

Youth roundup



How would you go about getting other kids interested in bridge?

“You gotta single out the kid. It’s a very egotistical game. Find the smart kid and ask them, ‘Are you better than most people?’”

*Wyatt Christlieb, 16
Palm Coast FL*

**See more youth answers,
pages 20-21**

Saturday, July 22

ACBL ED FOUNDATION &
BRIDGEWHIZ
NATIONAL YOUTH SWISS
TEAMS

10 am

Qualifier

2 pm

Finals

Youth Teams single session

10 am, 2 pm

Cardrhook Pairs single sessions

Youth Award Ceremony

5:30 pm

Including Master Point Press

Sportsmanship Award,

Baron Barclay Youth Pairs

Scholarship and ACBL Ed

Foundation & BridgeWhiz National

Youth Swiss Teams Scholarship

Canadians win Youth Pairs

Quan Chen of North York ON and Garrett Liu of Oakville ON won the Baron Barclay National Youth Pairs on Friday. Both are members of Canada’s Under-21 team headed to the World Youth Teams Championships in the Netherlands next month.

Chen and Liu scored 65.68% in the morning qualifying session to earn a carryover of 7.49, about five-sixths of a board in the 10-table final. But their 68.59% in the



Winners of the Baron Barclay National Youth Pairs: Quan Chen and Garrett Liu

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Keith Lin, Leo Susser, Eddy Qi, Katherine Lee, coach Will Zhu, Gary Zeng, Chloe Chow, Nathan Chow and Kyle Lin are part of the Center for Bridge Education group.

San Francisco’s CBE turns kids into bridge players

The trophies were handed out and the Michigan Room, where the Youth NABC is being held, emptied out. But eight kids and a coach stayed behind, along with a few parents. They were clustered around a table with cards from one of the boards they had played that afternoon laid out.

It was the Center for Bridge Education group from San Francisco having their usual postmortem.

“I think I should have been able to set 5♣,” one of the kids suggested.

Coach Will Zhu studied the layout. “You can’t,” he said. “Unless declarer does something stupid, like play hearts out of their hand, they’re always making five.”

This is their tradition every Monday in the summer, and about one Monday a month during the school year. They also have casual games on Saturdays in the summer.

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Baron Barclay National Youth Pairs

Overalls



Second in the Baron Barclay National Youth Pairs: Edward He and Eric He



First in B: Clair Cao and Jeffrey Yin



First in C: James Sung and James Fu

Section Tops



Tiger Li and Darwin



Alex Xu and Alex Fu



Lee Blocher and Adam Hemmer



Wyatt Christlieb and Diego Costa



Olivia Rabinowitz and Davis Buff



Lydia Zhang and Maiya Clouse

Youth Consolation Pairs



First: Jason Yao and Ella Su



1C: Alexandra Deschenes and Avery Liang

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BARON BARCLAY NATIONAL YOUTH OPEN PAIRS

10.0 Tables / Based on 18 Tables

	A	B	C		
11.90	1			Quan Chen, North York ON; Garrett Liu, Oakville ON	71.79%
8.93	2			Eric He – Edward He, Bellevue WA	65.17%
6.69	3			Nicole Qian, Gainesville FL; Matthew Rippin, Plano TX	63.04%
5.02	4			Tiger Li, Buffalo NY; Darwin Skalski, Williamsville NY	62.61%
3.97	5			Lee Blocher, Champaign IL; Adam Hemmer, Houghton MI	61.19%
3.40	6			Han Wu, Markham ON; Samuel Li, North York ON	60.69%
3.68	7	1		Claire Cao, Westford MA; Jeffrey Yin, Mc Lean VA	57.93%
2.64	8			Andrew Eidelhoch – Joey Qi, San Francisco CA	56.05%
2.38	9			Gary Zeng – Nancy Yu, San Francisco CA	55.82%
2.76		2	1	James Sung, New York NY; James Fu, Westfield NJ	52.63%
2.07		3		Kyle Lin – Keith Lin, San Francisco CA	50.84%
1.55		4		Katherine Lee – Jayson Lee, Hillsborough CA	50.39%
1.23		5		Jerry Shang, South Plainfield NJ; Autumn Tarver, Orange NJ	46.37%
1.05		6		Michael Hu, Plainsboro NJ; Jerry Yao, Millstone NJ	44.31%

FRIDAY AFTERNOON YOUTH CONSOLATION PAIRS

6.0 Tables

	A	B	C		
2.77	1	1		Ella Su, Redmond WA; Jason Yao, Bellevue WA	76.72%
2.08	2	2		Lydia Zhang, Clyde Hill WA; Maiya Clouse, Kirkland WA	63.60%
1.56	3	3		Eddy Qi – Leo Susser, San Francisco CA	58.75%
1.17	4	4	1	Avery Liang – Alexandra Deschenes, Bellevue WA	58.29%
1.20			2	Leon Grigoruk – Liam Lafferty, Palm Coast FL	54.38%

FRIDAY MORNING CARDROOK PAIRS

4.0 Tables

	A	B	C		
1.06	1	1	1	Elan Ravishankar, Schaumburg IL; Clayton Kaneko, Danville CA	57.95%
0.80	2	2	2	Kyra Smartt – Asani Sanford-Green, Orange NJ	57.45%

FRIDAY AFTERNOON CARDROOK PAIRS

2.5 Tables

	A	B			
0.93	1/2			Emma Wang, Palatine IL; Nolan Balocki, San Francisco CA	53.33%
0.93	1/2			Nolan Erpelding – Everett Erpelding, Minnetonka MN	53.33%

Youth Pairs*continued from page 17*

afternoon final session was so big they didn't even need it – they won by a board and three-quarters.

Liu, 17, began playing as a fifth-grader in 2016 through a program at school. He went to Toronto Youth Bridge and entered the Canadian junior training program with Bing Le. He has previously played on Canada's Under 16-team before moving up to the Under-21 division. He has attended each Youth NABC since Toronto in 2017.

Chen, also 17, began playing in 2018, when he lived in Saskatoon.

"My mom found an ad for a local bridge club in the newspaper," he said. "She suggested it as a bonding activity between me and my father."

A leader at the club saw his potential and got him into the junior training program online. Then he moved to Toronto and is also mentored by Bing Le. This is his first Youth NABC.

Chen and Liu have been regular partners for a year.

"We're hoping to do well in Veldhoven," Chen said.

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How would you go about getting other kids interested in bridge?



“First I would find people interested in card games. There’s a game similar to bridge called tractor. I would introduce them to bridge after playing tractor.”

*Joey Qi, 17
San Francisco CA*



“You tell them about the rewards – the scholarships, the travel. You do make friendships in bridge. Seeing all this, it’s worth it.”

*Autumn Tarver, 17
Orange NJ*



“I’ve actually gotten a kid interested. I just asked him, ‘Do you want to play this card game my dad and I play?’ He plays every Thursday now.”

*Lee Blocher, 12
Champaign IL*



“I started my own bridge club. I asked them to try it, to come at least one time to see if they liked it. It was a lot of fun. I learned a lot about teaching.”

*Gary Zeng, 19
San Francisco CA*



“Bridge is great for young competitors. You can interest kids who at an early age are interested in competing. Tell them how they can apply the skills they learn to life.”

*Jeremiah Charles, 17
Orange NJ*



“First it’s gotta have some kind of spark that makes it interesting. We need a bridge influencer. Second is ease of learning. People don’t know how to get started. To start you need to know so much. If you google it, you get a Wikipedia page that’s not helpful.”

*Darwin Skalski, 17
Buffalo NY*



“Make it so it’s a little more interesting. They tell you Bill Gates plays it, it’s good for memory. The key is to be fun for younger kids. That’s what keeps people playing.”

*Martha Johnson-Jackson, 18
Orange NJ*



“You gotta make it seem exciting. It’s so hard. It takes forever to figure out what’s going on. It would help to make online bridge more interactive, with better graphics.”

*Tiger Li, 16
Buffalo NY*

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“I wouldn’t.” [*Barely looking up from playing a game on his phone.*]
*Derek Deschenes, 12
Seattle WA*



“You could add an online component to tournaments like this.”
*Sabrina Da Silva-Carvalho, 17
Palm Coast FL*



“You want to have more bridge clubs in schools. Give incentives, like travel.”
*Leon Grigoruk, 16
Palm Coast FL*



“I would talk to my friends, start a club at school, try to get people interested.”
*Andrew Eidelhoch, 17
San Francisco CA*



“Maybe I’d make flyers and tell everyone I know.”
*Chloe Chow, 12
San Francisco CA*



“Scholarships would help.”
*Michael Johnson, 17
Flagler Beach FL*



“I write for a local magazine, so I’d write an article about bridge.”
*Maiya Clouse, 13
Kirkland WA*



“I wouldn’t try. They won’t try.”
*Keith Lin, 13
San Francisco CA*



“I’d try encouraging more schools. People don’t know about the game. If money isn’t an issue, I’d say sponsor school clubs.”
*Samuel Li, 17
North York ON*



“Make it fun and enjoyable. It can be hard. The rules seem like a wall. Elderly people like you to play it the way they play.”
*Greyson Peugh, 17
Palm Coast FL*



“The easiest way to start is just talking to them about the game. I have a friend who got interested. I showed her some of the basics.”
*Ella Su, 13
Redmond WA*



“I’d have a big carnival and have one of the prizes be a deck of cards and a bidding box. Maybe get Bill Gates to do an ad.”
*Nolan Balocki, 14,
San Francisco CA*

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Cardroom Pairs



Tied for first, afternoon: Emma Wang and Nolan Balocki



Tied for first, afternoon: Everett Erpelding and Nolan Erpelding



First, morning: Elan Ravishankar and Clayton Kaneko

CBE

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It was hard to maintain the group’s momentum during the pandemic, and Zhu is glad they’ve been able to meet in person for over a year.

“Their attitudes have changed,” Zhu said. “They never wanted to do hand review before. Now when they get done playing, they just want to talk about hands, hands, hands.”

The CBE has been sending groups to the Youth NABC since 2017, though the first year was so small they consider 2018, when they sent seven, the starting point. There were 16 in 2019. Though they’ve gotten smaller, they’ve remained one of the few regular groups at the Youth NABC as others such as Bermuda and Silicon Valley Youth Bridge have disappeared.

One of the young players traveling with the CBE group for the first time this year is Leo Susser, 16, whose brother and sister were previous members. He learned shortly after them in 2016, when he was 9, from his grandmother.

“It was kind of a family bonding experience,” he said.

Leo wasn’t as involved as his siblings, Nathan and Julia, now both at the University of Pennsylvania, but he took classes with CBE for a couple of years and then quit bridge for a couple of years. Then he came back on BBO two years ago at the urging of Richard Bellerose, who created Handz, an easy-to-learn version of bridge lite, for the CBE. That led to him going back to classes with Zhu and playing in duplicate games with his mom, Rebecca Susser.

Sometime around January this year, he was finally hooked.

“I’ve fallen in love with it since I got back into it,” he said. It gets your heart pumping, you get this feeling of adrenaline. Last year I wasn’t as into bridge as I am now. I played in a duplicate game, I got some masterpoints. I thought this awesome, addicting. Bidding and making a game as declarer gives you a feeling of power.”

He credits Zhu with sparking his interest.

“I feel like the CBE has done a good job,” Susser said. “I think there’s a wide audience of kids who would really like this.”

Susser has made plans to start a bridge club at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley CA when school resumes next month. “I already have six kids who say they’re interested,” he said. He needs to find a teacher to serve as advisor, but he thinks his history teacher is a good prospect. And while six is a decent start, he’s hoping to bribe a few more.

The plan is to start with Handz, which has the players write down information about their hands such as pattern and high-card points, before progressing to bridge.

Outside of bridge, Susser is working on a research project for a professor at the London School of Economics, looking at how restrictions on cigarettes played a role in the rise of vaping. He also plays tennis. Brother Nathan, meanwhile, who was a teacher for CBE, is preparing to study



Leo Susser plans to start a bridge club at his high school.

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abroad in Australia.

Another member of the CBE group is Nathan Chow, 16, who has been coming to the Youth NABC since 2018. Back then, when he was 11, Chow was excited to come to Atlanta hoping to meet Kit Woolsey. He brought a copy of Woolsey’s book “Matchpoints,” found where Woolsey was playing and waited patiently for him to finish the session. But when the moment finally came, Woolsey brushed him aside and exited.

Chow was crestfallen.

But then Ralph Katz and Nick Nickell came along and stumbled into a conversation with Zhu, who explained the boy’s sad demeanor.

Katz offered, “I’ll sign your book,” and Nickell did as well. The day was saved.



These players won trophies in the morning session on Friday.

These players won trophies in the afternoon session on Friday.



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