



The Kibitzer

April 2026

Editors: Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis

President's Message - The Game of Bridge and Our Community

In an age where mental health and social connection are more important than ever, the game of bridge stands out as a powerful tool for both. Often seen as a pastime for earlier generations, bridge is, in fact, one of the most stimulating and socially rewarding activities available today. Therefore it deserves full attention within our communities.

As you are all aware, bridge is a game of strategy, memory and partnership. Every hand challenges players to think critically, plan ahead and adapt to new information arising during playing the hand.

Studies have increasingly shown that such mentally demanding activities can help maintain brain function and may even delay the onset of age-related dysfunctions. In other words, bridge is like a workout for the brain.

The value of bridge goes far beyond mental fitness. It is fundamentally, a social game. Since it is played in pairs and often in clubs or group settings, bridge fosters communication and cooperation. Players build partnerships, learn to trust one another, and share in the challenges, the triumphs and the defeats of the game. In a world where isolation is becoming more common, bridge offers a meaningful way to connect with others face-to-face.

Bridge clubs and community centres provide welcoming environments where people of all ages can come together. Friendships are formed across different generations, and the new comers are often surprised by how engaging the bridge community can be.

Importantly, bridge is a game that can be learned at any stage of life. With the availability of beginner lessons, online platforms and local clubs, access to the game has never been easier. Encouraging younger players to learn the game not only preserves the tradition but also introduces them to a mentally enriching and socially rewarding activity that can last a life time.

Along these lines, the Calgary Bridge Centre has been welcoming a lot of new players to the game. It might be Thursday's Bid and Play sessions (averaging 15 tables) or Monday's 299er games (averaging 12 tables) or the Rookie-Master game that is usually "Sold Out".

The Bridge Centre is an excellent playground for new players to learn more about the game and practice what they have learned. Of course, without a fantastic group of volunteers none of this would be possible.

[President's Message continues next page]

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President's Message (continued)

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage every member of our unit to be an ambassador in spreading the word about the game that we all enjoy and love. I would also like to encourage our guest members to convert their membership to a full ACBL membership.

"Bridge is a game that keeps the mind sharp and the community connected."

Osama Elshafey
President, ACBL Unit 390
April 2026



Calgary 0-750 Non-Life Master Regional



The Unit 390 non-Life Master Regional is fast approaching. It is scheduled for June 5 - 7, 2026 at the DoubleTree by Hilton, where unit sectional tournaments are held. In fact, the Spring Sectional will run alongside the NLM Regional.

It has been three years since Calgary hosted such an event, and your organizing committee has vowed to make this year's tournament an exciting outing. There will be fun social activities, opportunities to learn, prizes, and much more ... and all this in addition to the chance to earn Gold Points!

Why not nab your favourite partner and make a date to play - one day, two days or for the entire tournament? It's called a **Gold Rush Regional** for a reason!

If you need help finding a partner or a team (for Sunday), please don't hesitate to contact **Delores Hedley** at 403-254-4995 or email dollyd@telus.net.

***Come play bridge
with us!***

Supervised Bid & Play News

By Delores Hedley and Cathy Brewer



Bid & Play is a wonderful experience! The idea behind the program is to help fledgling duplicate bridge players increase their skill and give them the confidence to join regular games. It is so gratifying to report that many have done just that.

When we first started in April 2024, we were lucky to get four to six tables. Two short years later, we were averaging 11 to 12 tables through winter months. Now that spring is here, (and golf season hasn't yet begun), we are getting about 16 tables. That's pushing the limit, since we have space and equipment to handle 18 tables.

It has been marvelous to see so many players give back to their bridge community by volunteering to share their knowledge and time to help beginning players. Some people volunteer weekly and help for the entire session while others drop in to help before their own bridge game commences. No matter how much time the volunteers are able to give, it is an amazingly selfless sharing of expertise that the students truly appreciate.

Recently, Karen Mitchell has begun offering a 15-minute "Quick Lesson" before each session. It started as an experiment and the audience seems to love it. Karen gets lots of questions from the floor after the talk and some people stay after we wrap up to ask more questions.

Special thanks go to **Richard Weinberger, Garry and JoAnn Hanson** who arrive early to set up.

As a side note, as of March 2026, Bid & Play has contributed \$12,286 to the Bridge Centre since the program began in August of 2023.

Sessions run every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., on the lower level at the Calgary Bridge Centre. Players are invited to drop in anytime during the scheduled hours. The cost to play is \$5.00.

If you would like more information about Bid & Play, please contact Delores at dollyd@telus.net. You can find a link to the complete Bid & Play flyer on the Unit 390 website.

Why not come out and be part of the fun?

Editors' Note: Cathy Brewer is one of the first students of Bid & Play. She is well and truly hooked on bridge. 😊

Member Milestones

The following members have reached new masterpoint milestones from the beginning of October 2025 to the end of March 2026. Congratulations to all on their achievements.



New Junior Masters (5+ MPs):

Leanne Bannon	Staci Larson
Warren Book	Sandy Mackie
Marilyn Carter	Caroline Marion
Susan Cooper	Tony Melton
Kevin Falkenberg	James Parakin
Ross Galway	Kathy Parakin
Jeanie Godfrey	Greg Thompson
Peter Jull	Anne Wanklyn

New Club Masters (20+ MPs with at least 5 black):

Leanne Bannon	Hugh Lyons
Susan Cameron	Penny Mellor
Michele Dick	Christine Neff
Lyle Ford	Patricia Rice
Gray Graves	Margie Ronca
Jane Jefferis	Gabriela Spineanu
Susan Jull	Valerie Thompson
Brenda Lucy	

New Sectional Masters (50+ MPs with at least 10 black and 5 silver):

Christina Larkins	Tony Teare
Lorraine Mansell	Deborah Waddell
Nok Yin (Jim) Lee	Jodie Winquist

New Regional Masters (100+ MPs with at least 15 black, 15 silver and 5 red, gold or platinum):

Dee-Ann Clark	Deanie Petrunia
Stephanie Martinez	Janet Quiring
Suzan Olsen	Adiel Rautenbach
David Pethrick	Gregory Waskiewich

New NABC Masters (200+ MPs with at least 20 black, 25 silver, 5 gold or platinum and 15 additional red, gold or platinum):

Donna Dahl	Colleen Rogers
Gilbert Fagnou	Sandy Shuler
Gwen Fagnou	Marjory Sword
Jeanette Kish	Cheryl Whittaker

New Life Masters (500+ MPs with at least 75 black, 75 silver, 50 gold or platinum and 50 additional red, gold or platinum):

Don Bacon	Marny Simpson
Andrew Melton	Cindy Watt

New Bronze Life Masters (a Life Master with 750+ MPs):

Don Bacon	Marny Simpson
Andrew Melton	

New Silver Life Masters (1000+ MPs; a Life Master with at least 200 pigmented points):

Arlene Connell	Lois Matton
Gretta Hinton	Claire Strachan
Carole Kirk	Jamie Watt

New Ruby Life Masters (1500+ MPs; a Life Master with at least 300 pigmented points):

Drina Barton	Terry Nazar
Mary Anne Crookes	Patricia Purvis

New Gold Life Masters (2500+ MPs; a Life Master with at least 500 pigmented points):

Howard Coren	Carole Anne Snow
Alex Knox	Connie Wignall
Andy McKaig	

New Sapphire Life Masters (3500+ MPs; a Life Master with at least 350 gold or platinum and 350 additional pigmented points):

William Basler



Mr. Boffo by Joe Martin
Dist. by Neatly Chiseled Features

2026 Rookie-Master Team Game

By Brad Bowyer, Special Events Chair

Another successful iteration of the Unit 390 Rookie-Master Swiss Team game took place on February 21, 2026 at the Bridge Centre. The Unit's first Rookie-Master Team game was held in 2014. This year's event was filled to capacity, offering a wonderful opportunity for newer players to meet some of the better-known players from the Calgary bridge community.

Many of our rookies have been attending the wildly popular "Bid & Play" sessions, and it was great to see them step up into an organized event. It takes real courage to join in—especially for those new to the Swiss teams format. Teams consist of two pairs, each formed by matching one master with one rookie.

To facilitate a post-game review, Barbara Webster prepared duplicated boards for the game (many, many boards!). While this added significantly to the duties of the DIC, **Clarence Duby** (alongside Assistant Director, **John Prance**) and our much-appreciated volunteer caddy, **Greg Bedard**, having printed hand records was a huge plus—much better than trying to recall the deals hours after they had been played!



Thanks to everyone who participated, and special thanks to Delores Hedley for recruiting, encouraging, and pairing up our teams.

A total of 21 teams participated. The event was stratified into three flights (A, B and C), with a team's flight being determined according to the average masterpoints for the four players.

Are you curious who took home the "hardware"?



Flight A Winners: Christine Neff, Terri Bedard
Janet Galbraith, Miriam Daniel



Flight B/C Winners: Derwyn Hughes, Andrea McManus,
Mary Anne Crookes, Brenda Lucy

*Why not make plans now
to join us next year!*

The Five Level Belongs to the Opponents

By Daniel Bertrand

I am playing a team event. Both sides are non-vulnerable when I pick up this hand:

♠AJ632 ♥K ♦A1032 ♣A94

My RHO passes and I open 1♠. My LHO bids 2♥. My partner raises to 4♠ and RHO goes on to 5♥. I have three Aces and could double, but my ♠A might not cash. Also, I do not like having a singleton ♥K in front of the heart bidder. I decide to pass. LHO passes and partner continues to 5♠. RHO passes, I pass, and LHO doubles. The auction has been:

North	East	South	West
	Pass	1♠	2♥
4♠	5♥	Pass	Pass
5♠	Pass	Pass	DBL
All Pass			

LHO leads the ♣K and dummy appears.

IMPs

Contract: 5♠x

Lead: ♣K

♠ KQ10984
♥ 5
♦ 5
♣ 108765

	N	
W	■	E
	S	

♠ AJ632
♥ K
♦ A1032
♣ A94

I seem to have three losers: two clubs and one heart. And I can see that we surely would have defeated 5♥ with a diamond lead. I will have to remind partner that the five level belongs to the opponents.

Unfortunately, rewinding the auction is not an option. Is there a way to take 11 tricks in 5♠? Can I avoid those three losers? Think about it! Make a plan!

Maybe an opponent has three diamonds to the King, Queen, and Jack; then I can set up my ♦10 for a heart discard from dummy (not too likely). I see another possibility. Do you see it? Think about it!

I win the first trick with the ♣A, continue with the ♦A (both opponents play small diamonds), and ruff a diamond with the ♠K as LHO plays the ♦K. I come back to my hand by overtaking the ♠10 with the ♠J (both opponents follow; 5♥ had no play) and ruff another diamond with the ♠Q (LHO discards a small heart). I overtake the ♠9 with the ♠A (both opponents discard hearts) and ruff my last diamond with the ♠8 as LHO discards another heart.

I have reached the following position with the lead in dummy:

♠ 4 ♥ 5 ♦ -- ♣ 10876	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>■</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W	■	E		S		♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
	N										
W	■	E									
	S										
♠ 632 ♥ K ♦ -- ♣ 94		♠ ♥ ♦ ♣									

When I lead dummy's heart to my King, I am hoping for a club position where the opponents cannot cash two tricks in the suit. It could be that the clubs started as ♣KQ opposite ♣J32. Or, perhaps the layout is something like this:

♠ 4 ♥ 5 ♦ -- ♣ 10876	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>■</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W	■	E		S		♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
	N										
W	■	E									
	S										
♠ -- ♥ AJ108 ♦ -- ♣ Q2		♠ ♥ ♦ ♣									
♠ 632 ♥ K ♦ -- ♣ 94		♠ -- ♥ Q96 ♦ QJ ♣ J									

Sure enough, LHO wins the ♥A and is stuck! She must return a club, or present me with a ruff and discard. But if she plays the ♣Q, dummy's ♣10 will win the next round of clubs and if she plays a small club, her partner will have to give me a ruff and discard.

[continued next page]

The Five Level ... (continued)

This is why I needed to ruff all my diamonds. Otherwise, LHO could play a small club over to her partner's ♣J and RHO would have a safe diamond exit.

I have to remember to congratulate partner on his brave 5♠ bid!

The full deal:

♠ 7	♠ KQ10984	♠ 5
♥ AJ108743	♥ 5	♥ Q962
♦ K7	♦ 5	♦ QJ9864
♣ KQ2	♣ 108765	♣ J3

♠ AJ632	♠ 5
♥ K	♥ Q962
♦ A1032	♦ QJ9864
♣ A94	♣ J3



Thank You!

The Editors would like to thank all the contributors to this edition of the Kibitzer.

In these pages, you will find articles by Frank Ayer, Daniel Bertrand, Gordon Campbell, Janet Galbraith, Allan Simon, and much more.

Material for future issues of The Kibitzer is always welcome. Email your articles and news items to 390kibitzer@acblunit390.org

The next edition is scheduled to be out in October 2026.



2025 - 26 North American Pairs District 18 and National Finals

The North American Pairs (NAP) is a grass-roots event for pairs. Club qualifying games were held in June, July and August of 2025. Players had to qualify at the club level in order to play in the District Final.

District playoffs are held in each of the ACBL's 25 districts and high placed pairs advance to the North American final played at the spring nationals. There are four flights in the NAP: Championship Flight (open), Flight A (under 6000 MP), Flight B (under 3000 MP) and Flight C (non-life master under 750 MP).

The District 18 Finals were held online on BBO, with separate events for each flight, although low registration meant Flight A was merged with the Championship Flight:

Championship Flight - Sat. Nov. 8, 2025 - six tables

Flight B - Sat. Nov. 15, 2025 - eight tables

Flight C - Sat. Nov. 8, 2025 - five and one-half tables

There was a decent turnout of players from Unit 390, with three pairs participating in the Championship event, six pairs in Flight B and four pairs in Flight C. Here is how our local players fared.

District 18 North American Pairs Final- Championship Flight

1 Michael Broadhurst - Dmitry Komin, Calgary AB

District 18 North American Pairs Final - Flight B

3 Clarende Duby - John Prance, Calgary AB

4 Frank Guo - June Cheng, Calgary AB

The top three eligible pairs in the Championship Flight, and the top four eligible pairs in Flights B and C qualified to the national finals, which was held at the 2026 Spring NABC in St Louis MO.

Only Broadhurst - Komin made the trip to St. Louis, where they competed in the national final of the Baldwin NAP. A disastrous second session ended their hopes of making the cut to Day 2.

Mixed Raises (What They Are and When to Use Them)

By Janet Galbraith

For this issue of the Kibitzer, I wanted to write something about **mixed raises** because I love playing them but I do not see many Calgary players using them. They are common enough that mixed raises appear on the 2022 re-designed ACBL convention card as a check box option.

1♣ Min Length: 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ NF2 ☐ (4432 only) ☐ NF1 ☐ NF0 ☐ Art F ☐ Resp ☐ Transfer Resp ☐	
Raises Single: NF ☐ Inv+ ☐ GF ☐ Jump: Wk ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐ After Overcall: Wk ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐	
1♦ Min Length: 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ Unbal ☐ NF2 ☐ NF1 ☐ NF0 ☐ Art F ☐ Resp ☐ Same as over 1♣ ☐	
Raises Single: NF ☐ Inv+ ☐ GF ☐ Jump: Wk ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐ After Overcall: Wk ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐	
1♥/♠ 1 st /2 nd Length: 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 3 rd /4 th Length: 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 1NT: F ☐ Semi-F ☐ Bypass ☐ ☐ Other ☐	
Art Raises: 2NT ☐ 3NT ☐ Splitter ☐ Other ☐ Drury 2♣ ☐ 2♦ ☐ In Comp ☐	
Jump Raise: Weak ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐ After Overcall: Weak ☐ Mixed ☐ Inv ☐	

Note that on the ACBL Convention Card, mixed raises are alertable when there is no competition, but not when there is, just like pre-emptive raises.

Here is a short overview of mixed raises.

Competitive auctions often force you to describe both fit and strength in very little bidding space. A mixed raise is a tool that can help partner judge how to proceed—whether to compete further, invite game, or stop safely—especially when the opponents have already entered the auction.

Definition:

A mixed raise is a jump raise of partner's suit that shows support and some values, but not enough for a limit raise. It tries to be more descriptive than a pre-emptive raise while still emphasizing a competitive fit.

- **Fit:** usually 4-card support for partner's major or good support for a minor
- **Strength:** 7 – 9 (or a bad 10) high card points, but distribution and suit quality affect your decision
- **Shape:** could have shortness or extra distribution to make competing worthwhile
- **Purpose:** invites partner to compete further when appropriate

A mixed raise can occur after partner opens the bidding or overcalls and it applies to both major and minor suits.

Example #1

You hold: ♠Qxxx ♥Kxx ♦xx ♣Qxxx

Partner opens 1♠. This hand fits into the range of a simple 2♠ raise, but the value of the hand is elevated because the extra trump contributes to better control of the trump suit and provides extra ruffing ability. Using mixed raises, the auction would be:

1♠ - (P) - 3♠

If your partnership uses Bergen raises, you already play a version of mixed raises, since 3♣ (or 3♦ if you play reverse Bergen) would show the same thing. However, when you play 2/1, you need a way to show single-suited invitational hands. Being able to bid 3♣ or 3♦ as natural and invitational is a more useful treatment.

Example #2

You hold: ♠Axx ♥Qx ♦xxx ♣Qxxxx

Partner opens 1♣. Now what? If you play inverted minors, 2♣ covers hands that are 10+ HCP. You might play that 1m – 3m is a pre-emptive raise, so what's left? For the in-between hands like this one, you are forced to bid 1NT, hiding the great club fit and often leading to poor results.

With mixed raises, your auction would be nice and simple:

1♣ - (P) - 3♣

Three clubs should be a comfortable spot to play, and if partner has extras, she can try for 3NT or 5♣.

Example #3

You hold: ♠KJxx ♥xx ♦KJxx ♣xxx

LHO opens 1♣, partner overcalls 1♠ and RHO passes. Bidding 2♠ seems like an underbid, but you are not strong enough to cuebid 2♣. A mixed raise lets you bid 3♠ to show your extra trump and values. It also severely impedes your LHO from getting back into the auction.

Some of you may currently play that this auction (a jump cue bid):

(1♣) - 1♠ - (P) - 3♠

shows a mixed raise. If you switch and use 3♠ as the mixed raise, you can save 3♣ to use as a splinter.

[continued next page]

Mixed Raises (continued)

Example #4

You hold: ♠Kxx ♥xx ♦KQxx ♣xxxx

The auction proceeds:

(1♣) - 1♦ - (1♠) - ?

Mixed raises apply in competitive auctions, so bidding 3♦ here works perfectly. Imagine that opener has three spades and plays support doubles. Would they be able to make one over your 3♦ bid? It will depend on how high they play the convention. If they have four spades, will they want to bid 3♠ over 3♦ if their hand is in the 11 – 13 HCP range? You are making their options far more complicated than if you simply raise to 2♦.

Another nice consideration with mixed raises is that the opponents (if they remember to ask!) will be aware that you have real values for your jump raise. If they get too frisky at the four level, you or your partner can bring out the red card, so they will often fold and you can buy the contract at the three level.

Compare that to using a jump raise as a pre-emptive bid – often known as transferring the opponents into game. It doesn't really slow them down unless you can get to the five level. Mixed raises help partner evaluate your side's options to either declare or defend at the best level and, at the same time, obstruct the opponents by taking up bidding space.

If you play 1M – 3M as a mixed raise instead of a limit raise (or if you replace 1M – Bergen raise with a natural invitational bid), you may wonder how you show a limit raise. That is a question that needs to be addressed. One possibility is to play a version of modified Jacoby 2NT, which just like inverted minors, can be used to show hands of 10+ HCP, not just game-forcing values.

An explanation of that convention will have to wait for another article!



Annual General Meeting

The Calgary Duplicate Bridge Association UNIT 390

When: Sunday, May 31, 2026
Where: Calgary Bridge Centre
Time: Light Lunch: 11:15 a.m.
Meeting: 12:00 noon
Pairs Game: to follow

- Card fees \$10.00
- Unit championship points

Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome and Introduction
3. Confirmation of Quorum
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes from 2025 AGM
6. President's Report
7. Treasurer's Report - Approval of Financial Statements
8. Appointment of Auditor for 2026/2027
9. Presentation of Awards
10. Election of Directors
11. Questions from the floor
12. Termination

Please RSVP no later than **May 24** if you are coming.

An attendance estimate is needed to finalize the catering arrangements.

You may register using the Registration Form on the Unit 390 website ([HERE](#)) or by emailing 390events@acblunit390.org.

Questions? You may contact Special Events Chair, Brad Bowyer, at 390events@acblunit390.org.

Connoisseur:

A specialist who knows
everything about something and
nothing about anything else.

Ambrose Bierce
The Cynic's Word Book

The Obvious Line

By Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis

Playing in a Swiss team event, at favourable vulnerability, you pick up this hand as South:

♠ K9842 ♥ KQ74 ♦ Q105 ♣ A

Partner, in first seat, passes as does RHO. The auction proceeds as follows:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣ ¹	DBL	4 ♠	All Pass

¹ Artificial showing a limit raise in spades (Drury).

West leads the ♣2 and partner tables a very suitable dummy:

IMPs

Contract: 4♠

Lead: ♣2

♠ AJ103
 ♥ J1095
 ♦ K82
 ♣ 75

♠ K9842
♥ KQ74
♦ Q105
♣ A

You would have to be quite unlucky to lose four tricks. Even without the ♦10 you would still be favoured to make the contract. The obvious line of play is to cash two spades hoping the ♠Q falls and, should that fail to transpire, bank on East holding the ♦J. Is there any way to improve your chance of success?

It is important to remember that, once the opening lead is made, declarer knows a lot more about the layout of the hand than the opponents do. With every trick played, the opponents can gather more information to help count points and make inferences about the length of declarer's suits.

For example, suppose you have two small cards opposite KJxxx in dummy and you need one trick. If you wait until trick 10 to play this suit, good opponents will know that you have a guess to make and will not give you any help. However, if you play this suit at trick two then LHO might grab her Ace for

fear of going to bed with her defensive trick. The basic principle is to force the opponents to make decisions at a time when they have the least amount of information.

How does this principle apply to your 4♠ contract? The opponents see two small clubs in dummy. Neither opponent knows her partner's exact length in the suit. Play the ♥Q before touching trumps. With a bit of luck the opponent holding the ♥A will grab the trick to continue clubs. Is there any risk in doing this? Yes, because you have opened up the possibility of a heart ruff for your opponents. But even if they are able to score a heart ruff you will still likely make the contract if the ♦J is favourably placed.

Accordingly, at trick two you play the ♥Q. LHO takes the ♥A and tries to cash the ♣Q. You ruff and finally it is time to tackle trumps. You begin by cashing the ♠K and leading to the ♠A. LHO follows twice, but RHO pitches a club on the second round. The hand is set up for an endplay. You revert to hearts now, playing three rounds, but LHO refuses to ruff in. At this point, you have stripped both clubs and hearts from your hand and dummy. When you exit a trump, LHO is endplayed into either leading a diamond or giving you a ruff and sluff.

The full deal:

♠ AJ103
 ♥ J1095
 ♦ K82
 ♣ 75

♠ Q75
♥ A62
♦ J94
♣ O832

♠	6
♥	83
♦	A763
♣	KJ10964

♠ K9842
♥ KQ74
♦ Q105
♣ A

Your forethought generates a 10-IMP gain for your team. You were due to fail had you embarked on the obvious line (as did your counterpart at the other table), losing the ♥A, ♠Q and two diamonds.

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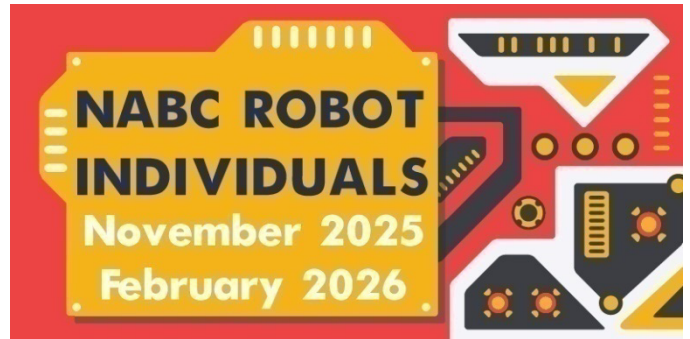
The Obvious Line (continued)

What if it had been East who held three spades to the Queen? The endplay still works, but in a different way (and with no guarantee of success). After stripping hearts and clubs and exiting in spades, East is forced to return a diamond or give you a ruff and sluff.

At this point, it all comes down to the location of the ♦J. You know that East has three spades, likely six clubs (that ♣2 lead looks like fourth best) and you know the heart distribution. Therefore, because West has five or six diamonds to East's one or two, she is favoured to hold both the Ace and Jack of diamonds. When East returns a diamond (surely East would lead the ♦J from a doubleton), you play the ♦Q and West has no counter. If she ducks, you will lead toward dummy's ♦K next; if she wins, she must return a diamond to avoid giving you a ruff and sluff, and you will run it to your ♦10.

Note that if your ♥Q holds trick two, you pretty much have to revert to the obvious line of play.

Bridge combines both technical skill and forcing mistakes from the opponents. The successful player leans on both these aspects of the game.



Fall 2025 and Spring 2026

It's a broken record ... a cut-and-paste from the last Kibitzer and many previous ones. **Richard Bickley** was the top performer amongst all Unit 390 players in both the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Robot Individual tournaments, scoring 61.1% and 58.9% respectively.

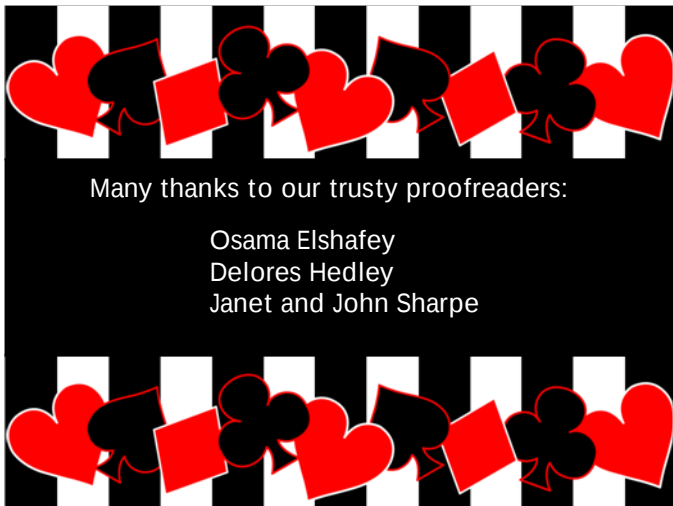
The three online NABC Robot Individuals staged by the ACBL each year, just prior to the NABC tournaments, continue to be popular, drawing close to 2,000 participants each iteration.

The Robot Individuals are into their 10th year of operation. Each tournament is a three-day, three-session robot duplicate event hosted by BBO.

The Fall 2025 event ran November 22 - 24 and was won by Bill Bleish of Kansas, who turned in a three-session average score of 73.0%. Amazingly, this was the third consecutive Fall Robot Individual title that Bill has captured. Nine members from Unit 390 participated in the Fall event.

The Spring Robot Individual, held in advance of the St. Louis NABC on February 21-23, 2026, reported that 1,753 participants completed the tournament. It took 72.5% to win the event. Fourteen players from Unit 390 competed.

The next Robot Individual is scheduled for July 4 - 6, 2026 ahead of the Minneapolis NABC.

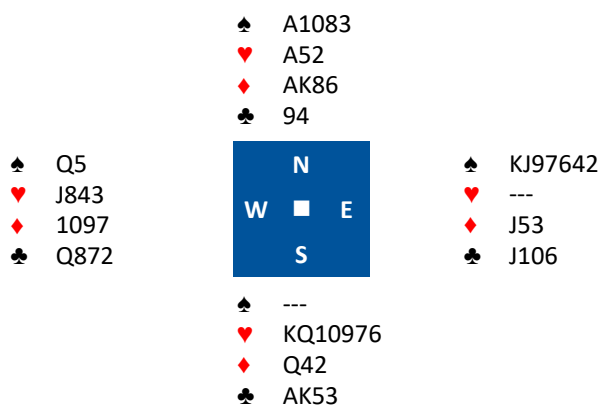


Risky Business or Slam Dunk?

By Allan Simon

The 1994 Canadian National Team Championship was held in Dartmouth, NS. Our team (Gordon Campbell-Doug Deschner and Doran Flock-Allan Simon) placed ninth in the 20-team round robin. We were in serious contention until we lost badly to McAvoy in the next-to-last match. The deal below was one of the more interesting boards of the earlier rounds. Not many pairs reached the excellent grand slam, mostly because East usually overcalled 3♠, seriously inconveniencing North-South. Our teammates, for instance, came back with -1460 on their card.

IMPs
North-South Vulnerable
Contract: 7♥
Lead: ♠5



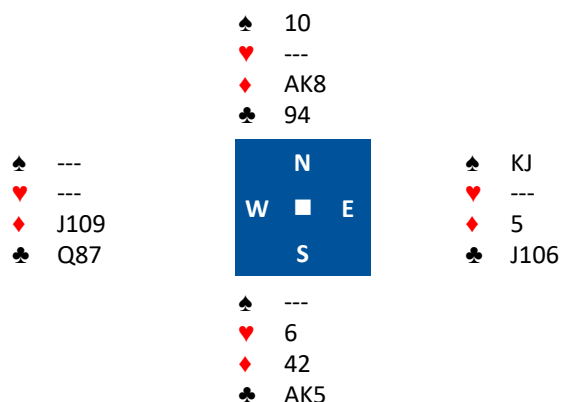
Flock	East	Simon	West
1NT	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♦	Pass	7♥	All Pass

As can be seen from the diagram the play in 7♥ is routine because diamonds break 3-3. However, the play of the slam is especially interesting if diamonds do not split evenly.

In spite of West's (Irving Litvack) imaginative lead of the ♠5, I ruffed a spade in hand to isolate the spade threat (only East could protect against dummy's ♠10 becoming a winner).

Once I played the ♥K and finessed West's ♥J, it was evident that a non-simultaneous double squeeze was available as long as West was guarding diamonds. This type of squeeze is so-called because the two opponents are not squeezed on the same trick ... first one, then the other is squeezed.

The end position would have been something along the following lines (assuming West started with four diamonds):



When the ♥6 is led West must discard a club, otherwise you will score three diamond tricks. You can also discard a club from dummy. At this point East has an easy discard of the ♠J -- he isn't squeezed yet. However when you continue by cashing two rounds of diamonds East must discard a club on the second round in order to retain the ♠K. As a result no one has been able to keep clubs and you score the last three tricks. In this case the squeeze is automatic.

Interestingly, had West led a club (when holding four or more diamonds) I would have had to guess whether diamonds were breaking or West still had them stopped since there would no longer be an idle club to pitch on the ♥6. In this case the squeeze would be positional.

After the hand Litvack asked me behind the screen how I knew that my partner had the ♥A. I had a simple answer. "I knew because nobody doubled." I guess it was a slam dunk!



2025 Ace of Clubs Races

Unit 390 Final Standings

(For masterpoints won in face-to-face club games)

0 to 5	1	Susan Jull	Calgary AB	23
	2	Lyle Ford	Calgary AB	22
	3	Christine Neff	Calgary AB	20
5 to 20	1	Patrick Harder	Calgary AB	18
	2	Earle Harris	Calgary AB	13
	3/4	Diane Wilkinson	Calgary AB	9
	3/4	Judith Shaw	Calgary AB	9
20 to 50	1	Stephanie Martinez	Calgary AB	54
	2	Chuck Cherry	Calgary AB	23
	3	Miriam Daniel	Calgary AB	22
50 to 100	1	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB	43
	2	Lois Clapperton	Calgary AB	41
	3	Quentin Krogstad	Calgary AB	35
100 to 200	1	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB	80
	2	Corliss Ward	Calgary AB	69
	3	Lana McFadden	Calgary AB	50
200 to 300	1	Sherry Goldenberg	Calgary AB	66
	2	Sandy Shuler	Calgary AB	60
	3	Dee-Ann Clark	Calgary AB	35
300 to 500	1	David Stephure	Calgary AB	75
	2	Inge French	Okotoks AB	54
	3	Robert Stothers	Calgary AB	44
500 to 1000	1	Richard Weinberger	Calgary AB	163
	2	Jamie Watt	Calgary AB	82
	3	Mike Blancher	Calgary AB	79
1000 to 1500	1	Dale Bercov	Calgary AB	133
	2	Terry Nazar	Cochrane AB	129
	3	Pat Anderson	Calgary AB	112
1500 to 2500	1	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB	231
	2	Howard Coren	Calgary AB	197
	3	Rick Boyd	Calgary AB	132
2500 to 3500	1	Terri Bedard	Calgary AB	179
	2	Garth Wiggins	Calgary AB	156
	3	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB	148
3500 to 5000	1	Grant Wharry	Calgary AB	87
	2	Faiz Nadir	Calgary AB	44
	3	Maged Wafa	Calgary AB	36
5000 to 7500	1	David Johnson	Calgary AB	77
	2	Jim Berglund	Calgary AB	73
	3	Jadwiga Polujan	Calgary AB	58
7500 to 10,000	1	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	206
	2	Abdul Fakh	Calgary AB	164
	3	Nok Yin (Jim) Lee	Calgary AB	4
Over 10,000	1	Steven Lawrence	Calgary AB	164
	2	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB	35
	3	Judith Gartaganis	Calgary AB	5

2025 Ace of Virtual Clubs Races

Unit 390 Final Standings

(For masterpoints won in online club games)

0 to 5	1	Greg Thompson	Canmore AB	1
	2	Karen Serafini	Calgary AB	1
	3	Warren Book	Calgary AB	1
5 to 20	1/2	Rodger Conner	Canmore AB	3
	1/2	Lori Conner	Canmore AB	3
	3	Di Vosburgh	Calgary AB	2
20 to 50	1	Julie Jacques	Calgary AB	23
	2	Leslie Dunning	Calgary AB	6
	3	Kerri Gallup	Longview AB	6
50 to 100	1	Philippa Fitzgerald-Finch	Calgary AB	23
	2	Joyce Gibson	Calgary AB	11
	3	Celia Gaudet	Calgary AB	6
100 to 200	1	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB	62
	2	Christine Stephure	Calgary AB	32
	3	Cheryl Whittaker	Calgary AB	28
200 to 300	1	Lynn Gall	Calgary AB	29
	2	Michael Mannas	Calgary AB	28
	3	Robert Scott	Calgary AB	11
300 to 500	1	David Stephure	Calgary AB	78
	2	Atsuko McDonald	Calgary AB	70
	3	Margriet Huisman	Calgary AB	42
500 to 1000	1	Morris Streich	Calgary AB	91
	2	Philip Coppard	Calgary AB	77
	3	Harvey Wiehler	Calgary AB	71
1000 to 1500	1	Martine Parent	Calgary AB	102
	2	Robert Boisson	Calgary AB	83
	3	Marny Simpson	Calgary AB	69
1500 to 2500	1	Mark Manzer	Calgary AB	164
	2	Brent Muir	Calgary AB	59
	3	Barry Crozier	Calgary AB	59
2500 to 3500	1	William Basler	Calgary AB	107
	2	Helen Dillen	Calgary AB	59
	3	Gerry Marchant	Calgary AB	57
3500 to 5000	1	Stephanie McAdam	Calgary AB	95
	2	Yi Peng (Mark) Mai	Calgary AB	54
	3	Michael Broadhurst	Calgary AB	45
5000 to 7500	1	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	11
	2	Jadwiga Polujan	Calgary AB	9
7500 to 10,000	1	Allan Simon	Calgary AB	25
	2	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	24
	3	Abdul Fakh	Calgary AB	24
Over 10,000	1	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB	16
	2/3	Judith Gartaganis	Calgary AB	2
	2/3	Nicholas Gartaganis	Calgary AB	2

2025 Mini-McKenney Races

Unit 390 Final Standings

(For masterpoints won in all ACBL-sanctioned games, with the exception of online colourless points)

0 to 5	1	Evelyn Boucher	Calgary AB	32
	2	Nancy Penner	Calgary AB	27
	3	Susan Jull	Calgary AB	24
5 to 20	1	Patrick Harder	Calgary AB	18
	2	Earle Harris	Calgary AB	14
	3	Valerie Thompson	Canmore AB	10
20 to 50	1	Stephanie Martinez	Calgary AB	68
	2	Chuck Cherry	Calgary AB	31
	3	Hai Hu	Calgary AB	28
50 to 100	1	Quentin Krogstad	Calgary AB	61
	2	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB	52
	3	Warren Johnston	Calgary AB	46
100 to 200	1	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB	108
	2	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB	99
	3	Dan Dover	Calgary AB	94
200 to 300	1	Sherry Goldenberg	Calgary AB	88
	2	Sandy Shuler	Calgary AB	76
	3	Sheila Morgan	Wheatland Cnty AB	57
300 to 500	1	David Stephure	Calgary AB	177
	2	Cindy Watt	Calgary AB	119
	3	Atsuko McDonald	Calgary AB	82
500 to 1000	1	Richard Weinberger	Calgary AB	199
	2	Jamie Watt	Calgary AB	147
	3	Andrew Melton	Calgary AB	135
1000 to 1500	1	John Prance	Calgary AB	197
	2	Terry Nazar	Cochrane AB	184
	3	Richard Wolfe	Calgary AB	179
1500 to 2500	1	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB	542
	2	Howard Coren	Calgary AB	388
	3	Mark Manzer	Calgary AB	221
2500 to 3500	1	Terri Bedard	Calgary AB	324
	2	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB	321
	3	Garth Wiggins	Rockyview Cnty AB	191
3500 to 5000	1	Yi Peng (Mark) Mai	Calgary AB	331
	2	Qi (Quincy) Ju	Calgary AB	190
	3	Grant Wharry	Calgary AB	172
5000 to 7500	1	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	326
	2	Jadwiga Polujan	Calgary AB	310
	3	David Johnson	Calgary AB	204
7500 to 10,000	1	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	446
	2	Abdul Fakih	Calgary AB	405
	3	Gordon Campbell	Calgary AB	155
Over 10,000	1	Steven Lawrence	Calgary AB	385
	2	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB	347
	3	Nicholas Gartaganis	Calgary AB	217

299er SPRING SECTIONAL

SATURDAY, MAY 9th, 2026

Calgary Bridge Centre
1140 8 Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta

**All Silver
Points!**



Stratification for 299ers:
(game played on upper level)

D: 200 - 299
E: 100 - 199
F: 0 - 99

Stratification for 49ers:
(game played on lower level)

G: 16 - 49
H: 0 - 15



Entry Fees (two single sessions) CASH ONLY!

Entry fee\$15 per person per session
Youth under 18 yearsFREE

All players must have an ACBL number.
Guest memberships are available at no cost.

Schedule:

10:00 am - 1:00 pm ... 299er Stratified Pairs
..... 49er Stratified Pairs
1:00 pm Lunch Break
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm 299er Stratified Pairs
..... 49er Stratified Pairs

Tournament Chair: Roger Bolton
403-217-4765

Partnerships: Delores Hedley
403-254-4995
dollyd@telus.net

Directors: Lois Matton
Barbara Webster

Complementary
coffee, pop and
snacks.

Don't Always Follow the Rule

By Gordon Campbell

Here is an embarrassing hand from the recent successful and well-attended Calgary New Year's Sectional.

The opponents bid unimpeded as follows:

1♦ - 1NT
3NT - Pass

My partner, Dan Bertrand, led the ♥3. I was tired (excuses!) and not overly paying attention, but I did manage to notice I had ♥QJ87 while dummy held the singleton ♥9. Dummy had loads of stuff, but I held the key ♦A which declarer would no doubt have to knock out.

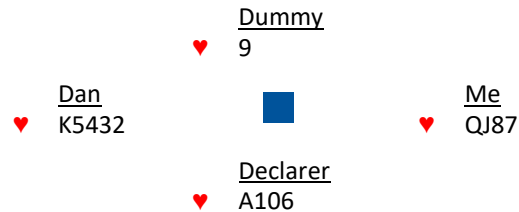
All of you are probably familiar with the basic rule: "always return your original fourth best". It is a very good rule. If you hold a 3-card suit, return your highest remaining card; if you have four or more, use the rule. That helps partner figure out that you only hold three (or perhaps two).

Back to this hand. I played the ♥J and declarer ducked, almost certainly holding up the ♥A. Mechanically, I returned my original fourth best ♥7, as per the standard rule. Declarer ducked again, playing the ♥10.

Dan perforce won the ♥K and returned another heart clearing the suit for the defense. Declarer took the ♥A and

knocked out my ♦A at which point I realized I had stupidly blocked the heart-suit. My ♥8 was high!

My poor partner who originally held ♥K5432 was a helpless victim of my defense. This was the layout of the heart suit:



1. I should have broken the "rule" and returned the ♥Q. If declarer ducks, partner's ♥K is preserved as an entry to his fifth heart.
2. However, if I do return the ♥Q on the second round and declarer (non-intuitively) takes the trick, the suit is again blocked because partner holds ♥K54 and declarer has ♥10 while I am stuck with ♥87. The defense cannot untangle their tricks.

I think I will tell my teammates that is what happened.

But oops, they are the Editors. 😊

Happy 95th Birthday Hazel

Hazel Skelton, long-time member of Unit 390 and Gold Life Master, celebrated her 95th birthday on March 3rd of this year. At the following Friday game, the South Calgary Ladies Bridge Club marked the occasion in the best possible way ... with cake! The crowd of nearly 60 players shared in the festivities.

Unit 390 members in good standing with the ACBL and reaching the age of ninety-five are recognized with Unit-reimbursed free plays for face-to-face play at all participating clubs and at all Unit events.

You can read the entire "90s Plus" policy [HERE](#).



Unit 390 Tournament Report

By Terry Nazar, Tournament Chair

It has been a busy start to the 2026 Unit 390 tournament cycle.

First up was the Calgary New Year's Sectional, traditionally our biggest tournament of the year. Despite some bad weather, the tournament attracted 263½ tables, with good representation across all segments. This was down just slightly from 2025, when we had 271 tables. The strong attendance of the 299er players continues to bolster our tournament numbers.

In late March, a special 2-day tournament was held in Canmore, AB. It was the first time since the early 2000's that a tournament has been held in the Banff-Canmore area. There were 115½ tables in attendance with a good cross section of 299ers and Open players. For many of the 299ers, this was their first time playing at an ACBL tournament.



A full house at the Canmore Seniors Association Centre

The tournament was held at the Canmore Seniors Association Centre in the downtown area. Carol Poland did a super job as the Local Chair. The Canmore hospitality committee kept everyone well supplied with freshly baked cookies and muffins, and of course, lots of coffee and tea. People removed their shoes at the door (like walking into someone's home!).



Always on duty!

The top point winners at the two sectionals were:

New Year's weekend

Flight A/X events: Dan Bertrand - Gordon Campbell (40.1 MP)

Flight B/C events: Richard Piette - Ryan Clark (4.7 MP)

299er/199er events: Nancy Brooks (4.9 MP)

Canmore/Banff weekend

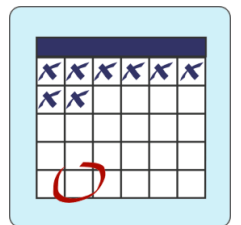
Open events: Janet and Christopher Galbraith (23.0 MP)

299er events: Nancy Penner - Mary Abel (4.8 MP)



There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to stage a successful tournament. Sometimes it can be very chaotic behind the scenes (to say the least!) while looking very organized on the surface. A case in point was the delivery of the bridge trailer to the New Year's Sectional. From tires spinning out in icy alleys, to the truck breaking down and having to scramble to get a backup, to getting stopped on the way to the hotel for speeding and then finding the insurance and registration on the borrowed truck had expired. Fortunately, thanks to a very understanding police officer, the trailer somehow showed up on time to be unloaded. All in a day's work!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the remaining Calgary 2026 Sectional tournaments. You can find the schedule on page 20. The remaining tournaments will be held at the DoubleTree. As always, Unit 390 will provide complimentary coffee every morning and donuts on Sunday. There will also be a pair of 299er tournaments at the Calgary Bridge Centre, one coming up in May and one in October.



The Calgary Spring event on June 5-7, 2026, will consist of two tournaments that run concurrently: the 0-750 non-Life Master Regional and the regular Sectional.

This Gold Rush Regional will be a great opportunity for NLMs to win gold points and climb closer to that Life Master title. Fun events are also planned between sessions. So, join the fun and come and play bridge with us!



Every player at an ACBL tournament or Unit 390-sponsored event must have an ACBL member number. Once a person has that number, it is theirs for life and it is used as a player identification to ensure that any masterpoints earned are properly recorded.

So how does one get an ACBL member number? By signing up, either as a guest member or a full member.

Guest memberships are free and do not expire, allowing new players to join simply by providing their name, email, and postal code. Upon signing up, guest members receive a welcome email containing their ACBL member number.

Guest members get access to the MyACBL online portal where they are able to track their progress and celebrate success. They also receive four months of weekly bridge strategy tips delivered via email.

When a guest member plays in an ACBL-sanctioned game, results are emailed and texted to them shortly afterward.

Guest members can earn up to 20 masterpoints. These points are tracked by the ACBL head office and registered on the player's record. Once this limit is reached, a full membership is required to continue earning points.

Guest members are able to access the Sapphires Program, a fun way to track their personal progress. Sapphires are digital

"badges" that can be earned for a long list of milestones a new player might achieve - playing in your first club game, bidding and making your first slam, playing in your first sectional tournament, making your first doubled contract - the list goes on. There is also a leaderboard that allows a guest member to compare their progress to others at a similar stage in their bridge playing careers.

Guest members are encouraged to upgrade to full membership going forward. Membership dues are an important part of the ACBL pool of funds used to provide services for bridge players. The ACBL offers a discounted rate for the first year of full membership (currently about \$53 CDN rather than the usual \$81 CDN). With a full membership, a player gets a hard-copy Bridge Bulletin every month (plus online access if desired). In addition, full members can earn unlimited masterpoints and results continue to be sent instantly via email and text.

Participation in high-level tournaments requires a full ACBL membership. For example, in order to participate in a National-rated event at an NABC, a person must be a full ACBL member whose dues are current. Guest members are not allowed to participate in such events. Starting January 1, 2027, full, paid-up ACBL memberships will be required at all regional tournaments (except for 0-20 masterpoint games).

Entering the Twilight Zone ...

"There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity... It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone."

Rod Serling

Have you ever tied for 1st in a Knock Out Team event? "How is that possible?" you might wonder.

Once upon a time, at a Regional tournament in the Twilight Zone ... (well actually, at the 2003 Calgary White Hat Regional), your editors were on a team that tied for 1st in the opening KO Team event! We were due to play the final match after the supper break, and were driving back to the site when the vehicle broke down. Try as we might, there was no way to make it on time for the evening session. Both teams were "no shows"! Luckily for us, in the vehicle were three members of our 4-person team and two members of the opposition team.

The directors reluctantly allowed both teams to pay the session card fees and record a tie!

299er October Sectional Report

Highlights



The annual Unit 390 Fall 299er Sectional was held at the Calgary Bridge Centre. In anticipation of another fantastic turnout, both levels of the Bridge Centre were used. The 299er games were held in the upper playing area, while separate 49er games were held on the lower level.

Roger Bolton, Unit Future Masters Chair, was once again at the helm. The tournament was a big success, in no small part because of the many volunteers who assisted with planning and on-site operation. Many thanks to all these volunteers! Without them, events such as this simply could not take place.

Brian Johns served as Director-in-Charge and he ran the 299er games. Dan Dover was Assistant Director in charge of the 49er games downstairs.

Dan was also the lunch-time guest speaker, and he talked about the role of the Director, particularly when summoned to the table to solve problems.

What a turnout indeed! Attendance numbers surpassed all previous records. The morning session saw 25½ tables in play while the afternoon session had 19½ tables. That's a grand total of 45 tables, with 27 in the 299er games and 18 in the 49er games!

Thank you to each and every player who continues to support 299er events - bridge in Calgary cannot thrive without you.



Tournament Action

Total masterpoints: 87.2 earned by 71 players.

This was final event of the tournament year, and the 2025 Unit 390 Sectionals 299er Masterpoint Race was decided. It was a tight race, but in the end, **Eric Gutland** held onto his slim lead to capture the title. Well done, Eric!

Sat AM 299er Pairs - 14.5 Tables

D E F		Score
1 1	Stephanie Martinez - Susan Ruf, Calgary AB	66.0%
2 2 1	Nancy Brooks - Nancy Penner, Calgary AB	62.5%
3 3	Warren Johnston - Eric Gutland, Calgary AB	59.8%
4 4	Gary Croxton - Ted Burgoin, Calgary AB	59.4%
5 5	Steve Eastes - Janet Quiring, Calgary AB	56.9%
6 6 2	Charles Teare - Jennifer Teare, Canmore AB	56.8%
	3 Christine Neff - Miriam Daniel, Calgary AB	55.0%

Sat AM 49er Pairs - 11.0 Tables

G H		Score
1 1	Ginny Brown - Michael Sainas, Calgary AB	70.5%
2	Jodie Winquist - Diane Yaciuk, Calgary AB	64.2%
3 2	Les Sherwood - Valerie Sherwood, Calgary AB	61.1%
4	Anne Gallagher - Rhona Gearty, Canmore AB	60.1%
5 3	Lynda Farrell - Yvette Alongi, Calgary AB	57.6%

Sat Aft 299er Pairs - 12.5 Tables

D E F		Score
1 1	Art Marche - Tsz Yu Leung, Calgary AB	63.6%
2 2 1	Nancy Brooks - Nancy Penner, Calgary AB	60.2%
3 3	Warren Johnston - Eric Gutland, Calgary AB	55.9%
4 4	Adiel Rautenbach - Dave Ross, Calgary AB	55.5%
5 5	Sylvia Nazar, Cochrane; Patricia Neilson, Red Deer	54.9%
6 6	Koleal Scott - Julie Bain, Calgary AB	54.3%
	2 Claudine Petrunia - Willie Jurcevic, Calgary AB	51.8%
	3 Kathleen Goodwin - Diane Morais, Calgary AB	50.9%

Sat Aft 49er Pairs - 7.0 Tables

G H		Score
1	Lee Wright - Leanne Bannon, Calgary AB	62.8%
2 1	Larry Dick - Michele Dick, Calgary AB	59.4%
3	Jodie Winquist - Diane Yaciuk, Calgary AB	58.9%
4/5 2/3	Les Sherwood - Valerie Sherwood, Calgary AB	52.8%
4/5 2/3	Jennifer Munn - Myrna Michieli, Calgary AB	52.8%

You can check out the complete results on the Unit 390 website [HERE](#). Scroll down the page to October 25.

The Photo Gallery of winners appears on the following page.

Winners Photo Gallery - 299er October Sectional

Morning Session Winners



Stephanie Martinez - Susan Ruf
Overall Winners and top pair in Flights D & E

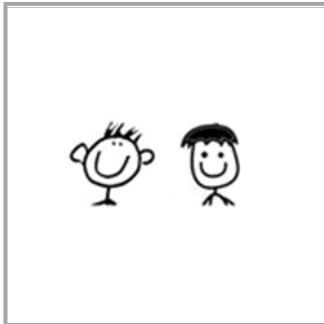


Nancy Penner - Nancy Brooks
Top pair in Flight F both AM and PM



Ginny Brown - Michael Sainas
Overall Winners and top pair in Flights G & H

Afternoon Session Winners



Art Marche - Tsz Yu Leung
Overall Winners and top pair in Flights D & E
(Sorry, no photo available)



Lee Wright - Leanne Bannon
Overall Winners and top pair in Flight G



Larry & Michele Dick
Top pair in Flight H



Think First, Play Later

By Frank Ayer

Playing a Sectional Swiss Teams with Steve Lawrence both vulnerable against the event leaders, in first seat I pick up:

♠AJ7 ♥743 ♦K1086 ♣KQ2

I open 1♦ and, with the opponents silent, the auction proceeds:

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

West confidently leads the ♣7 against 3NT and Steve lays down dummy.

IMPs

Contract: 3NT

Lead: ♣7

♠	K106
♥	AK65
♦	QJ43
♣	84
N W ■ E S	
♠	AJ7
♥	743
♦	K1086
♣	KQ2

Before playing from dummy I remember to count my tricks: two spades, two hearts, one club and three diamonds once the ♦A has been driven out. That's eight tricks and one more should be available in spades or clubs. The opponents only have two Aces to cash but the club lead threatens to set up three or four club winners. The Rule of Eleven tells me that, if the lead is fourth best, East only has one club higher than the ♣7. When the ♣4 is played from dummy East follows with the ♣10. What now?

The problem is to force out the ♦A yet still have a club stopper. Could it be right to duck? Let's think about that. If clubs are 5-3, 3NT cannot be made if I duck because East will continue clubs and West can duck that round to maintain communication. This means losing four club tricks no matter who has the ♦A.

What if clubs divide 6-2? If East has the ♦A, I need to duck this trick to cut communication.

If West has the ♦A, I have a second club stopper provided East does not win any tricks, including this one.

I decide to win the first club and lead a diamond. West takes the third round with the ♦A as East discards an encouraging ♥2. West shifts to the ♥9, East playing the ♥10 on dummy's ♥A. When I cash my last diamond winner West discards the ♥8 and East, the ♣3.

In order to get a better idea of the opponents' distribution I cash the ♥K. East follows with the ♥J and West discards the ♠2.

After seven tricks, I am in dummy at this end position:

♠	K106									
♥	65									
♦	--									
♣	8									
<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>♠</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>			N		W	♠	E		S	
	N									
W	♠	E								
	S									
♠	AJ7									
♥	7									
♦	--									
♣	Q2									

It's time to count the hand. East's club discard confirms that the clubs are surely 5-3 because he would never discard his last club. Another clue is that West might have overcalled 2♣ over 1♦ holding six clubs to the AJ9 along with the ♦A. Therefore West's distribution should be 3-2-3-5 and I can claim. Do you see how?

Assuming I've inferred the distribution correctly, West is down to two spades and four clubs. The 100% line is to finesse spades into the safe West hand. But not yet! I must first cash the ♠K, then take the finesse. Either it wins or West is endplayed when she wins the ♠Q, since she has only clubs left. At the table West won the spade, but had to give me my ninth trick after cashing the ♣A.

[continued next page]

Think First, Play Later (continued)

The complete hand:

[illegible]

Another way to look at the hand after the ♥K is cashed is that leading hearts or clubs is a losing play. The ♥K squeezed West in spades and clubs. Had she pitched a club to keep three spades, then I would have played a club knowing that, after West had taken three club winners, she would have to break spades, giving me three spade tricks.

Cashing the ♠K first made the spade finesse a "safety" finesse: either it wins and I have nine tricks or it loses and West is forced to lead away from her ♣A. Going up with the

♠A to drop the doubleton ♠Q offside also leads to nine tricks as the cards lie, but that would have been foolish.

Could clubs have been 4-4 instead of 5-3 (giving West 4-2-3-4 distribution)? Yes, but in that case perhaps East would have discarded two clubs rather than one club and one of his heart winners. Furthermore, with 4-4 in the black suits West might have led a spade instead of a club.

This was the last hand of a 9-board match. When Steve bid 3NT my right-hand opponent jokingly asked him "Are you really going to let him play another hand? He hasn't made a contract yet." He was correct. I had gone down in all the previous contracts that I had declared. After I scored +600 on this one, I couldn't help asking "Did I play this one okay?" We won in a blitz and won the event in the penultimate round.

Bridge combines elements of Chess, Poker and Partnership. We usually only talk about the Chess part - the technical side of the game - the moves we have available to us. Partnership is essential during the auction, on defense and for team morale. The Poker part is also important and involves "tells", bluffs, pot sizes (how much is at stake), and winning percentages. The confident, aggressive nature of West's opening lead was a **tell**. She had reasonable hopes of beating 3NT and that almost certainly implied a good 5-card (or longer) club suit with a side entry.

Upcoming Tournament Dates



Be sure to check the official tournament schedule on the ACBL website.
Go to <https://www.acbl.org/tournament> and select "Find a Tournament"

On the Unit 390 website, you will find a list of selected tournaments happening in and around our area at <https://aclblunit390.org/tournaments/selected-2026-tournaments/>



Red Deer Sectional	May 1 - 3, 2026
Calgary 299er Sectional	May 9, 2026
Edmonton Sectional	May 22 - 24, 2026
Unit 390 Annual General Meeting	May 31, 2026
Calgary Spring Sectional	June 5 - 7, 2026
Calgary 0-750 Non-Life Master Regional	June 5 - 7, 2026
Calgary Labour Day Sectional	September 4 - 6, 2026
Lethbridge Sectional and concurrent NLM Regional	September 25 - 27, 2026
Calgary 299er Sectional	October 24, 2026
Penticton Regional	June 15 - 21, 2026
Canadian Bridge Championships (Penticton)	June 15 - 21, 2026
Edmonton Regional	August 11 - 16, 2026

2025 CBF Zone V Mini-Richmond Races

Final Standings



The Richmond Trophy is awarded annually to Canada's top masterpoint winner across all masterpoint categories. The race, established in 1976, is open to paid-up Canadian

Bridge Federation members in good standing. The trophy was donated by Dave G. Richmond, a well-known Winnipeg bridge figure whose service to bridge spanned over 30 years.

A new name topped the Richmond Trophy list in 2025. The top honour went to Michael Gamble of Shawnigan Lake BC, with a total of 1905 masterpoints. He beat out Richard Chan of Markham ON, who had taken the title for the three previous years.

For the fifth year in a row, **Daniel Bertrand** was the highest placing Unit 390 member in the 2025 Richmond Trophy Race. Daniel won 446 masterpoints during the year.

The Mini-Richmond awards were introduced in 2012. The awards recognize CBF members who win the most masterpoints in the calendar year in each of the masterpoint categories, up to and including Diamond Life Master (5000 to 7500 MP). Each category winner in each of the six CBF zones receives a special pin. In addition, overall national winners receive a certificate recognizing their achievement. In order to participate in and receive recognition for achievement in CBF masterpoint races, one must be a paid-up CBF member in good standing.

Calgary Unit 390 is part of Zone V, which encompasses Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northern Manitoba. For 2025, Unit 390 players took top Zone V honours in seven of the 13 masterpoint categories and many others placed among the top three positions.

0 to 5	1	Leanne Bannon	Calgary AB	17
	3	Donna Johnson	Calgary AB	6
5 to 20	2	Earle Harris	Calgary AB	14
	3	Judith Shaw	Calgary AB	10
50 to 100	1	Quentin Krogstad	Calgary AB	61
100 to 200	2	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB	108
	3	Susan Ruf	Calgary AB	47
200 to 300	2	Ed Lamb	Calgary AB	44
300 to 500	1	David Stephure	Calgary AB	177
500 to 1000	1	Richard Weinberger	Calgary AB	199
	1	John Prance	Calgary AB	197
1000 to 1500	2	Richard Wolfe	Calgary AB	179
	3	Pat Anderson	Calgary AB	171
1500 to 2500	1	Mark Manzer	Calgary AB	221
	2	Chris Wuersch	Calgary AB	217
	3	Clarende Duby	Calgary AB	210
2500 to 3500	1	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB	321
3500 to 5000	2	Stephanie McAdam	Calgary AB	146
5000 to 7500	2	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	326

At the national level, **Rod Hilderman** placed second in the 2500-3500 masterpoint category, while David Stephure and Richard Weinberger each placed in the top five in their categories.



The Canadian Bridge Federation (CBF) is the national bridge organization responsible for promoting and protecting the rights and interests of Canadian bridge players. This includes supporting Canadians who represent our country internationally.

The CBF cannot serve Canadian Bridge without you! As a CBF member, you are helping to ensure that Canada can build a strong national bridge voice.

A one-year membership in the Canadian Bridge Federation costs just \$25 (\$65 for three years). Please consider joining. You can join the CBF when you pay your ACBL dues by checking the box for CBF membership. You may also join the CBF directly on the CBF website.

To read about the benefits of CBF membership, or to join/renew, please visit <https://cbf.ca/members/cbf-membership-and-benefits/>

2025 Unit 390 Sectionals Masterpoint Race - Top 40

Final Standings

(Based on all three Unit 390 open sectionals in 2025: New Year's, Spring and Fall open sectionals plus the May and October 299er sectionals)

1	83.09	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB
2	65.17	Gordon Campbell	Calgary AB
3	52.10	Christopher Galbraith	Calgary AB
	52.10	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB
5	43.83	Yi Peng (Mark) Mai	Calgary AB
6	42.41	Dmitry Komin	Calgary AB
7	40.36	Judith Gartaganis	Calgary AB
	40.36	Nicholas Gartaganis	Calgary AB
9	39.32	Faiz Nadir	Calgary AB
10	34.94	Abdul Fakihi	Calgary AB
11	32.97	Terri Bedard	Calgary AB
12	32.90	David Johnson	Calgary AB
13	30.23	Qi (Quincy) Ju	Calgary AB
14	28.65	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB
15	27.59	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB
16	22.79	Shuo Shi	Calgary AB
17	21.85	Garry Ramsden-Wood	Calgary AB
18	21.33	Chris Wuerscher	Calgary AB
19	21.03	Lamya Abougoush	Calgary AB
20	18.90	Bob Gagnon	Calgary AB
21	18.63	Dorothy Mersereau	Calgary AB
22	18.58	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB
23	17.92	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB
24	17.69	Terry Nazar	Cochrane AB
25	16.99	Frank Ayer	Calgary AB
26	16.44	Howard Coren	Calgary AB
27	16.40	Hai Hu	Calgary AB
28	16.07	Shuangbing (Frank) Guo	Calgary AB
	16.07	Grant Wharry	Calgary AB
30	16.05	Quentin Krogstad	Calgary AB
31	15.98	Stewart Brightman	Calgary AB
32	15.70	Devra Drysdale	Calgary AB
33	15.33	Blake Fleming	Calgary AB
34	15.11	Sylvia Nazar	Cochrane AB
35	15.10	Dale Bercov	Calgary AB
36	15.08	Marjory Sword	Canmore AB
37	14.94	Carole Kirk	Banff AB
38	14.60	Yurong (June) Cheng	Calgary AB
39	13.99	Marcia Andreychuk	Calgary AB
40	13.70	Barry Crozier	Calgary AB
	13.70	Lana McFadden	Calgary AB

* For the full list of YTD standings, please visit the Unit website at <https://acblunit390.org/unit-390-info/unit-390-sectionals-masterpoint-race/>

2025 Unit 390 Sectionals 299er Masterpoint Race - Top 40

Final Standings

(Based on 299er events at all three Unit 390 open sectionals in 2025: New Year's, Spring and Fall open sectionals plus the May and October 299er sectionals)

1	17.31	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB
2	13.04	Corliss Ward	Calgary AB
3	12.50	Susan Ruf	Calgary AB
4	11.56	Stephanie Martinez	Calgary AB
5	11.08	Nancy Brooks	Calgary AB
	11.08	Nancy Penner	Calgary AB
7	10.74	Warren Johnston	Calgary AB
8	10.31	Art Marche	Calgary AB
9	9.78	Sylvia Nazar	Cochrane AB
10	8.41	Dianne McCubbin	Calgary AB
11	8.01	Genevieve McLean	Calgary AB
12	7.85	Dee-Ann Clark	Calgary AB
	7.85	Gray Graves	Calgary AB
14	7.53	Charles (Tony) Teare	Canmore AB
	7.53	Jennifer Teare	Canmore AB
16	7.06	Joan Allwarden	Foothills AB
	7.06	Kerri Gallup	Longview AB
18	6.85	Sandy Shuler	Calgary AB
19	6.58	Sherry Goldenberg	Calgary AB
20	6.35	David Spence	Calgary AB
21	6.14	Jerry Malone	Wheatland Cnty AB
	6.14	Sheila Morgan	Wheatland Cnty AB
23	5.85	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB
24	5.70	Chuck Cherry	Calgary AB
25	5.53	Steve Eastes	Calgary AB
26	5.38	Jodie Winquist	Calgary AB
27	5.16	Edward Lamb	Calgary AB
	5.16	Ted Lobley	Calgary AB
29	5.04	Adiel Rautenbach	Calgary AB
	5.04	Dave Ross	Calgary AB
31	4.87	Larry Dick	Calgary AB
	4.87	Michele Dick	Calgary AB
33	4.48	Christina Larkins	Calgary AB
34	4.26	Les Sherwood	Calgary AB
	4.26	Valerie Sherwood	Calgary AB
36	3.81	Ginny Hood	Calgary AB
37	3.76	Miriam Daniel	Calgary AB
38	3.74	David Pethrick	Calgary AB
39	3.42	John Frank	Calgary AB
	3.42	Sheila Frank	Calgary AB

* For the full list of YTD standings, please visit the Unit website at <https://acblunit390.org/unit-390-info/unit-390-sectionals-299er-masterpoint-race/>

Unit 390 Membership Report for 2025

The Unit 390 membership numbers fell during 2025. However, participation in tournaments remained stable compared with 2024 (a total of 690 tables in 2024; 693½ tables in 2025). The turnout on the part of 299er players contributes significantly to the success of our tournaments. In 2025, a total of 136 tables played in 299er games at the three sectionals. The addition of a 49er pairs game on Sunday morning (now a 199er pairs game) has been well received and contributed an extra 26 tables. Count 'em up! That's 162 tables in 299er sessions ... nearly a quarter of our total tournament tables.

Additionally, two very successful 299er Sectionals were held in 2025: May (with 42½ tables) and October (with 64 tables). Kudos to Roger Bolton, Unit 390 Future Masters Chair, along with his team of volunteers, for organizing these events.

As mentioned elsewhere in this Kibitzer, certainly the Bid & Play program deserves much of the credit for the flourishing newcomer turnouts. As well, there continues to be a variety of lesson programs and games for newer players started by bridge teachers and club managers/directors.

In 2025, membership across the ACBL declined by 6.6% for the 12 months ending December 31, 2025, leaving 117,573 active members (down from 125,974 at the end of 2024).

District 18, which includes our Unit, was the only one of the 25 ACBL districts that even came close to maintaining membership -- a decline of 0.5%. In the other 24 districts, membership dropped anywhere from 3.9% to 9.0%.

The overall Unit 390 membership numbers showed a modest decline (a drop of 2.4% in 2025) but outperformed the ACBL-wide average. Of the 283 units in the ACBL, Unit 390 ranked 54th in this regard.

Unit 390 recruited 48 new members over the 12 months of 2025 (5.1%) as compared to the overall ACBL number of 4.8%. We kept pace in the area of new member retention (the number of new members that renew in year two) with a weighted 3-year average retention rate of 59.9% (compared to 58.5% ACBL-wide). We ranked 141st out of the ACBL's 283 units.

The Guest Membership program continued in 2025. It is a free way for players to try the benefits of ACBL membership. Guest Memberships are available only to brand-new members. For players converting their guest membership to a regular ACBL membership, the first year dues are at a

discounted price. As of December 31, 2025, Unit 390 had 36 guest members on its roster and a total of 73 former guest members had converted to regular members since the program began.

The average age of Calgary Unit players continues to be a couple of years lower than the ACBL-wide average: 72.5 years old compared to 74.7 ACBL-wide.

933 members at January 1, 2025

621 non-Life Masters

303 Life Masters

9 Snowbirds

Total Gains = 97

New members 48

Members transferred into Unit 390 19

Reinstated lapsed members 30

Total Losses = 119

Members transferred out of Unit 390 7

Deceased members 5

Members failed to renew 105

Suspended members 2

Unit 390 ended 2025 with a total of 911 members

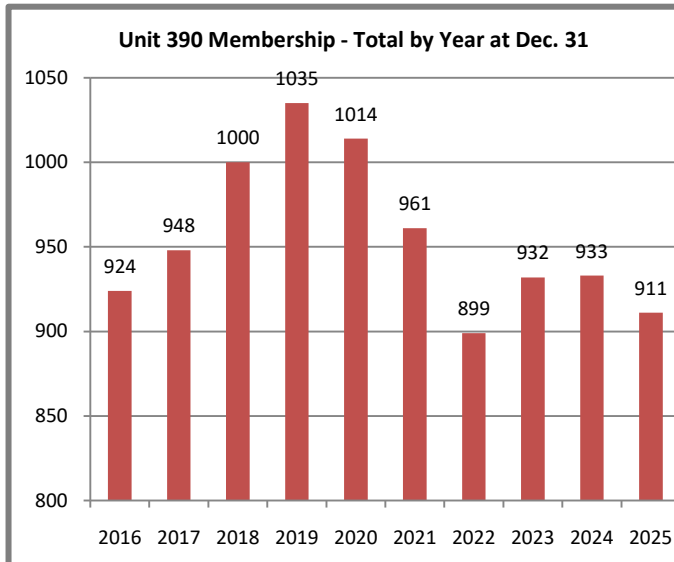
616 non-Life Masters

288 Life Masters

7 Snowbirds



Unit 390 Membership Stats 2016 - 2025



Legend

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 - Rookie (0-5) | 10 - Silver LM |
| 2 - Junior Master (5-20) | 11 - Ruby LM |
| 3 - Club Master (20-50) | 12 - Gold LM |
| 4 - Sectional Master (50-100) | 13 - Sapphire LM |
| 5 - Regional Master (100-200) | 14 - Diamond LM |
| 6 - NABC Master (200+) | 15 - Emerald LM |
| 7 - Advanced NABC Master | 16 - Platinum LM |
| 8 - Life Master | 17 - Grand LM |
| 9 - Bronze LM | |

616 Non-Life Masters
 288 Life Masters
 7 Snowbirds (3 Non-Life Masters and 4 Life Masters)

2026 Mini-McKenney Races

Unit 390 Year-to-date Standings - April 6th

(For masterpoints won in all ACBL-sanctioned games, with the exception of online colourless points)

0 to 5	1	Tony Melton	Calgary AB	16
	2	Anna Aubrecht	Calgary AB	3
	3	Yvette Alongi	Calgary AB	2
5 to 20	1	Christine McGovern	Calgary AB	11
	2	Susan Cooper	Calgary AB	9
	3	Kevin Falkenberg	Calgary AB	8
20 to 50	1	Christine Neff	Calgary AB	17
	2	Christina Larkins	Calgary AB	12
	3/4	Carol Poland	Canmore AB	11
	3/4	Betty Carrier	Canmore AB	11
50 to 100	1	Judith Smith	Canmore AB	18
	2	Miriam Daniel	Calgary AB	15
	3	Andrea McManus	Calgary AB	9
100 to 200	1	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB	21
	2	Dianne McCubbin	Calgary AB	19
	3	Marjory Sword	Canmore AB	19
200 to 300	1	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB	32
	2	Sylvia Nazar	Cochrane AB	27
	3	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB	23
300 to 500	1	Sherry Goldenberg	Calgary AB	21
	2	Sandy Shuler	Calgary AB	18
	3	Maxine Rystephanick	Calgary AB	15
500 to 1000	1	Mike Blancher	Calgary AB	63
	2	Andrew Melton	Calgary AB	47
	3	David Stephure	Calgary AB	44
1000 to 1500	1	Richard Wolfe	Calgary AB	47
	2	Richard Weinberger	Calgary AB	47
	3	Stephen Cohen	Calgary AB	47
1500 to 2500	1	Barry Crozier	Calgary AB	54
	2	Rick Boyd	Calgary AB	52
	3	Terry Nazar	Cochrane AB	43
2500 to 3500	1	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB	74
	2	Mark Manzer	Calgary AB	58
	3	Keith Falkenberg	Calgary AB	55
3500 to 5000	1	Terri Bedard	Calgary AB	54
	2	Christopher Galbraith	Calgary AB	51
	3	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB	44
5000 to 7500	1	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	61
	2	David Johnson	Calgary AB	35
	3	Jadwiga Polujan	Calgary AB	17
7500 to 10,000	1	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	100
	2	Abdul Fakh	Calgary AB	53
	3	Gordon Campbell	Calgary AB	45
Over 10,000	1	Douglas Rotchell	Airdrie AB	65
	2	Steven Lawrence	Calgary AB	41
	3	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB	37

2026 Ace of Clubs Races

Unit 390 Year-to-date Standings - April 6th

(For masterpoints won in face-to-face club games)

0 to 5	1	Tony Melton	Calgary AB	15
	2	James Hornett	Calgary AB	4
	3	Anna Aubrecht	Calgary AB	3
5 to 20	1	Christine McGovern	Calgary AB	9
	2	Leanne Bannon	Calgary AB	6
	3	Kevin Falkenberg	Calgary AB	6
20 to 50	1	Christine Neff	Calgary AB	17
	2	Christina Larkins	Calgary AB	11
	3	Lori Russell	Calgary AB	9
50 to 100	1	Miriam Daniel	Calgary AB	15
	2	Deanie Petrunia	Calgary AB	8
	3	Judith Smith	Canmore AB	7
100 to 200	1	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB	16
	2	Dianne McCubbin	Calgary AB	13
	3	Marjory Sword	Canmore AB	10
200 to 300	1	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB	27
	2	Corliss Ward	Calgary AB	14
	3	Art Marche	Calgary AB	14
300 to 500	1	Sherry Goldenberg	Calgary AB	16
	2	Maureen Stanley	Calgary AB	14
	3	Sandy Shuler	Calgary AB	12
500 to 1000	1	Mike Blancher	Calgary AB	39
	2	Andrew Melton	Calgary AB	28
	3	David Stephure	Calgary AB	26
1000 to 1500	1	Richard Weinberger	Calgary AB	36
	2	Richard Wolfe	Calgary AB	27
	3	Stephen Cohen	Calgary AB	26
1500 to 2500	1	Paulette McWilliam	Calgary AB	35
	2	Rick Boyd	Calgary AB	33
	3	Camille Collver	Calgary AB	31
2500 to 3500	1	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB	60
	2	Howard Coren	Calgary AB	36
	3	Andy McKaig	Calgary AB	30
3500 to 5000	1	Terri Bedard	Calgary AB	44
	2	Rod Hilderman	Calgary AB	34
	3	Grant Wharry	Calgary AB	24
5000 to 7500	1	Faiz Nadir	Calgary AB	15
	2	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	11
	3	Jadwiga Polujan	Calgary AB	11
7500 to 10,000	1	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	56
	2	Abdul Fakh	Calgary AB	48
	3	Gordon Campbell	Calgary AB	5
Over 10,000	1	Steven Lawrence	Calgary AB	27
	2	Douglas Rotchell	Airdrie AB	4

2026 Ace of Virtual Clubs Races

Unit 390 Year-to-date Standings - April 6th

(For masterpoints won in online club games)

0 to 5	1	Warren Book	Calgary AB	2
	2	Tony Melton	Calgary AB	1
5 to 20	1	Christine Ernst	Cochrane AB	1
20 to 50	1	Kerri Gallup	Longview AB	1
	2/3	Murray Knechtel	Calgary AB	1
	2/3	Deborah Bartlett	Calgary AB	1
50 to 100	1	Julie Jacques	Calgary AB	7
	2	Celia Gaudet	Calgary AB	3
	3	Diane Morais	Calgary AB	2
100 to 200	1	Philippa Fitzgerald-Finch	Calgary AB	7
	2	Zhengshan Li	Calgary AB	1
	3	Martin Hall	Canmore AB	1
200 to 300	1	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB	8
	2	Cheryl Whittaker	Calgary AB	8
	3	Christine Stephure	Calgary AB	3
300 to 500	1/2	Michael Mannas	Calgary AB	13
	1/2	Lynn Gall	Calgary AB	13
	3	Maxine Rystephanick	Calgary AB	10
500 to 1000	1	Philip Coppard	Calgary AB	18
	2	Morris Streich	Calgary AB	16
	3	David Stephure	Calgary AB	11
1000 to 1500	1	Marny Simpson	Calgary AB	13
	2	Cathy Bird	Calgary AB	12
	3	Richard Wolfe	Calgary AB	11
1500 to 2500	1	Brent Muir	Calgary AB	8
	2	Emelie Quennell	Calgary AB	8
	3	Sandy Jean Robinson	Calgary AB	8
2500 to 3500	1	Mark Manzer	Calgary AB	36
	2	Elizabeth Sprague	Calgary AB	12
	3	Keith Falkenberg	Calgary AB	7
3500 to 5000	1	William Basler	Calgary AB	24
	2	Christopher Galbraith	Calgary AB	3
	3	Gamil Tadros	Calgary AB	3
5000 to 7500	1	Stephanie McAdam	Calgary AB	5
	2	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB	3
	3	Yi Peng (Mark) Mai	Calgary AB	2
7500 to 10,000	1	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB	4
	2	Allan Simon	Calgary AB	2
Over 10,000	1	Gerry Marshall	Calgary AB	4
	2	Douglas Rotchell	Airdrie AB	1

A Headache for Declarer

By Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis

Playing in a strong team event, at favourable vulnerability, you pick up this hand as East:

♠AJ43 ♥A4 ♦J53 ♣8654

Partner, in first seat, passes. The auction is short and simple:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Partner leads the ♥J and you get to see dummy:

IMPs

Contract: 4♠

Lead: ♥J

♠ 1086
♥ KQ93
♦ 762
♣ Q109



♠ AJ43
♥ A4
♦ J53
♣ 8654

Declarer plays the ♥K and you take the Ace since there is no good reason to duck the trick. Declarer follows with the ♥5. At this juncture what do you know?

- declarer has a spade problem, potentially with two losers
- if declarer is desperate for tricks she will finesse against the ♥10, particularly when your partner shows up with one or no spades
- to beat this contract partner will need to hold one defensive trick (or two if your ♠J does not score)
- declarer has limited dummy entries

You return the ♦3 and declarer plays the ♦A as partner discourages. Declarer now lays down the ♠K, partner following with the ♠2. What do you do?

Let's think ahead. If you win the ♠A, what comes next? Partner has not had a chance to signal. She could have the doubleton ♦Q and had no way to encourage when you shifted to a diamond or he might have the Ace or King of clubs (not both since he did not lead a club). After losing the ♠A on the first round declarer could travel to dummy and decide to finesse you for the ♠J (the percentage play to hold the spade losers to one).

What can you do about it? The solution is to duck the first round of spades. Now declarer has a thorny problem in terms of how to proceed. He can try another high spade hoping to smother the ♠J or he might finesse partner's ♥10 hoping to pitch a loser. In any event you will certainly get more information by allowing declarer's ♠K to hold.

Needless to say, if you haven't planned ahead, ducking the first spade in tempo is no longer an option since you have telegraphed where the Ace is.

Let's assume you err by winning the ♠A on the first round. You decide to continue diamonds because the ♣Q109 in dummy looks dangerous. Declarer wins the second round of diamonds with the King (partner plays a discouraging diamond) and plays ♠Q and puts you in with the ♠J, partner pitching an encouraging club. The defense has taken one heart and two spades. This is the end position and you are on lead:

♠ --
♥ Q93
♦ 7
♣ Q109



♠ 4
♥ 4
♦ J
♣ 8654

If partner has the ♣A then beating the contract is automatic. What if he has only the ♣K? Looking ahead you can see that partner will surely get squeezed because she is the only one guarding hearts and clubs. There is nothing you can do if declarer has three hearts, but if she holds only two hearts you can recover from your earlier error of winning the first spade by returning a heart, not a club. That way, you kill the second heart trick. Declarer is forced to try cashing the heart winner while in dummy and you are able to ruff, depriving him of the tenth trick.

What if declarer has only one heart? Are you not giving him a dummy entry to pitch her losing clubs? If declarer is 5-1-4-3 (the sequence of plays in the diamond suit marks declarer with AKQx or AKQxx) it does not matter because he has to try cashing another heart which you will ruff. Declarer can't be 5-1-5-2 with ♣Ax because he would have played a low spade on the second round of the suit, creating a sure dummy entry (in trumps) to pitch his losing club on the ♥K.

[continued next page]

A Headache for Declarer (continued)

If declarer is 5-1-5-2 with Kx in clubs, one pitch on the ♥K does him no good. And with that holding, he may have tried a low club toward dummy's Queen early in the hand. If partner ducked the ♣A, he would happily pitch the ♣K on the ♥K. There is no way to know for certain, but your thought process points to the heart return to break up the squeeze.

The end position with all four hands:

♠ --	♠ --	♠ 4
♥ Q93	♥ Q93	♥ 4
♦ 7	♦ 7	♦ J
♣ Q109	♣ Q109	♣ 8654

♠ 97	♠ 4
♥ 7	♥ 4
♦ Q9	♦ J
♣ AJ	♣ 8654

continuation after the ♠K held. At the other table the defense won the first spade and continued diamonds. They returned a club after winning the ♠J. Our teammate made no mistake (after East showed up with the ♠AJ and ♥A he was never going to try to finesse East for the ♣K since East passed initially). He preferred to squeeze West to make his contract with certainty and gain 10 IMPs.

Plan ahead ... look for a way to give declarer a headache. And, if you make an early mistake on defense because you did not anticipate declarer's problem, try to visualize how you might recover.



If you returned a club, declarer wins and has four more winners to cash, subjecting partner to a pop squeeze when the fifth winner is cashed. The return of a heart now spikes the contract (and partner breathes a secret sign of relief).

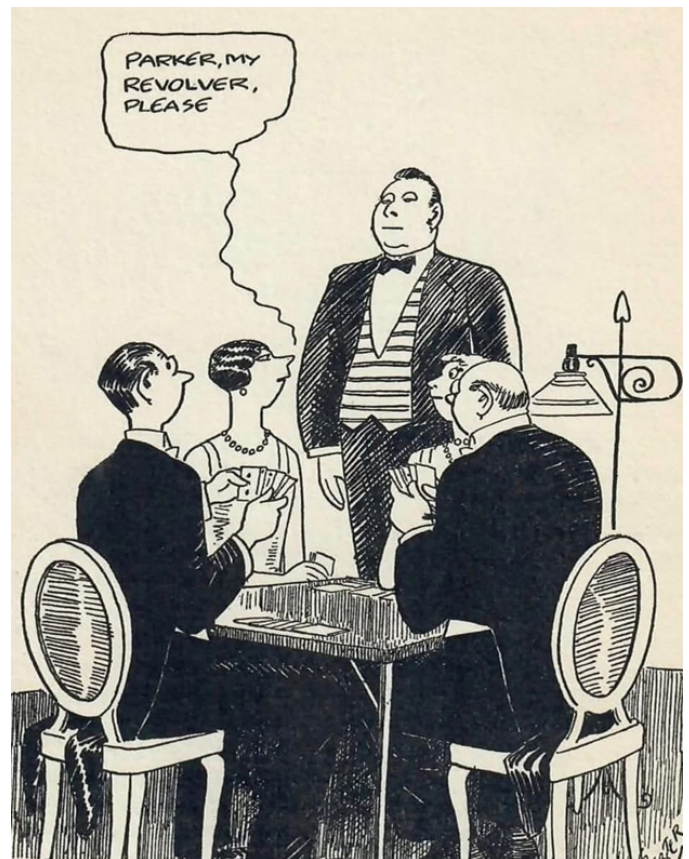
The full deal:

♠ 1086	♠ 1086	♠ 1086
♥ KQ93	♥ KQ93	♥ KQ93
♦ 762	♦ 762	♦ 762
♣ Q109	♣ Q109	♣ Q109

♠ 2	♠ 2	♠ 2
♥ J10862	♥ J10862	♥ J10862
♦ 1084	♦ 1084	♦ 1084
♣ K732	♣ K732	♣ K732

♠ KQ975	♠ KQ975	♠ KQ975
♥ 75	♥ 75	♥ 75
♦ AKQ9	♦ AKQ9	♦ AKQ9
♣ AJ	♣ AJ	♣ AJ

At our table after the ♠K held at trick two, declarer played the ♠Q hoping to smother the doubleton Jack (partner signalled she liked clubs). This line of play led to an easy defeat of the contract. As you can see, declarer had no good



2026 Unit 390 Sectionals

Masterpoint Race - Top 40

Year-to-date Standings at April 6, 2026

(Based on two Unit 390 open sectionals in 2026:
New Year's and Canmore open sectionals)

1	40.13	Daniel Bertrand	Calgary AB
	40.13	Gordon Campbell	Calgary AB
3	33.31	Christopher Galbraith	Calgary AB
	33.31	Janet Galbraith	Calgary AB
5	23.81	Jim Murphy	Calgary AB
6	23.45	Judith Gartaganis	Calgary AB
	23.45	Nicholas Gartaganis	Calgary AB
8	22.36	Lois Matton	Calgary AB
9	21.05	Terry Nazar	Cochrane AB
10	20.04	Devra Drysdale	Calgary AB
11	19.99	Stephen Cohen	Calgary AB
12	19.63	Mike Blancher	Calgary AB
13	19.52	Clarende Duby	Calgary AB
	19.52	John Prance	Calgary AB
15	18.23	Bob Gagnon	Calgary AB
16	16.43	Keith Falkenberg	Calgary AB
17	15.92	Nok Yin (Jim) Lee	Calgary AB
18	15.55	Richard Piette	Calgary AB
19	15.35	Janice Eliasson	Calgary AB
20	15.31	David Johnson	Calgary AB
21	15.15	Chris Murphy	Calgary AB
22	14.37	Qi (Quincy) Ju	Calgary AB
	14.37	Yi Peng (Mark) Mai	Calgary AB
24	14.16	Barbara Webster	Calgary AB
25	14.15	Barry Crozier	Calgary AB
26	11.83	Dorothy Mersereau	Calgary AB
27	11.59	Marc Maes	Calgary AB
	11.59	Chris Wuerscher	Calgary AB
29	10.64	Alex Knox	Calgary AB
30	9.80	Garth Wiggins	Calgary AB
31	9.15	Jamie Watt	Calgary AB
32	8.85	Mike D Aguiar	Calgary AB
33	8.21	Sylvia Nazar	Cochrane AB
34	7.98	Andrew Melton	Calgary AB
35	7.35	Jo Peterson	Calgary AB
36	7.28	Nancy Penner	Calgary AB
37	7.02	Andy Hellquist	Strathmore AB
38	6.70	Keith Wallace	Calgary AB
	6.70	Pam Wallace	Calgary AB
40	6.44	David Stephure	Calgary AB

* For the full list of YTD standings, please visit the Unit website at <https://acblunit390.org/unit-390-info/unit-390-sectionals-masterpoint-race/>

2026 Unit 390 Sectionals

299er Masterpoint Race - Top 40

Year-to-date Standings at April 6, 2026

(Based on 299er events at two Unit 390 open sectionals in
2026: New Year's and Canmore open sectionals)

1	4.89	Nancy Brooks	Calgary AB
2	4.38	Eric Gutland	Calgary AB
	4.38	Warren Johnston	Calgary AB
4	3.60	Barbara McKay	Calgary AB
	3.60	Lois Clapperton	Calgary AB
6	3.43	Gary Croxton	Calgary AB
7	3.19	Barrie Pomerance	Calgary AB
	3.19	Robert Penner	Calgary AB
9	3.12	Sylvia Nazar	Cochrane AB
10	3.07	Betty Carrier	Canmore AB
	3.07	Carol Poland	Canmore AB
12	2.88	Joan Allwarden	Foothills AB
	2.88	Kerri Gallup	Longview AB
14	2.78	Len Himelfarb	Calgary AB
	2.78	Nancy Penner	Calgary AB
16	2.71	Annalisa Bednall	Calgary AB
17	2.58	Stephanie Martinez	Calgary AB
	2.58	Susan Ruf	Calgary AB
19	2.51	Anne Gallagher	Canmore AB
	2.51	Valerie Thompson	Canmore AB
21	2.48	Laura Rodgers	Calgary AB
22	2.23	Steve Eastes	Calgary AB
23	2.11	Brenda Lucy	Calgary AB
24	2.09	Penny Mellor	Cochrane AB
	2.09	Valerie Lueke	Calgary AB
26	2.04	Dianne McCubbin	Calgary AB
	2.04	Janet Quiring	Calgary AB
28	1.99	Kevin Falkenberg	Calgary AB
29	1.77	Christine McGovern	Calgary AB
30	1.58	Donna Michael	Calgary AB
	1.58	Melvin Teghtmeyer	Calgary AB
32	1.45	Dedie Hudson	Calgary AB
	1.45	Susan McMahan	Calgary AB
34	1.43	Chuck Cherry	Calgary AB
35	1.30	Cheryl Whittaker	Calgary AB
	1.30	Colleen Rogers	Calgary AB
37	1.25	Larry McGovern	Calgary AB
38	1.20	Corliss Ward	Calgary AB
	1.20	Julie Bain	Calgary AB
40	1.19	Andrea McManus	Calgary AB
	1.19	Marion Mackie	Calgary AB

* For the full list of YTD standings, please visit the Unit website at <https://acblunit390.org/unit-390-info/unit-390-sectionals-299er-masterpoint-race/>