYATS (a conventional opening bid that shows a good 4♥ opening) in their methods. A bottom for them, needless to say, and sufficiently rattling that Gawrys neglected to lead a trump at tricks one or two against my slam on the next board, allowing me to make it for another zero. Now how do you feel?



Canadian Juniors

By Bo Han (Bruce) Zhu

Last summer, I had the pleasure of partnering with Darren Wolpert and teaming with John Carruthers-Marty Kirr and Jacob Freeman-Daniel Lavee, on a team organized by our wonderful NPC Katie Thorpe, in the Open GNTs. Playing with Darren for the first time and considering our substantially lower-than-average age of about 30, we definitely had our share of fun (over)bidding.

Our first match against fellow Canadians from DI6 (Ian Findlay-Gordon Campbell and Dan-Bertrand-Allan Simon) was the closest, with us escaping by a measly 3 IMPs. Bid and play the following hand with me as Darren and I attempt to win the tournament award for bidding, and making(!) the worst makeable slam:

Vul. vs Non-vul.

♠ J 9 5 4 3
 ♥ Q 8 5
 ♦ K J 7 4
 ♣ K

Bruce	LHO	Darren	RHO
Pass	INT*	Dbl.**	Pass***
Pass	Rdbl.****	Pass	2♣
Dbl.*****	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

- * 11-13 HCP
- ** Penalty, generally good 14+ HCP
- *** Forcing, usually one-suited runout or good hand
- **** Forced
- ***** Takeout by agreements

We've run out of agreements by now, but from the auction, it sounded like partner had some support for the suits outside clubs and wanted to hear me bid one. I decided to make a signoff bid that I thought was reasonable – 4♠.

The bidding then proceeds:

Bruce	LHO	Darren	RHO
4♠	Pass	5♠*	Pass
?			

* No agreement, but standard treatment is “bid 6♠ with a first- or second-round club control.”



Jacob Freeman & Daniel Lavee

Well, this gave me some thought. Obviously, I do have a second-round club control—the ♣K— but this card is essentially worthless being a singleton king in the enemy suit. I was also looking at a terrible trump suit (although containing any honour is above-average for junior standards) and I knew we were out at least 11 HCPs. On the bright side, partner did identify a fit and if I needed any finesses, I “knew” where

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everything was. My deciding factor in the end was that this auction is like asking for keycards – partner is in the driver's seat. Partnership trust is much more important than one hand ever, and so I comply with a 6♠ bid, ending the auction. LHO leads the ♣A and here is what I was looking at:

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♠A K 8
♥A K 7
♦A 9 5 3 2
♣6 4

♠J 9 5 4 3
♥Q 8 5
♦K J 7 4
♣K

```

Oh boy, was I in trouble. With my first-trick club loser, I needed to play spades and diamonds for no losers. I did some analysis before playing from dummy:

- Partner and I have a combined 28 HCPs, leaving the opponents with 12 HCPs. This means RHO has at most one jack and LHO has both pointed suit queens: ♠Q and ♦Q.
- LHO did not raise 2♣ at favourable colours knowing we likely had game. This means the club distribution is probably not 5-5 (I initially guessed they were divided 3-7.) This, coupled with LHO's INT opening bid, meant he was longer in ♠s, ♥s, and ♦s.

The first trick goes ♣A-♣4-♣10-♣K, and LHO continues with ♣Q which I ruffed. Now, spades must break 3-2 to avoid losing a trick. I could play the ♠AK and hope LHO has ♠Qx, but it is more likely he has longer spades. Therefore, I lead the ♠J, hoping LHO ducks or covers with ♠Q10x, and then later I will finesse for the ♠10. When I lead the ♠J, LHO plays the ♠6 smoothly. Well done, opponent! Good players should see

this coming with ♠AKx in dummy, in case I hold ♠J10xxxx. I let the ♠J run, bringing the ♠2 from RHO. On the ♠AK, LHO follows with the ♠Q7 and RHO plays the ♠10 and then pitches the ♣9. Phew! We've dodged a bullet so far.

We know LHO has the ♦Q and we could play the ♦A, ♦K and hope diamonds are 2-2. But there's a better play to give us one more chance, and that is to see if RHO has a singleton ♦10. If that is the case, we can play a small diamond towards the king, and then if the ten shows up, finesse LHO for the ♦Q. When I played low towards the king, RHO did not play the ♦10, so I ended up needing to resort to a 2-2 diamond split. That happened and the slam snuck home.

The full deal can be seen here:

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?bbo=y&myhand=M-1389088416-1626386458>



Bruce Zhu & Darren Wolpert

The next two rounds against D24 and D19 resulted in our opponents' withdrawals, our team was playing so well. Darren exhibited excellent judgement throughout the event. For instance, he picked up:

♠A 10 4
 ♥A J 6
 ♦A K Q 8 3
 ♣A Q

The bidding:

Vul. vs non-vul.

Darren	LHO	Bruce	RHO
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦**	Pass
2♥***	Pass	2♠****	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	X
3♦*****	Pass	4NT*****	Pass
?			

- * Strong
- ** Waiting
- *** Kokish – Either 5+ hearts or a good 24+ balanced
- **** Forced
- ***** Club stopper and no 4/5-card major
- ***** Quantitative

He then bid 6♦ to strongly suggest a trump suit despite having a minimum, reasoning that the ♣AQ were essentially the ♣AK on the bidding, and a suited slam required fewer HCPs. I passed and here were the two hands:

♠A 10 4
 ♥A J 6
 ♦A K Q 8 3
 ♣A Q

♠Q J 6 5
 ♥K 3
 ♦J 7 2
 ♣6 5 4 2

6♦ made easily. In fact, declarer took 13 tricks with friendly breaks, so we won 12 IMPs when slam was not bid at the other table.

We unfortunately couldn't force any more withdrawals in the finals, running out of steam against the eventual D9 champions (Jeffrey Wolfson-Jeff Meckstroth, David Berkowitz-Gary Cohler, Kevin Dwyer-Shan Huang). I had a blast and can't wait to do it again. Here's hoping to be seeing y'all in person soon!



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mel Norton of Burlington for winning his second Richmond Trophy in a row for most masterpoints accumulated by a Canadian in one year. Mel finished 5th overall in North America with just over 1200 masterpoints.



Super-Accepts After Notrump Openings

By Ray Jotcham

You have opened INT, and partner has shown five or more spades either by a transfer (I hate transfers over INT) or directly by bidding the suit. In my preferred style, this shows little or no game interest, with the caveat that game may be possible if partner has the right hand. How does opener show his hand? With three-card support, he just accepts the transfer or passes the 2♠ response. It's when opener has four-card support that things get interesting.

But first, a review of the Losing Trick Count (LTC) is in order. In its simplest form, any suit of three or more cards is assumed to have three losers, a two-card suit has two losers, etc. Then you deduct a loser for each ace, king or protected queen (e.g. QJx or Q109). If you have no ace, add a loser, and if you have three or four aces, deduct a loser. If after all this, you have 7 losers, then your hand is a minimum. With 6 or fewer losers, you have a maximum. *Don't try for game unless you have a maximum.*

Now for something a little different. What do these two deals have in common? Spades are trump.

A.

♠ —
♥ QJ 10 9 8
♦ QJ 10 9
♣ QJ 10 9

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

B.

♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2
♥ QJ 10
♦ —
♣ QJ 10 9

♠ A K Q J 10 9 8
♥ —
♦ QJ 10 9 8 7
♣ —

The obvious answer is that both hands are cold for thirteen tricks with spades as trumps—all the tricks being scored in the trump suit.

Let's change hand B slightly, and get hands C and D.

C.

♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2
♥ QJ 10
♦ 7
♣ QJ 10

♠ A K Q J 10 9 8
♥ —
♦ QJ 10 9 8
♣ 9

D.

♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2
♥ QJ 10
♦ 8 7
♣ QJ

♠ A K Q J 10 9 8
♥ 9
♦ QJ 10 9
♣ 10

The actual hand opposite: ♠ A x x x x With a VTL of seven, who
 ♥ x x x would not bid a game with a
 ♦ x x x x x seven-card major after a
 ♣ — strong notrump opening?

What if you have a stronger hand of the notrump variety, and open 2NT or 2♣ followed by 2NT?

Here I think Jacoby Transfers are indispensable (along with **Puppet** or **Muppet Stayman**). If you don't know what Muppet Stayman is, perhaps Steve Mackay, its inventor, might be persuaded to write an article about its superiority over regular Puppet.

Once again, since you are contemplating playing in a major suit, aces are worth their weight in gold, queens and jacks not so much. Hence some care should be taken in evaluating your hand before making a super-accept. After all, there is no way of asking partner if he wants to be in a game or not. YOU have the only power of decision.

As over INT openings, 4333 distribution should be looked at with a jaundiced eye. Responder will need a card or two or a two-suited hand to make a game, and will bid again with a few points. With no points, he won't be too happy to put down his pointless wonder and have you score up only nine tricks in a game you bid **because** you had a nine-card fit.

Rule #1 in bridge: KEEP PARTNER HAPPY!

What sort of hands do we need to super-accept a transfer?

1. Four card support. Even AKQ opposite a zero-point hand might not play well if you have a doubleton and are forced to ruff with one of your honours.
2. Side suit aces. Your hand should have 3 keycards as a minimum.
3. If you are **not** contemplating bidding 3NT, you need a side doubleton so VTL comes into effect.

Examples:

1. ♠ K Q J x If partner has no ace, he will not be happy if you bid 4♠ over the
 ♥ K Q x transfer and go down one. Over 3♥ by partner, bid 3♠, and leave
 ♦ K Q x any further move to him.
 ♣ K Q J

2. ♠ A K x x As over INT, a super accept in notrump sends the following
 ♥ A K x message: I expect to have a play for 3NT opposite a five-card suit
 ♦ A x x headed by one high honour or six low cards. I have two high
 ♣ K x x honours and three or four winners outside. Either a club lead or
 the outside ace will seal the deal.

Okay: we have four-card support, a doubleton, and three or more key-cards. Do we just bid the game? Bidding the game puts a lot of pressure on partner to find an appropriate call if he has some values or some distribution. Hence **Jotcham Super-accepts!** With the values for a super-accept, avoiding 3NT, bid one suit up to show three keycards, two suits up to show **four** keycards, and raise to game to show **five** keycards. This leaves the suit below the agreed suit available to retransfer into the agreed major if you show three or four keycards. A memory aid for this is **3-4-Skip-5**.

Examples

3.	♠A K x x	♠J 9 x x x x	2NT	3♥
	♥A K x x	♥x x	3NT	Pass
	♦A x x	♦x x		
	♣K x x	♣x x x		

3NT requires only a 2-1 spade break while 4♠ requires both the spade break and the ♣A onside.

4.	♠A K x x	♠J 10 x x x x	2NT	3♥
	♥A Q x x	♥x	4♠	7♠
	♦A x x	♦K Q x x x	Pass	
	♣A x	♣x		

Opposite five keycards and four trumps, thirteen tricks should be easy.

5.	♠A K x x	♠J 10 x x x x	2♣	2♦
	♥A x x x	♥x	2NT	3♥
	♦A K x	♦Q J x x x	4♠	4NT(asks for kings)
	♣A x	♣x	5♦ (♦K)	7♠
			Pass	

Since opener can have at most one side king (being capped at 23 HCP and already having 19 HCP in key cards), responder can ask for kings. When responder finds out about the ♦K (we show specific kings), the grand slam is bid. Strangely. If opener has 25 HCP, the hand is harder to bid since opener might have the kings in clubs and hearts. If over 4NT, opener bids 5♣, Responder can bid the suit in which he is looking for the king. If opener has that king, he raises that suit. Otherwise, he shows another king or signs off, leaving the final decision to responder.

6.	♠A x	♠x	2NT	3♦
	♥K x x x	♥A Q 10 x x x	4♣ (4 keys)	4♦ (retransfer)
	♦A J x	♦10 x x x	4♥	6♥
	♣A K J x	♣x x	Pass	

It is best for opener to declare since a diamond lead would seal the deal. As it happened, twelve tricks were laydown with one defender holding a doubleton honour in diamonds—strip clubs and spades, then play ace and a diamond.

A useful tip: if responder holds a bad 5-card major with no singleton or void, he should probably say “Pass” since there is no guarantee that bidding will improve the contract. If you have shortness, then you must have a side suit of at least four cards in length, and VTL comes into play. Therefore, bid with shortness, and pass with a 5-3-3-2 bad hand. The moral is: don’t go out of your way to seek trouble.

I hope you accept this offering in the spirit in which it was given.



Quest for Gold

By Howard Laufer

When I first started playing bridge in my retirement, I had no intention of amassing “masterpoints” or playing in tournaments. I just wanted to be a player who, two or three times a week, meandered down to the bridge club to spend a few hours passing the time playing in a friendly game of bridge. What I discovered to my chagrin was that Duplicate Bridge, the new game that I had just taken up, would swallow me up just like the whale did to Jonah.

It all started one rainy day in Clearwater, Florida. My wife and I realized that golfing was out of the question, so we decided to pop into the bridge club and spend the afternoon playing cards. The main room was filled that day. We tried to register for the 299er game which started at 12:30. The director, a sweet gal, named Laverne knew that we were virtual beginners and apologized profusely because there was no 299er game on Thursday afternoon, only an “open game”—whatever that meant.

“Can we play?” I asked.

She hesitated a minute and replied, “I don’t think that you want to play here today.”

“Why?” I asked. “Was it because the room was so full?”

“No,” she warned. “It’s an open game! Look around. Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell are here and so are a lot of other heavy hitters from around the area.” I had no idea of what she was talking about. She went on. “The field is so deep that you will feel like you have just fallen into a giant sinkhole.” Laverne was full of colorful metaphors that meant nothing to us, so we sat down ready to play. Two and one-half hours later we staggered out of the club bruised and battered. The warm Florida sunshine could not compensate us for the beating that we had just endured. “What happened in there?” my wife asked. “They just doubled and doubled and redoubled until we spun around in our chairs.” “Yeah,” I mumbled back. “And what about that

insane bidding where I opened a suit and then they actually had the nerve to also bid my suit right on top of me. How could they do that when they didn’t even have any of my suit in the first place? Crazy, eh?” At least now we knew what the “alert” bidding card looked like. We saw it often enough! You would think this discouraging start would put me off bridge all together but for some curious reason it did exactly the opposite. It spurred me on to get better and to compete with the best. All I wanted to do was get good enough so that I could do the same thing to the 299ers that the “sharks” had done to me in that open game. Eat them alive! I obviously had a long way to go but one of my virtues is patience. I started my quest by picking up every tidbit of knowledge that came my way. I even read a few good bridge books, too.

Back home in Ontario, we only had an open game. Small compensation in the fact that the game was stratified which meant we were only competing against players of our own ability. I didn’t quite understand it all because we were still playing hands against people who had thousands and thousands of masterpoints. Sure, it was stratified but was it fair? As we moved from table to table, I prayed that when we came up against the top players that the hands were simple to bid. You know, 1 no trump--3 no trump and the hand only played one way so everybody in the room would have the same result. If the hand was tough to bid, I knew we were dead in the water. Only the experts could bid those hands and find the right contract. We had no chance against people who played like robots.

Some of the expert players were a joy to play with; others were not. The good ones offered encouragement and friendly advice. The bad ones mostly ignored you. You could always ask Doug a question. Marilyn was grouchy but, at least, she offered a suggestion or two. Alice was too quiet and didn’t like to engage. My favorite was Rob. He was a heck of a player. I think everyone wanted to be his

partner. I liked it best when he played with his wife. He took an interest in who you were. I loved it when he made comments like, "That was a good contract. You landed in the right place" or "That was a good lead. It's the only way to defeat the contract."

After playing for a short period of time I realized that to become a Life Master you would have to dedicate a lot of time and energy to the game of bridge. Was I really that committed? Did I want to spend my life chasing masterpoints? What were they good for anyway? You couldn't trade them in for redeemable coupons at McDonald's or tickets to a hockey game. So, who cares? The problem is that the chase for masterpoints is addictive! As surely as eating chips and dip. Once you start, it's impossible to stop. It would probably take a serious Intervention Group to rescue you. I guess the best part of being a Life Master would be seeing your name in print in the Bridge Bulletin. Now, at least you would have formal recognition for your achievements---something like a college diploma only better. The bragging rights alone were enough motivation for me. Points, schmoins. I heard that somewhere, but it never applied to the avid bridge player who, in his quest to achieve the title of Life Master, would sacrifice both time and money to achieve that goal. A lot of experts would joke about how much money it cost them to earn five thousand points considering how much money each session costs and how many years you must play. Mike, an ex-math teacher, often joked that it was easy to get 5000 master points. "Just play three times a week and consistently earn two master points per week. That adds up to 100 points per year give or take. Simple right. Just think in 50 years, you're there." Undaunted, I paused for a moment and thought to myself, "Heck, I'm retired; I have all the time in the world."

In our first club game back home, my wife and I earned one quarter of a black point and then later another half of a point and finally weeks later one more half point. I thought back to what Mike had said when we first joined the club and I started to do the math. At this rate, I would probably achieve Life Master status sometime in the next millennium. To make things worse, I discovered that masterpoints come in different colors: red, black, silver and gold. But the ones that really mattered were gold. The reds and the silvers and the blacks seemed do-able, but the gold was a definite roadblock put up by the ACBL to torment those who were addicted to the quest for Life Master Status. In fact, mining for gold would be easier than earning it at tournaments. Again, I discovered that you could only earn gold points in

regional tournaments which were usually held a few times a year in various places around the country. If you have never been to a regional tournament, picture the Superbowl without the stands. That's the size of the convention center in Bradenton, Florida where I first played in the "gold rush" pairs. In some ways, it was like hiking the Klondike trail on my way to the Yukon. The path was steep, and the terrain was treacherous to traverse.

In this giant hall the size of a football field, imagine every gridline and hash mark filled with rows and rows of card tables. Next, section off the tables into separate rectangles and then spread them out through the entire convention center. Add road signs; otherwise you would need Google maps to navigate your way through this giant maze of bridge madness. Like the first time for anything, I was a little apprehensive about competing in such an overwhelming event. Could I survive playing against the "barracudas" who had dominated these waters for years? The gold rush was a 0-750 game. They had been here before, but this was my very first time. In the end, we did earn .20 gold points but that was a token that said, "Thanks for showing up." I did the math again and it didn't look good. For the first time, I started to think that maybe my goal of Life Master was a little too ambitious.

One expert at the club, an old gentleman who had played for a thousand years suggested that I keep it simple and don't play with too many conventions. But for some bizarre reason he stressed knowing every aspect of Stayman. "You will need the full repertoire," he said. "Puppet, Checkback, Crawling, Forcing, and, of course, Garbage." (I liked the sound of this one the best.) Then came the little wrinkle. "You'll have to learn Smolen, as well, so the contract plays from the correct side." This from the guy who said, "Keep it simple." My old mentor had a similar approach. He liked to use all the gadgets that he could find in the Encyclopedia of Bridge. He suggested that I incorporate all the ethnic groups that my convention card could hold.... Lebensohl, Cappelletti, Flannery, Truscott and even Rosenkrantz. I thought to myself, "Is he really serious?"

Most of the advice that I ultimately used came from the Bridge Bulletin. I always read Jerry Helms first. He spoke directly to me. I also liked his "Jerryisms." They kind of stuck to me like glue. Eddie Kantar's chalk talk sessions reminded me of my old coach, especially when he sprinkled in those humorous quips. I would follow that up with Lawrence and Cohen and Bergen. I just didn't have enough time to read

much more before I discovered that the next issue of the Bulletin had arrived at my doorstep, but I must admit, I did find time to read the Letters to the Editor. I was progressing toward my goal, but I knew that I still had a long way to go. Maybe too long!

Then one day it hit me. A light bulb burst in my brain. Maybe I wasn't cut out to be a Life Master after all; maybe I was just supposed to be a guy on a quest but a quest for what? It was at that point I stopped mining for gold and started mining for other precious things more important than gold. I just wanted to keep playing bridge, to keep getting better,

to keep learning, to enjoy the moment, and to simply have fun. In my retirement I didn't really need a quest—I needed a hobby; a pastime, an interest! Something that would challenge my mind but keep me engaged with people. Isn't that enough fulfillment for one retirement? Bridge had done that for me. What a wonderful thing!

By now, I realized that I would never have my name enshrined in the Life Master Milestones section of the Bridge Bulletin. I have made peace with that idea and that's okay with me, too.

Harvey at the Helm

By Paul Thurston

Canadian Bridge lost another long-time stalwart with the recent passing of Harvey Fogel of Toronto. Born and raised in Oshawa, Harv and I first crossed paths in the late 60s when we were both students at Brock University in St. Catharines.

Where did we meet? Why, of course in the cafeteria where a bridge game could usually be found raging at all hours!

Back in the day, we were all ultra-aggressive bidders, none more so than Mr. Fogel who frequently had to bring his considerable card-play skills to bear on yet another ambitious undertaking. Among those skills was a penchant for seeking (and often finding) opportunities for exotic plays that might wow the less indoctrinated among the players and onlookers.

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

West	North	East	South
			INT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♥
All pass			

The auction used to reach this slender heart slam was fairly typical of cafeteria bidding in those days: we had enough aces (5♠ in reply to Blackwood was “old-fashioned” and showed three aces) and enough high-card points so the trump suit would have to look after itself – but at least we had H.F. at the wheel as declarer.

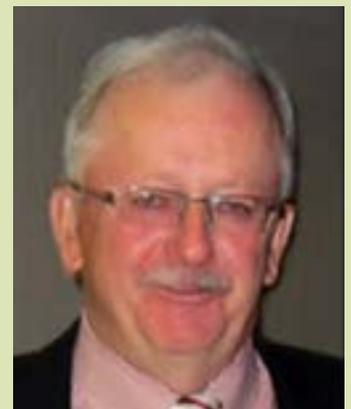
Superficially, you might think declarer needed to find the missing heart honours as a doubleton to escape two losers.

Not so!

Harv won the spade ace to play a low heart to his eight and West's king (yes, lots of false cards at Brock U.).

When a second spade came back, Harv won in hand to advance the trump jack to trap West's guarded queen while pinning the offside ten. The first intra-finesse I ever saw in real life!

Well done Harv – we will all miss you.



Spring

Niagara-on-the-Lake Sectional June 3-5, 2022



NOTL Community Centre
14 Anderson Lane, NOTL
(off Hwy 55/Mississauga Rd)
905-468-4386



0-750 Tournament

Friday June 3rd, 2022

750 Pairs 1:00pm & 7:00pm
99 Pairs 1:00pm & 7:00pm

Saturday June 4th, 2022

750 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm
99 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm

Lunch will be available for purchase

Sunday June 5th, 2022

750 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm
99 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm

Lunch will be available for purchase

All players are required to abide by
the COVID protocols of ACBL and the
Province of Ontario

Tournament Chair:

Chandi Jayawardena 905-941-1676
Email chandij@sympatico.ca

Partnership Chair:

Peggy-Sue Verkerk 905-359-0159
Email peggysueshaver@yahoo.com

Stratification

(Pair Average and strats adjusted as attendance warrants)

750 Pairs 100 - 750
99 Pairs 0 - 100

General Information

All Events are Playthrough or Single Session

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Claude's Corner

By Claude Tremblay

Ed. Note. This is our first edition of Claude's Corner, written by Unit 255 Board member, Claude Tremblay. For a more interactive experience doing Claude's challenges, please visit his club's website: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/niagaraonthelake/>

Here's Claude explaining what the challenges are all about.

Over the past 20 years, I have read many excellent bridge books and identified some very interesting hands which we can all learn from. I find that trying to solve a bridge problem is more effective than having someone tell me the answer. As a result, I provide a bridge challenge on play of the hand or defence for you to solve and give the answer on a separate page. I hope you enjoy testing yourself.

Challenge 1

Contract: 6♠

Dummy

♠ A K Q J
♥ 2
♦ A Q J
♣ A K Q 10 4

You

♠ 10 4 3 2
♥ A J 4 3
♦ 9 7
♣ 9 6 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Prepare your defense.

Trick 1: Partner leads ♥K, dummy plays ♥2, what do you do? You need to explain your action.

Challenge 2

Contract: 7♥

♠ A 9 8 6 4
♥ Q J 9
♦ A 7
♣ A Q 8

♠ 3
♥ A K 10 6 4
♦ 9 6 3
♣ K J 4 2

Partner may have gotten carried away. In an uncontested auction, partner puts you in a 7♥ contract. Yes 7♥!

While you recover from the shock, LHO leads the ♠K.

What is your plan to maximize the number of tricks you can really make?

See next page for solutions.

Claude Tremblay is a retired executive from the public and private sectors. After retiring in 1998, Claude started playing bridge and relocated to NOTL shortly after. He is a past president of Crime Stoppers and volunteered for Meals on Wheels for several years. He enjoys his newfound passion for playing bridge with his favorite partner, Muriel. They travel the world teaching and directing aboard cruise ships as Accredited Bridge Teacher and Certified Director. He is also an avid backgammon player.

Answer 1

Did you overtake with the ♠A and lead another ?

Dummy
 ♠ A K Q J
 ♥ 2
 ♦ A Q J
 ♣ A K Q 10 4

You
 ♠ 10 4 3 2
 ♥ A J 4 3
 ♦ 9 7
 ♣ 9 6 3

You are not going to take a trick in clubs and even if partner has the ♦K it would be finessed (assuming declarer can get to their hand). However, you have no need to rely on some fortunate distribution of the outstanding cards since the way to defeat the contract lies in your own hands. Partner is marked with the ♥Q, and by simply overtaking the king with the ace and returning the suit you will force declarer to ruff in dummy, thereby ensuring a trick for your ♠10.

Answer 2

Did you think about a Dummy Reversal?

♠ A 9 8 6 4
 ♥ Q J 9
 ♦ A 7
 ♣ A Q 8

♠ 3
 ♥ A K 10 6 4
 ♦ 9 6 3
 ♣ K J 4 2

First, did you notice the spots on the cards? You want to make sure you do not get overruffed. Usually you ruff with the “short” hand but this time we will ruff with the “long trump” hand. Hence the term *dummy reversal*. In effect, declarer’s hand becomes the dummy.

You win the ♠K and ruff a ♠ low, play a ♣ to the queen, second ♠ ruff high, ♣ to the ace for a third ♠ ruff high. So far, we have six tricks.

Then a diamond to the ace and a fourth ♠ ruff high ensuring we leave a small ♥ to return to dummy to pull trumps and finish with a small ♣ to the ♣KJ. This is an additional 7 tricks for a total of 13 tricks.

Voila! Brought the contract home even with spades splitting 5-2. May need a new partner bidding a grand slam on 28 HCPs! But your play was perfect. Remember: fits takes tricks, not just HCPs.

The full deal:

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

Summer

Niagara-on-the-Lake Sectional August 19-21, 2022



NOTL Community Centre
14 Anderson Lane, NOTL
(off Hwy 55/Mississauga Rd)
905-468-4386



0-499 Tournament

Friday August 19th, 2022

499 Pairs 7:00pm
99 Pairs 7:00pm

Saturday August 20th, 2022

499 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm
99 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm

Lunch will be available for purchase

Sunday August 21st, 2022

499 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm
99 Pairs 10:30am & 3:00pm

Lunch will be available for purchase

All players are required to abide by
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Tournament Chair:

Chandi Jayawardena 905-941-1676
Email chandij@sympatico.ca

Partnership Chair:

Peggy-Sue Verkerk 905-359-0159
Email peggysueshaver@yahoo.com

Stratification

(Pair Average and strats adjusted as attendance warrants)

499 Pairs 100 - 500
99 Pairs 0 - 100

General Information

All Events are Playthrough or Single Session

\$15/player/session for ACBL members

Extra \$4 for lapsed ACBL members

Temporary membership for non-ACBL members will
be available.

All events stratified by average masterpoints.

Sectional Tournament Sponsored by

Jaclyn Morrison of
HollisWealth[®]

(905) 937-0962

Jac.morrison@holliswealth.com

Unit 166

2022 Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs Awards

0–5		
Suhasini Vaidya	Toronto	52.48
Bryan Muldoon	Burlington	35.28
Marilyn George	Toronto	31.28
5–20		
Mel Rotstein	Toronto	74.59
Gene Machida	Toronto	61.58
Manjula Jhamb	Hamilton	43.61
20 to 50		
Ron McBride	Toronto	122.56
Mark Rowe	Etobicoke	122.44
Peggy Lee	Toronto	115.12
50–100		
Frank Indelicato	Hamilton	252.81
Lee Coplan	Toronto	111.01
Alasdair Barclay	Etobicoke	110.15
100–200		
Ron Lawrence	Oakville	361.34
Fay Greenholtz	Toronto	226.99
Gale Small	Hamilton	215.95
200–300		
Kathryn Jensen	Toronto	270.62
Peter Rival	Ancaster	236.59
Susan Samuels	Toronto	230.44
300–500		
Julie Wood	Toronto	289.88
Luigi Giammarco	Oakville	238.46
Amina Hafez	Toronto	223.64
500–1000		
Myrtle Herzenberg	Toronto	416.70
Sum Tang	Mississauga	293.25
Alan Huttung Lam	Scarborough	253.35

1000–1500		
Iain Macdonald	Toronto	361.69
Raymond Mitchell	Etobicoke	334.61
Graham Dixon	Etobicoke	243.96
1500–2500		
Rod McLeod	Burlington	307.13
Will Sutherland	North York	298.66
Joanne Grandy	Toronto	294.50
2500–3500		
Daniel Cecchelli	Hamilton	370.26
Robert Panchuk	Burlington	333.45
Doug Bennion	Toronto	203.88
3500–5000		
Vera Carpenter	York	1,009.69
Steven Mehta	Mississauga	412.30
Barbara Seagram	Toronto	384.00
5000–7500		
Mel Norton	Burlington	1,171.52
Roisin O'Hara	Oakville	512.14
Jack Shinehoft	Dundas	436.87
7500–10,000		
Andrew Firko	Oakville	648.30
Gary Westfall	Brampton	632.56
Roman Klein	Oakville	412.58
Over 10,000		
Rashid Khan	York	670.97
Dudley Camacho	Toronto	495.00
Linda Wynston	Toronto	330.90



Unit 166

2021 Mini-McKenney Awards

0–5		
Suhasini Vaidya	Toronto	52.48
Bryan Muldoon	Burlington	35.28
Marilyn George	Toronto	31.28
5–20		
Mel Rotstein	Toronto	74.59
Gene Machida	Toronto	61.58
Manjula Jhamb	Hamilton	43.61
20 to 50		
Mark Rowe	Etobicoke	124.38
Ron McBride	Toronto	122.56
Peggy Lee	Toronto	115.12
50–100		
Frank Indelicato	Hamilton	252.81
Lee Coplan	Toronto	116.94
Alasdair Barclay	Etobicoke	110.15
100–200		
Ron Lawrence	Oakville	387.17
Gale Small	Hamilton	236.55
Fay Greenholtz	Toronto	226.99
200–300		
Kathryn Jensen	Toronto	283.61
Peter Rival	Ancaster	254.16
Joanne Pooley	Toronto	251.11
300–500		
Julie Wood	Toronto	349.78
Luigi Giammarco	Oakville	242.16
Amina Hafez	Toronto	224.44
500–1000		
Myrtle Herzenberg	Toronto	477.20
Sum Tang	Mississauga	303.98
Alan Huttung Lam	Scarborough	275.62

1000–1500		
Iain Macdonald	Toronto	386.82
Raymond Mitchell	Etobicoke	334.61
Graham Dixon	Etobicoke	273.65
1500–2500		
Jacob Freeman	Toronto	379.97
Peter Peng	North York	377.57
Rod McLeod	Burlington	307.13
2500–3500		
Daniel Cecchelli	Hamilton	372.79
Robert Panchuk	Burlington	333.45
Steve McGrahan	Hamilton	209.22
3500–5000		
Vera Carpenter	York	1,041.13
Steven Mehta	Mississauga	412.30
Barbara Seagram	Toronto	384.41
5000–7500		
Mel Norton*	Burlington	1,214.34
Roisin O'Hara	Oakville	514.54
Barbara Shnier	Toronto	476.90
7500–10,000		
Andrew Firko	Oakville	648.30
Gary Westfall	Brampton	632.56
Barry Senensky	Toronto	572.01
Over 10,000		
Rashid Khan	York	712.44
Dudley Camacho	Toronto	501.99
David Grainger	Etobicoke	447.33

*2021 Richmond Trophy Winner
(for most masterpoints won by a Canadian)

In this issue...

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New Kibitzer feature!

**Claude's Corner with
NOTL's Claude Tremblay**

See page 33

Deadline for the Summer 2022 Kibitzer: April 15, 2022

The Kibitzer

Andy Stark

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