



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – March 4, 2024

Click [here](#) to access our regular game schedule.

Looking Ahead

- ♥ **The Thursday night online 999 game has been discontinued, effective immediately.**
- ♥ **All of our 499 and 649 games are now 749 games, both on BBO and F2F.**
- ♥ **[Local Sectional Tournament at the Barrie Club](#), March 3 (Sunday team game only)**
- ♥ **Club Championships**, week of March 3 = extra masterpoints, no extra charge
- ♥ **Pop-up 499 game on Friday afternoon, March 1, and all games on Sunday, March 3 will be pop-up games. RED POINTS \$1 surcharge**
- ♥ Diane Bourdeau will be giving a mini-lesson on **Responses to 1NT** at the Monday morning bridge lab on March 4.
- ♥ **Beginner 2** lessons begin, Saturday, March 9.
- ♥ Ted Boyd will be giving a mini-lesson on **Playing in F2F Games** at the Monday morning bridge lab on March 11.
- ♥ **[Sectional Tournament at Guelph Club](#)**, March 16-17
- ♥ Ron Van Der Zwaag will be giving a mini-lesson on **Bid One More?** at the Monday morning bridge lab on March 18.
- ♥ Jack Cole will be giving a mini-lesson on **Playing in our Online Games** at the Monday morning bridge lab on March 25. Please bring your laptop or iPad.

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Members

- John Hutchison
- Doug Kippen
- Joel St Denis

Game Changers

Effective immediately, all of our 499er and 649er games will be 749er games - both on BBO and F2F. As there are only about 15 members at our club in the 500-750 masterpoint band, you probably won't notice a difference when you play – but it positions GRBC better and the games will award more masterpoints!

Over the last couple of years, our club has introduced 299er games which had not been offered pre-Covid. Updating the 499er games (a holdover from pre-Covid) to 749er games recognizes the updates to the ACBL masterpoint formula that have increased the awards and sped up rank progressions, responds to requests from several club members, and rationalizes GRBC game offerings. Together, the 299er games and the 749er games provide the stepping stones for newer players to progress from beginner games to open games.

Pop Up Games

Pop up events are the ACBL's newest initiative to try to get players back to F2F play at their clubs. Pop up games are fun single-day special events that offer coloured points for an extra buck.



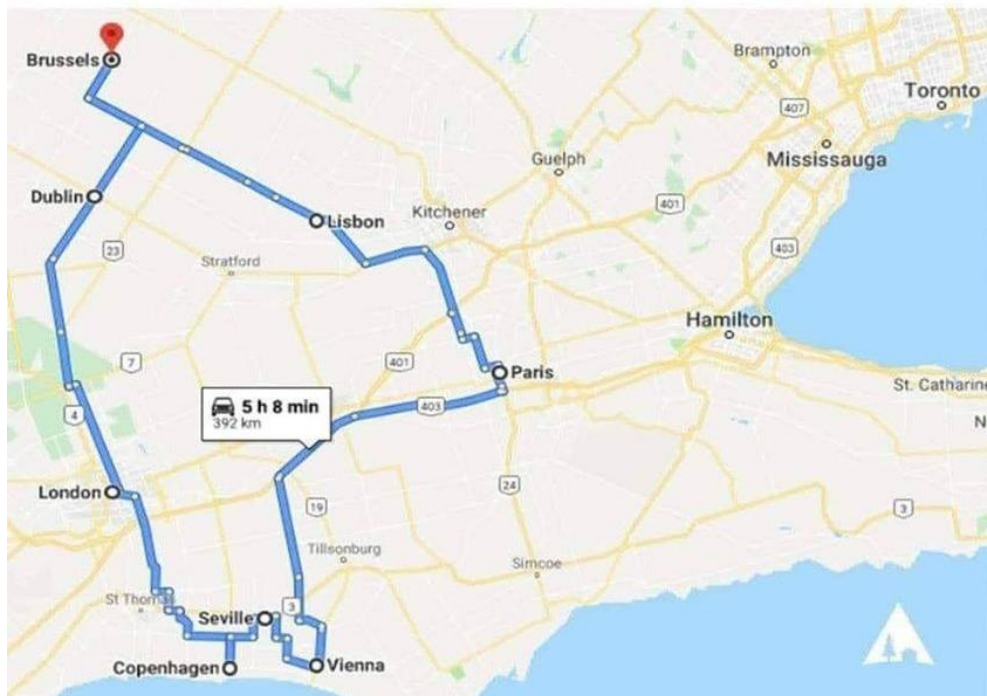
Bean There Done That

Contributed by Steve Allen, Treasurer (GrandRiverBridgeClubTreasurer@gmail.com)

GRBC now boasts 262 members. That is more than last year! Does their foolish spending stop there? Nope. Many of these members play regularly in our GRBC games week after week. Over time, that can amount to a lot of games. An analysis of their playing habits at GRBC games over the last year shows that we have some big rollers with too much recreational time on their hands.

#Members playing >199 times	3
#Members playing 150-199 times	6
#Members playing 100-149 times	34
#Members playing 50-99 times	82
#Members playing <50	the rest

When you can't afford
a trip to Europe.





Player Profile – Randall DeKraker

Contributed by Louise Dawdy

This week we are pleased to profile Randall DeKraker. Randall first learned to play bridge back in the mid-90s when he was teaching high school full-time in Walkerton, ON. A colleague invited him to participate in a Learn to Play Bridge evening where their teacher gathered eight people together and began indoctrinating them into the wonders of bridge. After a few tricks had been played, Randall well remembers how astounded he was at their teacher's ability to predict what cards his opponents had and play accordingly. Randall then knew that he wanted to learn all of it! And so it began.

From that day forward, the group met every week to play at a different person's home. It was very much "kitchen bridge", as that was often where they played. There were changes to the group over the years as some moved away, another went to the big bridge table in the sky, another to jail... but they nonetheless always managed to recruit new players and their weekly game went on until the pandemic put a stop to their fun. Although work sometimes made it difficult to attend his weekly bridge games, Randall rarely missed one.

Serendipitously, Randall retired from teaching in 2017 and moved to Kitchener in 2020 (via Hanover for a few years). Being a dedicated bridge acolyte, one of the first things that Randall did upon his arrival in K-W was google a local bridge club. And, of course, as we all know (and for good reason) GRBC was the top search result. Once our F2F games resumed, Randall joined our club.

Randall has many interests outside of bridge. He particularly enjoys activities where he can socialize and meet new people. Two or three times a week, his hiking group explores trails in and around as well as outside the city. Randall also belongs to a dinner group which seeks out restaurants in the region that offer a wide variety of foods from different ethnicities. When asked about his favourite local restaurant, Randall says "The value of a meal comes from the company with whom you share the meal. So, I am happy anywhere with the right person/people." That being said, Lancaster Smokehouse is a place they have enjoyed and will return to.

Randall loves travel and hopes to be able to continue to explore the world. Although his favourite trip is always the next one (!), Memphis, TN is a stand-out destination, given its deep history, great music, and fantastic food. With regard to Randall's most memorable travel destinations, Iguazu Falls on the Argentina/Brazil border is it, only to be tied with the Grand Canyon. "Both should be on everyone's bucket list."

Randall also enjoys creating culinary delights at home and will watch YouTube videos to learn new recipes and methods. He has become capable enough to modify a recipe to suit his own style with frequent success. His best/most successful dish is a middle eastern lamb stew.

Randall very much appreciated the K/W Symphony, and now he makes a pointed effort to support other types of arts such as chamber music, jazz, live theatre, and any other type of show. His support also extends to art galleries and museums as well as the Blue Jays.

Randall's most important bridge tip is that you must always keep learning. He feels that the beauty of the game is that it can be played by beginners and experts alike, with a good time being had by all. He likes that there is always something new to learn or another level to achieve. Randall reflects on his years of enjoyment playing kitchen bridge, but recognizes that they were often stuck using the same conventions and methods that they always had. Joining GRBC has really opened Randall's eyes to the further learning opportunities in bridge. As an educator, he very much likes the idea of life-long learning and feels that bridge really fits the ticket.

Randall adds: "Analogously, it is like learning to crawl, then walk, then run, ride a bike, drive a junker car, drive a family van, drive a sports car, fly a small plane, fly a private jet, and for a very few fly a fighter jet. Keep on learning is the First Rule of Bridge."

Randall grew up on a pig farm southeast of London (and so, has a deeper appreciation that most for bacon). He has siblings who live London (ON), Aurora, and New Brunswick. While they played many games growing up, including card games, bridge was not one of them.

Randall completed his undergrad at the University of Waterloo (physics major/philosophy minor). It was his time at UW that attracted him back to the area. Randall was a high school teacher for 14 years, during which time he very much enjoyed teaching senior high school physics, because he liked to show his students that the world is even more magical when you understand how it works. He also enjoyed teaching high school philosophy and watching young adults start to question what they thought they knew and think about things differently. Subsequent to teaching, he became an administrator and moved around Grey and Bruce counties as a principal. Randall still does the occasional tutoring gig.

Randall's BBO handle is **mrmojo63**. It's all about having mojo!

"Fine" is a weird word. If you go out for fine dining, that's the nicest kind of restaurant. But if they ask you how the food was and you say "fine," that means it was just ok. Then you go out to see you parked illegally and have to pay a "fine," which is bad



The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the "The Answer Lady" I have been responding to questions from "newer" players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players' questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

The Answer Lady will be away from her desk over the next few weeks, with no columns forthcoming. Don't let her absence deter you from sending in questions though. She's always willing to provide an answer.

Question

Answer Lady, I wonder if you can help my partner and me with the defence on this hand, played in a 499 F2F game. My partner and I were sitting East/West. We did not at any point enter the auction, which went: 1♠ by North, 2♦ by South, 2NT by North, and 3NT by South.

My partner, East, led the ♣2 from their hand, South played the ♣J from the dummy and I, sitting West, covered the ♣J with the ♣K. I then led back the ♣3. Should I have played the ♣K at that first opportunity? After the ♣J was played, I thought North might have the ♣A and ♣Q. Once I won the first trick with the ♣K, was the ♣3 the correct return?

A 499 player

D 12	N	W N E S
	♠ AK853 ♥ K92 ♦ 73 ♣ Q97	P 3NT P P P
W		E
♠ 109 ♥ J106 ♦ J964 ♣ K863		♠ QJ62 ♥ 7543 ♦ K ♣ A1042
	S	
	♠ 74 ♥ AQ8 ♦ AQ10852 ♣ J5	3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0

Answer

Thank you, 499 player. As always with F2F games, we are unable to show the complete bidding. The reader has kindly provided the bidding sequence shown above: 1♠-P-2♦-P-2NT-P-3NT, North/South bidding with no interference from East/West.

After your partner leads that ♣2 of clubs, you need to play the ♣K, your highest club regardless of which card declarer calls for from dummy. Barbara Seagram in her book: *Bridge: The Magic of Defense, 2023*, Chapter 4, Third Hand Play, p. 51 reminds us of the rule learned in those beginner bridge classes: "*When partner leads a small card and dummy comes down with small cards, you in third seat **must always** play your highest card*". If you don't play the ♣K of clubs, the opponents will win that trick and your partner will wonder where the ♣K and ♣Q are. East will think North has both the ♣K and the ♣Q and may discontinue that line of play. So, you must try to take the trick. If you held KQxx, you would play the ♣Q, showing your partner you may also have the ♣K. But when you take the ♣K, your partner can infer that North has the ♣Q, not you.

You can also determine your partner's holding in that club suit. East led the ♣2 of clubs as the opening lead, the lowest card in the suit, fourth from the suit. You thus know East must have at most four cards in that suit, not five, as the 2 is the lowest card. Most likely your partner chose a four-card suit as their opening lead (as opposed to a three-card suit). It seems highly likely therefore that declarer has only three clubs (East four, South two, West four).

When leading back, you did the right thing. First of all, you led back your partner's suit (there are only two reasons not to return your partner's lead: a) you have no cards in that suit or b) you are looking for a different partner). Secondly, you led the fourth card in your original suit holding, in this case the ♣3. If you had only two remaining clubs in your hand, you would lead the higher of the two, in this case the ♣8.

K863: win with the K and lead back the 3

K83: win with the K and lead back the 8

Your partner should win with the ♣10, assuming Declarer plays the ♣9 on the second trick. (There is no need to go up with the ♣A unless Declarer plays the ♣Q on the second trick.) Winning with the ♣10, East can then play ♣A and another club. East/West would thus win four club tricks and put considerable pressure on the opponents in terms of discards. Now, Declarer can't afford to lose any more tricks and will need to work extremely hard to win that total of nine tricks in 3NT - an almost impossible task given the way the spades and diamonds are distributed. The magic of best defence unfolds in winning that first club trick and returning the correct card at Trick 2. Of course, Declarer's error was playing the ♣J on the first trick. Playing the ♣5, would have allowed East/West to win only three club tricks, with the ♣Q eventually winning a trick.



Famous People Who Love(d) Bridge

Here is an interesting trivia question for you: what do James Bond, Dwight Eisenhower, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and Snoopy the cartoon have in common? The answer is, they are all famous characters and influential individuals who have professed their love for the game of Bridge. This is just a brief list of the most famous people who have taken part in Bridge tournaments around the world. In reality, the most famous bridge players, some playing professionally, are not real-world celebrities or public figures.

Mahatma Gandhi

As a young man, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a passionate bridge player. According to Rajmohan Gandhi who wrote Gandhi's most detailed biography, Mahatma often played a game of Bridge. He goes on to explain that he got so good at it that his prowess may have played a role in converting some players into his followers. The leader of the colonial-times Indian nationalism is well revered for using non-violent civil disobedience. Only his passion for the game of bridge rivalled his extraordinary dedication and strategy to promote political and social change.

Bill Gates

Bill Gates, the famous philanthropic founder of Microsoft, does not shy away from talking about his love for the game of bridge. There is a quote of him professing that Bridge is the king of all card games. He began playing bridge as a child with his parents and admits that this game may have helped grow his intellect early enough. However, he only got involved in tournaments after Warren Buffet introduced him, to which he quickly got addicted. To this day, Bill Gates still hunts for and hires the top bridge players in the world to form a formidable team for tournaments.

Warren Buffett

Warren Buffett once said that he wouldn't mind getting imprisoned, but only if he had the company of three cellmates who are decent bridge players. Provided, he added, these players do not mind keeping the game going round the clock. This is how much he loves this card game. As an investor, Warren is often short on time and relies on meticulous planning to manage his days. However, he admits that he still finds time to play the game of bridge for at least 12 hours every week. He also takes part in online tournaments. At one point, he was on the same team with Bill Gates and they enjoyed moderate success in their games.

Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill is the charismatic leader that led the United Kingdom and the allied forces to victory in the Second World War. He is one of the most popular players in the bridge game. In his biography, he points out that he was an avid player of the game since his early days. He confesses that he relied on his bridge game tactics and strategies to make some crucial battlefield decisions during the heat of the war.

The above was adapted from a bridgewinners article.

Here are the names of some other famous bridge players in no particular order.

- The Marx Brothers (be sure to watch the bridge cheating scene in *Animal Crackers*)
- Dwight Eisenhower
- Omar Sharif
- Martina Navratilova
- Deng Xiaoping
- George Kaufman
- James Bond
- George Kaufman
- James Holzhauer (of Jeopardy fame)
- Snoopy
- George Burns

The bottom line is – as a bridge player, you are in good company!

Time You Learned our Mini-Lessons!

Newcomer bridge labs most Monday mornings, 9:00 am – 11:30 am, except on holiday Mondays. Upcoming mini-lessons include **Responses to One No Trump** by Diane Bourdeau on March 4, **Playing in our F2F Games** with Ted Boyd on March 11, **Bid One More?** with Ron Van Der Zwaag on March 18, and **Playing in our Online Games** with Jack Cole on March 25. NO EXTRA CHARGE



Beginners 2

Beginners 2 is a continuation of Beginners 1. All concepts will be reviewed and reinforced. Bidding will be emphasized, including take-out doubles and responses and ace-asking conventions. The principles of declaring no trump and suit contracts will also be covered.

Beginners 2 is suitable for players who have either graduated from Beginners 1, or have been playing social bridge for a while, or have been away from duplicate bridge for some time.

Instructor: Sue Moses

Dates: March 9, 16, 23, April 6 & 13, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

Cost: \$75 with the textbook (same as for Beginners 1)

Venue: in our teaching room

Current Enrollment: 13

***If, at first,
you do succeed.
Try to hide
your astonishment.***

From the Archives: Strats – The Great Equalizer

Bridge is one of the few sports where rookie players get to play against expert players. Of course, the expert players usually win, but it's not as unfair as it looks - because of **STRATIFICATION**. You may have heard our directors announce winners in A, B, and C.... All of the games at our club are stratified - meaning that players are assigned to a stratum with a pre-set maximum masterpoint limitation. During the course of the game, you play against the whole room regardless of stratum - BUT when it comes to the scoring, players of equal calibre are scored against one another. It is possible for C players to win in A, but not the reverse. And when C players win in A, which happens more often than you might think, that is quite an accomplishment.

Strats for
Our Open
Games

Open Games: C=>1,000ish B=1,000ish-3,000ish A=<3,000ish
749 Games: C=>350 B=350-500 A=500-750
299 Game: C=>65 B=65-150 A=150-300
99er Game: C=>5 B=5-20 A=20-100

Conventional Wisdom

This is the fifth in a series of columns on convention cards. Today, we will look at the rectangle entitled **MAJOR OPENING**.

MAJOR OPENING		
Expected Min. Length	4	5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES		
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____	
1NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____	
Drury	<input type="checkbox"/>	: Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____	

- Check the **5** box for both 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th
- Check the **Invitational** box for Double Raise - showing a “limit raise” with 10-12 HCP and four of the suit in question (some partnerships agree their limit raises can have only three cards in the suit)
- Check the **Weak** box for Double Raise After Overcall (not many points but four of partner’s suit)
- Check the **2NT** box if you and your partner play Jacoby 2NT (bear in mind that Jacoby 2NT is on only if Opener didn’t pass originally)
- Leave **1NT Forcing/Semi-Forcing** blank unless you and your partner play Two Over One
- Check the 2NT **Invitational** box and write “**10-12**” on the line (bear in mind that this is what a 2NT response means if Opener passed originally)
- After 3NT write “**13-15**” on the line
- Don’t bother about Drury for now.
- If you play Bergen Raises, you should write that on the **Other** line.





Dear David

Law & Order SVU

The hardest thing most people have to confront is understanding the Income Tax rules. Understanding the myriad rules that directors and players have to deal with is a close second for me.

Dir: W		2	West	North	East	South
Vul: None	♠ Q 8 7 6		3♣	pass	pass	3♥
9	♥ 8 6 4		3NT	4♥	all pass	
10 7	♦ K J 6 2					
14	♣ K 4					
♠ J 9	♠ K 10 5 4 3 2					
♥ ----	♥ A 10 9 7 5					
♦ Q 8 5 4	♦ 9					
♣ A Q J 9 5 3 2	♣ 7					
	♠ A					
	♥ K Q J 3 2					
	♦ A 10 7 3					
	♣ 10 8 6					

The first four bids were reasonable, but the opener's 3NT bid was, to say the least, strange. (My face is turning red!). The complainant on this hand said "I have a good hand and I assumed the hearts were splitting, so I bid 4♥". The contract went down for a below-average result. The complaint went to the game director and eventually to the head director. A ruling against E/W for a failure to alert the 3NT bid led to the director to placing us in a likely 4♠ contract - an average for both sides.

Today I wanted to talk about this hand because it contains a number of interesting issues that you should be aware of.

The alert procedure is a very convoluted (read: Income Tax guide) issue. I present this auction: 1♠ 2♣ 2♠ pass pass 2NT. The balancing 2NT bid cannot be natural, because the 2♣ overcaller would have started with a double or 1NT with a strong hand. I play this auction with most of my partners as five-plus clubs and shorter diamonds (at least four). The opponents cannot know this because 2NT is a natural sounding bid, so we dutifully alert and if asked, explain the bid.

The purpose of the alert procedure is to let the opponents know that a bid that would otherwise be deemed natural, is not natural. The auction 3♣ pass pass 3♥ 3NT cannot be construed as anything other than unnatural. Would I try to play 3NT after I had pre-empted and partner had passed unless I found three "hidden" aces after I opened? My reasoning is based on an auction like: 1♠ (opener) 1♥ (overcall) 2♥ (cuebid). Cuebids are not alertable because, by their very nature, they are not natural. The opponents have been forewarned and they can ask what 2♥ means if they so desire. Any bid that deviates from the standard interpretation of the bid should be alerted, unless, by their very nature (cuebids, for example), they are self-alerting.

My partner and I had never discussed the auction that occurred (in other words, there was no partnership agreement). How can you alert and explain a bid that has not been discussed? I expected my partner to work it out and I expected the opponents to ask for the meaning if they wanted to know. My partner would have tried to helpfully "guess" what I had, with the caveat that we had no agreement.

Finally, even if you deem it alertable and we had a firm agreement as to the meaning of 3NT, my partner cannot alert until the auction has ended. All bids deemed alertable that are 3NT or higher are "delayed alerts". In other words, your opponents cannot alert their bids until the auction has ended, but they must do it before the opening lead. Therefore, the statement that he wouldn't have bid 4♥ if he thought the hearts were splitting badly has no bearing on this issue. Partner's alert would come too late to change anything. That's the rules.

Top Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since the beginning of January.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	28.57	1	Regina Williams	17.81	1	George Rybiak	10.19
2	Lori Cole	19.30	1	Denis Williams	17.81	2	Richard Rybiak	9.24
3	Neil Jeffrey	16.33	3	Jack Cole	15.79	3	Sharon Nesbitt	9.21
4	Edith Ferber	15.69	4	John Kip	13.14	4	Debbie Miethig	8.97
5	Kathy Russell	13.07	5	Cheryl Kip	11.93	5	Casi Zehr	8.54
6	Steve Carpenter	12.87	6	Nancy Cattanach	11.08	6	Andrew Widdis	8.21
7	Mike Peng	12.07	7	Susan Durance	11.01	7	Doug Fickling	7.91
8	Roy Dandyk	11.67	8	Carolyn Baechler	10.69	7	Mark Sherwood	7.91
9	Dave Quarrie	10.95	9	Judy Beauchamp	10.64	9	Brian Gaber	7.26
10	Moira Hollingsworth	10.74	10	Kevin Latter	10.59	10	Audrey Cook	7.23
11	Ted Boyd	9.20	11	Jim Dalgliesh	10.58	11	Kathy Chandler	6.42
12	John Hanemaayer	8.25	12	Louise Dawdy	10.41	12	Randall DeKraker	6.28
13	Wayne Schroeder	8.07	13	Rick Arthur	9.74	13	Russel Kerr	6.25
14	Margot Stockie	7.73	14	Nanci Phelan	9.51	14	Robert Darby	5.65
15	David Wilson	7.59	15	David Dennis	9.24	15	Paul Raymond	5.51
16	Dianne Aves	6.52	16	Cheryl White	8.38	16	Don O'Bright	5.13
17	Robert Griffiths	6.28	17	Martin Jones	8.12	16	Richard Wehrle	5.13
18	Mary McClelland	5.66	18	Brenda Semple	7.98	18	Stu Cowan	5.11
19	Susan Lawton	5.56	19	Janice Pengelly	7.74	19	Phil De Montigny	5.08
20	Bruce Roberts	5.20	20	Kim Wakeford	7.44	20	Sheila Charters	4.67
21	Cindy Mahn	5.18	21	Vivian McLellan	7.31	21	Jeannie Leforge	4.62
22	Suzanne Edwards	5.08	21	Judy Widdecombe	7.31	22	JP Fraresso	4.60
23	Adriaan Kempe	5.06	23	Andy Martinek	7.30	23	Peter Gaasenbeek	4.59
24	Scott Hills	4.54	24	Elinor Girouard	7.28	24	Julia Prendiville	4.45
24	Jonathan Buss	4.54	25	Renate Boucher	7.22	25	John Aldridge	4.37

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- For both online and F2F games, log on to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. *When you use Partner Finder, it will allow folks to see your contact information. If you have posted a Partner Finder ad, kindly remember to check your phone and email and, when you've found a partner, delete your ad. Someone who replied to your ad may be waiting for a response.*
- For online games only, log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab (or look to see if someone else has already registered there).

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead. Please let her know what sort of game/partner you are interested in – your playing level, your available time slots, F2F and/or online, and any other pertinent information.

We have fun in **spades**.

We play with all our **hearts**.

We treat our members like **diamonds**.

You can still sign up for Beginners 2 at our **club**.