World Bridge Tour
THIS IS HOW WE PLAY

Online Contract Bridge League

OCBL JOURNAL

Issue N. 25. Thursday, 28 January, 2021

SCHEDULE TODAY

OCBL OPEN LEAGUE

ROUND 8. 21.30 CET / 15.30 EST

GROUP A

English Juniors	VS	Bridge42
Moss	VS	Skalman
Mikadinho	VS	Aus 1
Ireland	VS	Skeidar
Goodman	VS	Turkish Delight
Black	VS	Goded

GROUP B

	Sugi	VS	Lupoveloce
	Lebowitz	VS	France Sud
	Bishel	VS	Harris
	Orca	VS	Salvo
	Ferguson	VS	Fasting
VUGRAPH	Fredin	VS	Denmark

GROUP C

	Palma	VS	Leslie
	De Botton	VS	De Michelis
	Amateurs	VS	Alexander
	Seligman	VS	BridgeScanner
	McIceberg	VS	Amalgamated
	Norwegian Amazones	VS	Koeppel

OCBL OPEN LEAGUE FORMAT

QUALIFICATION

Phase 1:

For each group, the qualification stage will be played in the form of a Round Robin (11 Rounds)

Phase 2:

At the end of the Round Robin the teams, according to the ranking, will be divided in 2 groups: A, B.

Swiss A: It will be formed by the top 4 teams from each group. It will be played over 3 matches x 20 boards (Swiss)

Swiss B: It will be formed by the remaining teams It will be played over 3 matches x 20 boards (Swiss)

The qualification stage consists of 280 boards per team: 14 Rounds (11 Round Robin + 3 Swiss) x 20 boards each.

The teams will bring all the VPs earned during the round-robin as a carryover from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

The top 8 teams (7 teams from Swiss A and 1 teams from Swiss B) will advance to the knockout stage.

(LEARN TO) BE OPTIMIST!

Are you a pessimist, an optimist, a learned pessimist, a learned optimist, or a flexible optimist?

If you thought that **the glass could only be half full or half** empty take a one minute break and read the interview with Prof. Martin Seligman that is posted **on page 3**.

If you are **wondering** whether **F2F bridge will come back to normal as we knew it**, take a deep breathe and read **page 3**.

If you have been taught that **people can't change**, check the expert's opinion on p**age 3**.

If you are not playing the OCBL events because **you don't feel your level is good enough** and you don't think you will ever get a place among the Champions, be prepared to change your mind after reading **page 3**.

If you feel you are a great player, but you don't win as much as you deserve, maybe what you need is to learn how to be positive. Check if that's your case on **page 3**. Bridge is a mind sport - so learn how to hack your mind!

If you are looking for the **perfect gift for a Bridge player** who already has all Bridge books, including the ones on Whist, your solution is on **page 3**.

Adam is looking for volunteers

Adam Grossack posted the following message on Facebook:

"Interested in doing some vugraph commentary (volunteer only not paid)? Please send me a private message."

The OCBL JOURNAL in your MAILBOX

Would you like receiving the OCBL Daily Journal by e-mail for free?

Just drop your e-mail address here:
https://ocbl.org/journal/

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OCBL UPCOMING EVENTS

OCBL FEBRUARY CUP
1 - 5 February 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/februarycup/

FEBRUARY OPEN TEAMS
15 - 19 February 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/februaryot/

MARCH OPEN TEAMS
8 - 11 March 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/marchot/

OCBL MARCH CUP
22 - 26 March 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/marchcup/

OCBL OPEN LEAGUE
30 March - 16 May 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/openleague2/

OCBL MIXED LEAGUE
27 March - 9 May 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/mixedleague2/

OCBL APRIL CUP
5 - 9 April 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/aprilcup/

APRIL OPEN TEAMS
19 - 23 April 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/aprilot/

OCBL MAY CUP
3 - 7 May 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/maycup/

MAY OPEN TEAMS
31 May - 4 June 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/mayot/

OCBL JUNE CUP
14 - 18 June 2021
Info: https://ocbl.org/junecup/

About the OCBL Events:

OCBL OPEN LEAGUE
Play 3 days a week:
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
at 21.30 CET (15.30 EST)
Qualification + Knockout

OCBL MIXED LEAGUE
Play 2 days a week:
Saturday and Sunday
at 17.00 CET (11.00 EST)
Qualification + Knockout

OCBL CUP
Play 5 days
Qualification + Knockout

OCBL OPEN TEAMS
Play 5 days (4 in March)
Qualification + Swiss A

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN SELIGMAN

You define yourself as a born pessimist who became a flexible optimist: "I can recognize the situations which call for optimism, and the situations which don't call for optimism need a mercilessly realistic view of what's going to happen".

What do you think we fellow Bridge lovers and pros should expect from the future?

Covid is likely here to stay. This means that for the foreseeable future only the young and healthy will venture back into F2F bridge.

Without certainty of non-Covid, the rest of us will play on the net. So what happens on the net is serious for us.

Will Face-to-face Bridge come back as we knew it? If so, when?

A diminished version of F2F bridge will occur and is occurring even now in a few clubs, I hear, e.g., in Finland, where my partner, Seppo Sauvola, the coach of the Finnish juniors, lives.

Will online Bridge become the new real?

But **online bridge is the new, and welcome real world for most of us and for the future**.

RealBridge helps and with the cameras and the microphone, self-kibitzing cannot occur.

Collusive cheating can be brought under control by statistically investigating the extremely successful pairs.

Statistics such as % successful opening leads really help, and I want to give a shout-out to **Nicolas Hammond** for the creativity and rigor of his anti-cheating analyses.

And another shout-out to **Boye Brogeland** for beginning the process of controlling cheating.

The electronic game, while still imperfect, is clearly more honest now because of both of them.

The competition on the net has become world class, noticeably better than in any F2F national American event, for example. The notion of regional bridge (play only with people from your locale or even only from your nation) is outmoded, an artifact of the past.

Why should I play with "experts" from Philadelphia when it is just as easy for me to partner Marcin Lesniewski from Poland, or David Bakhshi from the UK? For bridge, the national and the regional tournament was just an artifact of convenient transportation. In an electronic age, that archaic idea no longer makes any sense and these provincial games will eventually peter out, except for social reasons.

We know of very clever people who love Bridge but do not necessarily succeed in it. Which are in your opinion the main qualities a person must have in order to become a Bridge champion? How can we train such abilities?

Talent is a very real thing. It is definable in scientific Psychology: **the rate at which skill develops given a fixed amount of experience**. So sheer amount of time on task, with good tutoring, is the key to developing bridge skill. Some people, the talented naturals, develop skill very quickly, e.g., Gavin Wolpert or Zach Grossack or Oskari Koivu (osku7).

I was on an airplane headed for a Birmingham regional, sitting next to Gavin when he was 16-years-old. I told him about Multi which I had just learned from Eric Rodwell.

"Are transfers on?" Gavin asked, instantly getting it. **These people are the "naturals." The rest of us are the "students."** We, in contrast, require years and years of experience and we require expert coaching over those years

I am an example of a "student" bridge player who is inherently quite short on talent. I started playing at age eight and by the time I was forty I had almost trudged up to the rank of life master.

Then I was a bachelor courting a gorgeous bridge player. She told me I was the "worst player she had played with in twenty years"(she had been recently divorced from a World Champion). So I called Paul Soloway and asked him to teach me how to play bridge.

That was the beginning of the story of how **good coaching and sheer time on task can compensate for relatively low talent**. Paul and then Eric and then Mark Lair partnered me and taught me serious bridge. I was slow to pick it up, but after four hours a day for years, I can now, at age seventy-eight, sit comfortably at a table with the best and not be embarrassed too often.

You not only improve, but the game is much more beautiful when you are playing with a partner who makes fewer mistakes than you do.

As a client, who is not wealthy, I want to encourage others to become clients. If you love the game but are slow, as I am, you will not improve fast enough in this lifetime, to play truly good bridge. You need to play with someone much better than you are, someone with a good work ethic to point out your errors and to teach you the latest gadgets. So I saved my money and decided to devote it to becoming a good, improving and serious client. Being a client costs me about as much as others spend on their clothes. (I spend almost zero on clothes).

Bridge's plague is cheating. As an expert of the human mind, do you think cheaters can really redeem themselves and become honest players? If yes, how could that happen?

Yes, people, not uncommonly reform, and some cheaters will reform, with the right incentives and the right punishments.

But…

The financial incentives for pro's to cheat is substantial and a few really wealthy clients have corrupted the game by tolerating cheating.

Could positive psychology be applied to Bridge? Which book of yours would you especially recommend to Bridge players in order to improve their play and attitude at the Bridge table?

The main lesson from positive psychology for bridge is how you cope with a minus 800.

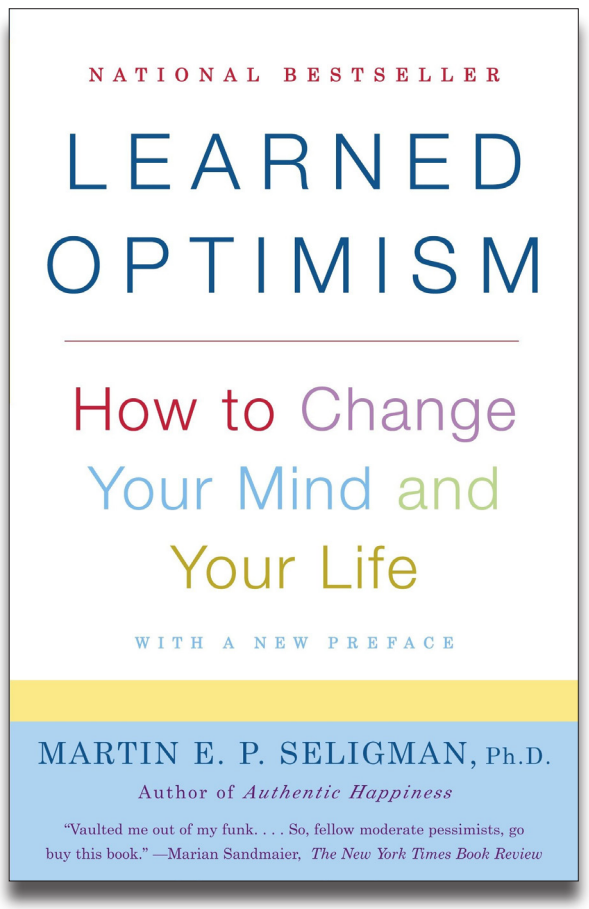
Pessimists are not resilient and they do not bounce back to their normal level of play. They miss the close game on the next hand and fail to find the imaginative shift on the hand after. Their game collapses after one or two disasters. Optimists are resilient. A disaster, even two in a row, does not impact them.

I gave my optimism test to 500 leading bridge players in 1988. (Bobby Wolf was at the very top in optimism).

I then competed with Ron Anderson (the Hog) in the Daily Bulletin to predict the final rounds of the Vanderbilt in Reno.

Each day he published his predictions based on intimate knowledge of the players and I published my predictions based only on the seeding points times their optimism scores. He got 13 of the 16 matches right, I got 15 of the 16 right.

Pessimists can become optimists. But to find if you are an optimist and how to become one, read *Learned Optimism*.



The Labours of Hercules
The Augean Stables

by **Mark Horton**

The fifth task assigned to Hercules was to 'clean out the Augean Stables' in a single day. The phrase has come to represent the undertaking of a difficult task, quite often involving an attack against corrupt practices.

Bridge players are required to perform difficult tasks on a regular basis. On this deal from the OCBL Open League South was faced with a lead problem:

Board 18. Dealer East. NS Vul.

♠ Q 4
♡ K 2
♢ 5 4 3 2
♣ A J 10 7 6

West	North	East	South
—	—	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

What should South lead?

Generally speaking one should tend to lead aggressively against this type of auction and South put his faith in the ♡K (sometimes known as the 'movie-star' lead).

This is what he saw:

♠ 7 6
♡ A 10 8 6
♢ A K Q 10 6
♣ Q 8

♠ Q 4
♡ K 2
♢ 5 4 3 2
♣ A J 10 7 6

Declarer won with dummy's ace, playing the seven from his hand as partner followed with the five. Declarer now played dummy's top diamonds, North following with the nine and jack and then ruffing the third round with the ♠J. When declarer discarded the ♣K North produced the ♡Q and followed it with the four, South ruffing as declarer played the nine followed by the jack. South exited with a diamond and North ruffed with the ♠A and returned the ♡3, which promoted a trick for South's ♠Q.

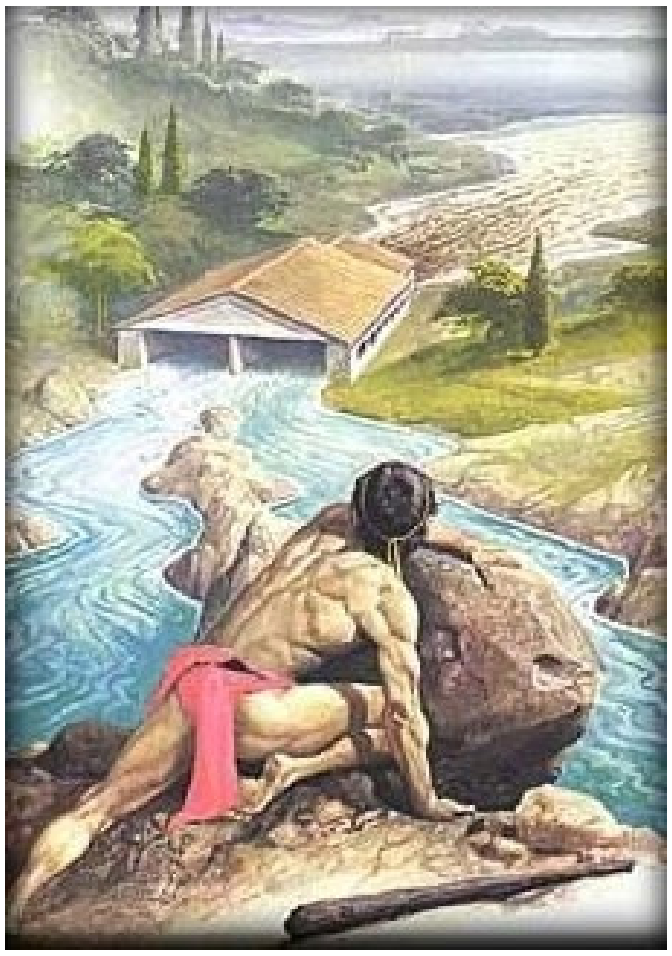
This was the full deal:

♠ A J
♡ Q 5 4 3
♢ J 9
♣ 9 8 5 3 2

♠ 7 6
♡ A 10 8 6
♢ A K Q 10 6
♣ Q 8

♠ K 10 9 8 5 3 2
♡ J 9 7
♢ 8 7
♣ K

♠ Q 4
♡ K 2
♢ 5 4 3 2
♣ A J 10 7 6



In this picture that has been found on the web, Hercules is rerouting two rivers in order to complete the assigned task.
Some curiosities about the fifth of Hercules Labours are posted in the next column.

From Wikipedia:

The fifth Labour of Heracles (Hercules in Latin) was to clean the Augean stables.

Eurystheus intended this assignment both as humiliating (rather than impressive, like the previous labours) and as impossible, since the livestock were divinely healthy (immortal) and therefore produced an enormous quantity of dung. These stables had not been cleaned in over thirty years, and 3,000 cattle lived there. However, Heracles succeeded by rerouting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus to wash out the filth.

Augeas reacted angrily because he had promised Heracles one tenth of his cattle if the job was finished in one day. He refused to honor the agreement, and Heracles killed him after completing the tasks.
Heracles gave his kingdom to Phyleus, Augeas' son, who had been exiled for supporting Heracles against his father.

According to the odes of the poet Pindar, Heracles then founded the Olympic Games:

the games which by the ancient tomb of Pelops the mighty Heracles founded, after that he slew Kleatos, Poseidon's godly son, and slew also Eurytos, that he might wrest from tyrannous Augeas against his will reward for service done.

Eurystheus discounted the success of this labour because the rushing waters had done the work of cleaning the stables and because Heracles was paid.
Stating that Heracles still had seven labours to do, Eurystheus then sent Heracles to defeat the Stymphalian Birds.

(text taken from Wikipedia - License text CC BY-SA 3.0GFDL - and added here by Francesca Canali)

Send us your up-to-date pic, please!

It has been a long time since many of us last met and we are doing our best to make your online Bridge experience as valuable as we can.

Obviously when producing Bridge articles it is necessary to use photos from the archives, as the last international face-to-face Bridge event was held several months ago (the 2020 Winter Games in Monaco).

Since online play is at the moment our new 'present', we would like to represent it as it is!

So if you can please send us a picture (can be a selfie)
of yourself playing online Bridge.

Let your Bridge friends see you in the present!

You can send the pic to:
info@ocbl.org

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Upcoming OCBL CUPs:

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1 - 5 February 2021

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14 - 18 June 2021

Info and pre-registration: WWW.OCBL.ORG