

A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Wuhan Live
Great Expectations
Bird's Eye View

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A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

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Quo Vadis

We are coming to the end of our second year and starting to look forward to what 2020 might have in store. We now have more than 10,000 readers and although hardly a day goes by without new names being added to the list, not everyone enjoying our pages have registered.

We are heartened by the words of encouragement we receive, but words alone will not keep us going. For that, we currently rely on our partnerships, our advertisers and those amongst you who offer us your financial support.

If those levels of support should drop, we will be in an awkward position. Apart from donations, one of the things you can do is show your interest in the companies that support us, and the products they promote. Do follow the links in the magazine for Funbridge, Bid 72, UBid - they have a lot to offer. Master Point Press is by far the biggest bridge book-publishing house in the world - there is an easy way to show you appreciate their sponsorship as much as we do!

We have considered making some of our content 'Premium Pages' that would require readers to make an annual payment in order to access them, but there are technical and administrative issues that cannot readily be resolved with a staff of two!

It would be easier to introduce a nominal annual charge - we are reluctant to do so, but if everyone paid £5 a year we could make significant technical improvements, pay our contributors what they are worth and have the odd day at the seaside (Tacchi said not to mention the yacht in Monaco).

Promoted to Glory

Three distinguished figures from the world of bridge have bid farewell. In this issue, we pay tribute to Elly Ducheyne, much-loved doyenne of the Press Room. We must also pay homage to Max Bavin who died suddenly last month. One of the great Directors of all time, Max rose to the very top of his profession, becoming Chief Tournament Director of the EBU, EBL and the WBF.

A tribute page has been created by the EBU:

<https://max-bavin.muchloved.com/>

Beth Palmer, winner of 6 World Championship titles, died at the beginning of last month. She had been due to represent the USA in the Venice Cup in Wuhan, but was unable to take part because of illness. I first met her when she was representing the USA in the Venice Cup, more than 20 years ago. At the time of her death she was ranked eleventh on the WBF's all-time list.

Change of Address

My technical team (consisting entirely of Ron Tacchi) asks me to point out that if you wish to change your email address for the magazine the easiest way is to resubscribe on the website and when you receive a communication from us on the previous address you click the 'unsubscribe' link at the bottom of the missive.

His problem is that he receives many of these requests and about 95% are spam or worse and could compromise the security of the magazine



CITTA' DI MILANO

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE TEAM TOURNAMENT

6th - 7th - 8th DECEMBER 2019

HOTEL DA VINCI - MILAN - CONGRESS CENTER

VIA SENIGALLIA, 6 - 20161 MILAN

SCHEDULE

Friday
6th 2 PM - end of registration
2.30 PM - 4 rounds
9.30 PM - 2 rounds

Saturday
7th 10.00 AM - 2 rounds
2.00 PM - 5 rounds

Sunday
8th 10.15 AM - 2 rounds
1.30 PM - 1 round
3 PM - prize giving

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gianluca.frola@federbridge.it - +39 329 560 99 77

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category in order to gain access to the special prizes.

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1 st € 4000	1 st € 750	1 st € 350
2 nd € 2500	2 nd € 600	
3 rd € 1200	3 rd € 500	
4 th € 900	4 th € 450	
5 th € 700	5 th € 400	
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8 th € 400		

SPECIAL PRIZES (€ 350 each, not cumulative)





- 1st team of 2nd/3rd cat./NC (min 3 teams)
- 1st Junior team (min. 3 teams)
- 1st Mixed team (min. 5 teams)
- 1st Ladies team (min. 5 teams)
- 1st Foreign team (min 5 teams)


The prize money will be awarded after legal taxes are deducted.
For foreign residents, the taxation is 30%.

ACCOMMODATION

For hotel reservations, please directly contact the Hotel.

The following rooms are reserved to bridge players:

	SINGLE ROOM double use	€ 70,00 (per night)
	breakfast buffet included, 10% VAT and WIFI included	
	DOUBLE ROOM	€ 70,00 (per night)
	breakfast buffet included, 10% VAT and WIFI included	
	TRIPLE ROOM , 1 queen+1 single bed	€ 90,00 (per night)
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	breakfast buffet included, 10% VAT and WIFI included	

 Bar and Snack bar are open during the whole event
for a delightful break.
Lunch and dinner: € 20 per person (buffet).

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Test Your Technique

with Marc Smith

see Page 103

This month's problem is a Wuhan Special, so here is another chance to see how your technique stacks up against some of the world's best players.

Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ J932
♥ AJ10
♦ A62
♣ Q64

10765
KQ9854
K
K3

You reach Four Hearts in an uncontested auction and West leads the ♦J. How would you play? (When you play trumps, both opponents follow twice.)

It's Wuhan - and it's Live!

The Editor was the Live News aditor at the World Championships.

The WBF's live news platform provides almost instantaneous reports on what is happening at a major championship. One of its aims is to report on interesting deals as soon as they are completed.

Green Card

The first deal of the Championships did not appear to be too testing, but events at one table reminded me of something from the 1995 Championships in Beijing. If you have a decent memory you will recall that Germany won the Venice Cup, defeating the USA in a thrilling final. Pony Nehmert was a member of the winning team and wanting to ensure that her bidding was not too conservative she allegedly took the unusual step while practicing for the championships of removing the green cards from her bidding box!

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ AQ10732	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K4
♥ —		♥ AKJ732
♦ Q10762		♦ K43
♣ J5		♣ 43
♠ 865		♠ 87
♥ Q1095		♥ 86
♦ J95		♦ KQ10532
♣ K98		♣ Q72

In the Open Room E/W reached 4♠ and declarer took ten tricks for +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Kazmucha	Verbeek	Sarniak	Van Zwol
-	1♣	1♥	1NT
2♠	3♣	Pass	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

If East had adopted Pony's stratagem she would not have been able to pass 3♦ and the spade game would probably have been reached. Of course you still have to make it and a tough defence would be testing. Chip Martel, sitting South for USA2 against Italy, won trick two with the ♣K and switched to the ♦J. That was enough to persuade Norberto Bocchi to play him for four spades and lose a trick to the ♠J.

The One and Only

This deal from the opening round saw many double-digit swings:

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ A1064	<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K2
♥ A9752		♥ K
♦ A4		♦ 986
♣ A9		♣ KJ108543
♠ 87		♠ QJ953
♥ 86		♥ QJ1043
♦ KQ10532		♦ J7
♣ Q72		♣ 6

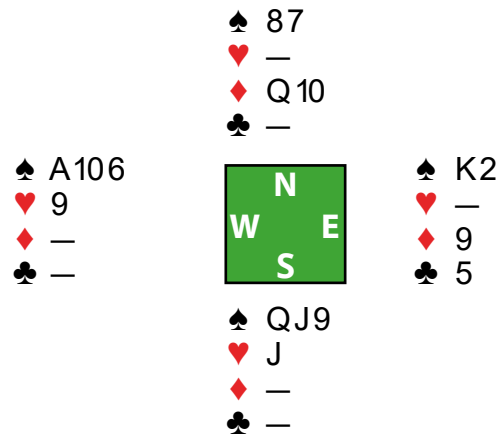
On a bad day, you might go down in 3NT after a diamond lead, a fate that befell several players, including one multiple world champion.

6♣ was attempted several times, but when a diamond was led no-one

had enough information to get the trumps right.

A couple of declarers were favoured by the lead of the ♠Q, after which only the overtrick was at issue.

At two tables, one in the Venice Cup, the other in the Bermuda Bowl the opening lead was a heart. Declarer wins with the king and cashes the top trumps. When the ♣Q declines to put in an appearance you play a third round pitching a diamond, win the likely diamond exit, cash the ♥A, ruff a heart and continue with two more rounds of trumps to reach this position:



When declarer plays the last trump, South must part with a spade. Having done its work, the ♥9 is discarded from dummy and declarer scores three spade tricks. In the match between Sweden and Israel the latter made 12 tricks after a diamond lead – but they were only in 5♣, and Sweden’s Fredrik Nyström (partnering Johan Upmark) followed this line to pick up a big swing.

Alas, the other declarer could not find the winning line.

Do Bridge Players Live Longer?

A recent article posed the question ‘Do Chess Players Live Longer’. Given the exalted status of these two closely related mind sports, it is a topic that can readily be discussed about bridge players. When I asked Herman to ‘review’ the matter, he immediately replied ‘No, it just seems that way’. Press Room manager Jan Swaan said that there was evidence to suggest that mentally active people live longer.

That might be true, but lifestyle must also have a part to play. The

legendary World Chess Champion Alexander Alekhine spent the latter part of his life in Lisbon and there is a story that feeling unwell he consulted a doctor who asked him how much he drank. When Alekhine admitted to consuming two bottles of brandy a day the doctor told him that if he wished to prolong his life he must stop drinking. Alekhine asked him ‘If I do, how much longer will I live?’ ‘Six months’ was the reply. ‘In that case, it isn’t worth it’. He died a few days later aged 53. Coincidentally, his greatest rival Capablanca died at the same age. Former world champions Petrosian and Tal were both 55 when they died (the latter being a heavy drinker and smoker – my collection of photographs includes one of him playing table-tennis in the English seaside town of Hastings holding the bat in one hand and a cigarette in the other!). Bobby Fisher made it to 64. I haven’t had time to check on everyone, but Mikhail Botvinnik, at 84 might be the longest lived world chess champion.

You can contrast those immortals with some of their bridge counterparts. Giorgio Belladonna reached 72 but Benito Garozzo is still going strong at 92, two years younger than Pietro Forquet’s 94 not out. Bob-Hamman was born in 1938, Bobby Wolff in 1932.

One obvious difference that exists between the two mediums is that top-class bridge players can remain at the top of the game for a much longer period – perhaps the most famous example being the World title won by Boris Schapiro at the age of 89.

There will be Blood

It is inevitable that during an event lasting two weeks there will be at least one deal where a significant penalty occurs.

The arrival of one such affords me an opportunity to tell you a story; shortly before the championships, two family members met for the first time in 10 years. Wanting to celebrate, one of them had purchased two very expensive bottles of red wine. They were driving back to the other one’s home when another car, which in turn was concertinaed, hit them. Anxious for the safety of her relative, the driver got out of the car and opened the backdoor. An ominous dark pool was already forming over the back seat. When she pointed this out to her passenger, he exclaimed ‘Please god, let it be blood!’

Welcome to Round 4 of the Bermuda Bowl:

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AK954 ♥ 1052 ♦ J93 ♣ A3		♠ 108 ♥ J86 ♦ — ♣ J10987642	♠ Q763 ♥ K9743 ♦ 1075 ♣ Q
		♠ J2 ♥ AQ ♦ AKQ8642 ♣ K5	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hampson	Van Prooijen	Greco	Verhees
–	–	Pass	1♣*
1♠	Double*	3♥*	4♦
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Double	All Pass		
1♣	15+ any distribution		
3♥	Fit jump		

West cashed his spades and switched to ace and another club, so -500. 'Tis but a scratch' as the Black Knight would say. (Connoisseurs of the famous scene from *Monty Python and The Holy Grail* will know that the Black Knight's opening line is: 'None shall Pass' which seems to be the mantra of many bridge players nowadays!)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
De Wijs	Fleisher	Muller	Martel
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠*	Pass	3NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥*
Pass	6♣	Pass	7♦
Double	7♥	Double	7NT
Double	All Pass		

The defenders took five spades and the ♣A for -1400.

'A bit more than a flesh wound' said King Arthur.

Thanks to the efforts of Fotis Skoularikis the WBF's TMS Manager you can now see the pictures of the players in a particular match every time you visit the appropriate part of the relevant micro-site. For example just go to:

<http://db.worldbridge.org/Repository/tourn/wuhan.19/microSite/RunningScores/Asp/BoarddetailsCondit.asp?qmatchid=85541>

(Hover over a name to see the photo.)

Passing the Test

One of the many aspects of the technology that is applied to these championships is the ability to see the results from every table – especially useful if you spot an interesting deal. This one is from Round 5:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 864 ♥ 109 ♦ Q765 ♣ A1097		♠ AQ10 ♥ K64 ♦ KJ ♣ K8654	♠ K9532 ♥ J72 ♦ A42 ♣ QJ
		♠ J7 ♥ AQ853 ♦ 10983 ♣ 32	

All things being equal, you would expect E/W to bid game, with 3NT and 4♠ being the obvious contracts.

3NT was reached 6 times in the BB, and 4♠ 15 times.

If South leads anything other than a heart against 3NT then declarer will have an easy time collecting at least nine tricks. On a low heart lead, the only winning line is for declarer to put up dummy's jack and then take the diamond finesse. 3NT was only defeated once when South led the ♥5.

If the contract is 4♠ by East, a low club lead to the ace followed by a heart switch means declarer is down 'on the go' and if West is at the

helm the ♥10 has the same effect.

On a diamond lead, declarer can win, draw trumps and play a club. If North wins and exits with a diamond declarer wins in dummy, crosses to dummy with a club, cashes the ♦A and plays a heart, making as the cards lie.

In the BB six pairs recorded +620.

In the VC 2 pairs tried 3NT, one was +660 after the ♦10 was led, the other one down after the ♥5. 5 pairs made 4♠ (9 went down, 3 after a club lead).

In the DT 3 tried 3NT, two going down after a heart lead, the other making after South tried the ♦10. 7 pairs made 4♠ while 13 went down, only one encountering the killing club lead.

In the Mixed 3NT made three times (♦10 lead) and was one down after the ♥5. 12 pairs went down in 4♠ (only one South found a club lead) while 7 pairs made it.

Having digested that information, do you think that the declarers who failed in 3NT after getting a heart lead or those who went down in 4♠ after the ♦10 misplayed? I'm inclined to think they did, but bridge hands look so much simpler on paper – don't you agree?

At the Double

This deal from Round 5 saw a number of pairs reach a reasonable slam:

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K873 ♥ 8 ♦ Q10863 ♣ 1098	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AJ1064 ♥ AK9642 ♦ 92 ♣ —	♠ Q5 ♥ J107 ♦ K75 ♣ KJ754
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In the Closed Room Angeleri and Poleschi had stopped peacefully in 4♥, recording +480.

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Pellegrini</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Pejacsevic</i>
	–	–	–	Pass
1♣*		Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT		Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣*		Pass	4♠*	Pass
4NT*		Pass	5♦*	Pass
6♥		All Pass		
1♣	0+♣, (11)12-14 NT, 5+♣ (16+) or any 18+			
4♣	Cue-bid			
4♠	Cue-bid			
4NT	RKCB			
5♦	3 key cards			

It looks best to make an attacking lead, and as it happens, a diamond lead would have given declarer too much to do. When South started with the ♣5 (perhaps hoping to deflect declarer from a potential finesse) declarer was in with a shout, although it still far from clear where the tricks will come from.

Declarer put in dummy's ♣Q, pitching the ♦2, and ran the ♠9 to South's queen. Back came the ♥J and declarer won with the king, cashed the ♠A and continued with the ♠J, overruffing South's ♥7 with the queen. A spade was discarded on the ♣A and declarer ruffed a club and played off his remaining trumps to reach this position:

♠ — ♥ — ♦ AJ ♣ 6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 ♥ 2 ♦ 9 ♣ —	♠ K ♥ — ♦ Q10 ♣ — ♠ — ♥ — ♦ K7 ♣ J
---------------------------	--	---------------------------	---

When declarer cashed the ♥2 South had to pitch a diamond and the

now redundant ♣6 was discarded from dummy. Forced to hold on to the ♠K, North also had to part with a diamond so dummy's ♦AJ took the last two tricks, a delightful simultaneous double squeeze.

(Only 8 pairs recorded +980 over the four series. Trinidad & Tobago's Deborah Fletcher was the only player in the Venice Cup to do so, and she had to contend with the diamond lead that should, in theory have defeated the contract.)

Misdefend This Hand With Me In Wuhan

In the early stages of a round robin qualifying contest, I pick up this modest collection:

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ KJ872
♥ 1062
♦ 2
♣ QJ63

Under our methods 2♠ would promise 5-9 with at least five spades, but at this vulnerability I don't feel the need to press. When I pass West opens 1♦ and East responds 1♥. That allows me to bid 1♠ and when West rebids 1NT my partner raises to 2♠. East bids 3NT and that is the final contract. This has been the auction:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
1NT	2♠	3NT	All Pass

My partner leads the ♠3 and I get to see this dummy:

<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; 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		♠ A10 ♥ A8753 ♦ 6 ♣ A10854
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠ KJ872 ♥ 1062 ♦ 2 ♣ QJ63										

When declarer plays the ten from dummy, I win with the king and return

the seven for the six, nine and ace. The ♥3 goes to the six, jack and king and my partner's exit with the ♠5 which declarer wins with the queen, pitching a club from dummy. Declarer now cashes the ♦AKQ, partner following with the four, five and seven as I throw a club and a spade, and then plays the ♥9 for the queen, ace and my two. When declarer exits with a heart I can win and cash a spade, but must then give the remaining tricks to dummy.

This was the full deal:

Dealer South. None Vul

♠ 953		♠ A10									
♥ KQ4		♥ A8753									
♦ J98754		♦ 6									
♣ K	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <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		♣ A10854
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ Q64		♠ KJ872									
♥ J9		♥ 1062									
♦ AKQ103		♦ 2									
♣ 972		♣ QJ63									


It would not have helped me to keep an extra spade, as then declarer would play the ♥9, ducking if partner played the queen; if partner played low declarer would take the ace and exit with a heart.

Having taken the ♠K the winning defence is to exit in a minor, but that is somewhat obscure. Much simpler is to play the ♠J at trick one. West can win with the queen, but playing on clubs will see me win the second round and knock out the spade ace when declarer is helpless.

Rivers of Blood

This was a deal that made the headlines:

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 874 ♥ Q53 ♦ 1076 ♣ 8764		♠ A10 ♥ AK9872 ♦ K92 ♣ 92
♠ KQ52 ♥ 1064 ♦ Q54 ♣ AK10		♠ J963 ♥ J ♦ AJ83 ♣ QJ53

In the Closed Room, Fukuyoshi and Yanagisawa had taken 12 tricks in 4♥, +680.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Deas</i>	<i>Miyakuni Seamon-Molson</i>	<i>Kato</i>	
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Double
Redouble	All Pass		

When West made a support redouble North could not think of anything sensible to bid – neither can I, but some pairs play that a pass in this position is a suggestion to play for penalties. South led the ♥J and declarer managed to take all the tricks – it was easy to get the trumps right and once a diamond had slipped past the ace South was toast. Six overtricks adds up to +3120 and a modest 20 IMP swing.

Remarkably, despite collecting another 28 IMPs via slam and game swings, USA 2 lost this match 50-56, which says a lot for the resolve of their Japanese opponents.

Man of Many Parts


Fernando Lema, driving force behind the WBF Youth pages (www.youth.worldbridge.org) is a busy man. Thanks to him, we now have the first ever ranking list: <http://youth.worldbridge.org/new-youth-rankings-and-master-points/>

It is also possible to collect Youth participation certificates at: <http://youth.worldbridge.org/world-open-youth-championships-participation-certificates/>

You can also look at deals played in these Championships: <http://youth.worldbridge.org/44th-world-team-championships-september-15th-some-boards/>

Meanwhile, apart from organising an endless series of interviews etc he somehow finds time to seek out interesting deals, like this one from the seventh round of the Venice Cup:

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ Q10642 ♥ 102 ♦ AK5 ♣ J82		♠ KJ7 ♥ J4 ♦ 9843 ♣ A653
♠ A83 ♥ AK98 ♦ Q1062 ♣ Q4		♠ 95 ♥ Q7653 ♦ J7 ♣ K1097

In the Open Room, Japan recorded +120.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Miyakuni</i>	<i>Baldysz</i>	<i>Kato</i>
-	1♠	Pass	1NT*
Double	Pass	Pass	2♥
Double	Pass	Pass	2♠
Double	All Pass		

East led the ♥J and when it held she continued with the four, West winning with the king and playing the ace, ruffed and overruffed. A low club saw West win with the queen, return a club to the ace and ruff the third round of the suit. A heart was ruffed and overruffed and the defenders still had two trump tricks to come for +800.

The Substitute's Tale

David Kendrick joined the English Senior team at the eleventh hour. He reported a couple of good stories about this deal from Round 9:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ J1098 ♥ 82 ♦ Q985 ♣ 1063		♠ A7532 ♥ Q ♦ 763 ♣ K854
♠ K6 ♥ K104 ♦ KJ102 ♣ AQJ2	♠ Q4 ♥ AJ97653 ♦ A4 ♣ 97	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Comella</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Sabbatini</i>
-	-	-	1♥
1NT	Pass	2♥*	3♥
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North led a heart and when dummy's queen was allowed to hold declarer played a diamond. If he puts in the ten, North will win and play a second heart enabling South to clear the suit, after which there are only eight tricks. Knowing that South must hold the ♦A declarer avoided this trap by playing the king. When it held he was up to eight tricks. It looks tempting to play the diamond jack at this point, but South will win and switch to the ♠Q after which declarer will have no way to generate a ninth trick. Appreciating the danger, declarer crossed to dummy with a club

and played a diamond. That meant South's king hit thin air and whatever the defenders did declarer could establish a ninth trick in diamonds.

When E/W stopped in 3♠ at the other table, England gained 10 IMPs.


In the Open Room Forrester & Robson made 5♣ for +600 in the BB match between England & Singapore.

In the replay, Kien Hoong Fong was at the helm in 3NT and Allerton led the ♥8, Jagger winning with the ace and switching to the ♠Q. Declarer won in dummy and played a diamond and South went up with the ace to play a second spade. Declarer won perforce with the king, cashed three top clubs and the ♥K before crossing to dummy with a club to exit with a spade. North could take two tricks in the suit, but then had to lead into the ♦KJ. Well defended and beautifully played.

Bold Bidding

Snatching a brief glance at the Senior's match between Netherlands and England I spotted this deal:

Board 18. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ J932 ♥ 98754 ♦ A3 ♣ 107		♠ Q ♥ 2 ♦ KJ75 ♣ KJ95432
♠ K6 ♥ AKJ1063 ♦ Q ♣ AQ86	♠ A108754 ♥ Q ♦ 1098642 ♣ —	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Mulder</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Vergoed</i>
-	-	3♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	4♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	5♦
Double	5♠	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

♠ J932			
♥ 98754			
♦ A3			
♣ 107			
♠ K6			♠ Q
♥ AKJ1063	W	N	♥ 2
♦ Q	E		♦ KJ75
♣ AQ86	S		♣ KJ95432
			♠ A108754
			♥ Q
			♦ 1098642
			♣ —

You could ask a whole raft of questions about this deal.

If West had simply raised to 5♣ would South have taken any action? If South bids 5♦ could it suggest a two-suited hand, so North can bid 5♥ and then pass 5♠? Probably not, as South might have bid 5♦ on a modest hand with a lot of diamonds.

When West bids 4♥ what would a double by South mean – is it asking for a club lead?

Here South elected to bid 4♠ (not the universal choice when this sequence occurred at other tables – for instance in the Venice Cup Scotland’s Liz McGowan saw her partner pass 4♥ and she led the ♦A. When South followed with the ♦2 she switched to a club for one down). Would you have been tempted to bid 5♠ over 5♣? No need if you can rely on partner to take a second bid!

There was nothing to the play in 5♠x,-200, the par result.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ten Brink</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>De Vrind</i>	<i>Mould</i>
-	-	Pass	2♠
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	6♣	All Pass

I was toying with mentioning the fact that England’s John Holland was playing against the Netherlands, but Brian Senior pointed out that it would have been better if the Netherlands had been fielding a player called England, so I decided not to bother.

Would you consider passing with the East hand? Here East was constrained by the fact that it would have promised 11-14, 6+♣ – looking at

what is sometimes called a ‘Cologne’ hand (4711) I think I might have stretched a point.

As a result here it was West who took two bids opposite a silent partner, but looking at seven card support for clubs East felt obliged to bid 6♣, giving England 6 IMPs on this exciting deal.

Missing the Point

Counting at bridge comes in many forms – one of which is to keep track of the number of high cards each player has shown. This deal from R14 is a typical example:

Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ AJ94		♠ K87
♥ QJ109		♥ K8654
♦ A105		♦ Q94
♣ 73		♣ AJ

	N	
W		E
	S	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

South leads the ♣K and you win with the ace and play two rounds of hearts, South winning the second as North discards the ♠6. South exits with the ♦6 and you elect to put up dummy’s ace, draw the outstanding trump and play the ♦5. North takes the king and plays the ♣5, South winning with the queen and exiting with the ♦J. You win with the queen and these cards remain:

♠ AJ94		♠ K87
♥ J		♥ K8
♦ —		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

Having lost three tricks, you need to locate the ♠Q. Any ideas?

Declarer cashed the ♠K to discover this was the full deal:

Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ AJ94 ♥ QJ109 ♦ A105 ♣ 73		♠ Q6532 ♥ 7 ♦ K72 ♣ 10654
♠ 10 ♥ A32 ♦ J863 ♣ KQ982		♠ K87 ♥ K8654 ♦ Q94 ♣ AJ

Were you counting South's points?

He has already shown up with the ♥A, ♦J, ♣KQ but passed as dealer, making North an overwhelming favourite to hold the ♠Q. So the indicated play is to cross to dummy with the ♠A and advance the ♠J.

In the Closed Room South's somewhat unlucky lead of the ♠10 had given declarer an easy route to eleven tricks and +650, so the cost was 10 IMPs.

Promoted to Glory

If I remember correctly, the late Barry Crane suggested that God dealt you AK of a suit so that you would not have a lead problem. This deal was from Round 15:

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 10 ♥ K10 ♦ K108652 ♣ K1065		♠ 875 ♥ QJ8 ♦ QJ9 ♣ Q974
♠ QJ943 ♥ A97643 ♦ 7 ♣ J		♠ AK62 ♥ 52 ♦ A43 ♣ A832

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bethers</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Romanovska</i>	<i>Byrne</i>
–	–	1♣	2♣*
2♦	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Double
3NT	Pass	Pass	4♥
Double	All Pass		

2♣ Majors

East led the ♦A and switched to the ♠A. When West followed with the ten, continuing with the king followed by the two would see West ruff and return a club, when East can win and play a fourth spade, promoting the ♥K to glory for -500. Seeing ghosts, she cashed the ♣A first, and declarer subsequently felled the singleton ♥K to escape for -300.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Myers</i>	<i>Rubins</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Alfejev</i>
–	–	1♣	1♠
2♦	2♠	2NT	3♥
3NT	All Pass		


Having overcalled 1♠ and received support South naturally led the suit, only to discover that it was the losing option.

Declarer wrapped up nine tricks that were worth 3 IMPs.

The Youngsters of Today

The BBC is currently running a series celebrating the 50th anniversary of the televising of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (I suspect some of you may now be hearing Sousa's *Liberty Bell* that was used as the show's theme tune). One of my favourite sketches was entitled *The Four Yorkshiremen* which they popularized from the original airing on the *Not The 1948 Show*. They reminisce about the good old days and the sketch concludes with the line 'But you try and tell the youngsters of today that... and they won't believe you'.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ 10762 ♥ 106 ♦ AJ42 ♣ 873		♠ 4 ♥ 873 ♦ 95 ♣ AKQJ1064	♠ KQ3 ♥ KQJ5 ♦ KQ10 ♣ 952
		♠ AJ985 ♥ A942 ♦ 8763 ♣ —	

Watching this deal from Round 14 I saw North open 3NT. When I was a lad it was usual for the solid suit to be accompanied by at least one other stopper, but times have changed.

When East doubled, I wondered if South might be tempted to redouble – after all, 7+2 = 9, but then I noticed that South’s club void might not be an asset (especially if North’s suit happened to be diamonds). Nevertheless, I was willing to speculate that at there would be at least one table where the contract was 3NT doubled.


Our resident statistician, Herman De Wael (Herman assures me that it should be wael, but it would take too long to explain why) advises that was precisely the case, declarer finding the lack of a club in partner’s hand an insurmountable obstacle.

If only North had held an outside stopper – but try telling the youngsters of today that.

Masterclass

Viewing figures suggest that if big numbers are the sole criteria to justify selection for an appearance on BBO then Meckwell are the biggest draw. When they are in full cry, you can learn a lot from watching them. Here are a couple of deals from their R17 match with England, which provided full value for money.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ A643 ♥ 1043 ♦ AJ8 ♣ 1042		♠ J7 ♥ K852 ♦ Q54 ♣ AQ95	♠ 1098 ♥ Q76 ♦ K10972 ♣ 76
		♠ KQ52 ♥ AJ9 ♦ 63 ♣ KJ83	


In the Closed Room North (as was usually the case) declared 3NT and East’s lead of the ♦10 saw the contract defeated in double quick time.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♣4 and when declarer put up dummy’s queen East followed with the seven and South the three. The jack of spades saw East contribute the ten (upside down Smith) and West took the ace and switched to the ♦J to flatten the board – not exactly shabby and too difficult for some of the pairs confronted by the problem.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ A ♥ KJ82 ♦ AQJ5 ♣ K865		♠ Q10985 ♥ 105 ♦ 974 ♣ QJ3	♠ 76 ♥ Q9743 ♦ K632 ♣ A7
♠ KJ432 ♥ A6 ♦ 108 ♣ 10942			

Open Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
	–	–	Pass	Pass
	1♣*	Pass	1♠*	Pass
	3♠*	Pass	4♠*	Pass
	4NT*	Pass	6♦*	All Pass
1♣	16+			
1♠	5+♥			
3♠	Splinter, tending to minimum			
4♠	RKCB			
4NT	3 key cards			
6♦	Transfer to hearts			

Every ten years or so I pester Eric about writing a book on RM Precision – when you see a sequence like this you can understand why.

Closed Room

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Robson</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>
	–	–	Pass	Pass
	2♦*	Pass	2♠*	Pass
	3♥*	Pass	4♥	All Pass
2♦	Multi, weak major, 4-9 or 4441 16+			
2♠	Pass or correct			
3♥	1444			


I leave you to ponder the merits of some further move by East (presumably 3♠ would have been asking for controls or range).

USA 1 just got the better of things to stay more than a match ahead of the field.

Variation

When you are playing a hand, you have to consider the possibility that the key suits may break badly. Judge for yourselves if declarer did that on this deal from Round 19:

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ J75 ♥ AKJ1062 ♦ KQ9 ♣ J		♠ 106 ♥ 943 ♦ J85 ♣ K10953	♠ A3 ♥ 8 ♦ A10632 ♣ A8764
♠ KQ9842 ♥ Q75 ♦ 74 ♣ Q2			

In the other room Weinstein and Leven had stopped in 3NT after 1♦-(1♠)-2♥-3♣-3♠-3NT and taken all the tricks.

Open Room

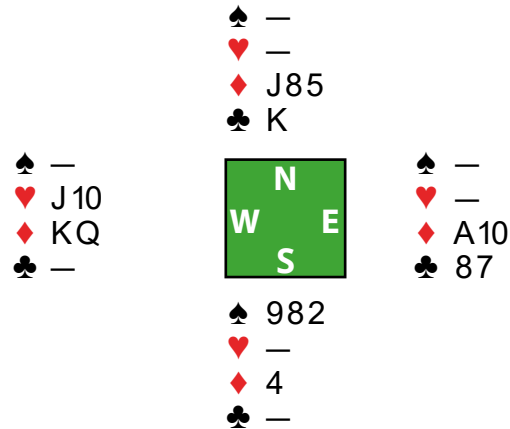
	West	North	East	South
	<i>Brogeland</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
	–	–	1♦	1♠
	2♣*	Pass	3♣	Pass
	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
	4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
	5♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Here E/W were more ambitious, and given that I have no certainty as to what 2♣ meant the key bid may have been West's decision to go beyond 3NT.

South led the queen of spades and declarer won with the ace. One possible line now is for declarer to cross to dummy with a heart and play the ♥J, discarding a spade, another to cash both top hearts pitching a spade and then play a third round.

Declarer preferred to play back a spade and South won and continued with a third spade, making sure that declarer would not have a discard on the ♠J. North ruffed with the ♦8 and declarer overruffed, crossed to the ♥A, ruffed a heart, cashed the ♦A, played a diamond to dummy and cashed the ♦K, claiming when the missing trumps appeared.

It occurred to me that if North had started with four trumps and South with four hearts that the line chosen would fail. However, if declarer cashes a second heart and then ruffs a third one (North discarding) and then cross-ruffs, it will be possible to reach this ending:



Now declarer can cross-ruff the remaining tricks.

Interestingly, were the cards to lie in this fashion an unlikely initial trump lead would defeat 6♦.

The trouble with this type of hypothetical scenario is that you can create a situation where you manage to go down in a contract where the suits break reasonably!

What one can say is that if North happens to have started with four diamonds and four hearts then ruffing a heart and then cashing the ♦A will result in defeat, unless declarer plays double dummy. You might like to consider how you would play if North refused to ruff the third spade—which would surely be the right play if North had started with four trumps. If North started with four diamonds and three hearts then after cashing a

heart and ruffing a heart declarer must not cash the ♦A, instead playing a diamond to the king, cashing the ♥K and then play winning hearts—and that would see declarer go down even with hearts 3-3. The conclusion:

North should refuse to ruff the third round of spades!

14 pairs reached 6♦, 5 in the Mixed and three in each of the other three events, with only two going down.

Bidding Battles

If your bidding is as bad as mine, then there will be no shortage of deals where you are uncertain as how to proceed – the sort of hands that make good copy for series such as the Bridge World’s *Master Solvers Club*, or A New Bridge Magazine’s *Masterpoint Press Bidding Battle*.

I wonder if this problem from R20 might appear:

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K762
♥ AQ53
♦ 93
♣ 862

You have the South hand and the auction unfolds like this:

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Padon</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Birman</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT	2♣	3♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	?

As far as I can see, there are five possibilities:

- Pass The objection to this is that you only have one trump trick, so partner will need a decent number of high cards. On the other hand, the opponents are vulnerable.
- 4♣ Reasonable, but it fails to convey any strength.
- 3NT You have a stopper, but the lack of a high card in clubs is a concern.
- 4♥ This looks appealing – as apart from anything else partner might have four-card support.
- 5♣ Aggressive, but hardly ridiculous.

Have you made up your mind?
Here is the full deal:

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ — ♥ K107 ♦ AQ74 ♣ KQJ1043	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> N W — E S </div> </div>	♠ AQ108543 ♥ J62 ♦ K ♣ A9
♠ J9 ♥ 984 ♦ J108652 ♣ 75	♠ K762 ♥ AQ53 ♦ 93 ♣ 862	

29 Pairs played in 4♥, 31 in 5♣ and most of the rest in 3NT, the latter contract being easily defeated.

At my featured table South opted for 3NT, (as did his counterpart after a slightly different sequence).

Of course, any self-respecting Rabbi would make 12 tricks in 6♣!

Board of the Day

When I asked Herman to check the frequencies on board 23 of Round 20, I was surprised at the answer. Over half of the field had solved what appeared to be a difficult declarer play problem. Perhaps it was more of a defensive problem.

♠ AQJ98
♥ J109
♦ AQ62
♣ K
♠ 543
♥ A763
♦ J4
♣ AQ106

West	North	East	South
<i>Dufrat</i>	<i>Puillet</i>	<i>Žmuda</i>	<i>Bessis</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦*	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Getting North to be declarer in 4♠. Over the 96 tables of the four championships, 62 North players became declarers in 4♠. A further 4 played 4♠ doubled, while one table managed to reach 4♠ redoubled. Two pairs went slightly overboard in 5♠, one pair even attempted 6♠ (doubled, of course). So a total of 70 North players were playing in spades.

Eight declarers were faced with the problem of making 4♠ from the South hand. An extra South had to contend with playing 6♠, strangely left undoubled.

Eight pairs found their spade fit unsatisfactory, and ended up playing 3NT, twice from the South side and six times from North.

This was, for example, what happened to the Chinese Open pair:

West	North	East	South
<i>Ramirez</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Cazabon</i>	<i>Z. Shi</i>
–	–	–	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Some East/West pairs could not contain themselves from entering the bidding. Only two pair managed a more or less satisfactory defence, in 2♦ or 3♦ doubled (going for 800 and 1100 respectively). This was the bidding in India – England seniors.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Dhakras</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Sridharan</i>
–	–	–	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
2♣	Double	Pass	Pass
2♦	Double	All Pass	

(the deal was a push in the match, actually, as the other table got their 4♠ doubled, scoring 790)

Others ended up in clubs. One player essayed 3♣x from West (ending up at -1700), six from the East side. A total of nine contracts for E/W.

This was the bidding in Netherlands – Chinese Taipei (Seniors)

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
2NT	Double	3♣	Double
All Pass			

An auction with South becoming declarer in the same contract was:

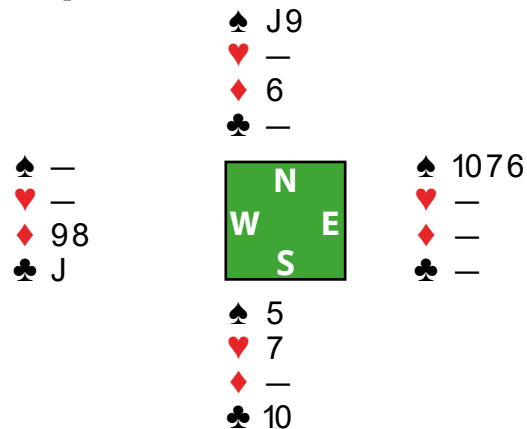
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
1♦	1♥*	Pass	1♠*
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

1♥ Spades
1♠ Support

How would you play 4♠ on the lead of the ♥K, East following with the ♥2, encouraging.

If you decide to duck, West continues with the ♥Q, East playing the four.

Short of entries to hand, it would now be a mistake to play a spade – you must continue with the ♦J, covered by the king and ace. Now it looks as if you are well placed and can hope to lose just two spades. However, when you cash dummy's ♠A West discards the ♦5. When you continue with the ♠Q, East wins and returns the ♥8. You win with dummy's jack, cash the ♦Q, overtake the ♣K, discard a diamond on the ♣Q and ruff a club to reach this position:



When you exit with a diamond East has to ruff and lead into dummy's trump tenace.

When 4♠ was played by North it was generally made when East led the ♦10, but it is a much tougher proposition if East leads a heart.

One way to go down is to duck the initial lead, when West will probably switch to a diamond. Declarer wins in hand with the jack and plays a spade, West pitching a club. If declarer puts in dummy's queen (which sort of feels right) East wins and plays a heart. Declarer wins with the ace, cashes two clubs pitching a heart, plays a diamond to the queen and a diamond, but East ruffs and plays a heart and declarer must lose another trick for one down.

Let's see how 4♠ should be played courtesy of Eric Rodwell:

West	North	East	South
<i>Padon</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Birman</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East led the ♥2 and West won with the queen and switched to the ♦5. Declarer won with dummy's jack and played a spade. When West discarded a club Rodwell found the winning line when he put up the ace. He unblocked the ♣K, crossed to dummy with a heart and pitched a heart and a diamond on the top clubs, before ruffing a heart. Down to ♠QJ9 ♦AQ he was sure enough of the position to claim ten tricks.

He was the only declarer who played from North and received a heart lead to make 4♠.

This was the full deal:

♠ — ♥ KQ5 ♦ K9875 ♣ J9874		♠ K10762 ♥ 842 ♦ 103 ♣ 532	♠ 543 ♥ A763 ♦ J4 ♣ AQ106
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Name that Squeeze

Watching the potentially important last round match Bermuda Bowl match between Italy and Argentina this deal was not without interest:

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ 962 ♥ AQ92 ♦ A62 ♣ K105		♠ K105 ♥ J873 ♦ J98 ♣ J94	♠ AJ8743 ♥ 65 ♦ KQ7 ♣ 76 ♠ Q ♥ K104 ♦ 10543 ♣ AQ832
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

If East leads a heart and declarer plays dummy's ten West wins with

the queen and returns a spade, East winning with the king. If East plays a second heart West will win and play a third heart, but declarer ruffs, draws trumps and plays the ♦K. West wins, but has no way to prevent declarer establishing a long diamond in dummy to take care of one of declarer's clubs.

Suppose East switches to a club at trick three.

If declarer takes the finesse, West wins and as long as the defenders are careful declarer will subsequently lose two diamonds and be one down.

If declarer takes the view that the ♣K is offside, rises with dummy's ace and plays a diamond West cannot afford to take the ace, so declarer wins and then plays spades to reach this position:

♠ — ♥ A9 ♦ A6 ♣ K10		♠ — ♥ J8 ♦ J9 ♣ J9	♠ 87 ♥ 6 ♦ K7 ♣ 7 ♠ — ♥ K4 ♦ 105 ♣ Q8
------------------------------	--	-----------------------------	--


When declarer plays another trump, discarding a diamond from dummy, West has no good move. Discarding a heart allows declarer to exit with a heart. Discarding a diamond lets declarer duck a diamond and pitching a club allows declarer to play a club.

This looks like a triple squeeze and endplay, which I somehow feel deserves a special name – maybe something along the lines of *Peking Duck three ways squeeze*.

Destiny Denied

This deal from Round 21 contained a hidden possibility – as far as Herman and I can tell no-one found the winning play:

Board 14. Dealer East None Vul.

♠ A62 ♥ KQ92 ♦ 106 ♣ Q953		♠ 873 ♥ A10754 ♦ K97 ♣ A4	♠ QJ1054 ♥ J3 ♦ QJ3 ♣ K86
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♠ K9 ♥ 86 ♦ A8542 ♣ J1072			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

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

South led the ♠K and declarer ducked, won the next spade, drew trumps and exited with a spade. North won and switched to the ♦Q, ending declarer's hopes. That was slightly surprising line of play, as declarer might have tried playing two rounds of clubs, hoping that the king was onside – then if South did not have a third spade declarer would be in clover.

There is a way to make nine tricks, but it involves a slightly unusual play – declarer must play the ♣Q at trick five. This type of play, where declarer, in desperation, leads an unsupported honour, hoping it will not be covered is occasionally successful. Here declarer would be delighted were the queen to win, but in this case even if it is covered it would, as the cards lie, have the effect of keeping North off lead. If the queen is covered by the king and ace, declarer plays his remaining club and although South can win he is endplayed.

We leave you to judge if this is a plausible line of play!

The Wonder of Wuhan

Bulletin number 9 of the 2019 World Bridge Championships carried an announcement about IPBA awards for play in online events. Incredibly, a candidate deal was dealt in a Robot tournament on Wednesday night – and the declarer was in Wuhan! Simon Stocken, eager to get his hands

(metaphorically speaking) on some cards, had invested US\$1.35 to play in an ACBL Robot tournament when this hand appeared on the screen: This is the deal in question:

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A87432 ♥ AK ♦ K3 ♣ AJ10			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

West	North	East	South
<i>Robot</i>	<i>Robot</i>	<i>Robot</i>	<i>Simon</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT*
Pass	5♠*	Pass	5NT*
Pass	6♠	Pass	7NT
All Pass			

- 2♦ Game forcing
- 4NT RKCB
- 5♠ 2 key cards +♠Q
- 5NT Kings?
- 6♠ No

Simon (no mean Poker player) was holding the South cards and decided to go 'all in' by bidding 7NT. He knew that partner held the ♠KQ and the ♦A, but absent any side kings, must have a little more and if that was in diamonds there would probably be a play for all the tricks.

West led the ♥10 and dummy was a little disappointing:

♠ KQ10 ♥ J82 ♦ AJ8652 ♣ 9			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

♠ A87432 ♥ AK ♦ K3 ♣ AJ10			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

Simon won with the ♥A and cashed five rounds of spades to reach this position:

♠ —
♥ J8
♦ AJ86
♣ 9

██████████

♠ 4
♥ K
♦ K3
♣ AJ10

With a nod to Vienna, he cashed the ♥K and followed it with the ♦K. So far West, who had turned up with a singleton ♠J had pitched a diamond, a heart and two clubs. East, who had three spades, had parted with two clubs and a heart and now discarded a second heart.

At this point, these cards remained:

♠ —
♥ J
♦ AJ8
♣ 9

♠ —
♥ —
♦ Q109
♣ K8

♠ —
♥ Q7
♦ —
♣ Q75

♠ 4
♥ —
♦ 3
♣ AJ10

W N
S E

When Simon cashed the last spade, West had to part with a club and the now redundant ♦8 went from dummy. East could happily part with a club, and then threw a heart when a diamond went to the jack. However, when Simon played the ♦A from dummy, East became the second victim of the non-simultaneous double squeeze. He had to throw a club and declarer played a club to the ace, felling the outstanding honours and promoting the ♣J to glory.

This had been the complete deal:

♠ KQ10
♥ J82
♦ AJ8652
♣ 9

♠ J
♥ 1093
♦ Q10974
♣ K862

♠ 965
♥ Q7654
♦ —
♣ Q7543

♠ A87432
♥ AK
♦ K3
♣ AJ10

W N
S E

Misdefend This Hand With Me In Wuhan

Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ AJ9
♥ Q5
♦ K5
♣ J98652

When the player on my left opens 1♠ I have nothing to say and West responds 1NT. When East rebids 3♠ West advances to 4♠ leaving us with this short sequence:

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

I can hope to have two trump tricks, but for the moment it is unclear where the other two we require will come from. Either red suit could be the right lead, but with trump control I opt for the ♣6 and dummy is revealed:

♠ 32
♥ J94
♦ AJ109862
♣ 10

N
W E
S

♠ AJ9
♥ Q5
♦ K5
♣ J98652

Partner plays the queen and declarer wins with the ace and plays back the three, ruffing with dummy's ♠2 as partner contributes the four and continues with the ♠3 for the five, king and my ace. I must make some attempt to construct declarer's hand. If he has seven spades, then he might be something along the lines of 7-2-2-2, 7-2-1-3 or 7-3-1-2. If declarer is missing the ♥A then exiting with a club must be safe. Declarer ruffs, cashes the queen of spades, partner pitching the ♥2 and plays a spade to my jack, partner parting with the ♥3. These cards remain:

♠ —
♥ J94
♦ AJ109
♣ —

N
W E
S

♠ —
♥ Q5
♦ K5
♣ J65

My partner's discards suggest he started with five hearts and as far as I can see if declarer has three hearts including the king he cannot hope for more than nine tricks, so I exit with a club and declarer ruffs and plays another spade retaining three hearts and the ♦AJ in dummy. When partner parts with the ♥6 declarer produces the ♥A and follows it with another heart, establishing a heart as a tenth trick.

The full deal:

Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ 5
♥ K7632
♦ Q43
♣ KQ74

♠ 32
♥ J94
♦ AJ109862
♣ 10

N
W E
S

♠ KQ108764
♥ A108
♦ 7
♣ A3

♠ AJ9
♥ Q5
♦ K5
♣ J98652

Post mortem

Having ruffed a club, declarer should have taken a heart finesse, subsequently repeating the finesse when next in dummy. Partner might have tried coming down to ♥K76 ♦Q4 as then declarer would need to play a low heart. If I play low partner wins with the king and declarer will need to divine the heart position. Given that I did not lead a diamond honour partner is marked with at least one of them and is known to have started with the ♣KQ and the ♥K, so declarer should not go wrong.

I could have defeated the contract by switching to a diamond when in with the ♠A or ♠J. In retrospect that should not have been a difficult play to find.

Misdefend This Hand With Me In Wuhan

At the start of the fourth session of a long match, I pick up a promising collection:

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AK2
♥ 83
♦ AQJ1086
♣ K2

I start with 1♣, which in our system promises a strong hand. When West overcalls 4♠ my partner doubles and I decide to pass, leaving us with this brief exchange:

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♣*
4♠	Double	All Pass	

My partner leads the ♦9 and dummy has bits and pieces:

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W S </div>	♠ 8 ♥ AQ74 ♦ K742 ♣ Q874
	♠ AK2 ♥ 83 ♦ AQJ1086 ♣ K2

When declarer plays dummy's two I follow with the six and declarer plays the five. Partner continues with the missing diamond and declarer again plays low from dummy, ruffs my ten and plays the ♠Q. I win with the ace as partner follows with the five. If partner has the ♣A we can do some serious damage, but laying down the ♣K would be speculative. Trusting that partner has a second spade I exit with the ♦8. Declarer pitches the ♣9 and when partner cannot produce a trump dummy's king wins and declarer ruffs a diamond high and plays the ♠J. I can win that, but it proves to be the last trick for the defence, as declarer ruffs my diamond exit and eventually takes the heart finesse to arrive at ten tricks.

This was the layout:

Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 5		♠ 8
♥ KJ9652		♥ AQ74
♦ 93		♦ K742
♣ J653		♣ Q874
♠ QJ1097643	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W S </div>	♠ 8
♥ 10		♥ AQ74
♦ 5		♦ K742
♣ A109		♣ Q874
		♠ AK2
		♥ 83
		♦ AQJ1086
		♣ K2

Post mortem

There was no need to take the risk that partner held only one trump. Exiting with a heart at trick four is one way to ensure the demise of the contract. Cashing the ♠A is also possible. If North does not signal for clubs, a heart switch is then the winning defence.

And it's Live!

As the quarter-finals unfold, this deal might just play a part in the final outcomes.

Here is the action from the match that was featured on VuGraph:

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ10765		♠ 942
♥ KJ97654		♥ –
♦ –		♦ AKQ974
♣ –		♣ J853
♠ KJ83	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> N E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> W S </div>	♠ –
♥ 82		♥ AQ103
♦ 10832		♦ J65
♣ Q74		♣ AK10962

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	1♥	3♦	4♣*
Pass	5♦*	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

If 4♣ agreed hearts 5♦ was presumably exclusion Blackwood.

I opined that you would probably find this sequence on page 42 of Meckwell's system notes on hands that are 6-7-0-0.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Forrester	Levin	Robson
-	1♠	2♦	3♣
3♦	3♥	Pass	4♦*
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

I don't know what 4♦ meant, but I think N/S did well to flatten the deal, don't you (my cynical colleagues point out that if partner can jump to 6♥ missing the ♥AQ10 and the ♣AK then he must have a diamond void, which is a fair point).

With USA1 ahead 179-160 it kept England in the match.

Third Hand Low

Since the days of Whist, everyone has known about the principle of playing 'third hand high' for a defender, the aim being to force out an opposing high card. However, circumstances alter cases, as on this deal from Round 14 of the Transnational Teams:

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ 7									
	♥ QJ72									
	♦ AQ54									
	♣ KJ109									
♠ AJ42	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	N			E	W	S			♠ KQ1093
N			E							
W	S									
♥ K108653		♥ A9								
♦ J		♦ 10976								
♣ 82		♣ Q7								
	♠ 865									
	♥ 4									
	♦ K832									
	♣ A6543									

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Chen	Adamson	Zeng	Kane
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♦
4♠	All Pass		

South led the ♥4 and when declarer played dummy's three, North realised that putting in the jack would allow declarer to win, draw trumps ending in dummy and play hearts from the top, collecting North's queen. His solution was to contribute the two, allowing declarer to win with the nine. Declarer cashed two spades and then tried the ♥A, but South could ruff and the defenders then cashed their minor suit winners for one down.

In the replay the same contract was reached, but after an identical opening lead North put in the ♥Q and declarer had an easy route to ten tricks.

Triumph and Disaster

Bridge is a game of mistakes, but some are more expensive than others.

This deal from the first session of the final was testing, especially in the d'Orsi Trophy match between England and Denmark:

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

	♠ A10853									
	♥ -									
	♦ KQ8									
	♣ AKJ87									
♠ J	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; height: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	N			E	W	S			♠ KQ742
N			E							
W	S									
♥ 10742		♥ KJ9853								
♦ 1094		♦ J								
♣ 96542		♣ 3								
	♠ 96									
	♥ AQ6									
	♦ A76532									
	♣ Q10									

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nielsen	Pryor	Boesgaard	Muller
-	1♠	2♥	3NT
4♥	6♣	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

♠ A 10853			
♥ -			
♦ KQ8			
♣ AKJ87			
♠ J			♠ KQ742
♥ 10742			♥ KJ9853
♦ 1094			♦ J
♣ 96542			♣ 3
			♠ 96
			♥ AQ6
			♦ A76532
			♣ Q10

This might not be an auction to be preserved for history, East's double of 6♠ affording N/S a chance to at least get a plus score, 1470.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Holland	Schou	Mould	Hansen
-	1♣*	2♦*	2♠*
Pass	4♥*	Pass	5♣*
Pass	6♣	Pass	6♦
Pass	7♦	All Pass	
1♣	11+, only 2♣ if 4432 w. 11-14		
2♦	Majors		

It looks as if 2♠ showed diamonds, with 4♥ perhaps being Voidwood for diamonds.

West led the ♠J and with the aid of the bidding this looks an easy hand to play – declarer wins in dummy, cashes the ♦K followed by a diamond to the ♦A, unblocks the ♣Q10 and then draws the outstanding trump. However, declarer elected to cash dummy's top trumps – not fatal, as he can now unblock the clubs, ruff a heart, throw two losers on top clubs, ruff a club, draw the outstanding trump and claim. When declarer preferred to draw the last trump immediately, he was in trouble. He took two more diamonds, then cashed the ♣10 and overtook the ♣Q, playing three more rounds of the suit, ruffing the last in hand. On this trick East was down to ♠K ♥KJ while declarer held ♠9 ♥A ♦7. When East threw the ♠K declarer had his thirteenth trick, +2140 and 12 IMPs – a 29 IMP turnover.

Technical issues thwarted plans for 'live' coverage of the finals, but we will be back next year!

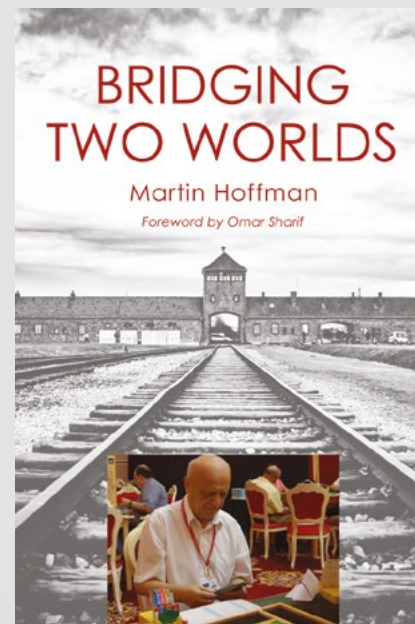
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THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER

BRIDGING TWO WORLDS

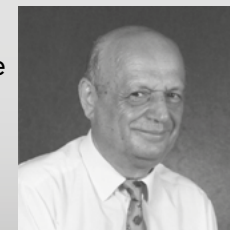
MARTIN HOFFMAN

FOREWORD BY OMAR SHARIF



Czech-born bridge player and writer, Martin Hoffman, recounts the horrors of the WW2 death camps and how he managed to survive Auschwitz. He shares his struggles to establish a normal life after relocation to post-war England, and the important part the game of bridge played in his recovery.

Martin Hoffman (1929-2018) was a bridge player and author of eight books on the game. The winner of many top events in the UK, he was regarded at his peak as the best duplicate pairs player in Europe.



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Declarer's Deadly Defence

Continuing our series on Mollo impersonations

Ron Tacchi

Hugh Darwen's book on Double Dummy problems houses many treasures, all of which can be found online.

Colin the Corgi, having recently acquired a copy, thought it would be a jolly jape to palm one of the deals into the Thursday night duplicate. He opened the book at random and came across Problem 155 which had been composed by Ulrich Auhagen in 1967.

Dealer South.

<p>♠ 2 ♥ K8 ♦ KJ872 ♣ 86532</p>	<p>♠ KJ9 ♥ Q532 ♦ A6 ♣ KJ107</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 10px auto; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	<p>♠ 43 ♥ J976 ♦ Q109 ♣ AQ94</p>
	<p>♠ AQ108765 ♥ A104 ♦ 543 ♣ —</p>	

South to make six spades. West leads a low club.

The Secretary Bird sitting South opened the proceedings with a bid of Four Spades and the Walrus, fully occupying the North seat, counted his points and immediately bid six. Timothy the Toucan, West, selected a small club as he knew that it was bad practice to lead away from one of his kings. He didn't know why, but experience had taught him that he received less abuse if he just gracefully followed some of the rules he was given. SB called for the club ten as he knew that TT would not underlead an ace, The Hog, who was kibitzing between the SB and the Rueful Rabbit, Timothy's partner, had harangued the poor Toucan the previous evening on the iniquities of leading away from an ace. The Rabbit was so pleased that his friend and partner seemed to have found the perfect

lead, why it might even be from a doubleton, that he began to get very excited and as he prepared to pluck the club queen from his hand he inadvertently dropped his club suit onto the table.

At first all seemed OK as they had fluttered face down, but as he picked them up at the bottom of the pile the four appeared face up. The SB's face lit up "Exposed card." he exclaimed joyfully and demanded that it should be played. The Rabbit looking crestfallen resignedly followed the command of the SB. As the SB discarded a diamond from hand the Hog burst into loud laughter and said "Brilliant, brilliant, why that is the first time I have seen a declarer make two mistakes before he has played from his hand, in fact rarely has a declarer defended so well."

The SB continued by trying a small heart towards the queen but the Toucan was at the top of his game and having seen the Rabbit play a small club at trick one he knew that his partner must have the ace of hearts and he also knew that honours were made to capture honours, not little cards, he played small and was somewhat surprised when the queen held and then even more subdued when his king was felled by the SB's ace of hearts, but no matter what the SB did he was still going to have to lose a heart and a diamond.

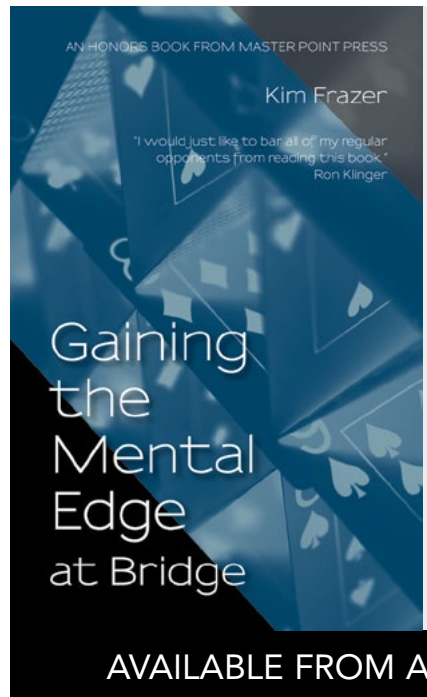
He turned to the Hog and said "So you think I could have made it?" "Well if you had let the Rabbit play the card he wanted to then yes." The Hog then explained that if the Rabbit had played the queen the declarer ruffs and plays a small heart towards the queen, if West takes his king then South will eventually make three hearts by finessing against East's jack and set up a club by way of a ruffing finesse against East and thus dispose of the two diamonds in his hand. If West does not take his heart king then declarer again sets up a club via a ruffing finesse and discards his remaining heart from hand and then loses a diamond and ruffs the last one in dummy.

"So" the SB said, "if East plays low I always fail", "Double" said the Hog in a bellow that was even loud for him. "You mean, you think can always make it" said the SB. "Yes, if West leads a club" replied the Hog. "Redouble" retorted the SB. Whereupon HH took the South seat whilst

SB took up residence in the East chair.

The Toucan again lead a club and the Hog promptly played a low club from dummy and the SB inserted his nine, the Hog ruffed high and a small heart softly descended on to the green baize. The Toucan, on top of his game, remembered what happened the previous time and rose toucanfully with his king and exited with a trump. Winning in dummy the Hog finessed the heart ten, cashed the ace and crossed to dummy to lead a club. The SB covered and the Hog ruffed high, crossed back to dummy and led another club, again the SB was forced to cover and again the hog ruffed high. He now crossed to dummy's last trump and cashed the good club and heart queen to discard his two losing diamonds. "I make that...." And the rest of the sentence was lost whilst the SB hissed his feelings about the Hog.

Of course had Timothy had ducked the heart then the Hog would have had plenty of time to set up a club and discard his losing heart in his hand and still be able to ruff his third diamond in dummy and make his contract by just losing a diamond.



AN HONORS BOOK FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

Kim Frazer

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Ron Klingler

Gaining the Mental Edge at Bridge

Kim Frazer

In this book, Kim Frazer—an Olympian, winner of gold medals at three consecutive Commonwealth Games and an Australian international bridge player—has adapted the mental techniques that brought her success in target shooting and explains in easily-understood terms how to use these at the bridge table.

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the revival of its
BRIDGE CONGRESS
and return to its first home
THE GRAND HOTEL MALAHIDE

For Information Contact us at:- malahidebridgecongress@mrbc.ie

'Malahide regional bridge club has announced the revival of Malahide bridge congress. First organised in 1965 the congress was subsequently discontinued. The renewal of the festival will take place at the home of the original event, the Grand hotel over the weekend of March 6th to 8th, 2020.'

Irish Times
Seamus Dowling Bridge Notes March 9th.

The Programme will have Gala Open Pairs, Mixed Pairs and Novice Pairs on its Opening night of Friday March 6th. Saturday is a Pairs day of 2 sessional Congress, Intermediate A and B categories and these categories will be repeated for 2 sessional Teams on Sunday 8th finishing around 5.30pm. These competitions are all pre entry and alongside them will be one sessional Open Pairs with No pre entry required.

The Grand Hotel Malahide is an excellent Congress venue with superb facilities and it has much more to offer with its gorgeous view of Dublin bay and being situated in the historic and homely village of Malahide.

Visit <http://www.visitmalahide.ie/> to know more about Malahide and all it has to offer from Medieval Castle to beaches with coastal walks and it is a 10-minute drive from Dublin Airport.

You might consider adding Malahide Bridge Congress to your diary for 2020!

For more information:

Malahide Regional Bridge Club email: malahidebridgecongress@mrbc.ie

Brochure will be found on <http://malahideregionalbridgeclub.com/>

...when ready....

The Grand Hotel Malahide email: info@the.grand.ie

Quote Bridge Congress Phone: +353 1 845 0000

<https://www.thegrand.ie/contact-us/>

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will be run under the auspices of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI)

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The team is not new to this game. They are also behind the Funbridge app with a community of 400,000 players worldwide

Corrections to your bidding

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The app tells you which card you should play to take as many tricks as possible on the deal.

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Ask the computer for advice and it will tell you what it would play if it were in your shoes.

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GOTO Bridge 19 shows you the cards held by the other players sitting at the table.

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Navigate through the deal as you want and replay tricks.

GOTO Bridge is seen as the reference among bridge software in France. Thanks to its numerous game modes and features, it allows players of all ages and levels to have endless fun.

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thanks to GOTO Bridge numerous assets and features.

- Unlimited deals.
- Immediate comparison on all deals played.
- Tips and help given by the computer.
- Analysis of your bidding and card play at the end of each deal.
- Par score and contracts most often played on the deal.
- Bidding and card play lessons with exercises.
- Practise bidding and card play in the sequence and contract of your choice.



- Assessment of your bidding and card play on thousands of deals and for 10 game levels.
- Undo: you can cancel your last action if you made a mistake.
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- The ideal game mode for a quick game.

“Unlimited deals” game mode

- This game mode allows you to play an unlimited number of deals, one after the other.

At the end of the deal, you are compared to the software which has played the same deal as you in the same conditions.

You have access to its auction and card play to be able to analyse your deals in minute detail.

- Lessons and exercises
- Enrich your knowledge thanks to GOTO Bridge lessons.

“Lessons and exercises” game mode

GOTO Bridge lessons and exercises are an excellent source of learning and progress.

In this game mode, you will take lessons on:

- Bidding: 19 topics (major two-suiters after 1NT, natural responses after an overcall, etc. with corrected exercises).
- Card play: 17 topics (defence in a trump contract, squeeze*, etc.

with corrected exercises).

*This lesson is based on the book entitled “Le Squeeze au bridge” (“The squeeze in bridge”) by Romanet, available at lebridgeur.com.

- Practice
- Improve your skills in different game areas.

“Practice” game mode

This game mode allows you to practice the different areas of the game. It includes the following features:

- The “correction” mode behind the success of the previous versions of GOTO Bridge. Its principle is simple. During card play, GOTO Bridge will show you the best card to play to take the highest number of tricks on the deal. During the bidding phase, it will correct your bidding cards and will explain your mistakes to you. At the end of the deal, you will have the possibility to replay your deal from the moment when you made a mistake.

- Easy deals to take up bridge or have fun: excellent practice without any constraints.
- Card play practice: GOTO Bridge makes bids on your behalf in the type of contract that you want to play.
- Bidding practice in the auction of your choice.
- Random deals requiring special attention as when playing in a club.
- Save your deals while playing tournaments and replay them.

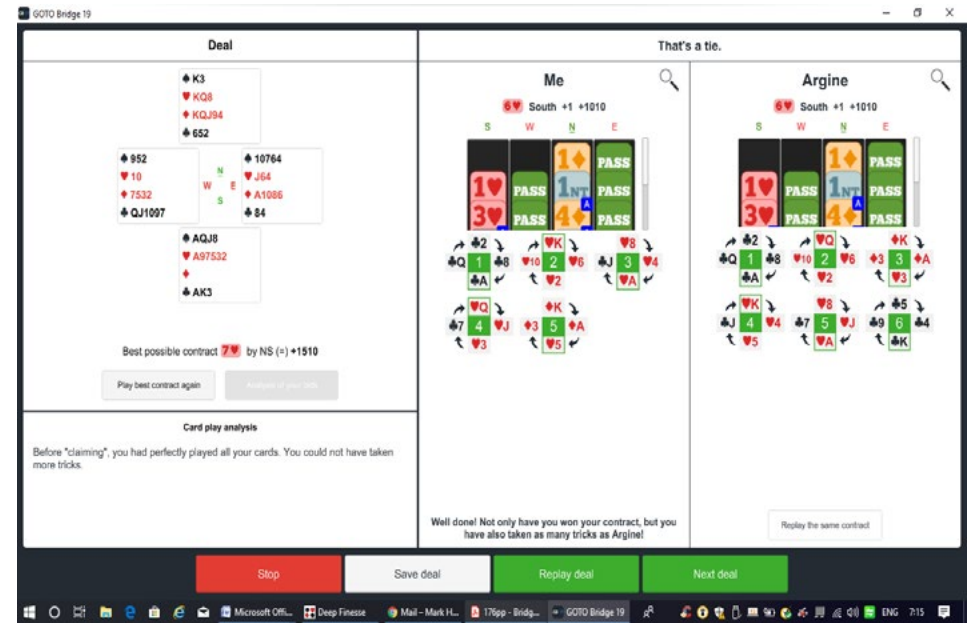
Tournaments

- Compare yourself to other players and challenge champions.

“Tournaments” game mode

This game mode allows you to compare yourself to other players and to be ranked among the best ones: this is the competition part of GOTO Bridge.

- Assessment of the way you play on thousands of deals and for 10 game levels
- Statistics per game area (bidding, card play, attack or defence)



- Head-to-head comparison with the best international and Funbridge players
- Card play tournaments: you are compared (card play only) to other players who have played the same contract
- Challenge “Argine”: pit yourself against the latest version of GOTO Bridge game engine (i.e. the artificial intelligence playing with you) in a 5-deal tournament in IMP scoring. Win 10 tournaments in a row and get a 1-year subscription to the online bridge game Funbridge!

Set your own conventions

Select your bidding system in “Settings” among the SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card), the English ACOL system, the French 5-card major system, the Polish system, the Nordic system, the NBB Standard system and the 2/1 system. A free profile also allows you to set your own conventions.

Bidding systems and conventions

GOTO Bridge allows you to play several bidding systems:

- SAYC system.

- English ACOL system.
- French 5-card major system.
- Polish system.
- Nordic system.
- NBB Standard system.
- 2/1 system.
- Forum D system.

Several profiles are available for each system: beginner, intermediate, competition and strong 2.

You also have the possibility to create a free profile with your own conventions to play GOTO Bridge as you wish.

But since a picture is worth a thousand words, the opposite screen shot should speak for itself.

Deal manager

Sort, prepare, view and print your deals thanks to the brand-new deal manager.

“Deal manager” game mode

Useful resource for your bridge lessons. Thanks to this tool, you can:

- Prepare your deals as you want: set distribution, vulnerability, dealer, bidding sequence and lead.
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New « Goulash » game mode

Challenge GOTO Bridge 19 artificial intelligence “Argine” on deals with freak distributions (also called “Goulash deals”)!

Goulash mode

It consists of a challenge against Argine on 8 deals.

What makes it special is that some deals are “Goulash”, i.e. with freak distributions.

You play the first deal as usual:

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- If the contract is a part-score or the deal is passed out, the pair who has bid the contract gets the score that goes with it.

If the contract is a part-score, on the next deal, each player sorts his 13 cards by suits. All four hands are stacked back in the deck which is cut once. Cards are then dealt in groups of 5-3-5 for instance instead of one at a time as usual. It allows to create deals where the suits are more unevenly distributed between the players. On this deal, you follow the same rules as above and so on.

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Misplay These Hands With Me

False Impression

Playing in an invitational event in Denmark where our opponents are of the highest class, I pick up this hand:

- ♠ AJ3
- ♥ A987
- ♦ QJ863
- ♣ 2

With both sides vulnerable I deal and open 1♦ and partner responds 2♣, which we play as forcing to game. In this situation a reverse does not promise extra values so I am happy to bid 2♥ but when partner rebids 3♣ all I can do is sign off in 3NT, which leaves us with this straightforward auction:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the eight of spades and I see that partner has nothing to spare:

- ♠ K64
 - ♥ KJ
 - ♦ 5
 - ♣ KQ98754
-
- ♠ AJ3
 - ♥ A987
 - ♦ QJ863
 - ♣ 2

East plays the queen and I win with the ace and must consider the best way to develop the clubs.

One possibility is to put in the nine if West follows with the three or

six. This will give me five tricks almost all the time (84.78%) but I must consider what will happen if East wins with the jack or ten and switches to a diamond. Then there will be a risk that I will lose three diamonds along with two clubs.

Eventually I decide to play a club to the king. If that holds, I can duck the next round hoping to find a doubleton ace. However, although the king wins East complicates matters by following with the jack.

If that is a true card West has the ♣A106 left, but that won't be a problem if I can avoid the loss of three diamonds. Just in case East started with the ♣J10 alone, I continue with the queen of clubs. However, East follows with the six and West wins with the ace and returns the two of diamonds. East plays the ten and I win with the jack, cross to the king of spades and play a club. East wins with the ten and returns a diamond and West is kind enough to spare me any agonising by revealing that he has the ♦AK9.

With murder in my heart I congratulate East on her play of the jack of clubs.

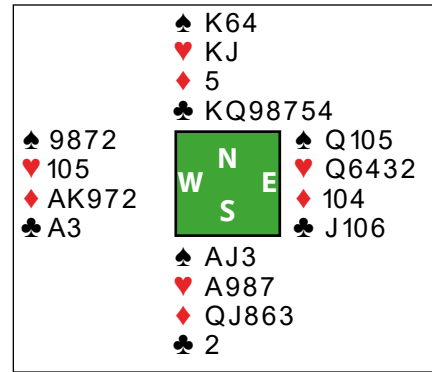
This was the full deal:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ 9872 ♥ 105 ♦ AK972 ♣ A3 	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ K64 ♥ KJ ♦ 5 ♣ KQ98754 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ Q105 ♥ Q6432 ♦ 104 ♣ J106
	N											
W		E										
	S											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠ AJ3 ♥ A987 ♦ QJ863 ♣ 2 												

Post mortem

East's play of the jack of clubs is easily overlooked. It is of a type known as a mandatory false card, as playing the six would leave declarer with no alternative to continuing with a low club. Aside from the restricted choice principle that with ♣J10 doubleton East would play the ten half the time, in this company declarer should have allowed for the possibility that East would always play the jack from ♣J106 and played a low club at trick three.

Observe that if declarer had put in the nine of clubs at trick two East wins and must switch to the four of diamonds rather than the ten.



Born Loser

Playing in the Blue Ribbon Pairs I pick up:

♠ 86
♥ AK10742
♦ 2
♣ A1094

With E/W vulnerable East deals and opens 1♠. I overcall 2♥ and when West has nothing to say my partner bids 2♠ which we play as promising a good hand for hearts, but with only three card support. East comes again with 3♠ but I am not going to stop short of game. I consider bidding 4♣ along the way, but finally decide on 4♥, which closes proceedings, leaving us with this auction:

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

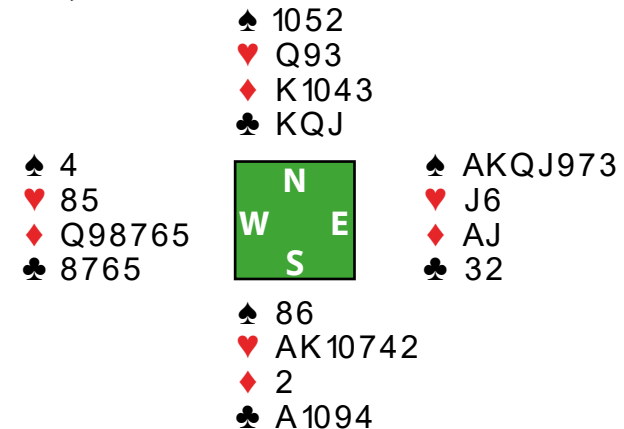
West leads the four of spades and dummy is quite suitable:

♠ 1052
♥ Q93
♦ K1043
♣ KQJ

♠ 86
♥ AK10742
♦ 2
♣ A1094

East takes the first trick with the queen of spades and continues with the ace, on which West pitches the six of diamonds, which marks East with seven spades and presumably the ace of diamonds. When East plays a third spade I ruff with the ace of hearts, cash the king and play a heart to dummy's nine. Much to my annoyance, East wins with the jack and cashes the ace of diamonds leaving me one down.

This was the layout:



Post mortem

Declarer might have reflected on the fact that with a singleton heart along with the ♠AKQJ973 and the ♦A East would almost certainly have bid 4♠ at some point. However, there was no need to guess how to tackle the trump suit. All declarer has to do is discard the losing diamond at trick three. Then dummy can take care of a fourth round of spades.

East could have forced declarer to make a decision about the trump suit by cashing the ace of diamonds before playing a third spade. East's failure to bid 4♠ strongly suggests the 7-2-2-2 pattern, so declarer should not go wrong.



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Deals that Caught My Eye in Wuhan

David Bird looks at key matches in the World Championships

Deals that Caught my Eye in Wuhan

David Bird wrote a superb series of articles about key matches in the World Championships. He has extracted the best moments for ANBM readers.

USA1 – China, Venice Cup RR 1

There are many wonderful bridge championships around the world, but who can doubt that the greatest of them all is now underway in Wuhan? Marc Smith and I took our seats to watch two of the world’s finest women’s teams face each other. As always, I will be concentrating on the big swings that arose. These are the deals where most can be learnt, also usually the ones with the best entertainment value.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ K854 ♥ K8 ♦ Q65 ♣ 10753	♠ 3 ♥ A1063 ♦ 10872 ♣ AQJ8		♠ J9762 ♥ QJ752 ♦ 3 ♣ K9
	♠ AQ10 ♥ 94 ♦ AKJ94 ♣ 642		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Sanborn	Zuo	Levitina	Nan Wang
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Nan Wang opened with a 13-15 point 1NT and ended in 3NT, Kerri Sanborn leading the ♠4. Declarer won East’s jack of spades with the queen and now needed to develop extra tricks from the minor suits. With an easy entry to dummy, she might have crossed for a finesse of the jack of diamonds. This would be an avoidance play to keep East, who could play spades effectively, off lead.

With no safe entry to dummy, Wang decided to play diamonds from the top. West won the third round (East discarding the ♥5 and ♥2) and switched to the ♥8. Declarer rose with the heart ace and played the ace and queen of clubs. After a spade to her ace, declarer settled for the nine top tricks, not risking a finesse of the ♣8.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Shen	Stansby	Wen Fei Wang	Shi
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Double	3NT
All Pass			

JoAnna Stansby decided to investigate some game other than 3NT. This might well have been a good idea if competing in a *Bridge World* bidding challenge. It did not work out so well here. Wen Fei Wang was able to double 3♥ and her partner then led the king of hearts against 3NT. Sylvia Shi won with dummy’s ace and led the ♦10 to her ace.

King and another diamond put West on lead and she continued with her last heart, after a ♥5 discard from East. Wang won with the heart jack and switched to a spade. The queen of spades lost to the king and the next trick mirrored this action in clubs. That was one down and 9 IMPs to China.

No IMPs were exchanged on my next deal, but the bidding was worthy of note:

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AK1094 ♥ Q86 ♦ 83 ♣ 942	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 865 ♥ AJ9742 ♦ 64 ♣ K5
♠ QJ73 ♥ K53 ♦ KQ9 ♣ Q87		
	♠ 2 ♥ 10 ♦ AJ10752 ♣ AJ1063	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sanborn</i>	<i>Zuo</i>	<i>Levitina</i>	<i>Nan Wang</i>
-	-	2♥	3♦
3♥	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

Even at favourable vulnerability, it would have been wild to overcall 4NT on the South cards. The defensive values outweigh the playing strength of the hand. Wang bid 3♦ instead. West's 3♥ was not invitational and North was just about worth her 3♠ bid. How should South interpret partner's return to 4♦ over 4♣?

I don't see why it should be forcing. North might well have introduced spades, just in case there was a fit there (or South held a strong hand). Wang not only read 4♦ as forcing, she looked for a slam with a control-bid in hearts!

Sanborn was so impressed with this dazzling display of strength that she omitted to double 5♦. Surely she should have doubled. She was looking at two trump tricks and had honor cards in every side suit, with her partner's weak 2♥ to come. The fortunate lie of the club suit allowed declarer to escape for two down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Stansby</i>	<i>Wen Fei Wang</i>	<i>Shi</i>
-	-	2♦*	4NT
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

There was more cause to bid 4NT when East's multi had not revealed her major suit. Qi Shen did not hold a clear-cut double on this auction. Wang led the ace of hearts to put the club game two down and no IMPs were exchanged.

On Board 9, for reasons that I make clear later, we will look only at the action from the Closed Room:

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 10954 ♥ A10832 ♦ AK ♣ 86	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q763 ♥ KJ7 ♦ Q1062 ♣ K3
		♠ 82 ♥ 64 ♦ J4 ♣ AQJ7542
		♠ AKJ ♥ Q95 ♦ 98753 ♣ 109

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Stansby</i>	<i>Wen Fei Wang</i>	<i>Shi</i>
-	1♦	3♣	3♦
3NT	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

Shen bid a bold 3NT and South doubled, despite having no club stopper. Shen won the diamond lead, finessed the queen of clubs successfully and led a spade, South winning with the king. Diamonds were cleared and a second round of clubs produced the glorious sight (Americans would

choose a different adjective) of the club king from North. That was +950 to the China account.

What happened at the other table, you may wonder. Ah well, that causes me a slight problem. In a bulletin report for the World Junior championships recently, I expressed my dislike of low part-scores. I offered a reward of \$100 to any reader who ever found me reporting contracts of either 1NT or 2♦. I must therefore say merely that East did not overcall at the other table and North stopped in some part-score, going one down.

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ A87 ♥ – ♦ KQJ72 ♣ AQJ32		♠ Q952 ♥ Q1082 ♦ A103 ♣ K5	♠ K1043 ♥ 5 ♦ 98654 ♣ 864
	♠ J6 ♥ AKJ97643 ♦ – ♣ 1097		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sanborn</i>	<i>Zuo</i>	<i>Levitina</i>	<i>Nan Wang</i>
–	–	Pass	4♥
Double	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♥	All Pass	

West had an awkward decision whether to double or to bid 4NT. What action would you have taken? Marc Smith, my co-commentator, favoured 4NT. Probably that's right, but it's a close decision.

The heart game was cold and Ira Levitina did well to remove the double. The text-books claim 'A double of 4♥ should be prepared for spades.' It's easy to say that, but you also have to double on other very strong hands.

Four Spades on a 4-3 fit would not have played well, but Xiaoxue Zuo

cannot be blamed for bidding 5♥, which had three top losers. Indeed, why should anyone wish to blame her when the king of diamonds was led and one of the spade losers went away. It was +650 for China.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Shen</i>	<i>Stansby</i>	<i>Wen Fei Wang</i>	<i>Shi</i>
–	–	Pass	4♥
Double	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Shen's second double looks an obvious move to me. As does her choice of lead, the king of diamonds. With dummy holding the diamond ace opposite declarer's void, Sanborn's second decision of the match not to double at the five-level brought her a reward of 5 IMPs.

There has been precious little cardplay content in this report. Sorry about that, but I can't think that any reasonable reader will blame the poor writer for the boards that were dealt.

My last deal is... let me see.. ah, it's another bidding board.

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ J2 ♥ QJ965 ♦ A92 ♣ 986		♠ AK109653 ♥ 7 ♦ Q643 ♣ 7	♠ Q74 ♥ 1043 ♦ K7 ♣ AKQJ4
	♠ 8 ♥ AK82 ♦ J1085 ♣ 10532		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Sanborn	Zuo	Levitina	Nan Wang
-	-	1NT	Pass
2♦	3♠	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

1NT showed 15-17 points. Three Spades doubled cannot be beaten, since a diamond ruff will consume East's natural trump trick. Four Hearts would be only one down. So, who shall we blame for this awful minus 530?

West was somewhat light for her double, it is true. However, it was East's decision to pass the double with three-card heart support that cost a barrel of IMPs. Her splendid club suit was likely to be useful in 4♥ and might be worth little in defense against a spade contract. If West had been a bit stronger, 3♠ would have gone one down. Yes, but then 4♥ might well have been a make.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Shen	Stansby	Wen Fei Wang	Shi
-	-	1NT	Pass
2♦	3♠	All Pass	

The China East had no opportunity to display her excellent bidding judgement, because West did not re-open with a double. Does this imply that Shen showed better judgement than Sanborn at the other table? No, because the 1NT opening here was two points lighter.

The match drew to a close with a score of China 38 – USA1 8. It was a very well played session for the China team, who conceded only 8 IMPs to one of the best women's teams in the world. Well done to them!

USA1 – USA2, Bermuda Bowl RR 6

There is a mistaken general opinion that Monday mornings are dull. Not when you can watch the two top USA teams facing each other in the Bermuda Bowl! Neither had made particularly impressive starts, as it happens, but Marc Smith and I were hoping for some great action.

♠ AK109653			
♥ 7			
♦ Q643			
♣ 7			
♠ J2		♠ Q74	
♥ QJ965		♥ 1043	
♦ A92		♦ K7	
♣ 986		♣ AKQJ4	
♠ 8			
♥ AK82			
♦ J1085			
♣ 10532			

Normally the biggest firework is saved until last. Not in this match...

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ A8		
	♥ 109873		
	♦ J54		
	♣ QJ5		
♠ 532		♠ QJ64	
♥ A642		♥ QJ	
♦ A986		♦ 10732	
♣ 106		♣ 983	
	♠ K1097		
	♥ K5		
	♦ KQ		
	♣ AK742		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Moss	Rodwell	Lall	Meckstroth
-	-	Pass	1♣*
1♥	Double	2♥	Double
All Pass			

When the 1♥ bid appeared from West, the voice commentators quickly explained that it had actually been made by North. "Don't worry, the VG operator will soon correct matters with an Undo." East raised to 2♥ on a doubleton and the puzzled kibitzers waited in vain for further explanation.

Moss and Lall had been 'speeding' against the strong 1♣ and were unlucky indeed to have been caught by two of the toughest cops in the business.

Eric Rodwell led the ♥10 and must have been surprised to see that dummy's shortest suit was in trumps. Jeff Meckstroth covered dummy's ♥J with the king and was allowed to hold the trick. He returned a second trump to dummy's queen, and declarer played a low spade to South's ♠9.

After the ♣K and a club to the jack, Rodwell returned the ♥7 to declarer's ♥A. Ace and another diamond put South on lead, and he returned a spade to North's ace. Rodwell drew declarer's last trump and that was +1100. Declarer had made only two trumps and the ♦A.

Brad Moss and Justin Lall were left hoping that no unsympathetic bulletin reporter was in attendance.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Fleisher	Levin	Martel
-	-	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Chip Martel racked up an easy +600. ‘Nothing much to that one,’ he may have said, but it was 11 IMPs to USA 1.

After I presented five bidding boards in my Venice Cup report yesterday, you will be relieved to hear that we will now see a cardplay deal.

Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ 7 ♥ 10874 ♦ AKQ63 ♣ 985		♠ Q62 ♥ K932 ♦ 4 ♣ KQ1072	♠ AJ10954 ♥ AQJ ♦ 82 ♣ A4
	♠ K83 ♥ 65 ♦ J10975 ♣ J63		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Moss	Rodwell	Lall	Meckstroth
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Meckstroth led the ♥6 to partner’s ♥2 and East’s queen. Declarer has an easy make by playing the ace and jack of trumps next. He preferred to lead

the ♦8 to the ace, followed by a trump to the jack and king. When Meckstroth gave his partner a diamond ruff, it seemed that a club switch would doom the contract. Surely declarer would then lose a club and a heart?

Rodwell duly switched to the ♣K, won with the ace. Those who employ the GIB button offered by BBO were amazed to see that declarer still had a route to ten tricks. Since there was no entry left to the dummy, this could only be achieved by some rather unusual squeeze.

Slowly but surely, we began to see what might happen. If Rodwell kept the ♣Q and ♥K9, he would be thrown in with a club to give declarer two more heart tricks. If instead he discarded the ♣Q, South could not win the second round of clubs with the jack, without conceding a third-round trick to the dummy’s ♣9!

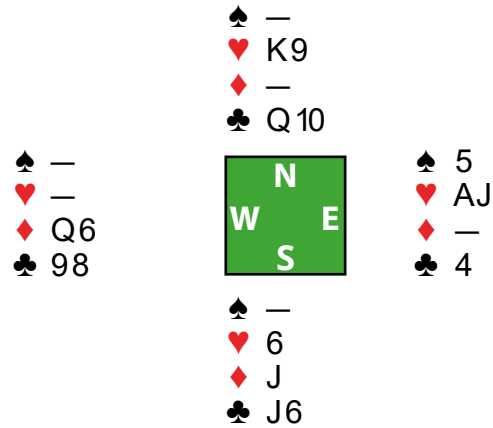
Lall did play off his trump suit, but his first discard from dummy was a card that he could not afford - the ♣8. When the remaining trumps were played, Rodwell had to find one more discard to find from ♥K9 ♣Q10.

The play record is incomplete, sadly, but the game was scored as one down. The heart situation was entirely clear after the opening lead, so declarer would surely guess right after exiting to North’s bare ♣Q. It is therefore fair to assume that Rodwell avoided the endplay by discarding the ♣Q. South would then win the club exit with the jack. His ♣6 would then be the setting trick, after declarer’s previous club discard from dummy. It was +100 for USA 1.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Fleisher	Levin	Martel
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

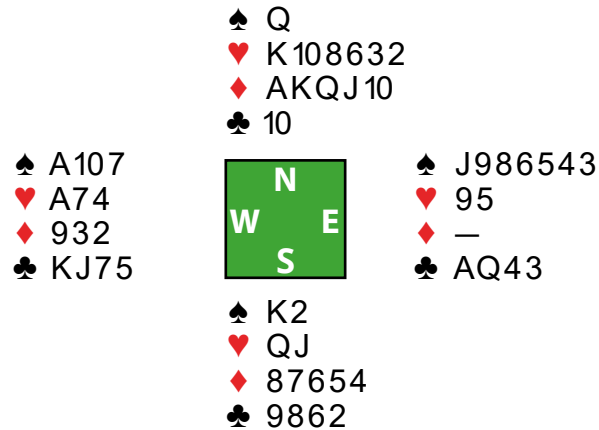
Martel led the ♦10, which seemed possibly more threatening than the heart lead at the other table. Bobby Levin won in dummy and finessed the ♥Q successfully. He continued with the ace and nine of trumps to South’s king, throwing a heart from dummy. North ruffed a second round of diamonds with the ♠Q and exited with the ♣K to the ace. Because Levin had retained dummy’s clubs, the defenders had no escape in this end position:



On the last trump the ♦6 was thrown from dummy. North discarded the ♣10 and was then endplayed to concede the last two tricks in hearts. Discarding the ♣Q would have been no good, as you see. It was another 12 IMPs to USA 1.

There was some interesting competitive bidding on the next deal:

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	1♥	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♦	Pass	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	5♦
Double	All Pass		

It would be poor tactics to upgrade the North hand to a Precision 1♣ opening, rather than make a start to showing the distribution. The East/West cards fit wonderfully well and West would have hit the jackpot if he had raised to 4♠. When he passed, Rodwell announced his two-suiter.

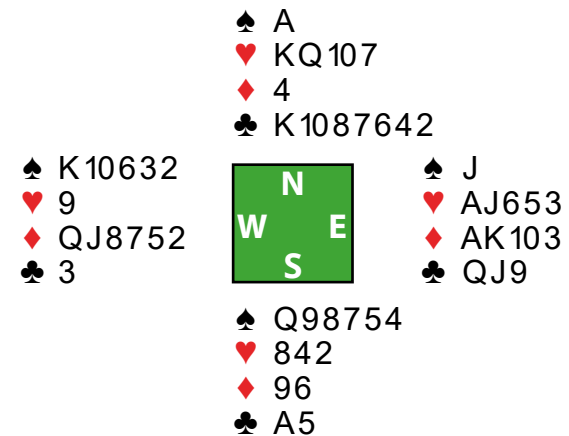
Moss bid 4♠ now, where eleven tricks are available, and we wondered if Meckstroth could find the red-against-white sacrifice. Yes, he could! It was an impressive display of trust in his partner. The cost was only 200 for one down doubled.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Martel</i>
–	1♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	5♦	All Pass	

Steve Weinstein found the raise to the spade game, but Martin Fleisher could not be shut out with his splendid two-suiter. The contract was not doubled at this table, so USA 2 collected 3 IMPs.

Board 24. Dealer West. Both Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
Pass	2♣	2♥	2♠
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

The Precision 2♣ opening worked well for the USA 1 pair. Although East/West can make a bundle of tricks in diamonds, it's difficult to see how they could compete on this auction. Rodwell lost two hearts, a diamond and a trump, picking up +110.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Martel</i>
Pass	1♣	1♥	2♥*
Pass	2♠	Double	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♦	All Pass

Over an opening of just 1♣, there was more space for East/West. Even so, it was a fine effort to reach the diamond game. Weinstein won the ♥K lead with dummy's ace. He then led the ♠J, judging to run this to North's ace. He won the trump switch with the ♦8 and ruffed three spade losers in the dummy. He could then draw the last trump and score his ♠K. It was a very pleasing +400, and 11 IMPs for USA 1.

On my next deal, Meckstroth found a play that is so often missed during tournaments on BBO, despite it being pointed out every time by an elderly, although admittedly very learned, voice commentator.

Board 29. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ A53 ♥ J987 ♦ 98732 ♣ 8	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J9842 ♥ 2 ♦ Q4 ♣ K10642	♠ KQ76 ♥ 10 ♦ J106 ♣ AJ975
♠ 10 ♥ AKQ6543 ♦ AK5 ♣ Q3			

♠ K10632 ♥ 9 ♦ QJ8752 ♣ 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A ♥ KQ107 ♦ 4 ♣ K1087642	♠ J ♥ AJ653 ♦ AK103 ♣ QJ9
♠ Q98754 ♥ 842 ♦ 96 ♣ A5			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
-	Pass	1♣	4♥
All Pass			

Moss led the ♣8 and Lall won with the ace. What will happen next if declarer follows with the ♣3? Knowing that the opening lead is a singleton, East will give his partner a club ruff. What's more, he will lead a high club (the ♣9). This is a suit preference signal suggesting a spade return. West will underlead the ♠A, East winning with the ♠Q, and a third round of clubs will promote West's ♥J into the setting trick.

That is not what happened at the table. Meckstroth followed with the ♣Q at trick one. Since his remaining card was lower than the ♣8 opening lead, it was possible in East's eyes that the lead was from a doubleton. He switched to the ♠K, killing his entry card, and the game could no longer be defeated.

So much for the 'That would never fool anyone!' merchants, who decline to make this deceptive play. It was +620 for USA 1.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Martel</i>
-	Pass	1♣	4♣*
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Martel's 4♣ showed a strong 4♥ overcall. The heart game was then played by North, making it a near impossibility for Levin to find the ♣A lead. He preferred the ♠K and no IMPs were exchanged.

USA 1 won the match by 57 IMPs to 10, moving up the table into 4th place. USA 2 accelerated in the opposite direction, ending in 20th place out of 24.

ITALY - CHINA, Bermuda Bowl RR9

You wouldn't guess it by looking at me (or so I hope), but I am a serious wine drinker. The major wine growing countries are divided into the Old World (France, Italy, Spain, etc.) and the New World (Australia, New Zealand, USA and South America).

The same division could be applied to the world's bridge nations. Roland Wald and I took our seats, looking forward to a clash between Italy (Old World) and China (New World), both of which teams were prominently installed in the leader-board top eight.

There were big contracts available early in the match. Let's see some of them.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 952 ♥ J97 ♦ AKQJ4 ♣ 84	♠ J ♥ K1063 ♦ 107 ♣ K109532	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AKQ10764 ♥ A84 ♦ 83 ♣ 6 ♠ 83 ♥ Q52 ♦ 9652 ♣ AQJ7
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
-	-	1♣*	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Zejun Zhuang opened with a Precision 1♣. Spades were agreed and two control-bids followed. RKCB discovered one key-card opposite and the small slam was reached. The New World had produced a very efficient auction.

Versace led a trump and that was thirteen tricks for a score of +1010.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
-	-	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass

My formative years at the bridge table occurred during the fabulous reign of the Italian Blue Team, famed for their accurate slam bidding. By comparison, this auction was disappointing. 2NT shows 3+ spades and a limit bid – a restrained evaluation by Antonio Sementa. Even so, we were expecting a rebid of 4♣ from Norberto Bocchi. No, he bid just 4♠. That was +510 on a diamond lead, and 11 IMPs to China.

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ AKQJ865 ♥ — ♦ Q762 ♣ 105	♠ 10732 ♥ 864 ♦ 104 ♣ J742	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 4 ♥ Q5 ♦ AKJ85 ♣ AK983 ♠ 9 ♥ AKJ109732 ♦ 93 ♣ Q6
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
1♠	Pass	2♦	4♥
5♥	Pass	7♦	All Pass

Simply magnificent! A control-bid at the five-level promises first-round control and Zhuang had heard enough to bid a grand slam. Versace led the ace of hearts and the China declarer claimed another +2140 for his side.

Was it possible that the proud descendants of the Blue Team would be outbid on two consecutive slam deals? Let's see.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
3NT	Pass	4♦	4♥
5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass

3NT showed a 'good 4M preempt', and 4♦ was a mild slam-try. Antonio Sementa showed the void heart, but Bocchi could not be sure that the trump suit was solid. That was +1460 and a further loss of 12 IMPs. China led 28-0 after just four boards.

Did the Great Dealer decide that it was time for all concerned to take a part-score breather? No, another slam deal descended from above:

♠ 10732		♠ 4									
♥ 864		♥ Q5									
♦ 104		♦ AKJ85									
♣ J742		♣ AK983									
♠ AKQJ865	<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										
♥ —		♠ 9									
♦ Q762		♥ AKJ109732									
♣ 105		♦ 93									
		♣ Q6									

to show equal-rank controls in diamonds and clubs. Gang Chen was facing a hand that had not opened with a strong 1♣. Feeling that his cards did not merit a grand-slam try, he raised to 6♠.

Alfredo Versace led his singleton diamond and all thirteen tricks were made, for +1010. Sementa and Bocchi would have a chance to redeem themselves. Would they reach the grand slam, do you think?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
–	Pass	1♠	3♥
4♣	Double	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

Wow, brilliant! Sementa was able to start with a 4♣ control-bid. When this was doubled by North, Bocchi spurned the chance to redouble (to show first-round club control), preferring to show his diamond control. His subsequent response to 4NT showed two key-cards and a useful void. This was enough for Sementa to leave just one card in the bidding-box. It was +1510 and an 11 IMP launch for the Italy plus-column.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ Q		♠ AJ8754									
♥ 2		♥ Q65									
♦ J10963		♦ A752									
♣ AQ8642		♣ —									
♠ K10632	<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										
♥ A		♠ 9									
♦ KQ4		♥ KJ1098743									
♣ K973		♦ 8									
		♣ J105									

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
–	Pass	1♠	3♥
4♥	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ AKQJ		♠ 62									
♥ Q9653		♥ KJ42									
♦ K865		♦ J72									
♣ —		♣ 10875									
♠ 10953	<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										
♥ 7		♠ 874									
♦ Q3		♥ A108									
♣ AKQ632		♦ A1094									
		♣ J94									

The normal meaning of 4♥ is to indicate a good raise to 4♠, while not guaranteeing anything specific in hearts. Zhuang bid 5♠, perhaps intending

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
-	-	-	Pass
2♣*	Double	3♣	Double
4♣	Double	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

♠ AKQJ			
♥ Q9653			
♦ K865			
♣ -			
♠ 10953		♠ 62	
♥ 7		♥ KJ42	
♦ Q3		♦ J72	
♣ AKQ632		♣ 10875	
		♠ 874	
		♥ A 108	
		♦ A 1094	
		♣ J94	

Versace and Lauria both demonstrated their familiarity with the Responsive Double. How do you fancy Lorenzo Lauria's chances in the heart game, with the trumps breaking badly?

Zhuang led the ♣7 to the jack and king, declarer ruffing. When the ♥5 was led, Zhuang did not split his honors. To keep his hopes alive, declarer needs to finesse now. (He must then abandon trumps, believing West's ♥7, and set up the diamond suit. He ruffs the next club and plays side-suit winners, losing two trumps and a diamond.)

This was all rather double-dummy. Lauria called for dummy's ace on the first round of trumps and ended two down for minus 200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	Double	Pass	1NT
2♣	Double	3♣	3♦
All Pass			

Chuan Cheng Ju was uninspired by partner's 1NT response, suggesting wasted values in clubs. Instead of bidding 2♥ at his second turn, he made a second double. The bidding subsided in 3♦, when the heart game was a very playable alternative. Their +110 turned out to be worth 8 IMPs in the plus column.

Our next board provided interesting action in both the bidding and the play:

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ -			
♥ J10742			
♦ J952			
♣ AK64			
♠ Q654		♠ AJ1098	
♥ K8		♥ 96	
♦ A874		♦ Q	
♣ J108		♣ Q9732	
		♠ K732	
		♥ AQ53	
		♦ K1063	
		♣ 5	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
Pass	Pass	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Double	3♣	4♥
4♠	5♥	All Pass	

Zhuang's 2♠ showed five spades and four or more cards in one of the minors. 2NT was an enquiry, presumably to be followed by a 3♠ game try here. Lauria entered with a take-out double of spades. When East showed his minor, Versace jumped to 4♥. What should North do when West bids 4♠?

A double would have netted 300 and this is what I was expecting. Lauria surprised all present by advancing to the five-level. He could visualize the club position and hope for something good in diamonds opposite.

If North had been the declarer in 5♥, a lead of the ♦Q would have dispatched the contract speedily. Chen (West) led the jack of clubs and Versace was in with a chance. He spent quite a while considering the matter. Ace and another trump would have spared him the possible diamond ruff. If East held the ♥K, though, a successful trump finesse might land the contract when there were two diamond tricks to be lost.

Eventually, Versace played a trump to the queen. This is surely the best line. Even if the finesse loses, there may be no diamond ruff available or the defenders may miss it. If the ♥K is with West, declarer will

in any case require the $\heartsuit Q$ to be onside. Chen won with the $\heartsuit K$ and paused for quite a while. A nett swing of 17 IMPs was at stake and only ace and another diamond would beat the contract. Should he find it, do you think? Eventually Chen reached for the $\heartsuit 8$. Lauria won and was careful to lead the $\diamond 2$ to the next trick. When East's $\diamond Q$ appeared, his bravery in the bidding had been rewarded with a fine +650.

\spadesuit —	\spadesuit —	\spadesuit —
\heartsuit J10742	\heartsuit AK10543	\heartsuit AK10543
\diamond J952	\diamond A8543	\diamond A8543
\clubsuit AK64	\clubsuit 4	\clubsuit 4
\spadesuit Q654	\spadesuit AJ1098	\spadesuit A32
\heartsuit K8	\heartsuit 96	\heartsuit QJ92
\diamond A874	\diamond Q	\diamond 96
\clubsuit J108	\clubsuit Q9732	\clubsuit 10765
\spadesuit K732	\spadesuit K732	\spadesuit J109865
\heartsuit AQ53	\heartsuit AQ53	\heartsuit 7
\diamond K1063	\diamond K1063	\diamond KQ72
\clubsuit 5	\clubsuit 5	\clubsuit AK

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

\spadesuit 7	\spadesuit 7	\spadesuit 7
\heartsuit AK10543	\heartsuit AK10543	\heartsuit AK10543
\diamond A8543	\diamond A8543	\diamond A8543
\clubsuit 4	\clubsuit 4	\clubsuit 4
\spadesuit KQ4	\spadesuit KQ4	\spadesuit A32
\heartsuit 86	\heartsuit 86	\heartsuit QJ92
\diamond J10	\diamond J10	\diamond 96
\clubsuit QJ9832	\clubsuit QJ9832	\clubsuit 10765

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
Pass	Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass
2 \clubsuit *	Double	2 \spadesuit	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	3 \heartsuit
3 \spadesuit	4 \heartsuit	4 \spadesuit	Double
All Pass			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>	<i>Versace</i>
Pass	1 \heartsuit	Pass	1 \spadesuit
2 \clubsuit	3 \diamond	Pass	4 \clubsuit
Pass	4 \heartsuit	Pass	5 \clubsuit
Pass	6 \diamond	All Pass	

It was a strange auction. Ju carried his side to 4 \heartsuit with no apparent encouragement from across the table. There was no way for N/S to match the Italians' 5 \heartsuit . Indeed, it had been a near miracle that they reached 4 \heartsuit . China collected +300 and it was 8 IMPs to Italy.

I might have waved you all goodbye at this stage. It was a splendid match, though, and I feel impelled to show you the very last board, where both N/S pairs bid well.

The diamond fit was found and a control-bid sequence carried the Italians to the fine contract of 6 \diamond . A club was led, allowing Lauria to ditch his spade singleton. He was soon writing +1010 in his card.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Ju</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Shi</i>
Pass	1 \heartsuit	Pass	1 \spadesuit
Pass	2 \diamond	Pass	2 \spadesuit *
Pass	4 \heartsuit	Pass	6 \diamond
All Pass			

Zheng Jun Shi's 2 \spadesuit was artificial and game-forcing. The meaning of 4 \heartsuit is not revealed by their convention card. It may have shown North's lengths in the red suits. Bocchi picked up an IMP by cashing the $\spadesuit A$.

It was a classy board to end a very well-played and enjoyable match. China won by 36 IMPs to 24.

NORWAY-ENGLAND, Bermuda Bowl RR12

This was my first sighting of the England team, who had been surfing the waves very ably and were well-placed in the qualifying top eight. The Norwegians were in a similar position, so Marc Smith and I expected a close-fought match as we took our seats.

There was some dubious bidding on the very first board:

Board 17. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

♠ AK ♥ Q9 ♦ AQ963 ♣ Q642		♠ 84 ♥ J1084 ♦ KJ8752 ♣ 10	♠ QJ1097652 ♥ 62 ♦ 4 ♣ 75
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	1NT	Pass	4♥*
4♠*	Pass	5♥	5♠
6♣	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	6♠	Double	All Pass

Boye Brogeland's transfer to 4♠ showed a long suit and a limited hand. David Bakhshi then bid 4♠ to show hearts and another suit. When East bid 5♥, Brogeland took the push to 5♠. This was a good view since eleven tricks were cold in hearts. What should West do now?

I can't say I understand Bakhshi's decision to bid 6♣. Surely partner will not hold an ace, when North has opened 1NT. Nor could he be sure that East would hold four hearts. A double of 5♠ would have netted 300, rather than a near certain minus score at the six-level.

Artur Malinowski corrected 6♣ to 6♥, which ran back to North. The only explanation for his 6♠ bid is that he trusted Bakhshi's bidding! Malinowski doubled, and England collected +500 instead of a minus-score in 6♥. It was an undistinguished start to the match.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
–	1♦	Pass	4♠
4NT*	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	5♠	Double	All Pass

Jeffrey Allerton judged well to sacrifice in 5♠, losing 300. It was 5 IMPs to England, where North at the other table could have picked up 9 IMPs for Norway.

The next board featured what I will call an 'obvious grand slam'. Both North-South pairs here did justice to this description. We will see in a moment how well other pairs did elsewhere.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 3 ♥ Q874 ♦ Q98 ♣ J9862		♠ AK1075 ♥ K109 ♦ AK103 ♣ 3	♠ J96 ♥ 6532 ♦ 7654 ♣ 107
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♠ Q842
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ J2
 ♣ AKQ54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	1♠	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣*	Pass	4♥*
Pass	4NT*	Pass	5♠*
Pass	5NT*	Pass	6♣*
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

♠ AK1075		♠ J96
♥ K109		♥ 6532
♦ AK103		♦ 7654
♣ 3		♣ 107
♠ 3		♠ Q842
♥ Q874		♥ AJ
♦ Q98		♦ J2
♣ J9862		♣ AKQ54

Espen Lindqvist made a natural response to the Jacoby 2NT. His subsequent RKCB 5NT asked partner to name any side-suit king. At the same time, it confirmed that all six key-cards were held. It was therefore open for South to bid a grand slam with extra playing strength. Brogeland declined to take this option. Lindqvist then bid 7♠ anyway, knowing at least that the ♣K would give him a heart discard.

Malinowski led a club, won in the dummy. Declarer then played a round of trumps, claiming 13 tricks when all followed.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
–	1♠	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♥*	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	7♠
All Pass			

Here Chris Jagger did jump to seven over the 5NT enquiry. Well bid to both pairs, although it was nothing more than we expected at this exalted level of play.

In the Bermuda Bowl, 21 pairs out of 24 bid 7♠. Three pairs stopped in 6♠, each losing 13 IMPs. In the Venice Cup, 18 pairs out of 24 bid 7♠. Six pairs stopped in 6♠, four of them losing 13 IMPs. It was a push in 6♠ in the match between Australia and China Hong Kong. The D'Orsi seniors matched the commendable Bermuda Bowl bidding, with 21 pairs bidding the grand slam. In the Mixed Teams, 19 out of 24 pairs reached the grand.

In conclusion, it was indeed an 'obvious grand slam', but not a 'completely obvious grand slam'.

I rarely report part-scores but there was some interest in this one. Indeed, it yielded the biggest swing of the match so far.

Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ Q9854		♠ 106
♥ 975		♥ A42
♦ K8		♦ QJ1073
♣ QJ5		♣ A98
♠ AK72		♠ J3
♥ Q6		♥ KJ1083
♦ 9542		♦ A6
♣ 742		♣ K1063

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
Double*	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

North-South hope to score two trumps and two clubs. To beat the contract, they will need to add a heart trick. Some would have conceded the contract immediately with a heart lead. Brogeland was over the first hurdle when he reached for the ♦A. He continued with a trump to North's king.

A heart switch from North will establish the ♥K, yes, but it will also set up a discard for one of dummy's club losers. Lindqvist cleared the second hurdle by switching to the ♣Q. Malinowski allowed this to hold and North then sprinted towards the third hurdle. Oh, no, he crashed into it! Rather than play a winning ♣5, he continued with the ♣J, declarer winning with the ace.

Brogeland, who knew exactly what was going on, contributed a blithe ♣K to this trick! He hoped that declarer would read him for a doubleton

club and lead a heart towards the queen, to set up a club discard. Malinowski was not to be deflected. He played ace, king and another spade, ruffing in his hand, and then led a club to South's 10. Brogeland was endplayed, forced to lead from the ♥K or to give a ruff-and-discard. The contract was made, for +110.

To recover from having to write up a part-score, I will have to break for a quick bite of lunch. Back in a short while...

Right, where were we? Ah yes, let's see what happened at the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
Double*	2♥	All Pass	

There was no defeating this contract, so the failure to beat 3♦ at the other table cost 6 IMPs.

Board 30. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ J3	♠ 10754	♠ A
♥ AK1094	♥ Q52	♥ J3
♦ 53	♦ J74	♦ Q10982
♣ J862	♣ K73	♣ Q10954
		♠ KQ9862
		♥ 876
		♦ AK6
		♣ A

♠ AK72	♠ Q9854	♠ 106
♥ Q6	♥ 975	♥ A42
♦ 9542	♦ K8	♦ QJ1073
♣ 742	♣ QJ5	♣ A98
		♠ J3
		♥ KJ1083
		♦ A6
		♣ K1063

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	-	2NT*	3♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

2NT showed a weak hand with both minors. If Bakhshi had passed over the 3♠ overcall, North would have had a tricky decision whether to raise to game. Many would pass on those cards. As it was, North/South took +300 off the advance sacrifice of 5♣.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
-	-	2NT*	4♠
All Pass			

The South hand seems to lie half-way between a 3♠ and a 4♠ overcall, as was demonstrated at our two tables. West began with the ace and king of hearts and happily led a third round for East to ruff. Jagger suppressed his disappointment at this start to proceedings when he noted that the ruff had been taken with the trump ace. His diamond loser went away on the ♣K and that was +420 for a gain of 3 IMPs.

Were we about to go through a 16-board match, having to accept swings of 6 and 3 IMPs as the best on offer? No. The penultimate board provided a bone with some meat on it.

Board 31. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A982
♥ AJ6
♦ K4
♣ AQ64

♠ K5
♥ 105
♦ AJ63
♣ 109873

♠ J107
♥ 987
♦ Q985
♣ KJ5



♠ Q643
♥ KQ432
♦ 1072
♣ 2

♠ K5
♥ —
♦ 63
♣ 98

♠ A982
♥ J
♦ —
♣ Q

♠ Q643
♥ K
♦ 2
♣ —

♠ J107
♥ 9
♦ Q8
♣ —



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Bakhshi's 2♦ was billed as an artificial game-force. His partner's 2♠ rebid presumably indicated 4-5 shape in the majors, since he then leapt to 4♥. Maybe 4♠ would have been a wiser choice. It is difficult to say.

It seemed that the heart game might survive, with a 3-2 trump break and a favourable spade position. However, declarer soon ran into trouble. He won the club lead with the ace, ruffed a club to his hand and led a diamond to the king and ace. North returned the ♥10, won with dummy's ace.

A low spade to the queen, or a second diamond, would work fine now. The situation became more delicate when declarer preferred to ruff another club in the long trump hand. The fortunate lie of the spade suit meant that he could have continued with ace and another spade now, before or after drawing another round of trumps. When he missed this lifeline, leading a second round of diamonds instead, he was in trouble.

Lindquist won with the ♦J and could have beaten the contract with a return of either minor. No, he offered declarer another lifeline with a trump return. Declarer won and surveyed this end position:

When the ♠3 was led, Brogeland inserted the jack. Malinowski then found the necessary great play of a low card from the dummy! (If instead he played ace and another spade, a club return from North would beat the contract.) Brogeland exited with a trump to declarer's king and the words 'lucky escape' were on everyone's lips.

Maybe there was going to be a final twist to the tale, though. Malinowski was still thinking. Eventually he led queen of spades from his hand, running the card, and went three down. He had played South for the ♠KJ7 instead of ♠J107. Such a pity after his fine duck in the spade suit.

At the other table a surprising twelve tricks were made in 4♠. It was 12 IMPs to Norway, who won a low-scoring match by 23 IMPs to 14.

USA1 – AUSTRALIA, Bermuda Bowl RR 15

USA1 had recently ascended to the summit of the leader board. Australia were on a ledge just below the top eight qualifying positions. Roland Wald and I took our seats, knowing that both teams would be fighting for every IMP. This was the first board:

Board 1. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

♠ AQ98 ♥ 97652 ♦ A84 ♣ A		♠ J72 ♥ AQ10 ♦ K1093 ♣ 754	♠ K643 ♥ K ♦ QJ2 ♣ J8632
♠ 105 ♥ J843 ♦ 765 ♣ KQ109			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gill</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣*	Double
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Sartaj Hans bid a Reverse Drury 2♣. You don't know what that means? Well, look it up on Google, like I've just had to do. Ah, it means that the opener's 2♦ and 2♥ rebids are reversed. Peter Gill liked his hand and rebid 2♠, reaching 4♥ a few moments later.

Eric Rodwell led the ♣2 to the queen and ace. When a trump was led, the king appeared from North and dummy's ace took the trick. Gill played a spade to the queen and king, ruffing the club continuation.

The key point of the deal had been reached. Declarer needs to believe North's ♥K and play on diamonds rather than leading another trump. After ace, king and another diamond, he can ruff the next club and play winners in spades and diamonds. South is then powerless.

When Gill preferred to play a second trump to the queen, there was no way home. He continued with jack and another spade, Jeff Meckstroth ruffing and cashing the ♥J. Declarer had to lose an eventual diamond trick and was one down.

I cannot describe any 1NT or 2♦ contracts, since I promised to pay \$100

to the first reader of any such write-up from me. I must therefore merely say that East at the other table stopped in some part-score, scoring +130.

Only a single IMP changed hands on the next five boards, so we will 'walk on by' until we reach this heart game:

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K9854 ♥ QJ8 ♦ J2 ♣ 853		♠ J1032 ♥ 94 ♦ AQ83 ♣ K102	♠ A6 ♥ AK10732 ♦ 4 ♣ AQ74
			♠ Q7 ♥ 65 ♦ K109765 ♣ J96

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gill</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣*	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣*
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Meckstroth's 2♣ showed 5-7 points (either any hand, or diamonds, depending on which kibitzer you believe...) and Rodwell closed shop in 4♥. Hans found an excellent lead, the jack of spades, covered by the queen, king and ace. Rodwell played his singleton diamond, East rising with the ace. Would you bet on declarer's chances after this start?

If East cashes his spade winner, the game is down. Declarer will have to lose a trump and a club. When Hans preferred to switch to the ♣2, declarer won with dummy's ♣9 and discarded his spade loser on the king of diamonds. This was a pity for East, since he had found a great opening lead.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Hung</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Edgtton</i>
–	–	–	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

♠ A6 ♥ AK10732 ♦ 4 ♣ AQ74	<table style="margin: auto; border: 2px solid green; padding: 10px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> </table>	N	W	S	E	♠ J1032 ♥ 94 ♦ AQ83 ♣ K102
N						
W						
S						
E						
♠ K9854 ♥ QJ8 ♦ J2 ♣ 853	♠ Q7 ♥ 65 ♦ K109765 ♣ J96					

Bobby Levin missed the successful spade lead, choosing an unfortunate trump. Andy Hung won West's ♥Q with the ace and led his diamond, the ace going up. Levin's ♠J switch was then covered by the three higher honours, as at the other table. Declarer had no quick entry to dummy, to ditch his spade loser, and chose to exit with a spade. West won and played a third spade, declarer ruffing in his hand. A low club to the jack won the next trick. Declarer did not risk playing the ♦K, finessing the ♥10 successfully instead. He then conceded a club trick and picked up +620 to flatten the board. It was an opportunity missed by Australia at the other table.

A huge number of IMPs were at stake on our next board, where Lady Luck was destined to play a major role.

Board 11. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

♠ 8 ♥ A97 ♦ AQ1094 ♣ A853	<table style="margin: auto; border: 2px solid green; padding: 10px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> </table>	N	W	S	E	♠ J106 ♥ Q1083 ♦ 7652 ♣ 64
N						
W						
S						
E						
♠ A97542 ♥ 6542 ♦ J ♣ QJ	♠ KQ3 ♥ KJ ♦ K83 ♣ K10972					

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gill</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Rodwell's 2NT was Puppet Stayman, looking for a 5-3 heart fit. His subsequent 3♥ showed a spade singleton. Gill led the ♠5 against 3NT, East's 10 forcing the queen. Meckstroth led the ♣10, covered by the jack and ace. He then led the ♣5, East covering with the ♣6. The play record claims that Meckstroth contributed the ♣2 to this trick! Oh, yes? He wanted to give East a chance to win with the ♣6 from ♣Q6 and return a spade?

We can safely assume that Meckstroth played the ♣7, West winning with the queen. This was a standard avoidance play to keep the danger hand (East) off lead. Gill scored his spade ace, and it was +460 for the Americans.

The stakes were higher on the other table:

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Hung</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Edgtton</i>
–	–	–	1NT
2♦*	Double	3♥	Pass
3♠	Double	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5NT*	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Steve Weinstein's 2♦ (multi defence) showed spades or hearts. North doubled and Levin raised the preemption to the three-level. The bidding might have stopped in 3NT, but North had slam ambitions. South's 4NT over 4♦ was a sign-off, but North was still hoping for a high minor-suit contract. He persisted with a pick-a-slam 5NT and South landed in 6♣.

Weinstein cashed the ace of spades and switched to a heart, drawing the queen and king. Nabil Edgtton led a low trump, winning West's ♣J with dummy's ace. When he led a second trump from dummy, East


followed with the remaining spot-card. Should declarer finesse or not?

In the absence of any bidding by East-West, Restricted Choice dictates that the ♣J is twice as likely to be a singleton as part of a doubleton ♣QJ. Many inexperienced players dispute this endlessly. The easiest way to explain it to them is that the West holdings of ♣Q, ♣J, ♣QJ are roughly equal in frequency. When an honour appears, it is therefore '2-to-1 on' that it's a singleton. Here West had indicated six spades on the bidding, so odds were even more than 2-to-1.

Edgtton correctly decided to finesse in clubs and went down in the slam. He lost 11 IMPS instead of gaining 10, entirely due to bad luck.

With four boards to play, Australia had another chance to make their first entry in the plus column:

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ AQ ♥ QJ982 ♦ KJ5 ♣ Q96		♠ J6 ♥ 10653 ♦ 9832 ♣ K32	♠ K8754 ♥ 74 ♦ 6 ♣ AJ854
	♠ 10932 ♥ AK ♦ AQ1074 ♣ 107		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gill</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Double
Pass	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West had to choose between 1♥ and 1NT at his first turn. What should he rebid when partner responds 1♠ to his 1♥ overcall? I can see he might

think that 1NT was not enough, with 15 points and a potential double diamond stopper. That said, a jump to 2NT sounds like a stronger hand than he held.

Partner cue-bid 3♦ in response, judging that he had enough for game now. Whether or not South doubles this, surely 3NT is a clear next move on the West cards? Gill passed but was able to bid 3NT at his next turn.

Meckstroth won the ♦3 lead with the ace and switched to the ♠2. Declarer won with the ace and indicated the complexity of the deal with a very long pause. He eventually led the queen of clubs, covered by the king and ace. A spade to the queen, followed by running the ♣9 is no good now, since South can return the ♠10, giving him three further tricks to cash.

Gill called for a heart instead and South won with the king, Declarer won the ♠3 return with the queen and led the ♥Q to South's ace. Meckstroth returned the ♠10 to dummy's king. Declarer had no need to play the ♣J now, luckily dropping the ♣10. He led the ♠7 to South's ♠9. Meckstroth then had to play a club or a diamond – a choice of two poisons. When he chose a diamond, Gill finessed the ♦J. He then cashed the ♦K and the ♥J, before crossing to the ♣J to score the ♠8. Well played!

The American East-West opted for a less stressful contract:


Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Hung</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Edgtton</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass

North led a diamond and you wouldn't thank me for the details of how declarer made +140. It was a much-needed 10 IMPs for Australia.

USA 1 struck back immediately on the next deal:

Board 14. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 10 ♥ K 10 ♦ K 108652 ♣ K 1065		♠ 875 ♥ QJ8 ♦ QJ9 ♣ Q974	♠ AK62 ♥ 52 ♦ A43 ♣ A832
		♠ QJ943 ♥ A97643 ♦ 7 ♣ J	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gill</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
-	-	1NT	2♣*
3NT	All Pass		

South's 2♣ showed the major suits. It's not obvious which major suit he should lead against 3NT. A spade lead (perhaps the ♠4) might give the defenders four spades and the heart ace. Meckstroth recalled the sunny afternoon, decades before, when an elderly aunt had offered him some valuable advice: 'I like to lead fourth-best of my longest and strongest, dear. You won't go far wrong if you do that.'

Nodding happily at the memory, Meckstroth reached for the ♥6. Declarer won with dummy's king, Rodwell pitching the queen. The game then went two down when the diamonds failed to divide evenly.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Hung</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Edgtton</i>
-	-	1NT	2♣*
3♠*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Weinstein's 3♠ showed a shortage. Edgtton then had to decide what to lead, armed only with the information that declarer had been happy to


bid 3NT opposite a spade singleton. He decided to lead a spade, in fact choosing the ♠4 that I suggested a few moments ago. Dummy turned out to have a third stopper in the suit and the game was made with an overtrick. That was 11 IMPs to USA 1.

The final score was a 44-10 win for USA 1. The Australians had missed a few chances and been very unlucky on a slam deal. Would they be able to overcome this disappointing match and qualify for the knock-out stages? We would know in three days time.

NORWAY-NETHERLANDS, Bermuda Bowl RR 18

Norway and the Netherlands are familiar teams to BBO followers in Europe. Marc Smith and I took our seats, expecting plenty of worthwhile action. Were we right? That will be for you to judge. Feel free to write your eventual 'Yes!' answer in capital letters.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ KJ ♥ Q83 ♦ J4 ♣ K97643		♠ AQ97 ♥ J75 ♦ 972 ♣ 852	♠ 10654 ♥ AK106 ♦ Q53 ♣ AQ
		♠ 832 ♥ 942 ♦ AK1086 ♣ J10	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Louk Verhees' response of 2NT was Puppet Stayman, looking for a 5-3

heart fit. Boye Brogeland led the $\heartsuit A$ and continued with a low diamond. Declarer won with the jack and was soon writing +660 on his card. On the face of it, I was not expecting to write up this deal in my bulletin report.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Aa</i>	<i>Bob Drijver</i>	<i>Livgard</i>	<i>Nab</i>
-	-	-	2 \clubsuit^*
Pass	2 \heartsuit^*	Pass	Pass
3 \clubsuit	All Pass		

Bart Nab opened 2 \clubsuit , which could be (a) a weak two in diamonds, (b) forcing to game, not with diamonds, or (c) 22-24 balanced. Five-card two-level openings have been incredibly successful in these championships, bringing in IMPs by the bucket-load. Allan Livgard did not like to double 2 \heartsuit , nor to bid further after partner's 3 \clubsuit protection. Terje Aa collected +110, but it was 11 IMPs away.

Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

\spadesuit J874 \heartsuit QJ72 \diamondsuit 93 \clubsuit QJ8	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 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		\spadesuit 10952 \heartsuit 10983 \diamondsuit A876 \clubsuit 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
\spadesuit AKQ63 \heartsuit K65 \diamondsuit - \clubsuit A10954		\spadesuit - \heartsuit A4 \diamondsuit KQJ10542 \clubsuit K763									

\spadesuit AQ97	\spadesuit 10654
\heartsuit J75	\heartsuit AK106
\diamondsuit 972	\diamondsuit Q53
\clubsuit 852	\clubsuit AQ
\spadesuit KJ	\spadesuit 832
\heartsuit Q83	\heartsuit 942
\diamondsuit J4	\diamondsuit AK1086
\clubsuit K97643	\clubsuit J10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
1 \clubsuit^*	Pass	1 \heartsuit	4 \heartsuit
Double	All Pass		

Verhees' opening was the Blue Club, East giving a negative response. What action should West take over South's leap to 4 \heartsuit ? When he chose to double, his partner didn't like to guess which major to bid. He elected to defend. Marc and I preferred a 4 \spadesuit bid on the West cards, but it's difficult to be sure we weren't influenced by a sight of the full deal.

Brogeland ruffed the $\spadesuit K$ lead and led the $\heartsuit Q$. East won and crossed to the $\clubsuit A$ for a club ruff. Declarer rose with the $\heartsuit A$ on the heart return, drew trumps and gave up a heart trick to West's king. He was only 200 down, and all present had noted that a bigger prize was available to East/West in spades.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Aa</i>	<i>Bob Drijver</i>	<i>Livgard</i>	<i>Nab</i>
1 \spadesuit	Pass	3 \clubsuit	5 \heartsuit
5 \spadesuit	All Pass		

Allan Livgard's 3 \clubsuit is described as 'mini-splinter in a minor'. Aa took the push to 5 \spadesuit , and this ended the auction. He won the diamond lead with dummy's ace, ditching a heart. After ace of clubs and a club ruff, he led a heart, Nab rising with the ace. The diamond continuation reduced declarer to four trumps. He played the $\spadesuit A$, discovering the break, and ruffed another club in dummy.

A heart to the king permitted a third club ruff. South's overcall then guided declarer to lead a heart, rather than a diamond, from dummy. He ruffed with the $\spadesuit 3$, North following, and claimed +650 for a swing of 10 IMPs.

After ten boards, the Netherlands led 27-13. Was this a foretaste of how the match would continue? No. Norway proceeded to win the last six boards by 50 IMPs to nil. Ardent Netherlands fans might like to switch to a different report. Let the big swings roll!

Board 27. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ AK ♥ AQ105 ♦ QJ95 ♣ Q103		♠ 2 ♥ 873 ♦ AK1072 ♣ 9542	♠ Q9765 ♥ 6 ♦ 864 ♣ A876
♠ J10843 ♥ KJ942 ♦ 3 ♣ KJ			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦*
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

With a 5-4 fit in hearts and two aces missing, this board did not seem to have much swing potential. East led the ♠2 to the 3, 5 and king. Declarer drew trumps and led a club to the king West won and returned a diamond, declarer claiming +450.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Aa</i>	<i>Bob Drijver</i>	<i>Livgard</i>	<i>Nab</i>
-	-	-	Pass
2♦*	2NT	Pass	3♥*
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	


Once more, a 5-card two-level opening caused havoc. Whether it should have done is another matter. The opening 2♦ showed a five-card major

and 4-8 points. Nab's 3♥ was a transfer to spades and his 4♥ rebid apparently then showed 5-5 in the majors. Drijver took a different view and returned to 4♠. There was no happy ending to this strange story. The spade game went three down and Norway gained 12 IMPs.

What other interpretation was possible for the 4♥ bid? It could hardly be a control-bid, with spades agreed, since this would mean that South held no controls in either minor. Anyway, a passed hand was unlikely to have a slam in mind opposite a 2NT overcall.

My colleague, Marc Smith, has already written up several deals where these 5-card pre-empts have reaped sizeable swings. Personally, I cannot remember a single board where they have misfired.

Board 29. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ KJ5 ♥ K85 ♦ Q7 ♣ K10976		♠ A986 ♥ J1076 ♦ J96 ♣ AQ	♠ 73 ♥ AQ3 ♦ AK1085 ♣ 542
♠ Q1042 ♥ 942 ♦ 432 ♣ J83			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	1♣	Double	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Brogeland led the ♣3 to the king and ace. A heart to the queen lost to North's king, and North's ♣10 cleared the club suit, South unblocking the ♣J. Van Prooijen led the ♦J, not covered, to the ace. He cashed three heart tricks next, North throwing a spade, and ran the ♦9 to the queen. North's ♣976 then put the game one down

Everything had depended on declarer's guess in diamonds. North had opened the bidding, vulnerable in first seat. 14 points were missing, after South had produced the ♣J. If North did not hold the ♦Q, he would need the ♠KQJ to bring his hand up to an aceless 12-count. All one could say is that it was a difficult guess for declarer.

♠ 73	♠ KJ5	♠ A986
♥ AQ3	♥ K85	♥ J1076
♦ AK1085	♦ Q7	♦ J96
♣ 542	♣ K10976	♣ AQ
		♠ Q1042
		♥ 942
		♦ 432
		♣ J83

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Aa</i>	<i>Bob Drijver</i>	<i>Livgard</i>	<i>Nab</i>
-	1♣	Double	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

The bidding was the same, as you see. This time Nab led the ♣8 to the king and ace. The next few tricks were the same as in the Open Room. Livgard then led the critical second round of diamonds and rose with the ♦K. The queen fell from North and it was +660 for Norway and a swing of 13 IMPs. You will have noted that the swings so far portrayed do not yet add up to 50 IMPs. Well, I will end my report with the one more double-digit swing that edged the total closer to that mark.

Board 30. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ K109	♠ J8	♠ 7643
♥ KQ10632	♥ AJ94	♥ 75
♦ A98	♦ KQ53	♦ 74
♣ 2	♣ J106	♣ AK974
		♠ AQ52
		♥ 8
		♦ J1062
		♣ Q853

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Double
Redouble	2♦	Pass	Pass
2♥	3♦	All Pass	

I can imagine Terence Reese wincing at South's second-round double. "Did you see that awful double by the Brogeland fellow? What was the point of it?" However, it was made at both tables of this match. Verhees was glad to hear it, because he could make a Support Redouble to show three spades. He rebid his hearts at his next turn and North's 3♦ closed the auction.

A spade lead would have beaten the contract, and this was indeed the recommendation of that fine player, Mr GIB. Few humans have yet reached his level of prowess (give us a few more decades), and East yielded to the seductive allure of his ♣AK. Switching to a spade would then have been too late, since the club ruff would be lost.

Van Prooijen delivered a club ruff at trick two, and declarer won the ♥Q return. Lindqvist continued with the king of trumps to the ace and won the trump return. He was then able to ditch a spade on the ♣Q and claim his +110.

You may be wondering how this mundane action could develop into a double-digit swing...

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Aa</i>	<i>Bob Drijver</i>	<i>Livgard</i>	<i>Nab</i>
-	-	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Double
Redouble	2♦	Pass	Pass
2♥	Double	All Pass	

Bob Drijver, perhaps with previous boards in mind, ventured a penalty double of 2♥. Terje Aa ducked the ♦K lead and won the ♣J switch with dummy's ace. After discarding a spade on the ♣K, he crossed to the ♦A and ruffed a diamond in dummy.

A spade to his king is needed next, but declarer mysteriously gave the defenders a chance by ruffing a club instead. Now came another key trick – declarer led the ♥K. If North lets this win, declarer must dig his own grave. Another trump will allow North to win and force declarer. If declarer then exits with another trump, North draws his last trump and gives South the ♠A and ♣Q. If instead declarer exits with a spade after the ♥K wins, he loses two spades and two trumps.

Sadly for the Netherlands, North missed this difficult chance and won the ♥K with the ace. His ♠J exit ran to declarer’s king and eight tricks were made. It was +470 and another 11 IMPs to Norway.

Their thirst not yet quenched, Norway picked up 8 and 6 IMPs on the final two boards, winning by 63 IMPs to 27. The match had been an exhilarating or harrowing experience, depending on which team you supported. For the two thousand or so kibitzers on BBO, it had been time well spent.

SWEDEN-ENGLAND Bermuda Bowl RR 21

With three round-robin matches to play, the England team was in sixth position. They would face three very tough opponents, though: Sweden, China and USA 2. Qualifying in the top eight places might prove an uphill task.

Marc Smith and I were hoping for the best when the BBO screen sprang to life. There was no action of note for four boards. Then a sequence of three boards brought very bad news indeed to England supporters.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K9 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ76543 ♣ 543	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ AQ73 ♥ KQ10643 ♦ 9 ♣ KJ
N					
W E					
S					
♠ 852 ♥ J82 ♦ Q ♣ AQ10876	♠ J1064 ♥ A95 ♦ A1082 ♣ 92				

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	3♦	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

This layout seemed to have ‘flat board’ written all over it. Johan Upmark won the club lead and led the ♥Q. David Bakhshi won the second round of trumps and cashed the ♦A. It was +450 for Sweden.

Can you predict what sort of mishap would befall the England East-West pair, sending a double-digit number into their minus-column?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>O.Rimstedt</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>M.Rimstedt</i>
–	3♦	3♥	3NT
4♣	All Pass		

Our first question must be: Why bid 4♣? If it was meant to be a slam-try, it is too ambitious when facing a three-level overcall. If it was meant to lead-directing, against a possible diamond sacrifice, I again find that rather off-piste.

Next we must look at East’s pass. Partner’s 4♣ bid, without a 3NT intervention, would obviously be forcing, whatever it meant. After 3NT, it could conceivably be a sacrifice on a long suit. All the more reason for West not to bid it, perhaps.

The defenders took the first four tricks, after a heart lead, and the club part-score was one down. It was a depressing way to lose 11 IMPs.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ Q9 ♥ KQJ ♦ Q985 ♣ J1074	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 106 ♥ 753 ♦ KJ6 ♣ KQ985
♠ J3 ♥ 10862 ♦ 742 ♣ A632		♠ AK87542 ♥ A94 ♦ A103 ♣ —

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣*
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

David Bakhshi opened with a Polish Club. It covers various different hand-types, but is usually either a weak no-trump or a strong club. Artur Malinowski gave a positive response and 2♠ announced the strong-club type with spades. Over North's 2NT rebid, Bakhshi rebid his spades. That was entirely reasonable, but you may think that the Swedish South chose a better option at the other table.

Artur Malinowski, who had denied three-card spade support at his previous return, now did the best that he could by making a control-bid in hearts. This denied the ♦K and Bakhshi could see possible losers in three suits. Although a slam was possible, it doesn't seem unreasonable to sign off in 4♠. Only the fact that dummy has precious values in all three suits outside clubs makes this a good slam.

Bakhshi won the ♥6 lead and must have nodded ruefully at the riches on display in the dummy. He drew trumps and took two diamond finesses through East, scoring +480.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>O.Rimstedt</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>M.Rimstedt</i>
–	–	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣*
Pass	5♥*	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Mikael Rimstedt's 4♣ was a self-agreeing splinter bid, showing a great hand for spades. His brother, Ola, now knew that the North hand was studded with gold nuggets. The meaning of 4NT is not available, but it bypassed 4♠ and must therefore have shown a good hand. Perhaps 5♣ confirmed a void club and 5♥ was a control-bid.

Even though I cannot shine a light on the meaning of every bid, it was a fabulous display of slam bidding. Showing South's club shortage was the key to success. A diamond lead solved any problem in that suit and Sweden gained another 11 IMPs. In the Bermuda Bowl, 11 out of 24 pairs bid the slam. Well done to them!

After two solid punches to the jaw, the England team would indeed be tottering if any similar blow arrived on the next board. Let's hope not!

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ A73 ♥ 105 ♦ KQ965 ♣ A32	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ KQJ86 ♥ 863 ♦ J2 ♣ 976
♠ 10954 ♥ QJ4 ♦ A10 ♣ QJ108		♠ 2 ♥ AK972 ♦ 8743 ♣ K54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♦*	1♠	2♠*	2NT
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣*	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

The 1♦ opening was (a) a 12-14 NT, (b) 4M and 5+m, 11-15, or (c) any 4441, 12-16. East's 2♠ was forcing to game with hearts. I assume that the free 3♦ bid showed 12-14 balanced with five diamonds. Diamonds were agreed and RKCB carried them to a very playable slam.

Fredrik Nyström won the ♠K lead, crossed to the ♥A and played a trump to the king. A heart to the king permitted a second trump lead. He then claimed twelve tricks, since a club discard could be set up on the hearts even against a 4-2 break.

It was indeed a third successive thunderbolt to England's chances in this match. Miracles occasionally happen, but I realized it would be very difficult for England's East-West pair to flatten this board.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>O.Rimstedt</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>M.Rimstedt</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

Jeffrey Allerton and Chris Jagger play a 12-14 1NT throughout. East passed cautiously on the second round and only the tiniest +140 nibble was taken out of the Swedish +1370. Rarely had a swing of 15 IMPs been better deserved.

England supporters in the Open Room were dreading a further double-digit swing on this deal:

♠ KQJ86		♠ 2
♥ 863		♥ AK972
♦ J2		♦ 8743
♣ 976		♣ K54
♠ A73	W N E	♠ 10954
♥ 105	W S	♥ QJ4
♦ KQ965		♦ A 10
♣ A32		♣ QJ108

Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ 1092		♠ J
♥ Q4		♥ K105
♦ 73		♦ AQJ108654
♣ KQJ1094		♣ A
♠ AKQ763	W N E	♠ 854
♥ 763	W S	♥ AJ984
♦ K9		♦ 2
♣ 87		♣ 6532

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	-	-	2♥*
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Nyström had a good hand for diamonds, but no control to show in hearts or diamonds. He used a Last Train 4♥, to show a suitable hand for a slam with no reference to his holding in hearts. RKCB then carried Upmark to 6♦.

If Bakhshi's vulnerable 2♥ opening had been based on a six-card suit, a heart ruff would have been available. Declarer must have feared the worst when ace and another heart were led. For most of the past 30 years that would have meant one down. Not in 2019! Malinowski produced another heart and the slam was made.

Could Allerton and Jagger redeem themselves?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>O.Rimstedt</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>M.Rimstedt</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♦	3♥*
3♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

♠ 1092	♥ Q4	♦ 73	♣ KQJ1094
♠ AKQ763	♥ 763	♦ K9	♣ 87
♠ 854	♥ AJ984	♦ 2	♣ 6532

	♠ J	
♥ K105		♦ AQJ108654
♣ A		

Yes, they could! South's 3♥ was a fit-jump. West showed a good hand with his free 3♠ rebid and Jagger then followed the old-timers' route to 6♦. Very reasonable! The next words were like tiger balm to English ears: 'No IMPs were exchanged'.

Were you beginning to fear that there would be no cardplay content whatsoever in this report? If so, you will have to retract your words.

Board 11. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ QJ62	♥ J73	♦ 952	♣ KQ5
♠ A1074	♥ 64	♦ KQ64	♣ 963
♠ 93	♥ 109852	♦ J103	♣ A72
♠ K85	♥ AKQ	♦ A87	♣ J1084

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Malinowski invited game and Bakhshi accepted. How would you play

this when West leads the ♠4 to East's 9 and your king?

The game will go down only if you lose three diamonds and two aces. Meanwhile, you need tricks from both of the black suits. Should you play on clubs next, or lead a second spade from your hand?

You have no idea which defender holds the diamond length, but you can presume that West holds the ♠A. If you lead a spade at trick two, West might beat you by rising with the ace and switching to diamonds, when East has the diamond length and the ♣A.

After much thought, Bakhshi preferred to lead a club. East won and switched to the ♦J. Declarer held up the ace for two rounds but had to play a spade eventually. The long diamond was with West and the game was one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>O.Rimstedt</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>M.Rimstedt</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Again West led a spade, rather than a lethal diamond. Mikael Rimstedt won with the king and led a second spade. This does seem to be a better play. If West fails to rise with the ♠A, you will have two spades in the bag and can switch to clubs. Even if West does rise with the ♠A, he might not switch to diamonds from his side of the table. If he does, well, you will then need the diamond length to lie opposite the ♣A.

Allerton rose with the ♠A and switched to the ♦4. Declarer held up the ♦A until the third round and subsequently found the ♣A in the safe hand. It was another 12 nails hammered into the English coffin.

Sweden had played the whole match like super-heroes. They were deserved winners by 54 IMPs to 15. We can only congratulate them

USA2 v ENGLAND Bermuda Bowl RR 23

England had started the final day of the round-robin in eighth place, the last position that would qualify for the knock-out stages. The two opponents they had still to face were high-riding China, to be followed by the USA2 team including three current holders of the Bermuda Bowl.

My alarm clock woke me at the requested 6am and I entered my computer room with eyes still half-closed. Good news awaited me. England had recovered from the previous day's drubbing by Sweden and beaten the host nation by 51 IMPs to 35. Wonderful! Whether they could finish the job and qualify... well, I would find that out soon enough.

The first serious swing went to USA2:

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 1084 ♥ J106 ♦ Q1065 ♣ 1098		♠ KQJ3 ♥ 975 ♦ A8 ♣ K542	♠ 52 ♥ AKQ83 ♦ K7432 ♣ 3
♠ A976 ♥ 42 ♦ J9 ♣ AQJ76			

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Martel</i>
–	1♥	1♠	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Andrew Robson led the ♠4 and Chip Martel won the third round of the suit. The heart suit divided well and declarer played five rounds, Tony Forrester reducing to: ♠Q ♦A ♣K52. A finesse of the ♣Q won the next trick and declarer then played a diamond to the king and the bare ace. Forrester could cash the ♠Q but then had to lead away from his ♣K5. Declarer repeated the club finesse and had his +600.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	1♥	1♠	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

In the Closed Room, the auction was identical, as was the play to the first three tricks. David Bakhshi then led the ♦9 to West's ♦10 and dummy's king. A diamond return put the contract one down, and USA2 collected 12 IMPs.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ1083 ♥ AQJ9 ♦ 954 ♣ A		♠ 642 ♥ 7 ♦ AQJ763 ♣ Q87	♠ KJ7 ♥ K102 ♦ K2 ♣ K10643
			♠ 95 ♥ 86543 ♦ 108 ♣ J952

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Martel</i>
–	1♣	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Martin Fleischer had no alternative but to lead away from a king. He judged that the ♦2 was the least risky start available. Robson won with dummy's queen and finessed the ♠8, losing to the jack. North's club switch went to the jack and the bare ace. All followed to the ♠A, and North's ♦K appeared on the next round of diamonds. It was +650.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	1♣	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

♠ AQ1083 ♥ AQJ9 ♦ 954 ♣ A	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		♠ KJ7 ♥ K102 ♦ K2 ♣ K10643	♠ 642 ♥ 7 ♦ AQJ763 ♣ Q87
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 95 ♥ 86543 ♦ 108 ♣ J952												

Brad Moss took another bid over 4♠ and the diamond slam was reached. The fact that North had opened the bidding, made the slam better than it may at first appear.

Declarer won the club lead, played a trump to the jack and finessed the ♠Q, losing to the king. He won the ♦K return, crossed to the ♥A and led the ♥Q for a ruffing finesse. The established ♥J would subsequently allow him to discard a spade and ruff the spade suit good. As it was, the ♥10 fell. Declarer could ruff one club and discard the other on the ♥9. Plus 1370 was worth another 12 IMPs for USA2.

After three more boards, the score had climbed to 35-8 in the Americans' favour. This might have been a major worry for England supporters. However, the teams in 9th and 10th positions, New Zealand and Israel, were losing to the Netherlands and Egypt respectively.

A reassuring bombshell plus-score was what England needed. Perhaps board 13 would provide it.

Board 13. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ — ♥ J76 ♦ 1087 ♣ 8765432	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		♠ K108743 ♥ 10 ♦ K9 ♣ KQJ10	♠ AJ652 ♥ AK93 ♦ AJ6 ♣ 9
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ Q9 ♥ Q8542 ♦ Q5432 ♣ A												

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Martel</i>
-	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

The BBO archive takes the view that it was West who administered the final penalty double. Hoping that I have not exceeded my brief, I have transferred this double to Forrester in the East seat.

The ♥K was led, drawing the ♥6 and ♥10 from the closed hands. Fleisher won the club switch with dummy's ♣A. At this point, the well-known expert Mr GIB announces that the ♦Q or a low heart will allow declarer to escape for one down.

Fleisher preferred to lead a low diamond to the king and ace. He won the diamond continuation with dummy's queen and ruffed a heart in his hand. All roads now seemed to result in two down. A trump to the queen was not optimal, West showing out. A diamond ruff was then needed, but declarer opted to ruff another heart.

Forrester ruffed the ♣K with the ♠J and removed dummy's last remaining trump with the ace. He was left with ♠65 ♥K ♦J, while declarer held ♠K10 ♣QJ. Because declarer had not ruffed a diamond rather than a heart earlier, Forrester was now able to force him twice. The penalty had grown to +800.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Double	2♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

Malinowski and Bakhshi stopped at a safe level and were doubled there. West may have been apprehensive, but there was little he could do about it. He had to hope for the best.

Justin Lall led the ♥A, switching to ace and another trump. Declarer won with dummy's queen, continuing with a diamond to the king and ace. A second diamond to the queen was followed by a diamond ruff.

Declarer then played good clubs, conceding two trump tricks for +670. The resultant 16-IMP swing more or less assured England's qualification for the knock-out stage.

On the next board, different game contracts were reached:

Board 14. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ Q762 ♥ J982 ♦ Q73 ♣ 85	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 84 ♥ KQ1043 ♦ A65 ♣ A109
♠ AJ105 ♥ 5 ♦ 108 ♣ KQJ762	♠ K93 ♥ A76 ♦ KJ942 ♣ 43	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Martel</i>
–	–	1♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

A 2♣ response by Robson would have been an artificial game-force. His actual 3♣ was natural and forcing to game. Forrester rebid 3♦, natural or at least showing a stopper in this suit. It was risky for South to double this bid. When Robson rebid 3NT, Martel may have regretted his decision not to double.

Sure enough, North led a spade rather than a lethal diamond. It was +460 for the England pair.

West	North	East	South
<i>Moss</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	–	1NT	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Lall opened 1NT but was able to show his five hearts subsequently. The Americans landed in the club game. How would this play when Malinowski found the lead of the ♦3?

To make the game, declarer must overtake the ♣9 at trick two and finesse the ♥10. If South wins with the ace, declarer can set up three spade discards on dummy's heart suit. If instead South holds up the ♥A, declarer can continue with the ♥K and make an overtrick.

Lall missed this line of play, failing to overtake the ♣9. He overtook the ♣10 on the next trick and played a heart to the 10 and ace. A diamond or low spade return then defeats the contract. Bakhshi duly returned the ♠3. Declarer rose with the ♠A and... oh no... 'Claim accepted +400' flashes up on my screen. The rest of the play record is not present.

There is no way home after the start portrayed in the record. If declarer crosses to the ♣A to discard a diamond and spade on the ♥KQ, he will have to lose two spade tricks. If instead he plays a spade or a diamond, the defenders can cash two winners for one down.

Ah well, England gained 1 IMP and lost the match eventually by only 35-33. All four England teams reached the knock-out stages. May I congratulate all the players involved, also the captains and coaches.


USA1 v ENGLAND Bermuda Bowl QF3

USA1 had topped the round-robin table and it was no surprise that they chose England as their quarter-final opponents. They had won their round-robin encounter by 14.8 VPs to 5.2.

England won the first 16-board set of the quarter-final by 26-16, and were leading by 65-48 after the second set. Marc Smith and I were hoping for more of the same as we took our seats for the third set (out of six).

There was not long to wait for the first action.

Board 5. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

♠ AJ6 ♥ J1054 ♦ 63 ♣ KQ87		♠ Q973 ♥ — ♦ AQ72 ♣ A6542
♠ 104 ♥ AQ9763 ♦ 95 ♣ J109		♠ K852 ♥ K82 ♦ KJ1084 ♣ 3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>
–	2♥	Double	4♥
Double	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Andrew Robson's responsive double is normally played to deny four spades. Forrester duly continued with 4NT, asking partner to choose a minor suit. It seemed that the resultant club game might need some play.

Steve Weinstein led the ♥A, ruffed in the dummy. Robson finessed the ♠J successfully, ruffed another heart in dummy and continued with the ♠Q. Bobby Levin declined to cover and the queen was run, pinning North's ♠10. How should declarer continue?

Robson drew trumps in three rounds and continued with his last trump. Levin had to find a discard from ♠K8 ♥K ♦KJ8. If he threw the ♥K, Robson could establish a heart trick. (It might nevertheless have been South's best choice, in case declarer had ♥J9 left.) A spade discard would allow declarer to establish dummy's ♠9. Levin therefore threw the ♦8.

Robson ducked a round of diamonds, won the spade return and led a diamond to the ace. The ♦K fell from South and the ♦Q was good for an eleventh trick. It was a finely played hand, rewarded by +400 on the scorecard.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	2♦*	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Artur Malinowski led the ♥7 to David Bakhshi's king. The ♥8 was returned to the jack and North's queen. Meanwhile, Eric Rodwell had thrown spades from the dummy. He won the ♦9 switch with dummy's ace, and at first it seemed that he might have made the game with three spade tricks, pinning North's 10, had he kept three spades in the dummy. The flaw in this analysis was that the club suit would be blocked after three rounds. Declarer's spot-cards in the suit were higher than those in the dummy.

Rodwell called for the ♠Q and David Bakhshi covered. (If three spades had been kept on the table, he would have had to withhold his king, to ensure that the ♠9 did not become an entry for the blocked clubs.) Declarer took four rounds of clubs, ending in his hand. He then cashed the ♠J and conceded two down. It was 11 IMPs to England.

I rarely describe part-scores, but there was interest on this board at both tables:

Board 5. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

♠ A10 ♥ 1065 ♦ Q93 ♣ KJ642		♠ 932 ♥ AQ984 ♦ A5 ♣ Q75
♠ 765 ♥ J ♦ K108764 ♣ 983		♠ KQJ84 ♥ K732 ♦ J2 ♣ A10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>
-	-	1♥	1♠
2NT	3♦	All Pass	

Forrester led the ♥A, after which 3♦ can be made. He switched to the ♣5 and Weinstein won with dummy's ♣A immediately, leaving defensive communication in the suit intact. Now the defenders were in with a chance.

Declarer discarded a club on the ♥K and ran the ♦J to East's ace. To beat the contract, West will need to score his ♦Q. If Forrester plays the ♥Q next, declarer ruffs and plays a spade. His aim is to reach dummy, to finesse again in trumps. West wins with the ♠A and, after declarer's failure to duck in clubs, can cross to the ♣Q for a fourth round of hearts. This allows West to throw the ♠10. The entry for the trump finesse will then be dead. My thanks to co-commentator, Marc Smith, for this analysis.

When Forrester played the ♣Q instead, a second trump finesse could not be prevented and +110 was the result.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	-	1♥	1♠
2NT	3♦	3♥	All Pass

Meckstroth won the spade lead with dummy's ace and played a heart to the queen, which was allowed to win. He continued with a spade to South's jack. When Bakhshi switched to the ♦J, Meckstroth played low from dummy. To make the contract, he must duck in his hand also. He opted to win with the ♦A and then ruffed the ♠9. The ♥10 was run to the South's king, and Bakhshi then forced him with a spade.

When declarer drew trumps and played a club, Bakhshi took the ♣A and the defenders scored the last three tricks to put the part-score two down. It was 3 IMPs to England.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 4 ♥ AQ63 ♦ 9763 ♣ AK43		♠ K1098 ♥ 42 ♦ AK104 ♣ 982
♠ AJ52 ♥ KJ10985 ♦ 5 ♣ J6	♠ Q763 ♥ 7 ♦ QJ82 ♣ Q1075	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Double	Redouble	2NT
3♠	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

West's 3♠ would have gone down, and Levin's further push to 4♣ surprised us. When this ran to Forrester in the East seat, he produced a similar Tiger Double to the one that I reported yesterday. He placed his partner with a very likely singleton diamond.

Robson led the singleton ♦5, Forrester winning with the ♦K and cashing the ♦A. He continued with the ♦10, a suit-preference signal for spades. Robson ruffed and some players might then have cashed the ♠A for a safe one down.

Robson knew that Forrester held two diamond spot-cards, otherwise South would not have bid clubs rather than diamonds. The ♦10 was therefore a clear-cut suit-preference card. He returned a low spade to East's king and ruffed a fourth round of diamonds. It was a splendid +500 instead of a minus score in 3♠.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Malinowski	Meckstroth	Bakhshi
-	-	-	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

♠ 4			
♥ AQ63			
♦ 9763			
♣ AK43			
♠ AJ52	W	N	E
♥ KJ10985			
♦ 5			
♣ J6			
			♠ K1098
			♥ 42
			♦ AK104
			♣ 982
			♠ Q763
			♥ 7
			♦ QJ82
			♣ Q1075

Bakhshi led his ♥7 to the jack and queen, Meckstroth following with the ♥4. Malinowski switched to the ♣A, Bakhshi playing the ♣7, and continued with the ♣K. On this trick Bakhshi played his ♣Q, a suit-preference card for hearts.

North cashed the ♥A and played a third heart, ruffed with dummy's king. The ♠8 was run successfully. The ♠9 was then covered with the queen and ace. Declarer had ♠J5 opposite ♠10, but had no way to draw South's ♠76. He was two down, and England scored another 12 IMPs.

On our next deal, both sides reached game on a combined 21 points.

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

		♠ K106	
		♥ KQ2	
		♦ K72	
		♣ Q1065	
♠ Q3			♠ AJ984
♥ -			♥ A1043
♦ AQ1098	W	N	♦ J64
♣ K98743		E	♣ 2
			♠ 752
			♥ J98765
			♦ 53
			♣ AJ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Robson	Weinstein	Forrester	Levin
-	-	1♠	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Robson's 2♣ was not natural. It was an artificial game-force. When he then showed preference for spades, Forrester's jump to game indicated a minimum hand with no interest in any higher contract. Levin found a heart lead, which was good for the defence. Forrester ruffed with dummy's ♠3 and continued with the ♠Q, covered with the king and ace. All followed to the ♠J and Forrester played a third round, finding a 3-3 break.

The contract was still destined to fail. With no trumps left in dummy, it seemed natural for North to play the ♥K. Declarer would then lose one trick in each suit. Weinstein preferred to lead the ♣6, and his partner won with the ace. It was still necessary to play hearts, but this was harder to see from the South seat.

When Levin returned the ♣J, Declarer ruffed with his penultimate trump and ran the ♦J. North ducked, but a second round of diamonds to dummy's 10 allowed Forrester to face his cards and claim +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Malinowski	Meckstroth	Bakhshi
-	-	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Bakhshi led the ♥7 to the queen and ace. The ♦6, to the 5, 8 and 7, was followed by the ♠Q, covered by the king and ace. The ♦J was run to Malinowski's king and king, and another heart then put 3NT three down.

England gained 11 IMPs, their third double-digit swing of the session. Only two boards were left, could they inflict any further damage on their mighty opponents?

Most things in this life are possible. Let's see.

Board 15. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ 7643 ♥ 1086 ♦ 952 ♣ Q92		♠ A82 ♥ AK ♦ 104 ♣ AJ10865	♠ 105 ♥ Q53 ♦ KQJ873 ♣ 43
		♠ KQJ9 ♥ J9742 ♦ A6 ♣ K7	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>
-	-	-	2♦*
Pass	2NT	3♦	Pass
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Levin's 2♦ opening was Flannery, showing four spades and five hearts. This convention is subjected to much abuse and ribaldry from the BBO commentators, few of whom are willing to name it explicitly. 'The dreaded F-convention,' is an oft-heard description. Terence Reese began this trend when he wrote scornfully that 'Flannery shows a hand type that causes no problems whatsoever for natural bidding'. This was a slight exaggeration. Even so, I have always been amazed that so many top US players, including world champions, employ the convention.

As you see, clubs were never mentioned and Levin ended in a 5-2 heart fit. He won the diamond lead, played dummy's ♥AK and crossed to the ♣A. After a club to the king, he discarded his remaining diamond on the ♣J, West winning with the queen. Declarer ruffed the diamond return and played good spades, losing tricks to the ♥10 and ♥Q for a safe +620.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
-	-	-	1♥
Pass	2♣	2♦	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Malinowski won the ♦Q lead in dummy, continuing with the king and ace of trumps. He was combining the second-best play in trumps, viewed alone, with the additional chance that he could then dispose of his diamond loser.

Unwilling to rely solely on the ♣Q being accompanied by at least three spades, declarer next cashed the ♥AK. The ♥Q did not fall, but (for what is worth) both defenders followed upwards in hearts.

Malinowski crossed to the ♠K and led the ♥7, ruffing in his hand. This ran the risk that East held the ♣Q and no more hearts. If instead West had the ♣Q and no more hearts, he might have been able to ditch a spade from three cards.

It's hard to judge whether the heart ruff was a better idea than simply playing for a discard in time on the spade suit. As the cards lay, both lines would succeed. When the hearts broke evenly, Malinowski crossed to the ♠Q and ditched his diamond loser on the ♥J. It was +1370 and another 13 IMPs for England.


After a memorable display of razor-sharp bridge, England had taken the third segment by 52 IMPs to 7 and would lead overnight by 118-55. If the Americans achieve a truly wonderful comeback tomorrow, good luck to them. It will not erase my lasting enjoyment at having witnessed today's session.

USA1 v ENGLAND Bermuda Bowl QF6

Overnight, England led USA1 by 118-55. They dropped only 2 IMPs in the fourth set. Calamity then struck in the fifth set, taken 76-13 by the Americans. As Roland Wald and I took our seats for the final 16 boards, England led by only 160-158. Momentum was with the USA1 team in a big way. What would happen?

The early boards were drab, showing no sense of occasion. I propose to brush the first eight of them under my computer-room carpet. We will start with this one:

Board 24. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ A94 ♥ K10863 ♦ J82 ♣ J8		♠ Q87 ♥ Q95 ♦ A3 ♣ AQ652	♠ J532 ♥ J74 ♦ KQ105 ♣ 43
		♠ K106 ♥ A2 ♦ 9764 ♣ K1097	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT*
Pass	3♦*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Eric Rodwell opened with a 14-16 point 1NT. Jeff Meckstroth's 2NT was Puppet Stayman, looking unsuccessfully for a 5-3 spade fit. Chris Jagger led the ♦Q, asking for an upside-down attitude signal (the ♦2 from partner), and Rodwell won with the ace. By doing so, he gave himself a chance that the defenders' diamonds (a doubleton jack or 10 with West) would be blocked.

Three rounds of clubs were followed by a spade to declarer's queen. Rodwell then cashed two more clubs and finessed the ♠10, drawing the ace. The defenders scored three diamond tricks, but dummy's ♠K and ♥A then brought declarer's total to nine. +400.

Closed Room


West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Robson</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠*
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Tony Forrester decided not to upgrade to a 15-17 1NT. The other seven tables in the quarter-finals all reached 3NT, which was made six times.

Playing in 1NT, Forrester did not finesse the ♠10 and made +120. USA1 picked up 7 IMPs, the biggest swing of this segment so far.

North did his best to look casual as he sorted his cards for the next board:

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ A10 ♥ 1065 ♦ Q93 ♣ KJ642		♠ AQ10765 ♥ KJ97654 ♦ — ♣ —	♠ 942 ♥ — ♦ AKQ974 ♣ J853
		♠ — ♥ AQ103 ♦ J65 ♣ AK10962	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
—	1♥	3♦	4♣*
Pass	5♦*	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

Many would open 1♠ on the North cards, permitting a heart rebid after high minor-suit competition. Rodwell preferred 1♥ and this made the bidding easier than it might have been. Meckstroth's 4♣ over 3♦ agreed hearts and was presumably a cue-bid. Rodwell then bid Exclusion RKCB

to show his diamond void. Meckstroth saw no need to tax his brain, calculating the agreed response on two key-cards, the trump queen and a void. He blasted straight into 7♥.

Rodwell ruffed the ♦K lead, cashed the ♠A and ruffed a spade low. He then used diamond-ruff entries to his hand to ruff two more spades. He duly made the grand slam without any assistance from the ♣AK.

♠ A10	♠ 942
♥ 1065	♥ —
♦ Q93	♦ AKQ974
♣ KJ642	♣ J853

♠ —	♠ —
♥ AQ103	♥ —
♦ J65	♦ —
♣ AK10962	♣ —

Board 27. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ AQ75	♠ KJ10642	♠ 983
♥ 74	♥ 93	♥ A65
♦ Q8	♦ J76	♦ AK1032
♣ AJ872	♣ 43	♣ 65

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ KQJ1082	♥ —	♥ —
♦ 954	♦ —	♦ —
♣ KQ109	♣ —	♣ —

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Robson</i>
–	1♠	2♦	3♣
3♦	3♥	Pass	4♦*
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

Forrester opened 1♠, and a 3♦ overcall might have made life more awkward for North-South. As it was, Robson was able to bid 3♣, then 4♦ to agree hearts and show a good hand. He didn't need to think too long before raising 6♥ to the grand. The play was the same as in the Open Room and no IMPs were exchanged.

In the Bermuda Bowl, only Norway and the Netherlands failed to reach 7♥. In the Venice Cup, with one match already conceded, three teams out of six bid the grand. In the Seniors, four bid 7♥, three bid 6♥ and one 5♥. In the Mixed Teams, 7♥ was bid three times, 6♥ five times.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Allerton</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Jagger</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	–	–	1♥
Double	1♠	2♥*	3♥
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

It was not a pretty auction by East-West. I'm sure there must be at least twelve of you currently reading this report. Would you like to take your seats in the jury box? Who was to blame for reaching this unappetising contract?

“As I see it, m'Lud, Jagger should have bid a restrained 3♦ at his first turn. He is rather strong for the bid, I concede, but if he starts with a cue-bid and bids diamonds later, this will be forcing.”

Meckstroth removed some bidding space by rebidding 3♥, rather than showing good hearts with double.

“Members of the jury, you may like to consider the wisest second-round action from the defendant in the West seat. He would certainly be expected to say something if South had merely doubled 2♥. Now that the bidding was so high, was he worth bidding 4♣, carrying the bidding past 3NT? Remember that he had heard a spade bid over his ♠AQxx.”

Jagger had to bid 4♦ over West's 4♣, and his previous cue-bid then came home to roost. He had not limited his hand and Allerton quite

rightly assumed that he must bid again. East thought for quite a while over 5♣, but had nowhere to go. West would have raised the diamonds with three-card support.

The England pair escaped a double, and North led the ♥9 to dummy's ace. Allerton played a trump to the king and ace, continuing with three rounds of diamonds to ditch his heart loser. He was still two down for -100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Forrester	Levin	Robson
-	-	-	1♥
Double	Redouble*	2♥	3♥
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Forrester's redouble showed spades. East did choose to cue-bid now, but Weinstein kept quiet over the 3♥ rebid by South.

Robson led the ♥K against 3NT and Bobby Levin won the second round. He ran the ♠9 to the 10, won the diamond return with dummy's queen and cashed the ♣A. After four more rounds of diamonds, he led a second spade. When South showed out, he rose with dummy's ♠A, conceding one down. East-West at the other table must have been relieved to lose only 2 IMPs.

Board 30. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ A95 ♥ A965 ♦ AJ106 ♣ A5		♠ QJ3 ♥ KQJ74 ♦ 2 ♣ K972	♠ 10642 ♥ 32 ♦ 975 ♣ J1063 ♠ K87 ♥ 108 ♦ KQ843 ♣ Q84
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
Allerton	Rodwell	Jagger	Meckstroth
-	-	1♥	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3NT*	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Jagger showed a minimum hand with his 3♣ over the Jacoby 2NT. West's 3♦ asked for a shortage and 3NT showed a diamond singleton. Over partner's 4♥, Allerton closed the shop in 6♥.

Twelve tricks are easy with the trumps breaking 2-2. The conversation online addressed whether thirteen tricks could be made after a lead of the ♦K. The tall, military figure of Mr GIB was among the kibitzers and he assured us that nothing could be easier.

The general aim is a dummy reversal, followed by one of two squeezes. Declarer wins the lead with the ♦A and plays a trump to the ace. A club to the king permits the first diamond ruff, with a low trump. The king of clubs and a club ruff are followed by a second diamond ruff. Now the ♠Q is led and the subsequent play depends on whether South decides to cover with the king.

First, let's see what happens if he does not cover. The ♠Q wins and declarer ruffs his last club with the ♥A. Two rounds of trumps then squeeze South in spades and diamonds.

Next we will suppose that the ♠Q is covered by the king and ace. Declarer then ruffs dummy's last diamond with the ♥Q, crosses to the ♥A (South's ♥10 appearing) and plays the ♥9 to squeeze North in the black suits.

How long did it take bridge writers to fathom such deals, before GIB and Deep Finesse were available? The famous Ottlik-Kelsey book, *Adventures in Cardplay*, was written many years before computer assistance. I still regard that as something of a miracle.

You will not be surprised to hear that only twelve tricks were made at the table. I am told that Italy bid and made 7♥. Sadly, they had been 100 IMPs behind, and that session of their quarter-final was not shown on BBO. The play details are therefore not available to me.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Forrester	Levin	Robson
-	-	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

A cue-bid auction carried Levin safely to 6♥. Twelve tricks were made, and there was no swing.

With only one board left, USA 1 led by 21 IMPs. In the distance, the sound of a well-endowed lady singing could be heard.

Board 32. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

	♠ Q85		
	♥ K6432		
	♦ 10976		
	♣ 8		
♠ J973		♠ K1064	
♥ AQ85		♥ J7	
♦ 854		♦ AQJ2	
♣ 52		♣ QJ10	
	♠ A2		
	♥ 109		
	♦ K3		
	♣ AK97643		



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Allerton	Rodwell	Jagger	Meckstroth
Pass	Pass	1NT	Double
All Pass			

Some say that it is total madness to play a weak 1NT in third seat, when vulnerable against not. That's not a common view in England, of course. We tend to admire such bravery.

Meckstroth's penalty double was passed out and he began the defence

with ace, king and another club. Jagger won and ran the ♥J to the king. South had cleared the club suit with the ♣3 (reverse suit preference), so Rodwell played a spade to South's ace. Meckstroth scored his remaining clubs and that was 500 away.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Forrester	Levin	Robson
Pass	Pass	1♦	3NT
All Pass			

Weinstein led the ♠3 and the game was two down. That was another 12 IMPs away, giving the USA 1 a winning margin of 195-162. A match of 96 boards is usually enough to bring the better team to the top. So it had proved, despite the early heroics from our lads. All agreed that it had been a splendid match!

NORWAY – NETHERLANDS Bermuda Bowl SF3

After just two sets of this semi-final, the Netherlands led Norway by 118-31. How was that possible, when many punters would rate the two teams equally? Marc Smith and I took our seats for the third set, keen to see for ourselves.

Did we have to twiddle our thumbs while a few drab part-scores limped by? No!

Board 1. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

	♠ AKQJ842		
	♥ 2		
	♦ J1097		
	♣ 10		
♠ 103		♠ 6	
♥ K10876		♥ AQJ943	
♦ 62		♦ KQ43	
♣ QJ52		♣ A3	
	♠ 975		
	♥ 5		
	♦ A85		
	♣ K98764		



Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Bob Muller</i>
-	4♠	5♥	5♠
6♥	6♠	Double	All Pass

Boards involving spades-v-hearts decisions at a high level are always interesting and instructive, particularly at world level. It is wrong to look at one bid that didn't work effectively, saying 'Well, I wouldn't have bid that.' You must seek to justify your opinion with some general principle or other.

As I see it, the first four bids were absolutely normal, barely open to dispute. I am not so happy with North's 6♠. Had he not already given a good picture of his hand? He had little idea of what his partner might hold and should perhaps have left the final decision to him.

Nils Kåre Kvangraven led the ♥A against 6♠ doubled and switched to the ♦K. DeWijs won in dummy, drew trumps and led the ♣10. East rose with the ace and cashed the ♦Q, scoring +300.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
-	4♠	5♥	5♠
6♥	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

Espen Lindqvist left the final decision to Boye Brogeland, who was happy to double. North won the spade lead and switched to the ♣10. Ricco Van Prooijen rose with the ♣A, drew trumps and conceded two tricks in the minors. It was 300 the other way and 9 IMPs to Norway.

On the evidence of just this one board, our wonderment at the 118-31 score-line was still intact. Perhaps the Netherlands would display their prowess on the next deal.

♠ AKQJ842			
♥ 2			
♦ J1097			
♣ 10			
♠ 103		♠ 6	
♥ K10876		♥ AQJ943	
♦ 62		♦ KQ43	
♣ QJ52		♣ A3	
		♠ 975	
		♥ 5	
		♦ A85	
		♣ K98764	

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

		♠ K97	
		♥ AQ765	
		♦ J6	
		♣ 832	
♠ Q86			♠ J54
♥ J432			♥ K10
♦ 10975			♦ K83
♣ QJ			♣ A10764
			♠ A1032
			♥ 98
			♦ AQ42
			♣ K95

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Bob Muller</i>
-	-	1♦	Pass
1♠*	Pass	1NT	Double
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

Indeed they would! Kvangraven's 1♦ was Relay Precision, promising no more than one diamond. Ulf Tundal's 1♠ response showed hearts, rather than spades, and Bob Muller's double was for take-out of hearts. When this was left in for penalties, East sought refuge in 2♣. Simon De Wijs doubled this, passed by South.

Wow! We had watched a couple of tigers. They had hidden motionless in the long grass, watching as their prey strolled around. Then, suddenly, they pounced. Holding three trumps each, was it not an achievement to catch their opponents in 2♣ doubled?

Muller led the ♥9 to partner's ace and De Wijs switched to the ♦J, covered with the king and ace. The ♦Q and a diamond ruff were followed by the ♥7 to declarer's king. Declarer led a low trump from his hand, South rising with the king. A fourth round of diamonds was ruffed with the ♣8, overruffed with the ♣10.

Kvangraven called for the ♠Q, North winning with the king. The ♥Q was ruffed with the ♣7, overruffed with the bare ♣9. South was forced to lead

from his ♠A103, but it was still a fine +500 to North-South, Magnificent!

At the other table, the bidding was 1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT. No big cats were present in this part of the jungle, and the contract went two down for -100. The Netherlands collected 9 IMPs.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J762 ♥ K9432 ♦ AJ97 ♣ —	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 ♥ 65 ♦ K64 ♣ KJ109732
♠ KQ5 ♥ AJ1087 ♦ 10 ♣ AQ84	♠ A9843 ♥ Q ♦ Q8532 ♣ 65	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Bob Muller</i>
–	–	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

The East-West convention card is silent on the meaning of 3♦ and 3♥. I will not hazard a guess on the matter. You're probably a better guesser than I am.

Muller found the killing lead of the ♥Q. Declarer won in the dummy, crossed to the ♣J and led the ♠10. South rose with the ace and crossed to the ♦A for his partner to cash the ♥K. That was one down and +100 to North-South.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	–	3♣	Pass
5♣	Double	Pass	5♠
Double	All Pass		

Lindqvist made an adventurous double on his shapely 9-count and West doubled the 5♠ response. Brogeland ruffed the ♣A lead in dummy and led a heart to the queen and ace. East won the ♦10 switch with the king and returned the ♠10 to declarer's ace. Two trump tricks had to be lost and it was 300 away. The Netherlands picked up their second swing of 9 IMPs.

You rather enjoyed the heart-spade battle on Board 1 and would like to see another one? Right, let's see what I can find.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 1098 ♥ KQ1032 ♦ K72 ♣ 42	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AJ7532 ♥ 94 ♦ 10 ♣ AJ87
♠ KQ64 ♥ — ♦ AJ954 ♣ 10963	♠ — ♥ AJ8765 ♦ Q863 ♣ KQ5	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Bob Muller</i>
–	2♥	2♠	6♥
6♠	All Pass		

In the commentary-box, we were suggesting an everyday 5♥ from South. In the torrid heat of a Bermuda Bowl semi-final, only a 6♥ bid was good enough.

Tundal had a clear-cut 6♠ bid on the West cards and this was passed out. Muller led the ♥A, ruffed in the dummy, and declarer had no way to avoid two club finesses. When the second of these had to be taken while North still had a trump left, declarer lost two clubs and a club ruff. That was two down for -200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	2♦	2♠	Pass
3♥	Double	Pass	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♠	6♥
Pass	Pass	6♠	7♥
Double	All Pass		

It was a thrilling auction, particularly when you consider that the two pairs held 20 points each. Brogeland's advance to 7♥ may seem surprising, but West had made forcing passes over both the spoof 5♦ and 6♥. The second of these must have promised a void heart, so no defence heart trick would be available. 7♥ was likely to cost less than an opposing game, let alone a slam.

A minor-suit lead would have led to a defensive diamond ruff. Louk Verhees led the ♠K and Brogeland escaped for two down. He discarded one of dummy's diamonds on his club winners, losing 300. It was 11 IMPs to the Netherlands.

On Board 11, both declarers exhibited some dazzling cardplay.

♠ KQ64 ♥ — ♦ AJ954 ♣ 10963	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ 1098 ♥ KQ1032 ♦ K72 ♣ 42	♠ AJ7532 ♥ 94 ♦ 10 ♣ AJ87
♠ — ♥ AJ8765 ♦ Q863 ♣ KQ5			

Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ Q1064 ♥ J107 ♦ Q962 ♣ J5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> W N S E </div>	♠ K9753 ♥ 94 ♦ 108 ♣ A972	♠ — ♥ KQ53 ♦ K743 ♣ Q10863
		♠ AJ82 ♥ A862 ♦ AJ5 ♣ K4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tundal</i>	<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Kvangraven</i>	<i>Bob Muller</i>
–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♥*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥*	Double	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Muller broke the transfer, and the 3♥ rebid by De Wijs was a re-transfer. The ♥J opening lead was ducked. Declarer won the next heart and played the ♠A, East throwing a club. After cashing the ♣K, declarer ruffed a heart in dummy. He then played the ♣A and ruffed a club with the ♠8.

Tundal overruffed with the ♠10 and had to assist declarer with his return from ♠Q6 ♦Q962. He chose to play the ♠6, run to South's jack. A trump to the king drew West's ♠Q and East then had to find a discard from ♥K ♦K73 ♣10. The two singletons were important guards, so he threw the ♦3.

Dummy's ♠9 now finished the job. East had to throw the ♦7 and declarer ditched his heart loser. He then led the ♦8 to the king and ace, continuing with the ♦5 towards the bare ♦10 in dummy. West had to win with the ♦Q and return the ♦9 to South's jack.

So, that is the standard of cardplay required to reach a Bermuda Bowl semi-final. Impressive, indeed!

Closed Room

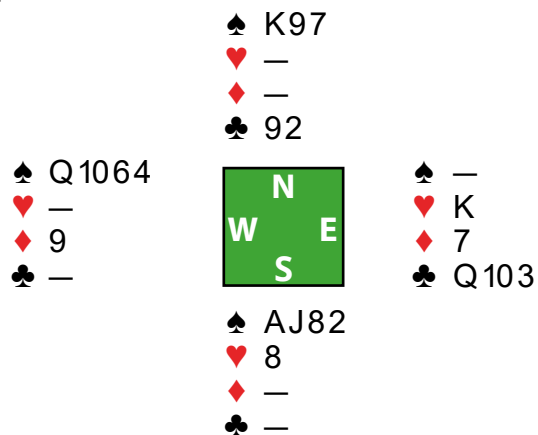
West	North	East	South
Verhees	Lindqvist	Van Prooijen	Brogeland

–	–	–	1NT
Pass	2♥*	Double	3♣
Pass	3♥*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Brogeland won the heart lead and played a second heart to East's queen.

He won the club return with dummy's ace and led the ♦8 to the jack and queen. He took the next club with the king and ruffed a heart in dummy. The ♦10 to the king and ace was followed by a diamond ruff in dummy.

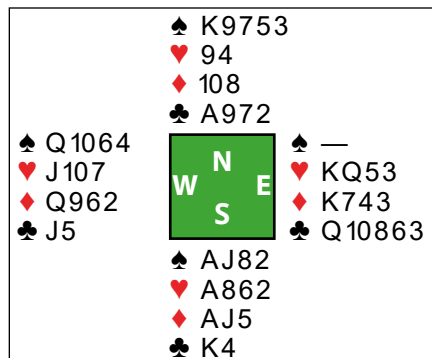
Only five tricks remained and the trump suit had not yet been touched! This was the position:



Brogeland ruffed a club with the ♠8, overruffed with the ♠10. West had no good return. If he played the ♦9, declarer would ruff with the ♠2, continuing with the ♠A and the ♠J (or a heart). If instead, West played a low trump, declarer would win with the ♠J and play a heart.

It was a high-quality push board. In the other semi-final, both Jeff Meckstroth and Jacek Kalita went one down in 4♠.

The Netherlands took this third set by 42-20, extending their lead to 160-53. The standard of play had been wonderful and great entertainment for the kibitzers.

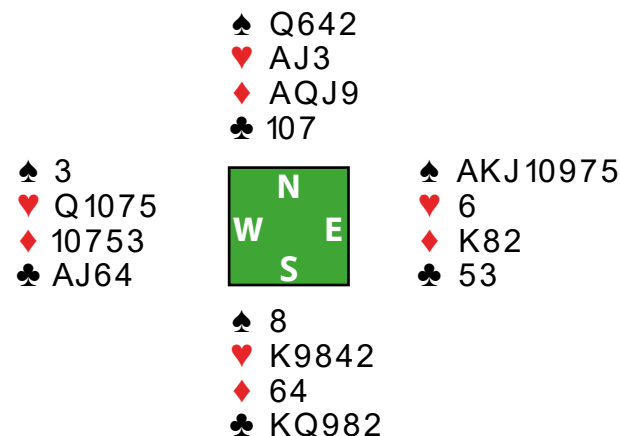


USA1 - POLAND Bermuda Bowl SF6

USA1, who had pulled back a large deficit in their quarter-final against England, were faced with a similar task once again. Only 16 boards were left and the score was: Poland 157 – USA 115. On voice commentary, Marc Smith and I agreed that Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell were the best pair in the world, famed for many last-set heroics. They would need some suitable boards, a lapse or two from their world-class opponents, and perhaps a bit of luck. It was not going to be easy.

This was the second board:

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Rodwell	Nowosadzki	Meckstroth
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♠	All Pass

It was a peaceful enough board in the Open Room. North-South had little chance to contest the auction, at adverse vulnerability. Meckstroth led a diamond to the ace, and the ♦J was returned to the king. Declarer played the ace and king of trumps, continuing with the jack.

Rodwell won and played a low heart to partner's king, declarer ruffing the next heart and drawing the last trump. He played a third round of diamonds, hoping that a 3-3 split would give him a club discard. Not today, and that was +110.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Buras	Levin	Narkiewicz
-	-	1♠	2♠*
Pass	4♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

♠ Q642	♥ AJ3	♦ AQJ9	♣ 107
♠ 3	♥ Q1075	♦ 10753	♣ AJ64
♠ AKJ10975	♥ 6	♦ K82	♣ 53
♠ 8	♥ K9842	♦ 64	♣ KQ982

Wow! Grzegorz Narkiewicz risked a Michaels 2♠, red against white. That was both brave and surprising. He found a great hand opposite, and Levin had an automatic 4♠ bid over a heart game that would not have been made.

The ♣K lead was ducked, and Narkiewicz switched to a heart. Winning with the ace, Buras returned the ♣10 to dummy's jack. The ♣A was ruffed with the ♠2, overruffed with the ♠5. Levin played the ace, king and jack of trumps. He had to lose two diamond tricks and that was 500 away. The Michaels bid, which might on another day have cost a big number, pulled in 12 IMPs.

USA 1 had a chance to recover the lost IMPs on the next deal:

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A10864	♥ K82	♦ J98	♣ Q3
♠ J9	♥ 10	♦ K75	♣ AKJ10762
♠ 72	♥ A976543	♦ A10	♣ 94
♠ KQ53	♥ QJ	♦ Q6432	♣ 85

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Rodwell	Nowosadzki	Meckstroth
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	1♠	2♦*	2NT*
3♣	Pass	3♥	All Pass

There would be four losers in 4♥, perhaps only two in 5♣. Nowosadzki's 2♦ was a transfer to hearts and Meckstroth's 2NT was a spade raise. When Poland stopped in 3♥, the defenders claimed their spade tricks and later two heart tricks. It was +140 for Poland. Could the American East-West do better at the other table?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Buras	Levin	Narkiewicz
-	-	-	Pass
1♣	1♠	2♥	3♥*
3♠*	Pass	4♣	4♠
Pass	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Steve Weinstein's 3♠ implied good clubs and asked for a spade stopper. South's 4♠ over 4♣ was dubious, to put it politely. He had already announced a strong spade raise, and his side-suit holdings were very weak. After two passes, we were expecting Bobby Levin to double. USA1 could then collect +800 against a part-score at the other table. It would be a gain of 12 IMPs.

Bobby Levin preferred to bid 4NT, asking partner to choose between five-level contracts. Weinstein did not take long to select 5♣. If he could land this contract, it would still be a gain of 10 IMPs for the Americans.

Krzysztof Buras led the ♠A, his partner following with the ♠K. After a spade continuation to the queen, Narkiewicz switched to the ♣5. A long pause followed. Weinstein needed to ruff a diamond in dummy. If he intended to finesse South for the ♣Q, he would need to do it on the first round.

Why should he want to finesse, though? It was true that North-South had bid very high on their spade fit, but it was South who had bid strongly.

If anything, he might be short in clubs. Time ticked by; then the ♣J appeared on the table. North won with the queen and returned a trump, putting the club game two down. 8 IMPs were lost where 10 or 12 might have been gained.

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AK ♥ Q7 ♦ AQ9632 ♣ K85		♠ 97 ♥ A9842 ♦ 7 ♣ AQ1076	♠ J1065 ♥ J5 ♦ K1085 ♣ 432
		♠ Q8432 ♥ K1063 ♦ J4 ♣ J9	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
-	1♥	Pass	3♥
4♦	4♥	All Pass	

South's 3♥ was described as a mixed raise. Nowosadzki led the ♦K (♦9 from partner) and switched to the ♠J. Kalita won with the king and returned the ♦Q, ruffed by declarer. When trumps broke 2-2 and the ♣K was onside, the game was made for +420.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Buras</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Narkiewicz</i>
-	1♥	Pass	3♦
4♦	4♥	5♦	All Pass

Now it was Poland that had a chance to collect +800. Ace and king of hearts, followed by a ♣J switch. Should North not double 5♦, with two

aces in his hand? The required defence was found, but only +300 entered the Poland coffers. That was a loss of 3 IMPs instead of a gain of 9 IMPs.

Board 26. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ A ♥ A76 ♦ AQJ986 ♣ K54		♠ Q1093 ♥ J3 ♦ 1072 ♣ Q976	♠ 86542 ♥ Q10952 ♦ 543 ♣ -
		♠ KJ7 ♥ K84 ♦ K ♣ AJ10832	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
-	-	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

East-West had a game available in either red suit, but Kalita had nothing to say over the 1NT opening. At first glance this seemed a likely bad board for Poland. However, when West led the ♦A, dropping declarer's king, we could see that a substantial number of 100s might be harvested.

Kalita took six diamond tricks, no doubt enjoying the experience. East discarded the ♠8 and ♠6 (upside-down attitude) to show that he had (a) little interest in spades, and then (b) no interest at all in spades. The kibitzers cried 'No, no!' when East released one of his hearts on the sixth round of diamonds. Dummy, meanwhile, had thrown two hearts and a spade.

West switched to the ♥6, drawing the queen and king. Meckstroth cashed the ♣A, and East threw the ♠5. The ♣2 went to West's king and East discarded the ♥9. What attraction did he see in the ♠42 that he was keeping instead? The defenders could then take only two hearts, with their six diamonds, the ♠A and ♣K. Dummy's ♣Q claimed the last trick and the penalty was 400 instead of a possible 500.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Buras	Levin	Narkiewicz
-	-	Pass	1♣
Double	Pass	1♠	2♣
2♦	2NT	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

The Americans reached game in hearts, collecting +650 after a lead of the ♦K. That was a gain of 6 IMPs.

Board 29. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ A976 ♥ A62 ♦ Q653 ♣ Q7		♠ J102 ♥ KJ1043 ♦ 8 ♣ AKJ10	♠ K3 ♥ Q87 ♦ AKJ2 ♣ 8632
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Rodwell	Nowosadzki	Meckstroth
-	1♦	1♥	2♦*
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Meckstroth's 2♦ was inverted after the intervention. East led the ♣K, asking for unblock or upside-down count. To show three cards, West would normally follow with the ♣9. He actually played the ♣5. Perhaps he was worried about setting up a trick for dummy's ♣8 if declarer held ♣Q10.

East switched to the ♠J, won with dummy's king. A diamond to the queen was followed by a heart, East rising with the king. Still unwilling

to continue clubs, Nowosadzki returned the ♥J. Rodwell won with dummy's queen and cashed four rounds of diamonds. When he followed with the ♥A, East threw the ♣10.

On another day, the prolonged failure to cash the defenders' club tricks might have given away the contract. Here, Rodwell had only eight tricks. When he exited with a club, East took two club tricks and West scored an eventual spade. It was one down, as Nature had always intended.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Buras	Levin	Narkiewicz
-	1♣	1♥	1♠*
Pass	1NT	2♣	Double
All Pass			

Poland were about to bid 3NT, no doubt for a push board, when Levin took a second bid. He was doubled in 2♣, which seems an 800 touch on best defence. If the defenders force declarer in diamonds, he can make no more than his four trump tricks.

South led the ♣2 to the queen and king. He won the ♠10 with the king and played another trump. When declarer won and led the ♠J to North's ace, 800 was still available. Surely the defenders would now force declarer in diamonds? North could achieve the same result by giving his partner a spade ruff.

A diamond switch did come, South winning with the jack. He returned a club, however, and declarer was then able to draw trumps and score two spade tricks in the dummy. It was 'only 500', still good for a 12-IMP Polish gain.

Poland took the final set 33-19, winning the semi-final by 186-134. If they have seen the score from the other semi-final, they may be a bit nervous about tomorrow. Still, that won't stop them celebrating tonight. Very well played!

NETHERLANDS - POLAND Bermuda Bowl F3

No-one could challenge the right of these two fine teams to play for the biggest prize in world bridge. Roland Wald and I were hoping for some great boards to watch, as we took our seats for the final session of the first day.

Let's take a look at the first swing of any size:

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ AKQ852 ♥ 1076 ♦ 72 ♣ A10	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		♠ 3 ♥ KQ9853 ♦ AJ54 ♣ 94
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ J1064 ♥ A2 ♦ KQ1063 ♣ K2	♠ 97 ♥ J4 ♦ 98 ♣ QJ87653										

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♦	1♠	2♦*	Pass
2♥	2♠	3♥	All Pass

Bauke Muller's 2♦ was a transfer to hearts. Four Hearts was a great game to be in. What had gone wrong?

East could not be sure of the diamond length opposite, nor did he know of any heart support. West would be forced to rebid 2♥ on many mundane hands without support. Even so, East must have considered bidding 4♥ instead of 3♥. There could so easily be ten tricks in the red suits.

North led the ♠A, receiving the ♠7 from his partner (upside-down count). When he continued with the ♠2, Simon De Wijs discarded a club from dummy and won with the ♠J. The red suits were good for the remaining tricks and it was +230 for the Netherlands.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Buras</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Narkiewicz</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	2♠	3♠*	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

There seemed to be no risk attached to re-opening with 2♠, but Van Prooijen must have been surprised when his opponents were at the five-level at his next turn. He led the ♣A, followed by the ♠A. Declarer won the switch back to clubs, drew trumps and was soon writing +600 on his card. It was 9 IMPs to Poland.

If I tell you that the next five boards produced a score-line of 6-3, you will understand why I now leap-frog to Board 13.

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ K96 ♥ A2 ♦ 863 ♣ Q10852	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		♠ J75 ♥ 943 ♦ 10742 ♣ A97
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ 1032 ♥ QJ1086 ♦ KJ5 ♣ KJ	♠ AQ84 ♥ K75 ♦ AQ9 ♣ 643										

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
–	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

North's 3♣ was Puppet Stayman. A heart lead would be necessary to beat 3NT and the Great Dealer had decided to make this easy for West. Kalita won with dummy's ace, crossed to the ♠A and led the ♣3. What should

West do on this trick?

If West goes up with the ♣K, declarer can duck the next round of hearts and make the contract. East will have no heart to play when he takes his ♣A. De Wijs gave the matter some consideration, eventually playing the ♣J. He could reason that declarer would surely have crossed to the ♣A at trick 2 if he held that card. East won the first round of clubs the ace and continued hearts. Declarer won the third round and led another club, going one down.

♠ 1032	♠ K96	♠ J75						
♥ QJ1086	♥ A2	♥ 943						
♦ KJ5	♦ 863	♦ 10742						
♣ KJ	♣ Q10852	♣ A97						
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>			W	N	E	S		
W	N	E						
S								
♠ AQ84	♠ AQ84	♠ AQ84						
♥ K75	♥ K75	♥ K75						
♦ AQ9	♦ AQ9	♦ AQ9						
♣ 643	♣ 643	♣ 643						

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
-	-	2♣	Pass
3♣	3♠	4♦	4♠
All Pass			

In the Tarzan strong club system, 2♣ showed six clubs and 11-15 points. Since Muller's 4♦ would force his side to at least 5♣, it was rather surprising that he allowed the opponents' contract of 4♠ to stand.

Michał Nowosadzki ruffed the ♣A lead and then had a choice of red suits to play. When he reached for a heart, West won with the ♥K and forced declarer with a ♣10 return. Declarer now found the necessary switch to diamonds, leading the ♦4. After prolonged thought, Muller played low on the first round of diamonds. Declarer then scored an over-trick, for +450.

East should have won with the ♦K, but a further club force would be unsuccessful. Declarer ruffs, crosses to the ♦J and plays the ♠J, covered by the king and ace. He can then play the ♠Q and two good diamonds, ditching the ♥J10 from dummy. He loses a trump trick but collects 420.

If instead East cashes the ♥A and then plays a club, declarer has the entries to pick up the trump suit for no loss. (Note that East's 4♦ bid had allowed declarer to place him with 0=3=4=6 shape at an early stage.)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Buras</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Narkiewicz</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
-	-	1♣*	Pass
1♥	1♠	Double	3♠
Pass	4♠	Double	All Pass

Again declarer ruffed the ♣A lead and led a heart, won by West's king. This time, declarer had no clear picture from the bidding of what East's shape was likely to be.

West forced declarer to ruff a club. Van Prooijen now missed the necessary switch to diamonds, continuing with a second heart. East won with the ace and played a club to partner's queen, ruffed by declarer. A heart to the queen stood up and the ♦10 was run to East's king. The ♣K then

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Buras</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Narkiewicz</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

At this table, Louk Verhees ducked the first round of hearts. He won the heart continuation in dummy and crossed to the ♠Q to lead a low club. Krzysztof Buras played the ♣J, and the game was one down for no swing.

In the D'Orsi Seniors final, Alan Mould made 3NT when the Danish West went in with the ♣K.

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ AQ9532	♠ —						
♥ 982	♥ A73						
♦ AQ94	♦ K862						
♣ —	♣ AK6532						
♠ K104	♠ J876						
♥ K654	♥ QJ10						
♦ 753	♦ J10						
♣ Q108	♣ J974						
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>		W	N	E	S		
W	N	E					
S							

killed the contract. Declarer ruffed and had to concede a trump trick to West. It was 11 IMPs to Poland, the only double-digit swing of the session.

You will judge from my continuation with a part-score deal, that the fare offered in this set was meagre. Still, those who go fishing do not always return with a full basket.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ AKJ6 ♥ 8742 ♦ AQJ ♣ Q2	♠ 874 ♥ AKQ ♦ 32 ♣ KJ1096 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 109532 ♥ J109 ♦ 1098 ♣ 75 ♠ Q ♥ 653 ♦ K7654 ♣ A843
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
1♣*	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

West broke the transfer and ended too high, even though the ♦K and ♠Q were well placed. I suppose it was fair enough with 17 points. I certainly don't agree with one of my fellow commentators that you should always break with four-card support, even with a minimum. When no-one has bid on the first round, you have every chance of buying it in 2♠. You might be more inclined towards pre-emption when the suit was hearts.

North led the ♥K, partner showing an even number, and cashed one more heart. He then switched to a diamond, drawing the king and ace. De Wijs drew trumps and exited with a heart. Was North half-asleep? No, he switched to the ♣J and the defenders scored two tricks in the suit for one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Buras</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Narkiewicz</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣*	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

A transfer, a break and a re-transfer led to the same 3♠ contract. This time Van Prooijen cashed three hearts, before switching to the ♦2. Verhees contributed the ♦7, declarer winning with the queen. Buras was then able to draw trumps and play the established ♥8 for a club discard. The contract was made for +140.

We can now appreciate Nowosadzki's wisdom in switching after only two rounds of hearts at the other table. Well defended!

I don't want to supply short measure on my last report of this great tournament, so I will show you one more deal from this low-scoring set:

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ97632 ♥ K6 ♦ A10 ♣ Q4	♠ 8 ♥ AQ10732 ♦ K64 ♣ 532 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 54 ♥ J95 ♦ J873 ♣ AJ87 ♠ KJ10 ♥ 84 ♦ Q952 ♣ K1096
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>De Wijs</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>Kalita</i>
1♣*	3♥	Double	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Who was the hero of this auction? It was Nowosadzki. If he had bid a mundane 2♥ instead of 3♥, East-West might not have bid so high.

North's club lead went to South's king, setting up a discard for declarer's diamond loser. A diamond lead would have allowed declarer to set up a discard for his club loser, so nothing was lost. South switched to a heart and ruffed the third round of the suit with the ♠K, declarer discarding the ♦10. That was one down.

♠ 8	♥ AQ10732	♦ K64	♣ 532
♠ AQ97632	♥ K6	♦ A10	♣ Q4
♠ 54	♥ J95	♦ J873	♣ AJ87
♠ KJ10	♥ 84	♦ Q952	♣ K1096

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Buras	Van Prooijen	Narkiewicz	Verhees
1♠	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Again a club was led, South this time inserting the ♣9. Buras won and played the ♠A. He then crossed to the ♣A and played a trump towards the queen. It was +140 and 6 IMPs to Poland, who took the set by 39 IMPs to 17. The first day of the final ended with the Netherlands leading by 91-90.

May I end by thanking the BBO VuGraph operators for their sterling efforts. How they perform such an exhausting task for two weeks, I do not know. It was a very welcome innovation to provide such comprehensive VuGraph coverage for all four main championships, rather than 80% going just to the Bermuda Bowl. My thanks also go to the great Monika Kummel, who set the bulletins so attractively, distracting the readers' attention from any errors committed by elderly writers.

I must certainly commend also the organisers of this great tournament in Wuhan. The format of a complete round-robin, followed by two-day knockout matches was excellent. The tournament website was magnificent – a great service for bridge fans and writers worldwide. Many thanks to everyone involved!



Obituary - Elly Ducheyne

Elly Ducheyne

The first lady of the Press Room, Elly Ducheyne passed away on 15 October 2019.

WBF President Gianarrigo Rona said:

'She was the unforgotten devoted manager of the Press Room until her retirement in 2003 and a great friend to our bridge family.'

President Emeritus José Damiani had this to say:

'I worked closely with Elly for many years, initially in the EBL and later on in the WBF.'

'It was a time where journalists attended the Championship sites to get immediate information and human contact. It was time before the internet where Elly welcomed everybody with kindness and efficiency. She guided newcomers, and took care of everyone's needs. Life has changed and now most of the time relationships in the Press Room are conducted online, but I will always remember Elly's welcoming smile and good humour. I address to Jan, her brother and new chief of the Press Room with the same characteristics as his sister, my personal condolences and friendship.'

Since the late 70s she and her late husband Rene Ducheyne managed the Press Room for many years together. After Rene's death in 1991 she continued until 2003, the year she retired. She was an honorary member of the IBPA.

In The Netherlands she was active for the NBB - the Dutch Bridge Federation. When, back in 1992, the Hoechst Company announced that its long time support for one of the world's best bridge tournaments would be coming to an end, most organisers would have decided enough was enough. However, Elly sought out and found a new sponsor, the famous Forbo Linoleum group, so that as usual the world's finest players could travel to Scheveningen to test their skills.

Elly was the Dutch host/organiser for the Juan-les-Pins Bridge Festival for many years as well as a bridge teacher for wives of diplomats in The Hague.

She was the first person to receive an honorary lifetime subscription to Bridge Magazine.

She was also famous for her hospitality and the frequent bridge-dinners with (international) bridge friends, good food and fine wines at her house. However, the last couple of years she retired more and more from the bridge scene.

Bridge meant the world to her.



Dutch Treat

As a tribute to Elly Ducheyne we reproduce a piece that was first published several years ago.

Memory Lane

I have lost count of the number of trips I have made to The Hague and Scheveningen to either play or work at the many outstanding events that have taken place here.

When, back in 1992, the Hoechst Company announced that its long time support for one of the world's best bridge tournaments would be coming to an end, most organisers would have decided enough was enough. However, the remarkable Elly Ducheyne sought out and found a new sponsor, the famous Forbo Linoleum group.

It was in that same year alongside Richard Winter, Brian Senior & Steve Ray that I managed to win the last edition of the Hoechst and the following year we almost won the first edition of the Forbo.

In 1994 Jan van Cleef reported this deal from the match between Ray and Germany:

Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q642 ♥ KQ4 ♦ 9652 ♣ 85		♠ J87 ♥ 1052 ♦ Q3 ♣ AQ1093
♠ 95 ♥ AJ763 ♦ K74 ♣ J42		♠ AK103 ♥ 98 ♦ AJ108 ♣ K76

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zenkel</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Nippgen</i>	<i>Horton</i>
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Sabine Zenkel is better known as Sabine Auken!

West led the two of diamonds (In the other room West led a spade for the jack and ace and declarer ran the nine of hearts. East won with the ten and switched to the queen of clubs, going back to spades when it held, ensuring one down) and declarer took the queen with the ace and ran the nine of hearts. East won and switched to the queen of clubs. When that held East continued with the ace of clubs and a club. With open cards declarer can play on hearts, but declarer followed a different course, crossing to dummy with a diamond and playing the nine of spades, running it when East followed with the eight. West could win with the queen, but now the spades were good and declarer had three spades, four diamonds, a heart and a club.

If East covers the nine of spades declarer wins, cashes two diamonds (forcing West to pitch a spade) and then plays two rounds of hearts, forcing West to lead into the ♠K10.

That same year we encountered this deal in our match against the Dutch women:

Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 752 ♥ AQ5 ♦ A104 ♣ QJ109		♠ Q943 ♥ 76 ♦ 652 ♣ K643 ♠ AK106 ♥ 9843 ♦ QJ73 ♣ 5 ♠ J8 ♥ KJ102 ♦ K98 ♣ A872
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In the Closed Room Steve Ray had taken four tricks in his contract of 1NT and was hoping for a swing.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Winter</i>		<i>Horton</i>	
–	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Double*	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Dble Asking for a spade lead

West led the queen of clubs and declarer won in dummy and played a heart for the jack and queen. Winning the return of the nine of clubs with the ace declarer tried a spade to the nine, and East won with the ten and switched to the queen of diamonds, covered by the king and ace. West drew trumps and the defenders were not hard pressed to take the rest for six down, -1400.

To illustrate what a wonderful topsy-turvy game bridge can be we won our group in 1996 -and then finished a fine last in the final!

In 1997 The European Pairs Championships were played in The Hague and I penned the following article:

The Multicoloured Tulip

Alexandre Dumas’s ‘The Black Tulip’ was published in 1850. All the action is set in 17th Century Holland and The Hague features prominently in the early chapters. For those not familiar with the story, it involves the efforts of Cornelius Van Barle to produce the first black tulip, despite being wrongfully imprisoned for the possession of incriminating papers left with him by his godfather, of one of the two De Witte brothers, who are brutally murdered at the beginning of the story. It also tells of his romance with Rosa, the daughter of his jailer, Gryphus, and the efforts of his jealous rival (for the tulip, not Rosa!) Isaac Boxtel, to steal the tulip from him.

The tulip was first introduced into Holland in 1571 and in no time at all Amsterdam, Haarlem, Hoorn, Utrecht and Rotterdam were set up as centres of a new trade that continues today. What is not so well known is that Dumas had originally intended that the book be linked to bridge, which, like the tulip, was sweeping through Holland at the time. The grand finale was to be a match between teams captained by William of Orange and Van Barle. We have been fortunate enough to obtain part of that long lost manuscript and we reproduce an extract from the soon to be published novel entitled ‘The Multicoloured Tulip’.

It had, thought Cornelius Van Barle, by anybody’s standards, been a pretty poor month. Following the death of his father, his lifelong bridge partner, the other two members of his all conquering team, Cornelius and John De Witte, had been viciously murdered by a mob in The Hague. It was rumoured that their deaths had been planned by their arch rivals, the team led by William of Orange. The same day that they had been murdered he had been arrested on a charge of hiding seditious papers in his house. So far as he was aware, for he had never found the time to look at them, the documents handed to him by his godfather were nothing more than his latest ideas on bridge, which broke new ground in the development of multi-meaning opening bids. After a brief trial he had been sentenced to life imprisonment and was quickly despatched to the prison at Loevestein. It was a miserable existence, enlightened only by the attachment he had formed with Gryphus’s daughter Rosa and the occasional game of bridge which her father from time to time allowed. Cornelius had taught Rosa to play and that evening after supper they settled down to play against Gryphus and Isaac Boxtel. Cornelius had

no idea that Boxtel was determined to try and obtain a copy of his bidding system, which he intended to publish and claim as his own. This was one of the early boards:

Dealer East. North/South Game.

♠ KQ95 ♥ 102 ♦ QJ1063 ♣ A3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J10863 ♥ Q3 ♦ 94 ♣ KQ104	♠ 74 ♥ A7654 ♦ 7 ♣ 98762
	♠ A2 ♥ KJ98 ♦ AK852 ♣ J5		

West	North	East	South
Rosa	Gryphus	Van Barle	Boxtel
—	—	2♥*	2NT
Pass	3♥*	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

- 2♥ Weak, either hearts or spades and a minor
- 3♥ Transfer

Just as in modern times, Dutch players were fond of aggressive opening bids, especially with weak hands. Van Barle was using one of the many multimeaning bids that were popular then. They also knew all about transfers. Not seeing where declarer could make any tricks, Rosa decided to double.

The opening lead was the queen of diamonds. Boxtall did not view the dummy with any great enthusiasm. Prospects were poor and with no particular plan in mind he ducked the opening lead, hoping West might give him some help. Rosa spent some time considering her next play. They were using upside down signals, so it was probable that the seven of diamonds was a singleton. She had a feeling that a low spade might be best but eventually she opted for the ace and another club. That was better

thought Boxtel who could now see his way to eight tricks. He cashed his remaining club winners, discarding a spade and a diamond from hand and paused for thought. East's hand-type was now obvious and as long as he held the ten of hearts the contract could be made. When declarer played a heart to his nine Rosa won with the ten and exited with a low spade. Declarer could make only six tricks and was -800. Rosa and Van Barle continued to have the better of things throughout the evening.

This was the final deal:

Dealer North. East/West Game.

♠ 5 ♥ K1083 ♦ AQJ74 ♣ KQ8	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q7 ♥ AQ65 ♦ K10983 ♣ 54	♠ K109864 ♥ J972 ♦ 62 ♣ 9
	♠ AJ32 ♥ 4 ♦ 5 ♣ AJ107632		

West	North	East	South
Rosa	Gryphus	Van Barle	Boxtel
—	1♦	1♥	2♣
2♥	3♣	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4NT*	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Boxtel's bid of Four Clubs was an idea of the De Witte brothers which had appeared in all the Dutch magazines of the time. The reply of 4NT promised two key cards and the queen of trumps.

West led the two of hearts. Boxtall put in dummy's eight and East won the trick with the queen. He returned a trump which was taken in dummy. Declarer's first move was to try to bring down the jack of hearts. He played the king from dummy, forcing East to cover, and ruffed in hand. He continued with the ace of spades and a spade ruff, noting the fall of

East's queen. He was disappointed when West's heart on the next trick proved to be the nine. It was time to take stock. He could finesse either way in diamonds or he could ruff another spade, hoping East had started with ♠KQ7. Eventually he decided to combine the two possibilities and ruffed another spade. When the king did not appear, he ruffed a heart back to hand and drew the remaining trump. Eventually he took the losing diamond finesse and was one down. Van Barle smiled inwardly. The advice he had received about overcalling with length in the opener's suit from old Friar Lawrence was not so bad after all. That night as he lay in his cell, Van Barle contemplated his situation. Surely there must be something in life more exciting than bridge? Why of course, there were tulips! Suppose he were to invent a new variety perhaps, just like one of his many bridge conventions, one of many colours. Of course, it would be named the Multicoloured Tulip.

In the last edition of the Forbo in 2002 I played with my good friend Jean Paul Meyer, alongside Pierre Adad and Pierre Guillamin.

On this deal, I was the victim of a brilliant opening lead:

♠ Q10543
♥ AQ
♦ 953
♣ K103

♠ 9
♥ KJ973
♦ AQ8
♣ A542

West	North	East	South
<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Meyer</i>	<i>Zhong</i>	<i>Horton</i>
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the six of spades, and after a long think, East puts in the jack and switches to the seven of diamonds. You play low, but West wins with the ten and plays back a spade to East's king. The jack of diamonds comes next.

It was obvious at the table that the diamond finesse was wrong, so I went up with the ace, unblocked the hearts, came to hand with a club and continued with hearts. If West is looking at the ace of spades, king of diamonds and queen and jack of clubs he will not be able to survive when the last heart is cashed. Sadly, this was the full deal:

Dealer North. East/West Vul

♠ A86 ♥ 1065 ♦ K10642 ♣ Q9		♠ Q10543 ♥ AQ ♦ 953 ♣ K103 ♠ KJ72 ♥ 842 ♦ J7 ♣ J876 ♠ 9 ♥ KJ973 ♦ AQ8 ♣ A542
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West was not under any pressure and the contract had to go one down. At the other table West led an uninspired diamond. Full marks to the late, great, John Armstrong for his brilliant lead.

Here is a deal for the textbooks:

♠ J109752 ♥ 5 ♦ KQ10 ♣ Q83		♠ A3 ♥ KQ10 ♦ J63 ♣ AKJ62 ♠ K84 ♥ A873 ♦ A974 ♣ 97 ♠ Q6 ♥ J9642 ♦ 852 ♣ 1054
-------------------------------------	--	---

West North East South

ChodorowskaMeyer Chodorowski Horton

1♣	Pass	Pass	
1♠	Double	Redble	2♥
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass


When North led the ace of clubs South pretended to have a doubleton, playing the ten, followed by the five on the next round. There was some surprise when South followed to the third club, but after declarer had won and played the jack of spades, North went up with the ace and played a fourth club to promote the queen of spades.


Although we didn't qualify for the main final we won our group which ensured I could plunder the local wine shops the following day – just as I had done ten years before.

Ron Tacchi was also in The Hague in 1997 and penned the following reports:

Saturday saw the start of the Mixed Pairs. Rather than follow one pair and be accused of casting the 'commentator's curse' on the poor souls I discovered that in the C Section on the high numbered tables the boards remained stationary and the pairs moved, so I could see what different outcomes befell the contestants. Boards 25, 26 and 27 particularly came under my gaze.

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ Q103 ♥ KQJ862 ♦ A4 ♣ J3		♠ K982 ♥ 53 ♦ QJ86 ♣ A104 ♠ A7 ♥ 10974 ♦ K732 ♣ 985 ♠ J654 ♥ A ♦ 1095 ♣ KQ762
------------------------------------	---	--

♠ J109752 ♥ 5 ♦ KQ10 ♣ Q83		♠ A3 ♥ KQ10 ♦ J63 ♣ AKJ62 ♠ K84 ♥ A873 ♦ A974 ♣ 97 ♠ Q6 ♥ J9642 ♦ 852 ♣ 1054
-------------------------------------	---	---


At three tables the good contract of 3♥ was reached and made on the nose to give nearly 60% to East West.

On one table North South competed to 3♠ and West took a rosy view of his six-card major and chanced game. North fell from grace and snatched defeat from the jaws of victory when he lead a small spade giving the contract away and 95% to East West.

My final story is when North/South competed to 3♠ and were allowed to play there. They were booked for a good result as going one off undoubled was worth almost 80% of the matchpoints.

On the lead of the king of hearts declarer performe won with the ace and she now had to tackle the trump suit. The majority of declarers who were in this contract took the simple line of playing small to the ace and consequently lost three trump tricks. If you play small towards the king and play the eight (or cover West's card if is an honour) you will have a lot more information on the next round when you play towards the king. It seems to me that playing the king at the first opportunity is putting too many eggs in one basket. By delaying the decision you may immediately find a favourable lie of the cards or be better placed at the second attempt to know what to do. Double dummy of course East West can always make two trump tricks and take a diamond ruff along with their two club tricks, but defenders do not always do the right thing and there was an additional 15% available for making the contract.

Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 875 ♥ Q43 ♦ AKJ42 ♣ Q3		♠ J62 ♥ A1096 ♦ 85 ♣ 10852 ♠ A10943 ♥ J ♦ Q963 ♣ 976 ♠ KQ ♥ K8752 ♦ 107 ♣ AKJ5
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East frequently opened the bidding with a Muiderberg 2♠ bid which was

freely supported by his partner to the three-level. On two occasions East West won the contract with 3♠ and lost their five top losers for one-off and just above average. On one occasion East elected to pass and South tried a slightly off centre 1NT which was passed out. The defence have an obvious six tricks and declarer would appear to have seven but on the run of the diamonds declarer did not discard optimally (she should have discarded two clubs and a heart from dummy and three hearts from hand) and so lost communication between herself and dummy. This resulted in scoring less than 20%.

Twice North South arrived in the heart game after the Muiderberg opening. One failed by two tricks and the other by one. In both cases East/West started with two top diamonds. The first continued with a spade to her partner's ace who got off lead with a small club which declarer took with a high honour. The other continued with another diamond presenting declarer with a ruff and discard as she ruffed in dummy and discarded a club from hand. After the opening two-bid showing a minimum of nine cards in a major and a minor it seems to me that if the trumps split 3-1 it is much more likely that West will be the culprit and therefore the correct way to address the trump suit is to cash the king first. When the jack falls from East one applies the theory of restricted choice and finesse against West for the missing queen. Now all you have to do is correctly guess the club suit (not trivial) to bring home the contract.

Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ J10873 ♥ 3 ♦ K873 ♣ 974		♠ A62 ♥ A987 ♦ AQ652 ♣ K	♠ Q3 ♥ KQ2 ♦ 109 ♣ AJ10653
	♠ K954 ♥ J10654 ♦ J4 ♣ Q2		

A typical auction was:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♦	2♣	Double*
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

10 tricks were not difficult for North South, just losing two trumps and the ace of clubs. At one table, South opened 2♣ and from my less than limited understanding of the explanation in Dutch I deduced it showed a weak hand with the majors. North responded 2NT, alerted, and East intervened with 3♣. There was now a system malfunction as North transposed South's 3♥ bid to 4♠, whereupon West expressed an opinion with a double and was rewarded by defeating the contract by two tricks and a 95% score.

On my final view of this hand North opened 1♦ and East tried 3♣. This appeared to cause East some difficulty and after a long pause she extracted the 5♣ card from her bidding box and North immediately rippedosted with a red card; this time the contract was three light rewarding North South with 97%.

More Haste Less Speed

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

I saw this hand a couple of times and in both cases a sudden leap to 3NT killed the auction. A third of the pairs reached a slam. All but two in 6NT, one pair bid 6♣ whilst Anneke van der Meer & Rob Jagroop reached the

grand slam in clubs which made as the diamonds broke 3-3. Notice that 6NT always makes. ‘Not on a heart lead’ some of you might say, but you would be wrong.

Let us take the case of North being declarer and East leads a heart (otherwise declarer ducks a diamond and claims when the suit breaks 3-3). The ten is covered by West’s king, taken by North’s ace. North runs the clubs, comes to hand with a diamond and then leads towards the heart jack establishing his twelfth trick. If South is declarer and West finds the heart lead, declarer plays low from dummy letting East win with his queen and takes the heart return with the ace in dummy. I watched one South now lazily cash out for eleven tricks. Had she bothered to allow for the small chance that one hand guarded both the diamonds and the hearts then that hand would be irrevocably squeezed, and on this occasion that was the situation. If South cashed her three spades and then her five clubs West cannot keep three diamonds and the king of hearts, notice it was the nine of diamonds on the South hand which made the squeeze possible, but I doubt there are many Scotsmen here at this tournament.

Between the sessions there was a medley of pastas and salads provided by the Holland Casino to fortify the competitors. Copious cream cakes followed, evidence of which could be found on my keyboard.

This hand posed declarer problems:

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K54 ♥ 109653 ♦ 1082 ♣ K3	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #90ee90; padding: 5px;"> <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	♠ A ♥ AJ2 ♦ AQ9765 ♣ AQ4	♠ Q8 ♥ Q87 ♦ KJ3 ♣ 109865
N						
W E						
S						
	♠ J1097632 ♥ K4 ♦ 4 ♣ J72					

Only three pairs reached a slam on the East West cards, all in diamonds, and all made it. After a diamond opening by East when South pre-empted

in spades it aided declarer in the play of the hand.

You have to decide early on to play North for three trumps (including both the honours). As you can see the entry situation is very delicate – you need to finesse twice in trumps and then play the heart suit for one loser. Having decided to play South for a singleton diamond you will have to play her for a doubleton heart. The idea being you can take a diamond finesse by entering dummy with the king of clubs, stripping South of her only trump and can now play the hearts without risking a ruff. *(If North covers the first diamond with the jack declarer might easily go down. Editor)* You will need to ruff your second high club honour in dummy to create another entry for the appropriate finesse. *(First you have to play the jack of hearts from your hand! Editor)* I think you will find it rewarding to plug the hand into Deep Finesse to appreciate all the subtleties of the play of the hand in 6♦ (or even 6♥).

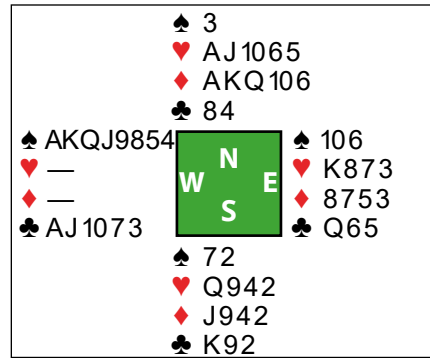
Butler Pairs

On Sunday we started the Butler Pairs, though I could find no sign of Jeeves and Hudson as a pair. I watched boards 16, 17, 18 for three rounds and then I moved to B7 to watch the boards pass me by. I was to watch Marcus Been and Chris van Gestel for five rounds, until they had played boards 16, 17 and 18. I chose a good hand for my first foray to table B7.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ AKQJ9854 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ AJ1073	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #90ee90; padding: 5px;"> <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	♠ 106 ♥ K873 ♦ 8753 ♣ Q65	♠ 3 ♥ AJ1065 ♦ AKQ106 ♣ 84
N						
W E						
S						
	♠ 72 ♥ Q942 ♦ J942 ♣ K92					

West	North	East	South
2♣*	2♥	Pass	3♥
3♠	4♥	Double	Pass
5♣	All Pass		
	2♣	Game forcing	



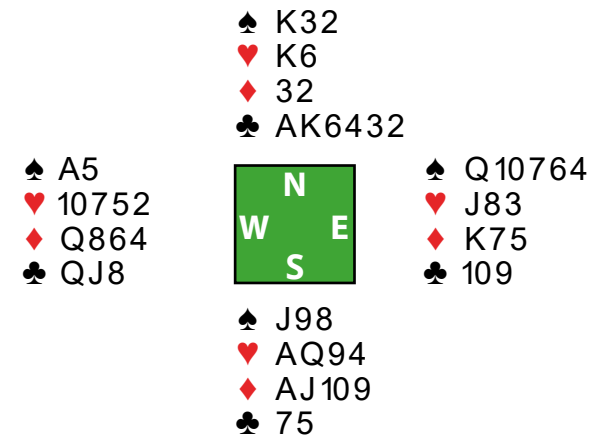
This is a test for partnership understandings. I wonder how many of you have discussed auctions after a game-forcing opening and a barrage from the opposition. What should East's initial Pass mean? It was not alerted at my table. What would a Double have meant? I think no one was more surprised than West when his 5♣ bid was passed. Whatever the merits or demerits of the auction it was 10 IMPs to North/South. Checking the frequencies on this deal I found one instance where North/South played in 5♦ doubled. I cannot imagine holding the West cards that I would allow the opposition to be playing the hand. As you can see with the ten of spades as an entry and the king of clubs onside with a 3-2 break in the suit, thirteen tricks were not difficult to come by, though only half the field managed this feat. Obviously those playing in clubs would not risk crossing to dummy in spades and taking a club finesse, but a significant proportion of those playing in spades only made twelve tricks.

The grand slam is not a good proposition, less than twenty per cent. *(Looking at the deal now, West might have jumped to 6♣. Editor)*

The board was very memorable for the organiser, Hans Metselaar and his partner Allie Hoensyok, but not for a good result. At their table West opened an agricultural 6♠ and North believing him tried 7♦ but this just goaded West into bidding one more. They were the only pair to bid the grand slam, so did they score the most points? No, for at one table the contract was 6♠ redoubled making plus one for a score 2470 as opposed to 2210 for 7♠.

The next board gave declarer a chance to show he could take every possibility to make his contract. At Butler scoring the emphasis is on making your contract; whilst overtrick IMPs are welcome the loss of a cold game gambling for an extra trick does not stack up with the odds, so as a general rule it is safety first at this type of scoring.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
–	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

After a standard bidding sequence North received the lead of ♠4 won by West who returned the suit. North ducked and won the third round with his king. There are several lines open to declarer and your grand mother would cash the ace and king of clubs, play a third round and make plus one. Whilst practical in its approach it is not the best line as you will fail if it is East who has the long clubs. The other possibilities include playing clubs from dummy, ducking if West plays the queen at any point.

You can also take two finesses in diamonds and hope for split honours with East holding honour third and then you hope that the J10 of hearts are trebleton.

Declarer's first move was to a small diamond towards dummy with the nine losing to the queen. West tried a mildly deceptive small club which declarer took with the ace and took a successful second finesse in diamonds. He is now up to eight tricks and the ninth can come from three suits. He should cash the ace of diamonds and if the king drops (which it does in this case) he is home free. If East urns up with four diamonds then according to the law of vacant places West is odds on to hold more clubs than East (declarer has seen nine pointed cards in East's hand as opposed

to five in West) so he should cash the other high club. If both opponents follow then he takes a deep breath and plays a third round for West to win and again he has his contract. Should East discard on the second club (West won't as it would mean he had seven hearts and did not speak non-vulnerable) then you are reduced to playing for the J10 of hearts to be trebleton.


As you can see it is almost impossible to fail with the actual layout of the cards, though there was one pair who proved me wrong.

Butler Pairs – Second Session

Since before 2000 I have attended many tournaments working on the Daily Bulletins.

This was the first time I had the opportunity to kibitz a regular member of the team, Jos Jacobs. With Jos lying in fifth place a good second session might see him in the money and provide a story. He was playing with Marjo Chorus, also a frequent visitor to European and World Championships as a journalist. They gave me an interesting deal:

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ A108 ♥ KQ ♦ J1054 ♣ J1054		♠ KJ743 ♥ A108 ♦ A65 ♣ 97
♠ 9 ♥ J75432 ♦ K72 ♣ AK8		

Jacobs and Chorus did not seem to have a great opportunity on this hand as the opponents subsided in 2♠ when 4♠ might make on a non-heart lead.

Chorus got off to the best start by leading a heart forcing declarer to win in dummy. Declarer now cashed the ace of trumps and noted the fall of the ♠9 from South. Perhaps believing an old saying that 'the queen lies with the nine' declarer now led a small spade to the king and was disappointed to see South discard a heart. He crossed to dummy with


a heart and tried the diamond jack ducked to South's king. Chorus now gave Jacobs a heart ruff and he cashed the queen of spades before exiting with a club. Chorus cashed both the ace and king of clubs, and played a third round forcing declarer to ruff. That left him with a diamond loser to fail by one trick. 7 IMPs to Chorus and Jacobs.

Let us examine the play in 4♠ after interference by South in hearts. On a heart lead declarer has no chance (the lead takes out early an important entry to dummy) other than an egregious defensive error. No one other than a results merchant would criticise South for leading a high club honour and following up with a heart to dummy. Declarer's plan must be to set up a club to discard a diamond loser. After the interference by South the odds must favour North having the trump length. Declarer must husband entries to dummy both to set up a club trick and be able to get to it. Thus to tackle trumps he must start with a small one towards hand, inserting the jack and noting the fall of the nine. The only winning continuation for declarer is to play the nine of clubs. If South takes his king then declarer can subsequently take a ruffing finesse against North's queen and if he ducks the declarer can ruff out South's king. Assuming South takes the trick and gets off lead with a heart, declarer now takes the ruffing club finesse against North and then enters dummy with the ace of trumps to cash the established club.

Hors D'Oeuvre

Before today's main course here is an attractive deal from Wednesday:

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ J864 ♥ 652 ♦ AK72 ♣ 104		♠ A7 ♥ AQJ8 ♦ Q5 ♣ KQJ86
♠ 9 ♥ 109 ♦ J9843 ♣ A9753		
♠ KQ10532 ♥ K743 ♦ 106 ♣ 2		

Open Room

West North East South

Rob Donkersloot

Pim Coppens

Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3♥*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

3♣ Puppet Stayman
 3♦ No five card major
 3♥ Spades

♠ J864	♠ 9	♠ A7
♥ 652	♥ 109	♥ AQJ8
♦ AK72	♦ J9843	♦ Q5
♣ 104	♣ A9753	♣ KQJ86
		♠ KQ10532
		♥ K743
		♦ 106
		♣ 2

Knowing that West held four spades South led the three of hearts, but it proved to be costly. Declarer won with the queen and played a club to the ten and ace. North returned a heart and declarer won and cashed two top clubs, pitching spades from dummy. When South discarded he played the jack of hearts and South won and switched to the ten of diamonds. Declarer won in hand with the queen and cashed the eight of hearts to reach this position:

♠ —	♠ —	♠ A7
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ J98	♦ —	♦ 5
♣ 97	♣ —	♣ J8
♠ J8	♠ —	♠ KQ105
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ AK7	♦ —	♦ 6
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —

When declarer cashed the ace of spades North had to surrender an eleventh trick. (Best to avoid discarding a diamond which would allow declarer to collect the last trick with the ♦7 – the beer card!)

It's a Knock Out

It's a Knockout was a British comedy game show first broadcast in 1966. It was adapted from the French show *Intervilles*, and was part of the

international *Jeux Sans Frontières* franchise. The games might best be described as school sports days for adults. To get the flavour check out this classic clip – the **penguin game** from Aix-Les-Bains, France in 1974: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_X8EhnwM9g

On Friday the competitors contested the bridge version of the event – without the costumes!

I decided to follow the fortunes of Wilma den Broeder & Cobie Hendriksen, who were up against Nicolien van der Meer & Anneke Draaisma (who have only been playing bridge for a year!)

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 94	♠ A1052
♥ 742	♥ 10
♦ A84	♦ Q97532
♣ 106543	♣ KQ
♠ QJ86	♠ K73
♥ KJ853	♥ AQ96
♦ K	♦ J106
♣ A87	♣ J92

West	North	East	South
<i>Wilma</i>	<i>Nicolian</i>	<i>Cobie</i>	<i>Ineke</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

South led the two of clubs and declarer won in hand, unblocked the clubs and played a diamond for the king and ace. When North innocently played a third club declarer pitched her losing heart and ran the queen of spades to South's king. She could not be prevented from establishing the diamonds and had eleven tricks.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ K8 ♥ KQ75 ♦ QJ972 ♣ J6	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ AJ7 ♥ 84 ♦ AK10865 ♣ K5	♠ 9642 ♥ AJ9 ♦ 3 ♣ 109742
-----------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Wilma</i>	<i>Nicolian</i>	<i>Cobie</i>	<i>Ineke</i>
Pass	1♦	Double	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Wilma would have liked to bid 2♦ to show her majors, but it was not part of the partnerships methods.

South led the nine of clubs for the three, jack and king. With considerable communication problems Cobie played the jack of spades and North won with the king returned the jack of diamonds. Declarer won with the king, cashed the ace faced the problem of how to tackle the clubs. South had pitched a club on the second round of diamonds, so declarer decided to play them from the top and was held to eight tricks.

If you would like to understand why it is right to play low to the eight on the second round then take a look at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principle_of_restricted_choice

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K1075 ♥ KQJ76 ♦ 84 ♣ Q5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 62 ♥ A9 ♦ KQJ972 ♣ A42	♠ 98 ♥ 852 ♦ A63 ♣ J10976
------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
<i>Wilma</i>	<i>Nicolian</i>	<i>Cobie</i>	<i>Ineke</i>
-	-	1♦	Pass
1♠	2♥	2♦	All Pass


In case you are wondering there are no typos – this is the real auction – which just goes to show that anything is possible when you are enjoying yourselves!

South led the eight of hearts and declarer won with the ace and knocked out the ace of diamonds. She subsequently lost a trick to the king of spades, +130.

It was close match, but it went in favour of Nicolian & Ineke.

With my intended viewing chair having been taken over by a discarded sweater I had to change my plans for the next round and by coincidence it involved Wilma & Cobie, this time against Joany Hubscher & Els Sloof. (If you want to try a quick movie buff teaser – in which film set in The Netherlands does the character Else Meertens appear?)

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AQJ982 ♥ 4 ♦ QJ8 ♣ 1043		♠ 104 ♥ A2 ♦ A10753 ♣ Q972	♠ 7 ♥ KJ986 ♦ K62 ♣ KJ65
------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------


Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Els</i>	<i>Wilma</i>	<i>Joany</i>	<i>Cobie</i>
-	Pass	Pass	1♥
2♠	4♥	All Pass	

Had West overcalled 1♠ North might have bid 2♠ to show a good raise in hearts – but that might have resulted in N/S missing the heart game.

With the ace of diamonds onside declarer lost only to the three aces, +420.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 54 ♥ A109842 ♦ 1072 ♣ 104		♠ A1086 ♥ J ♦ J96 ♣ AJ953	♠ KJ2 ♥ KQ765 ♦ AQ4 ♣ 62
--------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

♠ Q973	♥ 3
♦ K853	♣ KQ87

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Els</i>	<i>Wilma</i>	<i>Joany</i>	<i>Cobie</i>
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	1♣	Double	1♦
Pass	1♠	2♥	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	All Pass

With 4♠ due to fail East's decision to bid on was expensive.

South led the king of clubs, continued with the queen and then switched to the three of spades. North took the ace and returned the six and declarer won with the king, crossed to dummy with a heart and played a diamond to the queen and king. South returned a diamond and when declarer played low from dummy the nine forced the ace, setting up North's jack for three down.

(The answer to my film poser – *One of our Aircraft is Missing.*)

IMP Wars

When Patrick Jourdain asked Alain Levy for a good board during a tournament the French star replied 'I have no good boards'. Each morning at breakfast Patrick repeated his question to Alain, only to receive the same reply, 'I have no good boards'. After receiving the same answer for the fifth time Patrick said, 'So give me a bad board'.

In a team event one man's good board can easily be the other man's bad board. Let's take a look at a few deals from Saturday's team tournament:

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AK4 ♥ AQ32 ♦ 973 ♣ Q75	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q872 ♥ 54 ♦ KJ ♣ J9842	♠ 103 ♥ KJ10876 ♦ Q65 ♣ A10
-----------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------------

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

In theory the only way to be sure of defeating 4♥ is for East to lead the king of diamonds, when the defenders should be able to score two diamonds, a diamond ruff and a club. However, a club lead will probably keep the defenders in the game, as declarer might well play dummy's ten, allowing West to win with the king. (If you consider that East is unlikely to lead away from a king then rising with dummy's ace, drawing trumps and playing a club towards the queen is the way to go.)

In with the king of clubs West should realise that there are only two plausible ways in which 4♥ might be defeated. One is to find partner with the ♠AQ, the other with a doubleton king of diamonds. You want to know which is more likely? Me too!

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q86 ♥ K965 ♦ K8 ♣ A1054	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10942 ♥ QJ ♦ AQJ1097 ♣ 2	♠ AKJ753 ♥ 10732 ♦ – ♣ QJ8
------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	3♦	3♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♠	All Pass


If South leads a diamond declarer ruffs and cashes a top trump. When South discards the natural play is a heart to the king, followed by a second heart. North wins and plays a diamond, forcing declarer for a second time. Playing a heart now will allow North to pitch a club and receive a club ruff, so declarer must draw trumps. When the last one is played this will be the position:

♠ – ♥ 96 ♦ – ♣ A1054	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 ♥ – ♦ J1097 ♣ 2	♠ K ♥ 107 ♦ – ♣ QJ8
-------------------------------	--	-------------------------------	------------------------------

♠ –
♥ A
♦ 6
♣ K976

In order to look after both clubs and hearts South must pitch a diamond, but now declarer can simply give up a heart.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 62 ♥ QJ106 ♦ QJ1086 ♣ Q10		♠ KQ1093 ♥ 8543 ♦ 4 ♣ 743
♠ AJ75 ♥ A7 ♦ K2 ♣ AJ962	♠ 84 ♥ K92 ♦ A9753 ♣ K85	


If West opens 1♣, East responds 1♠ and is likely to be raised to game.

Suppose West starts with 1NT?

If East decides to transfer to spades West will probably jump to 3♠, when East should press on to 4♠.

If East responds 2♣ West bids 2♠. Now East should raise to 3♠. The rationale behind this is simple; once your five card suit is supported the fifth card acquires significant value, roughly that of an extra king.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.


♠ QJ932 ♥ QJ8 ♦ KJ3 ♣ 32		♠ K10 ♥ AK752 ♦ 5 ♣ AQ1097
♠ A84 ♥ 943 ♦ AQ1074 ♣ K5	♠ 765 ♥ 106 ♦ 9862 ♣ J864	

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
3♥	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		
4♠	Cue-bid		
4NT	RKCB		
5♥	2 key cards		

If West had been able to show 2 key cards plus the trump queen, East might have asked for side kings, contemplating a possible grand slam if West shows the ♣K.

Not a difficult slam to bid, but at one table East doubled 1♠ and then rebid 2♥ – which ended the auction!!

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ QJ6 ♥ A942 ♦ K9 ♣ A1086		♠ 76432 ♥ K ♦ AQJ63 ♣ 72
	♠ 109 ♥ QJ1086 ♦ 104 ♣ J953	♠ AK5 ♥ 753 ♦ 8752 ♣ KQ4

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	3NT	All Pass

South led the queen of hearts and declarer elected to put up dummy's ace. He crossed to hand with a club and played a heart. South won and made the natural, but fatal decision to switch to the ten of diamonds before cashing a second heart. When declarer covered North could win and cash two more diamonds, but now South was inexorably squeezed in hearts and clubs.

If declarer ducks the heart lead North wins and switches to a spade. If declarer wins and tries a diamond to the king North wins and plays another spade. Declarer wins and plays a diamond and North wins. Cashing a third diamond will lead to the squeeze we have already seen, but playing a third spade allows declarer to win in dummy, cross to hand with a club and play a heart, ducking when South plays an honour. Declarer will still need to get the clubs right, but that should not be too difficult as South is known to be 2-5-2-4.



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Bridge Educational Software

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You are East with:

- ♠ QJ2
- ♥ Q986
- ♦ Q42
- ♣ KJ7

IMPs. Dealer East. North-South Vul.

West	North	East	South
-	-	You	-
1♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
Redouble*	2♣	1♥	Double
?			

Rdbl three-card heart, unlimited

Sally Brock (European and World Champion)

2NT. Natural and invitational.

Tim Verbeek (European and Junior World Champion)

Double. I would double, just to show extras. No idea what to do after this bid.

David Bakhshi (multiple Gold Cup winner and winner of several North American Bridge Championships)

Double. It's a tough problem with various options, including Pass, Double, 2♦, 2♥ and 2NT. Passing is possible since the opponents are Vulnerable, but I am a little concerned that we might only score 100 when we can make at least a part-score our way. 2♦ and 2♥ feel like value bids since this does not look like an 11 point hand, but neither is perfect with only 7 hearts and no guarantee of 8 diamonds. 2NT would be more attractive without the opponents interference. I would treat Double as value showing (T/O), so whilst I

do not expect partner to pass, this leaves more options open since I can pass if partner bids 2♥ or bid 2♥ if he bids 2♦ to try to show a more constructive 2♥ bid. If partner can make a stronger bid then I can still offer NT at that point.

Mark Horton (Editor A New Bridge Magazine and prolific author)

Double. My cards are very defensive in nature so I prefer this to 2NT. If we can take 8/9 tricks in no trumps then it would be reasonable to hope for at least +200 if partner is minded to pass.

Simon de Wijs (European and World Champion, Bermuda Bowl Winner)

2NT. The most direct bid to the most likely game contract. My alternative is to double and pass partner's two-level bid, but I feel that would make it too tough to reach 3NT.

Marshall Lewis (represented Croatia internationally, as a player and as a coach)

2NT. Straightforward: no extra heart length and close to opening values. As a theoretical aside, in the US (as opposed to most of Europe, I believe) a common approach to Support Doubles is to make one almost any time three pieces are held, i.e. even with a dead minimum. Playing a standard system I think this is an inferior agreement in any circumstances, but especially facing a passed hand – and all the more so when Responder's major is hearts. Even if partner is known to be non-minimum, though, 2NT is enough on this lot.

Jan van Cleeff (multiple National Champion and co-founder bid72)

Double. The hand derives from a bid72 bidding contest for clubs. I doubled for penalties and got an in-app rating of 10 on a scale of 0 to 10 when my partner rightfully passed. By the way, 3NT was rated 10 as well and 2NT earned 9.

These were the West and the East hands:

- ♠ K75
- ♥ A102
- ♦ A10953
- ♣ Q2



- ♠ QJ2
- ♥ Q986
- ♦ Q42
- ♣ KJ7



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Highlights and New Features

Funbridge News - November

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DEFEND WITH JULIAN POTTAGGE

The Questions

1

♠ 4
♥ KQJ109
♦ AJ104
♣ 1053

♠ KQ1083
♥ 2
♦ Q73
♣ J962



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

You lead the king of spades, which holds, partner playing the two and declarer the five. How do you continue?

2

♠ Q104
♥ AJ73
♦ A7
♣ KQ64

♠ A9732
♥ Q854
♦ —
♣ J752



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	—	—	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♣*	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥*	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

4♣ Cue-bid agreeing diamonds
5♥ Two key cards, no ♦Q

You lead the ace of spades, collecting the four, five and king. What is your plan?



You reach Four Hearts in an uncontested auction and West leads the $\heartsuit J$. How would you play? (When you play trumps, both opponents follow twice.)

Dealer North. E/W Vul.

<p>\spadesuit J932 \heartsuit AJ10 \diamondsuit A62 \clubsuit Q64</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>\spadesuit K \heartsuit 63 \diamondsuit Q8543 \clubsuit J9752</p>
N					
W E					
S					
<p>\spadesuit AQ84 \heartsuit 72 \diamondsuit J1097 \clubsuit A108</p>	<p>\spadesuit 10765 \heartsuit KQ9854 \diamondsuit K \clubsuit K3</p>				

Solution

You seem to have four top losers, but that is no reason to panic. Things could have been worse: it is often better to play in the 4-4 fit rather than the 5-3 or 6-3, but that is definitely not the case here. You have done well to avoid reaching Four Spades.

Believe it or not, after the opening diamond lead, the defenders cannot prevent you making this contract. The route to success lies in catching a defender in what is known as a Morton's Fork. The name goes back to 15th-century England and King Henry VII's tax collector, John Morton. His attitude was that someone living modestly must be saving money, so he could afford to pay taxes, and someone living extravagantly was

rich, and thus could also afford taxes. In bridge terms, it applies to a situation in which you present a defender with a choice of options, both of which are bad for his side.

To see how this works in practice, notice what happens on this deal if you win the $\heartsuit K$, draw two rounds of trumps ending in hand, and lead your low club towards dummy. If West holds the $\clubsuit A$, what can he do?

Suppose first that he rises with the $\clubsuit A$. That gives you a second club trick, and you will then have discards for losing spades on the $\heartsuit A$ and the $\clubsuit Q$. You will lose only two spades and one club. If, however, West ducks the first round of clubs, you win with the $\clubsuit Q$ in dummy and discard your $\clubsuit K$ on the $\heartsuit A$. You can now play on spades, losing three tricks in that suit. Either way, you make ten tricks and your contract, despite four apparent top losers.

This board was flat in the Venice Cup final in Wuhan when both Cecilia Rimstedt of Sweden and Wen Fei Wang of China made Four Hearts on this line of play. Well played!

Great Expectations

Alex Adamson & Harry Smith Give Us More Tales From The Over The Rainbow Bridge Club

Three months had passed since they had qualified for The Ozian Cup semi-final. Their quarter of the draw had moved quickly, in no small way helped by Aunty Em's persistence in arranging the matches for her own team, and her regular requests for updates from the other captains. The other sections of the draw had seen the usual accumulation of late matches. Much to Aunty Em's annoyance, the Ozian Bridge Union had allowed the quarter-final match that would decide their next opponents to be delayed still further because the members of one of the teams were away on international duty. Despite her skills, and persistence, the date that they eventually fixed up was only two weeks before the fixed date for the final.

'It's all very well for them. They are all either professionals or are retired. In either case they have no idea about the real world problems of trying to run a business!' she told anyone who was willing to listen, and many who were not.

The event had created very mixed emotions amongst the club members. The Lion was very excited, but then disappointed to learn that only the final would be shown on BBO. The Scarecrow, still proud to be a member of a team that had survived two rounds in this event, had suggested that their own team might offer practice matches. The Lion was aware that any match against the Scarecrow would be unlikely to provide suitable preparation to play a top team, and preferred to push this idea into the long grass rather than invite a certain rebuff from the Tin Man. Instead, the Lion had offered the services of Glinda and himself to provide coffee and refreshments for the visiting team.

Glinda had been most surprised, and more than a little upset, when her three fellow witches had shown no interest in helping. Several months had passed since she, partnering the Lion, had been half of the team that had put them out of the event, but she had still not been forgiven. 'It was a matter of self-respect,' her erstwhile partner, the Wicked Witch of the West, had told her. 'Playing with a moderately competent player like the Lion is understandable,' the Wicked Witch had conceded, 'but how could you possibly justify teaming up with the Scarecrow and Hank

the Hunk, who,' in the view of the Wicked Witch, 'won the match simply through total incompetence?' Glinda was aware there was a strong element of truth in this, but she did seem to remember that Wicked's own team had not managed to be error-free. Not that she would ever expect Wicked to recognise this.

The Lion's delight at the success of his friends contrasted sharply with the attitude of Almira Gulch. Her team had lost to Aunty Em's team in the previous round, despite no blemishes that she could see in her own play. Indeed she still remembered with pride the Three Club contract she had made on a carefully planned elimination and throw in. It had been a great disappointment to her when she had found the same contract had been made in the other room. There had probably been a misdefence. Clearly the three professionals she had recruited had not been up to the job. She was already forming plans for the following year, and she was wondering how she might go about approaching Meckstroth and Rodwell.

For the last two weeks, ever since it had become clear who their semi-final opposition would be, Aunty Em had been researching and planning. Now with a day to go, she had called her team together for a council of war. 'It's not going to be easy,' she started. 'They are the top seeds and the two pairs in this team have both been in every match the Ozian International team has played in the last three years. John Garden is by some way the best player in the team. He's playing with Frank Simpson, who can get up John's nose, according to all accounts, by making inappropriate comments to the opposition, usually sharing with them the funny side of their misfortune..

The other pair is the very steady and sound Andy Martin playing with Joe Goldie, a man who can win or lose a match all by himself. He's a brilliant card player, very intuitive at reading the table, but is prone to wild flights of fancy.'

Both pairs play a strong Notrump and five-card majors, with lots of extras, and we can rely on Joe forgetting something at least once in the match.'

'We've dealt with two strong teams from the Emerald City already.'

The Tin Man's confidence had risen with each match as he realised the merit of having a sound pair in the other room.

'And I strongly imagine they will have had a word with these other two teams to find out what we are like.' Dorothy was thoughtful. 'I don't want in any way to downplay how well we did in these last two matches, but that pair of junior internationals in Erica's team grossly underrated us, and the three professionals in Almira Gulch's team made it clear that they thought that they were labouring under a large handicap.' All four of them smiled at the memory of Miss Gulch's face at the end of that match.

'And we have the advantage of it being a home match,' Professor Marvel commented, 'and I know that some members will be coming to kibitz and support us.'

Aunty Em grimaced. 'And I can name a few who might be coming, but support will be far from their minds.'

'Can I offer you a cup of tea or coffee after your long drive?' Glinda smiled at Frank Simpson.

'Coffee, milk no sugar,' Frank barely glanced at her, 'Where is Mrs Gale, your captain?' Glinda introduced him to Aunty Em, wondering if the word 'thank you' wasn't in Emerald City vocabulary.

Aunty Em smiled as Frank approached, quite deliberately putting on a little old lady impression. 'You've not been in an Ozian Cup semi-final before,' Frank stated as he tossed a coin. 'It's four sets of twelve boards and the winner of the toss can choose seating arrangements in rounds two and four.'

'I had read the rules,' Aunty Em replied quietly. 'Tails please.'

'Heads it is,' Frank grunted. 'John and I will sit East – West in the Open Room. I presume you have nominated an open and a closed room.' Frank had noticed the large number of club members milling about. 'And I hope that they know how to behave themselves.'

'I hope we all do,' Aunty Em replied.


The start was delayed in the Open Room as it took a few minutes for the spectators to settle into their places. Frank ordered the Lion and the Chairman of the Lollipop Guild to move. 'You are only allowed to see one hand. Move left or right, I don't care. It depends on whether you want to watch an international player or not.'

On the first few boards the values were lying East – West, and John

Garden had played three of the first six hands. There was one easy game, which Aunty Em was fairly sure would be bid and made at the other table. But they had stopped in two good partscores, and bid and made two tight games. John had been card perfect, and Frank's comments at the end of each hand made it quite clear he expected a good swing in.

They took out their cards for board seven:

Dealer South. Both Vu.I

♠ J532 ♥ 1052 ♦ 8 ♣ 109742		♠ 1098 ♥ QJ8 ♦ J972 ♣ KQ3	♠ 6 ♥ AK963 ♦ AQ4 ♣ A865 ♠ AKQ74 ♥ 74 ♦ K10653 ♣ J
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Dorothy opened the South hand One Spade, and her Aunty Em responded Two Hearts. This wasn't game forcing so Dorothy bid Two Spades, as she felt she had inadequate values for Three Diamonds. Aunty Em now bid Three Clubs, so Dorothy took the opportunity to bring her diamond suit into play by bidding Three Diamonds and then Four Diamonds over Aunty Em's Three Notrump.

Aunty Em sat up alert. Just a round of bidding earlier, she had been willing to subside in Three Notrump, but she now knew they had a diamond fit, and her hand had shot up in value thanks to its excellent controls. She checked and found no missing key cards, so she now knew Dorothy had the ace of spades and the king of diamonds. That only came to seven points so Dorothy must have other values in her hand. Em could see four top winners outside trumps, and eight possible trump tricks. Surely Dorothy's extra cards were worth a trick? She placed the Seven Diamond bidding card on the table.

Frank looked at this card. 'How forcing was Two Hearts?'

'Only one round,' Dorothy replied calmly.

‘And Three No-trump was to play?’ Frank continued with a hint of sarcasm in his voice. ‘Her hand must really have been improved by your Four Diamond bid.’ He had decided this pair weren’t up to his standard, and placed the double card firmly on the table. He wouldn’t have done that against a good pair, he told himself, but he reckoned that an aggressive double early in the match should unsettle them.

The full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
<i>John</i>	<i>Aunty Em</i>	<i>Frank</i>	<i>Dorothy</i>
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	7♦	Double	All Pass

John placed the ♣9 face down on the table. ‘Lead on partner,’ Frank grinned, ‘So your Two Spades was non-forcing, her 3NT was non-forcing and now you’re in a grand slam? I’m dying to see what sort of hand can be bid like that.’

John raised his eyebrows in despair. No matter how many times he told him, he couldn’t manage to stop Frank commenting on the opposition bidding. He faced his lead and Dorothy took stock.

‘What on earth was that double?’ Dorothy thought to herself. She played the ♣A, and Frank followed with the three. She could play for spades and diamonds both to split well, but surely that couldn’t be the case with that double. She temporised by trumping a club, noting Frank’s queen.

She now played a heart to dummy’s ace with a nagging worry that the double was based on a heart void; no ruff came. She ruffed another club, Frank playing the king. She now cashed her three top spades and the second top heart. With five cards left, the position was as follow:

♠ J ♥ 10 ♦ 8 ♣ 107	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ — ♥ 9 ♦ AQ4 ♣ 8	♠ — ♥ Q ♦ J972 ♣ —
	♠ 74 ♥ — ♦ K106 ♣ —		

Dorothy looked across at Frank. This was a top international. Surely he hadn’t doubled simply on a long trump holding and the king-queen of dummy’s side suit? But there was no other explanation. She ruffed dummy’s last heart, ruffed a spade high, ruffed dummy’s last club with the ♦10 and ruffed another spade high. The final trick was won by the ♦K. Frank had suffered the indignity of underruffing twice, and being over-ruffed twice, on the last four tricks.

Aunty Em took her scorecard and carefully inscribed 2,330 in the plus column. She could see John about to explode, so she put the next board on the table, hoping to get a quick start before the opposition discomfiture had subsided.

Aunty Em and Dorothy made their way through the spectators to the social area. The Lion gave a small thumbs up to Glinda, who smiled encouragingly from behind the serving counter.

Aunty Em found the scoring up after the first quarter a very enjoyable experience. She had been right about the early boards. They had lost fifteen IMPs in total on them, but when the Tin Man intoned minus 1,370 on the seventh board she proudly announced 14 IMPs in. The remaining boards had been scrappy, but mainly due to John and Frank’s discomfort, the Over The Rainbow team had pulled in a further five IMPs, to take a lead of four IMPs.

The two teams fought out a tight second set, with the quality of the Emerald City players showing in better judgement on a couple of part score hands. When the dust had cleared, Aunty Em’s team had lost 11 IMPs.

The Tin Man took the North seat in the Open Room for the third set. He and the Professor would be facing John and Frank. The Lion, sitting behind Professor Marvel's left shoulder felt a pang of jealousy as he saw Glinda wishing the Tin Man good luck. The feeling only lasted a moment, as the Tin Man was focussing so intently that it seemed he hadn't even heard. He certainly didn't acknowledge her, or anyone else for that matter, as he studied his opponents' system card.

Once again it was clearly close. John and Frank were playing soundly, and even Frank was showing respect for the quality of play he was seeing from his opposition. Professor Marvel reckoned his opponents hadn't given anything. But on the other hand he and the Tin Man had also been steady. It was clearly very tight when the penultimate board of the set was placed on the table.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ AK8543 ♥ K ♦ 87 ♣ KQ53	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ QJ762 ♥ 10982 ♦ 62 ♣ 96	♠ — ♥ A753 ♦ AQJ954 ♣ J74
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The Professor, as dealer, opened the South hand One Diamond, and John overcalled his spade suit. The Tin Man made a routine negative double, and, once again making the pressure bid, Frank put his partner into the spade game.

The Professor studied his hand. There was no guarantee they had the necessary values, but with partner's double guaranteeing a heart suit, they did have a fit and a possible source of tricks in his diamond suit. He placed the Five Heart card on the table, and this ended the bidding.

The full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
<i>John</i>	<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Frank</i>	<i>Professor</i>
–	–	–	1♦
1♠	Double	4♠	5♥
All Pass			

John led the ♠K. The Professor smiled at the sight of dummy and ruffed in hand. Deciding that he couldn't handle king to four in either hand, he laid down the ace of trumps, and dropped John's king. He had a problem; Frank must hold four trumps.

If he played the queen and jack, Frank would still have one trump. If he gave him it, he would have no trumps left to deal with a flood of spades. If he left him with it, Frank would ruff the third round of diamonds, and there would be no way back to his own hand. If he just played on diamonds now, Frank would again ruff the third, and play back another trump. Again, there would be no way to enjoy the diamonds in his own hand.

The Professor sat back. There had to be a solution. He took the crystal from his shirt pocket and rubbed and turned it. It worked! All of a sudden he saw it. He stopped and replayed it in his head. Yes. He played the ♥5 from his hand and the ♥6 from dummy.

Frank found himself on lead in this position:

♠ 10 ♥ QJ ♦ K103 ♣ A1082	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ QJ76 ♥ 109 ♦ 62 ♣ 96	♠ — ♥ 7 ♦ AQJ954 ♣ J74
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It was hopeless. Whatever he did, the Professor would make three trump tricks and a spade ruff, six diamond tricks and the club trick. Eleven tricks were his. As the hand finished, John turned to his right. 'Very well played,' he said appreciatively.

Frank pushed his cards into the board. 'A push, I would think. Joe is

up to that. Can you not bid Five Spades? It's only 500. That's the danger for us.'

'Why should I look for 500 against 650 when they may well already be too high?' John retorted.

Frank grunted. 'He may have recovered effectively, but the ace of hearts at trick two was a mistake. If he plays a low heart towards the dummy it's easy for him.'

'On this layout, yes,' John countered. 'Not so clever if it is you that hold the singleton king. And I've spoken to you before about criticising the opponents. Even when you happen to be right it's the wrong thing to do.'

Ten minutes later and the scoring up began. Aunty Em was keeping a running total. They were four IMPs up on the set when the Tin Man proudly announced their score for the Five Hearts hand: 'Plus 650!'

'Lose twelve IMPs, I'm sorry to say,' Aunty Em was clearly not pleased. 'They had a bidding misunderstanding, and ended up in Six Diamonds. It needs the king of hearts to be singleton and the club suit to lie favourably, but everything is right. The losing heart goes on dummy's fourth club. We were told to expect Joe to forget the system at least once. Well, that's his memory lapse. Unfortunately his card play is better than his memory.' A few more IMPs slipped away on the remaining hands.

'I make it we're leading by eighteen,' Frank announced jauntily as he approached the table at which they were scoring. 'We're going to sit in the same seats. Joe and Andy will be looking for some more of these great slams on the North/South hands.'

Aunty Em could think of no suitable reply. She just became more determined. There was a steely glint in her eye as she stood up. The Chairman of the Lollipop Guild whispered, 'Good luck, yes good luck.' The Lion considered patting her on the shoulder, then thought better of it.

The set started with three quiet boards, and then Aunty Em picked up an eight-card suit. The full hand was:

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A5		♠ 4						
♥ 104		♥ J8653						
♦ K964		♦ AQJ752						
♣ A9732		♣ Q						
♠ KQJ108763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="background-color: #008000; color: white; text-align: center;">S</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W	S	E	♠ 92
	N							
W	S	E						
♥ Q972		♥ AK						
♦ —		♦ 1083						
♣ 6		♣ KJ10854						

Joe, in the South seat, opened the auction with One Club. Aunty Em's hand stretched towards the bidding box to pull out the stop card followed by the obvious Four Spades. Her hand paused. They needed a swing, and Four Spades would be bid in the other room. She decided to try something different and bid One Spade, knowing that holding the master suit, she would be able to bid again over whatever happened.

Andy now showed a good hand with club support by making a spade cue-bid, Dorothy came in with Three Diamonds, and Joe continued with Four Clubs. As planned, Aunty Em now laid down the Four Spade card, only to hear Andy bid the club slam.

This brought a smile to Em's face. Her one-level overcall had worked. This had allowed Dorothy to come into the auction. As she herself held good cards in hearts, and her partner had values in diamonds, she now knew there was no clear source of tricks for her opposition in their slam. Confident it would go down, she made a speculative double rather than take the spade sacrifice. She led her ♠K.

The full bidding sequence had been as follows:

West	North	East	South
<i>Aunty Em</i>	<i>Andy</i>	<i>Dorothy</i>	<i>Joe</i>
-	-	-	1♣
1♠	2♠	3♦	4♣
4♠	6♣	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Aunty Em's smile grew wider as she saw Joe's disgust at the sight of dummy. It took less than half a minute for Joe to pull the trumps, lead a diamond towards the king. When Em discarded he threw his cards on the table. 'Three diamonds to lose for two down if you have eight spades, three down if you only have seven,' he announced'.

'That was quite lucky,' Andy said quietly. 'It appears neither side can make game in any denomination. Without the double, it would just have been a small loss.'

'If you think that excuses your wild leap, think again,' Joe snarled.

'My wild leap! Perhaps you imagined an extra ace to justify that freely bid Four Clubs!' Andy defended himself with vigour. 'With the extra values you had shown, slam had to be good.'

When the board came to be played in the other room, the auction was, as Aunty Em expected, rather different. John Garden made the standard Four Spade overcall, and the Tin Man, sitting in the North seat, bid game in his partner's suit. Always a disciplined player, John passed, and Five Clubs became the final contract on the following auction:

West	North	East	South
<i>John</i>	<i>Tin Man</i>	<i>Frank</i>	<i>Professor</i>
-	-	-	1♣
4♠	5♣	All Pass	

The Professor thanked his partner for the dummy, and, showing no emotion, won the spade lead, pulled trumps and cashed his two heart tricks. He then played the ♦8 and when John showed out, ducked this to Frank's jack. This was the position with Frank, sitting East, on lead:

♠ QJ10876 ♥ Q9 ♦ — ♣ —	♠ 5 ♥ — ♦ K96 ♣ A973	♠ — ♥ J86 ♦ AQ752 ♣ —	♠ — ♥ — ♦ 103 ♣ J10854			
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 10px;"> <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						

He was faced with a selection of unattractive options. If he cashed the ♦A then he would either have to lead away from his queen into the tenace, setting up a discard for South's spade, or give a heart ruff-and-discard, which would have the same effect. He tried a heart, hoping that John had, uncharacteristically, mis-signalled. The Professor ruffed in dummy, discarding a diamond from his hand. He now threw John in with a spade, to leave the following position:

♠ QJ876 ♥ 9 ♦ — ♣ —	♠ — ♥ — ♦ K96 ♣ A97	♠ — ♥ J8 ♦ AQ75 ♣ —	♠ — ♥ — ♦ 10 ♣ J10854			
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #6aa84f; color: white; padding: 10px;"> <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						

The Professor showed his hand. 'You are out of minors and my hands are out of majors, so I'll ruff whatever you play and throw my diamond.'

'Well played,' said John, 'I always like artistic play, and to find two throw-ins in the one hand certainly is artistic.'

'Lucky lie of the cards,' Frank mumbled as he put his cards away. 'No chance if I had a second spade. What if I play a low diamond instead of the heart?'

'No, nothing works,' said John. 'Declarer wins and throws me in with the spade again, and I'll have to give him the ruff-and-discard as before.'

The two tables finished almost simultaneously. Em and Dorothy left the closed room as Joe and Andy were standing up and shuffling past the spectators. As they took the vacated seats in the Open Room, their fellow club members crowded round, peering over shoulders and through gaps to get a view of the score cards.

It wasn't quite enough! They had gained 15 IMPs on the Five Diamonds board but the swings on the other eleven boards just about cancelled each other out. They had only taken back 16 of the 18 IMP deficit.

'I knew they weren't up to it,' Almira Gulch said to the person on her

left.

‘Lucky they got this far,’ the Wicked Witch acknowledged the woman on her right.

They both stiffened as they each realised who they were speaking to, stood up in unison, and went to seek better company.

Before they could go to congratulate their opposition, Joe appeared beside them. ‘I think we’ve won, but just, and we didn’t deserve to. You played a great game.’

Both John Garden and Andy Martin came up just behind Joe. ‘That was the luckiest win I can remember us having,’ Andy Martin sighed. ‘You’ve certainly put Munchkinland on the bridge map.’

‘You’ll be a seeded team next year as a beaten semi-finalist. I can only hope we’re in the other half of the draw,’ John Garden had joined them. ‘What we had seen of Munchkinland in the past,’ he glanced sideways at Almira Gulch as she put her coat on, ‘hadn’t impressed us. We were very lucky to come through.’

‘Good luck in the final,’ Aunty Em had recovered her composure.

‘And we’re looking forward to meeting you in next year’s final,’ the Tin Man added.

‘Congratulations on your win,’ Professor Marvel had walked over to the table at which Frank was sitting staring at his card. ‘Can I give you a packet of these camomile and green tea pastilles? They really are good for frayed nerves. And I’ve been told they can also have a positive effect on one’s mental attitude!’



The South African Bridge Federation 68th National Congress Cape Town 2020

- National Teams:** Monday 9th March - Friday 13th March
Registration: Monday 9th March @ 12h30 - 13h30
Playing Times: Starts Monday 9th @ 14h00 - Ends Friday 13th @ 12h30
Entry Fee: R4000.00 per Team
- National Pairs:** Friday 13th March - Monday 16th March
Playing Times: Starts Friday 13th @ 14h00 - Ends Monday 16th @ 14h00
Entry Fee: R1200.00 per Pair
- Venue:** The Italian Club, Milnerton, Cape Town

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Letter from Germany

The German National Championships by Martin Cantor


Four of Germany's six national championships are held in Berlin in the course of a single week in August: mixed pairs, mixed teams, open teams then open pairs. The seniors pairs and ladies pairs take place separately later in the year. For reasons I don't know there is neither a ladies nor a seniors team championship. Domestic commitments restricted me to the two pairs events, both of which I played with Silvia Klasberg-Brawanski.

The format was the same for both: after two qualifying sessions of 22 boards the top twenty pairs played in the M group for the medals, the remainder the A group, in both cases two 18 or 20 board sessions with a 50% carryover. At least that was the plan. Which worked fine for the mixed pairs. The open pairs however suffered significant disruption when a pair was ruled by the chief tournament director to have been using two systems during the qualification rounds, in contravention of the conditions of contest. The 40% score they were awarded for several boards dropped them out of the M final into the A group. They appealed the ruling, and the appeal on the Sunday morning ate into the scheduled playing time by 45 minutes, and a reduction of four boards. The pair in question declined to play in the A group, to nobody's disappointment. Apologies if this is all a bit cryptic, but the pair had registered with their names withheld from the public, as they are allowed to do under German data protection laws, which are stringent.

Silvia and I had disastrous sessions on both Saturdays, so were nowhere near making the cut for either event. We did better on the second days, with scores of 56.48% and 60.3%, which was at least some small consolation. And so to some hands.

We scored surprisingly well on this board from the first session of the mixed:

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K75 ♥ AJ9 ♦ KQJ973 ♣ K		♠ J108 ♥ K4 ♦ 85 ♣ J108743	♠ A963 ♥ 10653 ♦ A6 ♣ AQ6
♠ Q42 ♥ Q872 ♦ 1042 ♣ 952			

West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
-	Pass	1♣*	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
4NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

- 1♣ Polish Club, weak NT or ♣s 15+ or any 18+ or 4=4=1=4 11+
- 2♦ natural and game forcing.


Two pairs made all the tricks, presumably after careless discarding by N/S, but a surprising number of pairs stopped in 3NT, and a number played the diamond slam, so we got 20/62 for what seemed like a normal matchpoint contract.

Later in the same set we got a surprisingly bad score for what again seemed like normal actions, at least on our part. Not vulnerable against vulnerable, you pick up ♠ 83 ♥ J2 ♦ AKQ73 ♣ KQ43 and the player on your right deals and opens 3♥. Do you take any action? Would you even consider doubling? As the pre-emptor's partner, hearing the double, and holding ♠ AQ1076 ♥ - ♦ J1054 ♣ A865 would you now be licking your

lips? I certainly was, at least until my LHO passed the double, and Silvia had no way to escape two diamond losers and three trump losers for -200 and 7/75, as we shared the score with three other pairs in 3♥X, two pairs two down in 4♥, a pair two down in 4♠ and one (careless) pair two down in 3♥. For the record Silvia had a perfectly normal 3♥ opener ♠K54 ♥KQ87653 ♦82 ♣2. Our cause wasn't helped either when on the second board of that round we reached the par contract of 5♠X, went the par two down, and scored a miserable 11/71.

Another unorthodox double led to another poor score, though our poor defence was also to blame.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ 942 ♥ 943 ♦ KQ10 ♣ A532		♠ KQJ6 ♥ J862 ♦ 654 ♣ J4	♠ A8 ♥ KQ105 ♦ A93 ♣ 10876
		♠ 10753 ♥ A7 ♦ J872 ♣ KQ9	


West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
-	-	-	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

1♣ Polish Club, weak NT or ♣s 15+ or any 18+ or 4=4=1=4 11+

South's double with a doubleton heart when opponents have at most seven hearts between them is, to choose a positive adjective, brave. North's decision to bid his spades rather than his hearts was I guess just bad luck for us. Letting it make was entirely our own fault and we fully deserved the resulting zero.

This next hand offered alternative lines of play, and I made the wrong choice when I went for the technical that makes with several possible winning distributions over the coup that relies on a particular lie of the cards and an (easy to make) defensive slip. Wrong choice.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q86 ♥ 7 ♦ 975 ♣ Q96432		♠ J1097 ♥ K8 ♦ KJ106 ♣ A107	♠ 42 ♥ AQ109543 ♦ 82 ♣ K5
		♠ AK53 ♥ J62 ♦ AQ43 ♣ J8	

West	North	East	South
	<i>Martin</i>		<i>Silvia</i>
-	-	3♥	Double
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East led the ♦8. There is an inevitable club loser, a likely (but not certain) two heart losers, and a quite likely spade loser. I eventually decided to play for one or both of the major suit queens to be right. They weren't. The deceptive line that might well have succeeded would be to play the ♠J to the ace then cross back to hand with the ♣A, leaving East vulnerable to a throw in with the club king if she failed to unblock it.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ KJ8643 ♥ 2 ♦ 972 ♣ J73	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A7 ♥ AKQJ1043 ♦ K ♣ AK4	♠ Q952 ♥ 865 ♦ A106 ♣ Q109
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West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
Pass	2♦*	Double	2♥*
Pass	2♠	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	All Pass

2♦ Multi

We were cross with ourselves not to have bid slam on this hand, but in fact only nine pairs out of forty-two managed it. I might have bid 3♠ at my second turn but it seemed like a good idea at the time to mention my suit. Silvia thought about raising me to slam, but that is far from clear. And in fact on a trump lead slam only makes because of the ♥9 in the West hand.

The final round of the qualification saw me playing both boards in 6♠. I failed to find the winning line on the first, which essentially is on high cross ruff lines, though I was far from alone:

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ — ♥ J10875432 ♦ J98 ♣ 75	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K1093 ♠ AQ6 ♦ A6 ♣ AQ64	♠ QJ654 ♥ K9 ♦ Q53 ♣ 982
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♠ A872 ♥ — ♦ K10742 ♣ KJ103

28/34 matchpoints for that, but we more than got our score back on the next with 53/9 for playing in spades rather than clubs and being allowed to make it:

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 102 ♥ 108 ♦ AQ10987 ♣ 873	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ KQJ87 ♥ J3 ♦ KJ43 ♣ J10	♠ A65 ♥ 976542 ♦ 652 ♣ 2
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♠ 943 ♥ AKQ ♦ — ♣ AKQ9654

West	North	East	South
	<i>Martin</i>		<i>Silvia</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠


All Pass

2♣ 2+♣s and game forcing unless East's next bid is 3♣ when 6+ and invitational

A diamond lead beats the slam since East can subsequently hold up the trump ace to the second round, but when West didn't bid diamonds East naturally led her singleton. Which had me worried until she also showed up with the ♠A.

Our system led me to an unfortunate lead on

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.


♠ K962 ♥ J96542 ♦ K ♣ J7		♠ Q108753 ♥ Q7 ♦ 102 ♣ 854	♠ 4 ♥ K3 ♦ QJ9873 ♣ KQ102
♠ AJ ♥ A108 ♦ A654 ♣ A963			

West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
-	-	-	1NT
2♣*	2♠	All Pass	
2♣	Either diamonds or both majors		

Spades were pretty certainly 6-1-2-4 around the table, so a forcing defence looked good to me and I led the ♥K. Oops. Even now North has only nine obvious tricks, but there are always ten with my hand being squeezed in the minors, potentially trump squeezed, depending on the exact sequence of plays.

Only one N/S pair found 6♦ on this hand, and they were unlucky enough to play against a pair who found the paying sacrifice of 6♥X minus 2.


Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 8652 ♥ J8732 ♦ — ♣ 10875		♠ J74 ♥ K ♦ AKJ874 ♣ J94	♠ KQ93 ♥ AQ10965 ♣ Q5 ♣ K
♠ A10 ♥ 4 ♦ 109632 ♣ AQ632			

After a heart lead and spade switch, declarer must of course draw trumps then play the ♣4 not the jack, leading to a cute position. If the ♣K is singleton declarer must finesse against the ten on the way back. But if the South hand is on the table and East has king doubleton in clubs s/ he should put the king in – in which case the K10 holding would beat the slam – unless declarer plays for just that holding.

Another hand where 6♦ proved difficult to bid was this one, managed by just two of ten pairs in the M group and five of twenty-five in the A group. Put it down to the low point count and, more significantly, South's void in partner's first suit.

Board 1. Dealer North. none Vul.

♠ KQ862 ♥ A963 ♦ Q3 ♣ Q4		♠ 53 ♥ KQ875 ♦ KJ94 ♣ AK	♠ 74 ♥ J1042 ♦ 5 ♣ J97532
♠ AJ109 ♥ — ♦ A108762 ♣ 1086			

Here's a question for you – do you bid, vulnerable against not, when RHO deals and opens 3♥ and you hold ♠AQJ85 ♥6 ♦108543 ♣K9? And if so, what do you bid? Here's another question for you – do you bid, and if so what, vulnerable against not, when LHO deals and opens 3♥, partner and RHO pass, and you hold ♠K1094 ♥Q84 ♦K62 ♣A84? Neither Silvia with the first hand nor I with the second thought we could act, and we still don't see that either of us should, even though 3♥ makes, and we're cold for 4♠, the opener's hand being ♠2 ♥KJ107532 ♦J ♣QJ107.

Now try this one: ♠A85 ♥964 ♦AJ10875 ♣8. You deal not vulnerable against vulnerable and after two passes partner opens 2♣ showing 11-14 HCP and 6+ clubs or 5+ clubs and a four card major. RHO passes and so do you (what else?). Now LHO doubles, and partner redoubles showing a good club suit. RHO passes and so do you (what else?). LHO now bids 2NT which is passed round to you. You double (what else?). When that goes round to RHO she bids 3♠ and since you're in the groove you double again. When the dust clears you write +1100 in your column for 0/48. And firstly you thank the bridge gods that this time an unconventional double didn't pay off, then you breathe a big sigh of relief when you realise that it might well have done, because 2NT was cold for the opponents and -690 would, unsurprisingly, have scored 48/0. The full hand

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 72 ♥ K1053 ♦ 2 ♣ AQJ763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A85 ♥ 964 ♦ AJ10875 ♣ 8
	♠ 9643 ♥ Q72 ♦ KQ3 ♣ K104	

The Precision style 2♣ opener worked for us again a few boards later when Silvia's opening bid was passed out – again it's not obvious which opponent should act over it – and after a defensive slip she made her contract, but even one down would have been a good score for us.

Board 11. dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 84 ♥ K54 ♦ K8 ♣ AQ10532	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K10 ♥ A1063 ♦ A105 ♣ K984
	♠ A9765 ♥ Q72 ♦ J9743 ♣ —	
	♠ QJ32 ♥ J98 ♦ Q62 ♣ J76	

Everybody loves a Biltcliffe Coup – as long as they are the beneficiaries, not the losers, so we enjoyed this one (*even though they did not double. Ed.*).

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ AQJ105 ♥ AJ1054 ♦ 32 ♣ Q	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 9 ♥ Q8732 ♠ KJ764 ♣ A4
	♠ 876 ♥ 9 ♦ AQ1085 ♣ J872	
	♠ K432 ♥ K6 ♦ 9 ♣ K109653	

West	North	East	South
<i>Silvia</i>		<i>Martin</i>	
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Double	3♦	4♣
4♠	All Pass		

One last hand for you. Despite going down in a makeable contract I at least had the consolation of two native English speaking opponents,

the American Kevin Castner my screenmate on my left, and British born David Cole hidden on my right.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 76 ♥ 752 ♦ QJ65 ♣ J432	♠ QJ43 ♥ J83 ♦ 1097 ♣ AQ10		♠ 9852 ♥ AQ1064 ♦ K84 ♣ K
♠ AK10 ♥ K9 ♦ A32 ♣ 98765			
West	North	East	South
-	<i>Martin</i>	1♥	<i>Silvia</i>
2♥	2♠	Pass	Double
Pass	3NT	All Pass	3♥*

After much thought Kevin led a small heart which ran to my 8. I obviously needed three club tricks without losing the lead to East. Giving me the options of a singleton honour in East and a correct guess as to which, or both honours in West. East certainly didn't have ♦KQJ, but equally certainly could have the KQ, so any of the layouts were possible. Eventually I went for the double finesse. When Kevin took the king I asked "singleton?". Kevin: "You don't want to know". So I knew. As is often the case, I think in retrospect that I might have got it right, but I'm somewhat comforted by the fact that the only other two pairs who bid to 3NT (one other in the A group, one in the M) also both went down on a heart lead.

Congratulations to all the medallists:

Mixed Pairs

- Gold Pony Nehmert & Christian Fröhner
- Silver Marie Eggeling & Paul Grünke
- Bronze Katharina Brinck & Thomas Gotard

Mixed Teams

- Gold Daniela von Arnim, Anne Gladiator, Michael Gromöller & Roland Rohowsky
- Silver Marie Eggeleing, Andrea Reim, Raffael Braun, Thomas Gotard & Paul Grünke
- Bronze Kathryn Herz, Conny Rißler, Eckhard Böhlke & Wolfhart Umlauf

Open Teams

- Gold Sabine Auken, Roy Welland, Julius Linde & Christian Schwerdt
- Silver Jörg Fritsche, Michael Gromöller, Helmut Häusler, Andreas Kirmse & Klaus Reps
- Bronze Marie Eggeling, Pony Nehmert, Matthias Felmy & Christian Fröhner

Open Pairs

- Gold Julius Linde & Christian Schwerdt
- Silver **Marius Gündel & Philipp Pabst**, who get a special mention, being just 14 and 20 years old respectively
- Bronze Michael Gromöller & Helmut Häusler

Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

1

♠ 4
 ♥ KQJ109
 ♦ AJ104
 ♣ 1053

 ♠ KQ1083
 ♥ 2
 ♦ Q73
 ♣ J962

 ♠ 962
 ♥ A7653
 ♦ K982
 ♣ 8

 ♠ AJ75
 ♥ 84
 ♦ 65
 ♣ AKQ74



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

You lead the king of spades, which holds, partner playing the two and declarer the five. How do you continue?

If you play that the king lead against a no-trump contract asks for count or unblock, you will know that partner began with three low spades. Playing simple attitude, South could ♠A-J-x in a 3-2-3-5 shape.

You want to switch rather than play into a tenace. Since a heart switch will set up dummy’s suit, you surely want to lead a diamond, playing partner for the king.

What happens if you lead a low diamond? Partner takes the ten with the king and returns the nine of spades, which holds. Declarer takes the next spade and drives out the ace of hearts. It would do not help a lot for partner to switch back to diamonds because declarer could take the black tops before playing a heart, forcing partner to give dummy an entry even after holding up the ace of hearts. The solution is to switch to the queen of diamonds. This will knock out the ace. Your side then has an answer to anything your opponent might try.

2

♠ Q104
 ♥ AJ73
 ♦ A7
 ♣ KQ64

 ♠ A9732
 ♥ Q854
 ♦ –
 ♣ J752

 ♠ J865
 ♥ 1062
 ♦ J1053
 ♣ 103

 ♠ K
 ♥ K9
 ♦ KQ98642
 ♣ A98



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	–	–	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♣*	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥*	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

- 4♣ Cue-bid agreeing diamonds
- 5♥ Two key cards, no ♦Q

You lead the ace of spades, collecting the four, five and king. What is your plan?

You cannot be certain that the king of spades is a singleton—declarer could be unblocking. Could partner hold the king of hearts and might a heart switch beat the slam? Lacking that card declarer has a maximum of 14 points and must have seven diamonds if not eight; in this case a spade winner, a heart and three clubs will cover all of your opponent’s losers in the side suits.

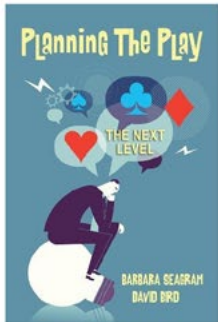
Realistically the king of hearts and the ace of clubs are both on your right, which means you need partner to hold a trump trick. The danger to guard against is a trump coup – if declarer ruffs three times in hand and returns to dummy, partner’s trump trick might vanish.

Since you wish to reduce dummy’s entries, you should switch to a club now, which cannot help declarer at all. Have you spotted what else you might need to do? To stop the jack of hearts from being an entry you need to be ready to rise with the queen on the first round.



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Professor Samantha Punch,
UK Bridge Player

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Zia Mahmood,
International Bridge Player

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Andrew Robson,
English Bridge Player

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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).

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Kit's Corner

by World Champion Kit Woolsey

Kit's Corner

World Champion Kit Woolsey reveals how an expert thinks, using real deals from major events. Sit beside the master and compare his thoughts with your own.

Get the Promotion

In a round-robin match in the Senior Trials, you face a common competitive decision.

As East, you hold:

Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ A65
♥ QJ976
♦ Q
♣ A643

Your call?

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	?	

You have support for all the unbid suits, However, the two-card differential in the majors makes overcalling 1♥ more attractive than a takeout double. If you double, it may be difficult to show your 5-card heart suit later. If you overcall 1♥ you can bring the other suits into the picture with a later takeout double of diamonds if you so choose.

You bid 1♥. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♦	?	

Your call?

Normally it is wrong to sell out at the 2-level with a singleton in the enemy suit if you have anything resembling a decent hand. Here, however, the warning signs are up. Partner didn't raise, so either he has at

most 2 hearts or you are completely outgunned. South has spades, so you don't want to be playing there. You might catch your partner with some clubs, but he needs 5 clubs for competing to 3♣ to be really attractive. The vulnerability is the worst for part-score competition, since if either your contract or their contract goes down you will have done basically as well by defending. All things considered, it looks right to go quietly.

You pass. The auction concludes

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

Partner leads the ♥8:

♠ 2
♥ 1054
♦ AK10852
♣ KQ7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A65
♥ QJ976
♦ Q
♣ A643

Declarer plays small from dummy.

You play suit-preference at trick 1. 10, 9, 8 are, by priority, suit-preference high. 2, 3, 4 are, by priority, suit-preference low. 6, 5, 7 are, by priority, encouraging. After trick 1, UDCA.

What do you play?

You certainly like hearts, and the ♥6 is your most encouraging card. No reason not to play it.

You play the ♥6. Declarer wins the ace, and leads a diamond to the ace, partner following with the ♦7. Declarer continues with the king of diamonds off dummy. What do you do?

♠ 2	♠ A65
♥ 105	♥ QJ97
♦ K10852	♦ —
♣ KQ7	♣ A643

N	
W	E
S	

It appears that declarer is hoping to discard a loser. Clearly you should ruff small.

You ruff small. Declarer overruffs with the ♠8, partner playing the ♦3. Declarer now leads the ♣8. Partner plays the ♣5, and dummy the king. Do you win or duck?

♠ 2	♠ A6
♥ 105	♥ QJ97
♦ 10852	♦ —
♣ KQ7	♣ A643

N	
W	E
S	

There is no reason to duck, since declarer will then be leading a spade through you which you won't like. You must win this trick.

You win the ace of clubs. What do you lead?

♠ 2	♠ A6
♥ 105	♥ QJ97
♦ 10852	♦ —
♣ Q7	♣ 643

N	
W	E
S	

All the indications are that declarer started with 3 hearts. Partner led the ♥8. Also, declarer was rushing to take a discard on the diamond, and he would have no reason to rush to discard a club. You want to establish your heart trick as soon as possible.

You lead the queen of hearts. Declarer wins the king, partner playing the ♥3. Declarer leads the ♣2 to dummy's queen, partner playing the ♣9. Now declarer leads a spade off dummy. Are you ready to play smoothly? Do you win or duck?

If partner has a singleton king or queen of spades, you must duck. A count of the hand indicates that declarer doesn't have 8 spades. He is known to have 1 diamond and two clubs, and from his line of play and the opening lead he clearly has 3 hearts. You don't have to worry about crashing partner's honour.

If partner has Qx of spades, you would give declarer a guess by ducking. There is no need for that. By going up ace and playing hearts, you will get the promotion and have a sure thing. This is clearly what you should play for.

You win the ace of spades and play hearts. As expected, the jack of hearts cashes. On the fourth round of hearts declarer ruffs with the jack, and partner overruffs with the queen for down 1. The full hand is:

♠ 2	♠ A65
♥ 1054	♥ QJ976
♦ AK10852	♦ Q
♣ KQ7	♣ A643

♠ Q9	N	♠ A65
♥ 83	W	♥ QJ976
♦ J9763	E	♦ Q
♣ J1095	S	♣ A643

♠ KJ108743
♥ AK2
♦ 4
♣ 82

Could declarer have done better?

Not realistically. If he takes a trump finesse first, he won't get back to dummy in time to take the needed heart pitch on the diamond. His line was virtually cold on a 4-2 diamond split. He was very unlucky to go down.

Do you agree with West's opening lead?

East did overcall 1♥. That doesn't make a heart lead mandatory. East was overcalling because hearts is his longest suit, not because it is his

strongest suit. If East had ♥Jxxxx and ♣AQxx, he would still have over-called 1♥.

Both the heart lead and the club lead are attractive. West may be in only once, so he needs to take his best shot. While the club sequence could be the winner, the heart lead is probably percentage. The key is that West has a doubleton heart, along with a trump holding which might be promoted. In fact, that is exactly what happened.

If East were going to duck the spade off dummy, it might be important for him to do so in tempo so as to not give away the location of the ace. However, if East decides to go up ace of spades, he can take his time about it. There won't be any gain from playing the ace quickly, since declarer will know East has it whether East plays quickly or not. Thus, if East is not prepared but his instinct is to play the ace, he might as well stop and think about it. He will lose the deceptive value of playing small quickly, but it might be that playing small is correct even with the deceptive value lost.

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Larry's Advice

“Think at Trick One!” This is a theme I constantly try to drill into students. I am still drilling.

So many hands are lost at trick one due to failure to think. Usually, this is associated with declarer play, but defenders, too, must think at trick one. Here is a recent example from a deal I played in a knockout teams:

You hold:

♠ A72
♥ K10
♦ K72
♣ 86543

The dealer on your right opens 1♣. The eventual dummy, on your left responds 1♥. RHO rebids 1♠ and LHO bids 2♦, 4th suit Game Forcing. RHO bids 2NT, raised to 3NT :

West	North	East	South
You			
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

It sounds like they are prepared for all four suits. You try a ♣, selecting the 6. You don't want to lead low, because that will encourage partner to continue the suit. When he sees your highish spot, maybe he can read it as from a bunch of low cards, and switch if appropriate. Down comes the dummy:

♠ KQ10
♥ AJ97
♦ Q10982
♣ 10

♠ A72
♥ K10
♦ K72
♣ 86543



Declarer thinks about the hand for maybe 10 seconds, then tries dummy's ♣10.

Your partner plays the ♣J and declarer thinks some more.

What are you thinking? Are you thinking? Are you daydreaming? Is this hand too difficult (they made all those bids, alerted, etc.)? Should I just wade through this deal and hope I don't have to do anything important and just wait for the next deal which might be simpler and more fun? What was the bidding again? Why are you bothering me with this?

Here are the many things to consider:

What is the club situation? Declarer was maybe hoping dummy's 10 would hold. Partner's jack is making him think. Declarer won't have ace-king-nine - he would take partner's jack without being too troubled. Partner would have played the king with king-jack (third-hand high), so the most likely scenario is that partner has queen-jack (if he had only the jack, declarer wouldn't be thinking). Also partner rates to have the 9. (Again, declarer would not be thinking so long with ace-king-nine). So it looks as if you might have hit partner with the QJ9 of clubs - a good lead for a change.

Did your thinking end there? I hope not. Are you ready for trick two? What if declarer wins the club and plays a spade? In general, it is never good to play second-hand high. Grabbing your ace will almost always help declarer in these situations. Not only will it help his timing and entries, but he might be missing the ♠J, and face a guess in this suit. You

don't know enough about the full deal yet, so the best policy would be to duck and to do so smoothly! If you think about it at trick 2, you will be telling declarer where the ace is. So you should be getting yourself ready for a spade play at trick 2 (smooth duck).

Is that all? No. What if declarer leads a low diamond from hand at trick 2? Again, you should follow general principles. Be prepared to duck, and to duck smoothly. Don't give away the location of the king.

Are you still thinking? Are you ready for a heart at trick two? This is a (rare) situation where you should actually play second hand high! If declarer has the queen, he is always entitled to four heart tricks - your play won't matter. But if your partner has the queen, and you play the 10, dummy's jack will go to partner's queen. This will simplify the suit and the entries for declarer. Meanwhile, if you hop up with the king, he will have more difficulty. He might duck (playing you for king-queen). Even if he does win the ace, he will have to come back to his hand in some other suit to lead hearts again (he doesn't know your ten is falling). Lastly, if he happens to have ♥Q83, he might win the ace and finesse into your ♥10 on the next round of hearts.

Do you play Smith Echo? This is a wonderful defensive signalling method. When declarer starts his suit (for the first time), you don't give count. Instead, you tell partner if you are happy with the opening-lead suit. Playing high-low says "I like the opening lead." Playing low-high says "try some other suit - not the suit our partnership led at trick 1." This method applies to either defender (opening leader or third hand). Almost all experts use this method. If you are playing Smith Echo, it is a good (ethical) idea to try to make your signal without lots of thought. So in addition to all the above thinking, you should be ready to play the right Smith card. On a heart play, your king won't mean anything (honours are honours). BUT - if declarer plays a spade or a diamond, you plan to duck. Which spot you duck with will send a message. Are you happy with clubs? Do you want partner to continue? If so, you will follow (smoothly) with the ♠7 or ♦7. If not, you will play the deuce of that suit.

In fact, declarer does cross in spades. When dummy's king wins, he plays the ♦10 and lets it run. And you? Were you ready for a smooth duck of your ♦K?

I'll leave you here. The full deal is not important. I just wanted to illustrate

how many things there are to think about. The time to do this thinking is at trick one. Part of good defence is not only knowing what to do, but being able to do it in tempo when the time comes. The way to become a good defender is to think through all of these matters at trick one. You must give every deal your full concentration. And yes, I suppose some of you are wondering about slow play. You can't sit there forever at trick one - sometimes you can't prepare for everything.

Smith Echo

Smith Echo is a defensive signalling method (usually used only against notrump) and quite popular amongst experts.

Playing hi-lo in the first suit declarer plays says nothing about that suit. It sends a message about the suit the defence has led at trick one. Hi-lo means "I like the opening lead suit." Lo-hi means "I don't like it." This signal is used by both defenders and requires lots of judgment and inference. If count is important (for example, a long entryless suit is in dummy), then that overrides the Smith signal.

Example 1

The opening leader has ♠KJ976 and ♦82.

He leads a low spade and dummy has ♠xxx. Third hand plays the ♠Q (yeah!) and declarer wins the ace.

Declarer plays diamonds. The opening leader plays the ♦8 to say: "I like spades."

Example 2

The opening leader has ♠108762, ♦82 and ♥AQ10x. He leads a low spade and dummy has ♠Jxx and ♥xxx. Third hand plays the ♠K and declarer wins the ace. Declarer plays diamonds. The opening leader plays the ♦2 to say: "I don't like spades; try something else." (Usually, partner can figure out from the context what that "else" means.)

Example 3

Third hand has ♠QJ102. His partner leads a low spade and dummy plays low with ♠xx. The ten forces the ace. Declarer now plays diamonds. With such a great spade holding, 3rd hand plays hi-lo in diamonds to tell partner to persist with spades when he gets in.

Example 4

Third hand has ♠10 singleton. His partner leads a low spade and dummy plays low with ♠xxx. The ten forces the ace. Declarer now plays diamonds. With a desire to have partner play something other than spades, 3rd hand follows with a low diamond to say: “I don’t like spades.”

Note: Smith-Echo is used by both defenders one time only. It is used on the first suit declarer plays.

Note: Sometimes, count has to take precedence over Smith Echo. If dummy has, say ♦KQJ10x with no side entry, and declarer plays a low diamond at trick 2, it is crucial to give count. (If declarer leads the ♦A, then count isn’t important and a Smith signal is given).

Note: Some pairs play “reverse Smith echo” - the opposite of what is described.

Note: Sometimes it is obvious that a player (usually the 3rd-hand player) can’t possibly like the suit led (maybe his 3rd hand “high” play was a little one). In that case, hi-lo in declarer’s first-played suit is usually suit-preference amongst the remaining 2 suits.

Note: There are many subtle inferences, exceptions, subtleties - experienced partnerships need to work on the details.

Note: Tempo is important. Try to think at trick one about your future signals. Don’t take a long time for your Smith signal as this give partner unauthorized information.



2018 Book of the Year

*“The ABTA wishes to award its first-ever Newcomer Book of the Year Award to **Jeff Bayone** for his amazing work, *A Taste of Bridge*.”*

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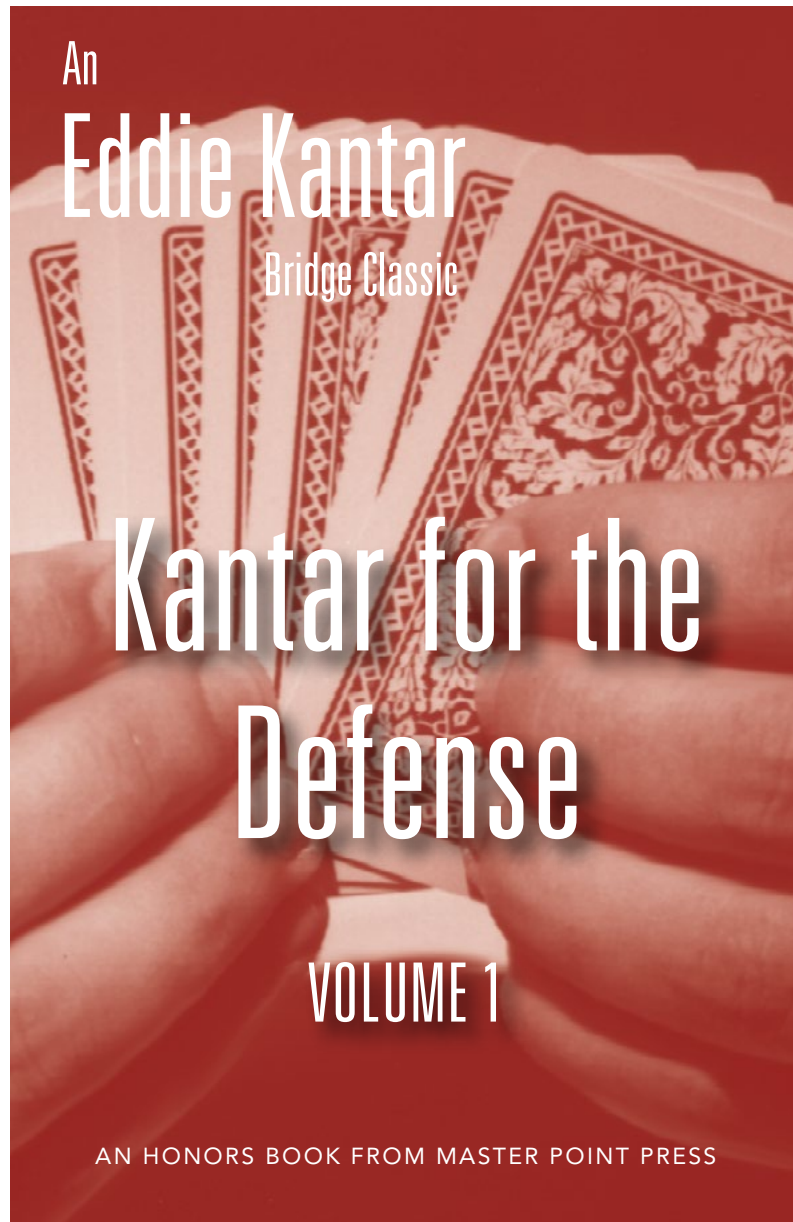
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Kantar for the Defense

by Victor Mollo

this month's Master Point Press Bidding Battle book prize



(37) PUSHING THEM AROUND

Neither side vulnerable
Dealer West

North
 ♠ 6 2
 ♥ A Q 2
 ♦ J 10 8 7 4 2
 ♣ K Q

East (you)
 ♠ 3
 ♥ J 10 8 7 6
 ♦ A 5
 ♣ J 7 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
3 ♠	Pass	Pass	3 NT
Pass	4 NT	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♠ K

The ♠K holds, declarer playing the ♠9. At trick two partner continues with the ♠Q. What do you discard?

PUSHING THEM AROUND (Solution)

North		
♠ 6 2		
♥ A Q 2		
♦ J 10 8 7 4 2		
♣ K Q		
West		East
♠ K Q J 8 7 5 4		♠ 3
♥ 5 4		♥ J 10 8 7 6
♦ Q 3		♦ A 5
♣ 4 2		♣ J 7 6 5 3
South		
♠ A 10 9		
♥ K 9 3		
♦ K 9 6		
♣ A 10 9 8		

The ♦ A! In order to defeat this contract partner needs a side entry. It can't be in hearts, so it has to be in either diamonds or clubs.

Partner's play of the ♠ Q (instead of the ♠ J) indicates that his entry is in the higher ranking of the two possible suits. If partner's lone face card is the doubleton ♦ Q you have to discard the ♦ A to make sure partner gets the lead.

If you discard anything else, declarer must play you for the ♦ A as the hand cannot be made if partner has it. In fact, if you discard anything else, declarer makes an overtrick.

KEY LESSON POINTERS

1. WHEN PARTNER HAS EQUAL HONORS HE CAN USE THEM TO INDICATE WHERE HIS SIDE STRENGTH LIES.
2. A_x OR K_x IN BACK OF A LONG WEAK SUIT CAN BE AN IMPEDIMENT IF PARTNER HAS Q_x IN THE SAME SUIT. IN THAT CASE THE HIGH HONOR MUST BE UNBLOCKED EARLY TO CREATE AN ENTRY INTO PARTNER'S HAND.

(38) FOUR JACKS SHOWING

Neither side vulnerable
Dealer North

North			
♠ A 4			
♥ A K 4			
♦ K Q J 10 8 7			
♣ Q J			
West (you)			
♠ J 9 8 6 2			
♥ J 10 9			
♦ A			
♣ A 10 8 3			
North	East	South	West
1 ♦	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead: ♠ 6

1. Dummy plays the ♠ A, partner the ♠ 5, and declarer the ♠ Q. How do you read this suit?
2. The ♦ K is led from dummy, partner plays the deuce and declarer the three. After making the thoughtful play of taking the trick, how do you continue?

FOUR JACKS SHOWING (Solution)

North		
♠ A 4		
♥ A K 4		
♦ K Q J 10 9 7		
♣ Q J		
West		East
♠ J 9 8 6 2		♠ 10 7 5
♥ J 10 9		♥ 8 7 3 2
♦ A		♦ 8 4 2
♣ A 10 8 3		♣ K 4 2
South		
♠ K Q 3		
♥ Q 6 5		
♦ 6 5 3		
♣ 9 7 6 5		

1. Declarer has ♠KQx and is making a deceptive play. If declarer had ♠KQ partner would have ♠10753. With that holding he should play low at trick one, reserving his come-on signals to show either the Q or K when dummy wins the first trick with an unsupported ace.
2. Shift to the ♣A! Declarer has nine tricks in sight outside of clubs (two spades, five diamonds and at least two hearts), so you need four club tricks.

There are two possibilities. Partner has specifically ♣K9 doubleton in which case you must shift to a low club, or partner has ♣Kxx in which case you must shift to the ace, then the ♣2 to partner's ♣K and wait for partner to return a third club through declarer's guarded ♣9.

The second possibility is more likely.

KEY LESSON POINTERS

1. WHEN DUMMY WINS A SPOT CARD OPENING LEAD WITH AN UNSUPPORTED ACE, THIRD HAND SIGNALS ENCOURAGEMENT WITH THE Q OR K, OTHERWISE, LOW.
2. KEEP A RUNNING COUNT OF DECLARER'S TRICKS.
3. WHEN PARTNER MUST HAVE ONE OF TWO HOLDINGS TO DEFEAT A CONTRACT, PLAY FOR THE ONE THAT IS MORE PROBABLE.

Think Defense

Multiple world champion Eddie Kantar's popular bridge column, *Kantar for the Defense*, has run in *The Bridge World* for almost fifty years, challenging players to defeat the contract in a variety of situations. Now available once more in print, *Kantar for the Defense Volume 1* and *Volume 2* are a collection of the best of these columns, offering the reader 100 practical defensive problems in each volume.

Kantar invites his reader to direct every play towards the goal of beating the contract in a variety of hands, bringing focus on counting tricks, points and distribution. Problems range from an intermediate to semi-advanced level and knowledge of basic card combinations is assumed. Each book concludes with a complete list of themes for its 100 problems.



EDDIE KANTAR (Santa Monica) is one of the world's best-known and best-loved bridge writers. He is a World and National champion, and has been inducted into the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame.



AN HONORS BOOK FROM
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The Abbot's Cunning Plan

by David Bird

'Who are you playing in your Hampshire League match tonight?' enquired Brother Cameron, arriving for breakfast and taking a seat next to the Abbot.

The Abbot showed no sign of welcoming the newcomer. Had he not seen that three other novices were sitting on a table near the servery? His own table was usually reserved for members of the monastery first team and a few other senior monks.

'Did you not notice Damien, Mark and Stephen other there?' queried the Abbot. 'Are you not on speaking terms for some reason?'

'Of course we are,' Brother Cameron replied. 'It's just that since my team was promoted into the top division, I thought it would make sense to share information on the teams we play.'

The Abbot looked towards Brother Xavier. 'Pass the toast, will you?' he said. 'It gets cold so quickly at this time of year.'

'One of the Southampton University pairs play transfer weak-two bids,' continued Brother Cameron. 'Last week, when we played them, I worked out quite a clever defence to that method. I can explain it to you, if you like.'

'We're playing against Hoggitt tonight, if you must know,' said the Abbot. 'If you don't mind, I'd rather like to enjoy my breakfast without talking about bridge all the time.'

That evening the Hoggitt team, who had won the league's first division for the past three seasons, arrived at the monastery in good time. This was an early board at the Abbot's table:

Dealer South. N.S Vul.

♠ J975 ♥ A32 ♦ Q10 ♣ AQ82	<table border="1" style="margin: 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		♠ Q843 ♥ Q54 ♦ AK85 ♣ J6	♠ K1062 ♥ 109 ♦ J9764 ♣ 94
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ A ♥ KJ876 ♦ 32 ♣ K10753											

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Steve Presley</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>David Hoggitt</i>
-	-	-	1♥
Double	Redouble	1♠	2♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Unwilling to lead from any of his side-suit honours, the Abbot reached for a low trump. Hoggitt won with the jack and led the ♣3 from his hand.

The Abbot, who could place declarer with the king of clubs for his opening bid, won with the queen. He continued with ace and another trump, preventing a club ruff in dummy. Hoggitt won with dummy's trump queen and led the jack of clubs to the Abbot's queen. 'You make one more club trick,' he said, facing his remaining cards.

The Abbot nodded his agreement, returning his cards to the wallet. 'I managed to pull dummy's trumps,' he observed. 'Unfortunately, the game was still there.'

Presley and Hoggitt shared a glance. Yes, the game was still there with him in the West seat.

‘I could tell from the bidding that there would only be three trumps in the dummy,’ continued the Abbot. ‘Still, virtue will have to be its own reward, as far as my opening lead was concerned.’

This was too much for Steve Presley. ‘Perhaps you could play low on the first round of clubs,’ he said.

The Abbot blinked. Was that right? Perhaps it was. He could then capture two of declarer’s club honours with his ace-queen and still remove dummy’s trumps in time. The ♣8 would become the setting trick. Mind you, pointing this out was an appalling display of etiquette by Presley. Some people rated him as a good player, but he had a lot to learn about basic good manners.

Meanwhile, at the other table, Brother Lucius had just reached a borderline slam.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 863 ♥ QJ104 ♦ A975 ♣ K2		♠ Q42 ♥ K8 ♦ KQ83 ♣ 9543	♠ 7 ♥ 976532 ♦ 1042 ♣ Q76
	♠ AKJ1095 ♥ A ♦ J6 ♣ AJ108		

West	North	East	South
<i>Jeremy Barker</i>	<i>Brother Paulo</i>	<i>Andy Hughton</i>	<i>Brother Lucius</i>
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

When Brother Lucius heard a double raise, he leapt straight to a small slam. Partner might hold no diamond control, but so be it. If the defenders failed to lead a diamond, in that case, he might be able to discard one

of his diamond losers on the king of hearts.

Jeremy Barker, who was wearing a sports jacket that had served him well for forty years, placed the queen of hearts on the table. Paulo displayed his minimal dummy, and Lucius noted that it was a club lead that would have caused problems, not a diamond. ‘Thank you, partner,’ he said. ‘Play small.’

East signalled his length with the ♥7 and Lucius won with the ace. All followed to the trump ace. How could twelve tricks be made? The first required move was surely a low diamond through the defender who held the ace of that suit. There was no clue as to that card’s location, but the lack of entries to dummy would force him to lead through the West hand.

At trick three, Brother Lucius led the ♦6. If Barker played low, he would win with dummy’s king and ditch his remaining diamond on the king of hearts. With any luck he should then be able to the clubs for only one loser. Lucius was happy to see West pause to consider the matter. Paulo had always been a lucky player! His raise to 3♠ was a clear overbid, but it seemed that it would be rewarded in a big way.

With a shrug of the shoulders, Jeremy Barker rose with the ace of diamonds. When he played another heart, Lucius won in the dummy and discard a club from his hand. A trump to the king allowed him to cash the jack of diamonds. He then returned to dummy with the trump queen and discarded two more club losers on the ♦KQ. The slam was his.

‘How were the clubs?’ enquired Brother Lucius.

‘King-one here,’ Barker replied.

‘Ducking the first diamond is no good for you, then,’ said Lucius. ‘I can take a diamond discard and finesse twice in clubs.’

‘I needed to lead a club,’ Barker continued. ‘Anyone finding that lead is either a genius or a lunatic.’

‘I believe the Abbot is West at the other table,’ observed Brother Paulo.

Meanwhile, the Abbot had not yet been granted the opportunity to play a contract. He picked up a balanced four-count and emitted a small sigh when Hoggitt arrived in a small slam.

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 97 ♥ J1085 ♦ J643 ♣ Q94	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J63 ♥ K64 ♦ A1087 ♣ A73	♠ 85 ♥ 9732 ♦ K52 ♣ K1062 ♠ AKQ1042 ♥ AQ ♦ Q9 ♣ J85
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--

West	North	East	South
<i>The Abbot</i>	<i>Steve Presley</i>	<i>Brother Xavier</i>	<i>David Hoggitt</i>
–	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Hoggitt leapt to 6♠ on the second round, fearful that any cue-bid auction might allow East to double partner's 5♣ for a lead of that suit. The Abbot led the jack of hearts and down went the dummy.

Hoggitt won with the ace of hearts and drew trumps with the ace and king. After cashing his other heart winner, he then needed to develop the diamond suit for two club discards. During this procedure, he could afford to lose only one trick in diamonds, of course. What was the best line?

When the ♦Q was led, the Abbot followed with the ♦5. 'Ace, please,' said Hoggitt. He discarded the ♦9 on the king of hearts and continued with the ♦

7 from dummy. East played low and declarer discarded a club from his hand. The Abbot won with the jack of diamonds and switched to a club. Hoggitt rose with

dummy's ace and called for another diamond, intending to take a second finesse in the suit. He was spared this trouble when the diamond king appeared on his right. He ruffed in his hand and crossed to the jack of trumps to discard his remaining club loser on the established ♦10. The slam had been made.

'That was a strange play in the diamond suit,' observed the Abbot. 'I thought you were going to run the queen.'

Hoggitt looked back impassively. 'If I run the queen and then take a ruffing finesse against the jack in the East hand, I go down,' he replied.

'As the cards lie,' said the Abbot.

'My line of taking a double ruffing finesse was a near certainty,' Hoggitt continued. 'It would only go down if you held the king and jack of diamonds. Then you would have covered the queen.'

The Abbot paused to consider the matter, marking time by entering the score on his card. 'I can't believe anyone would cover from the king-jack at our level of play,' he retorted.

Pompous as always, thought Hoggitt. It was tempting to mention that a club lead would have worked well. With any luck, though, the Abbot's partner would come round to that.'

'What happens on a club lead?' asked Brother Xavier.

'It's completely academic,' replied the Abbot, beckoning for the next board to be put into position. 'From my hand, any top expert would rate a club lead as the least attractive available.'

This was the last board of the first half at the other table:

Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 4 ♥ KQJ9873 ♦ Q93 ♣ 87	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 963 ♥ 62 ♦ J107 ♣ QJ1063	♠ QJ108 ♥ 1054 ♦ K86 ♣ 942 ♠ AK752 ♥ A ♦ A542
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Br. Paulo



♣ AK5

West	North	East	South
Jeremy Barker	Brother Paulo	Andy Hughton	Brother Lucius
3♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

♠ 4	♠ 963	♠ QJ108
♥ KQJ9873	♥ 62	♥ 1054
♦ Q93	♦ J107	♦ K86
♣ 87	♦ QJ1063	♣ 942
	♠ AK752	
	♥ A	
	♦ A542	
	♣ AK5	

Brother Lucius won the king of hearts lead with the ace. If trumps were 3-2, an easy overtrick would be available. After West's pre-empt, the chance of a 4-1 break was enhanced. What plan should he make?

Aiming to use dummy's trumps to withstand future heart leads, Lucius's next move was a low trump from his hand. He called for dummy's ♠6 and Hughton won with a mildly deceptive ten. Declarer ruffed the heart return in his hand, continuing with another low trump. West showed out and East had no effective return when he won the trick. After declarer's repeated ducking play, dummy still held a trump to deal with a third round of hearts.

Brother Lucius won the eventual club return, drew trumps and claimed ten tricks, conceding a diamond trick at the end.

The half-time interval had arrived and a novice entered the room with two large platefuls of the traditional St. Titus refreshment offering – margarine sandwiches. Brother James deposited one plate on the monastery team's table and walked towards the away team's table.

'Very kind of you,' said David Hoggitt, 'but we've brought our own refreshments.'

The last time they had played a match here, he suspected that the away team's sandwiches had been spread rather too liberally with the very fatty lard-based margarine. He had felt distinctly unwell during the second half of the match and had not played at his best. He would never say openly that this was part of the Abbot's plan to swing the odds in his team's direction. Still, with him... well, you never could tell!



Final Peebles SBU Congress 6th to 8th December 2019



The last SBU Congress after 46 years at the Peebles Hotel Hydro, and the only one in 2019, will take place in December this year. The format is shown below, but we aim to have a truly special event with some additional features:

- 'Play through the ages' with Liz McGowan. We have a special set of boards for you with a booklet providing analysis and entertaining stories from the history of the SBU congress
- A 'nightcap with the experts' late on Friday evening, hosted in the hotel's brand new gin lounge. This will give you a chance to ask the experts about the hands played that day in a seminar format
- A celebratory Gala Dinner on Saturday, followed by a speedball pairs event.

To mark this final congress, participants will be encouraged to follow the evening dress code which was once the standard at Peebles congresses – strictly black tie, lounge suit or equivalents.

Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
14:00	Play through the ages	10:45	Swiss Pairs session 1	13:40	Swiss Teams session 2
19:45	Swiss Teams session 1	15:00	Swiss Pairs session 2		
23:00	Nightcap with the experts	18:45	Gala Dinner	19:45	Swiss Teams session 3
		22:00	Speedball pairs		

Join us in marking the end of an era and saying goodbye in style.

See over for costs and entry details.

Congress fees:

Full congress (includes Friday afternoon and the speedball)	£75
Congress Swiss Teams only (three sessions)	£45
Congress Swiss Pairs only (two sessions)	£30

Hotel prices:

We have worked hard to agree value-for-money rates with the hotel. Resident prices cover all meals including buffet lunches and the Gala Dinner.

Accommodation	Three nights (Friday lunch to Monday breakfast)
Single room	£340 pp
Double room used as a single	£395 pp
Double room	£315 pp

The Gala Dinner is available to non-residents for £45 pp.

Note that spaces are limited and there is much enthusiasm for the event. Residency for the whole weekend will secure a space – after that non-resident places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Entries:

Visit www.sbu.org.uk or contact Hasan or Julie at sbucongressdesk@gmail.com or on 0131 343 3838.

The uBid Auction Room

Marc Smith

Marc Smith follows the medal-winning England Seniors team

The 2019 World Championship was staged in Wuhan in central China. That England teams had qualified from the European Championships in all four categories was, in itself, a considerable achievement. Poland and Sweden were the only other European countries represented in all four events, Open, Women, Seniors and Mixed. After eight days and a 23-match round robin, all four England teams also qualified for the knockout stage, something achieved by only two (China and USA) of the nine other countries with four starters.

The England Bermuda Bowl team led the mighty USA-1 team including Meckstroth/Rodwell by more than 70 IMPs overnight in their quarter-final, but they were finally beaten in a close finish. Meanwhile, the Women, the Mixed and the Seniors all marched onwards. Only the Netherlands also produced three semi-finalists.

The England team in the Mixed had won their round robin by more than a whole match and all three pairs were in the top ten in the Butler, but after defeating Latvia in their quarter-final they were beaten by USA in the semi-final. The Women saw off Poland in their quarter-final but conceded their semi-final against Sweden with a set to play. They then won a squeaker by 5 IMPs on the final deal of their playoff match to earn bronze medals. A special note of congratulations to Nicola Smith, as this was her 20th world championship medal, tying her for second place all-time with Bobby Wolff and Giorgio Belladonna, behind only Bob Hamman (who has 31).

The team that qualified via the European Championship in the Seniors underwent some unavoidable changes. The original threesome of Malcolm Pryor, David Muller and Trevor Ward were augmented by David Kendrick, John Holland and NBM's own Alan Mould (not forgetting npc David Jones). During their two weeks in Wuhan, they faced numerous tricky bidding challenges. Readers can bid my selection of the hands with their regular partner (using the bidding slips provided elsewhere in the magazine) and

then compare their contracts with those reached at the table by our silver medal-winning Seniors. As the team established their place amongst the leaders, they became regulars on VuGraph, screened live around the world on BBO. We begin with one of the team's early appearance on that stage, in Round 10 against the eventual gold-medalists, Denmark.

Hand 1. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ KQJ82		♠ 943
♥ J8		♥ A43
♦ Q10943		♦ AK76
♣ 8		♣ Q74

West	North	East	South
<i>Holland</i>	<i>Christiansen</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>H Hansen</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

John Holland passed as Dealer and made a fit-showing jump (maximum pass with spades and diamonds) in response to his partner's third-seat opening. Although he had only a 13-count facing a passed hand, Mould appreciated his spade fit and excellent honour structure, and made an invitational raise. With excellent trumps and ten cards (rather than the nine he had promised so far) in his two suits, Holland had no problem accepting. E/W +620.

The auction started the same way in the replay:

West	North	East	South
<i>Schou</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>J Hansen</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
3♦	All Pass		

Jorgen Hansen passed Two Spades in the same position as Mould. Dave Kendrick backed in with Three Clubs on the South cards and Steen Schou

competed with Three Diamonds, which ended matters. E/W +130 and 10 IMPs to England.

Recommended auction: It is hard to fault the English auction. Yes, there is the danger of a diamond ruff, but vulnerable at IMPs this is the sort of game you want to reach. The use of fit jumps both in competitive auctions and by a passed hand is a major development in modern bidding.

MARKS: Four Spades 10, Four Diamonds/Two Spades 7, Three Spades 6

Running Score: 2019 d’Orsi Trophy silver medallists 10

Next on the menu were the Australians:

Hand 2. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K642	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A109
♥ K3		♥ A86
♦ J75		♦ AK6432
♣ AQ107		♣ 5

West	North	East	South
<i>Holland</i>	<i>Braithwaite</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>De Livera</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Six Diamonds is a decent slam, needing at worst the diamonds to come down or the club finesse. The alternative of trying to ruff down the ♣K or finding the same defender with the ♣K and four spades if the diamonds do not break offers even better odds.

Holland showed a weak no-trump with his rebid and Mould’s Three Diamonds was game forcing with a decent six-card suit. Holland agreed diamonds immediately with a raise and a couple of cue-bids later Mould installed himself in slam. E/W +1370.

West	North	East	South
<i>Neill</i>	<i>Pryor</i>	<i>Kanetkar</i>	<i>Muller</i>
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Avi Kanetkar had a strong jump shift response available. Bruce Neill then had to decide whether to support diamonds immediately or show the balanced nature of his hand. I think that is a close decision, but it seems to me that if you do choose to rebid 2NT then you are virtually obliged to make one more try when partner raises to game. E/W +720 and 12 IMPs to England.

Recommended auction: If you play strong jump shifts, then an auction starting 1♣-2♦-3♦ is one way to reach slam or 1♣-2♦-2NT-3NT-4♦-etc. If not, then how you advance will depend on your methods over a 1NT rebid. For those playing some sort of xyz variation, the auction 1♣-1♦-1NT-2♦*-2♠-3♦-4♦-4♥-4♠-6♦ seems reasonable. (Two Diamonds shows any game-forcing hand.)

MARKS: Six Diamonds 10, Five Diamonds/4NT 5, 6NT 3

Running Score: 2019 d’Orsi Trophy silver medallists 20

Hand 3. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ –	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K762
♥ K107		♥ AQ53
♦ AQ74		♦ 93
♣ KQJ1043		♣ 862

North opens 1♠ and South passes. North rebids 2♠ if able

West	North	East	South
<i>Holland</i>	<i>Das</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>Saha</i>
–	1♠	Pass	Pass
Double	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass

In the round robin match against the eventual bronze-medalists, India, the English pair were never tempted by the lure of 3NT. Too strong for any other action, Holland began with a double and Mould competed to Three Hearts when North rebid his spades. Holland finally got to introduce his suit at the four-level, and Mould raised to game. North held ♣A9 and a singleton ♦K, so careful play brought home eleven tricks. E/W +400.

Unfortunately, you cannot win them all. Your teammate sitting North at the other table chose an inopportune moment for a Four Spade opening, which cost 800. Even if you make it to the top spot on this deal, it’s still 9 IMPs to India.

Recommended auction: I cannot improve on the Mould/Holland auction.

MARKS: Five Clubs 10, Two Spades-Doubled (N) 6, Four Clubs 5, 3NT 1

Running Score: 2019 d’Orsi Trophy silver medallists 30

Hand 4. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AKQ763		♠ J
♥ 763		♥ K105
♦ K9		♦ AQJ108654
♣ 87		♣ A

North overcalls 2♣. South makes a fit-showing 3♥ bid if able. North will bid 4♣ if 3♥ is doubled

West	North	East	South
<i>Holland</i>	<i>Lebel</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>Soulet</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♦	3♥
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♦	All Pass

South’s Three Heart bid not only stole space from the auction, but also encouraged Mould to devalue his hand. The key is the ♦K. Perhaps, having already rebid his spades, a raise of Four Diamonds to game would have encouraged Mould to bid the excellent slam.

At the other table, the two French former world champions had no such reservations

West	North	East	South
<i>Levy</i>	<i>Pryor</i>	<i>Abecassis</i>	<i>Muller</i>
-	-	-	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♦	4♣
4♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

The English pair’s pre-emption gave the French even less room, Muller’s Four Clubs cutting out East’s Three Spade bid. I think we just have to accept that Michel Abecassis’s evaluation of the East hand was superior on this occasion.

Recommended auction: Some variation of the French auction is hard to criticize.

MARKS: Six Diamonds 10, Five Diamonds 7, Four Spades 4, Four

Clubs-Doubled 1

Running Score: 2019 d’Orsi Trophy silver medallists 37

The lead in the quarter-final match against China ebbed and flowed with neither side managing to pull far ahead. With just three of the 96 boards remaining, though, China led by 18 IMPs and things were looking grim. Readers will perhaps be appreciative of a relatively easy 10 marks on our next deal, whilst at the same time recognizing that a pair playing in a world championship quarter-final failed to collect them.

Hand 5. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A95		♠ QJ3
♥ A965		♥ KQJ74
♦ AJ106		♦ 2
♣ A5		♣ K972

West	North	East	South
<i>X Shen</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>M Shen</i>	<i>Mould</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

The Chinese system card describes this 2NT simply as ‘game forcing’, rather than a heart raise. Three Clubs was, presumably, natural, and perhaps the jump to Four Hearts was meant to show primary support. Whatever the intended message, it obviously did not make its way across the table and the easy slam was missed. E/W +480.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Tao</i>
-	-	1♥	Pass
3NT*	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	5NT	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Dave Kendrick’s 3NT response was the partnership’s game-forcing raise, and Ward rebid Four Hearts to show a minimum. After Kendrick cue-bid to show extras, Ward used Blackwood to discover that all four aces were opposite, and even then made a grand slam try on the way to Six Hearts.

There was nothing in the play in Six Hearts. However, David Bird's excellent article in the Thursday bulletin (still available on the championship website) explains how an Italian declarer made all thirteen tricks on a two-way squeeze. (And a good thing too, as he had bid Seven Hearts!) Here it was E/W +980 and an 11-IMP swing to England that contributed greatly to their last gasp come back.

Recommended auction: Using bog-standard BBO-style Jacoby, the auction begins 1♥-2NT-3♦ showing a shortage, but saying nothing about strength. Even so, when West then advances beyond game with a 4♠ cue-bid, it does not seem unreasonable for East to use Blackwood with similar results to the English auction above.

MARKS: Six Hearts 10, Five Hearts/4NT 2

Running Score: 2019 d'Orsi Trophy silver medallists 47

In the semi-final against Netherlands, England trailed by 30 IMPs overnight. However, a magnificent fourth stanza, which they won 87-7, put them well on the way to the final.

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ –	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q953
♥ 8		♥ Q10532
♦ AQ98432		♦ K65
♣ K9863		♣ Q

South opens 1♥. North bids a natural 2♠ if able

West	North	East	South
<i>Mulder</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>Vergoed</i>	<i>Holland</i>
–	–	–	1♥
2NT*	3♣*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

At this table, Andre Mulder's Unusual 2NT simply did not get the job done. Mould showed a forcing bid in spades with his Three Club cue-bid, and even made a slam try on the way to game. Indeed, Vergoed might have rescued his side by doubling Four Diamonds. Perhaps then Mulder might have come alive to the possibility of declaring. As it happens, West has to lead a club (or a rather unlikely singleton heart) to even beat Four Spades. E/W +50.

West	North	East	South
<i>Pryor</i>	<i>Hoffland</i>	<i>Muller</i>	<i>van der Hoek</i>
–	–	–	1♥
2♦	2♠	3♦	Pass
5♦	Double	All Pass	

With such high suit disparity, Malcolm Pryor's Two Diamond overcall looks like a much more sensible start on this West hand. Hoffland got his spades into the auction, but it was all too late. David Muller made a courtesy raise in diamonds, which was all Pryor needed to hear. North's double of Five Diamonds simply gilded the English lily. It may look as if the defence may be able to beat the contract if they can get two rounds of trumps in, but the Great Dealer was feeling generous on this day, and the ♣J-10-x comes down, so only one ruff in dummy is needed even if they do.

Recommended auction: I cannot argue much with the Pryor/Muller auction.

MARKS: Five Diamonds 10, Four Diamonds 4

Running Score: 2019 d'Orsi Trophy silver medallists 57

We finish back where we began, against Denmark, but this time in the final.

Hand 7. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ A9	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 10px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ KQJ1087
♥ Q984		♥ J3
♦ A		♦ Q652
♣ AKJ974		♣ Q

North doubles a diamond cue-bid

West	North	East	South
<i>Holland</i>	<i>Christiansen</i>	<i>Mould</i>	<i>H Hansen</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Double	Pass	Pass
Redouble	Pass	4♠	All Pass

A controlled auction from the English pair uncovered the lack of a heart control and stopped safely in game. South led a diamond in response to his partner's double, so Mould quite sensible won, drew trumps, and

started cashing clubs. When clubs ran he had thirteen tricks. E/W +510.

West	North	East	South
Nielsen	Ward	Boesgaard	Kendrick
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

A common expert method after a one-level response and a reverse bid is to play a convention called Blackout, using the lower of either 2NT or the fourth suit as a type of Lebensohl to show a weak hand. All other bids are then forcing to game. Thus, Boesgaard was able to bid a forcing Two Spades here. The problem was that he then used the space he had saved by jumping to game at his next turn (see below). Nielsen jumped to slam with his diamond control, leaving Kendrick with a blind opening lead. Would you have found the heart lead from Kxxx on this auction?

Kendrick didn't either, preferring a diamond from Jxx. The best percentage line for declarer in slam is the same as the one taken by Mould in Four Spades: either clubs 3-3 or the ♣10 doubleton, a bit below 50% but what else can you do? Boesgaard decided to try ruffing diamonds in dummy and throwing his heart losers on the clubs. This was, in fact, worse odds, as it needed clubs 3-3. With North holding the doubleton ♣10, declarer made only ten tricks (yes he does seem to have eleven even then). That was E/W +100 and 12 IMPs to England.

Recommended auction: The English auction above. I suspect that Mould/Holland were playing Blackout. Nevertheless, Three Spades is still the best bid by East, as it lets partner know that you suit is playable facing even a singleton. Partner can then cue-bid below game and stop safely in circumstances such as those here.

MARKS: Four Spades, Five Spades 7, Five Clubs 6, Six Clubs/Six Spades 2

Running Score: 2019 d'Orsi Trophy silver medallists 67

Hand 8. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K76	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">N W E S</div>	♠ 104	
♥ Q7		♥ AK6543	
♦ AQJ4		♦ 9753	
♣ 8762		♣ J	

South opens 1♠. North raises to 2♠

West	North	East	South
Holland	Boesgaard	Mould	Nielsen
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass

“Points Schmoits” as one well-known American bridge writer once said. The English pair sailed into the excellent game on their combined 20-count. With trumps 3-2 and the ♠A and ♦K both with the opening bidder, there were eleven comfortable tricks. E/W +450.

At the other table, the Pryor/Muller Acol/weak notrump style made things more difficult for the Danes.

West	North	East	South
Schou	Pryor	J Hansen	Muller
-	-	-	1♠
Pass	2♣	2♥	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

Pryor's 2/1 response did not deter Jorgen Hansen from entering the bidding at his first turn, but it did persuade Schou that it wasn't their hand. The English pair did not even sell out to Three Hearts, and when the defence began with two rounds of hearts followed by a switch to the singleton club, that was the end of the defenders' second diamond trick. E/W -140 and 11 IMPs to England.

Recommended auction: Once again, the Mould/Holland one above. Excellent judgement.

MARKS: Four Hearts 10, Three Hearts 6, Two Spades (S) 1

Final Score: 2019 d'Orsi Trophy silver medallists 77

As a footnote, I make no apologies if this report sounds a bit like the Holland/Mould show. Undoubtedly, every member of the team played their part in their superb achievement. From emailing and chatting to team members during the event, though, I am sure that every one of them would say that they could not have achieved what they did without the superhuman efforts of John and Alan. Holland/Mould played all but three of the 23 matches in the round robin, and all 288 boards in the knockout rounds. Just look at the pictures of them in the bulletin – they both had dark hair when they left the UK to fly out to China! It is now the same colour as their medals.

Apologies to readers who hoped to outbid the featured pair this month. You will need to bid exceptionally well to outscore their 77/80. Of course, over the course of 556 boards I could have found a few where they did not land in a particularly good contract. That would not have represented what this team achieved, though. Congratulations to all seven of them. Meanwhile, Mark will be in this chair for the Christmas edition and I will return in the New Year issue with another set of deals that challenged the experts at a major event somewhere in the world.



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The Master Point Press Bidding Battle Set 22

Moderated by Brian Senior

A small panel this month, which is not altogether a surprise as several would have been in Wuhan with more important matters on their minds.

All this month's problems come from panellist Marc Smith, so it will be interesting to see how he gets on.

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

- ♠ QJ104
- ♥ QJ73
- ♦ KQ75
- ♣ Q

West	North	East	South
–	3♥	Double	Pass
?			

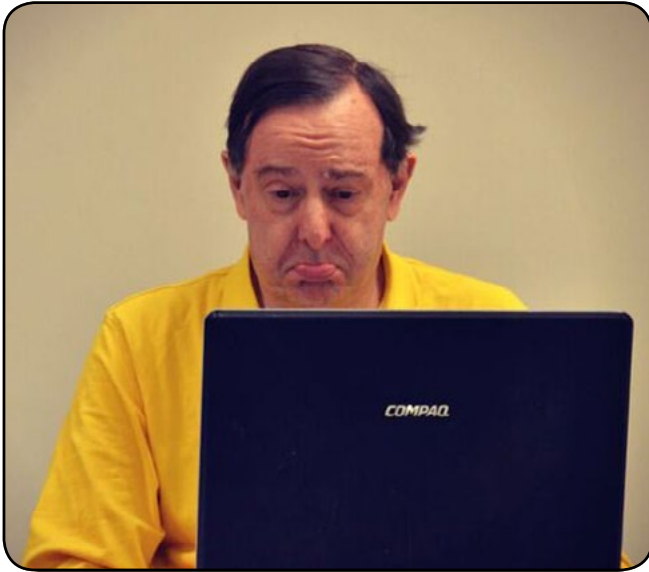
Bid	Votes	Marks
3NT	10	10
4♠	2	5
4♥	1	3
Pass	1	2

This was what Marc sent in along with the problem: A number of options. In our match the board was flat at – 730 when both players passed the double. Partner held ♠A9x ♥ – ♦J109xxx ♣AKxx, so 5♦ was cold, as was 3NT (by ducking when a low heart is led to South's nine). 4♠ probably goes down. Presumably you get to 5♦ by advancing with 4♥ (two places to play)...?

And so to the panel:

THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	No. of Votes	Marks		Bid	No. of Votes	Marks			
1.	3NT	10	10	5.	5♣	5	10			
	4♠	2	5		Pass	4	8			
	4♥	1	3		Double	2	4			
	Pass	1	2		5♥	2	6			
2.	1♠	7	10	4NT	1	6	6.	Pass	9	10
	4♠	4	7	Double	5	8				
	3♠	3	6	2NT	0	2				
3.	3♥	6	10	7.	2♠	11	10			
	3NT	4	8		2♦	2	6			
	3♠	3	7		Double	1	3			
	4♦	1	2		8.	5♠	7	10		
4.	Pass	9	10	4♥		2	9			
	Double	3	6	4♣		2	5			
	2♦	2	4	4NT		2	3			
				4♠	1	3				



**Brian Senior—your Moderator—
universally and affectionately known as
Mr. Grumpy**

Apteker: Pass. I expect to take this a minimum of two down and possibly four down. Slam is unlikely and would be hard to explore. 3NT is the only alternative for me, which will undoubtedly make, but I am gunning for more.

But the rest preferred to play rather than defend:

Lambardi: 3NT. Spades will play better if partner is void in hearts, but in the more likely case of a singleton I'd much rather keep clear of ruffs/over-ruffs. Missing so many top cards suggests nine tricks rather than 10. Leaving the double in is an alternative, but declarer might take six trumps and an ace and a club trick.

Teramoto: 3NT. This looks safer than defending. 4♠ is also OK but I would like to avoid a ruff by the defense.

Smith: 3NT. I seem to have plenty of choices here: Pass, 3NT, 4♠, 4♥. I can quickly rule out passing with my trumps under the bidder and game very likely for our side. Four Spades also seems to risk a silly result. A 4♥ cue-bid is an option: I can pass if partner bids 4♠, but still get to 5♦ if he has, say, a 3-1-4-5 shape. In the end, I don't think we want to be at the mercy of possible bad breaks in a high-level suit contract. We should have enough HCP to make 3NT playable, and that contract is likely to be most resilient if suits don't break well..

Bird: 3NT. I cannot be sure of four spades opposite. Nor am I happy to bid 4♥ with no aces and only one king. Pass is a non-starter for me, so 3NT it is.

Brock: 3NT. Some quote from Hamman about if 3NT is a possibility then you should choose it. What a lot of bad bids have been excused by quoting this!

Haven't they just – but I don't think this is one of them.

Green: 3NT. Close between 3NT, 4♠ and Pass. I think my hand is a little too slow for 4♠ and my heart pips are not quite good enough to pass the double. I wouldn't argue with Pass, maybe it's right, but I could imagine +200 instead of +600.

Robson: 3NT. Swap my major-suit tens and I'd pass for sure. As it is, I do think 3NT will make whereas there could be some unlucky ruffs to beat 4♠. Close.

Sime: 3NT. Soft cards point towards No Trump. An over-ruff or bad spade break may sink 4♠. I am not passing Three Hearts doubled unless North is on my lunatics list

That would probably include me, I suspect.

Sandsmark: 3NT. I don't know if partner promises four spades with his double, but regardless of that, 4♠ may give South a heart ruff. If partner shows a very strong hand with his next bid, and bids 4♣/♦, I think I will have to bid the spade suit first, and if he persists on going towards slam, I will also show my diamonds and cue-bid if I can.

I'm sure that, while he will usually have four spades, partner doesn't guarantee four. That would simply be too restrictive and mean he would have a problem with, say, a strong 3-1-4-5.

Kokish: 3NT. Just another problem with no correct solution. Lots of slow cards suggest staying low despite the heavy HCP.

That's a big vote for 3NT, and they make good points. However, there were a couple of minority actions chosen.

Rigal: 4♠. I can see that defending (or playing 3NT) might be best. I can see it, but I just don't care. The odds favour this choice I think. I believe the chance of a diamond ruff against me is outweighed by the fact that a club honour in dummy might well give North eight tricks in hearts and make 3NT awkward.

Stabell: 4♠. 3NT might be easier opposite a minimum 3-1-4-5-hand, but the bidding is going to end there even if partner is very strong. Slam is laydown opposite a hand like: ♠AKxx ♥x ♦AJxx ♣AKxx and I hope that partner might be able to make a move over 4♠ with this.

I think he should.

Cannell: 4♥. The percentages auger well for the Heart ace/king being the property of N/S. That means partner will cover a multitude of our losers. Depending on partner's heart holding, as

well as the number of filling control cards, will give us a slam, or not. I am cue-bidding in case partner bids Four Spades. Then, RKCB. If partner bids something else I may go the route of 5NT = pick-a-slam (and pull 6♣ to 6♦ = spades/diamonds).

You could sell me on 4♥ being superior to 4♠ because it always gets to a 4-4 spade fit while avoiding a 4-3 fit, but you can't sell me on the slam hunt. I agree with those who say it is close, but put me with the majority – 3NT.

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AK109765
♥ 83
♦ —
♣ K1094

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♦
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
1♠	7	10
4♠	4	7
3♠	3	6

Marc:

At both the tables, West overcalled 3♠, which seemed to me fairly middle-of-the road at 'red', but since even The Abbot said he would overcall 4♠ maybe I am wrong about that. At one table it continue back to opener's 4♦, which ended the auction. At the other, it went P-P-X, P-4♥-P-P-? and I chose to defend. We beat it by two via two diamond ruffs to gain 6 IMPs but we are cold

for 11 tricks opposite ♠Qx ♥xxx ♦xxx ♣AQxxx.

The panel was split 50-50 between the simple overcall and a pre-empt, but then the pre-emptors were also split roughly down the middle.

The simple overcallers:

Lambardi: 1♠. Would a direct 4♠ keep the opponents from a cheap sacrifice? Unlikely in these days. If they do bid 5♦ I will have got myself into a very awkward position. Even if partner makes some sort of card-showing double I'd be hard pressed to guess our right level.

Brock: 1♠. I think I'm learning that when you have spades there is no strong reason to pre-empt.

Green: 1♠. It might be right to overcall 4♠ and it certainly piles on the pressure. But vul against not I don't feel that my suit is quite good enough and on a bad day I might go for a number.

Bird: 1♠. When Marc Smith first showed me this hand, I told him I thought his 3♠ was absurd, particularly with the void in South's suit. There's no real need to bid 4♠, so I will see what happens over 1♠.

Stabell: 1♠. We might easily have the highest contract even though partner couldn't open, so I don't really see the need to pre-empt when I have the highest suit.

Apteker: 1♠. At these colours it may be tactically right to bid 4♠, which I would do if my major was hearts. Given that I have the boss suit, I prefer to show partner that I have some defense too in case the opponents sacrifice in a red suit when it is our hand.

Cannell: 1♠. Slowly, slowly... catchee...

Or what about 3♠?

Smith: 3♠. The choices seem to be 1♠, 3♠ and 4♠. The problem I have with One Spade is that at this vulnerability I would rather not give the opponents plenty of room to discover a big-red suit fit in which to save against Four Spades. Indeed, perhaps they can make game in a red suit, so pre-emption offers the best chance of shutting it out. The problem I have is that Four Spades feels like it is just too much at this vulnerability. Unlike Four Hearts, when you bid a pre-emptive Four Spades the opponents are more likely to double and defend when you have over-reached. For me, if you were constructing an example of a vul-vs-NV Three Spade overcall for a textbook, this hand wouldn't be far from what you would choose.

It looks a bit heavy for me to use as a book example. ♠AK109xxx and 3-2-1 in the side suits is enough for me, without the ♣K.

Kokish: 3♠. If the vulnerability is still important for you, you'll like 3♠ more than 1♠ (and having to bid again) and 4♠. Whether this hand, with its quick tricks and chunky four-card side suit, is anywhere close to perfect for 3♠ is in the eye of the beholder.

Rigal: 3♠. I can double 4♥ when it comes back to me if looking for a swing, I suppose. 4♠ often acts as a transfer to double, and I might not object to that I suppose, but I'm allowed to take the low road at least once a set, buoyed by the scoring and vulnerability.

Certainly, if I bid only 3♠ at my first turn I would double 4♥. Four Spades could easily be making facing a couple of black queens.

Does this next vote mean that Iain is on his own lunatics list?

Sime: 4♠. Let them have the problem. More likely plus 790 than minus 800. Most likely neither.

Teramoto: 4♠. I would like to play 4♠ and avoid them finding a fit. 4♠ should have tricks at this vulnerability.

Sandsmark: 4♠. What's the problem? Partner has passed, so 4♠ is a pre-empt which may even make and, as such, it takes a lot of bidding space away from the enemy.

Robson: 4♠. Don't like the colours but must put on the pressure.

That's how I see it, but the majority don't agree. As always, while there is logic to be applied to the situation, pre-empting is to a big degree a matter of personal style.



Andrew Robson

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ K10764
♥ 8
♦ 653
♣ A942

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

Bid	Votes	Marks
3♥	6	10
3NT	4	8
3♠	3	7
4♦	1	2

Marc:

Do you simply bid 3NT? Are the spades good enough for 3♠? What about 3♥? Partner had ♠Axx ♥AKJxxx ♦AJ10x ♣ – so 4♠ is clearly best. Perhaps you think partner's hand is a better problem – I think he should bid 4♣ (presumably choice of games cue-bid) over 3NT, rather than passing as Muller did against us.

How did the panel do this time?

Lambardi: 4♦. Not a bid that will gain me a good score, I guess. I hate supporting partners second (minor!) suit with three cards (xxx!) but my hand structure suggests a trump contract, and if partner is 2-5-5-1 he'll like my dummy. No problems if he is either 3-5-4-1 or 1-6-4-2, as he will rebid spades/hearts to steer us back to the right spot. Going beyond the obvious alternative – 3 NT – will be wrong when partner is 1-5-4-3 (or 2-5-4-2, surely a 2NT rebid) but would he jump rebid in diamonds with that

shape? Would he not know that he would be putting me in an impossible situation if I was weak?

Sorry Pablo, but I agree with your first sentence more than what followed it. While it is fair to say that there is no good choice in this situation, I really don't like 4♦ on three low. And if he bids 4♥ over 4♦, are you sure that he will be showing a sixth heart and not making a diamond slam try? I'm afraid that I wouldn't be so confident of some of my partners.

Robson: 3♠. Absent an agreement where partner has denied three spades. Anyone for Gazilli?

Not me, but then I've never played it so can't really judge. I suspect that it would have worked well this time.

Stabell: 3♠. Close between 3♠ and 3NT, but if partner's jump is based on a spade fit (3-5-4-1), you will look silly in 3NT. Really hoping that partner can bid 3NT now.

It's fair to say that if partner has a borderline 3♦ jump it will probably be because he has a partial spade fit.

Brock: 3♠. I don't think this shows much more than a decent five-card suit. Although I have a decent club stopper, I don't really want to play there if partner has three spades and a singleton small club. When partner makes a jump like this he usually has a fair idea of where he is going and if he is thinking of 4♥ or 5♦, I do not strongly disagree.

A bit like 1♣ – 1♠ – 3♣ – 3♠, I agree that 3♠ shows only a reasonable five-card suit. The question is whether K10xxx qualifies. It is at best borderline, convincing some to opt for 3NT.

Teramoto: 3NT. 3♠ should have a little more in

spades. Partner may continue with 4♠ over 3NT if he has 3-5-4-1 with good spades and controls.
Apteker: 3NT. Our most likely game on this misfitting hand. If my spade quality was better, I would bid 3♠.

Sandsmark: 3NT. There is nothing in this bidding sequence that suggests any fit. 3♠ would be an alternative bid, even though the suit in itself is feeble. Hopefully I am among the majority this time? (They normally let me down!)

It's happened again Tommy!

Bird: 3NT. This could be right even when partner holds five diamonds, which is not guaranteed. I expect there will be a few votes for 3♥, leaving partner room to show three-card spade support. It looks dangerous to me. I would not feel at all happy if partner raised 3♥ to 4♥.

Neither would I, David, but all the alternatives are pretty ugly this time, working perfectly opposite some of partner's possible hands, and disastrous opposite others.

Smith: 3♥. I cannot say that I love Three Hearts on a singleton, but I like 3NT even less. Yes, the ♣9 might prove useful, but one club stop facing shortage may not be enough. Is partner supposed to bid on over 3NT with something like ♠QJx ♥AKQxx ♦AKxx ♣x? 3NT may also be better from partner's side – ♠Ax ♥AKxxx♦AKQx-♣Qx for example. I don't think the spade suit is good enough for 3♠.

Sime: 3♥. The cheapest bid is the most flexible; game in any one of four denominations may be right.

Green: 3♥. I hope Eric is on the panel this month as I'm sure he'll back me up! I want partner to bid 3NT if possible. If partner raises then



David Bird

he'll have six and if he rebids diamonds we can play game in diamonds. If partner tries 3♠ then I can always go back to NT. Considering partner could hold a singleton club I don't think a direct 3NT is a great idea with ♣A9xx.

Rigal: 3♥. I'm sure Kokish would agree, because rebidding spades might make partner play me for a much better suit and bidding 3NT might see me play there facing 3-5-4-1. We need a partner who thinks the same way, of course. Without that 3NT is really mandated.

Cannell: 3♥. The perfect hand for Kokish's false preference Three Heart bid on the small singleton! For you, Eric. It leaves us well placed when partner continues describing the jump-shift hand.

And the man himself:

Kokish: 3♥. Old story; same happy ending for me. Brian hates this and will tell you why, but 3NT is too short-sighted by my lights, buries the fifth spade, cautions partner not to bid out his 5/5s, and suggests a slower hand with more strength and (even) less fit.

Much as it pains me, I'll go with the plurality this time.

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A86
 ♥ Q754
 ♦ 973
 ♣ Q82

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	2♣
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	9	10
Dble	3	6
2♦	2	4

Marc:

A common enough situation. At the table, one player passed and it then went 2♠-P-3♣ back to him and he passed again... – 110. At the other table, he doubled and partner now went overboard and they got to 5♦ doubled for – 1100. Partner held ♠KQJx♥AJx♦KJ10xx♣x. My preference is for neither of the above but for a third option, 2♦.

Was there support for Marc's view from the panel?

Smith: 2♦. In theory, double shows 4-4 in the majors, so there is a real risk of partner bidding 3♠ or even 4♠ if I start that way. Passing is all too likely to either leave me guessing what to do next time, or to us selling out cheaply. At least 2♦ isn't far from what I actually have – a minimum response with some diamond support. Not ideal, but better than the alternatives.

Bird: 2♦. A negative double will not work well if partner rebids 2♠ or 2NT. I need to keep low on this weak hand.

Only from his partner in crime, David Bird. Two Diamonds would be more attractive in Acol, or if playing a short club and unbalanced diamond.

So, what about a negative double?

Green: Double. Light but I would rather act now than wait for a reopening double.

Sandsmark: Double. Negative double. You just don't have perfect hands every time you double negatively. If double doesn't get nearly all the votes, I will be happy to see what bid could describe this hand in this setting!

Stabell: Double. This is probably the lower limit for a two-level negative double. Will pass whatever partner suggests and hope that we are in a playable contract. Passing 2♣ might work out better, but could lead to a missed game since I cannot really bid more than 2♥ over partner's reopening double.

That is the problem – if you pass now you cannot safely show your values later on in the auction. But the majority didn't think they were worth an immediate action.

Cannell: Pass. Just short of a flawed Negative Double.

Lambardi: Pass. Not even close to the offence/

defense ratio for a negative double (in my book). HCP are OK but shape is hopeless and Qxx in clubs may be exactly what might turn a competitive stretch from partner into a mini-phantom. If partner reopens I will regret my pass, however, as I will be too strong for a minimum bid. But all in all I'll take that risk.

Teramoto: Pass. It has only 8 HCP and ♣Qxx suggests not to need an immediate double. If it goes 2♣ – All Pass, partner usually has three or more clubs, when it is OK to defend.

Yes, the club holding is bad news.

Brock: Pass. If partner can't reopen we probably won't miss anything. I hate doubling without both majors and 2♦ with xxx looks wrong.

Robson: Pass. Put it this way – if it goes All Pass, am I gutted? Absolutely not.

Sime: Pass. If we can make game, partner will re-open. If we can make a partial, and partner passes, I expect to beat Two Clubs. If we cannot make anything (partner being minimum balanced) we might still beat Two Clubs.

Apteker: Pass. If partner passes, we will probably be in our best spot. If partner re-opens, I think a minimum 2♥ bid better describes the offensive strength of this hand than doubling now for take-out.

Kokish: Pass. I don't hate double, but passing a 2♠ reply or converting to 3♦ are both unattractive enough that stretching with this hand is not indicated.

Rigal: Pass. Switch the minors and I have to act, but when facing a minimum balanced hand at any vulnerability or scoring I think defending 2♣ may be our best result. OK...maybe I'm allowed to take two low roads a set.

Take as many low roads as you like, Barry. On another day we may laugh at you, but not today. I can well imagine losing discipline and doubling at the table, but Pass looks right to me.

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ K
♥ Q74
♦ AK
♣ QJ108654

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

?

3♥ Artificial game try in spades

Bid	Votes	Marks
5♣	5	10
Pass	4	8
Dble	2	4
5♥	2	6
4NT	1	6

Marc:

Lots of options here. Pass/Double/4NT/5♣/5♥, for example. At the table where I was watching the player bid 4NT (two places to play) and they stopped in 5♣, which was two down. 5♥ would have been one down, so partner has done well to bid the only game you can make on ♠AQx ♥KJ10xx ♦xxx ♣9x. The only winning options are the least obvious – 4♠ is two down, and defending is your only plus score.

So did any of the panel find the winning Pass?

Cannell: 5♥. I like my offence more than my

defense.

Well, you do have a possible double fit, but your high cards are largely in your short suits, sending mixed messages.

Lambardi: 5♥. Difficult to tell who makes what. Partner seems to hold long hearts and a hand not strong enough to overcall at the three-level. Clubs may easily play better; would 4NT be a choice of strains here? As it could easily be construed as BW, I will content myself with hearts. If partner is 3-5-3-2 or 3-5-2-3 (would he bid 4♥ with that shape?) clubs will play better, but if he is the more likely 3-6-3-1 bidding 5♣ will be wrong. We could get ruffed in the non-trump suit in either suit, so that cancels itself out.

Or perhaps our long suit offers greater control?

Kokish: 5♣. I would not do this with two spade losers and a moderate offensive hand. It's close IMHO between this and pass-and-pull a double, which for me would be a stronger move. Direct 5♣ is about offence (vulnerability-influenced) vs defense vs doubt. Definitely not a slam try in context.

Teramoto: 5♣. I expect that partner has some clubs. Clubs will be good fit and, I hope, safer than 5♥.

Apteker: 5♣. Now that I know of our double fit, I am not sure who is sacrificing and who can make what. I suspect they are going down in 4♠, but I cannot express that emphatically with a double nor would I like to pass, which I think is forcing, as partner does not know that I have three hearts. I also suspect that 5♣ is down one, but we may make and there is the small likelihood that the opponents may take a phantom sacrifice in 5♠.

Yes, if really in doubt whether to bid on or not, it is always worth bearing in mind that a pass will often end the auction while a bid gives the opposition one more opportunity to do the wrong thing.

Sandsmark: 5♣. This one is really difficult, for both Pass, 5♣ and 5♥ could be right. I do, however believe that when partner, after passing, launches his heart suit, he is sure to have a fit in clubs as well. If he doesn't, he will probably run to 5♥, and that suits me well and, on a bright and sunny day, he could even have enough for a slam: ♠762 ♥AJ10864 ♦— ♣K972.

They seem to assume varying degrees of club fit. I'd be surprised to find partner with as much of a club fit as in Tommy's example because then I think he would have supported clubs rather than risk playing in 4♥ when I didn't have rebiddable clubs or heart support.

Sime: 5♣. Offering partner an option with 4NT risks ending in the lesser fit, threatened by an early club ruff.

Maybe, but we surely can't have more than three hearts if we offer him the choice of trump suits, and we must have long clubs to do so.

Robson: 4NT. Take-out for the rounded suits.

Then there are those who are unsure whether to go on or not and leave it to partner to decide.

Stabell: Pass. South probably has some defensive values since he didn't just blast 4♠, so I am reluctant to go to the five-level on my own. I would have doubled 4♠ with no heart fit, so hope that partner is in a better position than I am to make the final decision. With AK/K in our suits, partner is not going to pass.

Brock: Pass. I don't have strong feelings. If I had to guess I would think both 4♠ and 5♣/♥

would be one off, but happy to go along with whatever partner thinks.

Green: Pass. Partner has suggested a game in hearts and I have three of them – happy days! I feel like I must be missing something. It doesn't feel like we need to play in clubs instead of hearts and we could easily be off three tricks, so I'd rather stay low.

Rigal: Pass. I'd assume 4♣ was non-leaping Michaels unless we agreed that a call of 3♠ showed that hand, but never mind...Assuming 4♣ is just clubs, I think most of my hand is in the short suits so I have no reason to act...do I?

The system says that we play Leaping Michaels over a weak two bid, but we do not play non-Leaping Michaels over a weak three bid. Whether or not we agree with that is by the by. You could argue that this auction started with a weak two bid so LM applies, I suppose, or you could say that as you are not jumping the overcall is natural – as was clearly intended on this occasion.

Finally, the terrible twins are convinced that neither side should be making game so double:

Smith: Double. Very hard: Pass, Double, 4NT, 5♣ and 5♥ are all options, and perhaps I am persuaded in favour of defending by knowing the hand.. The problem is that making eleven tricks seems unlikely when partner couldn't bid Three Hearts over Two Spades. I suppose AKxxx and Kx of clubs is possible, but even then there is a fairly high risk of a club ruff or a 4-1 heart split. The clue for me, that South originally had a game invitation, and North did not accept, so they have bid game not expecting it to make. Let's hope they are right.

Bird: Double. I expect to go one down at the

five-level. Since neither South nor North seems to think they can make 4♠, I won't either.

I have no more idea than has anyone else what will work best, but I think that where there are votes for bidding and also for passing the forcing pass has a lot going for it. If we don't know what to do, why not let partner decide? For one thing, we can assume whatever degree of club fit we like, but partner KNOWS what club fit he has.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ 8642
♦ A2
♣ A7543

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♦	2♣
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
Pass	9	10
Double	5	8
2NT	0	2

Marc:

Three reasonable options here: Pass/2NT/Double. Partner has ♠Qxxx ♥AKQ ♦Kxxx ♣x so passing and then passing partner's re-opening double collects +300. Making a negative double gets you to 4♥ (+420) but 2NT gets a raise and 3NT is – 50.

The panel voted for only two of Marc's possible actions. Let's see the panellists battle it out:

Lambardi: Double. Wrong club pips for a NT contract. Will try for a heart fit and correct

spades or diamonds to 2NT, correctable. Having five cards in opponents' suit is not what is usually expected from a negative doubler, but at the same time my two aces and ♠KJ will be very good in a heart or diamond contract. The spade shortness, although admittedly partner's likeliest side-suit, may actually turn out to be an asset in a red-suit game (or slam). Passing will work sometimes, but will I pass a reopening double by partner? Not my tendency, so might as well not waste time.

Brock: Pass. Can't see any reason to bid on this round, but have no idea what I will bid on the next, however partner reopens!

Stabell: Double. Looks normal enough to look for a heart fit, then suggest 3NT if there is none.

Green: Pass. If I double (the only alternative) and partner bids 2♠, then what am I going to bid? Presumably 3NT, and I don't fancy that much on a club lead. On the other hand, if I pass and partner re-opens we may get a force going and declarer could lose control and go for a number. If partner doesn't re-open with a double but bids something, then I feel that I'll be better placed.

Bird: Double. Since I can probably bid 2NT next time round, why bid it now?

Robson: Pass. I'll pass out the reopener too, despite my lack of a club pip (even the eight would be that much clearer).

Teramoto: Double. Club quality is not enough for defense. They often take five tricks in clubs and maybe two more.

Sime: Pass. And Pass a re-opening double. Cards in short suits suggest defending. One club stop probably won't save us in No Trump.

Double risks ending in Four Hearts opposite a quack and three rags.

Kokish: Double. Mostly because I would not be confident that passing a reopening double with these club spots would be best. Pretty sure that pass will get the most votes.

Well predicted Eric.

Sandsmark: Pass. Forcing pass, and my partner, who has seen a deck of cards before, will reopen with a double, which I will pass. We may or may not have a game, but South will never win 2♣. I take a certain win before a not so obvious one. Better that South goes down than us!

Rigal: Pass. I will play for penalties, if given the chance, so why would I bid and look for a non-making game?

Apteker: Pass. I intend to pass the re-opening double, notwithstanding that my club pips are paltry. I may not get compensated sufficiently by penalizing 2♣, but it may not be too big a loss, and I expect to at least to go positive where game values may be marginal. Unless partner rebids his diamonds as opposed to the re-opening double, it is hard to see how 3NT will run nine tricks on a club lead (if West has one).

Passing the reopening double is not the only possibility and Drew prefers to look for game our way, having warned partner that he has something odd by failing to make a negative double yet then being able to cue-bid at his next turn.

Cannell: Pass. I expect more bidding. This hand has so many flaws. If I double Two Clubs partner may compete too high in spades. If I bid any number of no-trumps a club lead will scuttle that. If partner re-opens with a double, I am bidding Three Clubs as a nebulous force since



Iain Sime

I do not expect to get rich defending Two Clubs doubled.

I think we all agree that we are unlikely to get rich, but that 2♣ doubled may still be the safest way to go plus, which may be good enough on the board. This is where we came in:

Smith: Pass. There seem to be three reasonable options: a natural 2NT, a negative double with only one of the majors, or a pass, planning on defending when partner re-opens with a double? With game not certain (and non-vulnerable anyway) it seems like the percentage play is to try to score +300 or thereabouts on defense. Even if we can make game, are we certain to

reach the right one? As I recall, partner would have raised 2NT to the no-play 3NT on his 4-4-4-1 shape, defending only costs 3 IMPs if the opponents get to 4♥ at the other table.

I'll go with the passers, but it's another tough one. This is a good set of problems – thank you, Marc.

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

- ♠ 10
- ♥ AK
- ♦ AK8
- ♣ KQ109653

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
2♠	11	10
2♦	2	6
Dble	1	3

Marc:

There seem to be plenty of options, but most of them flawed. Partner held ♠Q9x ♥Q109xx ♦Qxxx ♣J so 5♣ and 4♥ both make, but 3NT is three down on top.

This one attracted the biggest panel vote of the set, but let's start with the minority votes.

Sime: Double. If I recall correctly, we do not play support doubles. If I am incorrect, please change my vote to Two Spades. Or rewind and open Two Clubs.

You are quite correct, Iain – we do not play

Support Doubles. You are on your own with your choice of action, so will score poorly on this problem, but I'm going to boost your award by one point simply for knowing the system because, as we will see, there are plenty of panellists who do not.

Stabell: 2♦. It will be difficult to show this three-loser hand no matter what I do, but 2♠ should show a better heart fit and 3♣ is not enough. Not sure if this was a 1♣ opening.

Well, I understand that it's quite a hand for a 1♣ opening, but nobody else was too worried, though Ben thought it was close. Probably, like me, they prefer to avoid opening 2♣ when there is a sensible alternative – the strong and artificial 2♣ opening is not exactly the strongest area of most people's bidding.

Cannell: 2♦. Let's make a forcing bid and see what partner does next.

Everyone agrees that we should make a forcing bid, but the rest prefer to cue-bid rather than invent a suit – I'm sure 2♦ would have attracted a big vote had South not intervened. And that intervention gives us an easy force:

Lambardi: 2♠. Game force, not three cards in hearts (as I play support doubles at that level). Will rebid my clubs next to help partner assess the combination. It can be 5-7♣ or simply 3NT.

Smith: 2♠. It does depend on my methods, but if double would be support, showing three hearts, and 2NT would be an invitational or better four-card heart raise, then Two Spades seems to be available to show any other strong hand. I seem to recall that at the table the player who faced this problem tried to show a hand too strong for Three Clubs by bidding 3♦, but for most people would that not be a splinter agreeing hearts?

I'm sure that 3♦ would agree hearts, but 2NT would not be a heart raise for most of us, I don't think. Plus, of course, we are not playing support doubles, as previously discussed.

Bird: 2♠. With heart support, I can find another action (even if the NBM ban on Support Doubles is still in place). A cue-bid should therefore show a powerful hand without heart support.

With genuine heart support we could simply make the same call we would have chosen had South not overcalled, so I agree that the cue-bid is not a way in which to show heart support.

Does the panel want to add Support Doubles to our agreements? If any panellist cares one way or the other, feel free to let me know.

Teramoto: 2♠. This is GF and denies precisely three hearts. I will bid Clubs at my next turn.

Apteker: 2♠. A general force seems like a good start.

Brock: 2♠. This is FG for me, with no particular promises. Will bid clubs next whatever happens (more or less).

But in the absence of support doubles any old general force can start with a double, so the cue-bid can be more specific, can it not?

Green: 2♠. Showing a game-forcing hand (without three hearts as no support double). I assume that this may or may not have heart support, to be clarified on the next round. I might well have opened this 2♣ the round before. It's close.

Sandsmark: 2♠. I think I have to let partner understand that I am very strong. If he doesn't bid NT, I won't either, and I will probably have to put my money on a club game, or on a heart game if partner shows length. Some jurors will probably suggest 3♠. Alas, I am not among them,



Tommy Sandsmark

for I think we need to exchange info before we decide on the contract.

I'm pretty sure that partner would take 3♠ as agreeing hearts.

Robson: 2♠. Set up a game-force, usually based on a very good suit I opened, certainly not agreeing hearts.

Kokish: 2♠. This never guarantees responder's suit as we need a way to show our own strong suit in a big hand. I like 2♦, which I would choose if not confident that 2♠ would be interpreted correctly.

Rigal: 2♠. This normally asks for a spade stopper rather than promising heart support (especially if playing support doubles) but I plan to bid 3♣ over 2NT to show a GF hand in clubs, and rebid the suit at whatever level is legal over anything else.

Those last three sum it up for me.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ KQ3
♦ AKQ874
♣ 86

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Marks
5♠	7	10
4♥	2	9
4♣	2	5
4NT	2	3
4♠	1	3

Marc:

How do you agree spades and find out if partner has a club control? Five Spades, perhaps, assuming she has the major-suit aces? Partner had ♠AQxxxx ♥AJxx ♦x ♣x so slam was easy to make but not so easy to bid.

The panel:

Sime: 4♠. Most now open One Spade with a 6/4 ten count. Some don't even need that many points. Five Spades, asking for a club control, is the route to Six Spades with an insufficiency of key cards. Or to Five Spades minus one when the trump queen is also missing.

Pessimist or realist? Iain is certainly correct that everyone opens 6-4 10-counts these days. Do they bid spades, spades, hearts, or spades, hearts, spades, with those hands? And has partner even

guaranteed six spades?

Iain could score very well in real life but, with nobody else taking the low road, will get another lousy low score in NBM world – sorry.

Stabell: 4NT. Does partner show a good 6/4-hand with this sequence? Would East have bid 3NT with: ♠AQ10xx ♥AJxx ♦x ♣xxx? Not sure—I would guess 3♠ on this hand is possible, hoping to hear 3NT from me. No luck this time. I really think the problem was my 3♦ bid. What was I planning to do over 3NT? I think 2♠ would have been better—that would have given us space to sort out club stopper/diamond fit/strength at a more comfortable level. Now, I will gamble that partner has a club control and that we belong in spades, but might easily be wrong on both counts.

Sandsmark: 4NT. Good old Blackie! I am heading for 6♠ if the aces are there. If not, I will be content with 5♠. Everything else would be speculative in my eyes, and there is really no more info to convey to partner here! ♠AQ9762 ♥A864 ♦J2 ♣Q.

I really don't like this gamble. Partner is more likely to have two clubs and one diamond than one club and two diamonds simply because there are more clubs out there for him to hold. And I'm sure that he could hold Leif-Erik's example hand.

Smith: 4♣. Partner is either 6-4 in the majors, or 5-4 without a club stop, something like ♠AQxxx ♥AJxx ♦x ♣Jxx. Either way, we probably do not want to play in 3NT. For me, this feels like a choice-of-games cue-bid, although I accept that it could also be control-showing agreeing spades. We could be cold for slam (♠AQxxxx ♥Axxx ♦xx ♣x) or in danger at the five-level (♠Q10xxxx ♥AJxx ♦ – ♣KJx) and it is

unclear how whatever he does next is going to tell us more. Very tricky. Actually I found this set particularly difficult, which is perhaps not surprising as I didn't know what to do on most of them the first time I had them, and still don't. **Green:** 4♣. Shows a strong hand with some spade support (usually a doubleton). In this scenario it does not show a control as this is the only way to show a strong hand with support.

I think 4♣ should agree spades, but maybe it doesn't guarantee a club control. As Ben says, how else do we proceed with a good hand – we can't cue-bid diamonds, having bid them twice already, but maybe...

Kokish: 4♥. With heart support I'd have raised to 3♥, so 4♥ is, like 4♣, a control for slam with spades agreed for now, but 4♥ denies a club control. Those who believe that 5♠ over 3♠ unambiguously demands slam with fewer than two club losers, can explain why they 'know' East has ace-queen of spades and ace of hearts, because spades, hearts, spades shows a good 6-4. Then you can ask them whether 4♥ would serve that purpose better.

Brock: 4♥. I would have thought this should be a cue for spades as I can't want to play in a 4-3 heart fit on this auction.

Yes, I agree, We can't have four hearts as we could then have simply raised 2♥ to 3♥, and it's hard to construct hands where we have bid correctly to date and now want to play a four-three heart fit, so 4♥ should be a cue-bid for spades. And if we believe that then a 4♣ bid probably should promise a club control.

The rest go for the simple but flawed jump to 5♠. **Lambardi:** 5♠. Looking for club control. Is

partner promising six spades or simply 5-4-1-3 with no club stopper? If he IS promising six spades, what is the inference, if any, of choosing that particular order (spades, hearts, spades) over spades, spades, hearts? In any case, cannot envision a hand where he would be lacking ♠Q if 5-4-1-3. With ♠A109xxx ♥AJxx he would have something in clubs to make up his opening, so ♠KJ should be adequate enough. If, on the other hand, he has ♠Axxxx ♥AJxx ♦x ♣Kx, he knows we are off ♣A and I will have at most two spades so, unless I had specifically ♠KQ, slam is not good in spades. With ♦J and no ♠Q, he will surely try 6NT and, even with a small singleton diamond, 6NT will make sometimes when 6♠ fails. If he holds ♣A the (very difficult) problem will be how to bid the grand when it makes!

I don't see what else he could bid with 5-4-1-3 with three low clubs. With ♠A109xxx ♥AJxx, his ♥ could be the jack or queen, and even if it is a high honour you are still trying to find the ♠Q in the play. If he has ♠AQxxxx ♥A ♣A, getting to Seven may not be as hard as you suggest as he will surely bid 6♣ on the way to 6♠.

Bird: 5♠. Partner may not hold six spades, but I will risk 5♠ anyway. How many panel members are clever enough to cue-bid the non-existent club control? My guess is three or four.

Not a bad guess – there were two.

Teramoto: 5♠. Invitation to Slam without a Club control. I can bid 4♣ as a cue-bid for spades, if I have club controls.

Robson: 5♠. Two club losers.

Apteker: 5♠. Asking partner to bid slam with clubs controlled. If partner bids 6♣, showing

first round, I will bid 6♦, and if he follows that with 6♥, 6♠. I will leave it to partner to bid the grand, which he should do with three aces and the trump queen. This is better than setting the suit with 4♣, intending to follow up with RKCB, as you may be off clubs opposite the wrong key-card response and never be able to tell.

Cannell: 5♠. I play this as a key on the unbid suit. If no club control partner passes, with second-round club control partner bids Six Spades, and with first-round club control partner bids Six Clubs. After 6♣ – 6♦ – 6♥ – 7♠ – Pass.

Rigal: 5♠. Not easy to set spades and invite slam. I don't expect to miss a grand slam and I can't imagine stopping short of the five level, facing a normal opening bid. This asks for club control but I believe partner can decide not to advance with a sub-minimum and second-round control.

I agree that 5♠ asks about clubs. It is a gamble and sees us in slam facing ♣Kx, making slam at best 50%, while also getting us there missing the ♠Q much of the time. All I can say is that I dislike it less than I dislike 4NT. It has to get the top score because half the panel voted for it and nothing else garnered more than two votes, but it isn't a good bid.

I am sold on Eric and Sally's assertion that 4♥ should be a cue for spades rather than an attempt to play in 4♥ and, once we believe that, it is surely the right action, isn't it?

I hated Leif-Erik's chosen call of 4NT, but he brought up a very important point that actually it was maybe our 3♦ rebid that caused the problem by cramping our auction. Many (most?) of us would have made the easy bid of 3♦ without a second thought, but maybe 2♠—unless we have an agreement that

this guarantees three-card support—is better because it saves space. And if our other agreements preclude our bidding 2♠ here, then maybe 3♣, FSF, would be better than 3♦? It would solve partner's problem with 5-4-2-2 with no club stopper as he would have an easy 3♦ bid, and I suspect that Eric would extend that to 5-4-1-3 hands as well, so that we would know that the actual auction showed a sixth spade. And, once we know that he is 6-4, we can then move onto discussion as to whether spades, hearts, spades is stronger than spades, spades, hearts, or just different suit texture.

Congratulations to Sally, who topped the panel this month with a score of 74 points, one ahead of Eric and Tadashi.



SET 22 – THE PANEL'S BIDS & MARKS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	England	3NT	1♠	3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠	4♥	74
Eric Kokish	Canada	3NT	3♠	3♥	Pass	5♣	Dble	2♠	4♥	73
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	3NT	4♠	3NT	Pass	5♣	Dble	2♠	5♠	73
Alon Apteker	South Africa	Pass	1♠	3NT	Pass	5♣	Pass	2♠	5♠	70
Andrew Robson	England	3NT	4♠	3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	2♠	5♠	70
Ben Green	England	3NT	1♠	3♥	Dble	Pass	Pass	2♠	4♣	69
Barry Rigal	USA	4♠	3♠	3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠	5♠	69
Pablo Lambardi	Argentina	3NT	1♠	4♦	Pass	5♥	Dble	2♠	5♠	66
Drew Cannell	Canada	4♥	1♠	3♥	Pass	5♥	Pass	2♦	5♠	65
Tommy Sandsmark	Norway	3NT	4♠	3NT	Dble	5♣	Pass	2♠	4NT	64
David Bird	England	3NT	1♠	3NT	2♦	Dble	Dble	2♠	5♠	64
Iain Sime	Scotland	3NT	4♠	3♥	Pass	5♣	Pass	Dble	4♠	63
Marc Smith	England	3NT	3♠	3♥	2♦	Dble	Pass	2♠	4♣	59
Leif-Erik Stabell	Zimbabwe	4♠	1♠	3♠	Dble	Pass	Dble	2♦	4NT	53
Tommy Sandsmark	Norway	1NT	4♥	4♣	3♣	3♦	3♣	4NT	4♥	42



Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 23

Open to All – Free Entry

PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 864
♥ A104
♦ 8
♣ AK10876

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♠	Double
2♣	3♦	Double	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ –
♥ AQ109543
♦ AKJ87
♣ 3

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

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ J1097642
♥ –
♦ Q10
♣ KQ54

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♥
?			

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ J
♥ Q1043
♦ 1098632
♣ K5

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ J2
♥ AKQ1094
♦ 96
♣ 865

West	North	East	South
–	–	2♥	Double
?			

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ –
♥ 92
♦ A1082
♣ AJ98753

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	1♠
2♣	4♠	5♥	5♠
?			

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer North. All Vul.

♠ A4
♥ KQJ72
♦ 842
♣ AKJ

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	1♠
Double	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ AQJ106
♥ 108
♦ AJ6
♣ 1054

West	North	East	South
–	–	3♦	3NT
?			

Send entry to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website www.newbridgemag.com.

Entries to arrive before the end of the month.

A New Bridge Magazine Bidding System

Attention!!!

The Bidding System will be modified – It will be updated next month as per Brian's comments in his recent moderations.

Basic Method

Natural

Five-card majors

Minors are three cards in length minimum. Always open 1♣ with 3-3 but 1♦ with 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 response 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, next step is a WNT and 2NT is GF with the next step suit; 3m is unbalanced and non-forcing. All other bids are at least quasi-natural and FG.

After, say, 1♣ – 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT/3♣ are WNT/long

clubs minimum so NF, anything else is GF.

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. 4♣ is RKCB. 2any – 2new = NAT Constructive NF; 2any – 3new = NAT Forcing.

Three-level openings are natural and pre-emptive. Over 3♦/♥/♠, 4♣ is RKCB and over 3♣, 4♦ is RKCB.

3NT opening is Acoll gambling – solid suit and at most a queen outside.

Four-level opening 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 in a suit shows a good suit and a good hand. Where the response was 1NT, 3NT may be a flat 19-count.

After 2NT, 20-22, 3♣ = Stayman with Smolen, 3♦/3♥ = transfers, 3♠ = slam try with both minors. Four level bids are as after 1NT opening.

Reverse Kokish is played after 2♣ opening (2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠-2NT is 23-24 balanced, and 2♣-2♦-2NT is 25+ balanced GF).

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 natural, 3 partner's suit extras with no singleton, 3NT

=18-19 balanced, 4 of new suits are splinters but deny a second suit. 4 of partner's major shows a bad opening. Such as 1M – 2NT – 3♦ – 3M – 4♣ = splinter (3NT is 5M-4♦-2-2).

Continuations:

1x – 1M – 2M promises four-card support or three-card support and an unbalanced hand. Balanced hands with three-card support rebid 1NT.

Reverses are forcing for one round after a one level response. The lower of 2NT and 4th 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.

Where responder jumps in a third suit after opener has bid and rebid a suit, that is a splinter, with a non-jump new suit NAT F1.

Sequences such as 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 2♥ are F1; 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♦ = ART GF, while 2♥ would be NF but opener is can raise. 1♦ – 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♥ = splinter in support of ♦.

4th 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. 4NT followed by 5NT is for specific kings.

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 normally denies a control in that suit, except that a player may revert to traditional cue-bidding, e.g. spades are trumps, cue-bidding 4♦ then 5♣ with 1st-round ♦, 2nd-round ♣ if he feels that to be appropriate and he is happy to commit to the five level.

Exception: a shortage control in partner's suit is not shown immediately.

The default for 5NT is "pick a slam" unless following on from 4NT by the same player.

Competition:

Responsive and competitive doubles through 4♦ – after that, doubles are value-showing, not penalties.

1x – Dble – 1y – Dble = 4y and some values; 2y = 5y and a hand that would have bid 2y over a pass from RHO.

Negative doubles through 4♦ – after that, doubles are value showing, not penalties.

Game try doubles where no space for any other game try.

After our 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, raise 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). Where we overcall 1M, a 2NT response is a four-card limit or better raise, a cue-bid could contain four-card support if only worth a two-level raise, but is otherwise a three-card raise.

Double jumps are splinters.

Lebensohl applies after interference over our 1NT and facing our T/O double of a weak two bid or of 2M after they opened a multi 2♦ against us. 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

How to Enter

Send your chosen bid in each of the eight problems, by email to biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com or enter via the website 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.

1NT – 2♥ – 3♠ is FG). Note that most relatively balanced hands with no stopper will start with a T/O double.

We open 1NT and they overcall. Whatever its meaning, double of the overcall is T/O of the suit BID. Pass then double is also T/O and therefore implies length in the first opposing suit.

2NT is rarely natural in competition (except as defined above). Possibilities include Lebensohl or scramble if game is not viable. Scramble will tend to apply in balancing situations, Lebensohl (Good/Bad) where game is still a live possibility.

This includes the Good/Bad 2NT in situations where it is appropriate.

We double their Stayman or transfer over 1NT: if 1NT = 14+, double shows the suit doubled. If 1NT is maximum 15 HCP, double is PEN of 1NT.

Our 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 single-jumps, splinter double-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 4th.

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 against two-level openings – 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♣ = ♣&M and 4♦ = Ms. Over 3♥, 4♣/♦ = Nat, 4♥ = ♠&m, 4NT = ms. Over 3♠, 4♠/♦/♥ = nat, 4♠/4NT = two-suiter.

Over their 1NT, Dble = 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.



WEST

Hands for the
November 2019 The uBid Auction Room

Bid these hands with those on the last 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 West. Both Vul.

♠ KQJ82
♥ J8
♦ Q10943
♣ 8

Hand 2. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K642
♥ K3
♦ J75
♣ AQ107

Hand 3. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ —
♥ K107
♦ AQ74
♣ KQJ1043

North opens 1♠ and South passes. North rebids 2♠ if able

Hand 4. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AKQ763
♥ 763
♦ K9
♣ 87

North overcalls 2♣. South makes a fit-showing 3♥ bid if able. North will bid 4♣ if 3♥ is doubled

Hand 5. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ A95
♥ A965
♦ AJ106
♣ A5

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ —
♥ 8
♦ AQ98432
♣ K9863

South opens 1♥. North bids a natural 2♠ if able

Hand 7. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ A9
♥ Q984
♦ A
♣ AKJ974

North doubles a diamond cue-bid

Hand 8. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ K76
♥ Q7
♦ AQJ4
♣ 8762

South opens 1♠. North raises to 2♠

MASTER POINT BIDDING BATTLE



Results – Set 21

Bill March and **Dean Pokorny** scored 76 to win this month's instalment. Third was **Colin Brown** on 73. They win the book tokens. **Carles Acero** was drawn from the proverbial hat to receive the fourth book token.

Other Good Scores

72 Paul Genty, James Carpenter, Dominic Connolly
67 Mike Perkins
65 Bazil Caygill
63 Alex Athanasiadis
62 Derek Markam
61 Nelson Pearson, Mike Ralph
60 David Barnes
59 Rodney Lighton

The Yearly Standings:

In the year's standings, the following readers have an average of more than 61:

Dean Pokorny	358
Bill March	355
Mike Perkins	344
Dominic Connolly	342
Mark Bartusek	339
Alex Athanasiadis	333
Rodney Lighton	328
Mike Ralph	327
Bazil Caygill	322
Colin Brown	320
Dudley Leigh	315
Todd Holes	314
David Barnes	311
Nelson Pearson	306

Comments on Bidding Battle Set 2 I

Brian Senior examines the responses of the readers and compares them against those of the panel.

PROBLEM 1.

Pairs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A84
♥ AQ1064
♦ 7
♣ 10853

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣*	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass

?
1♣ 3+ Clubs

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
Pass	8	10	8
1NT	5	8	8
2♠	2	5	7
2♣	0	0	7
2♥	0	2	1

We had two reader choices that were not even mentioned by the panel as possibilities, 2♣ and 2♥. 2♣ is effectively fourth-suit forcing and I don't see what the bidders hope will happen after this bid. Will we be better off if he now bids 2♦? What will he choose with, say, a doubleton heart and Hx in clubs? I fear he will choose to show the club stopper when 2♥ will be a far better contract than 2NT. Partner's 1♠ rebid showed nothing more than that he held four spades – it isn't a strong bid, and he could have jumped in spades or cue-bid 2♣ had he held a strong hand. For me, 2♣ has nothing going for it at all, so zero points, I'm afraid.

2♥ also will get us to a worse contract than we are in at the moment most of the time. At least, however, facing two hearts and ♣Hx we will get to play in 2♥. We have a strong five-card suit and, as a passed hand, 2♥ at

least is descriptive, and should have fair play, so I'll award two points. I think the readers have done poorly on this problem. Thirteen panellists out of 15 voted for Pass or 1NT, while only 16 out of 31 readers selected one of those two calls. Remember that, while in an uncontested auction, a 1♠ rebid would be almost unlimited and 99% forcing, that is not the case when we start with an overcall.

PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ AQ42
♥ AQJ653
♦ K8
♣ 9

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	3♣*	Pass

?
3♣ Natural and invitational

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
3♥	6	10	6
3NT	3	8	12
3♠	3	8	11
3♦	1	3	0
4♥	1	3	1
Pass	1	2	1

PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ Q75
♥ 9876
♦ 10962
♣ AK

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

?
1♣ 3+ Clubs

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
4♣	8	10	5
4♠	5	8	17
5♦	1	6	4
Pass	1	2	2
4♦	0	2	1
4♥	0	0	1
5NT	0	0	1

There were three reader bids not selected by any panellist. Of these, I suspect that the reader who voted for 4♥ misread the question – I hope so. While the panel generally likes our holding, facing partner’s very shapely hand, the reader who chose 5NT (pick a slam?) is taking liking a little too far and I am not inclined to give an award to what looks to be a serious overbid. Partner may well have short hearts, but he is not assured to hold all the missing high cards in both his suits. The reader who opted for giving simple preference to 4♦ is going against the feeling of the panel that this is a good hand – all but one either bids game or makes a slam try. However, since passing 3♠ was awarded two points, I can hardly do other than award 4♦ the same two points.

PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ A852
♥ AK1082
♦ A5
♣ Q6

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

?
2♦ Constructive, NF

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
Double	9	10	20
3♠	3	7	4
3♣	1	5	2
3NT	1	3	1
3♦	1	2	0
3♥	0	0	1
4♥	0	0	1
Pass	0	0	2

Again, the readers came up with three answers not selected by any of the panel. I’m sorry to say that I cannot bring myself to make an award to any of the three.

3♥ and 4♥ are wrong because partner has not promised any heart support. I can promise you that no expert plays that a change of suit facing an overcall promises anything in partner’s suit. Hence, while jumps to 3♥ or 4♥ may show the right strength for the hand, they are too committal facing what could be a singleton heart.

We began with a simple overcall and are facing a constructive, albeit non-forcing, response from partner. We hold 17 HCP, about 10 more than we might have held. How can we possibly pass? One panellist made a quiet raise to 3♦, the rest either bid game or cue-bid. Passing, as chosen by two readers, is not an option.

PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A93
♥ 932
♦ A10
♣ AK1093

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
4♣	7	10	12
4♦	4	9	2
3♥	2	6	6
3♦	1	5	3
4♥	1	2	4
3NT	0	0	2
3♠	0	2	1
6♣	0	0	1

Yet again, three bids chosen by readers that were not selected by a panelist. Of these, I think two are horribly wrong. We have a known eight-card heart fit and a massive club fit, yet two readers opt for 3NT. I could come up with hands opposite which 3NT is going down while slam is making. No award for that, I'm afraid. And, while a leap to 6♣ is nearer the mark than 3NT, it is just a bit wild. We can, as suggested by the panel, set trumps and find out whether partner is interested in slam. Why guess when we could belong in game, small slam or grand? I will, however, award two points to a bid of 3♠ because, while I do not personally think it should be a cue-bid, I can understand how some readers might play it in that fashion.

PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ –
♥ AK32
♦ K2
♣ AKJ10862

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣*
?			
2♣ Constructive spade raise			

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
2♥	8	10	12
2♠	3	7	2
Double	2	7	5
4♣	1	5	0
3♣	1	3	3
3♥	0	2	1
5♣	0	4	7
Pass	0	0	1

Again, what seems to be the almost statutory three new possibilities suggested by readers. Of these, I do not understand Pass. All we do by passing is allow the opposition to discuss what they would like to do on the deal without our doing anything to involve partner in the discussion regarding what we should be doing. We have a powerful hand with a number of possible descriptive bids at our disposal, so why not make one of them?

Three Hearts at least has the merit of showing a strong hand and our second suit. I think. However, that it should show five hearts, as even a 2♥ bid shows a strong hand here. Anyway, I can live with 3♥, so two points.

A jump to 5♣ is a guess, but it might give the opposition a guess as well if they have most of the missing high cards and a good spade fit. There is more than one way in which 5♣ could work out well so, though I prefer the panel's 2♥ bid, I'll award four points to 5♣.

PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer South. All Vul.

♠ Q8652
♥ —
♦ AK10
♣ KQ432

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♠	3♥	4♥*	Pass

?
4♥ Too good to bid 4♠

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
5♥	8	10	10
5♣	2	6	6
5♦	2	6	5
4NT	1	5	3
5♠	1	5	2
6♥	1	4	0
4♠	0	0	5

The entire panel at least made a slam try, committing to the five level, and some were contemplating a possible grand. That being the case,

those readers who signed off in game are going against the strong feelings of the panel so no award.

Bill March (5♥) wrote he would play that 5♠ asked for a heart control and, with not good trumps, he was stuck and hoped partner would work it out.

PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AQ9
♥ KJ97543
♦ Q3
♣ 7

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Votes	Mark	Readers
2♥	10	10	24
3♥	3	6	5
2♠	1	3	2
4♥	1	3	0

Bill March (2♥) could live with this underbid, but partner might have a different opinion.

SAN FRANCISCO

NOV 28 to DEC 8

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EAST

Hands for the
November 2019 The uBid 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 West. Both Vul.

♠ 943
♥ A43
♦ AK76
♣ Q74

Hand 2. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A109
♥ A86
♦ AK6432
♣ 5

Hand 3. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K762
♥ AQ53
♦ 93
♣ 862

North opens 1♠ and South passes. North rebids 2♠ if able

Hand 4. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ QJ8
♥ 1032
♦ KJ84
♣ J84

North overcalls 2♣. South makes a fit-showing 3♥ bid if able. North will bid 4♣ if 3♥ is doubled

Hand 5. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ QJ3
♥ KQJ74
♦ 2
♣ K972

Hand 6. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q953
♥ Q10532
♦ K65
♣ Q

South opens 1♥. North bids a natural 2♠ if able

Hand 7. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ KQJ1087
♥ J3
♦ Q652
♣ Q

North doubles a diamond cue-bid

Hand 8. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ 104
♥ AK6543
♦ 9753
♣ J

South opens 1♠. North raises to 2♠

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 Mis-play 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.

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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.

It is possible to make a donation by credit card – just go to the appropriate page on the web site. A number of readers are making regular donations by bank transfer.

If you would like to discuss any of the above contact me at: editor@newbridgemag.com

Ask not what A New Bridge Magazine can do for you – ask what you can do for A New Bridge Magazine.