



New Bridge Destination, Spades & Company, Launches in Plymouth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plymouth, Minnesota - February 2, 2026

Spades & Company is proud to announce the opening of a dedicated space for bridge players to learn, play, and connect—conveniently located near the intersection of I-494 and I-394 in Plymouth, Minnesota.

The first and only space of its kind in the western suburbs of the Twin Cities, Spades & Company is designed for the bridge community, bringing together players of all experience levels in a welcoming environment.

The space features two thoughtfully designed game rooms: an intimate 12-table room and a 25-table Grand Room for larger tournaments and special events. A lobby reception area with refreshments provides a comfortable place to gather before and after play.

Attending an event at Spades & Company means enjoying bridge in a premium, thoughtfully designed space with inspiring surroundings, while taking part in special events featuring guest industry leaders such as teachers, authors, and competitive players. Players can strengthen their skills through beginner and intermediate learning opportunities, connect through curated social gatherings, and feel welcomed in an environment designed for all experience levels. New-to-bridge and advancing players will find lessons and events at their respective experience levels.

The largest bridge organization in North America - the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) - estimates that up to 25 million people play bridge in the U.S. alone, and over 12,000 people join the ACBL each year.

Founder of Spades & Company, Norrie Thomas, was drawn to the cognitive components of the game and also the connections it fosters. *"Spades & Company was founded as a way to study and play this remarkable game. I'm drawn to its impressive heritage and its ability to sharpen the mind while bringing people together. The full impact of this game requires logical and rational skills. Equally important are the*

connections you make. While playing and studying bridge I have enriched my life with these friendships. Spades & Company is a place to learn, play, and connect.”

Steve Gaynor, ACBL Director and Platinum Life Master says, *“The majority of bridge players in Minnesota are intermediate/newcomer (I/N) players, so offering opportunities for this player group is a high priority. This new bridge club is focused on developing skills and confidence.”*

Keith Thompson, an experienced ACBL Tournament Director and Club Director says, *“Our success with the West Metro Social Duplicate Bridge Club shows our model of ‘lesson, play, and analysis’ is a winning strategy. Our new club will continue this model in a fun and welcoming environment. I hope to see many of the newer players at the Summer ACBL tournament.”*

Officially welcoming players in early March, a calendar of events can be found online at SpadesandCompany.org, and a preview of those events is listed below. Registering in advance is appreciated but not required; payment is taken onsite. Spades & Company will continue building toward a full schedule of daily bridge games, lessons, and events that support learning, competition, and community.

The first event at Spades & Company will be Friday, March 6, 2026 featuring the West Metro Social Duplicate Bridge Friday Game, which will move from its previous location at The Marsh to the new Spades & Company location.

All future West Metro Social Duplicate Bridge Club games will be at the new Spades & Company location.

Lessons with Steve Gaynor are on Monday, March 9 and Monday, March 16 from 10:00AM - 12:00PM. These lessons cover the fundamentals of sound bidding, including what an opening bid is and how to get started, five effective ways to support your partner, when to use takeout doubles (and when not to), the key concepts behind negative doubles, understanding the “No Trump” ladder, disciplined approaches to preempts, and practical methods for valuing your hand. Instruction is led by Steve Gaynor, a Platinum Life Master with more than 11,500 masterpoints, an ACBL member and director since 1971, a bridge educator for over 50 years, author of more than 150 lessons, and current President of ACBL District 14.

Lessons with Steve Gaynor are Monday March 9th and Monday March 16th from 10:00AM - 12:00PM.

Beginning March 16th, **Monday Night Games with Keith Thompson** will be from 6:00PM - 9:00PM. The evening begins with a meet-and-greet at 5:30PM, followed by the game at 6:00PM, and concludes with a post-game analysis around 9:00PM. This ACBL sanctioned and stratified event welcomes both new and advancing players, offering a fun and educational opportunity to play and learn alongside an experienced bridge instructor. *Monday Night Games with Keith Thompson are March 16 - April 27 from 6:00PM - 9:00PM.*

Beginning Tuesday, March 17, Spades & Company will offer **Lessons with Sarah Wahl** focused on *2 Over 1 Game Force* (Audrey Grant & Eric Rodwell), *The Play of the Hand at Bridge* (Louis Watson), and *25 Most Common Conventions* (Barbara Seagram). Each session includes a 30-minute lecture, 60 minutes of supervised play (approximately 10 boards), and a 20-minute Q&A with hand-record analysis, using instructor-prepared materials and boards. Lessons are led by Sarah Wahl, a Life Master, accomplished competitor, and respected ACBL director in Minnesota, winner of the 2025 ACBL 0–3000 Mini Spingold KO, known for directing games and fostering a welcoming environment for players of all levels.

Lessons with Sarah Wahl are Tuesdays March 17-April 14 from 9:30AM - 12:30PM.

A Grand Opening Tournament will be June 5-6 with games at 10:00AM and 2:30PM featuring ACBL Director Kimberly Hayward. This sectional tournament is specifically aimed at developing players with 0-999 masterpoints (Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N)). This tournament will provide Life Master coaches during lunch breaks for post game analysis with your partner. This is a great opportunity to sharpen one's skills before the Minneapolis Summer Nationals. \$17 per session with lunch provided.

Additional events are in planning and will be announced soon.

Join Spades & Company as a member via the website to be added to the distribution list and be the first to hear about new events, lessons, and updates. There is no cost or commitment to join as a member.

Spades & Company looks forward to welcoming the Twin Cities bridge community to the new, dedicated space. For more information or inquiries, reach

out to the founder Norrie Thomas at Info@SpadesandCompany.org or NorrieAThomas@gmail.com

About Spades & Company

Spades & Company is a premier destination for bridge education, play, and private game gatherings. Through expert instruction, engaging events, and a purpose-built space, we celebrate both the tradition and the evolving joy of bridge. From beginner lessons to expert-level events and private game nights, Spades & Company brings people together through games that challenge the mind and spark connection.

Spades & Company

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