

My Experience at the 2023 Lancaster Regional

By Debbie Holt Weil

I can't remember the last time I had so much fun!

The Lancaster Regional gave me a real high! I played with Cathy Strauss, a far better player than I am, who kindly invited me to play in a team game with our friend Karen Pollak and her fill-in partner, Jill Kolody. (Karen's regular partner, Tom Tully, unfortunately couldn't make it.) We were placed in Bracket 4. (I don't think I've ever been in any bracket other than the bottom!)



During the first 3 morning matches, we held our own, but lost. We lost by 1 the first match, tied the second, and lost by 3 in the third. Being relatively new to team play, I thought we didn't have a chance of winning. After lunch, Match 4, we won by 4—balancing our overall total to “0.” Then in Match 5, we won—pretty big! Karen looked at the score board and told us we were actually tied for 3rd. I couldn't believe it! How was it possible? With my 630 points, I was playing up in what to me is the BIG Leagues. Then Match 6 came, and somehow, we killed it! We were so excited to think that we may have placed third.

Karen checked the board. She came back with a disappointed look on her face telling us we didn't place third. We didn't place third, we placed FIRST! 9.62 Gold points! I don't remember ever being so excited! We went out to celebrate over dinner, and I couldn't sleep all night.

But the nicest thing happened to me the next morning. I received text messages and emails from players I barely knew. And even my wonderful bridge teacher, Joann Glasson, and my regular partner, Emily LoSciuto, took the time to contact me. How lovely to be part of a bridge family that is so kind and supportive!

When I started learning bridge in the spring of 2008, I did so to be able to play with my 83-year-old mother, who had been trying to get me to play all her life. I immediately got hooked! Then, that fall, I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Inflammatory Breast Cancer, and told there was only a 33% of my living 5 years, and that I'd most likely be dead in 18 months. BBO was my savior! During chemo, I joined the BBO BIL (Beginners / Intermediate Bridge Lounge). I took their lessons and started playing at home online. Every hand was a new challenge, and bridge made me focus on something other than myself.

Never in a million years did I think I'd live to see the day that I would become a Life Master. But with only 12 more Gold points to go, I am planning to get there! Many thanks to my dear sweet friend and original partner Susan Glazer, my first teacher Joe DeColli, and all the players who have supported me along the way!

With 12 more Gold to go, I need all the luck I can get! I'm looking forward to Atlanta, Rehoboth, and Philadelphia!