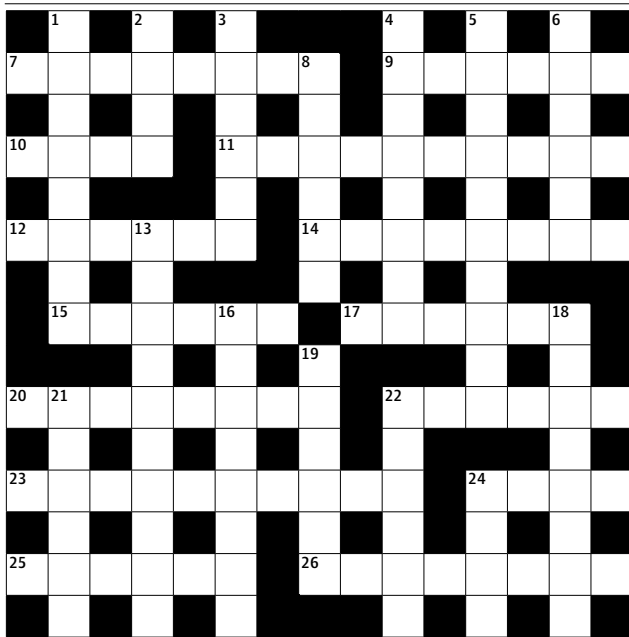


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,191 set by Brendan

Across

- 7 One hoping trick will work, actually being taken in by French (8)
- 9 Handsome youth holding hand down bids in oddly deficient way (6)
- 10 After top honour, duke worsted in court, in a way (4)
- 11 Hard to handle, like a pointless holding? (10)
- 12 Positive indicators about right requirements for contract (6)
- 14 Difficult partner no longer playing (8)
- 15 Claim about line with ace and queen that's made by professional (6)
- 17 Don't follow suit – change to green energy (6)
- 20 Complaint I had rejected – more upset about diamonds (8)
- 22 Defend against South, in another test for learner (6)
- 23 Made first bid, holding cards tight? Just the opposite (4-6)
- 24 Reports from one couple at table about another (4)
- 25 Didn't bid spades, oddly (6)
- 26 Turn of partner to err – for example, about passing (8)

Down

- 1 For instance, gets rid of diamond, being heartless? (8)
- 2 Start putting one's cards on the table in corrupt deal (4)
- 3 Concerns – lots of little ones raised by partners, normally (6)

- 4 Patience, for example, as funny fellow hunted animals (4,4)
- 5 People managing without skill name business associates (2-8)
- 6 Nothing old foursome raised for player taking bow (6)
- 8 Some 19 that's extractable from tropical plants or shrubbery (6)
- 13 Bid one's spades over West, showing immaturity (10)
- 16 Penalties for players, not clubs (3,5)
- 18 Blow to West coming from unwise bid, ultimately, since double goes in (4,4)
- 19 Part of 6 or 24 down for English composer (6)
- 21 Way to dramatically expose king not ruled out (2,4)
- 22 Leader's odd new arrangement of pack (6)
- 24 Advance cautiously, finishing in two hearts, vulnerable (4)

Winners of prize puzzle 26,184

