

eDeclarer

March 2021

ACBL UNIT 499 NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Hello Unit 499!

Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney statistics are out for the year. Congratulations to all at the top of their game! Following are the leaders in each of their categories of play.

Ace of Clubs

The vast majority of ACBL members play in local club games most of the time. To recognize achievement at the club level, the Ace of Clubs competition was created in 1984. These club champions are recognized at the unit level, district level and ACBL-wide. All points won at the club level are counted in this contest with the exception of those won in STaCs (Sectional Tournaments at Clubs) and on-line games. This award was renamed in 2011 in honor of Grand Life Master Helen Shanbrom of Tamarac, FL. Shanbrom has been one of the most active players in the ACBL for decades and has won the top category of the Ace of Clubs more times than any other member in ACBL history. Winners are as follows:

0-5	Gary Hargrave
5-20	Roberta Polson
25-50	David Freimuth
50-100	Irving Googins
100-200	Yilmaz Ozturhan
200-300	Nancy Thomas
300-500	Bob Spivock
500-1,000	Malcolm Mendelson
1000-1500	Bill Lemaire
<u>1500-2500</u>	Anne Hollingsworth
<u>2500-3500</u>	Joshua Fendel
<u>3500-5000</u>	Grant Robinson
<u>5000-7500</u>	Jerry Weitzner
7500-10,000	Chris Pizarra
Over 10,000	Mike Bandler

Mini-McKenney

In 1974, the ACBL Board of Directors voted to recognize the masterpoint achievements of all players and the Mini-McKenney races were established. The winners at each level of achievement are recognized by the ACBL each year in the April issue of the Bridge Bulletin and at the district level. Eligibility is determined by each player's masterpoint holding at the beginning of the calendar year. The home unit of each winner may purchase a Mini-McKenney Medallion to present to the player.

Standings are updated monthly at the ACBL web site. Winners are as follows:

0-5	Gary Hargrave
5-20	Roberta Polson
20-50	David Freimuth
50-100	Irving Googins
100-200	Yilmaz Ozturhan
200-300	Nancy Thomas
300-500	Bob Spivock
<u>500-1000</u>	Malcolm Mendelson
1000-1500	Michael Kruley
<u>1500-2500</u>	Anne Hollingsworth
<u>2500-3500</u>	Joshua Fendel
<u>3500-5000</u>	Grant Robinson
<u>5000-7500</u>	Jerry Weitzner
7500-10,000	Christopher Pizarra
Over 10,000	Mike Bandler

Congratulations to all! Good luck at the tables! Bid those slams and make them!

Lyn Sacco



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Unit 499 eDeclarer

Published monthly

Editor: Judy Keilin

Publisher: Mary Krouse

Submit articles to jkeilin@gmail.com

Volume 116

March 2021

Deadline for April is March 24th

To submit a letter to the editor, send it to Judy Keilin at jkeilin@gmail.com

Mary Krouse, Publisher

...from the Editor

Hopefully most of you have successfully received your Covid vaccines. Having survived some nasty side-effects, I am looking forward to getting out more with less fear. I don't see going to movies, theater, concerts, or bridge games in the near future, but eating out is now a safer possibility. My thoughtful husband has already reserved an outdoor Sunday brunch at one of our favorite "special occasion" venues in Napa for my birthday next month. What a guy!!

In the meantime, I've come to love online bridge. No driving, dressing up, rushing – just firing up the iPad, and ready to play. Works for me!

I do miss seeing you all, especially those who don't play online. Some day, we will meet again. Maybe some champagne on the snack table?

Stay healthy!

Judy Keilin

Editor



Be sure to visit the unit website for more information on our clubs and events, as well as archives of our newsletters.

diablovalleybridge.com/ccbc

Milestones and New Members

MILESTONES

NEW CLUB MASTERS (20)

Sydney Dodds
Claire Humphrey
Robert Kahl
Rick Pyle

NEW SECTIONAL MASTERS (50)

Judy Coy
Alice Lowe
Stuart Rowe

NEW REGIONAL MASTERS (100)

Patty Smith

NEW NABC MASTERS (200)

Stephen Walker

NEW LIFE MASTERS (300/500)

Bob Spivock
Alan Woodberry

NEW BRONZE LIFE MASTERS (500/750)

Chris Evans
Trudy Moore
Bob Spivock

NEW SILVER LIFE MASTERS (1000)

Belinda Ledgerwood

NEW RUBY LIFE MASTERS (1500)

Peter Figdor

NEW MEMBERS

Tom Budd
Elizabeth Charlton
Mary Dicig
Katherine Evans
Lynn Hoffmann

Be sure to welcome these folks when you meet them at the virtual tables.

MARCH MADNESS

March Madness is a Tournament of sixty-eight college basketball teams, in which all teams battle to sudden-death situations, meaning if they lose, they lose. It's just that simple, right?

Well, take that to the bridge table and chomp on it. Yes, it can be March Madness each time we play the game, and we're hoping to remove the mad from madness, and replace it with glad; displaying our "Cool-as-a-Cucumber" attitude. Now that we play online, it's a bit more challenging. While playing the game, we can only hope that people aren't connecting by phone, or text. I frankly call that cheating. Why play, if you have to be dishonest to win? What's the fun in that anyway? So, I'm certain for most folks, we play honestly, and of course, love to get Masterpoints. When you know you have your opponents over a barrel, graciously accept the win. For some folks, this is the only social outlet they have, and gloating is downright distasteful. If the opponents exchange "Great play", "Super, Partner", "We did it", let the director know.

When school finally resumes, are you aware that the ACBL School Bridge Lesson Series program is designed to help bring the joy of bridge to youth? More than four thousand youngsters participate each year in schools throughout North America. The program is sponsored by the ACBL and includes teacher stipends and free textbooks.

More about the health benefits of bridge:

This is from an AARP article:

When asking folks about playing bridge online, this eighty-year-old woman said she scheduled two bridge games a week with friends, using video and audio. "It's a godsend during this pandemic," and sometimes plays additional games spontaneously with strangers or a robot. "It's [good for the brain](#), good for relaxation, and certainly takes my mind off a lot of the problems going on".

Traditional bridge games pit teams of two players against each other, and bridge groups will often have several games going at once, switching up teams and players.

Playing bridge has been shown to improve reasoning skills and both long- and short-term memory. In fact, research from the Mayo Clinic in 2017 indicated that bridge — with about seven hundred-fifty trillion possible hands — could help people avoid mental decline before the onset of dementia. On top of that, an older study out of the University of California, Berkeley, found strong evidence that an area in the brain that's used when playing bridge stimulates the immune system. WHO KNEW!

Stay Safe and Sane,
Lisa Assoni
The Short Cut Cook



Play a Hand with Me

Play A Hand With Me

March, 2021

North

S 765

H Q765

D A43

C K52

West

S A8

H J1098

D 765

C 8764

East

S 432

H K

D QJ1098

C QJ109



South

S KQJ109

H A432

D K2

C A3

1S P 2S P

3H P 4S P

P P

The auction on this deal looks fairly routine with South asking for help in the heart suit or a maximum raise. North is not sure of the heart help but does have a good raise so it is worth a shot at game.

The opening lead is the J of hearts. You can see that there might be 3 heart losers and the A of spades. West would not likely be leading away from the K of hearts so you play low from dummy and East plays the K. Surely this K is a singleton. Your thought should be to avoid losing 3 heart tricks.

If you win the A of hearts and try to draw the trumps West will win the first round and lead the 10 of hearts and East will ruff when you play the Q. You will now lose 3 hearts and a trump.

Since you can see that you cannot make it that way try to vision how it would go if you let the K of hearts win since you have 2 losers in that suit anyway. East will lead one of the minors and you will win it and start drawing trump. West will win the A and lead another heart which you will play low from dummy and if East trumps this you play low from your hand losing only 2 heart tricks. If East doesn't ruff this you can win your A and draw all of the trumps conceding a heart at the end.

I found this deal very interesting and in addition another hand with the same theme occurred the very next day which I will share next month.

Jerry Weitzner

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BRIDGE CONVENTIONS & GADGETS



THE NEGATIVE DOUBLE-Part 1

By Mel Chaplin
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One of the most valuable tools in bridge bidding, the Negative Double, is utilized only by Responder & it must be made at Responder's first opportunity to bid. Opener has to start the bidding with one-of-a-suit & Intervener has to make a suit overcall at the 1- or 2-level. The Negative Double promises 6+ total points (HCP + distribution) & usually at least four cards in one of the un-bid suits. If one major suit is un-bid, the Negative Double promises four cards in that suit. The Negative Double promises both majors if neither major has been bid at the 1-level. But after Intervener makes a call at the 2-level, Responder's Negative Double promises only one major. In general, a Negative Double shows the un-bid suits with focus on the majors. The Negative Double is a required convention when playing 5-card majors, otherwise 4-4 major suit fits will sometimes be missed.

The Negative Double is a very versatile bidding tool that can be used over a wide hand-strength range. Many partnerships play Negative Doubles only through 3S but Larry Cohen advocates playing the convention "through infinity". That is, the Negative Double can be used by Responder at any level at his first opportunity to bid & should never show strength in the opponent's suit but rather should always be for take-out.

Responder can call a Negative Double with as little as 6 total points if Opener can answer at the 1-level. But the higher the required answer from Opener the better the values Responder needs to use the Negative Double. In general, Responder needs 8+ total points if Opener will have to answer at the 2-level & Responder should have 10-12 total points if Opener will have to reply at the 3-level.

The current definition of a Negative Double, that is, the concept of using a low-level double by Responder for take-out rather than for penalty, was devised in the late 1950's by Alvin Roth & Tobias Stone. It briefly carried the moniker "Sputnik" in reference to the earth-orbiting satellite produced by the Soviet Union in the cold-war era.

SPECIFIC AUCTIONS

Responder can utilize the Negative Double in a wide variety of bidding circumstances. In only a few bidding sequences does Responder guarantee a specific distribution when using the Negative Double. Unfortunately, some memory work is required to master these bidding sequences.

#1) Responder's Hand: ♠AQxx ♥J10xx ♦xx ♣xxx (7 total points).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	1D	Dbl

After this specific bidding sequence Responder's Negative Double shows exactly four Spades & four Hearts & 6+ total points. Holding only one major suit Responder should simply bid that major holding only four cards. Just pretend Intervener didn't bid 1D. Holding five cards in one major & four cards in the other Responder would bid the longer suit.

#2) Responder's Hand: ♠AKxx ♥Qxx ♦xxxx ♣xx (9 total points).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1D	1H	Dbl

Responder's Negative Double promises 4 Spades & 6+ total points. Holding five Spades Responder would simply bid 1S.

#3) Responder's Hand: ♠xx ♥x ♦QJxxx ♣AQ10xx (9 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1H	1S	Dbl

Responder's Negative Double shows both minor suits & 8+ total points.

RESPONDER'S AVAILABLE ANSWERS AFTER INTERVENER BIDS 1S.

After Intervener bids 1S Responder can call a Negative Double holding a wide variety of hands. That is, Responder has much more FLEXIBILITY in his hand distributions that are suitable for using the Negative Double. No longer does Responder guarantee a SPECIFIC distribution when he uses the Negative Double.

#1) Responder's Hand: ♠xx ♥Kxxx ♦Kxxxx ♣xx (6 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	1S	Dbl

This is a classic use of the Negative Double, two un-bid suits consisting of at least four cards each. Responder will pass almost any re-bid Opener offers.

#2) Responder's Hand: ♠xx ♥xx ♦AJ10xxx ♣QJx (8 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1H	1S	Dbl

Opener will assume Responder's Negative Double shows both minor suits, at least 4-4. But when Opener re-bids Clubs Responder can correct to Diamonds without increasing the bidding level. Responder has a nice 6-card Diamond suit but she doesn't have the hand values to call the free bid of 2D (need 10+ total points). But she has the requirements to call a Negative Double. After Opener's re-bid, Responder's subsequent 2D bid shows a long Diamond suit & less than 10 total points.

#3) Responder's Hand: ♠Kx ♥AQJx ♦KJxx ♣xxx (14 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	1S	Dbl

Responder holds 14 HCP but she can't call a free bid because she doesn't have a 5-card suit. But she can call a Negative Double which shows four hearts.

#4) Responder's Hand: ♠AJx ♥AJxx ♦xxx ♣J10x (11 total points).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	1S	Dbl

Responder calls a Negative Double hoping Opener will bid 2H. But when Opener bids 2D Responder can now bid 2NT showing invitational values & a solid Spade stopper.

#5) Responder's Hand: ♠xx ♥AKJxx ♦Qxx ♣xxx (10 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1D	1S	???

??? Responder should bid 2H. When Responder has a choice of calling a Negative Double or making an overcall he should make the overcall if he holds a strong 5-card major.

#6) Responder's Hand: ♠xxx ♥Jxxxx ♦Qx ♣AQJ (10 HCP).

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Intervener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Advancer</u>
1D	1S	Dbf	P
2C	P	???	

??? Responder should bid 2H (not forcing). Responder bidding a new suit after she calls a Negative Double is not forcing.

In the next two issues we will explore (a) additional FLEXIBLE bidding actions initiated by Responder's Negative Double that do not promise specific distributions, (b) when NOT to use the Negative Double & (c) Opener's responses to a Negative Double.

FURTHER READING:

Larry Cohen. Bridge with Larry Cohen. "The Learning Center. September 2014.
Robert Todd. Negative Doubles. Adventures in Bridge. www.advinbridge.com.
Max Hardy. "Standard Bridge Bidding for the 21st Century." pp 223-227, 2000.

Next Time: THE NEGATIVE DOUBLE-Part 2.



Club News

This section is for club owners and managers who wish to submit news about their games. Please go to our website for information about all our clubs, game times, and to check on the latest results. Dial-valleybridge.com

Until further notice all bridge clubs in Unit 499 are closed due to the coronavirus. Stay home, stay safe! Visit our website for information.

Also visit ACBL.org to find information about on line classes and places to play.

ROSSMOOR DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Gateway Club, Rossmoor



The online games have been popular with many players at Rossmoor. No plans for in person games at this time, but what a nice thought it is!

Stay safe everyone!

Contra Costa Bridge Center

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News

Educational Foundation Week, [Monday through Sunday, February 22–28](#). Double regular (½ more than usual) masterpoints, all Black. Extra \$1 goes to [ACBL Educational Foundation](#) to promote bridge education.

Sunday 499er and Open Swiss Teams, [February 28, 1:00](#), \$6.

- o Using new BBO capability to hold Swiss team games.
- o Takes the place of scheduled pairs game.
- o Teams of four players.
- o **Two brackets:** 499er and Open (no stratification).
- o **Need teammates?** Pairs guaranteed to play; singles if possible.

[Click here](#) for details about playing in ACBL Virtual Club Swiss Team tournaments on BBO.

Regular schedule through NABC Robot Individual and NAOBC, [March 6–27](#).

Sundays are Special Games, [Sunday, March 14](#) and [March 28, 1:00](#).

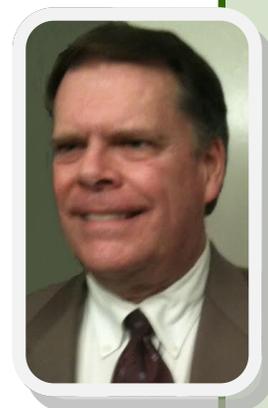
Stardust Week, [Monday through Sunday, March 22–28](#), all games extra \$1. Double regular (½ more than usual) masterpoints, **25% Gold**.

0–20 Newcomer Game, Wednesday afternoons, [2:00](#), \$4, 12 boards, guaranteed partner, gentle pace, life-lines.

Thank you for your support of CCBC!

Online Game Schedule

Monday	9:50	99er	\$5
Monday	10:00	Open	\$5
Tuesday	10:00	749er	\$5
Wednesday	9:50	299er	\$5
Wednesday	10:00	Open	\$5
Wednesday	2:00	0–20	\$4
Thursday	10:00	999er	\$5
Friday	10:00	Open	\$5
Friday	12:30	499er	\$5
Saturday	10:00	199er	\$5
Sunday (2nd and 4th Sundays)	1:00	Open	\$5



Grant Robinson
Contra Costa Bridge Center

Lamorinda Bridge Club

Online Game Schedule:

Tuesday 7pm Open Game \$5
Wednesday 10am Open Game \$5
Friday 10am Limited Game (499) \$5
Saturday 10am Open Game \$5
Sunday 10am Limited Game (299) \$5
Sunday 10:15am Open Game \$5
Sunday 7pm Open Game \$5



Due to dwindling participation the Thursday games have been cancelled.

The Sunday evening game is new. You are welcome to partner with a Robot in any of our games.

Occasionally ACBL/BBO offers special games awarding higher levels and/or different color Master Points. For these games the Table Fee may be increased to \$6 per person.

Supervised Play (Tuesdays, 3pm-5pm):

Lamorinda has for years offered a 2-hour session for our students to practice what they are learning. When we were Face-to-Face the charge was \$5 per session, During the Pandemic we suspended the session. Now that it is clear that we will continue virtual bridge for yet more time, we have arranged to make it available once again through the Shark Bridge Platform.

The sessions will have voice activation so that participants at each breakout table will be able to talk with each other, and if there are questions about the bidding or play of any hand, the director can be called to your table to discuss it with you, just as was done in F2F. We do have to pay Shark Bridge for this opportunity, so there will be a charge of \$7 per session, payable by Check, Venmo, or PayPal. To participate in Supervised Play please email or call either one of us, so that you can be put on the email distribution list to receive the link to the Shark Bridge session on Tuesdays.

If you have family and/or friends/neighbors who wish to learn our "bridge" game then pass along our contact information. We offer ongoing lessons and private tutoring sessions.

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