

THE GNT EXPERIENCE FROM A FLIGHT C DISTRICT WINNER

Judy Hansen, Mary Sass, and Jeff & Jake Olson represented District 14 last summer (2009) in the GNT finals at the Nationals in Washington, D.C. Here are a few observations from Judy about the experience:

When I started playing duplicate about 5 years ago, there were SO many things to learn that it was overwhelming at first. The first tournament I played in was at the Gopher Regional in May, 2005. There was this event that everyone was playing in called a Knock-Out. All of my friends who were playing in that came back one session later having been knocked-out. That just didn't sound very pleasant!!

Here I was focusing on learning Michael's, Stayman and 1430/3014 (are you kidding me??!). There were so many terms and events and tournaments being talked about by other players. I didn't have a clue what many of them were or meant. One of those events was a GNT qualifier and, later, a GNT tournament. Nobody explained to me as a new player what GNT event stood for let alone what it meant. If only I had known!!!

GNT stands for Grand National Teams. First you should play in a GNT qualifying event. It's most fun to have another pair to play with in this event. You & your partner, along with this other pair, play in a GNT club qualifying game scored like any other Swiss team game. You do not have to win this game. You just have to win ½ of your matches or be in the top half of the Flight C teams and you will qualify to compete in the district GNT event. It's pretty easy to qualify in a GNT qualifying game to play in the GNT district event. If you qualify even only once, you can compete at the district GNT game. [*And these club qualifiers pay ½ red points too—Ed.*]

Last year my partner Mary Sass & I played in a GNT qualifying event at the Twin Cities Bridge Center. After qualifying as a C-level GNT team, we competed at the district GNT finals in New Brighton last spring. We paired up with Jeff & Jake Olson after seeing them at a club qualifier where we both played with different pairs. At the District finals we just played our normal game and with a lot of luck, we won the two-day event. Even if we hadn't won the district GNT finals, we would have won some masterpoints just like any other duplicate game you play in.

This meant that we would now be able to compete in Washington DC in the Summer National in 2009. Our team received almost \$1600 dollars to help pay for some of our expenses while in DC. This was the second national tournament that I had gone to and Mary's first. It was the first national-level event to compete in for both of us. We had a blast!! While I'd like to say we won there - well we didn't. We ended up in 14th place, I believe. But it was well worth the experience. [*But this squad earned nearly 20 points in Washington, winning a 2 day KO event, and finishing in the overalls of two other events!--Ed.*]

I don't care if you have 1 masterpoint or 300 masterpoints, it's well worth it to play in a GNT qualifying game and, if you qualify, the GNT district final. If you love the game like we all do, it's part of the experience. You've got nothing to lose. And you could win!!

Any pair can play; any pair can have success. If any newer players wants to ask me any questions directly, I'd be happy to talk to them.

Judy