



THE DECLARER



Autumn 2023

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Ken Trock, Editor

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The Declarer

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President's Message *by Brett Kunin*



I trust all of you had a joyous Thanksgiving with your loved ones. The next two NJBL events will be in March 2024.

Because of the Unit's reduced income, diminished attendance since the pandemic, and the increasing costs of holding a lavish event for the Annual Meeting/Awards brunch, the NJBL Board prudently decided that the Unit can no longer afford to sustain a \$5000 loss. We are looking at other locations, and the Award brunch committee will recommend reducing the price to \$25 per person; having it catered by a local restaurant. That issue will be decided by the full Board later this month, and it is likely that the event will be held on Sunday, March 10. More details will follow with a blast email. Keep the weekend open on your calendars! In addition, our first Sectional next year is scheduled for March 1-3.

The projected attendance for the ACBL NABC in Atlanta (not completed at the writing of this message) is approximately 6600 tables, which was within projections. At the last meeting of the ACBL Board of Directors, a proposal by the new Executive Director, Bronia Jenkins, known as the 5/5/5 Plan, was passed. This is an effort by the ACBL to maintain or increase the declining membership. The Advisory Council (formerly the Board of Governors, of which I am one of the members representing District 3, of which our Unit is a part) has not seen the full details. The plan will require Units to actively attempt to contact members whose membership has lapsed to receive approximately the same amount as the Unit currently receives, which is 11% of the membership fees paid to the ACBL. In anticipation of the passage of this motion, several months ago, our Unit formed a committee to do so, and has been very active. More details will be provided when we have more information.

My best wishes to all for the December holidays and a safe and healthy New Year.

NJBL Nominating Committee

The NJ Bridge League Board of Directors Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of candidates to serve on the 2024 Board (alphabetically):

Beth Carlson
Bob Carroll
Komal Kamat
Kelly Kiefer
Judy Snyder

Voting on candidates for a 3 year term will be at the Annual Meeting/Awards brunch in March 2024.

Dust Goes To Show You

by Jay Korabow

It was interesting to watch the above deal in an expert team match:

	<u>North</u>		
Dealer: North	♠ K10953		
Vul: Both	♥ 95		
	♦ 942		
	♣ J54		
		<u>East</u>	
<u>West</u>		♠ J42	
♠ A6		♥ 862	
♥ AJ43		♦ K753	
♦ Q10		♣ 1082	
♣ AKQ76			
	<u>South</u>		
	♠ Q87		
	♥ KQ107		
	♦ AJ86		
	♣ 93		

The bidding:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dbl
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

With 20 HCP, both Wests thought it best to double South's opening 1♦ bid, but then the paths diverged. At the first table, North passed, and East, with a bad 4-count, thought a 1NT response was the least of evils (compared to bidding a 3 card suit), though most would expect 6 or 7 (up to a bad 11) HCP for such a call.

East was rapidly raised to 3NT and received a low Heart opening lead. When they inserted the ♥J and it held, South's discarding woes mounted on the run of the Clubs, and 11 tricks for +660 was the East-West result. With a damaging Spade lead possible, this result seemed to be an impressive IMP gain in the making.

In the replay, the bidding as above saw North insert a 1♠ call over the double, far from a unanimous choice but very effective on this deal. After two passes, West then had a choice of 2♣, double, or 1NT – the last showing a hand too good to start with a 1NT overcall. The 1NT bid would have kept the contract low, as indeed when North leads the ♠10 and Declarer cannot duck the Ace twice, only seven or eight tricks are there for East-West.

Usually, it is desirable for the strong hand to be Declarer in No Trump, as the lead will be into a tenace or a holding that benefits from being led "into" rather than "thru." However, this West reasonably thought doubling again was best. As at the first table, East had no good option, so chose 1NT as well. 2NT might have been a sufficient rebid for West, but as Bob Hamman would likely endorse, trotting out the old 3NT call is a formula for frequent success, and that was the final contract.

Here, South found the low Spade opening lead, of course, and when Declarer played low, North won the ♠K and returned the ♠10. Declarer (East) did not cover with the ♠J, so South had to keep the ♠Q, which became high as the ♠A won. Five rounds of Clubs followed, and South had to come down to the six card holding shown below, with the Spade suit blocked.

	<u>North</u>		
	♠ 95		
	♥ 9		
	♦ 942		
	♣ –		
		<u>East</u>	
<u>West</u>		♠ J	
♠ –		♥ 86	
♥ AJ43		♦ K75	
♦ Q10		♣ –	
♣ –			
	<u>South</u>		
	♠ Q		
	♥ KQ10		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ –		

With six tricks in, needing three more in the diagrammed position, Declarer now played the $\heartsuit Q$, and South's goose was cooked. South won the $\heartsuit A$, cashed the $\spadesuit Q$, and then could play either the $\heartsuit K$, (which Declarer would duck to retain $\heartsuit AJ$ over the $\heartsuit Q10$) or could chose to exit with the $\heartsuit J$, which they did.

The $\heartsuit J$ went to Declarer's $\heartsuit K$, and although North now had the high $\heartsuit 9$ as well as a good Spade, they had no entry to cash them. Declarer next played the $\heartsuit 8$ towards the $\heartsuit AJ4$, and when South played the $\heartsuit K$, East simply ducked to ensure tricks eight and nine with the $\heartsuit AJ$ sitting over South's remaining $\heartsuit Q10$.

+600 was an unlikely surprise result for East-West here and kept the loss to two IMPs on the board. East apologized, saying something like he "didn't have Jack" – a saying that denotes an absence of riches. But in fact, East-West's two major suit Jacks were worth their weight in gold on this deal, while North-South's two Jacks were disintegrated into dust, if even that, as the deal materialized.

Constructive Matchpoint Auctions

by Brett Kunin

Playing in the afternoon Common Game on October 26th at my local club, two hands arose which illustrate how Partner can assist in determining whether to “bid on”.

On board 15 with North/South vulnerable, after an initial Pass, Partner (West) opens 1♦, your RHO passes, and you bid 1♥ with ♠ 98 ♥ QT432 ♦ AQT ♣ T86. Your LHO bids 1♠, Partner doubles to show 3 card support, and LHO bids 2♠. You Pass, LHO passes, and with ♠ Kxx ♥ J97 ♦ KJ654 ♣ AJ, rather than double, Partner makes the good call of 3♦ with a hand containing a 5 card suit and an outside Ace and King. Note that you have a difficult decision if Partner reopens with a double, as you hold a weak Heart suit and a dubious Club holding. However, you now have an easy call of 3♥. Looking at the deal below, there is little to the play of 3♥, and 2♠ makes if Declarer plays the Club suit correctly or negotiates a Diamond ruff in Dummy. +140 vs. -110 is an 80% board.

<u>LHO (S)</u>	<u>Partner (W)</u>	<u>RHO (N)</u>	<u>Me (E)</u>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♦!	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

Dealer: LHO
Vul: Opps

Partner
♠ K54
♥ J97
♦ KJ654
♣ AJ

LHO
♠ AJ762
♥ A6
♦ 983
♣ Q73

RHO
♠ Q103
♥ K85
♦ 72
♣ K9542

Me
♠ 98
♥ Q10432
♦ AQ10
♣ 1086

On board 16 (East/West vulnerable), West, still your Partner, passes in first seat, your RHO opens 1♦, and you make a minimal takeout double holding ♠ K65 ♥ AQJ6 ♦ 106 ♣ Q632. LHO bids 3♦, and Partner bids 4♠. RHO bids 5♦, and with 2 dead Diamonds, you double, ending the auction.

<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>Me</u>	<u>LHO</u>
Pass	1♦	Dbl	3♦
4♠	5♦	Dbl	All Pass

On lead, you lead a small Spade, Partner's suit. Declarer wins the ♠A, and plays the ♦Q to Partner's Ace. He plays the ♠Q, which you duck, playing the ♠8, asking for a Heart shift. Partner obliges by playing the ♥K and you take your Heart tricks. In all, we take 1 Spade, 3 Hearts, and a Diamond for down three. The full hands are:

Dealer: Partner
Vul: Us

Partner
♠ QJ1042
♥ K8
♦ A
♣ 108754

LHO
♠ 76
♥ 1072
♦ K98743
♣ K9

RHO
♠ A93
♥ 9543
♦ QJ52
♣ AJ

Me
♠ K85
♥ AQJ6
♦ 106
♣ Q632

You, of course, compliment North on the save vs 4♠, which is cold. Only 3 pairs bid the game (which the point counters do not bid), which makes exactly 4. Therefore, your double preserves a 70%+ score, losing to the 3 pairs that were permitted to play in 4♠, as our +500 doesn't quite beat the +620 we get if allowed to play there. Note that Partner made the good 4♠ call with a 6 loser hand via the Losing Trick Count (LTC). Also note that my double of 5♦ was mandatory, with what could be 2 fast Diamond losers and a minimum take out double, as you do not want Partner to consider bidding on.

Kudos to my Partner, Sam Borenstein, for making the key calls on both hands.

The Wonderful World of Bridge

by Arnold Kohn



The Bridge community does not care if you are rich or poor. It does not care about your personal politics, what your ethnic background is, or where you are from. They do care about whether you are a good partner and how you treat others.

I direct a Wednesday duplicate game at the Monroe Senior Center and I have to relate two reasons why I still play and direct. A woman, who has been one of our better players for many years, has been beset with Dementia. Yet every Wednesday, promptly at 1215 she is in her seat at table two, ready to play bridge. She is able to call cards from Dummy, answer all alerts, and with her husband, often places high in her direction. Another player who has had twelve surgeries since the advent of Covid and now needs another, is a regular player. I still remember Lynn Deas, a world class player, playing at a national tournament, suffering from ALS, strapped to an almost vertical board, playing at a high level. My friends, this is what bridge is about.

Big Games

(Must be face-to-face to qualify)

September 1, 2023 – November 30, 2023

OPEN

77.04%	Linda Levitt - Robert Carroll	Bill's Bridge
76.92%	Dorel Livescu - Julie Anderson	Jersey Bridge Club
76.92%	Richard Ross - Alexander Allen	Jersey Bridge Club
75.89%	Susan E G Slusky - Peter Wright	Bill's Bridge
75.35%	Alexander Allen - Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts BC
75.00%	Dorel Livescu - Julie Anderson	Jersey Bridge Club
74.38%	Robert Brolin - Arnold Dorin	Monroe Bridge Club
72.92%	Lisa Walsh - Elyse Menashe	Jersey Bridge Club
72.44%	Peggy Hall - Doris Grzymski	Canoe Brook
71.19%	Jim McCarroll - Barbara Codispoti	Shadowfax
71.00%	Peter Stein - Stephen Arshan	Monroe Bridge Club
71.00%	Om Singh - Susan E G Slusky	Bill's Bridge
70.92%	Dennis Thompson - Sam Borenstein	Summit Area Bridge
70.58%	Dennis Thompson - Steve Albin	Summit Area Bridge
70.54%	Leslie Degeorges - Janine Beer	Summit Area Bridge
70.33%	Wendy Sands - Buffy Phillips	Jersey Bridge Club
70.24%	Terrence Havican - Sheila Holderness	Montclair Golf Club
70.24%	Peter Stein - Himanshu Joshi	Shadowfax
70.04%	Priti Merchant - Peter Maulbeck	Montclair Golf Club
70.00%	Donna Dulet - Lisa Walsh	Toms River BC

LIMITED/INVITATIONAL

77.72%	Jaya Gupta - Prem Gupta	Regency at Monroe
75.50%	Patricia Pritchard - Laura Haaren	Rumson Friday
75.00%	Paul Gessman - Michael O'Donohue	Regency at Monroe
75.00%	Leigh Walker - Colin Burrows	Shadowfax
70.00%	Millie Galligan - Marc Galligan	Rumson Friday

Unit 140 Top Masterpoint Earners at Sept/Oct Sectional in Edison

Player	Masterpoint Range		
	0 – 1500 MPs	1500 – 5000 MPs	5000 + MPs
Robert Derosa	8.98		
Lewis Lefkowitz	6.47		
Tianyang Chen	6.42		
Himanshu Joshi		20.57	
Arnold Dorin		15.79	
Ronald Kraft		10.54	
Donna Dulet			28.25
Richard Ross			20.18
Stephen Arshan			14.05

The Book Lead

By Ken Trock

What do you lead from a 2 honor card sequence against No Trump contracts? Let's look at a suit combination in a vacuum. For sake of a demonstration it will be Hearts. You will be leading from ♥ KQ742. Assume righty opened 1NT and lefty raised to 3NT. The "book" lead is the 4, so we'll try that. Here are a couple possible layouts.

1. ♥ 863

♥ KQ742 ♥ 109

♥ AJ5

Oops, we kicked a trick.

2. ♥ J

♥ KQ742 ♥ 1096

♥ A853

Now THAT'S annoying.

Let's go against the suggested 4th best and try the ♥K. As I was reminded at a tournament recently, some people play that if a King is led vs. NT, that third hand shows count. We'll assume we're NOT playing that here.

3. ♥ 863

♥ KQ742 ♥ 109

♥ AJ5

This is the same layout example 1. If Declarer wins trick one, they'll get no other Heart tricks if anyone but you lead another. If Declarer ducks trick one, we'll hopefully figure out to switch, but I admit it can be tough seeing the 9 come from Partner, if using standard attitude.

4. ♥ 963

♥ KQ742 ♥ J8

♥ A105

We blocked the suit with this lead. Declarer ducks. Even if we figure out to lead a low Heart at trick two and have an outside entry in our hand, Declarer can duck again.

Here's an opening lead problem my Partner faced as Declarer recently.

5. ♥ J93

Lead: ♥5

♥ ?? ♥ ??

♥ A86

It looks right to try the 9 from Dummy. Here is the layout.

♥ J93

♥ KQ65 ♥ 1072

♥ A86

Not sure what to play from Dummy if we didn't have the ♥9 up there.

To me these examples argue for leading 4th best against NT from a 2 card honor sequence, something we already knew 😊 Take another look at example 3. I had to carefully give Partner two high spots to make the King a better lead than the 4. Switch it just a little so that the 10 is in Dummy.

6. ♥ 1063

♥ KQ742 ♥ 98

♥ AJ5

Now the lead of the King, while still favorable on this layout, gives Declarer a second stopper with the combined ♥J10.

Bonus hand. What do you lead from ♣ 10943? If you said the ♣3 or ♣4, you're in luck here.

♣ QJ8

♣ 10943

♣ K75

♣ A62

Surely Declarer will split their ♣QJ holding. As long as Partner knows to cover with the ♣K, we'll get a trick out of this suit. Had you led the ♣10, Declarer can pickup the whole suit. Try it out.



Mim Fields celebrating the first of several birthday parties for her 100th birthday at the Spring Lake (NJ) Bridge Club. Mim has played at several local clubs with our director, Ed Litterio, for over 40 years. Bob Martin presents Mim with a tray of gifts.



**SILVER
POINTS**

New Jersey Bridge League March Sectional March 1 - March 3, 2024

Edison Elks Club

375 Old Post Road, Edison, NJ 08817

Playing Site Phone: 732-985-2487

Tournament Chair: Arman Tookmanian (908)798-7654



**SILVER
POINTS**

Friday, March 1

- 10:00 AM • Open Stratified Pairs • Stratified 0-499 Pairs*
2:30 PM • Open GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs
• GRASSROOT 499er Stratified Pairs*

Saturday, March 2

- 10:00 AM • Open Stratified Pairs • Stratified 499er Pairs*
2:30 PM • Open GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs
• GRASSROOT 499er Stratified Pairs*

*499er events will be held provided there are sufficient pairs

Sunday, March 3

- 9:30 AM: • Bagel Breakfast
10:30 AM: • Playthrough Bracketed Swiss Teams: There will be a short break for lunch and food will be served.

Stratifications: Open Pairs A (3000+) B (1000-3000) C (0-1000)
499ers Pairs A (300-499) B (100-300) C (0-100) (May be varied based on participation.)

In pair events, strats are based as an average of the total master points of the pair. In any event or flight with a master point upper limit, no individual's MP total may exceed that limit.

Covid Policies:

MASKING WILL BE OPTIONAL PURSUANT TO ACBL PROTOCOLS - see our website www.njbl.net
However, should any bridge player request that players mask at the table, compliance is MANDATORY.

Our Unit Board of Directors has voted to require that no person will be permitted entry without Proof of Covid vaccination(s) and photo ID.

Parking Policy: No parking in designated spots marked "Reserved" in the Elks parking lot. PARKING IS LIMITED, and carpooling is recommended. There is overflow parking available across the street in an Edison H.S. parking lot.

Reservation Policy: Reservations are not required for this tournament.

GRASSROOT Games: Almost 30% More Masterpoints

Food and Beverages: Free coffee and limited snacks will be served. Pizza will be served on Friday and Saturday at \$1.75 per slice. Bottled water and soda, \$1.00.

Partnerships: We will try to find you partners, but we cannot guarantee them. Please email your request to Amie Dorin at amied26@gmail.com or call him at 732-841-2351 by Friday, February 23rd. Note that we are much more likely to be able to find a partner for you the EARLIER you make the request.

NJBL Website: Visit our website www.njbl.net to read about upcoming tournaments and events, past results, bridge clubs, THE DECLARER (NJBL's online newsletter), and many other useful bridge links.

Entries: \$30 per pair per session. For non-ACBL members, you MUST purchase a 4-month membership to be able to play. In addition, we must charge an extra \$4 per person per session for those whose ACBL membership has expired. \$136 per team for Sunday's Swiss teams' game.

Milestones

Changes in Rank: September 2023 – November 2023

Emerald Life Master

Donna Dulet	Ocean
Stephen Garreffa	Randolph

Diamond Life Master

Wendy Lee	East Hanover
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Sapphire Life Master

Dorothy Koernig	Summit
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Gold Life Master

Sharon Gross	Point Pleasant Beach
Dorel Livescu	Somerset
Hans Neuteboom	Manchester
Barbara Schlosser	Lawrenceville

Ruby Life Master

Elly DeBoer	Lawrence Township
Marilynn Greenberg	West Orange
Lenore Mohr	Springfield

Silver Life Master

Edward Andrews Jr.	Skillman
Richard Helfman	Metuchen
Rochelle Schack	West Orange
Terry Zuckerman	Livingston

Bronze Life Master

Richard Bindelglass	Martinsville
Jesse Cohen	Califon
Prem Gupta	Monroe
Gilbert Meierhans	Metuchen
Mary Lou Van Handle	Succasunna

Life Master

Jaishree Gupta	Monroe
Gilbert Meierhans	Metuchen

Advanced NABC Master

Chantal Frantzen	Princeton
Robert Frantzen	Princeton
David Mayer	Wayside

NABC Master

Arman Tookmanian	Morristown
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Regional Master

Valerie Benton	Berkeley Heights
Michael Muller	Somerset
Mary Jane O'Hare	Rumson
Jerry Seasonwein	Monroe
Catherine Wellington	Summit

Club Master

Joseph Easten	North Caldwell
Mary Beth Guckian	Chatham
Rajesh Kapoor	West Windsor
Jeanne Kelly	Rumson
Prakesh Malkani	East Brunswick
Bipin Patel	East Hanover
Ivelisse Roche	Montclair

Junior Master

Joanne Castellazzo	Freehold
John Davidson	Princeton
Karen Gibbons	Rumson
Eli Herbst	Princeton
Nancy Klein	Verona
Narsinha Lele	Edison
Pratima Lele	Edison
Michael Levine	Livingston
Kathleen McLaughlin	Freehold
Bipin Patel	East Hanover
Sarma Ponnappalli	Plainsboro
Andrew Robins	Wayside
Jesse Rockoff	Rahway
Hal Sprechman	Manchester
Ronald Wiss	South Orange

REMEMBRANCES

The Board of Directors of the New Jersey Bridge League offer their condolences to the families and friends of the following members of the ACBL Unit 140. They will be missed at our bridge tables. We would like to remember all who support and participate in this great game. Please notify Julie Anderson at julie17rae@gmail.com of any deaths within our membership; indicate, when known, dates of passing and club(s) attended.

Donna Steif

d. September 5, 2023

frequent player at Monroe