

# A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Club Corner  
A Hand from the Pub  
Letter from Germany

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# A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Editor:

**Mark Horton**

Advertising:

**Mark Horton**

Photographers:

**Ron Tacchi**

**Francesca Canali**

Proofreaders:

**Danny Roth**

**Monika Kummel**

**Herman De Wael**

Typesetter:

**Ron Tacchi**

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## Master Point Press Bidding Battle

Alan Mould is handing over the reins to Brian Senior from next month. Alan was previously in charge of Bridge Magazine's *Marks & Comments* feature and has done a fantastic job over the last few years. Brian, one of England's finest players and writers, needs no introduction.

Entry to the monthly competition is free and the winners receive prizes from Master Point Press. Give it a try!

## Sun Sea & Slams

We are delighted to announce that two of our regular contributors will be involved in bridge holidays later this year.

David Bird will be at a five star hotel in Rhodes, 3-10 October, while Sally Brock will be at the Vidamar Hotel in Madeira (venue of the famous Madeira Bridge Festival) from 18 October.

You will find full details in this issue.

## I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue

From time to time we spot bridge related clues.

A recent Daily Telegraph Crossword included this clue:

It involves tricks to tighten with a spanner (8,6).

*Answer below*

## Champions of Europe

There is still time for Women and Seniors to enter the Pairs Championships that will take place next month from 6-9 June in Ostende at the European

Championships. All you have to do is go to:

European Pairs Championships Registrations

[http://db.eurobridge.org/repository/competitions/18Ostend/microsite/Participants.](http://db.eurobridge.org/repository/competitions/18Ostend/microsite/Participants.asp)

asp

Meanwhile, looking ahead to next year, the European Mixed Teams Championship will take place Friday 22 – Thursday 28 February 2019 at a venue to be announced.

The EBU is going to hold trials to select England's representative. These will be held on the weekend of 7-9 September 2018 at a venue to be announced. Depending on the number of entries, there may then be a play-off between the leading two teams to be played on 8/9 December (or earlier by agreement).

Teams can consist of 4 to 6 players and entry fees are £420 per team. Applications should be sent to [dawn@ebu.co.uk](mailto:dawn@ebu.co.uk) on or before June 29<sup>th</sup> 2018.

The EBU will pay entry fees to the Championships and will provide a uniform, but other than that participation is self-funded.

## Show Me The Money

We are in the process of setting up donations by Credit Cards. As soon as this facility is available we will inform you and then – just go the relevant page on the web site: <http://newbridgemag.com/credit-cards.html> to make a donation.



## Return to Sender

Apologies to those who are supporting *A New Bridge Magazine* by sending regular donations. Administrative problems may have caused some of these to be returned. The issue has been resolved, so everything should run smoothly from now on.

## The Way Ahead

The World's finest young players will be in China in August for the 2018 World Youth Team Championships. England's representatives are:

U21 Sam Anoyrkatis & Theo Anoyrkatis; Harry Madden & Kripa Panchagnula; Liam Sanderson & Daniel Winter; NPC Michael Byrne

U16 Jasmine Bakhshi & Henry Rose; Jamie Fegarty & Liam Fegarty; Oscar Selby & Andy Cope; NPC Giorgio Provenza; Coach Laura Porro

The under 16 team are currently playing in an online competition organised by the WBF and after three rounds, victories over Italy, Israel and Sweden see them at the top of the table.

Captain Giorgio Provenza reported this deal:

### Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ Q6		
	♥ K73		
	♦ 9872		
	♣ KQ86		
♠ A4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                 N W     E S             </div>	♠ K72	
♥ 52		♥ QJ964	
♦ K104		♦ QJ65	
♣ A109743		♣ 5	
	♠ J109853		
	♥ A108		
	♦ A3		
	♣ J2		

West	North	East	South
Rose	Maradona	Bourne	Oslogard
–	–	Pass	1♠
2♣	Double*	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

East led the five of clubs and when declarer played dummy's two West put in the ten, declarer winning with the queen and playing the ♠Q. West won with the ace, cashed the ace of clubs and saw his partner discard the ♥4. He switched to the ♦4 and when declarer followed with the two East contributed the five. Declarer withheld dummy's ace, but East continued with the ♦6 and West unblocked the king under the ace, making sure the defenders arrived at six tricks.

Both sides made a slight mistake – did you spot them?

West was right to switch to diamonds, but he should play an honour.

Declarer should have covered the four of diamonds with the seven, which restricts the defenders to three diamond tricks.

Giorgio posed a question in his latest blog (you can see it at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/node/3111>) – who is the only Honorary Life Master of the ACBL?

Answer below

## Crossword Solution

*Contract Bridge*

## The Honorary LM

*Snoopy is the ACBL's only Honorary Life Master. (Charles Shultz drew Snoopy playing bridge in several of his comic strips.)*

## In This Issue

- 4 **FUNBRIDGE** — Test Your Technique
- 5 **A Winter's Tale** — The editor reports on the Slava Cup in Moscow
- 34 **FUNBRIDGE** — Misplay These Hands With Me
- 36 **Deals That Caught My Eye** — David Bird reports on the Commonwealth Championships
- 42 **Letter From Germany** — Martin Cantor on the Bundesliga
- 48 **Defend With Julian Pottage**
- 49 **FUNBRIDGE** — Test Your Technique solution
- 50 **The Long and Winding Road** — Alex Adamson & Harry Smith with another tale from the Over The Rainbow Bridge Club
- 56 **Defend With Julian Pottage** — The Answers
- 57 **Vu-Bridge** — Play Like a Champion
- 59 **Bridge With Larry Cohen**
- 62 **From The Archives** — Brian Senior
- 64 **Club Corner** — Tony Poole
- 66 **From Our French Correspondent** — Ron Tacchi
- 69 **A Hand from the Pub** — Jim Mason
- 73 **Book Review** — Martin Cantor
- 74 **Kit's Corner** — Kit Woolsey
- 78 **Brother Kyran's Debut** — David Bird
- 82 **The Auction Room** — Mark Horton
- 89 **Master Point Press Bidding Battle** — Moderated by Alan Mould
- 100 **Master Point Press Bidding Battle Competition** — Set 5
- 103 **Hands for This Month's Auction Room**



## Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 9

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ92  
♥ K1032  
♦ 1054  
♣ J7

♠ A108543  
♥ 864  
♦ A92  
♣ A

The bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	3♠	3NT*	4♠
All Pass			

\*3NT alerted as the minors

South receives the lead of the ♦8 (3rd and 5th).  
How would you play?



# A Winter's Tale

The Editor reports on the latest edition of one of Europe's top tournaments

The Metropal Hotel was the venue for the seventeenth edition of the Slava Cup, one of the premier events in the bridge calendar. Pavel Portnoy and his Committee assembled an outstanding field from all around the world which, as usual, included World, European and National Champions. They were in Moscow to pay homage to the memory of the talented Slava Grinyuk, who died an untimely death in his thirties. This year's format saw 60 pairs playing sixteen eight board matches.

## The Moscow Rules

The *Moscow Rules* are rules-of-thumb said to have been developed during the Cold War to be used by spies and others working in Moscow.

The rules are associated with Moscow because the city developed a reputation as being a particularly harsh locale for clandestine operatives who were exposed. The list may never have existed as written.

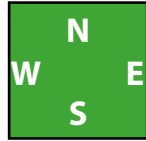
In the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., the Moscow Rules are given as:

- Assume nothing.
- Never go against your gut.
- Everyone is potentially under opposition control.
- Do not look back; you are never completely alone.
- Go with the flow, blend in.
- Vary your pattern and stay within your cover.
- Lull them into a sense of complacency.
- Do not harass the opposition.
- Pick the time and place for action.
- Keep your options open.

Quite a few of those might be useful at the bridge table!

The opening round of this year's Slava Cup was one of the quietest I can remember. In a way that was good news, as we were having some technical issues at our Bulletin Headquarters in the little village of Sutton Benger.

### Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ J 10 9 4 2 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A 10 8	♠ Q 6 5 3 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 10 4 2 ♣ 9 4 3 2		♠ 8 7 ♥ 8 7 5 4 ♦ K Q J ♣ K Q 7 5
♠ AK ♥ AK Q J ♦ A 8 6 5 3 ♣ J 6			

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gerasimov</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Vorobeychi</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣*
2♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♦
All Pass			
1♣ Strong			

I am not sure about the precise meaning of 2NT but it looks like a simple scramble, hoping to find a playable spot in a minor.

Declarer won the spade lead and played ace of diamonds and a diamond. With trumps 3-2 his contract was secure, +110.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Shudnev	Russyan	Gomerov	Kowalski
–	–	1NT	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

West led the ten of spades and declarer won with the ace, unblocked the king and exited with a diamond. East won with the jack and switched to the seven of hearts.

Declarer won with the ace, West following with the ten, and played a diamond to the ten and queen. When East failed to find the essential switch to a low club, playing a second heart, declarer had nine tricks, +150.

♠ Q653		♠ 87
♥ 63		♥ 8754
♦ 1042		♦ KQJ
♣ 9432		♣ KQ75
♠ J10942	♠ N	
♥ 1092	♥ W	
♦ 97	♦ E	
♣ A108	♣ S	
♠ AK		
♥ AKQJ		
♦ A8653		
♣ J6		

## Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ3		♠ AQ102
♥ 864		♥ AJ32
♦ J7		♦ A3
♣ Q10863		♣ 752
♠ 74	♠ N	
♥ 9	♥ W	
♦ KQ86542	♦ E	
♣ AK4	♣ S	
♠ 9865		
♥ KQ1075		
♦ 109		
♣ J9		

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Gerasimov	Gromov	Vorobeychi	Dubiniv
–	–	1NT	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

2NT Transfer  
3♥ Shortage

South led the ♥K and when it held he switched to the eight of spades. That speeded up the play, +690.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Shudnev	Russyan	Gomerov	Kowalski
–	–	1♣	1♥
1♠*	2♥	2NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♦	All Pass

North led the ♥6 and declarer won with dummy's ace, drew trumps and played a spade to the ten, +620.

Many pairs bid 6♦ on this deal which was worth between 7 & 9 IMPs but the jackpot went to Jurica Caric and Josef Harsanyi, who collected 14 IMPs for bidding and making 7♦.

## A Gentleman in Moscow


This finely composed novel by Amor Towles stretches out with old-World elegance. *A Gentleman in Moscow* offers a chance to sink back into a lost attitude of aristocracy—equal parts urbane and humane. The book opens a few years after the Russian Revolution in a period of violent upheaval. A handsome Count named Alexander Rostov has been summoned before the Emergency Committee of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and accused of writing a counter-revolutionary poem. The trial transcript offers an indication of the count's blithe resistance to the spirit of the times. Asked to state his occupation, he replies, "It is not the business of a gentleman to have occupations." Only high-ranking friends keep him from being thrown against a wall and shot. Instead, he's declared a "Former Person" and sentenced to life imprisonment in Moscow's Hotel Metropol, the venue for this year's Slava Cup.

I strongly recommend you read this book—and delight in the references to the place that played host to the tournament.

I could offer many wonderful extracts, but here is just one to whet your appetite: *the Count reviewed the menu in reverse order as was his habit, having learned from experience that giving consideration to appetizers before entrées can only lead to regrets.*

Experience is a valuable asset in bridge, too. How valuable would it be in Round 2?

## Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 10983 ♥ Q7 ♦ J94 ♣ QJ65		♠ AJ4 ♥ 1053 ♦ 75 ♣ K9742	♠ Q752 ♥ AK962 ♦ A ♣ A108
		♠ K6 ♥ J84 ♦ KQ108632 ♣ 3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Friedlander</i>	<i>Vorobey</i>	<i>Macura</i>	<i>Sliva</i>
–	–	1♥	2♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

West was unwilling to introduce the spade suit—I'm not sure that was a good idea, but I leave you to decide.

South led the three of clubs for the queen, king and ace and declarer played a heart to the queen and a heart to the ace and then abandoned trumps, which eventually saw South ruff a club, declarer finishing with just eight tricks, +110, which cost just 1 IMP.


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Rekunov</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>	<i>Zenkevich</i>
–	–	1♥	3♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Here West was willing to get spades into the picture and East pushed on to game.

North led the seven of diamonds and declarer won perforce with dummy's ace, played a heart to the queen and ran the eight of spades, South winning with the king and returning the king of diamonds. Declarer ruffed in dummy, cashed the top hearts pitching a diamond and played the queen of spades. North could win with the ace and cash the jack, but declarer had the rest, +620 and 10 IMPs.

## Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A1052 ♥ — ♦ QJ7643 ♣ 832		♠ K97 ♥ AQ98743 ♦ 105 ♣ 7	♠ J3 ♥ 102 ♦ A82 ♣ AKQJ109
		♠ Q864 ♥ KJ65 ♦ K9 ♣ 654	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Friedlander</i>	<i>Vorobey</i>	<i>Macura</i>	<i>Sliva</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Double	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	5♥	6♣	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

A dramatic auction to be sure.

East's decision to keep quiet over 3♥ passed of peacefully when West was able to reopen. When East went on to 6♣ over 5♥ a big swing was certain. South elected to lead the five of hearts and declarer could ruff, come to hand

with a club, ruff another heart, play a diamond to the ace, draw trumps, give up a diamond and claim, +1090 and 13 IMPs.

I suspect South wishes he had chosen a spade for his opening salvo.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Rekunov</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>	<i>Zenkevich</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	3♥	Double	Pass
4♥*	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Here East took immediate action. One thing in favour of doubling is that every once in a while partner might bid 3NT, but perhaps that is not a good enough reason to prefer it to the simple overcall of 4♣. Whatever, a sound contract was reached.

North led the ace of hearts and declarer ruffed, played a diamond to the ace and a diamond, +620 and 4 IMPs.

## Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ K754		♠ 1093
♥ A62		♥ QJ109
♦ KQ85		♦ A43
♣ 108		♣ KJ2
♠ J862	♠ N	♠ 1093
♥ K73	W	♥ QJ109
♦ J1096	E	♦ A43
♣ 63	S	♣ KJ2
♠ AQ		
♥ 854		
♦ 72		
♣ AQ9754		

♠ K97		♠ J3
♥ AQ98743		♥ 102
♦ 105		♦ A82
♣ 7		♣ AKQJ109
♠ A1052	♠ N	♠ J3
♥ –	W	♥ 102
♦ QJ7643	E	♦ A82
♣ 832	S	♣ AKQJ109
♠ Q864		
♥ KJ65		
♦ K9		
♣ 654		

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Friedlander</i>	<i>Vorobey</i>	<i>Macura</i>	<i>Sliva</i>
–	–	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
2♣	Precision		
2♦	Enquiry		
3♣	No major		

East led the queen of hearts and declarer ducked twice, won the third heart and advanced the ten of clubs. East played the king and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a diamond for the king and ace. East cashed the ten of hearts, but with the jack of clubs onside declarer had the rest, +400 and a couple of IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Rekunov</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>	<i>Zenkevich</i>
–	–	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	3♣*
All Pass			

After an identical start to the auction North was content to pass.

You could argue that if one of the club honours had been offside the contract would have failed, but there is an old rule which says that if your partner opens the bidding and you have an opening bid yourself it is incumbent upon you to ensure that your side reaches game.

Declarer took ten tricks, +130 but that cost 6 IMPs.


## Conclave

Robert Harris's *Conclave*, as its title suggests, is about a papal conclave set sometime in the near future. The pope has died and the cardinals are gathering to elect his successor: basically, powerful men are coming together to make some really big decisions. What could possibly go wrong?

That question might easily apply to the contestants in a bridge tournament. We got a couple of answers to that question in Round 3.



## Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q9432 ♥ 8762 ♦ Q10 ♣ AJ		♠ AK ♥ KQ109 ♦ KJ932 ♣ 73	♠ 10865 ♥ 4 ♦ 8754 ♣ K1065
		♠ J7 ♥ AJ53 ♦ A6 ♣ Q9842	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Rudakov</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>	<i>Orlov</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
2♠	3♦	4♠	Double
All Pass			

Although West was unwilling to venture an overcall at the one-level, he happily came in on the next round. Holding four small cards in a suit the opponents had bid and supported he knew whatever values his partner held were unlikely to be wasted and the chance of finding a fit was increased.

North cashed the top spades and then played hearts, declarer ruffing in dummy, and playing a club. Putting in the jack will lead to eight tricks and an excellent save, but despite South's opening bid declarer went up with the ace and then ran the jack, so the penalty was -500 which was worth an IMP.

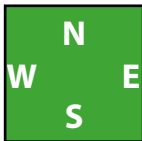
Escaping for -300 would have been worth 6 IMPs.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponomareva</i>	<i>Macura</i>	<i>Garkavyi</i>	<i>Friedlander</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♠	Double*	3♠	4♥
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♥*
Pass	6♥	All Pass	
4NT RKCB			
5♥ 2 key cards			

Looking at two small clubs North's decision to ask for key cards was not without risk (I politely refrain from suggesting it is unsound) and although West led a spade there was no way to avoid the loss of two clubs, -100 and 12 IMPs.

## Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 65 ♥ A1042 ♦ AQ8 ♣ 7653		♠ Q943 ♥ KJ ♦ 1074 ♣ AJ108	♠ 102 ♥ 765 ♦ KJ32 ♣ KQ92
		♠ AKJ87 ♥ Q983 ♦ 965 ♣ 4	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Rudakov</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>	<i>Orlov</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Do you agree with South's 4♠?

It is true that your hand improves when your five-card suit is raised, but for my money the way forward is via 3♥, leaving the final decision to partner. Although North has two useful cards in the guise of the ♥KJ the right move is probably to settle for 3♠. Still, the lure of a vulnerable game is great—and even a contract that appears hopeless can be difficult to defeat.

♠ 65	♠ Q943	♠ 102
♥ A1042	♥ KJ	♥ 765
♦ AQ8	♦ 1074	♦ KJ32
♣ 7653	♣ AJ108	♣ KQ92
		♠ AKJ87
		♥ Q983
		♦ 965
		♣ 4

West led the five of spades and declarer won with the ace and played a heart to the king followed by the jack. West won with the ace and switched to the ace of diamonds followed by the queen, a rapid one down as East overtook it and cashed the jack, -100 and an 8 IMP pick up.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponomareva</i>	<i>Macura</i>	<i>Garkavyi</i>	<i>Friedlander</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Here West led the six of clubs and declarer won with dummy's ace as East followed with the two. A spade to the ace was followed by a heart to the king and the jack of hearts, East following with the five and six. West won with the ace and was at the crossroads. I can't be sure about the meaning of East's ♣2. If it showed an even number then it seems clear there is little future in that suit, but it may have been simply encouraging. The only other information West had was that South was 5-4 in the majors with the ♠AK and the ♥Q. If the minor suits were 2-2 and included the ♦K then playing a second club would be one way to defeat the contract. When West did play a second club declarer could ruff, draw the outstanding trumps and pitch a diamond on the ♥Q for +620 and 8 IMPs in the other direction.

As the players returned to the pavilion for lunch the leaders were Iceland's Jon Baldursson and Sigurbjorn Haraldsson.

## Red Square

If you are a regular reader of the Slava Cup Bulletins you will know I am a great fan of the novels of Martin Cruz Smith, which feature the Moscow detective Arkady Renko. I am currently reading Red Square. As the existing social and economic structures of the Soviet Union break down, Arkady Renko has been reinstated as an Investigator in the Moscow Militsiya (Police Force). He is trying to clear up a nest of illicit traders when his chief informant dies in a horrific fireball. At the late informer's flat, his fax machine keeps asking the apparently meaningless question, "Where is Red Square?"

You may know that it is just a few hundred yards from the Metropol, but of course in the novel there is a little more to it than that.

Unfortunately there was little of interest in Round 4.

### Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 986	♠ AKQ1054	♠ 32
♥ K74	♥ AJ8	♥ 532
♦ A1097	♦ 863	♦ KQJ54
♣ 1076	♣ Q	♣ J43
		♠ J7
		♥ Q1096
		♦ 2
		♣ AK9852

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sliva</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Vorobey</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	1♣*	2♣*	2NT*
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

1♣ Strong

2♣ was alerted—perhaps it showed diamonds or both majors.

As the cards lie there is no way to prevent declarer scoring twelve tricks, +480.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>
–	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

♠ 986 ♥ K74 ♦ A1097 ♣ 1076	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                     W N                      S E                 </div>	♠ AKQ1054 ♥ AJ8 ♦ 863 ♣ Q	♠ 32 ♥ 532 ♦ KQJ54 ♣ J43
♠ J7 ♥ Q1096 ♦ 2 ♣ AK9852			

South might have bid 4♣ over 3♠, and if North then bids 4♥ South can at least consider bidding 5♦ which would surely see North go on to slam.

Three pairs recorded +980 for an 11 IMP pickup, while one N/S pair played in 3NT and lost the first five tricks to surrender 11 IMPs.

### Board 30. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ AKQ32 ♥ 10 ♦ KQ7 ♣ K432	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                     W N                      S E                 </div>	♠ J109875 ♥ KJ ♦ 5 ♣ QJ85	♠ 4 ♥ A9852 ♦ J109843 ♣ 9
♠ 6 ♥ Q7643 ♦ A62 ♣ A1076			

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sliva</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Vorobey</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣*	2♠	All Pass	
1♣ Strong			

East led the nine of clubs and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a spade to the eight. When it held he continued with the nine of spades and West won and exited with the king of diamonds, declarer taking dummy's ace and playing the six of clubs to West's king. West exited with the ten of hearts and East won and returned the nine, West's ruff representing the setting trick, one down, -50 but a 3 IMP pick-up for the leaders.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Gusev</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Nikitina</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	All Pass

That strikes me as a good sequence, exploring the possibility of finding a heart fit before introducing the diamonds.


South led the six of spades and declarer won with dummy's ace and continued with the king, pitching the nine of clubs. South ruffed and tried to cash the ace of clubs (the indicated defence is to continue with two rounds of diamonds) and declarer ruffed, cashed the ♥A, ruffed a heart, pitched a heart on the ♣K, and cross-ruffed clubs and hearts for eleven tricks, +150, but no swing.

## The Snow Collectors

*The Snow Collectors* is a short story written by Tatyana Nikitichna Tolstaya, TV host, publicist, novelist, and essayist from the Tolstoy family, known for her fiction and acerbic essays on contemporary Russian life. Her paternal grandfather, Aleksei Nikolaevich Tolstoy, was a pioneering science fiction writer, and the son of Count Nikolay Alexandrovich Tolstoy and Alexandra Leontievna Turgeneva a relative of Decembrist Nikolay Turgenev and the writer Ivan Turgenev. Tolstaya's paternal grandmother was the poet Natalia Krandievskaya. Mikhail Lozinsky, her maternal grandfather, was a literary translator renowned for his translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*.

While the players were enjoying what appeared to be clear skies in Moscow, we were being hit by a succession of snowfalls.

## Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A1072 ♥ K9 ♦ KJ5 ♣ AKQ10		♠ KJ643 ♥ 10 ♦ 8632 ♣ 832	♠ Q85 ♥ AQJ2 ♦ A9 ♣ J975
	♠ 9 ♥ 876543 ♦ Q1074 ♣ 64		

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ekenberg</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	1NT*	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

1NT (13) 14-16 semi balanced, can have five-card major or six-card minor

2♣ Asking for 4♥ (doesn't promise a major)

South led the ♥5 and declarer won with dummy's king and played four rounds of clubs ending in dummy, followed by a low spade. When North went up with the king declarer claimed, +990.

### Closed Room

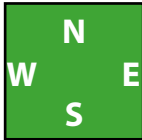
West	North	East	South
<i>Ponamareva</i>	<i>Rusyan</i>	<i>Garkavyi</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
–	–	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♠*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♠*	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

2♦ Game forcing checkback

Here too declarer got a heart lead. After winning with dummy's king declarer cashed the ♣AKQ and played a heart to the ace. He then played a spade to the nine, ten and jack and could claim, as he knew North's return would deliver the missing trick, +990.

It was a flat board, although one lucky pair played in 6NT redoubled for +1660 and 12 IMPs.

## Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ AK986 ♥ A863 ♦ 97 ♣ 87		♠ Q10532 ♥ K5 ♦ Q4 ♣ A642	♠ 7 ♥ QJ94 ♦ KJ653 ♣ K95
		♠ J4 ♥ 1072 ♦ A1082 ♣ QJ103	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Ekenberg	Baldursson	Hult	Haraldsson
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	All Pass

North led the queen of diamonds and when that was covered by the king South ducked, declarer continuing with a spade to the ace and a spade ruff, followed by the queen of hearts (as it happens declarer does best to leave trumps alone and exit with a diamond, ducking South's trump return to North king, winning the trump continuation in dummy and then ruffing another diamond, which should see him get home with nine tricks). North won with the ♥K and could have left declarer short of a trick by returning a heart, but he played a second diamond and South won with the ten and exited with the jack of clubs, North taking the ace and exiting with a club. Declarer won with dummy's king and could have got back on track by playing a diamond, but he ruffed a club and ruffed a spade with the ♥9. South overruffed and returned his remaining trump for one down, -100 and 4 IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Ponamareva	Russyan	Garkavyi	Kowalski
–	–	–	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	All Pass

North led the queen of diamonds and this time South took the king with the ace and returned the two of hearts. Declarer ducked that to North's king, won the diamond return with dummy's jack and could now have made an overtrick—ruff a diamond high, cross to dummy with a trump, ruff a diamond and play a club towards the king. Instead declarer played a spade to the ace, followed by a club. When that held, ruffing a diamond is the ten-trick line but declarer gave up a club and when South won and exited with a trump declarer could only come to nine tricks by playing to setup a long

♠ Q10532	♠ 7
♥ K5	♥ QJ94
♦ Q4	♦ KJ653
♣ A642	♣ K95
♠ AK986	♠ J4
♥ A863	♥ 1072
♦ 97	♦ A1082
♣ 87	♣ QJ103

diamond, the losing club going on the king of spades, +140 and 3 IMPs.

The five pairs who recorded +620 were rewarded with 11 IMPs.

## King Queen Knave

*King, Queen, Knave* is a novel written by Vladimir Nabokov (under his pen name V. Sirin), while living in Berlin and sojourning at resorts in the Baltic in 1928. It was published as (*Korol', dama, valet*) in Russian in October of that year; the novel was translated into English by the author's son (with significant changes made by the author) in 1968, forty years after its Russian debut.

The last round of day 1 was, I am sorry to report, another quiet one.

### Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 7642	♠ AKQ3
♥ 52	♥ A84
♦ J98	♦ K32
♣ J863	♣ A42
♠ 5	♠ J1098
♥ KJ73	♥ Q1096
♦ Q754	♦ A106
♣ K1097	♣ Q5

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Alfejeva	Badursson	Birin	Haraldsson
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♦*	Pass	1NT	All Pass

1♣ Strong  
1♦ Negative

South led the jack of spades and declarer won and continued with three more rounds of the suit, North discarding the five and four of diamonds and the



seven of hearts. Having won the fourth spade with the ten South switched to the six of hearts and North won with the king and returned the seven of clubs. South won with the queen and played the nine of hearts, North winning with the jack. (Declarer can win with the ace, cash the ace of clubs and exit with a heart, eventually scoring two diamond tricks thanks to the favourable position. If North knew South had the ♥10 then withholding the jack prevents this line from working). North's club exit (nothing else works now) saw declarer win with dummy's jack and play a diamond to the king and ace. South returned the six but when the nine forced the queen declarer had seven tricks, +90 and 5 IMPs.

♠ 7642	♠ 5	♠ AKQ3
♥ 52	♥ KJ73	♥ A84
♦ J98	♦ Q754	♦ K32
♣ J863	♣ K1097	♣ A42
	♠ J1098	♠ 32
	♥ Q1096	♥ J95
	♦ A106	♦ AQ7643
	♣ Q5	♣ AQ

There were other ways to defend that would have made life easier for N/S.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Marina</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Petrov</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Redouble	2♥
2♠	All Pass		

South led the ♥9 and declarer ducked North's king, won the heart continuation, cashed two spades, North pitching the ♦4, ruffed a heart and played the jack of clubs for the king and ace. South won the club exit and played a spade. Declarer won and exited with a club, North won as South pitched a diamond and played a club, ruffed and overruffed by South who could cash two tricks before giving declarer a diamond at the end, one down, -50 and a single IMP for E/W.



Apolinary Kowalski enjoying the opening banquet with Romain Zaleski

### Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AQ5	♠ J1098	♠ 32
♥ K62	♥ AQ84	♥ J95
♦ KJ10985	♦ —	♦ AQ7643
♣ 4	♣ K10876	♣ AQ
	♠ K764	
	♥ 1073	
	♦ 2	
	♣ J9532	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Badursson</i>	<i>Birin</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
—	2♦*	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	4♣
5♦	All Pass		
2♦	Short ♦10-15		

South led the four of spades and declarer finessed, drew trumps, eliminated the black suits and claimed – it was clear North held the ♥AQ to get up to 10 points.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Marina</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Petrov</i>
—	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♦*	Double	Pass	2♠
Double	Pass	3♠*	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	All Pass		
2♦	Inverted raise		

I'm not sure how to interpret the bids of 3♠ and 4♠ – are you?

South led the seven of hearts (just imagine North's holding was ♥AQJ8 and you will see the advantage of starting with the ten) so declarer was able to claim when there was no ruff and the spade king was onside, +600 which gave both our E/W pairs 3 IMPs.

## On the Moscow Menu

Who is the most successful restaurateur in the world?

The man is Arkady Novikov. It's his name above the door and on the menus, and right now he's the hottest thing in the kitchen. The spry, fast-talking 51-year-old has already created one vast food empire in that most unlikely of epicurean locations, Moscow, and is about to create another in London. He already has more than 50 restaurants worldwide – in Moscow there are 10 all within half a kilometre of the Kremlin. You could try No Fish, just off Lubyanka Square or Farsh, one of his 11 burger joints. Or perhaps 1517, Vogue Café or Bolshoi. The list is almost endless.

Virtually every major restaurateur turned down the chance to open a restaurant in the Berkeley Street site Novikov inhabits because they reckoned it was too big to be profitable.

The 540-seater establishment is, in fact, two restaurants, a Zuma-style Asian upstairs and a classical Italian downstairs, plus a Moscow-meets-May-fair lounge bar in the basement. The rent is £1,000,000 a year. Novikov spent £10 million developing it and they do 800-900 covers a day with an average check of £80-£100. That means the place is taking almost £100,000 every day, £700,000 a week and upwards of £35 million a year- and 30% of that is profit.

Novikov has just closed a deal that is close to his heart in Moscow having

secured the franchise to open Krispy Kreme in Moscow's Red Square. When it opened there were 500 people in the queue outside.

I expect there were just as many people waiting to watch on BBO as day 2 of the Slava Cup got under way.



## Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ AQ763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</span> </div>	♠ K852
♥ 10864		♥ AQ75
♦ 8		♦ J53
♣ AJ5		♣ Q4
♠ J10		♠ 94
♥ KJ9	♥ 32	
♦ K742	♦ AQ1096	
♣ 9762	♣ K1083	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	1♣	1♦
1NT	2♠	All Pass	

East led the queen of clubs and declarer won with the ace and exited with a heart. Now East does best to let West win the trick so that he can switch to the jack of spades, but anxious to play a second club he put up the queen and declarer took the club return with the jack and played a second heart. West won with the jack and gave his partner a club ruff, and when a diamond was returned declarer won with dummy's ace, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart and pitched a heart on the king of clubs. East ruffed and exited with a diamond, but declarer ruffed and played two rounds of spades for +110 and 5 IMPs.

As the cards lie, declarer does best to play a diamond to the ten at trick two. West wins and plays a spade, but declarer rises with the ace, crosses to dummy with a club and plays three rounds of diamonds pitching hearts. East can ruff, but declarer is sure to take eight tricks.

## Closed Room

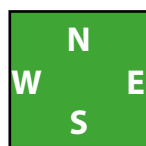
West	North	East	South
Orlov	Baldursson	Rudakov	Haraldsson
–	–	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

- 2♣ Majors  
2♦ No preference

Once again the lead was the queen of clubs and declarer won with the ace and played a diamond. However, he put in dummy's queen and West won and returned a club, declarer winning with dummy's eight, cashing the ace of diamonds, and then playing a heart. West won with the jack and could have looked for two down by switching to a spade, but he gave his partner a club ruff, East exiting with a diamond. Declarer ruffed and played a heart and East won and played a third heart. Declarer ruffed and ruffed a diamond, overruffed by East who played a heart, ruffed in turn by the nine, ten and queen. East had a trump to come for one down, -100 and an IMP for E/W.

### Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

	♠ 42	
	♥ J532	
	♦ 52	
	♣ K9743	
♠ 10865		♠ A973
♥ 109		♥ AK8
♦ Q10		♦ AJ864
♣ A10862		♣ 5
	♠ KQJ	
	♥ Q764	
	♦ K973	
	♣ QJ	



## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kowalski	Alfejeva	Russyan	Birin
Pass	Pass	1♦	Double
1♠	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Declarer won the club lead with the ace and ran the queen of diamonds, South winning with the king and switching to the queen of spades. When it held he continued with the jack and declarer won with dummy's ace, crossed to the ten of diamonds and was soon claiming ten tricks, +170, a loss of 4 IMPs.

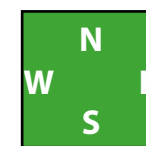
## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Orlov	Baldursson	Rudakov	Haraldsson
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

North led the two of hearts and declarer won with dummy's ace and ducked a spade, South winning with the queen and returning the jack. Declarer took dummy's ace, played a club to the ace and ran the queen of diamonds. South won and cashed the king of spades, but declarer had the rest, +620 and 8 IMPs.

### Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ 1093	
	♥ A9642	
	♦ J4	
	♣ J92	
♠ QJ75		♠ AK42
♥ 75		♥ QJ103
♦ Q1032		♦ 987
♣ A106		♣ 43
	♠ 86	
	♥ K8	
	♦ AK65	
	♣ KQ875	



## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
All Pass			
2♦	Transfer		

West led the queen of spades and the defenders played three rounds of the suit, declarer ruffing, cashing the king of hearts and playing a club. When dummy's jack held he played two rounds of hearts and was assured of eight tricks, +110 and an IMP.

♠ 1093	♥ A9642	♦ J4	♣ J92
♠ QJ75	♥ 75	♦ Q1032	♣ A106
♠ AK42	♥ QJ103	♦ 987	♣ 43
♠ 86	♥ K8	♦ AK65	♣ KQ875

## Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AQJ	♥ A	♦ K9653	♣ AJ42
♠ 1098764	♥ Q1065	♦ 42	♣ 9
♠ K2	♥ KJ9843	♦ A	♣ Q1086
♠ 53	♥ 72	♦ QJ1087	♣ K753

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	1♥	Pass
3♥	Double	4♣	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

South led the five of spades and North took the ace and switched to the five of diamonds. Declarer won with the ace and played a heart to North's ace. He ruffed the diamond return, drew the outstanding trump, cashed the king of spades and gave up a club, claiming +620 and 9 IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Orlov</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Rudakov</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	1♥	Pass
4♥	Double	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

4NT Minors

East led the four of hearts and declarer won, played a club to the king, ruffed a heart and exited with a diamond. East won and exited with a club and West ruffed and played a spade, one down, -50 which gave N/S 4 IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Orlov</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Rudakov</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	Pass	1NT*	Double
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Double*	All Pass		
1NT 10-12			
Dble Takeout			

East led the king of spades, continued with the ace and then switched to the four of clubs. Declarer was allowed to win with the nine and he ruffed a spade, cashed the king of hearts and the top diamonds and then played a club. West won and played a spade but declarer ruffed, cashed the ace of hearts and then played a club, claiming eight tricks, +670 and 12 IMPs.

In order to defeat 2♥ the defenders need to switch to trumps at trick two – in East's case it must be an honour. Declarer can win with dummy's king and play a spade but West wins and plays a heart and now there are only seven tricks.



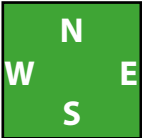
**Sigurbjorn Haraldsson**

## The Winter Queen

*The Winter Queen* is the first novel in the Erast Fandorin series of historical detective novels, written by Russian author Boris Akunin. It was subtitled (“conspiracy mystery”). In one episode, the hero investigates Count Zurov. After Fandorin beats him at cards, the count challenges him to a duel.

Luckily that tends not to happen at bridge, as unfortunately there are almost always winners and losers.

### Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ A 10 ♥ A J 6 ♦ 10 9 8 6 2 ♣ J 10 3		♠ Q 6 5 ♥ K Q 9 5 ♦ A 3 ♣ K 9 5 2	♠ K 8 ♥ 8 7 4 3 2 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ 8 7 4
---	---	--	--

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Yadlin</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Yadlin</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

North led the nine of diamonds and declarer was doomed, having to lose a diamond, two spades and a heart, -100 and a loss of 8 IMPs.

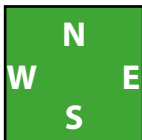
### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

4♦ Transfer

Played by East there is only one lead to defeat 4♠—an impossible to find ♠8 that allows North to win and switch to a diamond. South led the seven of hearts and North took the ace and switched to a diamond. Declarer won with the ace, pitched dummy’s diamonds on the top hearts, ruffed a diamond and played a spade for the ten, queen and king. He ruffed the heart return with dummy’s nine of spades, played a club to the king and a spade, +620 and a 9 IMP pick-up.

### Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 5 ♥ Q 8 7 5 ♦ 10 8 3 2 ♣ A K 5 2		♠ 10 9 6 3 2 ♥ K 10 6 4 3 ♦ A ♣ J 9	♠ A Q 8 4 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ K Q 7 5 ♣ Q 7
---	--	--	--

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Yadlin</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Yadlin</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1NT	2♣*	Double
3♥	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			



East led the four of hearts and declarer could not avoid three down, -150, worth 3 IMPs to N/S.

Would you have been tempted to double 3NT with West's cards? It would have been worth 6 IMPs.

Or perhaps you would have bid 4♥ as opposed to 3♥? (The defenders need to lead trumps on the go to beat it and then switch to diamonds.) Many pairs made 4♥, some of them doubled—and some with an overtrick, the swing being between 5 and 10 IMPs.

♠ 5	♠ AQ84	♠ 109632
♥ Q875	♥ J92	♥ K10643
♦ 10832	♦ KQ75	♦ A
♣ AK52	♣ Q7	♣ J9
	W N E	
	S	
	♠ KJ7	
	♥ A	
	♦ J964	
	♣ 108643	

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Baldursson	Russyan	Haraldsson	Kowalski
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1NT	Double*	3NT
All Pass			

Dble ♠ and another suit

There was no case for West to double here, but when East led the three of hearts the contract was again three down.

## Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A1052	♠ 63
♥ A98432	♥ KQJ
♦ 109	♦ AQ76
♣ 7	♣ AQJ5
♠ J9	♠ KQ874
♥ 105	♥ 76
♦ K8432	♦ J5
♣ K1086	♣ 9432
	W N E
	S

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Yadlin	Alfejeva	Yadlin	Birin
–	–	–	2♠
Pass	4♠	Double	All Pass

If E/W could make a five-level contract then 4♠ was likely to go down.

Declarer could not avoid the loss of four tricks, -200 which proved to be dead average.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Baldursson	Russyan	Haraldsson	Kowalski
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♥	Double	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	All Pass

That was a painless +130 which was worth a couple of IMPs.

Suppose East had bid 3NT at some point? Would South have led a spade—doubtful. On a heart lead would North switch to spades at trick two—perhaps. The frequencies revealed that 3NT was made eleven times and was worth 6 IMPs—it was defeated six times, a 7 IMP swing.

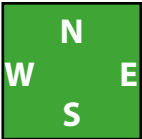
## The Rite of Spring

*The Rite of Spring* is a ballet and orchestral concert work by the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky. It was written for the 1913 Paris season of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes company; the original choreography was by Vaslav Nijinsky, with stage designs and costumes by Nicholas Roerich. When first performed, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 29 May 1913, the avant-garde nature of the music and choreography caused a sensation and a near-riot in the audience. Although designed as a work for the stage, with specific passages accompanying characters and action, the music achieved equal if not greater recognition as a concert piece and is widely considered to be one of the most influential musical works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally the 1<sup>st</sup> of March is regarded as the first day of Spring but that hardly applied to the weather in England.

Stravinsky was a young, virtually unknown composer when Diaghilev recruited him to create works for the Ballets Russes. *The Rite* was the third such project, after the acclaimed *Firebird* and *Petrushka*.

I wondered if the winners of this year's Slava Cup might be a relatively unknown pair?

## Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ QJ32 ♥ 107 ♦ Q1072 ♣ AJ8		♠ AK87 ♥ K9 ♦ KJ86 ♣ K105	♠ 4 ♥ Q532 ♦ A953 ♣ 9763
♠ 10965 ♥ AJ864 ♦ 4 ♣ Q42			

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kazantsev</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Rozenblyum</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	1NT	2♣*
Double	3♥	3NT	All Pass
2♣ Majors			

How do you play the double of 2♣? Just high cards, or the ability to double at least one major for penalties?

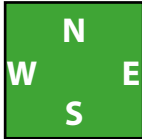
South led the six of hearts and when North came in with the ace of diamonds at trick two a second heart gave the defenders five tricks, +50 and 2 IMPs for the leaders.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	1NT	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

South led a trump and declarer won with dummy's queen and played a second spade to his ace, North pitching the five of hearts. When a diamond to the queen held declarer drew the outstanding trumps ending in dummy, North parting with a second heart and a club, and played a diamond to the jack, South discarding the four of hearts. Declarer played the king of diamonds and South threw another heart as North won with the ace. The queen of hearts at this point would give the defenders the next three tricks, but North exited with the ♥3 and now declarer was in the game. He went up with king and when South decided to duck declarer no longer needed to guess the location of the queen of clubs. He played a diamond to the ten and South pitched a club. When declarer cashed dummy's ace of clubs South threw the queen, so a remarkable +450 and 9 IMPs.

## Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K9832 ♥ A94 ♦ 972 ♣ AQ		♠ J6 ♥ Q1062 ♦ AQ864 ♣ 83	♠ Q1054 ♥ 875 ♦ J1053 ♣ J2
♠ A7 ♥ KJ3 ♦ K ♣ K1097654			

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kazantsev	Alfejeva	Rozenblyum	Birin
-	-	-	2♣*
All Pass			
2♣	Precision		

West led the seven of diamonds and when East followed with the four, declarer won with the king and played the king of clubs. West won and continued with the nine of diamonds for the ten and queen and declarer ruffed and played a club, West winning and exiting with his last diamond. Declarer ruffed and played two rounds of spades and West was endplayed, +110 when he elected to exit with a spade, 5 IMPs for N/S.

As you will doubtless have noticed the decisive moment was at trick one. If East takes the ace of diamonds and for example switches to a club, West wins, cashes a second club and exits with a diamond. Declarer ruffs East's queen and plays ace of spades and a spade but West wins and exits with a low heart when the contract must fail.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Isporski	Baldursson	Trendafilov	Haraldsson
-	-	-	2♣*
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

North led the jack of clubs and declarer won with the queen and ran the seven of diamonds, South returning the nine of clubs. Declarer won with the ace and played the nine of diamonds for the ten and queen, played a spade to the king and a diamond, drawing trumps and playing a heart to the nine, +130 and an IMP for E/W.

It had been a great morning for the overnight leaders, who had recorded three wins to move almost a match clear.

♠ Q1054		♠ J6	
♥ 875		♥ Q1062	
♦ J1053		♦ AQ864	
♣ J2		♣ 83	
♠ K9832	<b>W N</b>	♠ A7	
♥ A94	<b>E</b>	♥ KJ3	
♦ 972	<b>S</b>	♦ K	
♣ AQ		♣ K1097654	

## The Snow Maiden

*The Snow Maiden* (A Spring Fairy Tale) is an opera in four acts with a prologue by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, composed during 1880-1881.

The first performance took place at the Mariinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg on 29 January 1882 conducted by Eduard Nápravník. By 1898 it was revised in the edition known today. It remained the composer's own favourite work.

The story deals with the opposition of eternal forces of nature and involves the interactions of mythological characters (Frost, Spring, Wood-Sprite), real people (Kupava, Mizgir'), and those in-between, i.e., half-mythical, half-real (Snow Maiden, Lel', Berendey).

At the bridge table the opposition is always real, although sometimes they play as if inspired by some external force.

Would there be any inspirational play in Round 10? Judge for yourselves:

### Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ 1053		♠ KJ862	
♥ A4		♥ K753	
♦ Q765		♦ K8	
♣ AK85		♣ 97	
♠ AQ7	<b>W N</b>	♠ 94	
♥ 962	<b>E</b>	♥ QJ108	
♦ A9432	<b>S</b>	♦ J10	
♣ 62		♣ QJ1043	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Isporski	Alfejeva	Trendafilov	Birin
-	-	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	1♠	Double
2♥	Pass	2♠	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♠	All Pass

South led the queen of clubs and North overtook it with the king and played two rounds of hearts. Declarer won with the king and played three rounds of diamonds, pitching his remaining club. South ruffed his partner's seven, cashed the jack of hearts and continued with the queen, but declarer ruffed with dummy's queen, cashed the ace of spades and claimed, +140 and an IMP for E/W.

♠ AQ7	♠ 1053	♠ KJ862									
♥ 962	♥ A4	♥ K753									
♦ A9432	♦ Q765	♦ K8									
♣ 62	♣ AK85	♣ 97									
<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ 94	♠ 94										
♥ QJ108	♥ QJ108										
♦ J10	♦ J10										
♣ QJ1043	♣ QJ1043										

## Board 14. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ A97	♠ A97	♠ K864									
♥ 2	♥ 2	♥ Q84									
♦ AQ109854	♦ AQ109854	♦ J763									
♣ 72	♣ 72	♣ J5									
<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ J532	♠ J532										
♥ AKJ10	♥ AKJ10										
♦ 2	♦ 2										
♣ AK96	♣ AK96										
♠ Q10	♠ Q10										
♥ 97653	♥ 97653										
♦ K	♦ K										
♣ Q10843	♣ Q10843										

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	1♥*	2♥
4♠	5♦	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

1♥ Transfer

South led the ♦J and declarer played three rounds of the suit, ruffing with the jack of spades. He cashed the king of spades, played a spade to the queen and pitched a club on a diamond as North won with the queen. North cashed the ace of clubs and played a second round, declarer ruffing, crossing to dummy with a spade, cashing a diamond and playing a heart, but North was down to ♥A♣K8 and could claim the last three tricks for one down, +100—a loss of 5 IMPs.

Did you spot declarer's mistake?

After ruffing a diamond high he should retain the ♠K—one option is to cross to dummy with a spade and pitch a club on a diamond. If North now plays two rounds of clubs declarer does not ruff, instead pitching a heart, leaving the defenders helpless.

Had North passed and led his heart (or the ♦A—or any diamond for that matter) 4♠ would have been likely to be defeated (North will need to take the ♠A on the first round of the suit). Five Diamonds would have been routed by a club lead, but East started with the four of spades, which cost a trick when declarer put up dummy's queen. he continued with a spade to the ace and a spade ruff, so that was two down, -300 and 3 IMPs to E/W.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Baldursson</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣*	3♦	Double*	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

1♣ Strong



**Rumen Trendafilov**

South led the king of diamonds and North overtook it and returned his heart, declarer winning with the ace and playing a spade. Now North should take the ace and play a diamond, South ruffing and returning a heart. However, North withheld the ace and declarer could now have got home by going up with dummy's king of spades and playing a second spade. When declarer put in dummy's eight, South won with the ten and returned the seven of hearts, North ruffing and playing the nine of diamonds. South ruffed with the ♠Q and that was two down, -100 which gave N/S 7 IMPs.

Making 4♠ would have been worth 6 IMPs.

## The Moscow Puzzles

The Moscow Puzzles by Boris A.Kordemsky is quite simply, the best and most popular puzzle book ever published in Russia. Since its first appearance in 1956 there have been eight editions as well as translations from the original Russian into Ukrainian, Estonian, Lettish, and Lithuanian. Almost a million copies of the Russian version alone have been sold.

Part of the reason for the book's success is its marvellously varied assortment of brainteasers ranging from simple "catch" riddles to difficult problems (none, however, requiring advanced mathematics). Many of the puzzles will be new to Western readers, while some familiar problems have been clothed in new forms. Often the puzzles are presented in the form of charming stories that provide non-Russian readers with valuable insights into contemporary Russian life and customs.

As the players took their seats for Round 11 would they be able to overcome any problems that might present themselves?

If you were looking at ♠4 ♥KQJ87 ♦AK7 ♣A972 and saw your partner, Green v Red open 3♠ would you raise to game?

Partner's hand was ♠KQJ983 ♥1042 ♦1083 ♣8 and everything was friendly, so eleven tricks were the norm, the pairs who bid it collecting 4 IMPs.

### Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ Q832 ♥ Q432 ♦ K7 ♣ K102		♠ KJ9764 ♥ 976 ♦ J963 ♣ —	♠ 105 ♥ J10 ♦ Q108542 ♣ J83
♠ A ♥ AK85 ♦ A ♣ AQ97654			

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ekenberg</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	2♦*	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♣
All Pass			
2♦	Multi		

If 3♠ promised a minimum then going past 4♠ was pure speculation. Interestingly enough if the defenders fail to lead a diamond at trick one you can make 6♠ by setting up the clubs.

Obviously 6♣ was hopeless. Declarer took ten tricks, -200 and lost 10 IMPs.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>
–	Pass	3♣*	Double
3♦	3♠	Pass	5♣
All Pass			
3♣	Transfer pre-empt		

West led the ♦K and declarer won perforce with the ace and played the ace



of clubs followed by the queen. He ruffed the diamond return, unblocked the ♠A and exited with a club. He won the return of the ♥J with the ace and played the ♥5. When West went in with the queen the contract was one down, -100, still a loss of 9 IMPs.

13 pairs made game in spades – while one tried 7♥ and dropped 11 IMPs.

## Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K ♥ Q ♦ AKQ873 ♣ KQ873	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</span> <span style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</span> </div>	♠ Q2 ♥ J109763 ♦ 542 ♣ 104	♠ A98643 ♥ AK5 ♦ J9 ♣ J6
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♠ J1075  
 ♥ 842  
 ♦ 106  
 ♣ A952

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ekenberg</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

4♥ Cue-bid  
 4♠ Cue-bid  
 4NT RKCB  
 5♥ 2 key cards

A straightforward auction that everyone could understand, +1370.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♦	All Pass		



**Simon Hult**

The Bulgarian's saved a round of bidding, +1370 and the same 7 IMPs that were gained at the other table.

A couple of pairs stopped in 3NT to lose 8 IMPs, but incredibly 7 pairs attempted 6♣ to surrender 15 IMPs.


## The Mighty Handful

*The Mighty Handful* also known as *The Five* and *The New Russian School*, were five prominent 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian composers who worked together to create distinctly Russian classical music. Mily Balakirev (the leader), César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin all lived in Saint Petersburg, and collaborated from 1856 to 1870.

As I sat down to watch Round 12 I wondered if anyone would pick up a powerhouse – a mighty handful at the bridge table.

I did not have to wait long.

## Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ K10986 ♥ 953 ♦ 3 ♣ 10874		♠ — ♥ KJ87 ♦ KJ54 ♣ AQJ53	♠ AQ742 ♥ 104 ♦ 1086 ♣ 962
		♠ J53 ♥ AQ62 ♦ AQ972 ♣ K	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦
1♠	3♠*	4♠	4NT*
Pass	5♥*	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

Blackwood was not the answer on this deal—although I'm not sure why North did not respond 5NT, the traditional way to show two key cards and a void. +1390 cost N/S 3 IMPs.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Marina</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Petrov</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♠*
Double	6♥	All Pass	


Once again 4NT did not help.

Cue-bidding looks a better approach—if North bids 4♣ over 3♥ South bids 4♦ and then bids 5♣ over North's 4♠. If North then bids 5♦ and South

only bids 5♥ North continues with 5♠ when South knows enough to bid a grand slam. +1460 gave E/W an IMP.

Only 4 pairs went 'all in'—their reward was a 12 IMP pick-up.

## Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AJ86 ♥ AKJ ♦ 1086 ♣ Q86		♠ K105 ♥ Q109762 ♦ 52 ♣ 92	♠ Q43 ♥ 854 ♦ AKQJ4 ♣ 53
		♠ 972 ♥ 3 ♦ 973 ♣ AKJ1074	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
–	–	–	3♣
Double	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Full marks to Rossen Gunev for making the practical bid of 3NT.

South led the two of spades and must have been disappointed when he saw the dummy with its ♣Q86. North won with the king and returned the nine of clubs and South played the ten, so that was +460 and 7 IMPs.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Marina</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Petrov</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	–	3♣
All Pass			

West led the ace of hearts and switched to the six of spades, East winning with the queen and cashing the ace of diamonds. Best now is a club, which

should lead to three down, but East cashed another diamond which cost the defenders a trick, -100 and 2 IMPs for N/S.

If East had bid 3♦ West would have had an easy 3NT. On the other hand West might have overcalled 3NT.

## Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K86 ♥ J982 ♦ 1072 ♣ K84		♠ AQ32 ♥ AQ75 ♦ K ♣ QJ65
♠ 4 ♥ K64 ♦ QJ9653 ♣ A103	♠ J10975 ♥ 103 ♦ A84 ♣ 972	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♦*	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

1♦ Precision

South led the jack of spades and declarer won with the queen, unblocked the ♦K and played a club to the ten. North won and returned the king of spades, holding declarer to nine tricks, +400 and 7 IMPs for E/W.

For those who are interested, the chances of the diamond suit providing five tricks is 51.67%.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Marina</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Petrov</i>	<i>Birin</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

North led the two of diamonds and South won and switched to the seven of clubs. When declarer followed with the three North's ♣K was the setting trick, -100 and an 11 IMP loss.

Suppose declarer rejects the club finesse?

After taking the ace of clubs declarer draws trumps pitching two clubs from dummy and then takes the spade finesse. Declarer ruffs a spade and plays his remaining trumps to reach this position:

♠ – ♥ J982 ♦ – ♣ K		♠ A ♥ AQ75 ♦ – ♣ –
♠ – ♥ K64 ♦ – ♣ 103	♠ J ♥ 103 ♦ – ♣ 92	

He crosses to dummy with a heart and cashes the ace of spades, squeezing North.

## And Quiet Flows the Don

*And Quiet Flows the Don* is an epic novel in four volumes by Russian writer Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov. The first three volumes were written from 1925 to 1932 and published in the Soviet magazine *Oktyabr* in 1928-1932, and the fourth volume was finished in 1940. The English translation of the first three volumes appeared under this title in 1934.

The novel is considered one of the most significant works of world and Russian literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It depicts the lives and struggles of Don Cossacks during the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and Russian Civil War. In 1965, Sholokhov was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for this novel.

Going into the final day four matches were left to determine who would lift the Slava Cup in 2018. Any hopes of a quiet start to the day were soon dispelled.

The very first deal appeared dull—a 1NT contract. North led a spade from ♠A6543 which looked as if it would give the defenders seven tricks as the suit was 5-2-4-2 round the table and declarer was also missing the ♣AK and ♥A. However, South's holding was ♠9872 and when he followed with the two the suit was blocked, so when North's only outside entry was removed at trick two, declarer was home, +90 and 3 IMPs.

### Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A986 ♥ 7632 ♦ — ♣ AQ742	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                     N                      W                      E                      S                 </div>	♠ 102 ♥ AKQJ ♦ J5432 ♣ K3	♠ KJ754 ♥ — ♦ Q1096 ♣ J965
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### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Danailov	Alfejeva	Gunev	Birin
—	—	—	2♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass

South led the ten of diamonds and declarer ruffed and came to hand with a heart. When South discarded he ruffed a diamond, returned to hand with the ♣K, ruffed a diamond, and played dummy's ♣AQ. North ruffed the second of these, but declarer overruffed and played a spade to the ace, claiming +620 and a 2 IMP pick-up.

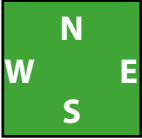
### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Orlov	Hult	Rudakov	Ekenberg
—	—	—	Pass
1♣*	1♥	1♠*	Double
1NT	Pass	2♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Double
5♠	Double	5NT	Double
All Pass			

North's overcall in the suit in which E/W could make game proved impossible to overcome.

North led the queen of spades and declarer won and cashed his hearts. South pitched two spades and two diamonds, so the best declarer could do was eight tricks, -800 which cost a massive 16 IMPs.

## Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 10763 ♥ K ♦ K843 ♣ A753		♠ AQJ95 ♥ Q9853 ♦ 107 ♣ K	♠ 8 ♥ 10742 ♦ QJ95 ♣ J864
		♠ K42 ♥ AJ6 ♦ A62 ♣ Q1092	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Birin</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT*
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

East led the jack of diamonds and declarer won with dummy's ace and drew trumps in four rounds, East parting with a club and two diamonds. The queen of hearts lost to the king and West returned a diamond, East winning with the queen and playing a club. West took the ace and played the king of diamonds and declarer had to lose a club at the end, -100 and a loss of 9 IMPs.

### Closed Room

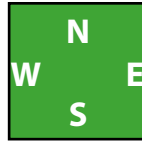
West	North	East	South
<i>Orlov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Rudakov</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
1♦	1♠	3♦	4♠
All Pass			

Here East led the queen of diamonds and declarer took dummy's ace, played two rounds of spades ending in dummy and cashed the ace of hearts. When

the king fell declarer drew trumps and ran the eight of hearts, claiming eleven tricks, +650, this time the 9 IMPs going to N/S.

11 Pairs went down in 4♠—they must all have taken the heart finesse. However, it is an illusion. You only need four heart tricks, so any 3-2 break will suffice. The danger is that you might, as here, lose to a singleton king.

## Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 865 ♥ A1054 ♦ 742 ♣ Q76		♠ AKQ74 ♥ 2 ♦ 985 ♣ KJ85	♠ J109 ♥ KQ763 ♦ J103 ♣ 42
		♠ 32 ♥ J98 ♦ AKQ6 ♣ A1093	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Alfejeva</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Birin</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

East led the king of hearts and continued the suit, declarer ruffing, drawing trumps and playing West for the ♣Q, +480 and 3 IMPs.



## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Orlov	Hult	Rudakov	Ekenberg
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♥*	Pass	4♦*
Pass	4♠*	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♣

All Pass

- 3♥ Splinter
- 4♦ Cue-bid
- 4♠ Cue-bid
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♥ 2 key cards

West cashed the ace of hearts and switched to the two of diamonds. Declarer won, cashed the ace of clubs and then ran the ten, +920 and 11 IMPs.

## The Orlov Diamond

Count *Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov* was the favourite of Empress Catherine the Great of Russia. He led the coup which overthrew Catherine's husband Peter III of Russia, and installed Catherine as empress. For some years, he was virtually co-ruler with her, but his repeated infidelities and the enmity of Catherine's other advisers led to his fall from power.

The *Orlov* is a large diamond of Indian origin, currently displayed as a part of the collection of the Diamond Fund of the Kremlin. It is described as having the shape and proportions of half



a chicken's egg. In 1774, it was encrusted into the Imperial Sceptre of Russian Empress Catherine the Great.

The diamond was found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Golkonda, India. According to one legend in 1747, a French soldier who had deserted during the Carnatic wars in Srirangam disguised himself as a Hindu convert in order

to steal it, when it served as the eye of a temple deity.

The as yet unnamed stone passed from merchant to merchant, eventually appearing for sale in Amsterdam. Shaffrass, an Iranian millionaire who then owned the diamond, found an eager buyer in the Count, who paid a purported 1.4 million Dutch florins. Catherine eventually forsook Count Orlov for Grigori Alexandrovich Potemkin. It is claimed that the Count tried to rekindle their romance by offering her the diamond as a gift. Actually, Catherine herself bought the diamond and only used Orlov's help with the deal and delivery, inventing the story about his generous present only to avoid criticism for spending the state's budget on jewellery. The Russian empress was very fond of diamonds, and she put them into fashion at her court and even named her personal stallion Diamond. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the purchase price was so big that only the empress herself could afford it.

Would Round 14 produce any sparkling gems?

## Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

	♠ KQ109652	
	♥ A6	
	♦ 10	
	♣ J72	
♠ 8		♠ AJ743
♥ Q9852		♥ 10
♦ QJ9743		♦ A85
♣ 5		♣ AKQ3
	♠ —	
	♥ KJ743	
	♦ K62	
	♣ 109864	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kowalski	Hult	Russyan	Ekenberg
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

East cashed the ace of clubs and switched to the ten of hearts. Declarer won with the ace and played the ten of diamonds, East taking the ace and cashing the king of clubs. When West discarded he continued with the three of clubs and West ruffed and returned a heart for East to ruff, so that was three down, -500 and 6 IMPs for E/W.

♠ 8	♠ KQ109652	♠ AJ743
♥ Q9852	♥ A6	♥ 10
♦ QJ9743	♦ 10	♦ A85
♣ 5	♣ J72	♣ AKQ3
		♠ —
		♥ KJ743
		♦ K62
		♣ 109864

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wrang	Danailov	Stokka	Gunev
–	–	–	2♦*
Pass	2♠	Double	Pass
3♦	3♠	Double	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♦	Double
All Pass			

East's second double was clearly for penalties, but West was unwilling to stand it.

North led the king of spades and South ruffed dummy's ace and returned the four of hearts, North winning with the ace and playing the ♦10 – South's king was the setting trick, +100, 9 IMPs to N/S.

## Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A2		♠ KJ97
♥ 863		♥ Q7
♦ AQ1043		♦ J98
♣ J75		♣ Q832
♠ Q83		
♥ A1092		
♦ 762		
♣ K104		
		♠ 10654
		♥ KJ54
		♦ K5
		♣ A96

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kowalski	Hult	Russyan	Ekenberg
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West made the unfortunate lead of the ten of hearts (if you must lead the suit why not start with the two?) and declarer took East's queen with the king and returned the four, West winning with the nine and switching to the eight of spades (nothing else is better). Declarer ducked, won the next spade and played the eight of hearts. That set up a heart and declarer had nine tricks when the diamonds came in, a Meckwellian +400 and 8 IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wrang	Danailov	Stokka	Gunev
–	–	Pass	1♦*
Pass	2♠*	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

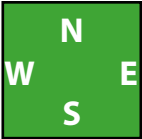
West led the three of spades and East won with the king and returned the seven to dummy's ace. A heart went to the queen, king and ace and West returned the two, giving declarer the chance for an overtrick by putting up dummy's eight. When he played the six, East's seven saw declarer duck. There were only eight tricks now, +120, a couple of IMPs for N/S.

## The Diamond Fund

The *Diamond Fund* is a unique collection of gems, jewellery and natural nuggets, which are stored and exhibited in the Kremlin. The Fund dates back to the Russian Crown treasury instituted by Emperor Peter I of Russia in 1719. The Diamond Fund exhibition was opened in 1967. The collection is undoubtedly one of the most significant and largest in the world. Recent additions include The Creator mined in Yakutia in 2004, the third largest raw diamond in the Fund, at 298.48 carats (59.696 g), the Golden Nugget, at 33kg and the *Alexander Pushkin*, the second-largest raw diamond, at 320.65 carats (64.130 g).

As the players settled into their seats for the penultimate round the leaders were hoping that they would be the ones to strike it lucky.

## Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A1084 ♥ 5 ♦ 10952 ♣ KQ97		♠ 763 ♥ AK ♦ 863 ♣ AJ832	♠ KQJ2 ♥ J10743 ♦ Q ♣ 1065
♠ 95 ♥ Q9862 ♦ AKJ74 ♣ 4			

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
–	–	2♥*	Pass
3♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
All Pass			
2♥ Both majors			

When South re-opened with a double, one option for North was to pass, leading a trump and continuing to do so every time he regained the lead would generate at least -300. However, that would be small beer compared to a possible vulnerable game. When North jumped to 5♣ South had to bid 5♦ and now it was a question of whether West might speculate with a double.

No, he let it go and led the two of diamonds, declarer winning with the ace and unblocking dummy's hearts. West ruffed the second round and switched to the king of clubs (had he found the underlead of the ace of spades he would have been able to put his partner in twice to ruff two more hearts for three down). Declarer won, ruffed a club and played a heart, back

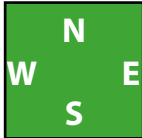
in three down territory, but West discarded a spade and declarer ruffed in dummy, drew trumps and escaped for two down, -200 and 4 IMPs for E/W.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zorlu</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Kubac</i>	<i>Rohowsky</i>
–	–	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠*	Double	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

West was confident N/S did not have a spade stopper so he led the four of spades and East won with the jack and returned the king, West overtaking with the ace and playing a third spade. Declarer ruffed, played a heart to the ace and a diamond for the queen and ace. A heart to the king saw West discard the ♣7 and declarer continued with a diamond, East discarding a club and declarer winning, crossing to the ace of clubs and playing a diamond. If East ruffs this the contract will be two down, but when he discarded declarer could win and exit with a diamond. West could win, but declarer was sure to score two tricks with the ♥Q9 – when East ruffed in with the ♥10 on the spade exit declarer pitched his diamond, so -100 which saw N/S lose an IMP.

## Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AJ9874 ♥ 84 ♦ K976 ♣ 5		♠ 53 ♥ K102 ♦ Q5 ♣ A97643	♠ 1062 ♥ J963 ♦ A82 ♣ 1082
♠ KQ ♥ AQ75 ♦ J1043 ♣ KQJ			

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Danailov	Hult	Gunev	Ekenberg
-	-	-	1♣*
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

1♣ 2+♣, 11-13 BAL or 17-19 BAL or 11-23 HCP, 4+ ♣ (can be 3352 if balanced)

That was a bad miss by the leaders. If North had bid 3♣ over 2♠ South would have had an easy 3NT and he would probably have done the same if North had doubled 3♠.

Declarer lost two diamonds and spade, +130 but it cost 9 IMPs.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Zorlu	Gromoeller	Kubac	Rohowsky
-	-	-	1NT
2♦*	3NT	All Pass	
2♦	Multi Landy		

On a spade lead declarer took ten tricks, +630 and 3 IMPs.

The leaders had lost 22-38 – whose nerves would be strongest in the decider?

## The Talisman

*An object, typically an inscribed ring or stone that is thought to have magic powers and to bring good luck.*

An event played in such close proximity to the Bolshoi Theatre, home to the most famous ballet company in the world, demands at least one reference.

*The Talisman* is a ballet which premièred on February 6 1889 at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. It gave rise to the so-called *Talisman Pas de Deux*, which is still performed by many ballet companies.

More importantly, as the last round got under way, who held the more powerful good luck charm?

On the opening deal the leaders did well to stop in 2♠ with ♠KQ765 ♥107 ♦Q53 ♣864 opposite ♠AJ ♥KQ42 ♦K104 ♣KJ105 after North

♠ 53	♥ K102	♦ Q5	♣ A97643
♠ AJ9874	♥ 84	♦ K976	♣ 5
♠ KQ	♥ AQ75	♦ J1043	♣ KQJ
♠ 1062	♥ J963	♦ A42	♣ 1082

opened a (3) 6-9 multi 2♦. +110 was the datum score – no swing. The next deal was a routine 4♥ for E/W followed by a part-score deal.

## Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 109	♥ AKQ	♦ 6	♣ AKQ10953
♠ K65	♥ J962	♦ QJ9	♣ J64
♠ J82	♥ 54	♦ AK8732	♣ 72
♠ AQ753	♥ 10873	♦ 1054	♣ 8

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Danailov	Hult	Gunev	Ekenberg
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♥
2♦	2NT*	3♦	Pass
Pass	4♦*	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

East led the king of diamonds and when West followed with the queen he switched to the eight of spades and declarer had to finesse, one down, -100 and 11 IMPs that saw the Bulgarians move into pole position.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Zorlu	Gromoeller	Kubac	Rohowsky
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦*
Pass	3♣	3♦	3♠
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

East started with his top diamonds and while declarer was running the clubs West parted with a heart, +620 and a 5 IMP pick-up.

## Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ K65 ♥ 643 ♦ 1063 ♣ J532	♠ A 10432 ♥ AK87 ♦ Q4 ♣ A9		♠ 97 ♥ Q105 ♦ AK987 ♣ K64
	♠ QJ8 ♥ J92 ♦ J52 ♣ Q1087		

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Hult</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Ekenberg</i>
–	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

On this layout you can't avoid taking ten tricks. East cashed the king of diamonds and switched to a trump, but declarer won with dummy's queen and played a diamond for the queen and ace. When East switched to a club declarer played low from dummy, took West's jack with the ace and returned a club, emerging with ten tricks, +170 and another 5 IMPs went in the Bulgarian's direction.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zorlu</i>	<i>Gromoeller</i>	<i>Kubac</i>	<i>Rohowsky</i>
–	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East started with three rounds of diamonds and declarer won with dummy's jack pitching a club, drew trumps via the finesse, cashed the ace of hearts

and continued with the seven, winning with dummy's jack when East followed with the ten, +650 and 7 IMPs.

With the remaining deals offering little scope for either side we knew the new names that would be added to the Roll of Honour.

1	DANAİLOV Diyan	617.0
	GUNEV Rossen	
2	EKENBERG Simon	590.0
	HULT Simon	
3	GROMOELLER Michael	579.0
	ROHOWSKY Roland	
4	MEDUSHEUSKI Henadzi	577.0
	SOTNIKAU Andrej	
5	ALFEJEVA Jelena	556.0
	BIRIN Sergei	
6	KUBAC Nezh	547.0
	ZORLU Nafiz	
7	ISPORSKI Vladislav	540.0
	TREDAFILOV Rumen	
8	BALDURSSON Jon	538.0
	HARALDSSON Sigurbjorn	
9	FRIEDLANDER Ehud	530.0
	MACURA Milan	
10	KOZLOV Sergey	529.0
	PETRUNIN Alexander	
11	KAZANTSEV Oleg	525.0
	ROZENBLYUM Mikhail	
12	DUBININ Alexander	522.0
	GROMOV Andrey	
13	ALIMBEKOV Farid	519.0
	RUBINS Karlis	
14	YADLIN Doron	518.0
	YADLIN Israel	
15	KOWALSKI Apolinary	516.0
	RUSSYAN Jerzy	
16	ORLOV Sergey	513.0
	RUDAKOV Eugene	
17	BASKAN Burak	513.0
	EKSIOGLU Mehmet	
18	KARAKOLEV Georgi	509.0
	MIHOV Vladimir	
19	BIRMAN Alon	507.0
	PADON Dror	
20	SLIVA Vitold	503.0
	VOROBAY Pavel	





# Misplay These Hands With Me

## Divide and Rule

The Festivals du Soleil staged across France feature excellent cash prizes. Near the end of one of the Mixed Pairs events we are in contention when I pick up:

♠ QJ9765  
♥ 104  
♦ AQ  
♣ A108

With only our side vulnerable East opens 1♥ and I overcall 1♠. When West passes my partner bids 2♣, which we play as constructive. 2♥ and 3♣ are possibilities but I decide to emphasise my suit and rebid 3♠ which partner raises to game giving us this auction:

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads the two of hearts and dummy is about what I expected:

♠ A8  
♥ 863  
♦ J95  
♣ KQJ52



♠ QJ9765  
♥ 104  
♦ AQ  
♣ A108

East wins with the king of hearts and switches to the three of clubs. A singleton no doubt, but as long as East has no more than two trumps I will survive. I win the club in hand, play a spade to the ace and a spade. East

wins with the king and plays an ominous seven of hearts. West wins with the queen and returns a club which East ruffs with the outstanding trump to put me down. This was the layout:

♠ A8		♠ K104									
♥ 863		♥ AKJ97									
♦ J95		♦ K762									
♣ KQJ52		♣ 3									
♠ 32											
♥ Q52											
♦ 10843											
♣ 9764											
	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ QJ9765									
		♥ 104									
		♦ AQ									
		♣ A108									

### Post mortem

East defended well, but declarer missed an opportunity. He should win the club switch in dummy and play a diamond to the queen. When that holds he cashes the ace of diamonds, crosses to dummy with a trump and plays the jack of diamonds, discarding the ten of hearts. That takes West out of the game and declarer can force out the king of spades and claim.

## Outrageous Fortune


Near the end of a local league match we are well ahead when I pick up a promising hand as dealer. Only the opponents are vulnerable.

♠ AQ765  
♥ AK  
♦ 2  
♣ KJ1032

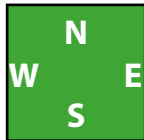
My first decision is what to open. The world is still divided as to what is best with this particular 5-5 but I opt for 1♠. Partner responds 2♦ and when I bid 3♣ partner bids 3♠. It must be right to bid 4♣ now and partner bids 4♦ which I take to be a control. When East doubles I pass. Partner redoubles to confirm first-round control in diamonds and when I bid 4♥ he continues with 5♣, which I take to be first round control in clubs. I go on with 5♥ but when partner can only bid 5♠ I decide a grand slam is out of reach and settle for 6♠. This has been our lengthy auction:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

West leads the eight of diamonds and I get a decent dummy:

♠ K94  
♥ 1053  
♦ AJ103  
♣ A64  
  
♠ AQ765  
♥ AK  
♦ 2  
♣ KJ1032

I put up the ace of diamonds and play three rounds of spades ending in hand, East discarding the queen of diamonds. When I play a fourth trump West discards the nine of diamonds and East the four of hearts as I throw a diamond from dummy. When I play a club West discards the two of hearts. I can go up with the ace and take a finesse, but there is no way to avoid the loss of two club tricks and I am one down. The full deal:

	♠ K94		♠ 103
	♥ 1053		♥ QJ4
	♦ AJ103		♦ KQ4
	♣ A64		♣ Q9875
♠ J82		♠ 103	
♥ 98762		♥ QJ4	
♦ 98765		♦ KQ4	
♣ –		♣ Q9875	
	♠ AQ765		
	♥ AK		
	♦ 2		
	♣ KJ1032		

### Post mortem

Declarer could have made the contract several times over. It would have cost nothing to cash the top hearts before playing a club and the fall of East's honours would have provided a twelfth trick (and a thirteenth as East is subject to a squeeze). Declarer could have won the third round of trumps in dummy and played a club to the jack, guarding against a 5-0 split. Finally when West discarded on the two of clubs declarer could have ducked the trick to East. Then there would still be time to take advantage of the heart position.

At the other table N/S stretched to 7♠. Declarer won the diamond lead, ruffed a diamond, drew trumps ending in dummy and ruffed a diamond. He cashed the top hearts (East had already parted with one), crossed to the ace of clubs, cashed the jack of diamonds and the ten of hearts and took the club finesse.

# Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at Commonwealth Nations Championship

Not surprisingly, a good field was attracted to the Australian Gold Coast for the Commonwealth Nations Cup. We will look at some deals that caused substantial swings. As always, our purpose will be constructive, to see how these swings might have been avoided.

In the first round of the qualifying stage, Australia Gold faced England B.

**Round 1. Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.**

♠ J42 ♥ 8 ♦ 964 ♣ AQ9762		♠ Q109 ♥ KJ1095 ♦ J107 ♣ 43	♠ K763 ♥ 763 ♦ 8532 ♣ K10
♠ A85 ♥ AQ42 ♦ AKQ ♣ J85			

West	North	East	South
Dyke	Haffer	Burn	Markey
–	3♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

The slam was a poor one, but with the trumps coming in and the ♥K inside it was destined to succeed.

Or maybe not! David Burn placed the ♥J on the table. Without a heart lead, declarer will have no reason not to finesse the ♥Q. After the ♥J lead he has an attractive option. Perhaps the lead is from J109xx and the ♥K can be ruffed down from the West hand. ‘Ace, please,’ said Joachim Haffer.

Declarer’s next card was the ♣5 from dummy. This will succeed against

single K or Kx with West, also against K43 since when East’s ♣10 falls, declarer can return to dummy to finesse the ♣9. With the trump suit safely negotiated, declarer attempted to ruff out the ♥K in two more rounds. This failed and his last shot was to eliminate the red suits and lead the ♠5 from dummy. Keiran Dyke played low and the defenders scored two spade tricks for one down.

At the other table Frances Hinden opened 3♣ and Graham Osborne responded 3NT. The ♠3 was led, drawing the jack, queen and ace. Osborne preferred to lead the ♣J (perhaps fancying West for ♣K10x after his lead from a 4-card suit). Eventually down to ♠8 ♥AQ, declarer exited with a spade, hoping for +490 on a heart return. Lazer cashed his ♠K7 and the ♦8 and that was just +430.

David Burn’s successful heart lead against 6♣ had netted 10 IMPs instead of losing 10 IMPs. England B won by 39-16.

**Round 1 Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.**

♠ 10953 ♥ J109 ♦ A83 ♣ Q83		♠ AKQ2 ♥ 2 ♦ KQ107 ♣ KJ97	♠ 8764 ♥ A863 ♦ 92 ♣ A52
♠ J ♥ KQ754 ♦ J654 ♣ 1064			

West	North	East	South
Dyke	Haffer	Burn	Markey
–	Pass	1♣	1♥
Double	2♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

The cards lie fairly well for declarer, despite the 4-1 trump break. Both sides reached the seemingly comfortable 4♠ and the kibitzers were not expecting any significant swing on the board. Burn won the ♥K lead with the ace and led a diamond to the king. When he crossed to the ♣A and led a second diamond, Haffer rose with the ♦A. Burn ruffed the heart continuation and played his three top trumps. Needing three more tricks, he played the ♦Q, throwing a club from dummy, cashed the ♣K and ruffed a club in dummy for +620.

♠ 8764	♠ 10953	♠ AKQ2
♥ A863	♥ J109	♥ 2
♦ 92	♦ A83	♦ KQ107
♣ A52	♣ Q83	♣ KJ97
		♠ J
		♥ KQ754
		♦ J654
		♣ 1064

West	North	East	South
Lazer	Hinden	Gumby	Osborne
–	Pass	1♦	2♥
Pass	3♥	Double	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Exemplary bidding, once again. North led the ♥J to the ace and the first eight tricks matched those at the other table, except that Warren Lazer did not draw a third round of trumps. Dummy was down to ♠Q ♦10 ♣K J 9 and he had to guess whether to ruff the fourth round of diamonds or the third round of clubs. He called for the ♦10, ruffed and overruffed by Hinden. Declarer won the trump return in dummy, cashed the ♣K and had to surrender the last two tricks to the ♣Q and a heart trick. That was one down and 12 IMPs away.

Graham Osborne had given a true count signal in diamonds (6, 4 and then the 5). Both defenders had played their clubs upwards. Should declarer have believed these signals and played for a club ruff instead?

When one defender holds seven minor-suit cards and the other six, the *a priori* odds favour the breaks that are closest to an even split. In other words, clubs are more likely to be 3-3 than 4-2. There are 700 ways for North to hold 3-3 shape in the minors, compared with only 525 for him to hold 4-2 shape. So, it does seem that the failing declarer took an inferior line.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> round England A faced Tasmania. To beat 2♠ doubled on this deal, you would need to walk a tightrope.

## Round 7 Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ J6432	♠ A
♥ K943	♥ 10652
♦ Q84	♦ A62
♣ K	♣ 97543
♠ Q10985	
♥ QJ	
♦ 1075	
♣ AJ8	
	♠ K7
	♥ A87
	♦ KJ93
	♣ Q1062

West	North	East	South
Eginton	Francis	Hirst	Bailey
–	Pass	Pass	1NT (12-14)
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Double	All Pass

What do you make of Bill Hirst's take-out double of 2♠? Even at match-points, I would regard it as too risky. Unless South happens to be exactly 3-3 in the majors, he will hold eight cards in the minors, where you are inviting partner to contest at the three-level. Also, if partner holds good spades and passes your double, will he not expect rather more than your two good cards?

Having said that, I must admit that it is possible to defeat 2♠. East must lead a low heart. The defenders can then score a trick in each side suit and three more from the trump suit.

East-West fell off the required tightrope after a couple of seconds. Hirst led the ♣4 and Steve Eginton very reasonably played the ♣J. Hilton Francis won with the singleton ♣K and led a spade to East's bare ace. The heart switch was won with dummy's ace and the ♣Q was covered and ruffed. Dummy's ♣10 was then good.

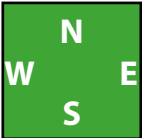
When diamonds were played, East won the second round and persisted with hearts, to declarer's king. Francis crossed to dummy with ♠K, cashed

dummy's ♣10, throwing a heart, and continued with the jack and 9 of diamonds. Eginton was down to the ♠Q109. He ruffed as declarer ditched his last heart, and had to concede the final trick to declarer's ♠J. That was one overtrick for +870.

At the other table Brian Callaghan made an overtrick in 1NT on the South cards and England A lost 13 IMPs. Tasmania won the match by 41-32.

Let's see the biggest swing in a quarter-final between Scotland and England A. Scotland scored a double game swing but both of the games could have been defeated with a different opening lead.

### Quarter-final. Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ73 ♥ 106 ♦ KJ107652 ♣ —		♠ 82 ♥ AQJ7 ♦ 83 ♣ AQ542	♠ Q104 ♥ K98542 ♦ A4 ♣ 73
--------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Sime</i>	<i>Duckworth</i>	<i>Murdoch</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
–	–	–	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Declarer has eight top tricks and only a heart opening lead will give him a ninth trick. Callaghan duly led the ♥8 and declarer claimed the contract when dummy went down.

East is likely to hold a double heart stopper for his jump to 3NT. Since East has suggested opening bid values with his 3NT bid and could not double 2♥ for take-out, this perhaps suggests short spades. If South is going to

consider a non-heart lead, the ♠Q looks best. Still, it's hard to fault a heart lead and this would no doubt be the choice of most players.

West	North	East	South
<i>Hyett</i>	<i>Haase</i>	<i>Hirst</i>	<i>Shenkin</i>
–	–	–	2♦
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Unless a diamond is led against 5♣ by West, declarer can take a ruffing finesse in hearts and ditch a diamond loser to make the game. Would Haase have led a diamond? A heart lead is not so attractive when you have no trumps, nor is a spade into West's bid suit. East-West have shown stoppers in spades and hearts and then declined to bid 3NT, so perhaps North would have found a diamond lead.


Anyway, that was all academic because Haase sacrificed in 5♦. Because of the multi opening West was on lead. To beat the diamond game West must lead the singleton heart, or the ace of spades to look at the dummy. Both these leads are very attractive, as I see it. When Hyett chose to lead the ♣J instead, the defenders' heart ruff was lost and the doubled game was made. Scotland gained 15 IMPs and won by 91-81.

On two of my last three boards a game was made that was down in top tricks. Let's see if we can pinpoint whether any clear-cut mistakes were made by the defenders.

The first comes from the semi-final between Scotland and Australia Gold (Australia had entered four teams):



## Semi-final. Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ A9753 ♥ — ♦ 32 ♣ A109753		♠ J6 ♥ KQJ10832 ♦ Q ♣ KJ6	♠ K8 ♥ A965 ♦ 109754 ♣ 82
-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiltshire</i>	<i>Haase</i>	<i>Henbest</i>	<i>Shenkin</i>
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

North's 2♠ showed spades and a minor. Barnet Shenkin could be fairly sure that the minor suit was clubs. What should he lead? If he didn't hold the ace of trumps, it would be fairly obvious to lead the ♠K. With control of the trump suit Shenkin preferred to lead a club. Gerald Haase won with the ace and East followed with the ♣6.

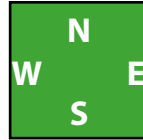
What should North return? A club return will surely beat the contract if the lead is a singleton, so what are the chances of that? It would mean that East held ♣KJ62 alongside a heart suit worthy of a vulnerable 3♥ overcall, also that he had chosen to follow with the ♣6 from that combination. Well, it's possible and I am not inclined to blame North for returning a club. What do you think? The effect was catastrophic. Declarer won and was able to ditch both spade losers when North had no trump to ruff the third round of diamonds. +650 to Australia Gold.

West	North	East	South
<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Gumby</i>	<i>Silverstone</i>	<i>Lazer</i>
Pass	1♣	3♥	All Pass
All Pass			

The same defence, club to the ace and a club return, allowed two overtricks. As you see even 3♥ would have gone down on a lead of the ♠K, which was eminently possible at the first table but not very likely here. The defenders can score their four top cards and a promotion of the ♥9. Australia gained 10 IMPs and won by 99-49.

Before we see the second game that was made with too many top losers, we will look at a 2♠ doubled contract that could be made in theory but went three down. It comes from the final between India A and Australia Gold:

## Final. Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ 1094 ♦ A842 ♣ AK1042		♠ K9753 ♥ Q73 ♦ Q93 ♣ J9	♠ Q4 ♥ AKJ65 ♦ J1076 ♣ 73
-------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Satyanaray</i>	<i>Haffer</i>	<i>Nadar</i>	<i>Markey</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Double	Redouble	1NT	2♣
Pass	2♠	Double	All Pass

I don't like the 2♣ bid on such a featureless opening bid. It takes away no bidding space and serves little purpose. South already knows that there is no spade fit and cannot be certain of a club fit.

Anyway, the final contract was 2♠ doubled and West led the ♠8. Phil Markey put up the ♠Q from dummy, which was a necessary first move. To stay on track for making the contract, he must next lead a trump, a top heart or a diamond honour, intending to finesse against the queen. He chose to lead a club and that meant one down, as the cards lie. East's ♣9 was allowed


to win and Kiran Nadar returned the ♠7, declarer finessing the ♠J successfully.

Markey led the ♥8 and had to rise with the ace or king to escape for one down. A finesse was tempting after West's take-out double and this lost to the queen. Retribution was swift. East's ♣J was covered by the queen and king. West then played two more club winners, East discarding er remaining hearts. A heart ruff was followed by a diamond switch declarer guessing correctly to play low, but he was three down for -500.


At the other table South passed and West ended in 3♣, going one down for a loss of 12 IMPs.

Right, thanks for waiting patiently for the second game made with too many top losers:

## Final. Board 24. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ 3 ♥ 542 ♦ 10974 ♣ J9632		♠ A ♥ 10873 ♦ AJ63 ♣ AKQ10	♠ QJ10764 ♥ 96 ♦ KQ2 ♣ 74  ♠ K9852 ♥ AKQJ ♦ 85 ♣ 85
------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------	---

West	North	East	South
<i>Wiltshire</i>	<i>Anklesaria</i>	<i>Henbest</i>	<i>Chokshi</i>
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

♠ 8 ♥ 1094 ♦ A842 ♣ AK1042		♠ K9753 ♥ Q73 ♦ Q93 ♣ J9  ♠ AJ1062 ♥ 82 ♦ K5 ♣ Q865	♠ Q4 ♥ AKJ65 ♦ J1076 ♣ 73
-------------------------------------	---	---	------------------------------------

How is it possible to screw up this defence, you might ask yourself. If you play the excellent method 'ace for attitude, king for count', East would lead the ♣K and receive a ♣2 odd-count signal. He cashes the ♣A and continues with the ♦A. The trump ace is the setting trick and that gives us the result that Nature always intended.

Max Henbest led the ♣Q. With no convention card accessible for the East-West pair, I am sadly not privy to their signalling methods. West played the ♣2 and presumably this did not show an odd count (it may have been an attitude signal) because East continued with the ♦A. No problem, you might think, West will give a discouraging attitude signal and East will then switch back to clubs. West played the ♦4 and... East continued with another diamond. It's hard to imagine what meaning of a low spot-card signal on an ace lead would make East rely on West holding the ♦K instead of another club standing up.

Keyzad Anklesaria won in his hand and could now attempt a discard on either diamonds or hearts. Quite rightly, he chose to play three rounds of hearts, ditching the ♣7. If West had ruffed the third heart, which was quite possible, declarer would have overruffed and tried for a discard on the third round of diamonds.

West	North	East	South
<i>Satyranaray</i>	<i>Gumby</i>	<i>Nadar</i>	<i>Lazer</i>
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

Nadar led the ♣A, West signalling with the ♣6. Presumably this was reverse-count because his partner continued speedily with the ♣A and the ♦A. It was 12 IMPs to India A, who went on to win the final by 103-65



## 11<sup>TH</sup> WORLD BRIDGE SERIES Orlando, Florida • 21<sup>ST</sup> September - 6<sup>TH</sup> October, 2018

The **World Bridge Series** is an incredibly exciting and challenging tournament, with many different Championships available to participants.

It is made even more interesting due to the fact that all the events are transnational, so that players from across the world, from different National Bridge Organisations, can come together as team-mates or in partnership to compete.

The venue is the magnificent Marriott Orlando World, where we have obtained special rates for all participants – please see below for how to make your reservation.

There are several restaurants and lounges within the complex, and excellent amenities that we feel sure you will enjoy ... and if you are bringing the family there is even a shuttle service to Walt Disney World! Orlando is, of course, a very well-known and popular resort, with plenty to see and do in the area. It's not all Disney – there is the Epcot Centre and Universal Studio as well as other museums and galleries. For the golfers among you there are golf courses, and there are several parks and lakes to enjoy.

The **Opening Ceremony** will be held on Friday 21st September.

The following is the outline schedule of the main events. A full detailed schedule will be published here in due course.

The first events are the **Open, Women's** and **Senior Teams** Championships: the Rosenblum Open Teams will start on Saturday 22nd September, the McConnell Women's Teams and the Rand Senior Teams are expected to start a day later.

The Teams Championships are followed by the **Open, Women's**, and **Senior Pairs** – the Open Pairs starts on Tuesday 25th September, the Women's and Seniors on Wednesday 26th September. Players eliminated from the KO stages of the Teams, up to and including the semi-finals, will be able to drop into the Pairs events, following the regulations that will be specified in the Supplemental Conditions of Contest for the Championships which will be published here in due course.

The **Mixed Teams** will start on Tuesday 2nd October and the Mixed Pairs on Thursday 4th October.

Junior Players will also be able to enter the **Youth Triathlon** event starting on Monday 1st October.

In addition there will be the **Joan Gerard Cup** – a pairs event – starting on Sunday 30th September, a **Seniors Triathlon** starting on Tuesday 2nd October, as well as a **Pairs Short Track** starting on Friday 5th October and an **IMP Pairs** starting in the afternoon of Friday 5th October.

Alongside all these tournaments there will be a number of other WBF events of one or two days (pairs or swiss) available for those wishing to participate in shorter tournaments. Details of these will be announced on the website in due course.

Players in good standing with their National Bridge Organisations are eligible to compete in any of these events, providing of course they meet all the WBF Eligibility requirements (including those relating to the ages of Senior or Youth players).

Registration must be made through the WBF Website, and the pages for this will be available from April 2018.

We look forward to welcoming many players to Orlando where we are sure it will be an enormously successful Championship!

Stay tuned on [championships.worldbridge.org/orlandows18](http://championships.worldbridge.org/orlandows18)  
for further information, including accommodation details

## Women's & Seniors' Pairs will be played in Ostend before the 54th European Bridge Team Championships

The image is a promotional graphic for bridge events. It features a background image of a large, modern building with a glass facade. Overlaid on the image are several text boxes and logos. At the top left is the EBL logo. At the top right is the EOC logo. The main text reads: '10th EBL Women's National Pairs', '8th EBL Seniors' National Pairs', 'Wed to Sat, June 6th-9th 2018', 'Kursaal Oostende (Sea Promenade)', 'Ostend, Belgium'. Below this, there are two lines of text: 'The Women's National Pairs was revived in Budapest in 2016' and 'The Seniors' National Pairs will be revived in Ostend June 2018'. At the bottom, it says 'Both National Pairs will take place BEFORE the 54th European Bridge Team Championships and the teams will take place at same venue June 6th to 16th 2018'. At the very bottom is a small graphic of a bridge table with cards.

### ELIGIBILITY

**WOMEN'S PAIRS:** Open to All WOMEN'S pairs registered and of good standing in their EBL NBO (Zone 1)

**SENIORS' PAIRS:** Open to All SENIOR pairs (i.e. players born in or before 1957) who are registered and of good standing in their EBL NBO (Zone 1)

**TEAMS:** Qualification from EBL NBO (Zone 1)

### LINKS to Further INFORMATION

EBL National **WOMEN'S PAIRS & SENIORS' PAIRS:**

[and information letter](#)

**EUROPEAN BRIDGE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

[and information letter](#)

[Supplemental Conditions of Contest Ostend Teams 2018](#)

**To book your hotel, please contact:**

Ostend Tourism Office

Brigitte Boddin at [b.boddin@toerisme-oostende.be](mailto:b.boddin@toerisme-oostende.be) or Tel: +32(0)59.29.53.35

[List of Hotels](#) [Supplemental List of Hotels](#)

# Letter from Germany – Of Leads and Diamonds (mostly)

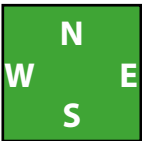
Martin Cantor

## Bundesliga Second Weekend

The second weekend of the teams Bundesliga was a disaster for our Bielefeld team of Horst Hübner, Omid Karimi, Silvia Klasberg-Brawanski, Peer Köster, Eckhard Renken and me. We probably had a bit more bad luck than good, but our own bad play was the main reason that we lost all three matches heavily. As a result we now lie in bottom place, and will need some good wins in the three matches of the final weekend.

Everyone knows that opening leads are the hardest part of the game, and for us several proved to be pivotal. Take this hand from our first match, where our good luck was trumped by our bad play.

### Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.


♠ A ♥ Q98 ♦ Q9873 ♣ 5432		♠ KJ10852 ♥ A32 ♦ A ♣ KQ8	♠ 9643 ♥ J1054 ♦ KJ104 ♣ 10
		♠ Q7 ♥ K76 ♦ 652 ♣ AJ976	

Looking at the North-South cards you'd want to be in 6♠, but Omid Karimi and I bid 1♠-1NT (forcing) – 3♠ – 4♠. East led his singleton club, but West didn't return one for him to ruff when in with the spade ace, so +680 and, praising our good fortune for my conservative view, we were hopeful of 13 IMPs if they bid the slam in the other room, maybe 1 IMP if they stayed in game. They did bid the slam, but 'unfortunately' our East led a small

heart, so that was 13 IMPs away.

A few boards later we were in 4♠ again, this time played by me as South.

### Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.



♠ 754 ♥ KQJ95 ♦ Q1032 ♣ 6		♠ K832 ♥ A8 ♦ 6 ♣ AKJ975	♠ A6 ♥ 1043 ♦ AK984 ♣ 1084
		♠ QJ109 ♥ 762 ♦ J75 ♣ Q32	

As you can see, once again a singleton club lead would beat the contract, but West was dazzled by his honour sequence in hearts, and when opponents failed to cash both red-suit winners I made an overtrick. At the other table North played 4♠, presumably after a transfer response sequence, and now the club lead is pretty much impossible to find. East duly led the ♦A, and unsurprisingly and unimportantly failed to find the club switch that would have gained us an IMP.

Here's another board where a club lead would have been the killer, although one with some interesting blockage issues.





## Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ A52 ♥ Q742 ♦ J84 ♣ J93		♠ KQ107 ♥ 1093 ♦ Q1075 ♣ Q4	♠ 963 ♥ 865 ♦ 6 ♣ AK10852
			

After two passes I opened 1NT (15-17), and thankfully East didn't double partner's Stayman enquiry, so West led ♥2 against my 3NT. Nor did West have the second sight that would have seen him rise with the ♠A at trick two, so I cashed my nine tricks. At the other table East did double 2♣ so South played in 4♦, just making. Note that there is a potential blockage problem if West does lead a club against 3NT. If West leads the ♣3, East needs to play the ♣10, or West needs to drop the jack under the ace at trick 2. It's somewhat easier if you're playing strict second and fourths, when West would lead the ♣9 promising one higher card, and it's easy for East to play the ♣10. Of course, if the queen is played from dummy after either the ♣3 or the ♣9 (as it should be in the hope of a blockage), West needs to drop the jack at trick 2. In which case, if East is confident of West holding the jack, for example after the lead of the strict second ♣9, then perhaps they should take the first trick with the ace, the second with the king, to try to alert partner.

Partner had a choice of red suit opening leads on this hand, after the auction 1♣-Pass-1♠-Pass-3♣-Pass-3NT-All Pass.

## Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AK98 ♥ K82 ♦ 972 ♣ Q76		♠ 6542 ♥ AJ105 ♦ KQ108 ♣ 8	♠ 3 ♥ Q96 ♦ 63 ♣ AKQ10542
			

After some thought he chose the ♥J and declarer promptly took his 10 tricks. I think this was more a case of poor judgement than bad luck. It's true that with your ten points you can't expect partner to have much, and to get 4 heart tricks he needs only the king to three or more whereas for four diamond tricks he needs the ace. But of course you need five tricks so even if you get four hearts you still need a diamond before declarer gets nine. Whereas if you can take four diamonds you have your fifth trick ready. Whilst it wouldn't have mattered here, it's a moot point which diamond you should lead. If partner has ♦Axx it won't matter unless East has ♦Jxxx which is unlikely on the bidding. If partner has ♦Ax you want to lead small to pick up ♦Jxxx with West. But if you lead an honour, you still might defeat the contract if partner has a club stopper and ♥Qxx or ♥Kxx.

Apart from opening leads, the other recurrent theme was the diamond suit. It's always pleasing when you come across one of those standard 'clever' plays that are much more common in the books than in real life. Like this one:



## Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ AQ8 ♥ 8642 ♦ J6 ♣ KQ72		
♠ 106 ♥ KQJ75 ♦ 107542 ♣ 6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ 9732 ♥ A93 ♦ AKQ ♣ J54	
	♠ KJ54 ♥ 10 ♦ 983 ♣ A10983		

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
2NT	Pass	4♥	All Pass

True we could have saved in 5♣ but it wasn't obvious. After the natural black suit lead and continuation declarer's trumps are shortened. He plays ♥K then a heart to the ace and discovers the 4-1 split. Now it looks like he needs the hand with 4 trumps to also hold three diamonds, so he cashes the diamond king and queen. But when the jack drops he can cross back to the ♥Q, and draw the last trump with the ♥J discarding the blocking diamond ace from dummy. Ten tricks and thank you very much.

This next hand definitely qualifies as being on the bad luck side of the scales:

## Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

	♠ A7 ♥ J1074 ♦ A1043 ♣ 75		
♠ Q954 ♥ Q95 ♦ 7 ♣ K8643	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ J83 ♥ K86 ♦ K86 ♣ QJ109	
	♠ K106 ♥ A2 ♦ QJ952 ♣ A2		

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT

Omid's slightly aggressive bidding got us to a 50% vulnerable game (5♦ is a bit less than 50% but still with the odds vulnerable). Lose 5 IMPs instead of win 10 when opponents at the other table played in 2♦+1.

Very much on the good luck side of the scales for us was:

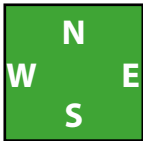
## Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

	♠ QJ10872 ♥ – ♦ 87 ♣ 98652		
♠ 6 ♥ A1064 ♦ J542 ♣ AKQ7	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ 95 ♥ KQJ972 ♦ AK63 ♣ J	
	♠ AK43 ♥ 853 ♦ Q109 ♣ 1043		

After a 1♦ opening bid by West and a weak 2♠ by North, my jump to 4♠ crowded the auction sufficiently for our opponents to have a misunderstanding and play in 6♦ rather than the cold heart slam that our teammates had no trouble finding. Mind you, if the ♦Q had been doubleton I'd be bemoaning our luck.

In case you're thinking all the mistakes were by teammates and all the bad luck mine, the truth is that most of my mistakes were so crass they don't make for interesting reading. But this one, where we missed a diamond slam (even the grand makes though you don't want to be in it) has some interest in the bidding.


**Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.**

♠ 105 ♥ J974 ♦ 107 ♣ 109752		♠ 76432 ♥ K86 ♦ K8 ♣ Q43	♠ KJ ♥ A10532 ♦ J654 ♣ KJ  ♠ AQ98 ♥ Q ♦ AQ932 ♣ A86
--------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	---

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3NT	Pass	4NT

All Pass

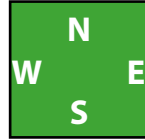
- 2♣ Fourth suit game forcing
- 3♣ Fifth suit—describe your hand

♠ 6 ♥ A1064 ♦ J542 ♣ AKQ7		♠ 95 ♥ KQJ972 ♦ AK63 ♣ J  ♠ AK43 ♥ 853 ♦ Q109 ♣ 1043	♠ QJ10872 ♥ — ♦ 87 ♣ 98652
------------------------------------	---	--	-------------------------------------

After partner's 2♣ I could have bid 2♦ which would strongly suggest a fifth diamond (four only if 4-2-4-3 with three small clubs), but I wanted no-trumps played from his hand to protect against round-suit leads. Of course partner could have bid 3♦ over my 3♣ but he also wanted to right-side the no-trump contract. I take the blame.

And another diamond slam, this one missed at both tables—admittedly it does depend on the trump finesse:

**Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.**

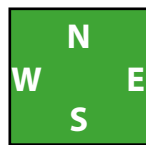
♠ KQ ♥ A3 ♦ QJ7543 ♣ 963		♠ A107 ♥ K10754 ♦ A1092 ♣ 10  ♠ 8642 ♥ Q62 ♦ 8 ♣ KQJ74	♠ J953 ♥ J98 ♦ K6 ♣ A852
-----------------------------------	---	--	-----------------------------------

Our opponents bid the diamond game and made an overtrick while our teammates stopped in 3♦ and made all 13 tricks. In the first division 8 pairs were in 5♦, one was in 6♦, and one in 4♥. Across all 5 divisions, 27 were in the diamond game, 4 the diamond slam, 4 the heart game, thirteen diamond partials, and one outlier in each of 3NT and 3♥.

And finally, two hands that aren't about opening leads or diamonds. You hold: ♠QJ6 ♥QJ ♦J9864 ♣954 and with your side vulnerable LHO deals and passes, partner opens 1♣, RHO overcalls 1♥. You pass and LHO's 2♣ bid is described as invitational with a heart fit. RHO bids 2♥. Do you bid 3♣ to push them up a level or do you pass?

Well this time the right action was to pass, as at our table the auction continued 3♥-Pass-4♥ making. From their discussion at the end of the hand LHO had no intention of raising without the push. Sigh. The full hand was:

	♠ QJ6	
	♥ QJ	
	♦ J9864	
	♣ 954	
♠ 104		♠ A9873
♥ A10532		♥ K876
♦ A53		♦ K7
♣ K106		♣ 73
	♠ K52	
	♥ 943	
	♦ Q102	
	♣ AQJ8	



When I lived in England I often played weak or even mini no trump, and valued it for its pre-emptive effect. Here's a hand where, unusually, the strong no trump acts to pre-empt opponents out of their spade game.

**Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.**

	♠ 10	
	♥ Q86	
	♦ J642	
	♣ K10764	
♠ Q876432		♠ AK5
♥ 753		♥ A92
♦ 7		♦ 1085
♣ 52		♣ AQ98
	♠ J9	
	♥ KJ104	
	♦ AKQ93	
	♣ J3	



I opened the South hand a 15-17 1NT, and played there going three off. I had company as eight of the 49 others did the same, mostly going four off, together with three who played in 2NT and one in 3NT going more off. All good scores against a making vulnerable 4♠ which 7 of the field bid (though one of them managed somehow to go off). Twelve East-Wests

played spade partials, while ten North-Souths played diamond partials. One N/S played 4♥ and one East played 3NT, making (presumably N/S managed to block the diamonds). At the remaining six tables N/S were in the par contract of 5♦ doubled. Looking at that array of scores, it seems that E/W can also be effectively pre-empted if South chooses to open 1♦, as long as North responds with an inverted 3♦ (or even more so 3♣ if you play that as a diamond raise in the 6-9 range) rather than 1NT. It's now not obvious for East to double, and for West to protect at these colours would be, as they say, to take quite a position.

Reliving these deals has left me drained and despondent all over again. So do please feel free to cross your fingers for us for the final weekend (or, as we say in Germany, 'Druck die Daumen' – squeeze your thumbs). Thanks if you do but we need to – and aim to – play a great deal better rather than rely on luck.

© Martin Cantor  
May 2018

NEW FROM  
**MASTER POINT PRESS** THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER

**THE BLUE TEAM**  
IN THE HISTORY OF BRIDGE  
Carl Alberto Perroux  
Translation Maurizio Di Sacco

How did Italy reach the summit of World Bridge and then remain there for more than fifteen years? Now in English translation for the first time, this is the diary of the man who was the whole story and saw it from within.

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# Highlights and New Features

## What happened on Funbridge lately?

### EBL MASTER POINTS TOURNAMENTS

After the World Bridge Federation earlier this year, the European Bridge League has now joined the circle of Funbridge prestigious partners.

As part of its partnership with the European Bridge League, Funbridge has the privilege of hosting EBL tournaments starting on 1st May allowing participants to earn Master Points and thus improve their EBL ranking.

These tournaments of 16 deals scored by MPs are available every day from 00:01 to 23:59.

Each tournament costs €2.

To play these tournaments:

- Open the Funbridge app.
- Tap “Play a tournament” on the home screen.
- Tap “Federation tournaments”.
- Tap “EBL – Master Points”.

You now have access to the next available tournaments to which you can register.

### NEW EBU MASTER POINTS TOURNAMENT ADDED TO SCHEDULE

As the Thursday games are proving popular the English Bridge Union and Funbridge have decided to add an extra midweek “EBU Master Points” tournament on Tuesday to give EBU members more chance to play.

The rules for this new tournament are identical to existing ones (Thursday, Saturday, Sunday): 20 deals tournaments, scored by MPs, available from 00:01 to 22:00.

To celebrate the addition of this extra game the EBU have expanded the monthly ladder competition. From May, the top five EBU members will win prizes, with the prize fund more than doubled:

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
£30	£20	£15	£10	£5

One more thing... Extra games on the two Bank Holiday Mondays (7<sup>th</sup> May and 28<sup>th</sup> May) will be available! And they will count toward the monthly and annual ladder competitions.

More info at [www.ebu.co.uk/funbridge](http://www.ebu.co.uk/funbridge)

# DEFEND WITH JULIAN

## POTTAGE


The Questions

Solutions on page 56

1

♠ 9  
♥ K4  
♦ AQJ765  
♣ 10432

♠ Q102  
♥ J1062  
♦ K43  
♣ K65



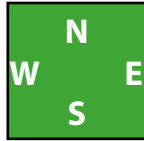
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠	3♦	4♠
All Pass			

You lead the king of hearts (asking for standard count), on which go the two, three and seven. How should you continue?

2

♠ QJ102  
♥ K6  
♦ AK104  
♣ K76

♠ AK98753  
♥ 7  
♦ 98  
♣ J105



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♠	3NT	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

You lead the king of spades, to which all follow. What is your plan?





## Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 4

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ92  
 ♥ K1032  
 ♦ 1054  
 ♣ J7

██████████

♠ A108543  
 ♥ 864  
 ♦ A92  
 ♣ A

The bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	3♠	3NT*	4♠

All Pass

\*3NT alerted as the minors

South receives the lead of the ♦8 (3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>). How would you play?

This hand is from the England trials and most declarers were playing 4♠, having roughly the same information from the bidding. They ducked the first diamond in order to cut communications in diamonds and hoping to establish two heart tricks to get rid of the 3<sup>rd</sup> diamond. This line required East to have a void in hearts (otherwise he can switch to a heart at trick 2).

A much better line that wasn't spotted is to take the diamond ace immediately. Cash the ♣A. Play two rounds of spades ending in dummy, ruff a club and lead a heart to the king. Whether West takes the ace or ducks, declarer can exit with the ♦10 after winning a trick with the heart king and East will be forced to give declarer a ruff and discard after cashing his two diamonds, declarer losing two diamonds and only one heart.

This was the full deal:

♠ 7		♠ KJ92									
♥ AQJ975		♥ K1032									
♦ 87		♦ 1054									
♣ K986		♣ J7									
	<table border="1" style="text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ –									
		♦ KQJ73									
		♣ Q105432									
		♠ A108543									
		♥ 864									
		♦ A92									
		♣ A									

If West leads the ♥A followed by any heart declarer will have to lose two diamonds.

# The Long And Winding Road

*Alex Adamson & Harry Smith give us More Tales from the Over The Rainbow Bridge Club*

‘It’s such a ridiculous place to hold the event’, the Tin Man protested. ‘Why shouldn’t the district quarter-final of the National Pairs be held right here? We had a good entry in the qualifying round!’

‘He’s getting even grumpier,’ Dorothy thought to herself. She shook her head, wondering how to head off a full-scale attack, a ‘tintrum’, as it was known locally.

‘I’ve already told you that the arrangements for the quarter-finals were published in advance so that the clubs could hold their heats knowing when and where the qualifiers would be going,’ Dorothy repeated through gritted teeth. ‘Anyway, you’re planning to go the Ozian Bridge Federation Annual General Meeting. I’m sure you could raise it there.’ She smiled to herself. She couldn’t even recall what complaint he had already planned to raise there. The way things were going, the AGM would require a special session just to deal with the Tin Man’s list of gripes.

‘But it will take us the best part of three hours to get to Sapphire City,’ the Tin Man whined. ‘It doesn’t look far on the map but the roads round Lake Orizon are notoriously slow!’

‘Does it matter?’ Dorothy’s exasperation was beginning to show through. ‘Given the speed the Lion drives at, you’ll hardly notice the difference. It’s of no consequence whether he’s on a motorway or a country lane.’

‘I don’t suppose you have room for one more?’ Professor Marvel joined their conversation.

‘Aren’t you travelling with your partner, Miss Gulch?’ Dorothy asked.

‘She’s going the day before, and being driven by her chauffeur. She told me that her car is not a suitable place for someone with my wardrobe, and in any case I really need to be here on Saturday to mind my store.’

The Tin Man gave a reflex ‘harrumph’ at the mention of the Professor’s healing crystal and aromatherapy shop.

‘If you ever want anything for that persistent cough, let me know. I’d be happy to help,’ Professor Marvel offered.

Dorothy smiled. Three hours in a car with Almira Gulch would not be a pleasant experience, and she was fairly sure the Professor thought so too. She

quickly brought the conversation back to their travel arrangements. ‘Well, I was thinking about going with my Aunty Em and Uncle Henry anyway. It’s a long way for either of them to drive, particularly for the return journey in the dark. That would make room for you in the Lion’s car, Professor.’

The Tin Man frowned. ‘I don’t want you to be tired out. Make sure you don’t do all the driving.’

‘I’ll do my share, and maybe a bit more – they are thirty years older than I am!’ Dorothy wondered how many more moans he could come up with!

Everyone has their skills, and one of the Tin Man’s was an ability not to be distracted by the feelings or needs of others. He snorted. ‘It’s hardly as if the Lion would let any of the rest of us drive his ego extension! At least this arrangement will avoid any danger of him filling your space with Glinda. Honestly, I would rather discuss hands with the Scarecrow than listen to him simpering like a teenager for hours.’

Come the Sunday morning of the event, Zeke and Hickory were glad to see the back of Aunty Em. They were perfectly capable of running the farm but she could not stop herself from giving them detailed instructions. ‘Good grief,’ muttered Zeke, as the car set off. ‘We’re not children. It’s as if we were as useless as Hank.’

‘Oh, no,’ said Hickory. ‘She does trust us. She would sooner leave Hank in charge of dummy than leave him in charge of the farm, even for a day.’

Dorothy found herself at the wheel from the start. Aunty Em had been delighted at Dorothy’s offer. Henry would have insisted on driving, which would have meant both of them arriving as nervous wrecks, that is if they had arrived at all.


They had set off early, and were at the venue with an hour to spare, allowing Dorothy to stretch her legs with a short walk, and to rest her brain for both the bridge ahead and putting up with the Tin Man. Returning to the venue she saw that all of the pairs who had qualified from the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club had arrived. The Wicked Witch of the West was holding forth to Glinda, while the Witches of the North and South were arguing about their system. The Tin Man was pacing up and down outside

the playing area, evidently not in the most sociable of moods. The Lion and the Scarecrow were sitting in the café with Aunty Em and Uncle Henry. Professor Marvel was at the centre of a happy, laughing group of people who, until minutes before, had been complete strangers. Almira Gulch was talking to an elderly lady who seemed to be wearing the entire output of a diamond mine.

They all took their places for the start of play. Aunty Em and Uncle Henry found themselves up against a local pair that, like most of the field, they had not met before. Em knew that with an old bird like Henry in a long event like this, it was good tactics to keep him on an even keel as long as possible. She resolved not to shout at him. Well, not that much, and probably not until after a few rounds.

This was the first board at their table:

### Dealer South, N/S Game

♠ KJ843 ♥ 92 ♦ 762 ♣ Q72		♠ AQ972 ♥ QJ754 ♦ 84 ♣ 5	♠ 106 ♥ K86 ♦ KQ95 ♣ A1043 ♠ 5 ♥ A103 ♦ AJ103 ♣ KJ986
-----------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	--

Sitting South, Uncle Henry had a routine One Club opening bid, promising at least three cards in the suit. Aunty Em responded with an inverted raise of Two Clubs. Henry was trying to remember the rebids to that when East came in with Two Spades. He decided that he could safely bid Three Clubs, showing that he had something extra in the suit.

West jumped to Four Spades, putting Aunty Em on the spot. If her side had game on then Four Spades doubled seemed unlikely to be sufficient recompense. As usual, when faced with a choice, Aunty Em took the more

aggressive path. She laid the Five Clubs bidding card on the table. When everyone now passed, the full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
	<i>Aunty Em</i>		<i>Uncle Henry</i>
–	–	–	1♣
Pass	2♣*	2♠	3♣
4♠	5♣	All Pass	

West led the ♠4, won by East's ace, who played back a spade, which Henry ruffed.

He contemplated his chances. If the clubs came in then all would be well, and if not it seemed he was going to be one down as there was nowhere to discard the losing heart. It very much looked as if spades were five-five so that didn't give him much of a clue. He played a trump to dummy's ace and called for a small club. When East played the ♠Q he grunted, 'such friendly people', to the bemusement of the rest of the table. He won the king and tabled his hand.

'Eleven tricks. I'll take two heart tricks, then the diamonds and the clubs. You'll get one more trick.'

'But I've got a trump trick, and you have a losing heart. One down, I think,' said West, showing him his hand.

Henry looked taken aback. He picked up East's last card, identified it as the wrong black queen, and slumped in his seat. 'Yes, one down.'

'Hang on a minute,' interjected Aunty Em, looking very thoughtful. 'My partner has claimed and stated a line. We're obliged to play it out. First, the two heart tricks, he said.' All followed. 'And now the diamonds.' West followed to the first three rounds then contemplated the ♦J led from South. They were down to:

♠ —		♠ 92			
♥ 8		♥ QJ			
♦ 5		♦ —			
♣ 104		♣ —			
♠ KJ8	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; text-align: center; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	
N					
W E					
S					
♥ —					
♦ —					
♣ Q					
♠ —					
♥ 10					
♦ J					
♣ J9					

If he trumped the diamond then he would have to give a ruff and discard, allowing declarer to dispose of his losing heart. He discarded a spade.

‘What was it next?’ Auntie Em pretended to ask her partner. ‘Ah, yes. A club.’ West won, unhappily, and played a spade. Henry discarded dummy’s heart and the opponents folded their cards with an ill grace.

‘Maybe next time you should play them out,’ Auntie Em advised her partner. ‘Though well done on diagnosing the layout so early in the hand.’

‘Five Diamonds is always making,’ West felt moved to share with the table. ‘Even if you get the clubs wrong you can use the fifth one to discard a heart.’

The event had been arranged as two separate sessions, so the scores for the first session were available at the interval. The Over the Rainbow Bridge Club pairs were having mixed fortunes. Least successful were the Irritable Witch of the South and the Unpleasant Witch of the North on 43%, and Miss Gulch and Professor Marvel who were sitting on 49%. With only the top third of the field qualifying for the semi-final everyone knew that a mere 50% was not going to be good enough. The witches were practically out. They had found that their usual tactics had not been working. To maintain their interest in the event, they had kept the tournament director busy dealing with complaints both by and about them. Almira and the Professor were likely to need something over 55% in the second session to qualify, a fact which was not lost on the Professor.

Two pairs were well placed. With scores over 60%, it was hard to see either Dorothy and the Tin Man or Auntie Em and Uncle Henry failing to

qualify. The Lion and the Scarecrow along with the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda were right on the borderline, scoring just over 50% each.

Dorothy enjoyed the story of Uncle Henry’s Five Clubs. ‘We had quite a few gifts,’ she told her Aunt. ‘Just as well as I didn’t seem to be guessing these holdings well myself.’

The Tin Man snorted. ‘Perhaps you shouldn’t be guessing then. Try working them out sometimes.’

‘I’m sure Dorothy played with great care,’ said the Professor, smiling, ‘but of course you are right that one should keep guessing to a minimum.’ He had been banished from his partner’s company during the interval. She had said something about his tie causing her to go down in a cold 3NT contract.

Dorothy, the Lion and the Scarecrow joined the queue for coffee. The Lion was magnanimously sharing his wisdom with his partner.

‘Events like this, you see, they are so very long. You have to keep your nerve from start to finish, fight for every match point. It’s a war of nutrition.’


‘I think you mean attrition,’ Dorothy interjected.

‘Attrition? What has that to do with keeping your strength up?’ asked the Lion, as he added a second doughnut to his plate. ‘You take one too,’ he told the Scarecrow. ‘If you find you’re not hungry then I’ll take care of it.’

The second set went less well for the Lion and the Scarecrow. The Lion’s energy conserving tactics had led to three very bad scores on passed out boards, and the Scarecrow’s luck was losing the battle against his incompetence. In the last round they had to play Dorothy and the Tin Man. The Lion knew that nothing short of two tops was likely to give them any chance at all.

This was the first board:

Dealer West. E/W Game.

♠ 5 ♥ A8 ♦ K98532 ♣ 10832		♠ A10832 ♥ J73 ♦ 64 ♣ QJ6  ♠ Q94 ♥ Q2 ♥ AQJ7 ♣ K954
	♠ KJ76 ♥ K109654 ♦ 10 ♣ A7	

After two passes, the Tin Man, sitting East, surveyed his hand. The system bid was 1NT. While he was a great believer in the weak no-trump at teams he was less convinced that it was a winner in third seat, vulnerable, at pairs. He opted for One Diamond, much to Dorothy's delight.

After a One Heart overcall by the Lion she raised to Three Diamonds. The Scarecrow bid Three Hearts, passed back to Dorothy in the West seat. She looked at her two opponents. She was aware that bidding on might push them into game, but if the Scarecrow bid it, it would probably not be sensible, and there was no way, she thought, that the Lion would voluntarily go to the four-level having signed off already one level lower. She bid Four Diamonds.

Two passes followed and the Lion, as so often, felt himself to be on the spot. He wished they were playing teams, where beating Four Diamonds by a trick or two would be okay against +140 in hearts. He shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He knew they needed a good score. An average or below would be fatal to their fragile chances. He would either have to double the Tin Man, which he couldn't bear, or press on with Four Hearts. Maybe that would make, or be a good save over Four Diamonds. Yes, that seemed like the less awful prospect. To his relief, his bid of Four Hearts ended the auction:

West	North	East	South
<i>Dorothy</i>	<i>Scarecrow</i>	<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Lion</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
3♦	3♥	Pass	Pass
4♦	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Dorothy gulped. If the Lion had bid on, it probably meant that the hand was close to a slam. She mentally prepared herself for a lecture about her Four Diamond bid from her disappointed partner. She led the ♠5.

The Lion looked at the lead and examined the spade suit. This was clearly a singleton. He could take the spade finesse later, the most immediate issue must be the threatened spade ruff. He won with dummy's ace and led a heart towards his hand. When the Tin Man played low he put up the king. Dorothy won, played a diamond to her partner's ace, and ruffed the spade return with her second trump. The Lion had to concede the master trump to the Tin Man for one down.

'Unlucky,' said Dorothy. 'We don't seem to be guessing well today.'

'I was playing the odds,' explained the Lion. 'I wanted to get trumps out as fast as possible, and East was favourite to hold the ace. On a good day I would have dropped the singleton queen of hearts and made eleven.'

'Indeed so,' said the Tin Man. 'Given that you had already decided that East, to wit, me, was an idiot, this was a reasonable course of action. You assumed that I, of all people, had failed to spot the obvious singleton lead, and then had failed to go up with the ace of hearts to give my partner a ruff. Holding ace small, I can't know that you are missing the queen, but I would be able to guarantee a second trump trick by taking the ace and giving the ruff. True, that might not be the best line to beat the contract but after all, we are playing match points where such things don't always matter. Put in the ten of hearts and, while Dorothy still gets her ruff, you have no other trump loser, and your contract rolls home.'

The Lion's shoulders sagged. Not only had his play probably cost them any chance of qualifying, but he also knew he would have to listen to this analysis in full gory detail again in the car home.

They took their cards out for the second board of the set, the last of the event:



Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ J1032 ♥ Q5 ♦ 863 ♣ J832	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">                     N W     E S                 </div>	♠ 9 ♥ K108732 ♥ Q1092 ♣ 94	♠ AQ75 ♥ 6 ♦ AJ75 ♣ AK107
	♠ K864 ♥ AJ94 ♦ K4 ♣ Q65		

The Scarecrow, very aware of the Lion's disappointment, sorted his cards carefully for once, spotted he was both North and the dealer, and opened One Club. The Tin Man made the routine weak jump overcall of Two Hearts. The Lion doubled for take out, effectively promising four spade cards. After that, the auction followed a well trodden path for this pair. The Scarecrow overbid his hand and the Lion underbid his. On this occasion the result was the surprisingly good contract of Six Spades.

The full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
<i>Dorothy</i>	<i>Scarecrow</i>	<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Lion</i>
–	1♣	2♥	Double
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Four and Five No-trumps were ordinary Blackwood as the Lion had long since barred the Scarecrow from all sorts of keycard.

Dorothy led the ♥Q, and the Lion breathed a sigh of relief when he saw dummy. If trumps broke three–two then he had eleven sure tricks, and chances for a twelfth in both minors.

He won the ♥A in hand and played a trump to dummy and a second

trump back to the king. The four–one break was a disappointment to him. He ruffed a heart in the dummy, took the ♠Q, cashed the ♣A and played a club back to his queen.

This was the position:

♠ J ♥ – ♦ 863 ♣ J8	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">                     N W     E S                 </div>	♠ – ♥ – ♦ AJ75 ♣ K10	♠ – ♥ K10 ♦ Q1092 ♣ –
	♠ 8 ♥ J9 ♦ K4 ♣ 6		

He had won the first seven tricks and needed five more. If he could score four tricks in the minors and his trump then he could still make it. First, he tried clubs. If the jack came down then he could discard a heart on the ♣10 and pin his hopes on the diamond finesse. He tried a club to the king. Disappointingly, the jack did not drop, but he was able to secure a trick with the ♠8 by ruffing the fourth round of the suit.

West's distribution was an open book. Dorothy had clearly started with a doubleton heart and four spades, and she had now shown four clubs. She was left with the master trump and three diamonds. As long as one of them was the queen he was still okay. He cashed the ♦K then finessed the ♦J. The Tin Man won with the queen and played the ♥K, on which Dorothy discarded her last diamond. Her last card was the winning trump. The contract was two down.

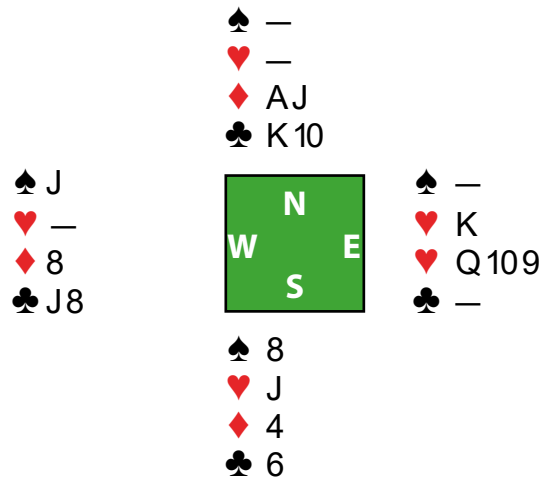
'Confound it,' growled the Lion, as he gathered his possessions and stood up. 'Three suits wrong. Well bid slam.' He didn't wait for the expected rebuttal from his right hand opponent.

Dorothy helped the Scarecrow to enter the score into the bridgemate. She saw that several pairs had made Six Spades. As she went to the cloakroom, Aunty Em was quick to tell her that she had guessed to take the club

finesse. It emerged later that the only person to make the contract without guessing the minors at all was Professor Marvel.

‘You see I followed your advice,’ he chuckled to the Tin Man in the car on the way back to Munchkinland.

Winning the heart lead he had immediately ruffed a heart in the dummy. Returning to hand with the  $\heartsuit K$ , he had ruffed a second heart before cashing the  $\spadesuit A$  and  $\spadesuit Q$  in the dummy. Had trumps been three – two he would have been sure of twelve tricks and looking for a thirteenth. Faced with the actual break, he took the  $\clubsuit A$ , came back to hand with the  $\clubsuit Q$  and played the  $\spadesuit K$ . This was the position:



He had taken the first nine tricks. A club to the king was his tenth, a club ruff was his eleventh, and the  $\diamondsuit A$  was his twelfth. West was left ruffing thin air on trick thirteen.

There was a grating sound as the Tin Man started ‘At our table ...’. The car braked sharply and swung into a layby.

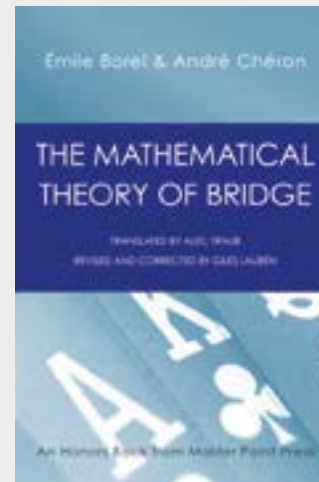
‘I suggest we have no more discussion of that hand, please.’ The Lion stared straight ahead, unable to look the Tin Man in the eye. ‘I may not be the fastest driver, but you’ll certainly get home quicker in the car than walking.’

The Tin Man started to open his mouth then shut it. Emboldened by the silence the Lion added, ‘And the same goes for the Four Hearts on the hand before.’

The Professor and Almira Gulch had made a comeback in the second

half, climbing to an overall score of 54% and relatively comfortable qualification. The Tin Man and Dorothy had finished first, picking up a few Guilders, but more importantly winning some coveted blue points, bringing the Tin Man closer to National Master, and parity with Miss Gulch. Aunty Em and Uncle Henry had tailed off a bit as fatigue set in, but had still got through. Indeed only two of the pairs from the Over the Rainbow Bridge Club had failed to progress. The Lion and the Scarecrow were well down the field – even two tops at the end would not have been enough to get to average – and the Irritable and Unpleasant Witches had finished bottom. They had last been seen in the car park, hurling curses at each other, the tournament director and the catering staff.

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# Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

1

♠ 9 ♥ K4 ♦ AQJ765 ♣ 10432		♠ Q102 ♥ J1062 ♦ K43 ♣ K65	♠ J84 ♥ AQ953 ♦ 1092 ♣ Q7
♠ AK7653 ♥ 87 ♦ 8 ♣ AJ98			

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠	3♦	4♠
All Pass			

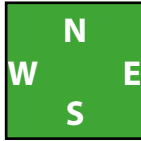
You lead the king of hearts (asking for standard count), on which go the two, three and seven. How should you continue?

The bidding and play to the first trick incline you to place partner with a five-card heart suit headed by the ace. This being the case, you can see three immediate tricks in the red suits. Where can the setting trick come from?

If partner has both the queen and jack of clubs, this could give your side a trick. If partner holds a singleton diamond, a ruff will be available. The odds, however, are that South with long spades will be short in diamonds.

Given your nine of spades, an overruff or the threat thereof surely offers your best chance. If partner holds J-8-x (or K-8-x), declarer will lose a trump one way or another. If partner has J-x-x, declarer will be on a guess. Of course, if you play a second heart right away, you may lose your ace of diamonds. If partner's third heart is low, declarer discards; if it is the remaining honour, your opponent ruffs high and gets the discard later. So cash the ace of diamonds before continuing hearts.

2

♠ AK98753 ♥ 7 ♦ 98 ♣ J105		♠ QJ102 ♥ K6 ♦ AK104 ♣ K76	♠ 4 ♥ 8543 ♦ J753 ♣ Q832
♠ 6 ♥ AQJ1092 ♦ Q62 ♣ A94			

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♠	3NT	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

You lead the king of spades, to which all follow. What is your plan? You can see all the spades, so a second round cannot stand up. You do not want to switch to a trump in case partner has J10xx or Q10xx. For the same reason you do not want to continue with a low spade.

If partner's trumps are weaker than the holdings cited above, declarer is likely to pick them up, either by a finesse or possibly a trump coup. You can do nothing about that. If partner holds the ace of clubs (rather unlikely), it can hardly run away.

Your best bet is to find partner with the queen in one of the minors. The queen of diamonds makes life easier for your side because it is unlikely to run away. More testing is when partner has the club queen. Then declarer could threaten a double squeeze, with you guarding spades, partner the fourth round of diamonds and nobody able to protect clubs. The way to break up the double squeeze is to attack the entries in the pivot suit. Switch to the jack of clubs.



# Vu-Bridge - Play Like a Champion

*Strenuous Slams by Ben Norton (UK)*

Leading against slams is a stressful business. It's often crucial to get the defence off to the best possible start, in the meantime lots of IMPs are depending on your decision. Thankfully it normally takes a long, complex and revealing auction for the opponents to reach a slam, giving the defender with a keen ear the chance to learn a great deal about the hand. Here are some of the main factors in the bidding that can tip you off:

Have they (your opponents) shown shortage or strength somewhere? If so it's probably best to look elsewhere for tricks, unless they're known to be tricky.

Did partner have the chance to double a cue-bid? If he scorned the opportunity to make a lead-directing double it's unlikely that suit will provide much nutrition.

Did they use RKCB? If so you can usually tell what they're missing. If they sign off in a small slam, expect your side to have a key-card, while high-level enquiries about the queen of trumps, side-suit kings and third-round controls often paint a good picture of what your opponents have, while implying all the key-cards are present.

Put all this together and try to construct their hands. It will help a great deal.

Against slams more than any other level of contract, it's vital that you make a plan. It's usually much easier than constructing a defence to beat a game, since you need only two tricks. When leading against a suit slam, normal practice dictates that an active defence be undertaken. Often the declaring side will have a source of tricks on which to discard their losers, while the overall high-card strength needed is far less than that of a No-trump contract, since they don't need to hold high-card stoppers in all of the suits. All this suggests an aggressive opening lead, aiming to set up a trick. After all, your side will have some high cards to work with.

Most of the time your adversaries will be missing a key-card to stop short of a grand slam, so a frequently good concept is to establish a side-suit trick

that you can cash when you get in with that key-card, which declarer will probably have to knock out to get to his tricks. In this way one often leads from kings or queens, hoping to find partner with the other one. Alternatively, you could try cashing your ace to give partner a ruff, if you have sufficient length there or the auction suggests partner is short. Of course being active won't always be right, and if there appears to be no trick-taking potential in any of the suits, or partner is known to have very little, a passive start may be called for.

On the contrary, defending against 6NT is a matter of giving nothing away. Declarer will have so much raw high-card strength behind him that you can hardly expect to cash two quick tricks. Also, he'll frequently have all the suits well-stopped, so an attacking lead will just sail into a tenace. Strive to be passive, leading from small cards or good sequences, and leave declarer to his own devices. There is an exception though. If the auction has suggested that your opponents have very long suits which will be big sources of tricks, they could well have twelve on top and an active lead may be lucrative. After all, they've probably elected to play in No-trumps due to having no fit, so they might not have diagnosed that there are two key-cards missing or they don't have a suit controlled.

This notion of passivity also holds true for grand slams. Unless they have gone mad or are swinging for the stars you won't have a trick to cash and should angle for safety. Don't help the enemy!

Keeping with this theme, here's a problem from a recent Gold Cup match (Britain's primary knock-out teams competition):

♠ AQ763  
♥ Q53  
♦ J7  
♣ K72

You pick up this collection as South at unfavourable vulnerability and hear East open 1♣, promising four. You overcall 1♠ and West doubles. Your RHO

rebids 2♦ and West jumps to 3♠, a Splinter bid showing spade shortage and agreeing diamonds as trumps. East proceeds with 4♦, which is RKCB in their methods, and signs off in 6♦ when his partner shows one key-card via a 4♠ bid. It's time to form a plan.

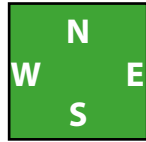
LHO must have a lot of red-suit cards, probably four hearts and six diamonds, to justify his bidding on what appears to be limited values. This is judging from your own strength and East's reverse, coupled with the fact that West has but one key-card and is presumably missing the ♦Q as well, because his partner didn't ask for it. Also, with a good hand West might have bid 2♦ or 2♥ instead of doubling. Place dummy with something like 1-4-6-2 shape or maybe a 1-5-5-2 hand. Where are your two tricks coming from?

The ♣A is overwhelmingly likely to be on your right, so your King looks well-placed, while the ♠A will be trick number two. Should you cash your ace now, so that it doesn't go away? After all, you expect to take a club trick.

That wouldn't be a good idea. Declarer is very likely to have spade length, probably in a 3-1-4-5 pattern, since with a heart void he wouldn't have bothered with RKCB. Yes, that leaves partner with four-card spade support, but you can tell he doesn't have anything, so wouldn't have raised anyway. You have the ♥Q so it's very unlikely that declarer will be able to get three spades away before surrendering the lead. Even if there are five good hearts in dummy declarer may well have some trouble with entries.

The real danger in banging down the ♠A is that declarer could easily have the king, providing a parking spot for dummy's losing club. You should go passive. It's very likely that East will end up relying on the club finesse. Thus, it's a choice between the red suits, and a heart, although through dummy's strength, might be disastrous if declarer does have a void. The safest shot is a trump, and the seven at that. The jack might unblock the suit to give dummy an extra trump entry in some scenarios, which might be used to ruff the hearts good. The full hand:

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K ♥ AJ104 ♦ 985432 ♣ 64	♠ 10854 ♥ 98762 ♦ 6 ♣ J95		♠ J92 ♥ K ♦ AKQ10 ♣ AQ1083
	♠ AQ763 ♥ Q53 ♦ J7 ♣ K72		

As it happens, the ♠K is singleton in dummy, so you can afford to lead the ♠A and switch to a red suit, but East was the favourite to hold that card. When you lead a trump declarer wins, draws another round, cashes the ♥K and exits with a spade. You win and know to get off lead with a heart, since three discards aren't enough for declarer unless he began with 4-1-4-4 distribution, with which 1♣ would probably have been the opening bid, but partner will have had a chance to signal his spade length anyway.

You are now invited to take an interactive quiz with Vu-Bridge, which poses five opening lead problems, all of which are against high-level contracts. You can either click on the link below or use your smartphone with this flash-code.

<http://vubridge.com/QM/Users/BridgeMag/BM20180515.php>





# Bridge with Larry Cohen

[www.larryco.com](http://www.larryco.com)

*The brilliant American player, writer and teacher discusses a topic that often confuses players*

## Active Ethics

One of my favourite teaching/story deals features this hand:

♠ 10873  
♥ Q82  
♦ —  
♣ KQ9872

Many years ago, playing with Marty Bergen in a major event, I held the above cards. Marty opened 1♦ and RHO doubled.

I considered Pass or 1♠, but instead decided to show my club suit. I bid 2♣.

Ooops. Marty alerted. He took my bid as conventional. He was right. I had forgotten our methods. This was one of Marty's (many) brainchilds called BROMAD. Instead of showing clubs, I had shown 7-10 points and 4+ diamonds! At least I had the 7-10 points.

Now what? I prayed.

It didn't work. Marty jumped to 5♦! Bury me, why don't you.

RHO doubled. What should I do? Should I run?

Here is the point of the upcoming article. I MUST NOT RUN! To do so would be unethical. Can you understand why?

I am NOT ALLOWED TO BE WOKEN UP BY MARTY'S ALERT. When I bid 2♣ I thought I was showing clubs. I must ignore the fact that he alerted and explained it as diamonds. (Even had he not explained it, I am not entitled to all of a sudden "remember".) Let me repeat: When I bid 2♣, I thought I had shown clubs. Armed with that information, my partner jumped to 5♦. Who am I to overrule him? I still have what I've shown. I showed clubs, I had clubs. Removing to 6♣ would be taking advantage of the alert.

This is a hard concept to understand, but most inexperienced players

would fall from grace and run from the impending disaster.

Before I show you a new deal with this theme, I will tell you that the above story had a remarkable ending. You can read about it in Points Schmoints, or hear the full story at one of my lectures (sorry for the tease).

Now, on to this deal from the 2007 Nationals.

My RHO, Daniel Levin, held:

♠ Q10  
♥ AJ542  
♦ K  
♣ Q10876

With neither side vulnerable, he saw a 1♦ opening by David Berkowitz. This was a Precision diamond - could be short. It is important to discuss with your partner if you treat such a 1♦ opening as anything special. Is 2♦ still Michaels? Daniel elected to bid 2NT, unusual. This showed the 2 lowest unbid suits - clubs and hearts.

His LHO (that would be me) doubled, penalty-oriented. Daniel's partner chose 3♦

What's that? Partner didn't choose one of Daniel's 5-card suits. He must want to play in diamonds. Maybe he has 6 or 7 of them. Daniel's singleton king is actually good support. RHO doubles. Everyone passes. The lead is made and you table your dummy.

Now, as Paul Harvey would say, for the "rest of the story".

After Daniel's 2NT, I asked what it showed. Some players, especially over a Precision diamond, choose to use 2NT as minors (as opposed to clubs + hearts). Daniel's partner answered: "I think 2NT shows the minors."

Do you see the difference? Daniel now had (unauthorized) information that his partner was interpreting 2NT as minors. When his partner bid 3♦, Daniel knew that he was choosing between clubs and diamonds. He also knew that 3♦X was going to be a total disaster.

But, he did the proper thing. Review the thinking before you knew the "rest of the story." You bid 2NT, thinking you were showing clubs + hearts.

Partner then, for whatever reason, chooses diamonds. End of story. Who are you to overrule him with your ordinary hand? Sure, if you were 7-6, you would be entitled to try something else. But, not with this hand. The ethical (and correct) move is to pass and take your medicine.

The medicine was a bottom. (Partner was 3-3 in the red suits and went for a huge number, whereas 3♥ would have been down only two tricks). But, Mr. Levin earned my respect. He did the right thing.

Incidentally, had he unethically removed 3♦X, the director would have been summoned and would have had an easy time ruling the contract back to 3♦X, anyway. That's the rules of bridge. You are not entitled to take advantage of "unauthorized information".

I know this is a complex matter for newer players, but it is a lesson worth learning.

Let's not use that "C" word. A less threatening term is "unethical." This won't make me popular with everyone out there, but let me put it right out there on the table: "It is UNETHICAL to take advantage of your partner's tempo." If you have heard otherwise, or are confused, this article is for you.

I know, I know. Some of you are thinking, "Larry, these nasty complainers are ruining our game. You know – the ones who call the director every time I take time to think." Yes, I know. I don't approve of litigiously "calling the cops" after any tempo break. Especially in a "social/fun" game, and certainly against new players, there is no need to scream for a director over every tempo violation. I feel your pain! But, let's not lose sight of the lesson.

Maybe your eyes normally glaze over when reading about this topic, but I can explain it in easy-to-follow English. When your partner takes 75 seconds to pass, you are not entitled to know that he has a problem. It is your ethical duty (obligation!) to not take advantage. If you have a marginal action, you must bend over backwards (break a few bones doing so) to do what is counter-indicated.

Example auctions:

<i>Opponent</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>You</i>
3♥	Pass (slow)	Pass	?

Your partner took 75 seconds (which he is completely entitled to do). You know he was thinking of bidding. You know he isn't broke. He doesn't have a flat 4-count. If he had "nothing," it would not have taken him 75 seconds

to pass. You have unauthorized information from the amount of time it took him to pass. If you have a marginal balancing decision, you must not take advantage. Unless you are absolutely sure it is normal to take action, you should pass. This is the proper approach. It is the right thing. You'll feel proud of yourself. The opponents will respect you. You can sleep in peace. If instead, you violate the code of honour, you will incur the wrath of your opponents (and maybe a higher source). Expect a director and maybe a committee (ugh!). Don't bid, say, 3♠ with only 11 points and a so-so 5-card spade suit. If you have 17 points (or any other obvious hand), then you can make the indicated bid, of course.

<i>Partner</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>Opponent</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥(slow)	Pass	??	

Your partner opened 1♠ then took 48 seconds to bid 2♥. What do your psychic powers tell you? Surely he has spades and hearts. What strength? He has extra values, of course. He was thinking of bidding more than 2♥. With a minimum, he'd have bid 2♥ in tempo. If you are considering making a marginal invitation now, don't do it! Just pass and take your medicine.

Did I mince any words? Is this not 100% clear to everyone? Read carefully: It is okay to huddle. Sometimes you have a problem. If you do take 64 seconds to take a call, so be it. You did nothing wrong. It is your partner who has to uphold the spirit of the game. As long as he doesn't take advantage, all is well and good in the world. If you are at all confused about this (I know it is a tricky topic for inexperienced players), please send me an e-mail and ask away. ([bridgecruises\\_lessons@larryco.com](mailto:bridgecruises_lessons@larryco.com))

Notes:

- 1) I repeat - this is not for beginners. We don't want to scare them away. (We do, however, wish to educate them. If there is a nice way to explain this issue, I'm all for it).
- 2) This is also not for "social" or casual players. (But, I wish I could explain it to them, as well). At any level, I suspect that most players, at least sub-consciously, are aware when they take advantage of partner's tempo.
- 3) I didn't want to overwhelm you, but there are also issues of tempo on defence! If your partner thinks a long time before ducking his ace, you

are not entitled to know he has that ace. Be aware. As usual, you can take all the time you want on a trick. Just don't "read anything" into partner's slow plays.

- 4) I've discussed only slow actions. The opposite is also problematic. Don't fall into the temptation to "fast pass." It is unethical to make a very fast pass or double (a few seconds is a normal pause/tempo). When the opponents skip the bidding, don't pass in 0.02 seconds to convey to your partner that you are broke. Furthermore, if you open a dead minimum hand, and the competitive auction comes back to you, please don't pull out your pass card while RHO is still placing his bidding card on the table. Such an action is at best unethical. At worst - well, I said I won't use that "C" word.

Let's use this one instead: Ciao.



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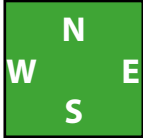
# From The Archives – Smother Play

by Brian Senior

The Smother Play is a rare beast – I have only played one successfully once in all my years of playing bridge – but magic tricks have a fascination for us all and it can come as quite a shock to the defender on the receiving end.

This example shows how the smother play works.

Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 1065 ♥ K742 ♦ 1098 ♣ Q107		♠ J743 ♥ A93 ♦ AK6 ♣ K84	♠ Q92 ♥ 6 ♦ 7543 ♣ J9532
♠ AK8 ♥ QJ1085 ♦ QJ2 ♣ A6			

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Six Hearts is a borderline contract which will succeed whenever declarer can avoid a loser in one or other major suit.

Declarer wins the diamond lead in hand and advances the queen of hearts. It holds the trick so declarer continues with the jack. When East shows out West is marked with a trump trick so it appears that declarer requires the queen of spades to fall under the ace-king.

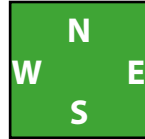
Declarer abandons the trump suit and cashes the top spades – no luck. Is there any hope remaining?

Declarer cashes the remaining diamond winners then plays three rounds of clubs, ruffing. Now he exits with the losing spade. East wins the spade queen and has to return a minor-suit at trick twelve. Declarer is down to ♥108 and dummy to ♠J ♥A. Declarer ruffs, perforce, and what is West to do? If he plays the ♥K dummy over-ruffs and declarer makes the last trick in hand. If West under-ruffs, dummy's spade is discarded and the ♥A wins trick thirteen. The sure trump trick has been smothered.

Declarer needed some good fortune to balance the bad. Had East held a fourth spade, he could have led it and West could over-ruff declarer while dummy had to follow suit, or had West held the ♠Q he would have won the third spade and returned a low heart to the bare ace.

And then I was researching for a series of articles on great plays by star players for the 2003 PABF Championships in Taipei daily bulletins when I came across this deal. It was played by a member of the Japanese Open team at the time, Yoshiyuki Nakamura. He played the deal in the 1976 Kyoto Mayor's Cup.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 10653 ♥ 10984 ♦ AQ43 ♣ J		♠ AK42 ♥ A765 ♦ KJ10 ♣ 73	♠ QJ ♥ Q32 ♦ – ♣ KQ1086542
♠ 987 ♥ KJ ♦ 987652 ♣ A9			



<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	1NT*	4♣	5♦
All Pass			

1NT 15-17

West led the jack of clubs. Nakamura won the ace and led the two of diamonds. West played low and declarer put in dummy's ten. East discarded a club. Looking at two trump losers and a club, to say nothing of needing to find a parking place for the third spade, prospects were not good. However, the auction offered a ray of hope as it suggested that clubs might be eight-one.

Nakamura led a heart to the jack and, when that held the trick, cashed the ♥K, crossed to the ace of spades and took a spade discard on the ace of hearts. He continued with a heart ruff, a spade to the king and a spade ruff. That left:

♠ 4		
♥ —		
♦ KJ		
♣ 3		
♠ 10		♠ —
♥ —		♥ —
♦ AQ4		♦ —
♣ —		♣ KQ104
♠ —		
♥ —		
♦ 987		
♣ 9		

At trick ten, Nakamura exited with the nine of clubs. East won and had to return a club and Nakamura ruffed with the seven. West was powerless. If he under-ruffed away would go dummy's spade and a diamond towards the king-jack would mean just one loser. If instead West ruffed with the ace, again dummy's spade would go away and the ♦KJ would claim the last two tricks.

A beautiful hand. Smother plays are rare indeed, but the common variety sees declarer with the top trump, as in our opening example. Nakamura's hand is the only one I have seen in which a smother play was successfully executed with the defender holding the top trump in the ending.

♠ AK42		♠ QJ
♥ A765		♥ Q32
♦ KJ10		♦ —
♣ 73		♣ KQ1086542
♠ 10653		
♥ 10984		
♦ AQ43		
♣ J		
♠ 987		
♥ KJ		
♦ 987652		
♣ A9		



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Jeff Bayone



## Club Corner


A series for the club player by Tony Poole

A positive suit response to an opening bid of 2♣ will generally include either an ace and a king, or a king and king/queen in any suit, or an ace and queen in the same suit. Any suit bid should contain a ‘positive’ honour. Even with a positive response it may be better to respond 2♦, to enable opener to bid out their hand.

With a balanced 7-8 point hand, the ‘technically’ correct bid is 2NT. However there is strong case for restricting its use to 4-3-3-3 hands. With other distributions, it’s better to start by responding 2♦ and await opener’s re-bid – he may bid one of your four-card suits. Responding 2NT also runs the risk that the contract will be played from the ‘wrong’ hand.

Let’s compare the two possibilities by examining a complete deal:

### Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 10 ♥ QJ73 ♦ J9862 ♣ 732		♠ AKJ42 ♥ A5 ♦ A5 ♣ AK96	♠ 975 ♥ 1062 ♦ K1074 ♣ 854
	♠ Q863 ♥ K984 ♦ Q3 ♣ QJ10		

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	2♣*	Pass	?

2♣ an Acol game force bid. (It could be 2♦ if you are playing Benjamin).

What is better between relaying with 2♦ or making the value showing bid of 2NT?

If you allow as much room as possible, in a game forcing auction, you can find out more at a lower level. And then you can progress the auction to the correct contract. So you have two methods:

### Relay method

2♣* 2♠ 2♦ Waiting 3♠ Promising values – You have quickly agreed the suit in a game forcing auction at the three-level.	2♦* 3♠*
---	------------

Now cue-bidding can take place.

In this situation the big hand has all 5 keycards so RKCB is reasonable. An alternative is for Opener to cue-bid 5♣ and see if Responder shows a king or shortage in a red suit (assuming 2<sup>nd</sup> round control cue-bidding is acceptable in your system.) Here is how the bidding would develop after the use of RKCB:

2♣* 2♠ 4NT* 5♦* 5NT* 4NT RKCB 5♣ 0 keycards 5♦ Do you have the ♠Q (Opener must have the missing key-cards) 5♥ Yes, and the ♥K (5♠ is the bid without the queen) 5NT Do you have any other kings 6♥ No	2♦* 3♠ 5♣* 5♥* 6♥
---	-------------------------------

Opener could now bid a safe 6♠.

In order to bid a grand slam you need to be confident of taking all the tricks. Responder's 3♠ suggests extra values, so the absence of the ♦K suggests that useful honour cards will be located. It would be speculative, but not ridiculous to bid 7♠.

## Responder shows values immediately

2♣\* 2NT  
3♠ ?

Responder knows of the spade fit and wants to be in slam but it is more difficult to tell Partner about the fit; does he:

bid 4♠, a slight underbid

cue-bid 4♥ which may leave opener wondering if it is a first or second round control.

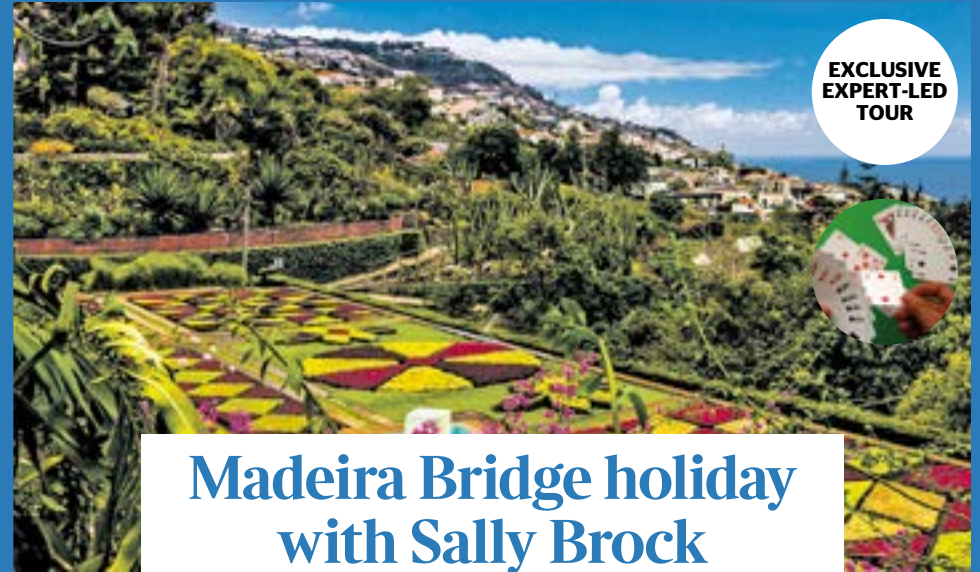
bid 4NT, RKCB, which is not suitable with an aceless hand.

It is generally better for the stronger hand to ask the questions as less information needs to be transmitted by the Responder.

### *Conclusion:*

One example hand is not sufficient to prove that the relay response of 2♦ is best, but it explains the thought processes that you need to consider when you have some soft values opposite partner's big hand. And having a major suit (four-card) is one main reason why Responder should use the relay. As Responder, holding a four-card major, you will have Stayman available if Opener bids 2NT. Even holding a three-card major you may also have five-card Stayman available in your toolkit. But that is another topic for another time.

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# From Our French Correspondent

Ron Tacchi delivers the latest news from across La Manche

Spring is finally arriving in *Le Perche*, yes spring is sprung, the grass is ris, (often attributed falsely to Ogden Nash but much more likely to that well-known author: anon) I wonders where the birdies is. The answer is they are mainly in the garden of Chateau Tacchi and they make a wonderful cacophony of sound from pre-dawn till après-dusk, particularly the little wren which perches on the window of my new office. Each year there is a slight shift of emphasis in the visitors to our bird tables who consume my weight in peanuts and grease balls during the cold and shorter days. I estimate a twitcher could spot in excess of thirty different birds over the year. This year we had a few more members of the Paridae family (tits) than usual. Apart from the regular *mésanges bleue, noire* and *charbonnière* (blue, coal and great – note that in typical French contrary style the great is called *charbonnière* and the coal is called *noire*) we have also had crested, long-tailed and sombre members of the family. The regular varieties take advantage of the many bird boxes dotted around the garden. They are breeding late this year as the oak trees are not yet in leaf. The blue-tits feed their young on the Oak Moth caterpillar and so wait until they espy fresh green shoots on the tree before laying their eggs as the moths adopt a similar strategy.

One other pleasant part of spring arriving is that my daily walk to the river (*La Loupe, here in France many towns and departments are named after the river that passes through them*) and back, a modest kilometre but stops me actually taking root in my office chair, is that I get to see the burgeoning flora and fauna. The verges are awash with colour from yellow cowslips and white wood anemones. We are still a couple of weeks away from the wild Spotted Orchids showing off their purple blooms. They are without doubt my favourite and I spend a lot of time checking how many blooms we can expect. It is always a desperate race for them to flower before the local council starts the *fauchage* or cutting of the verges, though things are getting a lot better as budget restraints and an awareness that it is better for the environment means this task is less frequently performed. On the return leg I harvest some wild garlic for use in the kitchen. The pheasants

and partridges are busy pairing up so that there will be plenty of game pie in the autumn. The hares have finished their displays and are almost certainly settling down to the joys of parenthood.

Back to the bridge – as is usual in these disquisitions I was approached by Watson who asked me how I made 3NT plus two on the following hand:

♠ K9852

♥ 6

♦ QJ75

♣ J87



♠ QJ

♥ K1043

♦ AK4

♣ AK94

‘At our table I opened a strong club and then showed a four-card heart suit and partner divulged a spade suit of five cards and little else. West, a pseudo-scientific player, who if he was half as good as he thinks he is would be twice as good as he actually is, questioned intensely the bidding and wanted to be sure that South had four hearts. After much soul searching a diamond appeared on the table. Over to you Watson.’

‘Having borne the brunt of your sarcasm more times than is necessary I shall immediately ask which card did he lead and what are his methods.’

‘Excellent question. He leads the two and they claimed to be playing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> leads. East furnished the eight and I won with the king.’

‘I can see eight tricks, four diamonds, two clubs and I must make two spade tricks no matter how they defend. And as you always tell me where there are eight there are nearly always nine. It would appear that my first priority is to establish some spade tricks, so I lead the queen of spades from hand.’

‘Again sound analysis. When the queen hits the felt West hums and haws

before playing four and his partner the three.’

‘It would seem that West is the proud holder of the spade ace as I do not believe he is devious enough to hesitate without it. I shall put him further to test and now try the jack.’

‘Again West harrumphs before eventually playing the six.’

‘What does East play?’

‘There is an important question to answer before we get to that one.’

‘I don’t see it.’

‘Well, what card is dummy playing?’

‘OK, OK, I see what you mean. I suppose I need to divine the spade situation.’

‘There may be other factors that affect your decision.’

‘It seems I have only one certain entry to dummy so I need to get the spades going if I am to make a lot of tricks but I don’t know if the spades are three-three or not so I am a little nervous.’

‘Examining the spade suit in isolation, assuming we are certain West has the ace then East either has a doubleton without the ten, a doubleton including the ten, a singleton, or three cards including the ten. If it is the first or third option then we are not going to set up the spade suit. So what now is your plan?’

‘Well I can either abandon the spade suit by playing low and trying for an extra trick in clubs by finding the queen onside or the suit splitting evenly. It seems a coin flip.’

‘Ask yourself not if you are a man or a mouse—we know the answer to that question—but are there any other small signals that might give you some clues.’

‘I can’t see anything obvious.’

‘Well, what card did West play on the first round of spades and similarly what card did East play to the same trick?’

‘West the four and East the three, so what?’

‘As I said West is a bit of a scientist, with four cards in the suit might he not have petered to show an even number. Likewise if East had only two spades might he not have given count to partner if he held a doubleton. They both played the lowest possible card from their hand, so either they are both telling the truth or both are lying.’

‘So you are saying I should overtake with the king and play another

round.’

‘If you are capable of reading into the defenders’ cards and believe them then yes, I went up with the king and played another whilst discarding a heart to find the suit had split kindly. There are also other minor indications that this might be the case. The diamond lead looks like it is from a three-card suit. West obviously has something in hearts, partly because he must and secondly from his questioning of the auction. However if he had a five-card suit I think he would have led it anyway. The fact that declarer may have led from a three-card suit implies that his club suit is of a similar length and since we believe he started with thirteen cards that leaves three spades, of course this is not cast iron logic, it is quite plausible West has four spades and only two clubs but again there are signs for you to examine and a firmer base on which to make your decision.’

‘Gosh, that’s reading a lot into a few small cards but it is very enlightening, I just hope I can remember to ask myself all these questions. I have now lost a trick to West but I do not see where trick eleven is coming from.’

‘Well West did not hand you the eleventh trick by leading a heart or give you the chance of a good guess by trying a club. He continued with another diamond. Back to you.’

‘Obviously I cash my diamond ace and then cross to dummy to cash the thirteenth diamond and two spades.’

‘What are you discarding from hand?’

‘I can easily discard a club and a heart, but on the third I am not sure.’

‘Again you have not asked what the defenders decided not to keep.’

‘OK, tell me.’

‘West, showing some small signs of stress, disembarassed himself of the nine and five of hearts and East likewise two hearts, the two and the seven. You lead the final spade and East after very little thought discards the eight of hearts. What’s your plan now?’

‘I don’t know. I quite like the idea of leading towards my king of hearts and so I think I would discard a club.’

‘What is your evidence for that approach?’

‘None really, I just don’t see anything much better.’

‘Well let’s do some analysis. We know there are six clubs outstanding and still three hearts as West has yet to play on this trick. Consider the West hand first. We now know he led from a three-card suit, he also had three



spades. The fact that he led a diamond rather than a club suggests his clubs are not longer than his diamonds and simple arithmetic tells us he has five hearts and two clubs or four hearts and three clubs. If he has five hearts then he still has the AQJ of the suit. That is unlikely for three reasons. Can you give me them?’

‘Earlier we said that if he had five he almost certainly would have led one. I must admit to not seeing any other obvious reason.’

‘Well what did he bid?’

‘Nothing, you had an uncontested auction.’

‘Precisely – another dog that didn’t bark in the night. If he had five hearts to the AQJ and the ace of spades do you not think he would have overcalled my opening one club bid?’ ‘Now can you see the third reason?’

‘Obviously not.’

‘Think about East’s discard. Would he have kept four clubs and no hearts? I think not, or at least he would have given the matter some thought.’

‘Wow, it never ceases to amaze me how much information is actually out there if you stop and apply the right questions and the right logic.’

‘So now you are confident that the hearts are four-four and the clubs three-three. Tell me what you are going to discard.’

‘I am still unsure.’

‘Who has the ace of hearts? Or alternatively would West have led a heart from QJ95?’

‘You are making it easy for me. It would appear that West has the heart ace, so there is no point in holding on to two hearts.’

‘Good, that’s right. Now West goes into trance and finally discards the jack of hearts. What card do you now play from dummy?’

‘Well if my analysis is correct it cannot harm to exit with a heart.’

‘Again good, you are beginning to get the hang of this. As you expect West wins with the ace and plays a club. The question is do you play West for the queen of clubs or the ten and why?’

‘I am going to choose the jack, because you were at pains to tell me West had a difficult decision for his final discard, if he didn’t have the queen of clubs it would have been simple.’

‘Bravo, this week I’ll buy the round.’

This was the full deal:

♠ A64 ♥ AJ95 ♦ 1062 ♣ Q63	♠ K9852 ♥ 6 ♦ QJ75 ♣ J87		♠ 1073 ♥ Q872 ♦ 983 ♣ 1052
♠ QJ ♥ K1043 ♦ AK4 ♣ AK94			

‘So what is the main lesson of this hand?’

‘Examine the small cards and learn what they might be showing.’

‘No, that is the second lesson. The first lesson is that as a defender “play in tempo”. If you had not garnered the information from West’s antics then it might well have been a different story. You might have played the same way but at the very best your pulse rate would have been a lot higher.’



# A Hand from the Pub

England International Jim Mason reports a terrific deal from an unusual setting

A couple of years ago, Young Ben (our resident British Junior) suggested that some of the players from the Leicestershire County first team should meet up in a pub for an evening's bridge with pre-dealt boards and hand records for post-play discussion. The aim was to drag our methods into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (or in the Whale's case, into the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). We would rotate partnerships, try out different systems and criticise each other as often as possible, occasionally with justification. The main attraction for me was that I would have relatively easy access to cider.

So it has come to pass that on a couple of Thursdays every month, at least four players from our nucleus of seven will assemble in The Swan In The Rushes to rattle through 32 hands in double-quick time. We have only entertained one guest player thus far. Noted Scottish international Les Steel graced us with his presence one evening, enthusiastically describing the experience as, "*a long way to travel in order to endure this*". He did enjoy the selection of real ales, as I recollect.

Anyway, the following hand turned up in last week's game.

♠ AK104  
♥ A86  
♦ 52  
♣ A532



♠ 63  
♥ KJ7432  
♦ A83  
♣ 86

Sitting South, Young Ben was declarer in 4♥ after an uneventful auction. Well, I say, "uneventful". In actual fact, his partner (Mad Dick) had perpetrated a shocking and entirely uncharacteristic underbid en route. My theory is that having now run through the entire gamut of overbids in the bridge spectrum, Dick is now exploring an alternative way of generating

random numbers.

Duncan led the queen of diamonds from the West seat, and when Simon the Sloth encouraged, Ben ducked. Duncan switched to a low Spade, so Ben won in dummy with the king and cashed the trump ace, preparing to claim 10 or 11 tricks depending on the trump break. However, East discarded the queen of clubs and it suddenly looked as if there were two unavoidable trump losers to go with one in each minor suit.

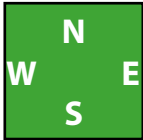
Young Ben is not a seasoned Junior International for no reason, and it didn't take him long to spot that the contract still had genuine chances. His next move was to play a low club from dummy, to Simon's nine and Duncan's four. The Sloth returned a diamond, so declarer won with his ace and played a club to dummy's ace. The ace of spades made it three aces in succession. Duncan followed to this trick with the jack, and when Ben ruffed a low spade back to hand, Duncan contributed the queen. This was irritating for declarer, as he belatedly spotted that if he had played the spades in this fashion before conceding the club, he could now discard his club loser on the master ten of spades.

It was too late to take advantage of that option now though. Ben ruffed a diamond in dummy and the moment of decision had arrived. If West had no black cards remaining, the contract was doomed. However, if Duncan did hold a black card, declarer could ruff that suit successfully back to hand. In the three card ending, South and West would each hold three trumps. Declarer would simply exit with a low card to Duncan, who would be endplayed, forced to lead away from his trump holding round into Ben's ♥KJ. Which black suit should Ben try?

Noting the fall of the high Spades, declarer ruffed a club back to hand ... and Duncan overruffed, exiting safely with a spade (having started life with ♠QJ97) to avoid the trump endplay. Duncan is not a seasoned ex-Junior International for no reason either, and he appreciated what declarer's problem was from an early stage in the play. The false-carding in spades was designed to induce declarer to favour the losing option.

It didn't happen exactly like that though. At the critical point, declarer actually ruffed a spade back to hand. That held the trick of course, because West was obliged to follow suit. So now Ben was able to exit in trumps, thus completing the endplay and landing his game. Despite the trap that West had set for him, Ben attached more credibility to East's initial club discard (which he judged to be from a five-card suit) plus the fact that East had followed to the first round of spades with the two, theoretically showing an odd number of cards in the suit. Simon the Sloth, who felt that he had had no significant role to play in the defence, suddenly found himself taking the stick for making declarer's "guess" much easier. That pleased me, as did the fact that it took ages to play the hand – because I was able to remind dummy (Mad Dick) that he had enough time to get the next round in, thus allowing me to turn my attention back to the puzzle section of the paper.

Here is the full deal:

♠ QJ97 ♥ Q1095 ♦ QJ10 ♣ K4	♠ AK104 ♥ A86 ♦ 52 ♣ A532		♠ 852 ♥ — ♦ K9764 ♣ QJ1097
♠ 63 ♥ KJ7432 ♦ A83 ♣ 86			

NEW FROM  
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## HAND OF THE WEEK

BY JOEL MARTINEAU



Perhaps the best way to improve your bridge is to watch an expert play, and try to understand the reasoning behind their bids and plays. Here, readers follow the bidding and play (or defense) of fifty-two deals — one a week for a year — and listen to the author's thinking as each hand develops. Understanding why the experts do what they do is the first step towards being able to do it yourself – at least some of the time!

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Robots offer many advantages. Among them, you can pause and resume the game later. You are the game master! Moreover, and this is precisely the very essence of Funbridge, you are judged fairly against thousands of other players of the app who play the same deals as you.

As the app is easy to navigate around and well-designed, you will easily and quickly discover the various game modes offered that are split into three main themes: tournaments, practice and challenges between players. Each of them comes along with sub-game modes that are equally attractive. You won't get bored!

Funbridge will be the perfect ally if you want to take up bridge or just improve your skills. Indeed, you will make rapid progress thanks to the practice modes available including "exclusive tournaments", i.e. customised tournaments created by other community players providing opportunities for exchanges about the deals played. You will thus be able to ask your questions to advanced

players and to increase your knowledge.

The app is full of very useful small features: watch a replay of other players' moves (bidding and card play), replay deals to score better, get the meaning of the bids played by the other players sitting at the table, ask the computer for advice, get an analysis of the way you play by the artificial intelligence at the end of a deal played... You will definitely learn from the app!

When you will feel ready, you will be able to pit yourself against thousands of other players by playing tournaments on Funbridge: tournaments of the day, series tournaments and Team Championships. As you can understand, this is the competition part of the app. In these different game modes, you will join rankings and see your rank change live based on your results.

You will also find "federation tournaments" in that section of the app. Several national bridge federations including the English Bridge Union and the French Bridge Federation have placed their trust in Funbridge to hold official tournaments awarding federation points allowing their members to increase their national rank directly via the app. You can't find your federation on Funbridge yet? Be patient, it is only a matter of time! Meanwhile, you can take part in tournaments of other federations since they are open to all.

Finally, you will enjoy comparing yourself with the other community players thanks to short individual tournaments called "challenges". The aim is to get the best scores on all the deals of

the tournament to beat your opponent. May the best win!

Note also that the developers of the app are surrounded by experts... Indeed, Jérôme Rombaut, 2017 Vice World Bridge Champion with France, is by their side. He is in charge of the artificial intelligence of the app. His objective? Make it behave like a human player.

Funbridge is the perfect bridge app. It suits all players with its comprehensive and various game modes. Its weak point? It is highly addictive! We strongly encourage you to try it out if you have not already done so, especially since you get 100 free deals when you sign up. Once you have used them up, you receive 10 free deals every week or you can opt for one of our subscription offers with unlimited deals (from €9 per month).

## A few figures

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## Book Review

### *A Taste of Bridge by Jeff Bayone*

by Michael Cantor

Master Point Press US\$ 19.95, £12.95

If you teach or want to teach bridge – whether professionally, for your club, or just to teach your friends, your children or grandchildren or even yourself – then you should seriously consider buying this book. Especially so if you are American or Canadian, since the bidding style is fundamentally North American.

This is a book for absolute beginners. It sets out the absolute beginners' course that the author has developed over forty years of teaching, and which has contributed in no small part to his building up the largest bridge club in North America, maybe even the world. It can be used as a teach yourself book, or as a guide for teachers, and is accompanied by a teachers manual and students' notes, both available for free download.

Coming from a card-playing family it's impossible for me to remember what it's like not to know what a spade is, or an ace, or a trick, or a trump. Because it's so hard for me to imagine myself back to that level of ignorance (or is it blissful innocence) I asked my wife – whose only interest in bridge is how often and how long it takes me away from home – to take a look and see if she could make sense of the opening chapters. She did, and she could.

The claims that the book offers “a whole new approach” and is “the first book for real beginners published in over a generation” are perhaps overstated, but it certainly is fresh, straightforward, and radically simple. The focus is very much on the play of hands rather than on the bidding, lessons on which only appear halfway through.

Does it sometimes over-simplify? I tend to think that at times it does, but of course it's hard to say just how much is too much, and

the author's success suggests that if anything it's better to err on the side of too much.

The one best thing in the book is the emphasis, repeated over and over, on students looking first not at points but at the shape of a hand, and recognising the common patterns, starting with 4333 and 4432s, progressing to the more distributional shapes. Getting the students saying, almost chanting, these patterns, whether out loud or to themselves, thus embedding this crucial pattern recognition from the outset.

Are there negatives? Well of course there are, at least in my view. A number of “Basic Bridge Rules” are framed and highlighted throughout, but some of these are rules in the sense of the laws of the game, others are rules in the sense of a beginners' guide (second hand low and that kind of thing). The bidding is extremely conservative by modern standards, for example 13 HCP to open, 26 HCP to make game in no trumps, which may form habits that students find it hard to get away from when they improve. More on defence, which after all makes up 50% of hands, would be welcome. There is almost nothing about slams, and while you need to walk before you can run, most players, even beginners, do love slams. A glossary and/or index would make it easier for students to check back and revise.

All in all, I don't know of a better book for total beginners.



# Kit's Corner

by World Champion Kit Woolsey

*World Champion Kit Woolsey provides insight into the mind of an expert bridge player through in-depth analysis of hands he played at recent Major Tournaments. Kit provides you with the opportunity to play along with him and decide what you would do at each critical juncture.*

## Mulberry Bush

In a round-robin match in the Open Trials, you have the opportunity to use one of your specialty opening bids.

As North, you hold:

Dealer West. E/W Vul

♠ Q765  
♥ A874  
♦ 2  
♣ AK73

Your 1NT opening range is 14-16. You play 5-card majors. A 1♦ opening is expected to have at least a doubleton diamond. With this shape, your theoretically correct opening bid is 2♥. This is like a Precision 2♦ opening, but since you play multi you use 2♥ instead.

Your call?

Opening 2♥ is clear. This hand is a model—short diamonds, no 5-card major, no 6-card club suit.

You open 2♥. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	?		

2♥ 11-15, 0 or 1 diamond, no 5-card major, no 6-card club suit.

2NT Asking about shape and strength.

Your agreements are to bid 3♣ with all minimums. With a non-minimum, you show your shape. 3♦ shows 4-4-1-4 with a stiff small diamond. 3NT

shows 4-4-1-4 with a stiff ace, king or queen. 3 of a major shows 3-4-1-5 or 4-3-1-5 with a 3-card holding in the major. 4♣ shows 4-4-0-5.

Your call?

With your range being 11-15, this hand is certainly a non-minimum with all those primes. Bidding 3♦ is clear.

You bid 3♦. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♦
Double	?		

3♦ Non-minimum, 4-4-1-4, stiff small diamond.

4♦ Forces 4♥, usually with a planned signoff.

Your agreements when an artificial call above 3NT gets doubled are as follows:

Pass: Denies a control in the doubled suit. With a control in the suit partner can redouble in order to repeat his call, and you are back where you started with the additional knowledge that the suit is controlled. If partner doesn't redouble he also doesn't have a control and is placing the contract.

Redouble: Almost doesn't exist. It is used to show the queen in the suit, so if partner has the ace he may manoeuvre to get the contract played from his side. Since the redouble takes partner off his intended track, it is optional.

Any other call: The bid you would have made if there had been no double, but shows a control in the suit.

The idea behind this approach is to not let the double interfere with the plan which was intended. We stay on the same track, but confirm that we have the suit controlled. If we don't have the suit controlled we find out, and are able to stop short of slam.

Your call?

Without the double, you would be forced to bid 4♥. After the double, your 4♥ call is supposed to show a control in diamonds. That is meaningless

on this auction, since partner already knows you have a stiff small diamond. Therefore, there is no difference in meaning between a double and a pass. If it could make a difference who declares 4♥ then it might matter, but since you opened 2♥ you will be declarer in 4♥ regardless of what you do if that is where partner is headed. Thus, it makes no difference whether you pass or bid 4♥.

You bid 4♥. The bidding concludes:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♦
Double	4♥	Pass	4♠

There was no way to hog the hand with your methods. In Kit's Corner you never have to be the dummy, so over you go to give it a try.

West leads the ♠2.

♠ Q765  
♥ A874  
♦ 2  
♣ AK73

---

♠ AKJ9  
♥ 9  
♦ KQ1073  
♣ J85

Where do you win this trick?

The trump lead may prevent a complete crossruff. Still, you figure to be in good shape. With decent splits you can score 1 diamond trick, 1 heart trick, and 2 club tricks. You will need only 6 trump tricks, so a second round of trumps won't be fatal. Since you will need to ruff diamonds in dummy, it is important to save the queen of spades for the second diamond ruff so you won't be overruffed. You have plenty of dummy entries.

You play small. East follows with the ♠4, and you win your ♠9. What next?

♠ Q76  
♥ A874  
♦ 2  
♣ AK73

---

♠ AKJ  
♥ 9  
♦ KQ1073  
♣ J85

It has to be right to lead diamonds from dummy. If East has the ace and takes it, you have a second diamond trick. If he ducks you have a diamond trick in your pocket, and without a second round of trumps having been drawn you can consider a complete crossruff.

You are going to want to cash the high clubs before finishing with your crossruff, so you might as well use a club entry to dummy now for a diamond play. This keeps your entry position more fluid.

You lead a club to the ace, West playing the ♣4 and East the ♣2. When you lead a diamond off dummy, East follows with the ♦4. What diamond do you play from your hand?

♠ Q76  
♥ A874  
♦ 2  
♣ K73

---

♠ AKJ  
♥ 9  
♦ KQ1073  
♣ J8

East is quite capable of ducking the ace of diamonds. You probably need only 1 diamond trick to make the contract. It has to be correct to play a diamond honour.

While it probably won't matter, playing the king feels right. This will keep both opponents in the dark about the location of the queen. If you play the queen and West wins the ace, East will know that you have the king.

You play the king of diamonds. West wins the ace, and continues with the ♠3. You win in your hand, as East discards the ♣6. What next?

♠ Q7  
♥ A874  
♦ —  
♣ K73

♠ AJ  
♥ 9  
♦ Q1073  
♣ J8

The 4-1 trump split coupled with East's club discard is ominous. It looks like West has a singleton club, in which case your king of clubs isn't cashing.

If the jack of diamonds comes down you won't have any problems. Otherwise you will be an entry short to set up the long diamonds.

Your best bet is to lead a club up to dummy. If West ruffs in and leads another trump you are in trouble, but you will still have time to play for the jack of diamonds coming down. Perhaps West will make a mistake and not ruff in, since it is often wrong to ruff air when you have long trumps. If West makes that mistake, you will get home on your crossruff.

You lead a small club. As feared, West ruffs and lead another trump. You win in your hand, as East discards the ♦5. What do you try now?

♠ Q  
♥ A874  
♦ —  
♣ K7

♠ A  
♥ 9  
♦ Q1073  
♣ J

If the diamond jack is coming down you have the rest of the tricks. If not you are a trick short, since you lack the entries to establish and cash the long diamond.

Is there any other chance? If West has the guarded jack of diamonds, things really are hopeless. But if East has the guarded jack of diamonds, you might be able to get him in a club-diamond squeeze. This would give East an initial shape of 1-2-5-5, which is possible and consistent with his discards. It would mean that West's double of 4♦ was unusual, but you never know.

Can you reach the desired squeeze position? You will have to end up in your hand with a diamond and a club, and 2 clubs in dummy. You will need to have lost a trick in order to correct the count. In addition, you will have to ruff one diamond in dummy so you will have scored your trumps separately.

Your best chance is to ruff a diamond and lead a small heart off dummy. If East fails to play a heart higher than your 9, you have him. West will win, and will have nothing but hearts left. When he returns a heart you win the ace, ruff a heart to your hand, and on this trick East will be squeezed.

In order to keep East in the dark, you should not cash the queen of diamonds first. If East thinks that his partner has the queen of diamonds he will not be concerned about being squeezed, and he won't see the need for going up from some Jx or Qx in hearts. This will cost you an overtrick if the diamonds are coming home, but that overtrick is nothing compared to the increased chances of making the contract.

You choose to cash the queen of diamonds and ruff a diamond. West started with AJ98, so you are out of bullets and have to go down one. The full hand is:

♠ Q765		♠ 4									
♥ A874		♥ KJ53									
♦ 2		♦ 654									
♣ AK73		♣ Q10962									
♠ 10832											
♥ Q1062											
♦ AJ98											
♣ 4											
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	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ AKJ9											
♥ 9											
♦ KQ1073											
♣ J85											

How was the defence?

The defence was accurate. West did well to lead a trump rather than his singleton club. 4-4-4-1 hands are so often played along crossruff lines, so you almost lead a trump first and look at your hand later. East's club discard was informative. Not only did it tell West the club distribution, but it was likely that East had the queen of clubs. If East had something like J109xx or 1098xx of clubs, he would have discarded the top of his sequence to make the position clear to his partner. West made the key play of ruffing the third round of clubs to lead the third round of trumps. Normally ruffing air doesn't gain, but here West could see what was likely to happen if he didn't ruff in.

Should West have doubled 4♦?

West's double probably wasn't a good idea. If East is on lead against 4♥, West wants a trump lead, not a diamond lead. Otherwise, West is going to be on lead, and the double can only help declarer in the play.

How was South's bidding?

It looks accurate. South has enough strength to drive to game even if North is minimal, but slam is out of the picture. South simply wants to play 4♠ if there is a 4-4 fit, 3NT otherwise.

The 4♦ relay for signoff is part of a convention often called Mulberry, which comes from a children's song: Here we go round the Mulberry bush. The original convention had 4♣ as a relay to 4♦, to be followed by a natural slam try. Calls of 4♥, 4♠, 4NT, and 5♣ were RKC in a coded manner. The common coding is in order of length of partner's suit, with ties (or unknown length) going to the lower ranking suit.

Mulberry is used for sequences where the captain knows everything, his partner knows nothing, and the captain might want to sign off in any game, make a slam try in any strain, or bid RKC in any suit. The Precision 2♦ (or 2♥ if playing multi) opening is a prototype of this situation.

We have made a couple of modifications. First of all, we play that 4♦ followed by 4NT is RKC for partner's shortest suit. Normally the follow-up to 4♦ would be a signoff, but that makes no sense since if the captain wanted to play game in no-trump he would have bid 3NT.

Our other modification is that we switched the meanings of the immediate bids of 4♥ and higher with the start of the 4♣ relay. We play that the

immediate bids of 4♥, 4♠, 4NT, 5♣, and 5♦ are natural slam tries. 4♣ first followed by 4♥, 4♠, and 4NT are RKC for partner's longest, second longest, and third longest suit respectively. Furthermore, 4♣ followed by any 5-level call is a very strong natural slam try – partner goes on any excuse. This looks technically superior, but the big advantage is that if one of the partners forgets the big disaster might be avoided. For example, suppose the captain carelessly “signs off” by bidding 4♥. The old way partner will take it as some RKC call, and there will be no way to recover. Our way partner will take it as a natural slam try, so at least we will get to the right strain and possibly the right level.

*The concept of using 4♦ as an ‘end-signal’ first appeared in Introduction to Weak Openings Systems by Lukasz Slawinski and Stanislaw Ruminski. The book is hard to find, but you can see it on the Internet:*

*<http://bridgefiles.net/Books/Regres1.htm>*

*The end signal is described on Page 48.*

*The Mulberry convention also appears in this month's Auction Room.*

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**LAST BOARD**  
Mark Horton

Over 100 years of bridge history, it is not surprising that one can find many matches and events that came down to the last board. In this book, the author has collected dozens of fascinating deals, each of which is that last board — the one that decided a world title or represented an individual triumph or tragedy.

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# Brother Kyran's Debut

by David Bird

An important milestone in every novice's life was his confirmation into the senior duplicate. Even though he might have played several times in partnership with another novice, membership of the senior duplicate community required one session to be played in partnership with the Abbot. Many regarded this as a daunting prospect, as terrifying in a way as the initiation rituals in some African tribes.

Brother Kyran, who was tall for his age, took the East seat.

'Ah, your great moment has come!' exclaimed Brother Lucius, arriving at the table. 'No need to be worried. It will all be over in a few hours.'

'Why on earth should he be worried about it?' retorted the Abbot. 'A game of bridge never hurt anyone.'

This was the first deal they played:

Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 982		♠ 104
♥ 753		♥ J94
♦ J63		♦ AK8
♣ K853		♣ Q9762
♠ J753	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4CAF50; padding: 10px; margin: 0;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>N</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>W</span> <span>S</span> <span>E</span> </div> </div>	♠ 104
♥ 2		♥ J94
♦ Q109754		♦ AK8
♣ J4		♣ Q9762
♠ AKQ6		
♥ AKQ1086		
♦ 2		
♣ A10		

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Paulo</i>	<i>Brother Kyran</i>	<i>Brother Lucius</i>
–	–	–	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

Lucius and Paulo breezed into a slam and the Abbot was uncertain what to lead. The singleton trump was probably safe but it would not be a good example to set his young partner. No, he would try his luck with the ♦10.

Brother Paulo laid out his dummy. 'I don't think I promised more than this, partner,' he observed.

'No, that's fine,' Brother Lucius replied. 'Play low, will you?'

Brother Kyran won with the king of diamonds and continued with the diamond ace. Lucius ruffed and drew two rounds of trumps, ready to claim on a spade ruff if trumps were 2-2. When the Abbot showed out on the second round of trumps, throwing a diamond, Lucius continued to play trumps. The Abbot had to keep the queen of diamonds and decided to abandon clubs, retaining all his spades.

Declarer still had one trump to play and on this trick the Abbot was squeezed. He discarded a spade and Brother Lucius subsequently scored four spade tricks for the contract.

'Disastrous defence, partner!' exclaimed the Abbot. 'You mustn't leave me with the diamond guard. If you insist on returning another diamond, make it the ♦8.'

'I see,' Brother Kyran replied uncertainly. 'But when you led the ten I didn't know you held the queen.'

The Abbot could feel his blood pressure rising. 'Goodness me, do you think Brother Lucius would jump to 6♥ with two top diamond losers?'

'Probably not,' the novice replied. 'Still, I thought it was better to play safe.'



‘Playing the only card in your hand to let the slam through is not my idea of playing safe,’ retorted the Abbot. ‘Still, never mind.’

A few rounds later, the Abbot and Brother Kyran faced the weakest pair in the monastery, Brother Aelred and Brother Michael.

Brother Aelred took the West seat and gave Brother Kyran a friendly smile. ‘I remember when I had to play my initiation session with Abbot Matthewson, over 40 years ago,’ he said. ‘I was quite terrified. Of course, I hardly knew one card from another back in those days.’

Nothing has changed then, thought the Abbot. Even with Brother Kyran in tow, it might still be possible to secure a couple of tops against these opponents. This was the first board of the round:

Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 74 ♥ 9 ♦ J10542 ♣ QJ1095	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <span>W</span> <span>E</span> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ 965 ♥ KJ10865 ♦ 98 ♣ K8
♠ 832 ♥ AQ3 ♦ Q763 ♣ 732		♠ AKQJ10 ♥ 742 ♦ AK ♣ A64

West	North	East	South
Brother Aelred	The Abbot	Brother Michael	Brother Kyran
–	–	2♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Brother Aelred led the ♥9 and the Abbot laid out his cards. He peered over his glasses at the young declarer. Brother Kyran didn't play weak jump over-calls in this situation, surely? He didn't seem very pleased with the dummy.

‘Thank you very much, Abbot,’ said Brother Kyran. Now, how many tricks did he have? Five trumps, three diamonds and two more aces. That

was ten tricks, all right, but the diamond suit was blocked and the heart lead was about to knock out his only side entry to dummy. What could be done?

Brother Kyran thought he had spotted the answer. ‘Play the three, please,’ he said.

After no more than ten seconds, Brother Michael had worked out that declarer could not beat the ♥9. Nodding confidently, he played an encouraging ♥8 on the trick. With no further heart to play, Brother Aelred switched to the queen of clubs. Brother Kyran won with the club ace, drew trumps and unblocked the ace and king of diamonds. He then crossed to dummy with the ♥A and discarded a club on the queen of diamonds. The game was his.

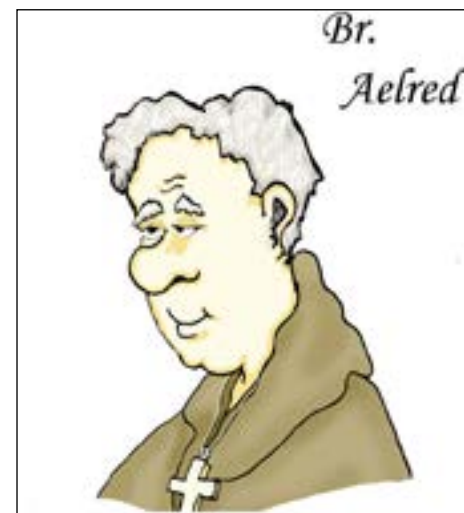
‘Not the best, partner,’ said Brother Aelred. ‘I know you couldn't tell, but my ♥9 was a singleton. If you overtake, you can give me a ruff.’

‘Anyone can see that now,’ Brother Michael retorted. ‘I thought you had a doubleton heart.’

Brother Kyran didn't like to say anything but it seemed to him that overtaking and giving partner a heart ruff would make no difference at all. West would be ruffing a loser and the ace of hearts would still be intact as an entry to the blocked queen of diamonds.

The Abbot surveyed the scoresheet with no great enthusiasm. ‘Three no-trumps scores better,’ he observed. ‘I put you with more shape when you jumped to 3♠. With only five spades, you should start with a double.’

‘Ah, a double,’ Brother Kyran replied. ‘I never thought of that.’



A few rounds later, the new partnership faced two of the less experienced members of the novitiate. This was the first board they played:

Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ 103 ♥ A10865 ♦ 106542 ♣ 8	♠ Q9 ♥ J42 ♦ AQ87 ♣ 9732	♠ AJ7652 ♥ KQ3 ♦ J9 ♣ K5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S
N						
W     E						
S						
	♠ K84 ♥ 97 ♦ K3 ♣ AQJ1064					

West	North	East	South
<i>Brother Kyran</i>	<i>Brother James</i>	<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Brother Stephen</i>
–	–	1♠	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The ♠10 was led and the Abbot, sitting East, examined the spade position carefully. If the lead was from 10-4 or 10-3, declarer could guarantee two spade tricks by covering with dummy's ♠Q. Was that too much to expect, even from young Brother Stephen? At the Academy of the Blessed St Francis he had apparently gained A-star passes in maths and chemistry. Even in these days of hideous grade inflation, that should indicate a modicum of common sense.

'Play the nine, please,' said Brother Stephen.

The Abbot shook his head sadly as he followed with the ♠7. What a hopeless effort! Now the boy would make only one spade trick.

Brother Stephen won with the ♠K and played the king and ace of diamonds. He then called for the ♣9, running that card successfully. After playing the ♦Q, he led another club and was soon claiming ten tricks for +630.

'That was a careless effort in the spade suit,' declared the Abbot. 'Play the queen from dummy! You had the ♠8, didn't you? You make two spade

tricks that way.'

'Yes,' replied Brother Stephen. 'I did see that play, but I thought when you won the queen with the ace, you might find the heart switch.'

The Abbot blinked. Heart switch? What had the heart position been? He reached for the young declarer's curtain card and could not believe what he saw. 'You overcalled 1NT on 13 points?' he exclaimed.

'I added 2 or 3 points for the good clubs,' Brother Stephen replied. 'The American players on BBO open a strong 1NT on this sort of hand. I thought it would be the same for a 1NT overcall.'

The Abbot slumped in his chair. 'I trust you didn't join the St. Titus community with the sole idea of playing on the computer all day?' he retorted. 'Adopt the foolish methods of the players on BBO and very soon no-one here will want to partner you.'

The Abbot scribbled the result in his scorecard and peered across the table. 'Lead a heart next time, will you? You may not have noticed but we could have taken the first six tricks.'

Brother Kyran could barely believe it when the call for the last round was made. He had managed to survive the experience, the prospect of which had caused him to toss and turn for the whole of the previous night. What's more, he would never have to undergo it again! Perhaps he could even end with some special play, one that would stick in the Abbot's memory for a while.

The Abbot scored well in a spade game and this was the last board of the evening:



Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 1043 ♥ 1085 ♦ J1075 ♣ 865		♠ A65 ♥ AK3 ♦ AQ8 ♣ AKJ7	♠ KJ872 ♥ Q97 ♦ 942 ♣ 42
		♠ Q9 ♥ J642 ♦ K63 ♣ Q1093	

West	North	East	South
Brother Hubert	The Abbot	Brother Richard	Brother Kyran
–	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

Brother Hubert did not particularly enjoy choosing a lead against a no-trump contract. When declarer was playing in a suit, it was easy enough... the best lead would be a trump, obviously. Against 6NT the general idea was to find a safe lead. Leading from a 10 was slightly more risky than leading from lower spot-cards. Anyway, surely the ♦J would be safest. Yes, if he had to rank the opening leads in order, it would be first the ♦J, second the ♣8, third the ♥5 and...'

'Do you realize it's your lead?' demanded the Abbot. 'I was hoping to get to bed before midnight, if that's all right with you.'

Brother Hubert led the jack of diamonds and Brother Kyran inspected the dummy laid out by the Abbot. There were ten tricks on top. At first glance it seemed that he might need the queen of hearts to fall doubleton and the king of spades to then be onside. It wasn't a very good slam. Was he meant to hold more than 8 points for a 2NT positive response?

Brother Kyran won the diamond lead with the king and played the two top hearts, the queen failing to show. What next? Perhaps he should cash

his winners in the minor suits. When seven tricks were cashed in clubs and diamonds, Brother Richard in the East seat was left with the ♥Q and ♠KJ8. He was thrown in with a heart and had to lead away from the spade king.

Brother Kyran rose with the queen of spades, hardly believing his luck when it won the trick. He then played the jack of hearts and crossed to the ♠A at trick 13.

'Just the line I would have chosen myself,' declared the Abbot, reaching for the score-sheet. 'Ah yes, it's very good for us.'

Brother Richard was less entranced with the result. 'A spade lead, that's what we needed,' he informed his partner.

Brother Hubert was not accustomed to having his expertise at opening leads queried. 'A spade?' he replied. 'By my reckoning, that was the very worst lead from my hand. I scored the four possible leads before I made my choice and gave that one just 3 points out of 10.'

'Really?' said Brother Richard. 'On this particular deal, I would have given it +100!'

# The Auction Room

Mark Horton

Welcome to the Auction Room, where we examine bidding methods from recent events. This month the teams contesting the 2018 Vanderbilt Final are under the spotlight.

The final of the 2018 Vanderbilt was between Brad Moss, Joe Grue, Eric Greco, Martin Fleisher, Chip Martel and Geoff Hampson and Eric Rodwell, Robert Levin, Jeff Meckstroth, Ralph Katz, Nick Nickell and Steve Weinstein.

## The Hands

(This month all the deals were played at IMPs.)

### Hand 1. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ AJ108732	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; background-color: #4CAF50; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>S</span> <span>E</span> </div> </div>	♠ 6
♥ 3		♥ AKJ8
♦ K10		♦ A872
♣ AK9		♣ J542

West	East
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Grue</i>
1♠	2♣*
2♦*	2♥*
3♦*	3♥*
3NT*	4♦*
4♥*	4♠
Pass	

2♣ Game forcing relay

Systems Guru Al Hollander thought that after the first relay West showed his strength and shape, East eventually bidding 4♦ as an 'end-signal' which forced East to bid 4♥ after which East could select the final contract.

North held ♠KQ4 ♥1042 ♦QJ963 ♣76 and led the ♦Q, declarer losing two trumps tricks, +650.

West	East
<i>Katz</i>	<i>Nickell</i>
1♠*	2♦*
2♠	2NT
3♥*	3♠
4♦	4♥*
4NT*	5♣*
5♦*	5♠*
6♣	Pass

- 1♠ 10+
- 2♦ Game forcing
- 3♥ 6+♠, good suit, usually one loser at most opposite stiff ♠10
- 4♥ Cue-bid
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♣ 0-3 keycards
- 5♦ Asking for the ♠Q
- 5♠ No ♠Q

2♣ would also have been game forcing and perhaps a better choice, as 2♦ suggests at least a five-card suit. East might have bid 3NT over 3♥, but perhaps worried about his club holding opted to bid 3♠. West's 4♦ kept that suit in the picture (give East ♦AQJxx the ♥A and ♠K for example and 7♦ will be just about laydown. 5♣ looks like a fingerfehler. West's 6♣ was an attempt to get East to focus on diamonds, as 7♦ would be fine with ♦AQxxxx or the ♦AQJxx I mentioned earlier. Nick mentioned that he lost his way when he passed 6♣ – but he could have made it!

With little to go on South led the ♥5 and declarer won with the jack and played three rounds of clubs, finishing three down, -300.

Remarkably, the contract could have been made. At trick two declarer plays a spade to the ace and ruffs a spade. Then a club to the nine is followed by a second spade ruff with the ♣J and South is helpless. Overruffing will be the last trick for the defence, but discarding is no better as declarer draws two rounds of trumps and then plays winning spades. The only winning lead is a trump, which is pretty much beyond mortal man.

*Recommended auction:* 1♠-2♣-2♠-3♦-4♣-4♥-4♠-Pass. This auction caters for East having a fifth club in a 1-3-4-5 hand, when 6♣ would be excellent.

Marks: 4♠/3NT10, 5♣ 6, 6♣ 4.

*Running score:* Fleisher 10 (14) Nickell 4 (0)

### Hand 2. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ Q	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">N</span> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">E</span> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">S</span> <span style="font-size: 2em;">W</span> </div>	♠ AJ87
♥ QJ764		♥ A83
♦ AK1083		♦ Q2
♣ AK		♣ 7652

West	East	
Weinstein	Levin	
-	Pass	(2♠)
4♦*	4♥	
Pass		

4♦ Leaping Michaels

Having passed initially East had an excellent hand, but was it good enough to justify doing more than bidding 4♥?

Writing for the EBU, Neil Rosen suggests that something like KQJ73 AKJ105 should be the minimum strength for the two suits. If those were West's suits here the five-level would be safe unless there are three losing clubs and given that most of the time West's hand will be stronger than perhaps East should make a try with 4♠.

Grue's 2♠ was based on ♠K1096432 ♥102 ♦54 ♣J8 so declarer could win the club lead, run the heart queen, play a heart to the ace and then play on diamonds for twelve tricks.

West	East	
Hampson	Greco	
-	1♦*	(2♠)
3♦*	4♥	
4♠*	5♦*	
6♥	Pass	

- 1♦ 10-15, 2+♦
- 3♦ Transfer
- 4♠ RKCB
- 5♦ 2 key cards

*Recommended auction:* Greco-Hampson had the right tools for this deal. After a 2♠ opening if West overcalls 4♦ and East bids 4♠ West will either bid 4NT or 5♣ and 6♥ should be reached.

Marks: 6♥10, 4♥/3NT 5.

*Running score:* Fleisher 20 (25) Nickell 9 (0)

At the end of the first session of 15 deals the score was 56-0 (!) in favour of Fleisher.

### Hand 3. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ A107	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">N</span> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">E</span> <span style="font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">S</span> <span style="font-size: 2em;">W</span> </div>	♠ K9865
♥ Q9654		♥ AJ2
♦ K		♦ -
♣ AJ72		♣ K10983

South overcalls 3♦ North raises to 4♦ and South bids 5♦

West	North	East	South
Martel	Katz	Fleisher	Nickell
-	-	1♠	3♦
Double	4♦	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Nickell, who had overcalled on ♠4 ♥108 ♦A9876543 ♣Q6 led the ♦A and declarer ruffed, played a club to the ace and a club to the ten. When that lost declarer knew his fate and he finished one down.

Should West, with his singleton ♦K have doubled 5♦? Assuming East passes that collects 500.

West	East	
Meckstroth	Rodwell	
-	1♠*	(3♦)
4♠	Pass	
1♠ 10-15		

After the limited opening bid West saw no reason to look beyond the spade game.

Declarer ruffed the diamond lead, played a spade to the ace and the ten of spades, ducking when North played the jack. He won the spade return, crossed to dummy with the ace of clubs and played a heart to the jack. When it held he drew the outstanding trump, cashed the ♣K and claimed



eleven tricks. If the heart finesse had lost, the contract would have failed, so its not clear why declarer took it.

*Recommended auction:* Facing a limited opening you either bid 4♠ or double 3♦. Facing an unlimited partner you have to start with a double, after which you will have to judge what to do if you encounter further pre-emption.

In some systems (Acol for example) East might open 1♣. If you would like to read more about the advantages/disadvantages of doing this take a look at <http://www.haroldschogger.com/Debate1cor1s.pdf> and <http://www.bridgebase.com/forums/topic/70386-opening-with-5-clubs-and-5-spades/>

Marks: 4♠/5♦ X 10, 4♥ 7, 6♣ 4.

*Running score:* Fleisher 24 (25) Nickell 19 (11)

### Hand 4.. Dealer South. Both Vul

♠ A109	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                 N W     E S             </div>	♠ KJ4
♥ 65		♥ Q10972
♦ AJ105		♦ —
♣ Q976		♣ AKJ42

*If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♦ and South raises to 3♦*

West	North	East	South
<i>Martel</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Nickell</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣*	1♦	Double*	3♦
Pass	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

1♣ 2+♣  
Dble 4+♥

Perhaps East would have done better to bid 4♣ at his second turn.

North, who had overcalled on ♠65 ♥AK43 ♦KQ862 ♣103 led the ♦K and declarer won with the ace pitching a spade from dummy and played a heart to the ten. South won and returned a diamond and now the defenders had the tempo and were sure of at least four tricks by playing diamonds at every opportunity. The winning line is to play a heart to the queen at trick two - not easy but not totally out of the question.

West	East
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
1♦*	1♥
1NT*	3♣*
4♣*	4♦*
5♣	Pass

1♦ 11-15, 2+♦  
1NT Denies 4♠  
3♣ 5+5, game forcing  
4♦ RKCB  
5♣ 2 key cards +♣Q

South led the ♠2, solving all declarer's problems.

*Recommended auction:* After 1♣-(1♦) East can bid 1♥ and then over South's 3♦ bid 4♣ when West has an easy raise to game. If West opens in the other minor the bidding might go: 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♣\*-2♦\*-3♣-4♣-4♦\*-4♠\*-5♣. It's not always a good idea to cue-bid a shortage in partner's suit, but here you discover you are missing a heart control.

Marks: 5♣/3NT 10, 4♥ 4.

*Running score:* Fleisher 28 (25) Nickell 29 (24)

Nickell outscored Fleisher 51-12 on the first 8 deals of the second session, but their opponents rallied, scoring 20 IMPs without reply over the remaining seven deals to lead 88-51.

### Hand 5. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 72	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">                 N W     E S             </div>	♠ AKQJ
♥ KQ1084		♥ J7
♦ QJ965		♦ A4
♣ 5		♣ AKJ72

West	East
Moss	Grue
–	2♣*
2♦*	2NT
3♦*	3♥
4♦*	4♥*
5♣*	6NT
Pass	

- 2♣ Strong
- 2♦ Waiting, game forcing
- 3♦ Transfer
- 4♦ 5♦
- 4♥ 2/3♥
- 5♣ Cue-bid

South led the ♠9 from ♠9854 ♥953 ♦732 ♣1084 and declarer took four rounds of the suit, overtook the ♥J and played a club to the jack, finishing one down.

West	East
Meckstroth	Rodwell
–	1♣*
1♠*	1NT*
2♣*	2♦*
2♠*	2NT*
3♦	4NT*
6♦	6NT
Pass	

- 1♣ 16+ unbalanced or 17+ balanced
- 1♠ 5+♥ game forcing
- 1NT Control ask
- 2♣ 1 king
- 2♦ Clubs
- 2♠ Not fit for clubs
- 4NT Quantitative

South led the ♥5 and when declarer put up dummy's king North carefully withheld the ace, no swing.

*Recommended auction:* A very tough hand with lots of points but no fit. In the Meckwell auction it would be interesting to know if East had denied

three hearts. Then it might be possible to bid 6♥ over 6♦ leaving West to choose the final contract. In the first auction, what would a bid of 4NT over 4♦ mean? If you think it is natural with no fit then maybe there is a case for West to pass?

Marks: 4♥/3NT10, 4NT 9, 6♥ 5, 6NT 2.

*Running score:* Fleisher 30 (25) Nickell 31 (24)

## Hand 6. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A5	<table border="1" style="width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KQ2
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ A1065	♥ 32										
♦ 654	♦ AKQJ7										
♣ QJ103	♣ A92										

West	East
Moss	Grue
–	1♣*
1♥*	1♠*
2♣*	2♦*
2♠*	2NT*
3♣*	3♦*
3♥*	3♠*
3NT	

Relay systems require a good memory - and can be difficult to interpret. Here I'm not sure about the meaning of 2♠ and 3NT.

- 1♣ 16+ unbalanced or 17+ balanced
- 1♥ 12+, not primary hearts
- 1♠ Relay
- 2♣ Balanced
- 3♣ 3433 or 4♥+4♣
- 3♥ 2-4-3-4, 6-7 zz points

ZZ points are Ace = 3, King = 2, Queen = 1. They are used in Relay Systems to locate honours for slam bidding. Al Hollander thinks the Grue-Moss methods are believed to have originated in a system called Zerth.

South led the ♠10 from ♠J10943 ♥J9 ♦1032 ♣754 and declarer won in dummy and ran the ♣Q for +520.

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
–	2NT*
3♣*	3NT
4♥*	6♦
2NT 19-20	
3♣ Modified Puppet Stayman	
3NT No interest in majors	
4♥ 4♣ and slam interest	

Al Hollander mentioned that 4♥ might show hearts and clubs.

Once again South led a spade, so declarer did not need the club finesse to be right.

*Recommended auction:* 1♦-1♥-2NT-3♣-3♦-3NT. Meckwell had the perfect methods for this combination.

Marks: **6NT/6♦ 10**, 3NT/5♦ 5.

*Running score:* Fleisher 35 (25) Nickell 41 (33)

### Hand 7. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">                 N W     E S             </div>	♠ K432
♥ AJ975		♥ Q63
♦ A762		♦ 8
♣ Q10		♣ AK632

*If East opens 1♣ South overcalls 1♦*

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Grue</i>
–	1♣ (1♦)
1♥	2♥
3♦*	3♠*
4♥	Pass
3♦ 5♥ and 4+♦ game forcing	
3♠ Slam try	

Should West have made a try? He controlled three suits, had reasonable trumps and what would be useful cards opposite a real club suit.

South held ♠10986 ♥10 ♦KQJ104 ♣J97 so there was no way to prevent twelve tricks, +680.

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
–	2♦*
2NT*	3♣*
3♦*	3♥*
4♣*	4♦*
4♥*	4♠*
4NT*	6♥
<b>Pass</b>	

- 2♦ 10-15, 4415 minus one card
- 2NT Relay
- 3♣ Minimum
- 3♦ Relay
- 3♥ Fragment, 4-3-1-5
- 4♣ Mulberry version, forces 4♦
- 4♥ Natural slam try
- 4♠ RKCB
- 4NT 3 key cards

The Mulberry convention is designed to distinguish sign-offs, slam tries and Keycard auctions where space is limited. It attempts to solve the problem by setting aside bids above the level of 3NT for particular purposes.

4♣ requires opener to bid 4♦, whereupon responder will Keycard in a suit, according to a specified priority (with 4♥, 4♠, 4NT and 5♣ being the Keycard bids).

4♦ is a Puppet Auction Terminator ; Opener is required to bid 4♥ and then Pass as responder places the final contract.

Bids above 4♦ are mild slam tries.

Fleisher (North) attempted to lead out of turn but Rodwell waived him off and South led the ♠10. Declarer won in dummy, played a heart for the ten jack and cashed the ♥A. When South discarded the ♦4 declarer played another trump, won the diamond return with dummy's ace, drew the outstanding trump and showed his hand, claiming if the clubs were 3-3.

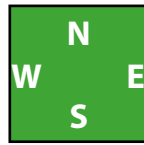
*Recommended auction:* Another cracking auction by Meckwell. Playing natural methods how about 1♣-(1♦)-1♥-2♥-3♦-3♠-4♦-4♥-4♠-5♣-6♥? Marks: **6♥ 10**, 4♥ 6, 3NT 5.

*Running score:* Fleisher 40 (25) Nickell 51 (46)

Fleisher won the third set 31-23 by virtue of bidding and making two vulnerable games not reached by Meckwell (one of them should have been defeated).

## Hand 8. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AKJ73  
♥ 3  
♦ AQ10  
♣ KQ102



♠ Q9  
♥ Q5  
♦ 97632  
♣ AJ76

West	East
------	------

<i>Grue</i>	<i>Moss</i>
1♣*	2♦*
2♥*	2♠*
2NT*	3NT*
4♥*	4NT*
6♣	Pass

- 1♣ 16+ unbalanced or 17+ balanced
- 2♦ 8-11, 5+♦ and 4+ other
- 2♥ Relay
- 2♠ ♣
- 2NT Relay
- 3NT 2-2-5-4
- 4♥ RKCB in clubs
- 4NT 1 key card, no ♣Q

Rodwell led the ♥A from ♠1064 ♥AJ972 ♦J5 ♣954 and continued the suit, declarer ruffing, drawing trumps, playing a diamond to the queen, cashing the ♦A and claiming.

West	East
------	------

<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Levin</i>
1♠	1NT
3♣*	3♦*
3NT*	4♣
4♦*	4♥*
6♣	Pass

- 3♣ Single suited game forcing or ♠+♣ (and possibly 5♠+4♥)
- 3♦ Asking
- 3NT Clubs
- 4♦ RKCB for clubs
- 4♥ 1 key card

The play was more or less identical.

*Recommended auction:* With no artificial aids one might bid 1♠-1NT-3♣-4♣-4♦-5♣-6♣.

Marks: 6♣ 10, 4♠/5♣ 6, 5♦ 4.

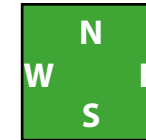
*Running score:* Fleisher 50 (25) Nickell 61 (46)

There were many other deals that might have featured - this was from the second session:

## Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K6  
♥ AQ1042  
♦ 93  
♣ 9854

♠ QJ94  
♥ J5  
♦ AKQ10  
♣ J62



♠ A873  
♥ K973  
♦ 875  
♣ K7

♠ 1052  
♥ 86  
♦ J642  
♣ AQ103

Both teams reached 4♠, Meckstroth and Rodwell via 1NT-2♣\*-2♠-4♠ and Martel-Fleisher after a 1♣ opening, Katz overcalling 1♥ and Fleisher doubling and then bidding game over Martel's 2♠.

Katz led the ♦9 and declarer won with the ten and advanced the ♠Q. When it held, Nickell following with the ♠2, declarer played the jack, trying to pin the ten and could not recover.

In the replay Greco led the ♣5 and Hampson won with the queen and switched to the ♦6. Declarer won with the king and played the ♠Q covered by the king and ace and then ran the ♠8. When it held he could draw the outstanding trump and play a club, establishing the jack, soon claiming ten tricks.

The interest lies in the play of the trump suit. The commentators suggested that according to Jeff Rubens North should always cover (automatic with ♠K10). Note that if you were South and held ♠1092 and your partner did



not cover you would have to drop the ♠9 to give declarer a losing option. My software tells me that when North does cover you should play to drop the ten (16.39%) and if the king is not covered you should play the jack as Chip Martel did (the same odds). Perhaps you should start with the ♠J (trying to look like a man with a suit by the ♠J109? Then if North plays the king perhaps it is fraction more likely to be a singleton?

Anyhow it was 12 IMPs to Nickell but although they won the bidding battles it was Fleisher who walked off with the trophy, 133-95.



2018 ACBL President Jay Whipple (center, jacket) presents the Vanderbilt Trophy to (from left) Brad Moss, Joe Grue, Eric Greco, captain Martin Fleisher, Chip Martel and Geoff Hampson. 'photo courtesy of the ACBL'

You can play through the deals mentioned in this article. Just follow the links:

Hands 1&2: [Here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/ya2xgfqu>

Hands 3 & 4 and the bonus deal: [Here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y7wcst5z>

Hand 5, 6 & 7: [Here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/ybczvtge>

Hand 8: [Here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/yatb4ud2>

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# The Master Point Press Bidding Battle

Set 4

Moderated by Alan Mould

A small, but perfectly formed, panel of 16 this month. And the problems come from: problem 1 comes from the junior Channel Trophy a few years back and was given to me by Michael Byrne; problems 2 and 3 I held in the Northern Year End Congress; problem 4 comes from Ben Green; problems 5-7 come from Marc Smith; and finally, problem 8 comes from Paul Bowyer. On with the show...

## PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ J53  
♥ A865  
♦ AKQ873  
♣ —

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
1♦	Pass	1NT	Double*

?

Dble Takeout of diamonds

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Three Diamonds	10	9
Two Hearts	9	4
Two Diamonds	8	1
Redouble	7	1
3NT	7	1
Pass	2	0
2NT	1	0

What do we know? We know the opponents probably, but not definitely, have an eight card spade fit. We know partner has clubs or diamonds or both, and we know that the diamonds are quite likely not to break. We may be cold for 3NT; they may be cold for

## THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	Marks	No. of Votes		Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
1.	Three Diamonds	10	9	5.	Double	10	9
	Two Hearts	9	4		Four Clubs	8	3
	Two Diamonds	8	1		Four Hearts	8	2
	Redouble	7	1		Five Diamonds	7	1
	3NT	7	1		3NT	3	0
	Pass	2	0		Four Diamonds	1	0
2.	2NT	1	0	Pass	0	0	
	Two Spades	10	8	6.	Pass	10	15
	Pass	9	6	4NT	7	1	
	One Spade	7	1	Four Spades	6	0	
3.	Three Spades	7	1	Any other bid	1	0	
	Double	10	14	7.	Three Diamonds	10	7
	4NT	8	1	2NT	9	5	
	3NT	8	1	Three Spades	9	3	
	Pass	4	0	Three Hearts	8	1	
	Four Diamonds	3	0	Three Clubs	1	0	
4.	Three Hearts	10	10	8.	Four Spades	10	7
	Three Clubs	9	1	4NT	9	4	
	Three Diamonds	8	1	5NT	8	1	
	Pass	7	4	Six Diamonds	8	3	
	Four Hearts	1	0	Five Clubs	7	1	
				Five Diamonds	3	0	



**Alan Mould – Your Moderator**

*Four Spades; or maybe each side can make three fifths of nothing at all.... So, we don't know much really. Just over half the panel therefore elect to jump rebid our good six card suit, both to make it tougher for the oppo to get together and happy if partner wants to carry on. As Marc puts it well:*

**Smith:** Three Diamonds. Partner's 1NT essentially shows clubs and, will often also have a modicum of diamond support. I don't consider a jump to Three Diamonds any more than competitive after South's double, since the opponents are clearly willing to bid 2M and since I am prepared to go to the three level anyway it makes no sense to let them exchange information cheaply. If partner takes me seriously and takes a shot at 3NT, though,

he should not be disappointed with this dummy.

*Fair enough. Others agree:*

**Apteker:** Three Diamonds. Looks right on playing strength and source of tricks. Partner, who is known to have at least four clubs (*No he isn't! 3-3-4-3 would always bid 1NT surely, particularly playing inverted raises*), will bid 3NT with a max or sharp cards. Two Diamonds might be the value bid but VUL at teams, there is reward in being aggressive.

**Leufkens:** Three Diamonds. Two Hearts might make sense to make sure partner bids NT first (if useful anyway) (*Enri answered this set whilst on the ski slopes of Austria, so we can forgive not noticing that partner has already bid NTs*), but Three Diamonds at least makes clear the core of my hand (if not the club void). And if North plans to do something, I'd like him to on as high level as possible. No, I'm not planning to double the opponents, with much of my strength in my long suits and few intermediates. Even if sometimes it could have been a lucrative adventure.

**Cannell:** Three Diamonds. Sort of a descriptive advance in my view. A good six plus diamond suit with some game aspirations.

**Alder:** Three Diamonds. Seems sensible.

**Bird:** Three Diamonds. I don't see much point in Two Hearts when partner has denied four hearts. I would rather cut out North with the high bid of Three Diamonds.

**Rosen:** Three Diamonds. Looks kinda normal – redouble would show a stronger hand needless to say.

**Wolff:** Three Diamonds – "Slam dunk" but I do not mean partner may have ♠KQx ♥Kx ♦Jxxx ♣10xxx.

*Which is, as Bobby suggests, a slam with 3NT going off!*

**Teramoto:** Three Diamonds. Shows a good hand with playing tricks. If I had more HCP, I can redouble first.

*We have just one redoubler:*

**Robson:** Redouble. First message is ownership even if that proves a semi bluff.

*And we have four who try and describe their hand by bidding hearts. The advantages of that over Three Diamonds? Ben makes the case well:*

**Green:** Two Hearts. A bit light on HCP but this probably shows 6-4 as with a strong 5-4 I might well start with a redouble. I want to involve partner and allow him to value his red suit holdings if the opponents compete to three or four level. If I bid Two Diamonds and Three Clubs came back to me then I would have to guess to bid Three Diamonds so I think a direct Two Hearts is better.

*Barry offers us some science:*

**Rigal:** Two Hearts. I play 2NT here as good diamonds (*Fair enough – with balanced good hands you redouble – AM*) and Three Diamonds as more shape than high cards. This hand looks like a Two Heart bid to me, in which case Two Spades is an artificial negative. I won't drive this hand to game; indeed over 2NT, Three Diamonds might be enough.

*You will see that in this set, there are comments labelled Carruthers/Silver. John and Joey answered this set when they were in Australia playing in the Commonwealth Nations Cup, so they did them together. Hence the joint comments:*

**Carruthers/Silver:** Two Hearts. The most descriptive effort available. Not Redouble, which could go all pass and after six club and four spade winners, the defence graciously concedes the remainder. Three Diamonds would be okay too.

*Really? Exactly how likely is it that someone has six clubs and that they are running?*

**Lawrence:** Two Hearts. Not sure where this is

going.

*Apart from redouble we have two other lone voices on this hand. Paul, true to his nature:*

**Bowyer:** Two Diamonds. Cautious as we might have enough to make 3NT. Equally, game may be zero-play, and this hand may be a misfit (partner could well be 3-3-2-5 with diamonds 4-1). Let's take things easy for now and see how things develop.

*And what do you intend to do when Two Spades or Three Clubs comes to you Paul?*

*And, at the other end of the spectrum, Iain, also true to his nature:*

**Sime:** 3NT. Lots of ways to win besides the obvious nine tricks on top. For example, lucky lead, misdefence, not our hand.

*Not this time I am afraid Iain. Partner had ♠K10x ♥xx ♦xxx ♣K10xxx. 3NT is obviously very poor, but when diamonds were 4-0, this was -400 on a heart lead....*

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### PROBLEM 2

**IMPs. Dealer West. E/W Vul.**

♠ Q987532  
♥ Q  
♦ K  
♣ Q1032

	West	North	East	South
	?			
<b>Bid</b>		<b>Marks</b>	<b>No. of Votes</b>	
Two Spades		10	8	
Pass		9	6	
One Spade		7	1	
Three Spades		7	1	
Any other bid		0	0	

*An irritating hand (personally I hate hands with stiff honours – but maybe that is just me), with everything seriously flawed. Two Spades has the seventh spade and extra shape, suggesting it is not enough; Three Spades at this vulnerability just does not have the suit; One Spade does not have the strength; and Pass feels wrong with seven spades – plus will it get any easier if you do? By the closest margin in the set, Two Spades just wins:*

**Robson:** Two Spades. Complete guess as to what those short red honours are doing. Two Spades is a middle course between Three Spades risking disaster and Pass and guess.

*Quite!*

**Leufkens:** Two Spades. You test my under limits to start with a pre-empt. Vul against not with this suit is even not my cup of tea. Passing doesn't help either, so with a vulnerable against non-vulnerable at least part of my hand is described.

**Bird:** Two Spades. I don't like to pass with seven spades and the suit is way too poor for a vulnerable three-bid. Let's give partner some sort of picture

of our hand rather than a blank canvas.

**Green:** Two Spades. I can't stomach passing with this shape and at this vulnerability with such a poor suit Three Spades is too rich for me. I will pull in a notch and underbid for once.

**Wolff:** Two Spades. Al Roth used to scream "Vulnerability is for children". Although his ideas were often different than mine, his, as on this hand, ring true.

*And that is from the man who said "Beware of the vulnerable coward" in these very pages not so long ago.*

**Rosen:** Two Spades. I'm getting old.

*Aren't we all – and too damned fast!*

**Alder:** Two Spades. Seems *au courant*.

**Rigal:** Two Spades. Not a classic weak two bid, but I hate everything else more. Others will feel differently, no doubt.

*Indeed. Two less, six, do what I did at the table – Pass. Some do not surprise me:*

**Bowyer:** Pass. Can't stomach any of the alternatives – One Spade is grotesque and a spade pre-empt is ghastly. As in Hand 1, time to wait and see.

**Lawrence:** Pass. Way too many flaws to bid.

*Others do:*

**Carruthers/Silver:** Pass. This is not a One Spade opener and no pre-empt is an accurate description, least of all red against white.

**Cannell:** Pass. Too much side values for any sort of pre-emptive action in first seat.

**Smith:** Pass. Despite the eau de cologne shape, this hand has a terrible offence-defence ratio unless we find a fit. The weakness of the spade suit argues against a vulnerable Three Spades and Two Spades seems to make it just too hard for partner to judge when he has the good hand. That leaves One Spade and Pass and, although I tend to open at the sniff of an oil rag, it's close but this is a bit too weak even for me.

**Apteker:** Pass. A matter of style with Three Spades



as the alternative. The hand has poor suit quality, poor honour location and wasted honour values although it does have some protection in terms of shape.

*The last two comments bring us to the lone voices on this one:*

**Teramoto:** One Spade. I don't want to miss Four Spades. We should now find the spade fit immediately if we have one.

**Sime:** Three Spades. We pre-empt a lot because it works. So, flawed pre-empts have become normal.

*I passed and it did not get any easier as it went Two Hearts – Pass – 2NT to me. I passed again, but when Three Hearts came back to me I bid Three Spades. That was theoretically right but practically wrong since partner held ♠10xx ♥xx ♦AQ10x ♣KJxx. There are four top losers off the contract but unless opener cashes the heart ace early it goes on the ♦Q. At the other table this hand opened Two Spades and auto-raised himself to Four Spades when partner bid Three Spades in competition. That was -790...*

## PROBLEM 3

**IMPs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.**

♠ 105  
♥ K9  
♦ AK854  
♣ AKQJ

	West	North	East	South
	–	–	–	3♠
	?			
Bid	Marks	No. of Votes		
Double	10	14		
4NT	8	1		
3NT	8	1		
Pass	4	0		

Four Diamonds 3 0

*Oh well, this proved a complete non-problem, with nearly a unanimous panel. At least I can take consolation that 14 of the world's best players found the same horribly losing action that I did.*

**Bowyer:** Double. Well, it's one of those unanswerable problems where anything I do could be wrong. Pass and I could miss a game, bid and I could turn a plus score into a (large) minus. I'm going to guess to Double as it has the greatest upside, (partner has longish hearts and bids a cold game), but I am prepared to discover that this is a losing option. A complete guess – time to spin the wheel.

**Smith:** Double. Not ideal, but the alternatives are all even worse. Four Diamonds would be diamonds/spades for me, but is hardly ideal even if it is natural. Pass could be right, but is just too unilateral. Similarly, 3NT, which may be the right contract played from partner's side. If partner responds Four Hearts, then I hope he has a fifth trump.

**Apteker:** Double. Forced into it and the most flexible bid. I would like to have a third heart but you cannot have everything 100% all the time. I will leave Four Hearts unless it gets doubled whereafter I would bid 4NT.

**Bird:** Double. Six card pre-empts are frequent nowadays and partner may be able to bid 3NT. If instead he bids Four Hearts, we may survive. I will need some persuading that Pass will work out best in the long run.

*It would on this hand, David!*

**Carruthers/Silver:** Double. We are in total agreement that we hate it, but there is no alternative which comes close to describing the power or shape of this hand.

**Lawrence:** Double. I win if partner does anything other than Four Hearts. Fairly decent odds although that bid will create a serious problem that



**David Bird**

I will probably solve by passing. I respect 3NT but it's not my style.

*We will get to 3NT soon enough... The problem is that even if we have a stop, it will need to be a completely solid one, as the lead is coming through partner's holding. I bet every panellist would bid 3NT if we were in fourth.*

**Rigal:** Double. Oh dear! There are several possible developments to this auction, with Four Hearts the least favourable but the rest seem to leave me well placed. I'm not going to commit myself as to what I'll do, though, since you didn't ask.

*Andy enlivens a dull problem with a fine story:*

**Robson:** Double. Diamond ace in wrong place, known in our team as Chemla after our dear friend Paul mis-sorted that card three times in two days.

**Cannell:** Double. Hate it, but seems like a least of evils type of bid. I will pass if partner bids a possible

Four Hearts, and hope we land on our feet.

**Teramoto:** Double. I hope partner can bid 3NT. I will pass if he bids Four Hearts.

**Alder:** Double. And hope for the best.

**Rosen:** Double. No right answer here.

**Wolff:** Double. But a simple Four Diamonds 90% and 4NT about 50%.

**Green:** Double. What else.

*Only these—and I am grateful to Iain and Enri for avoiding the unanimous panel:*

**Sime:** 4NT. Pick a minor, investing a level to find the better strain. I would rather my minors were reversed, since partner will bid Five Clubs with equal length. However, these clubs should survive



Iain Sime

a Moysian. Even if natural (I prefer Non-Leaping Michaels), Four Diamonds may be a silly contract. I hope that those who double will tell us their plan over the highly probable Four Hearts.

*Well, yes they did, Iain. They all said they would stick it, which is what I did.*

**Leufkens:** 3NT. I know, crazy. But chances are way too big partner bids Four Hearts with five, or even four, also with a spade stopper. I hope ♠10 makes it just enough. Or just dreaming about it. The rest makes even less sense by the way.

*This is the only bid that scores even worse than double. Double saw partner bid Four Hearts on ♠Jxx ♥7432 ♦Qxxx ♣xx and that was -400. 3NT sees them take the first 11 tricks with six spades and five hearts. At the other table they overcalled Four Diamonds and that was one off. This hand came from the same event as the previous one. You can gather that we did not win.*

## PROBLEM 4

**IMPs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.**

♠ Q 10 8 5  
♥ 10 2  
♦ 9 8 6  
♣ AQ 10 2

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♦
Pass	1♥	2♥*	Pass
?			
2♥	Natural		

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Three Hearts	10	10
Three Clubs	9	1
Three Diamonds	8	1
Pass	7	4

Four Hearts 1 0

*Do we have enough to invite game or don't we? By 12 votes to 4, the panel say yes. The passers though are pretty clear they are right:*

**Alder:** Pass. What else, pray tell?

**Rosen:** Pass. Not enough to continue in my book.

**Lawrence:** Pass. Three Hearts is possible. I like to bid Two Hearts aggressively, however, because it does so many good things for us and to our opponents. This suggests I be respectful of partner's bid.

**Apteker:** Pass. Three Hearts may be the winner but I am short a heart (*are we really? Won't partner have six almost all of the time to bid Two Hearts in this exposed position?*) and my spade values are questionable. I will compete to Three Hearts over Three Diamonds.

*Whereas many of the Three Heart bidders think it is a close decision:*

**Bowyer:** Three Hearts. Close between Pass and Three Hearts. The ♥10 just sways it for me, as I suspect it will fill in East's suit. So, I raise, but not without misgivings.

**Rigal:** Three Hearts. I think this is just worth an invite but passing is hard to criticize.

**Wolff:** Three Hearts. But Pass = 90%.

**Robson:** Three Hearts. Courtesy raise.

**Cannell:** Three Hearts. An invitational raise since partner is after all Vulnerable versus not.

**Leufkens:** Three Hearts. I hope partner can bid 3NT. Vul against not, he should be strong or have a great suit. But South pass in the 2nd round makes it less likely he's got 0 hearts I suppose.

**Carruthers/Silver:** Three Hearts. Although we are in agreement on the bid, we disagree on the second choice. For Joey, Four Hearts; for JC, Pass. Three Diamonds might work if partner is able to bid 3NT.

**Smith:** Three Hearts. Partner's natural Two Heart



overall covers a fairly wide range: what else can be done with anything from ♠x ♥AKQJxxx ♦Qxx ♣xx to ♠Kx ♥AKQxxxx ♦Ax ♣Kx? If Three Hearts is one down, tough. I don't see that I can bid less and I don't think I'm worth any more.

**Bird:** Three Hearts. Hurray that we're playing Two Hearts as natural. That's a good method. It's rarely discussed how strong the hand needs to be overall (*Indeed! And what is the difference in strength between an immediate Two Hearts, and passing and then bidding Two Hearts*). Even so, I don't like to risk missing a lay-down game.

**Teramoto:** Three Hearts. Game will be good if partner bids Four Hearts.

*Again, we have two lone votes. Iain makes a stronger invite than just raising:*

**Sime:** Three Diamonds. A high card raise in hearts, i.e. invitational. The heart ten ought to be useful, and the clubs well placed.

*Whereas Ben introduces some science:*

**Green:** Three Clubs. Showing a heart raise with values in clubs (as long as you have that agreement, but I think having passed it's normal). Second choice Three Hearts. I am slightly conflicted here as I did submit the problem. But that is what I would have bid.

*It does seem hard to see what else Three Clubs can be. After all, you are hardly going to rescue partner from Two Hearts! I have thus upgraded this bid as I think he has a very attractive upside. I have slightly downgraded the Pass as the panel strongly elected to bid, albeit with many thinking it close. It was very right to bid this time as partner held ♠xx ♥AKQJxx ♦A ♣J9xx. In case you wonder, North had not psyched—they had the five remaining hearts and a six count.*

## PROBLEM 5

**IMPs. Dealer West. None Vul**

♠ 865  
♥ A72  
♦ AKJ53  
♣ AK

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
1♦	2♥*	3♦	3♠
?			
2♥	Natural and weak		

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Double	10	9
Four Clubs	8	3
Four Hearts	8	2
Five Diamonds	7	1
3NT	3	0
Four Diamonds	1	0

*We have a good hand, but one that could easily not make game, or make a slam with the right cards in partner's hand. Meanwhile, this seems to be a pinochle deck—there are far too many aces and kings. What has everyone got for their bidding? Anyway, our problem now is to decide what to do. More than half the panel reach for their flexible friend—double. What does double mean in this unusual and surely undiscussed situation? No one on the panel seems sure, which sounds like a recipe for disaster to me. Still, let's hear from them.*

**Bowyer:** Double. Assuming partner is an intelligent human being who can work out what to do next.

*Does that not start with partner being able to work out what you mean by double?*

*Alon appreciates this leaves partner with a very difficult problem:*

**Apteker:** Double. The most flexible bid again being

a game try showing extra values. I realise that partner will be left with an extremely difficult decision with one major stopped, not knowing whether I have the other major stopped if he believes that 3NT may be correct.

*Enri also sees the problems and makes a very good point about the nature of Three Spades:*

**Leufkens:** Double. Let's see if partner understands. I think with a spade stopper and without a heart stopper I would have bid 3NT. But I could have neither stopper also.... The problem with a direct 3NT is that it's in the wrong hand. Three Spades doesn't indicate heart support for now, so then should have a good suit for sure.

*The Carruthers/Silver combo are on the same page as Enri:*

**Carruthers/Silver:** Double. In this and analogous situations, one should bid 3NT with a spade stop and Double with a heart stop. It's the only way to get to 3NT with both suits stopped. Or perhaps for the defence to take the first five hearts with just spades stopped.

*Others think Double is simply a game try:*

**Smith:** Double. This should be a game try (in diamonds). It's a good hand, but the majors are not ideal for just punting an 11 trick game, and partner may be able to bid 3NT with something like ♠Kxx ♥xx ♦Qxxx ♣Qxxx (which seems about minimum for Three Diamonds). I remember the hand now, and double also caters for South being a lunatic.

**Green:** Double. Showing a strong hand with no clear direction. Will pass Four Diamonds if partner bids it.

**Sime:** Double. Three Diamonds covers a broad spectrum of hands. Tell me where you are on that spectrum partner. I seem to have forgotten what a 2NT opener looks like.

*I must admit that opening 2NT looks normal to me as well*

**Cannell:** Double—A lack of direction strength showing noise. My second choice would be an immediate 3NT, but double “may” be more flexible. No guarantees.

**Alder:** Double. If partner passes, it could be right. *That rather depends on what partner thinks it means doesn't it?*

**Robson:** Double. Showing a good hand. Until further notice, that's what I think I have.

*And who can argue with that?*

*Some, perhaps unwilling to risk double, try other bids. We start with those introducing our doubleton at the four level...*

**Rosen:** Four Clubs. Double probably penalties here, using Four Clubs to consult partner.

**Teramoto:** Four Clubs. Showing values and game try +. We may have a slam on if partner has a good hand.

**Rigal:** Four Clubs. Do I dare to risk 3NT and be laughed out of court? I've made enough stupid bids this set already.

*The Four Clubs bidders, and a number of the doublers, are issuing a game try. Mike and Bobby make a slam try:*

**Lawrence:** Four Hearts. Only since I can imagine hands that make slam. If partner has that hand, he will bid Four Spades, bidding permitting. Five Diamonds is a sane second choice. But if I'm going to risk Five Diamonds, why not explore for Six Diamonds along the way?

**Wolff:** Four Hearts. Aggressive, but imaginative.

*In between, David just bids Five Diamonds:*

**Bird:** Five Diamonds. The upside of a double is that partner may be able to bid 3NT. It seems unlikely here. South will hold seven reasonable spades and that leaves only three cards between

partner and North.

*Not this time David! Partner had ♠AQJ ♥xxx ♦Qxxx ♣Jxx!?!? South was indeed a lunatic. Double gets you 800; anything else gets you to Five Diamonds for -50 on a heart lead.*

## PROBLEM 6

**IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul**

♠ 7  
♥ K1052  
♦ J76  
♣ KJ1063

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	4♥*	Pass

?

4♥ 18-19 balanced or equivalent. Denies a splinter.

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Pass	10	15
4NT	7	1
Four Spades	6	0
Any other bid	1	0

*On reflection, I really have no idea what I was thinking about in setting this problem. Yes, slam may be cold (and guess what folks?), but how on earth can you find out and the five level is definitely not safe. So, Pass is clear cut. I am extremely grateful to Neil for avoiding the dreaded unanimous panel, but given he is out of step with the rest of the panel felt I could not award more than seven marks to this:*

**Rosen:** 4NT. Just! I passed initially but changed my mind.

*Apart from that we have 14 versions of “Pass, what else?” let's just get through them...*

**Bowyer:** Pass. Er... Pass. Second Choice No Bid.



**Barry Rigal**

Third choice “I'm out”. Did the compiler miss out an ace (or two)?

*A brain cell or two I think, Paul.*

**Rigal:** Pass. Not really close to my mind. Give me a fifth heart and I reconsider and ...pass slowly.

**Robson:** Pass. Slam unlikely to be laydown. No one's bidding here. Even the paper tigers.

**Leufkens:** Pass. Five is more in danger than that you reach a good six, and not easy to find out when six is good. So ‘easy’ pass.

**Lawrence:** Pass. There's no safety at the five level.

**Sime:** Pass. Too many aces are missing. It was possible that the opponents had three of them (past

tense as, if they had, the hand wouldn't be here).  
**Bird:** Pass. Yes, there are some hands opposite that will yield a slam. If I go searching for one with a Four Spade cue-bid, I will end too high opposite myriads of other hands. Partner will expect me to hold more than an aceless eight count with modest trumps.

**Smith:** Pass. Difficult. We would be closer to bidding on in a four card major system, where partner is almost certain to be 2-4-5-2. Here, he could also be 2-4-4-3 or 3-4-4-2. I don't feel I can underwrite the five level, when I cue-bid Four Spades how does partner know that ♠xxx ♥AQxx ♦AKxx ♣AQ is

perfect and ♠KQx ♥AQxx ♦AKxx ♣xx terrible?  
**Carruthers/Silver:** Pass. Sure, we might make a slam, but we adjudge it more likely that four is the limit, so Five Hearts is in real danger.

**Cannell:** Pass. Colour me chicken. A distinct lack of aces over here. I know – partner has them, but even all four aces will not get us to twelve tricks. Using Hamman's second rule here since I failed to use his first rule on the previous problem!

*Just in case anyone has been buried under a stone for the last 30 years, Hamman's first and second laws are:*

*First Law: If you have a number of possible calls, and 3NT is one of them, bid it.*

*Second Law: Don't play me for perfect cards, as I never have them.*

**Apteker:** Pass. Not enough to cue Four Spades as the slam will need near perfect cards. With a fifth heart, I would make a move.

**Green:** Pass. I can't think of a sensible way to find out if partner has nothing in spades and if I start cue-bidding we might end up at a dangerous level without good enough trumps so I'll take a plus and go low.

**Teramoto:** Pass. I hope partner does not have too much. I agree that we may have a cold slam.

**Wolff:** Pass. With Four Spades 70%.

**Alder:** Pass. No doubt slam was cold; otherwise, we would not have been asked about it. I used the Losing Trick Count, which suggests moving higher is borderline.

*Slam was of course cold, but not in hearts! Partner held ♠xx ♥Axxx ♦AKQxx ♣AQ. I suppose Four Diamonds rather than Four Hearts just MIGHT have got you there, but it seems like a relay system is really needed.*

## PROBLEM 7

**IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul**

♠ 632  
 ♥ QJ764  
 ♦ AKQ6  
 ♣ 5

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠*	Pass
?			
2♠	Fourth suit forcing		

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Three Diamonds	10	7
2NT	9	5
Three Spades	9	3
Three Hearts	8	1
Three Clubs	1	0

*This hand was partially put in to test my theory that there is a difference in this situation between UK and North American views as to what to bid on such a hand (no stop, no support for partner, no five diamonds and no six hearts); and partially to see if there is a difference given that it is a FG situation; and partially to see if views have changed over the years. To take the first of these, in the UK the "standard" style on such a hand as this one is to rebid Three Hearts, which therefore does not show six, whereas my reading of North American views is that the "standard" style is to rebid Three Diamonds, which therefore does not show five. Of course, this is perhaps not a good example since these diamonds look as close to five as you are going to get. Only Enri actually bids Three Hearts, suggesting that the UK style is Dutch as well:*

**Leufkens:** Three Hearts. Default bid (going back to first suit) if nothing else fits. I assume Three Spades either indicates length or primary stopper



**Alon Apteker**



(A or K). Diamonds are strong but still no five card suit.

*No five card suit, but seven votes nevertheless, enough for the 10 marks:*

**Bowyer:** Three Diamonds. Another impossible problem. The only other choice (I suppose) is 2NT but my spade pips are two thin for that. Yes, this bid shows 5-5 in the red suits, but that's probably less of a lie than anything else on this hand. At least 3NT will be played by the right hand if partner bids it next. Incidentally, years ago S J Simon said AKx is a rebiddable suit; I'm not sure he meant it in this context, though.

*Hard to think of what context he did mean it in!*

**Carruthers/Silver:** Three Diamonds. Another least-of-evils bid. If we had any assurance that partner had length in spades, 2NT would be the choice.

**Lawrence:** Three Diamonds. Anything else is just ugly.

**Wolff:** Three Diamonds. With 2NT (ugh) 30%.

**Alder:** Three Diamonds. Let's save some space. Three Spades is a possibility.

**Apteker:** Three Diamonds. My options appear to be to bid Three Diamonds which usually shows a fifth card or Three Spades which shows either four spades or this type of holding. My diamond holding looks like five cards.

*And so to the three Three Spade bidders:*

**Cannell:** Three Spades. I believe this is a "Bluhmer" named after Lou Bluhm. It more or less announces three small spades on a hand that is stuck for a bid. I realize many would say Three Spades shows four spades, but I think this is a better treatment here.

**Bird:** Three Spades. We are forced to game, so Three Spades is the bid to show 3-5-4-1 shape with no spade stopper (*if you say so David, it is at least arguable, as Drew mentions, that it is natural*).



**Mike Lawrence**

Partner may then choose to play 3NT with such as ♠Jxx. If no good game is available, it won't be my fault.

*Tadishi gives a reason why it should not show four spades:*

**Teramoto:** Three Spades. This is a waiting bid. No spade stopper, no six hearts, no five diamonds. If partner has four spades, I think he bids 2NT over Two Diamonds.

*Five think that 2NT is the best lie:*

**Rigal:** 2NT. I'm asked if I have a spade stopper (partner normally having spade length but not strength) and 2NT seems the least lie.

**Green:** 2NT. Smallest lie. Second choice Three Hearts. Three Spades would show a better hand for me.

**Robson:** 2NT. A slightly tedious methods problem. Does a raise show four cards in the fourth suit (I play it does)? But the one thing I've learnt (from Z in fact) is you don't bid Three Diamonds unless you have a fifth diamond.

*Which means you are endplayed into 2NT. At least that is a consistent method!*

**Rosen:** 2NT. Yes lovely! Tempted by Three Diamonds obviously, also I know it is usual to default to rebidding the five card suit on these auctions - just can't bring myself to do it here.

**Sim:** 2NT. It is such fun to reach an invincible 3NT with three low opposite three low, especially if no other game makes.

*Funny you should mention that... Last word to the man who knows:*

**Smith:** Three Diamonds. I don't have a fifth diamond, but it still seems to describe my hand more accurately than would Three Hearts. Perhaps this is the hand for Three Spades? I recall the hand now, and only Three Spades will get you to the making game, which is 3NT facing something like ♠xxx ♥AK ♦xxx ♣AQxxx. Four Hearts was unlucky to fail, but go down it did when the fourth round of spades allowed 10x of trumps to uppercut you.

*3NT is obviously loads better than Four Hearts. It looks like it ought to be possible to get there. 2NT or Three Spades will get 3NT, and surely the auction after Three Diamonds will continue Three Hearts, 3NT? Only Enri's Three Hearts will not get the job done as partner will raise that.*

## PROBLEM 8

**IMPs. Dealer North. Both Vul.**

♠ K  
♥ J4  
♦ Q107643  
♣ J863

West	North	East	South
–	3♥	Double	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Four Spades	10	7
4NT	9	4
5NT	8	1
Six Diamonds	8	3
Five Clubs	7	1
Five Diamonds	3	0

*We have a decent hand in context. The question is what is partner up to? Has he got a slam try in diamonds, or just a very good hand, or trying to get us to pick between spades and clubs? The panel are clear this is a slam try in diamonds. So clear that the 10 marks goes to those panellists who elect to bid Four Spades, sure that this is a cue-bid.*

**Bird:** Four Spades. Partner's Four Hearts is a cue-bid with diamonds agreed. If instead he holds a black two-suiter, he should bid Four Spades (*or have bid Four Hearts over Three Hearts*). My hand is good in context and well worth a cue-bid of Four Spades.

*In agreement with David is Enri:*

**Leufkens:** Four Spades. Full confidence we're going to a diamond slam. Without a diamond fit he shouldn't bid Four Hearts but bid a suit now (or should have bid a two suiter last time).

**Apteker:** Four Spades. Pushy! Can't be natural and

shows something extra towards Five Diamonds. I have two more diamonds than promised and some shape so Five Diamonds, while unambiguous and reasonable, seems a bit conservative.

**Smith:** Four Spades. This is a cue-bid agreeing diamonds, not some obscure effort to get you to choose a black suit – he had other ways to bid those hands. Despite the dearth of high cards, the fifth and sixth trump make this hand worth one try below game. I expect something like ♠Axxx ♥Ax ♦AKx ♣AQxx. How else to you get to the good slam?

**Rosen:** Four Spades. Cue-bid for me. I know partner could be bidding choice of game, but I just play it as a good hand for diamonds – clearly, I am well worth a cue-bid if that's the case.

**Green:** Four Spades. I have more than I might have so I will dip my toe in with a cue before signing off at my next opportunity.

**Teramoto:** Four Spades. Cue-bid. This hand is not that bad.

*Four try 4NT. As always there is perfect agreement as to what that shows. Yeah, right!*

**Alder:** 4NT. Shows some slam interest.

*So, it is a try.*

**Lawrence:** 4NT. Keycard for diamonds. This hand has grown a lot. I'm assuming, of course, that partner has a big fit for diamonds.

*So, it is Blackwood.*

**Sime:** 4NT. Way too much for Five Diamonds. Still too much for Five Clubs. I intend to bid Five Diamonds over Five Clubs, which I hope will be interpreted as a try. Too few aces to bid slam myself.

*So, it is a try.*

*How about Five Clubs? What is that? Only Andrew bids it and by implication he thinks it is natural.*

**Robson:** Five Clubs. Close to 5NT, pick a slam. *Funny you should mention that. We have one (or two*

*depending on your view) for that:*

**Carruthers/Silver:** 5NT. Remarkably, this was the only problem on which our first choice was different. Joey's was Four Spades, intending it as a control-bid in support of diamonds; JC thought he deserved to declare right there on stiff king opposite queen-to-five or the like. In any case, Joey's close second choice was 5NT anyway. On this set, coincidentally, we were in complete agreement about Problems 1 through 7 and Joey ceded to JC on Problem 8. In our couple of decades on this and other panels together, we doubt we've ever come so close to unanimity. Both of us wish it always went so smoothly at the table.

*Don't we all John, don't we all. And that wins the comment of the month.*

*Still going up:*

**Wolff:** Six Diamonds. Aggressive, but, well, aggressive!

**Cannell:** Six Diamonds. A Landy slam-try. I hope I have the requisite values for success.

**Rigal:** Six Diamonds. Worth at least this surely. If partner believes I can bid then maybe I should be looking for a grand slam?

*Last word again to the man who knows, who has a sob story for us...*

**Bowyer:** 4NT. I can't see how this can be Bashwood (of any colour), so the message is "I have something over here". And you do have something, in context – a decent six-card suit and an all-important ♠K, so you have to do something more than make a feeble sign-off. Four Spades may be a possible call (in some eyes) but there is too much danger of partner playing you for Kxx and passing it (in my eyes). At the table, three players bid Five Diamonds (wet as the Atlantic ocean, in my view) and saw the dummy. One bid Five Clubs on the grounds that partner was looking for another



place to play... East promptly assumed that was a cue-bid and bid Six Diamonds. That went well as partner held ♠AQ109 ♥A3 ♦AK982 ♣A7. Naturally, I was the victimised North...

*Ah diddums! I am afraid you did not win this month either Paul. The gold goes to Marc Smith on 79, the silver to Ben Green on 77, and the there are no less than eight panellists on 76!*

*This was, sadly, a terrible set of problems, with two almost unanimous panels, and every problem bar one having an overall majority. Sorry folks.*



## SET 4 – THE PANEL'S BIDS & MARKS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Marc Smith	England	3♦	Pass	Dble	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♦	4♠	79
Ben Green	England	2♥	2♠	Dble	3♣	Dble	Pass	2NT	4♠	77
Phillip Alder	USA	3♦	2♠	Dble	Pass	Dble	Pass	3♦	4NT	76
Alon Apteker	South Africa	3♦	Pass	Dble	Pass	Dble	Pass	3♦	4♠	76
David Bird	England	3♦	2♠	Dble	3♥	5♦	Pass	3♠	4♠	76
Paul Bowyer	England	2♦	Pass	Dble	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♦	4NT	76
Drew Cannell	Canada	3♦	Pass	Dble	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♠	6♦	76
Carruthers/Silvers	Canada	2♥	Pass	Dble	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♦	5NT	76
Enri Leufkens	Netherlands	3♦	2♠	3NT	3♥	Dble	Pass	3♥	4♠	76
Bobby Wolff	USA	3♦	2♠	Dble	3♥	4♥	Pass	3♦	6♦	76
Barry Rigal	USA	2♥	2♠	Dble	3♥	4♣	Pass	2NT	6♦	74
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	3♦	1♠	Dble	3♥	4♣	Pass	3♠	4♠	74
Andrew Robson	England	Redble	2♠	Dble	3♥	Dble	Pass	2NT	5♣	73
Mike Lawrence	USA	2♥	Pass	Dble	Pass	4♥	Pass	3♦	4NT	72
Neil Rosen	England	3♦	2♠	Dble	Pass	4♣	4NT	2NT	4♠	71
Iain Sime	Scotland	3NT	3♠	4NT	3♦	Dble	Pass	2NT	4NT	68



## Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 5

Open to All – Free Entry

### PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 1075  
♥ AQ32  
♦ 10  
♣ AJ865

West	North	East	South
1♣*	2NT*	3♥*	4♦
?*			

- 1♣ Could be 2 card suit in a balanced hand for this pair
- 2NT ♦ & ♥, at least 5-5
- 3♥ Good raise in ♣s (3♦ would have been FG with ♠s, 3♠ Nat but NF)
- ? Pass would not be forcing

### PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ Q  
♥ K6  
♦ KQ732  
♣ J10864

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

Send entry to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com. Entries to arrive before the end of the month.

### PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AJ63  
♥ AKJ874  
♦ –  
♣ AQ5

West	North	East	South
–	3♠	Pass	Pass
?			

### PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 4  
♥ AKQ75  
♦ AQ5  
♣ KJ87

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	3♦
?			

### PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 5  
♥ K6  
♦ AK5  
♣ AK108654

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♣*
?*			

- 1♣ Could be two cards
- ? E/W methods are that 2/3♣ is natural, (3 weak). Pass and bidding ♣s natural if partner is silent, otherwise UCB.

### PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul

♠ A  
♥ AKQJ95  
♦ 8  
♣ A5432

West	North	East	South
–	–	3♠	Pass
?			

### PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AK  
♥ AJ4  
♦ 83  
♣ K76432

West	North	East	South
–	2♠*	3♦	3♠
?			

2♠ Natural and weak

### PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ –  
♥ AQ543  
♦ 98652  
♣ AK2

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♣	1♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Redble*	Pass	1♠
?			

Rdbl For rescue

# A New Bridge Magazine Bidding System

## Basic Method

### Natural

### Five-card majors

Minors are three cards in length minimum. Always open 1♣ with 3-3 or 4-4, so 1♦ is 3 cards only if precisely 4-4-3-2 shape

15-17 no-trump in all positions and vulnerabilities

Two over one is game forcing in all uncontested auctions

A 1NT is up to a non-game force but it is not-forcing. However the only hands that Pass are weak no-trump types.

Jumps at the two-level are weak (eg, 1♦-2♠) and at the three-level are invitational (eg 1♥-3♣)

1M-3M is a limit raise

Inverted minors are played. 1m-2m is F2NT and 1m-3m is pre-emptive. Over 1m-2m, 2NT is a WNT and is non-forcing, 3m is unbalanced and non-forcing. All other bids are at least quasi-natural and FG

2♣ shows 23+ balanced or any game forcing hand  
Weak 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ (5-9, six-card suit). In response 2NT is a relay asking for a high-card feature if not minimum with 3NT showing a good

suit, non-minimum. 3♣ asks for a singleton with 3NT showing a singleton ♣. 4♣ is RKCB

Three-level openings are natural and pre-emptive. Over 3♦/♥/♠, 4♣ is RKCB and over 3♣, 4♦ is RKCB.

3NT opening is Acol gambling – solid suit and at most a queen outside.

Four-level openings are natural.

### No-trump bidding:

After 1NT 15-17, 2♣ = Stayman, 2♦/2♥ = transfers, 2♠ = ♣s with 2NT/3♣ denying/showing a fit, 2NT = ♦s with 3♣/♦ denying/showing a fit. After this new suits are splinters. 3♣ is 5 card Stayman, 3♦ is 5-5 ms FG, 3♥/♠ 1-3-(4-5) / 3-1-(4-5) and FG. 4♣ is 5-5 majors, game only, 4♦/♥ = ♥/♠s (then 4NT = RKCB and new suits are Exclusion).

1NT rebid = 12-14 with 2♣ a puppet to 2♦ to play in 2♦ or make an invitational bid, 2♦ is game forcing checkback, new suits at the 3 level are 5-5 FG and higher bids are auto-splinters.

Jump 2NT rebid = 18-19 with natural continuations.

After 2 over 1, 2NT is 12-14 balanced or 18-19 balanced and 3NT is 15-17 range with a reason not to have opened 1NT

3NT rebid after a one-level response shows a good suit and a good hand.

After 2NT, 20-22, 3♣ = Stayman, 3♦/3♥ = transfers, 3♠ = slam try with both minors. Four-level bids are as after 1NT opening.

Kokish is played after 2♣ opening (2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠-2NT is 25+ balanced FG, and 2♣-2♦-2NT is 23-24 balanced NF)

### Initial response:

Jump shifts are weak at the two-level and invitational at the three-level. Bidding and rebidding a suit is invitational, bidding and jump rebidding a suit is FG (eg 1♦, 2♥ is weak, 1♦, 1♥, 2♣ 2♥ is invitational; 1♦, 1♥, 2♣, 3♥ is FG).

2NT after 1♣/1♦ is natural and invitational without 4M.

2NT after 1♥/1♠ = game-forcing with 4+ card support. Continuations in new suits are splinters, 3♥/♠ extras with no singleton, 3NT = 18-19 balanced, 4 new suits are 5-5 good suits, 4♥/♠ minimum balanced.

### Continuations:

1x-1M-2M promises four-card support or three-card support and an unbalanced hand. Balanced hands with three-card support rebid 1NT

## How to Enter

Send your chosen bid in each of the eight problems, by email to [biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com](mailto:biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com) or enter via the website [www.newbridgemag.com](http://www.newbridgemag.com). Entries must be received before the end of the month. Include your name, email address and number of the set which you are entering.

Reverses are forcing for one round after a one-level response. The lower of 2NT and 4<sup>th</sup> suit encompasses all weak hands, responder's rebid of own suit is F1 but not necessarily strong, all other bids are FG.

All high reverses are game-forcing.

Jumps when a bid of the suit one level lower is forcing are splinters, as are four-level responses in a lower-ranking suit to 1♥/1♠. Jumps when the previous level is forcing are splinters.

4<sup>th</sup> suit = game-forcing.

When responder's suit is raised a return to opener's suit is forcing.

## Slam bidding:

Roman Key Card Blackwood (1 or 4, 0 or 3, 2, 2 + trump Q).

Exclusion Blackwood only in clear circumstances including a jump to the five-level in a new suit and after 1NT – 4♦/♥. Responses are 0, 1, 2.

Cue-bids are Italian style, that is the lowest control is shown regardless of whether it is first or second round or a positive or negative control and skipping a suit denies a control in that suit. Exception: a negative control in partner's suit is not shown immediately.

The default for 5NT is "pick a slam".

## Competition:

Responsive and competitive Doubles through 3♠ – after that, Doubles are value-showing, not penalties.

Negative Doubles through 3♠ – after that, Doubles are value showing, not penalties.

After a 1M opening bid and an overcall, 2NT =

four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round but not FG. New suits at the three-level are FG.

After a 1m opening and an overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit F1 but not FG, new suit at the three-level is FG.

Fit-jumps after opponents overcall or take-out Double.

Fit jumps after our overcalls. Jump cue-bid is a mixed raise (about 6-9 with four-card support)

Double jumps are splinters.

Lebensohl applies after interference over our 1NT. An immediate 3NT shows a stopper but not 4oM, 2NT then 3NT shows a stopper and 4oM, 2NT then cue-bid shows no stopper but 4oM immediate cue-bid shows no stopper and no 4oM. In summary 3NT at any time shows a stopper and cue-bid at any time denies one, a jump to 3♠ (eg 1NT-2♥-3♠) is FG.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable.

## Overcalls:

After a 1M overcall, 2NT = four-card limit raise or better and a cue-bid is a three-card limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive, change of suit forcing one round. Fit jumps, jump cue is a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps)

After a minor-suit overcall, 2NT is natural and invitational and the cue-bid is a limit raise or better, raises are pre-emptive. Fit jumps, jump cue is

a mixed raise (about 6-9 and four trumps)

Weak jump overcalls, intermediate in 4<sup>th</sup>.

Michaels cue-bids. 1m-2m = Ms, 1M-2M = oM and m with 2NT asking for the m, inv+ and 3m P/C

## Defences:

Against all pre-empts, take-out Doubles with Lebensohl responses – same structure as above.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable.

Over 2M, 4♣/♦ are Leaping Michaels (5,5 in ♣/♦ and oM, FG). Over Natural weak 2♦, 4♣ = Leaping Michaels (5, 5 in ♣ & a M with 4♦ to ask for M). Over 3♣, 4♣ = Ms and 4♦ = ♦&M with 4♥/♠ as P/C. Over 3♦, 4♣ = Nat and 4♦ = Ms. Over 3♥, 4♣/♦ = Nat, 4♥ = ♠&m, 4NT = ms. Over 3♠, 4♠/♦/♥ = nat, 4♠/4NT = two-suiter

Over their 1NT, Double = pens, 2♣ = majors, 2♦ = 1 major, 2♥/♠ = 5♥/♠ & 4+m 2NT = minors or game-forcing 2-suiter.

Over a strong 1♣, natural, Double = majors, 1NT = minors, Pass then bid is strong.

## Grand Prix

In addition there is an annual Grand Prix with Master Point Press prizes of £100, £50 and £35. Only scores of 50 and over will count and the maximum score is 400. Each contestant's Grand Prix total is their five best scores over the year (January – December).

## WEST

Hands for the  
May 2018 The Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the following page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ AJ108732  
♥ 3  
♦ K10  
♣ AK9

Hand 2. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ Q  
♥ QJ764  
♦ AK1083  
♣ AK

Hand 3. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ A107  
♥ Q9654  
♦ K  
♣ AJ72

South overcalls 3♦ North raises to 4♦ and South bids 5♦

Hand 4.. Dealer South. Both Vul

♠ A109  
♥ 65  
♦ AJ105  
♣ Q976

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♦ and South raises to 3♦

Hand 5. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 72  
♥ KQ1084  
♦ QJ965  
♣ 5

Hand 6. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A5  
♥ A1065  
♦ 654  
♣ QJ103

Hand 7. Dealer East. EW Vul.

♠ A5  
♥ AJ975  
♦ A762  
♣ Q10

If East opens 1♣ South overcalls 1♦

Hand 8. Dealer West. NS Vul.

♠ AKJ73  
♥ 3  
♦ AQ10  
♣ KQ102

## MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



### Results - Set 3

Again, the month's winner comes from outside the UK, with **Tomaz Adamič** from Slovenia. He scored 77 and receives the first prize of a £40 Gift Certificate.

Second with 76 was **Mark Ralph**, followed by **Bill Linton** and **Dominic Connolly** with 75. Mark gets the voucher of £30. After a random draw the £20 go to Dominic and Bill gets £10.

### Other Good Scores

*74 Newton Brightwell*

*73 Rodney Lighton, Derek Markham, Sid Asmail*

*72 Simon Hill, Raj Krishan, Lars Erik Bergerud, Mark Bartusek*

*71 Alex Athanasiadis, Peter Barker, James Carpenter, Geoff Simpson, Andrew King*

### Grand Prix standings:

There are currently 28 readers who have sent in answers to all three sets of problems. Since only the five highest monthly scores will count towards the final result, nothing is lost to any other competitor. The top eleven scorers currently are: (all scores over 200)

224 Mike Ralph

218 Stuart Nelson, Mark Bartusek

210 Andrew King

209 Bill Linton

206 David Barnes

204 Nigel Guthrie

203 Peter Barker

202 Dudley Leigh, Michael Prior, Bill Gordon

### How to Claim Your Prize

The winners will receive an email from Master Point Press sending you a Gift Certificate. You will then need to create an account using your email address in order to validate your Certificate.



## EAST

Hands for the  
May 2018 The Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the previous page with your favourite partner; then turn to The Auction Room inside to see how your score compares to that of the experts

Hand 1. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 6  
♥ AKJ8  
♦ A872  
♣ J542

Hand 2. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ AJ87  
♥ A83  
♦ Q2  
♣ 7652

Hand 3. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K9865  
♥ AJ2  
♦ —  
♣ K10983

South overcalls 3♦ North raises to 4♦ and South bids 5♦

Hand 4.. Dealer South. Both Vul

♠ KJ4  
♥ Q10972  
♦ —  
♣ AKJ42

If West opens 1♣ North overcalls 1♦ and South raises to 3♦

Hand 5. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AKQJ  
♥ J7  
♦ A4  
♣ AKJ72

Hand 6. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KQ2  
♥ 32  
♦ AKQJ7  
♣ A92

Hand 7. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K432  
♥ Q63  
♦ 8  
♣ AK632

If East opens 1♣ South overcalls 1♦

Hand 8. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ Q9  
♥ Q5  
♦ 97632  
♣ AJ76

## Running Costs

In order to meet our production costs we are relying on sponsorship, advertising revenue and donations.

Sponsorship can come in many forms—one that is proving popular is the sponsorship of a particular column—as you will see from the association of FunBridge with Misplay these Hands with Me and Master Point Press with The Bidding Battle.

We have set ourselves a target of 50,000+ readers, which should be enough to attract a significant level of advertising. As that number increases we will be able to approach more famous companies who might wish to associate themselves with the bridge playing community.

You can help us to achieve our aims in several ways.

Firstly—and by far the most important—by telling all your bridge playing friends that we exist and making sure they register at our web site, [www.newbridgemag.com](http://www.newbridgemag.com)

Secondly by becoming a sponsor. That could take many forms—I have already mentioned the possibility of being linked to a column within the magazine and you will see from this issue that is already popular. There is also the possibility of linking directly to the title.

Thirdly by becoming a Friend of the magazine. That would involve a donation. Anyone donating £500 would become a Golden Friend. Setting up a standing order to pay a modest sum each month is an option suggested by one of our readers.

If you would like to discuss any of the above contact me at: [editor@newbridgemag.com](mailto:editor@newbridgemag.com)

Ask not what what A New Bridge Magazine can do for you—ask what you can do for A New Bridge Magazine.