



BULLETIN

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2006 WORLD CHAMPIONS !!



Mixed Pairs - Matt Granovetter, Karen McCallum (USA)



Senior Teams - Aleksander Jezioro (LIE), Jerzy Zaremba (POL), Salek Zeligman (ISR), Victor Markowicz (USA), Julian Klukowski (POL), Victor Melman (ISR)



McConnell Women's Teams - Carlyn Steiner (USA), Tobi Sokolow (USA), Tatiana Ponomoreva (RUS), Janice Seamon-Molson (USA), Victoria Gromova (RUS), Marinesa Letizia (USA)



Rosenblum Open Teams - Geir Helgemo (NOR), Tor Helness (NOR), Alan Sontag (Pluto), Rose Meltzer (USA), Kyle Larsen (USA), Roger Bates (USA)



Women's Pairs - Irina Levitina, Kerry Sanborn (USA)



Hiron Senior Pairs - Nico Klaver, Raold Ramer (NED)



Open Pairs - Zhong Fu, Jie Zhao (CHN)



IMP Pairs - Tezcan Sen, Okay Gur (TUR)

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The bulk of this material has been extracted from the Daily Bulletins ably edited by Brent Manley, Mark Horton and Brian Senior, with assistance from Rich Colker, Maureen Dennison, Maureen Hiron, Ron Klinger and Barry Rigal. Bylines are provided where known. Additional editing has taken place. The final session of the Open Pairs was observed on BBO and is reported by John Carruthers.

When asked, "How was Verona?", Eric Kokish remarked, "You couldn't get a bad meal there!" "Was he looking for one?" I wondered. With its history, natural beauty, architecture, music, literature, cuisine and people, is there a better place to hold a World Bridge Championship than Italy? We don't believe so.

With the recent proliferation of World Championships, some explanations are perhaps due the uninitiated. There are four majors (Bermuda Bowl, Olympiad Open Teams, Rosenblum, World Open Pairs) and many others, most restricted by age or gender. No one has won all four majors in a career (Brazil's Gabriel Chagas-Marcelo Branco have come closest, with wins in three and a runner-up in the fourth). However, in the 2006 World Championship, Italians Fulvio Fantoni-Claudio Nunes not only had the opportunity to complete the career grand slam, they had the chance to hold all four titles at the same time - going into Verona, they were the holders of the Open Pairs (2002), the Olympiad Teams (2004) and the Bermuda Bowl (2005). Furthermore, their Rosenblum team (with Lauria-Versace and Sementa-Angelini) would be one of the favourites. (True, this could occur only because the Rosenblum title would be decided before the Open Pairs championship and they had won the most recent, 2005, Bermuda Bowl.)

ROSENBLUM CUP

In the Rosenblum Cup, 16 groups of 10 or 11 teams (173 in all) would play round robins within their groups. In each group, the teams ranked 1st to 4th would qualify for the knockout phase. There were at least two teams in each group which would raise no eyebrows if they reached the final.

Since the World Bridge Federation had opened up the event to make it truly transnational, there were some unusual lineups for an event of this stature, with many mixed-nationality teams. In general, though, the partnerships within the teams were intra-national.

A Lively Start by Brian Senior

Match 1. Board 8. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ 7
 ♥ A 10 9 8 6 3
 ♦ K
 ♣ A Q 5 4 2

♠ A K 10 6 2
 ♥ Q J 4 2
 ♦ J 3
 ♣ 9 3

♠ Q J 9 5 3
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 6 5 2
 ♣ K J 10 7

♠ 8 4
 ♥ K 5
 ♦ A Q 10 9 8 7 4
 ♣ 8 6

West	North	East	South
Rosendorff	Moss	Kanektar	Forrester
Pass	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♦
4 ♠	5 ♣	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	
West	North	East	South
Townsend	Dyke	Gold	Wiltshire
1 ♠	2 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Townsend's decision to open a hand that Rosendorff passed led to two quite different auctions but the same final contract.

Rosendorff cashed a top spade and caught a low card from partner, suggesting interest in clubs. He duly switched to the nine of clubs, which Forrester ducked. Kanektar overtook to switch to a trump to the bare king and Forrester crossed to the king of hearts and drew trumps then tried to ruff out the hearts. When hearts proved to be four-one, there was little hope left, and the contract drifted one off for minus 50.

Townsend also led a top spade and saw a small card from partner. He, however, switched to a trump. Wiltshire won, crossed to the king of hearts and cashed four rounds of trumps. Then he played a heart and Townsend played low, as he had to do, but declarer finessed and could now set up the hearts to come to an overtrick; very nicely done for plus 420 and 10 IMPs to OZ-ONE.

The East/West bidding suggested that there was some distribution around, plus the opening bidder needed some high cards somewhere and East had suggested

the king of clubs at trick one, but it was still a brave play to find.

Alarms and Discussions by Barry Rigal

The subject of alarm clocks at the bridge table comes up from time to time – normally in the form of, “Wake up, partner.” This can be an oral request, but the same result can be achieved by the play of the cards. At it happened, round four of the Rosenblum qualifying produced just such an opportunity.

Match 4. Board 19. Dealer South. EW Vul.

<p>♠ Q J 8 5 4 3 2 ♥ 2 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ 8 3</p> <p>♠ A 7 6 ♥ Q 9 7 5 ♦ 10 ♣ Q 10 9 7 2</p>	<p>♠ 9 ♥ K 10 4 3 ♦ 6 5 4 3 ♣ A K 5 4</p> <p>♠ K 10 ♥ A J 8 6 ♦ A Q J 9 8 ♣ J 6</p>
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Bruce Rogoff, East, was on lead against four spades (I would say it was the luck of the Irish that Gay Keaveney chose to jump to four spades after South opened one no trump, an undiscussed sequence, instead of using a Texas transfer, but since our teammates are Irish, I won't).

Rogoff led the king of clubs and West produced the queen. A discouraging club would have produced a heart shift, so was something else required? After a little thought, out came a diamond. Declarer won the ace and led a trump, but West won the ace of spades to lead the two of clubs to East's ace for a diamond ruff. Our teammates played two spades, making four, so this was a double partscore swing.

Countermeasures by Ron Klinger

Test your defence on this deal. You are West:

<p>♠ J 6 3 ♥ J 5 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ K 10 9 7 6</p>	<p>♠ K Q 10 9 ♥ 8 7 3 2 ♦ K 6 ♣ 8 4 3</p>
---	---

South opens a strong club and ends in six diamonds. You lead the spade three, king, ace, ruffed. Declarer crosses to the diamond king and returns the diamond six to the jack. Then comes the ace of diamonds, dropping East's queen. Declarer continues with the heart ace, king and queen, East playing the six, four and ten

(reverse count), and you discard a club. South now plays the two of clubs. How would you defend?

The complete deal looked like this (hands rotated for convenience):

Match 11. Board 4. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ J 6 3 ♥ J 5 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ K 10 9 7 6</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ A K Q 9 ♦ A J 8 5 4 ♣ A Q 5 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q 10 9 ♥ 8 7 3 2 ♦ K 6 ♣ 8 4 3</p> <p>♠ A 8 7 5 4 2 ♥ 10 6 4 ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ J</p>
---	--	--

Via a sequence that need not be preserved for posterity, Bob Hamman had opened a strong club as South and finished in six diamonds. West started with the three of spades and Hamman played dummy's king. He ruffed East's ace, drew trumps thanks to the favourable layout and cashed the hearts. This was the position:

<p>♠ J 6 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ K 10 9 7</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ 9 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q 5 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 9 ♥ 8 ♦ — ♣ 8 4</p> <p>♠ 8 7 5 4 2 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ J</p>
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Hamman exited with the two of clubs. Had West been a good counter, he would have known that declarer had started with no spades, four hearts and five diamonds. Therefore, South had to have four clubs and hence East had a singleton. It was therefore vital to rise with the king of clubs (a 'crocodile') and return the club ten, leaving South with another club loser.

To rise with the club king was safe whether East had the jack or the queen. South would not have started with the ace-queen-jack to four clubs, as he would have discarded the low club on the spade queen when in dummy with the diamond king. In practice, West played an automatic second-hand-low on the two of clubs and East won, but had only spades left and away went South's two club losers.

“It is very close whether to play the spade nine at trick one,” said Hamman later, “but I was concerned that East might have the ace and jack. It was lucky that I did not

play a low spade. If I had, I would ruff East's ace, play the diamond ace, a diamond to the king and discard two clubs on the king and queen of spades. That would rely on the club finesse and diamonds behaving, but then the slam would have been one down."

The Last Round-Up by Brian Senior

Match 11. Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Duboin	Eisenberg	Bocchi	Allouche
Soulet	Madala	Sussel	Ferraro
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Duboin led a low club and Bocchi won the ace and switched to a low heart for the queen and ace. Allouche crossed to the king of clubs to lead a diamond to the king. Bocchi won the ace and played two more rounds of trumps, Duboin pitching a spade. Allouche continued with ace of spades then the ten, covered by the jack, queen and king. Duboin played the diamond queen, on which declarer threw a spade, followed by another diamond, ruffed. Allouche ruffed out the queen of clubs but had no way back to the established winner so that was her last trick; down two for minus 200.

Against Ferraro, Soulet also led a club to the ace but Sussel returned the suit. Ferraro won the king and led a diamond to the king and ace. Sussel returned a diamond, ruffed, and Ferraro continued with the ten of clubs, covered and ruffed, then a second diamond ruff. He threw the ten of spades on the club jack, ruffed, and a diamond was ruffed and over-ruffed. There was just the king of hearts to lose from here; plus 110 and 7 IMPs to LAVAZZA. A nice trump switch from Bocchi at the first table.

Defend Like an Expert

Everybody knows that an expert would rather play for a squeeze than take a finesse; but it is a less well-known fact that the REAL expert would always lead some suit other than his own - fourth highest from your longest and strongest is so vieux jeu. That might explain why at both tables in the match between Hecht-Johansen and

Grenthe West elected to lead a spade rather than a heart against three no trump.

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

<p>♠ 10 9 3 2 ♥ A ♦ K 9 4 2 ♣ K 5 4 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ K J 9 5 4 3 2 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ Q J 8 7 4 ♥ 8 7 ♦ Q J ♣ A 10 7 6</p>	
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<p>♠ A K ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ A 7 6 3 ♣ Q J 8 3</p>	
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Where HC Nielsen was on lead the spade lead went 'round to declarer's king as his partner encouraged. Now a club to the king scored the trick and declarer played three rounds of diamonds, letting Nielsen back on lead. When East, Lars Blakset, discarded a heart, Nielsen played back a second spade, and declarer had only eight tricks when much to his surprise the club ace turned up in Blakset's hand.

What would have happened had the club ace not been ducked? Well in the other room they discovered that. After East won his ace of clubs and shifted to a heart, declarer played three rounds of diamonds, keeping East off play, and had his contract comfortably enough.

Of course, the palookas would examine the deal and point out that a boring heart lead takes the game down three... But where would be the fun in that?

Round of 32 by Brian Senior

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

<p>♠ 8 4 3 ♥ J 8 6 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ K Q 5</p>	<p>♠ 5 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K Q J 6 ♣ J 8 6 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 10 7 ♥ A K Q 10 2 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ —</p>	
--	--	--	--

<p>♠ K 9 6 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A 10 9 7 4</p>	
--	--

West	North	East	South
Einarsson	Chagas	Haraldsson	Villas Boas
—	—	Pass	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

West	North	East	South
<i>Branco</i>	<i>Thorvaldsson</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Magnusson</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Neither the one-spade nor the two-club opening could get close to the heart slam, which is good only because the bulk of East's strength is in the right minor. Marcelo Branco made the obvious twelve tricks for plus 480. Miguel Villas Boas saved an overtrick at the other table with a pretty ducking play.

Bjarni Einarsson ruffed the club lead and cashed two top hearts then played the ace of spades followed by the queen, discarding from dummy. Most defenders would have grabbed their king of spades and that would have been the end of the hand, but Villas Boas ducked. Einarsson continued by running the spade jack, and this time Villas Boas won and returned a spade for Gabriel Chagas to ruff; plus 450 but 1 IMP to CHAGAS.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Einarsson</i>	<i>Chagas</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>	<i>Villas Boas</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠
1 NT	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
5 ♦	Pass	6 ♦	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West	North	East	South
<i>Branco</i>	<i>Thorvaldsson</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Magnusson</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠
1 NT	2 ♠	3 ♥	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Six diamonds is an excellent contract and both pairs did well to get there. Excellent, perhaps, but it appears

to be doomed to failure, as South's seven of diamonds prevents declarer from ruffing a heart in dummy. But Magnusson led a trump and now it was easy. Brenner could win the ten, cross to the queen of hearts and lead a diamond up. When Thorvaldsson showed out, Brenner won the ace and played on hearts, ruffing the fourth round in dummy; plus 1370.

Having doubled, Villas Boas then found a different way to let the slam home. He tried to cash the ace of spades and that was ruffed. Haraldsson played ace then queen of diamonds to the king and Villas Boas played a second spade. Declarer won the king, pitching a heart from hand, ruffed a spade then cashed the remaining trumps. The last trump squeezed North out of his club guard, and now the top hearts squeezed South in the black suits; plus 1540 and 5 IMPs to ICELAND.

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Einarsson</i>	<i>Chagas</i>	<i>Haraldsson</i>	<i>Villas Boas</i>
<i>Branco</i>	<i>Thorvaldsson</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Magnusson</i>
—	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Einarsson led a club to his partner's ace. The heart switch was ducked to the jack and Einarsson returned a low heart to the queen and king. Villas Boas played on clubs, Einarsson ducking twice, then switched his attention to diamonds, cashing two rounds before playing another club, throwing a diamond from hand. Einarsson won the club and led a spade, Haraldsson putting in the queen, so declarer had the rest for plus 630.

Branco also led a club to the ace but Brenner switched to the heart queen rather than a low one. That proved to be the killing defence as the heart went to the king and ace, allowing Branco to cash the jack then play a third round to the eight and ten, establishing his seven. Magnusson set up the clubs now but the seven of hearts was the setting trick; down one for minus 100 and 12 IMPs to CHAGAS.

It's in the Timing by Barry Rigal

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Tornqvist</i>
—	Pass	1 NT	2 NT
Double	4 ♦	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

In the third set of the round of 32 in the Rosenblum, there was a wild set between Allfrey and Morath (there were five doubled contracts in the first nine deals with penalties of 800, 500, and 300, together with a plus 750).

This deal produced the most interesting play. You may care to consider it as a declarer play problem, covering up the North and South cards. Upmark doubled David Bakhshi's four-heart contract, and Tornqvist led the ten of clubs - suit preference. Bakhshi won in hand and took a little time to digest the implications of the auction.

Eventually he found the master-play of the jack of hearts from hand – a play that is almost necessary (if not sufficient) to make the contract. South won his queen, gave his partner the club ruff, and got a spade ruff coming back. But now the fourth spade took care of the diamond loser and Bakhshi had 790.

There were actually two possible defences. The 'difficult' one is for North not to give his partner the spade ruff but to play a diamond – South still has a trump trick to come and the defence has established the diamond trick in time.

The 'easy' defence is for South to duck the heart jack – second hand plays low after all! North wins his heart ace, gives a spade ruff, gets a club ruff, and the second spade ruff spells one down!

Either defence would be an award candidate.

Last-Minute Winner by Brian Senior

After identical starts to the auction (see top of next column), Rajesh Tiwari raised direct to four hearts while Geoff Hampson only invited, however, Eric Greco

accepted the invitation so the same contract was reached at both tables.

Round of 16. Set 4. Board 19. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Gitelman</i>	<i>Tiwari</i>	<i>Moss</i>	<i>Prabhakar</i>
—	—	—	1 ♠
1 NT	Pass	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West	North	East	South
<i>Satya</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Nadar</i>	<i>Greco</i>
—	—	—	1 ♠
1 NT	Pass	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Against Prabhakar, Fred Gitelman led a low heart, dummy's nine winning. Prabhakar led the eight of spades to Gitelman's ace and he now played ace and another trump, Brad Moss pitching a club and a diamond. Prabhakar led the queen of diamonds to the king and ace, back to the ten of diamonds, then the spade jack, ruffing out the king when Gitelman covered. He took a spade pitch on the jack of diamonds, but was left with two spade losers at the end for one down; minus 50.

Bachiraju Satyanarayana also led a trump, but Greco chose to win in hand to lead a spade towards dummy's eight. Satyanarayana went in with the ace to play two more rounds of hearts and Kiran Nadar threw a club and a diamond, just as in the other room. Now Greco found a crucial extra chance. He cashed the ace of clubs before leading the diamond queen to the king and ace, ruffed a club, and saw a second honour fall on his left. (West can foil this plan by failing to cover the diamond queen.)

Surely the clubs were five-two, so Greco next ruffed a spade and led the ten of clubs for a ruffing finesse and claimed when West showed out, just conceding a diamond at the end as he had to overtake the ten with the jack to get at the established club trick; nicely played for plus 420 and 10 IMPs to EKEBLAD.

The Ethical Solution by Mark Horton

In a World Championship you will encounter ethical behaviour of the highest standards. Polish superstar Piotr Gawrys reported this outstanding example from the quarterfinals of the Rosenblum.

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

	♠ 10 7 6		
	♥ A K J 7 6 5		
	♦ 8 7		
	♣ 6 2		
♠ 8 5		♠ A 9 3	
♥ 8 4 2		♥ 3	
♦ 6 4 2		♦ A 10 9 5	
♣ K J 8 5 4		♣ A Q 10 7 3	
	♠ K Q J 4 2		
	♥ Q 10 9		
	♦ K Q J 3		
	♣ 9		
West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

When North opened with a Multi, South's jump to four clubs asked North for his suit and four diamonds showed hearts.

West led the eight of spades and after some thought – long enough to disclose the position of the ace of spades – East played low and declarer won in hand. Doing his best to lay a smoke screen, he played the ten of hearts to the king and cashed the ace. Now he played a diamond and East pounced on it with the ace. East now cashed the ace of clubs and when West encouraged, he played a second round of the suit, handing declarer his game. (It was a flat board, as in the other room, North was declarer and East did not lead a spade.)

Why did West encourage clubs? He knew his partner had the ace of spades only because of the time taken at trick one!

I have no hesitation in nominating Sweden's Fredrik Nyström for an IPBA award for outstanding sportsmanship.

Going For Gold by Brent Manley

Until this tournament, no team had made it to the final of the Rosenblum Cup with a female member. This year, the two teams in the final were both captained by women – Rose Meltzer and Christal Henner-Welland.

Going into the final set, Meltzer's team led 123-91. It is better, of course, to be ahead by 32 IMPs than behind by that sum, but no experienced player would take anything for granted with 16 deals left to play. Furthermore, the aggressive Henner squad had demonstrated their ability to come back, winning on

the next-to-last deal in their semi-final match. The final quarter produced some nervous moments for the Meltzer team before they finally pulled away for a comfortable win.

Board 24. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

	♠ 6 3 2		
	♥ A K 8 7 4 2		
	♦ J 4		
	♣ 8 5		
♠ Q 7		♠ J 8	
♥ J 9		♥ 6 3	
♦ A 8 7 5		♦ K Q 10 9 6	
♣ A K 10 6 3		♣ Q J 7 2	
	♠ A K 10 9 5 4		
	♥ Q 10 5		
	♦ 3 2		
	♣ 9 4		
West	North	East	South
<i>Nyström</i>	<i>Sontag</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Bates</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Sontag started with a low heart, and it wasn't long before Nyström was claiming – one trick! As you can see, the defenders have six tricks in each major, leaving declarer with one. That was down eight in a voluntarily bid game. Remarkably, it appeared that the result was going to be duplicated at the other table, but it didn't happen.

West	North	East	South
<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Lindkvist</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Fredin</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Double
4 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

Helgemo also opened the West hand with one no trump, and Helness innocently raised to game. When Fredin (needing the points) offered an opinion about this contract with a double (no doubt calling for the lead of a major), Helgemo believed him, running to four clubs. Magnus Lindkvist led two top hearts and switched to a spade, so North-South were plus 50, losing 8 IMPs for their effort! Such imagination deserved a better fate!

Results

Final:

Meltzer 179 Henner 133

3rd Place Playoff:

Yadlin 69 Welland 65

Semifinals:

Meltzer 171 Welland 83

Henner 113 Yadlin 107

Quarterfinals:

Meltzer 109 Nickell 86

Henner 146 Mahaffey 101

Yadlin 148 China SMEG 131

Welland 144 Soulet 118

Rank & Rosters:

1. **Meltzer** (USA/NOR) Bates R, Helgemo G, Helness T, Larsen K, Meltzer, R Sontag A
2. **Henner** (SWE/USA) Bertheau P, Fredin P, Henner-Welland C, Jacobus M, Lindkvist M, Nyström F
3. **Yadlin** (ISR/TUR) Ginossar E, Kalish A, Ozdil M, Podgur L, Yadlin D, Yadlin I
4. **Welland** (SWE/USA) Fallenius B, Levin B, Martel C, Stansby L, Weinstein S, Welland R
- 5/8. **China SMEG** (CHN) Dai J, Fu Z, Shi H, Yang L, Zhao J, Zhuang Z
- 5/8. **Mahaffey** (USA/POL/SCO) Cohler G, Gawryś P, Lair M, Lev S, Mahaffey J, Shenkin B
- 5/8. **Nickell** (USA) Freeman D, Hamman B, Meckstroth J, Nickell N, Rodwell E, Soloway P
- 5/8. **Soulet** (FRA) Allouche-Gaviard D, Eisenberg E, Payen B, Soulet P, Sussel P

OPEN PAIRS

The World Open Pairs Champions is the most exclusive bridge club in the world: only 11 pairs are members. Amazingly, one player, Marcelo Branco of Brazil, has won it twice, with a different partners. Only excellent pairs at the top of their game can even aspire to win. Most of the pairs who have won the Open Pairs have also won (or come close to winning) world team titles. Since there are usually many pairs capable of winning, it helps to have a slice of luck at the right time as well.

Fall of the Cards by Mark Horton

The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King

Hamlet. Act II, Scene II, William Shakespeare

Despite the obvious attractions of Italy v Czech Republic, I kept an eye open for a few morsels during the second session of the Open Pairs final. Luckily, most of the leading pairs seemed to be involved, and several deals offered an opportunity for declarer and defenders alike to earn their points in the play.

Final 2. Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Nunes	Rodwell	Fantoni	Simson
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♦
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

South led the ace of diamonds and continued with the jack, dummy's queen winning as declarer discarded a club. A club went to the king and South's ace and declarer ruffed the diamond continuation as North discarded the seven of hearts.

Now declarer played a heart to the ace. If he takes a spade finesse at this point the hand plays itself. After it wins he cashes the king of hearts and the queen of clubs, ruff a heart with the ace of spades, repeats the spade finesse and exits with a heart, taking the last two tricks via the spade tenace.

Alternatively, instead of playing a heart to the ace, declarer could (should?) have cashed the club, then the heart king, followed by a heart to ace, then ruffed the last diamond, ruffed a heart with the ace, ruffed a club, exited with the last heart.

However, declarer continued with a heart to the jack and king, cashed the queen of clubs and ruffed a heart with the five of spades. North over-ruffed and had to make another trump for one down, only 14% as opposed to the 81% had the contract been made.

Variations: It may appear that declarer can make the contract by ruffing a heart low first, then playing on clubs, but North usually comes to two trumps tricks on that line. If instead, declarer tries a diamond ruff after the heart ruff, then playing on clubs, North gets to discard two clubs, one on the diamond ruff and another when South wins the ace of clubs and plays a heart.

Finally, suppose declarer plays to score seven trump tricks via two ruffs and a trump coup, along with two hearts and a diamond? North can display great presence by under-ruffing the fourth round of hearts or the fourth round of diamonds, keeping a club to allow South to win the club ace and give him a club ruff. Quite a complex hand.

Board 22. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Magnusson	Meckstroth	Thorvaldsson	Johnson
—	—	Pass	Pass
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	4 ♠
5 ♥	5 ♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	pass	Pass

East, Matthias Thorvaldsson, started with the heart king, ruffed by Meckstroth, who could see that his 'save' might be a maker. He played a spade to dummy's ace, dropping the singleton king, then played a spade to the queen, cashed the ace of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. Now he played a low club from dummy's king and Magnusson followed low smoothly (his only chance, he said later, to defeat the contract).

Meckstroth played the nine of clubs from hand, losing to the ten. From there, Meckstroth was two down for only 6% of the match points (although he could have escaped for one off).

The Final's Final Session by John Carruthers

Discounting the pairs allowed to drop into the event after high finishes in the Rosenblum, the 72 pairs in the final had already gone through four sessions of qualifying, four sessions of semifinals and four sessions of finals to reach this point, with no score carry-forward into the next stage. In effect, they had already played three events. Even if they had not played in the Rosenblum, this would be their seventh day of top-flight competition.

This session would be 30 boards in length, very long by today's standards; the other four final sessions had been 28. As always, exhaustion, concentration, luck and adrenaline would play a part in determining the winners.

Although the 10:00 am local start time in Verona meant arising at 04:00 for this miserable wretch, duty called.

The top pairs in the standings after 4 of the 5 final sessions had been completed were:

1. Marc Bompis-Thierry Ste. Marie (FRA) 57.05%
2. Zhong Fu-Jie Zhao (CHN) 56.36%
3. Vincent Ramondt-Berry Westra (NED) 56.35%
4. Jacek Pyszola-Cezary Balicki (POL) 55.73%
5. David Bakhshi-Andrew Mcintosh (ENG) 55.22%
6. Bobby Levin-Steve Weinstein (USA) 55.20%
7. Fred Gitelman-Brad Moss (CAN/USA) 54.93%
8. Wojciech Olanski-Wlodzimirz Starkowski (POL) 54.88%
9. Rossen Gunev-Julian Stefanov (BUL) 54.78%
10. Fulvio Fantoni-Claudio Nunes (ITA) 54.46%

With one percentage point equaling about 70% of a top, it could be said that only these pairs had a legitimate chance to win. Everyone else was more than 4 tops behind and would need a double-barrelled miracle consisting of their own great game and poor games by all the leaders to challenge for the title. Indeed, in the event, the fifth session of the final provided merely a shuffling of the order of these pairs, with eight of the eventual top ten finishers coming from this group.

The final was run barometer-style, with all tables playing the same boards simultaneously and the scores being posted after each round. An innovation this time was for the final 10 boards to be played without the players knowing the scores, presumably to minimize the potential for 'shooting'.

A dull board at IMPs can be very exciting at match points, where every trick is important and all boards are equal in the scoreline.

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Pyszola	Fantoni	Balicki	Nunes
—	—	2 ♣	2 ♠
Double	3 ♣	Double	3 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The first round pitted 2002's winners against one of 1998's winners. 'Pepsi' made a good start with the ten of clubs, overtaken by Balicki with the jack to try the ace. Nunes ruffed, played one high spade and followed with a diamond to the king and a diamond ducked all around to Pepsi's eight.

At this point, Pepsi knew quite a lot about declarer's hand and could see that he would, in the normal course of events, make ten tricks with the favourable heart position. He shifted to the ten of hearts!

Nunes knew that Pepsi was capable of making such a play and considered his own play for quite some time. Eventually he decided that it was too risky to play the jack (he also knew quite a bit about the opposing hands); he feared that if Balicki were allowed to win a heart honour, a further club play would be over-ruffed by West and another heart would see the ace ruffed out. Down one or two, depending on whether he ruffed the club or discarded a heart on East's club play was too embarrassing to contemplate this early in the session.

Nunes rose with the ace, drew another round of trump and claimed nine tricks with the diamond ruff in dummy. When Pepsi showed him the inside king and queen of hearts, he permitted himself a wry smile. North-South achieved a 44% score.

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Ste. Marie	Moss	Bompis	Gitelman
—	1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The leaders bid to a routine, aggressive game. Bompis had to find a way to avoid losing a trick in each suit. Gitelman led the diamond ten, seven, four, five; he continued with a second round to the ace. Declarer continued with the king and ace of hearts, then a diamond to the king, ruffed with the jack of hearts. South exited with the club three to the eight and ace, and Moss blotted out the diamond threat.

Bompis did the best he could by ruffing in dummy, ruffing the ten of clubs and running trumps, but when Moss did not have four spades or queen-jack-nine, and did not succumb to exhaustion, Gitelman's nine stopped the run of the suit. Well-played and well-defended. But 77% to North-South nevertheless.

Board 6. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Ste. Marie	Moss	Bompis	Gitelman
—	—	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The results on this board were all over the map for a deal that looked like being played in spades at all tables. In fact, four pairs played in no trump contracts scoring 10, 11, 11 and 12 tricks respectively. In spades, the deal

was played in four, six and seven spades making 11, 12 or 13 tricks, mostly depending on the opening lead.

At our featured table, the French were conservative and Gitelman kicked off with a routine ten of clubs. Bompis won in dummy, unblocked the heart ace and continued with a low diamond. Moss considered this, then flew with the ace only to see it ruffed out. So what you say? Watch what happened next.

Declarer ruffed a heart, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a heart and ruffed a diamond. He still had three trumps in hand to draw North's and, ahem, squeeze South in the minors to make all 13 tricks! This was worth 76% of the match points to the French.

Six pairs bid the spade slam, five of them making it on a heart or club lead, one failing when Willenken-Schwartz led a diamond. Two pairs bid seven spades and neither made it, Fantoni Nunes leading a trump against Zia-Robson and Tuszynski-Kowalski receiving the diamond ace opening lead from Ramondt-Westra.

The slam can actually be made on a diamond lead, however. Ruff the diamond, play a heart to the ace and surrender a diamond. Then use a heart ruff and a club to ruff the diamonds out. Since they are four-four, dummy's fifth diamond sets up for the twelfth trick. This line needs only one heart ruff. Whether this is the right line or not is another matter.

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Gitelman	Westra	Moss	Ramondt
—	—	1 ♣	Pass
1 ♥	1 NT	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

This could certainly have been termed the one no trump tournament with everyone making that call at the drop of a hat. Gitelman (who had moved to the West seat due to the Howell movement) led the club ten. Ramondt tried the jack and won the king over Moss' queen. A spade to the ace was followed by three rounds of hearts to ditch a diamond.

Declarer got a bit unlucky when East was able to ruff the third heart and a bit lucky when he had to do so with the queen of trumps. Now the game (for declarer)

revolved around trying for the tenth trick, and for the defenders, attempting to hold declarer to nine.

Ramondt's extraordinarily farsighted play of the club jack at trick one could have come into play here. This had the effect of giving Moss a losing option on defence (returning a club). But Moss' diamonds were too good – he played king, ace of the suit.

Ramondt ruffed the second diamond and played the spade jack to Gitelman's king, and he locked declarer in dummy with a club. Declarer could take a club pitch on the heart ten, but now had to promote a trump trick for West whichever suit he played to come off the dummy. Well done all around. Plus 140 was 43% to North-South. Plus 170 would have scored 77%. Anyone for a one diamond opening bid?

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Gotard</i>	<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Piekarek</i>	<i>Fu</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Fu led the seven of clubs, ducked to Zhao's queen. He returned a spade and Piekarek, definitely playing match points, won the ace to play a club to the 10 and king, playing Fu for king-nine-seven-(x). Conversely, Fu could have had only two clubs. In any case, had the ace of hearts been wrong and the club right, Fu-Zhao would have been disadvantaged rather than Gotard-Piekarek.

As it was, North returned his remaining club and declarer won the ace to run the spade ten to South. Fu was excited now. He played the high club, forcing a trump from declarer. On a diamond to the queen and another to South's ace, Fu merely played off the ace and another heart and declarer found that when he returned to hand with a heart ruff, South was able to discard his remaining diamond and score a long trump. Two spades, one heart, one diamond and two clubs added up to one off, a whopping 96% score to North-South. Had Piekarek ducked the spade to Fu's queen, risen with the ace on Fu's club return, then knocked out the diamond ace, he'd have fallen into nine tricks and a 71% score rather than the 4% he received (no fatal tap on his trumps).

Halfway through this session, the Chinese had taken the lead on 56.01%, followed very closely by Ramondt-Westra, Bompis-Ste. Marie, Levin Weinstein, Fantoni-Nunes, Bakhshi-McIntosh and Pszczo;a-Balicki. All these pairs still had a legitimate shot to win, being blanketed by less than a top. The next-placed pair was almost two more tops further back.

Board 16. Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Bompis</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Ste. Marie</i>
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Ste. Marie made an enterprising pre-balancing double which Bompis passed for penalty, although not with alacrity. Bompis made the 'safe' ten of spades lead and Duboin won in dummy to start on diamonds by leading the two to the queen, Bompis winning the king.

This was the key point in the hand: Bompis, when in with the diamond king, continued with the nine of spades – this was all Duboin needed. He cashed the diamond ace, thinking, "God IS Italian!" when the jack fell from Ste. Marie. He simply played another diamond to dummy's ten, continued with ace and another club and claimed plus 670 and a 90% score. Plus 200 would have given the French an 89% score.

This looks like a clear error from North. He knew declarer's spade holding and could infer his diamond holding from the play to the first two tricks. There were no other cards for his partner than the queen of clubs and the king-queen-jack of hearts. Had he simply played off the ace and another heart when in with the diamond ace, South would surely have played all four rounds of the suit, allowing North to discard a club to declarer's disadvantage. West would not have been able to score a club ruff with his small trump.

This board settled things for Bompis and Ste. Marie. Since Fu-Zhao had scored plus 690 for two no trump doubled and 97% of the points, the French dropped to about a top and a half off the pace.

Further misery for the French appeared later in the form of another Italian pair...

Board 25. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Ste. Marie	Fantoni	Bompis	Nunes
—	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

One no trump was systemic (even in a mad-about-no-trump world, Fantoni-Nunes stand out; nevertheless, this one was systemic). West got his side off to a poor start with the three of clubs. Nunes won the jack and played a diamond to the ace, viewing the nine interestedly, and another to the eight. In with the queen, Ste. Marie continued with the club queen.

Nunes was now up to seven tricks when he might have been held to five or six on a 'fourth-highest-from-your-longest-and-strongest' spade lead. He breathed a metaphorical sigh of relief, won the club and cashed his two diamond tricks, West discarding the six, then the four of spades, showing an even number. Dummy let go a spade.

Nunes now cleverly played the six of hearts to discourage an honour play from West and passed it to Bompis' queen. Bompis now knew Nunes had started with a singleton spade. If it were the king, he had to cash his ace, allowing Ste. Marie to unblock the queen so the suit could be run. Alas for him, he succeeded only in blocking the suit.

Poor Ste. Marie, left on play with the second spade (Nunes discarding a heart), pinned dummy's eight of clubs with his ten, but Nunes, now toying with him and displaying a bit of humour in the card play (or perhaps it was compassion! No matter, Claudio, we appreciate it!), allowed Ste. Marie to take another trick by exiting with the five of clubs to West's seven, before taking the last two tricks with dummy's ace-jack of hearts. Plus 120 North-South and an 86% score. Whew!

At this point, it looked to be a two-horse race between Fu-Zhao and Levin-Weinstein, with Fu-Zhao a nose ahead. Nevertheless, Fu-Zhao scored average on the final five boards, only slightly better than Levin-Weinstein, but enough to finish in front by half a length for a very popular win.

The Final Table:

1. Zhong Fu-Jie Zhao (CHN) 56.84%
2. Bobby Levin-Steve Weinstein (USA) 56.41%
3. Fulvio Fantoni-Claudio Nunes (ITA) 55.91%
4. Vincent Ramondt-Berry Westra (NED) 55.16%
5. Jacek Pzszola-Cezary Balicki (POL) 55.14%
6. David Bakhshi-Andrew Mcintosh (ENG) 54.73%
7. Fred Gitelman-Brad Moss (CAN/USA) 54.38%
8. Winthrop Allegaert-Jaggy Shivdasani (USA/IND) 54.03%
9. Jason Hackett-Justin Hackett (ENG) 53.67%
10. Wojciech Olanski-Wlodzimierz Starkowski (POL) 54.88%

Fu and Zhao were certainly in the right place at the right time. *Team* matches are often decided on which side gets the slams in the match correct. It was unusual that in this last session of this pair game, there were six slam deals. Fu-Zhao bid their two cold grand slams for 83 and 66%; their opponents went one off in slam twice for 69 and 97% to the Chinese; Fu-Zhao were one off in a decent six no trump for 33%; and their opponents did not bid the slam on board six which depended on the lead, but made seven for only 24%.

Which is not to minimize their victory – they played extremely well, making an enterprising double of four hearts on board four, getting partner to avoid the one disastrous lead which would have allowed it to make. They pulled two spades doubled on board 16 to two no trump, a better spot, and made it, although the opponents could have beaten it double dummy.

They even had some bad luck, such as on board 7 where they reached a pushy vulnerable four spades, down two on a bad lie of the cards and going down one in one no trump against tougher defence on board 25 where Nunes made eight tricks.

It was all very exciting and well-worth getting up at 0400 EST to watch the action on Bridge Base Online.

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MIXED PAIRS

La Femme Fatale by Rich Colker

Things were admittedly going badly for Alfredo Versace of Italy and Chantal Haemmerli of Switzerland, who were suffering a below par game (having averaged well over 60% previously) in Monday morning's second final session of the Mixed Pairs. But as if that weren't enough, when they came to Linda and Brian Trent's table, things got even worse. What happened to the Italian triple world title holder on the second board of the round would be described as cruel were it not so brilliant.

The source of Versace's angst on this day was his RHO, Linda Trent. Linda is normally a quiet, unassuming intermediate player and teacher of newcomers. She undergoes a radical personality transformation when she dons her dark glasses and suits up to play against the big guns of the bridge world. Just watch Linda in action – and Alfredo in misery.

Board 16. Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Versace	B Trent	Haemmerli	L Trent
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Two clubs was strong and artificial, two diamonds negative, and three hearts transferred to spades after Versace's natural two no trump rebid. Versace thought long and hard before finally passing four spades, so perhaps a different auction would have denied interest beyond game.

Anyhow, North led the ten of diamonds and when dummy came down Versace smiled broadly, thanked his partner, and set about making his game. After winning the diamond king(!) at trick one, Versace ruffed the diamond four to dummy in order to play a trump toward his hand, hoping to find queen and one onside, inserting the nine as South followed low.

North won the ace of spades and led a third diamond as Versace pitched a club from dummy and South ruffed – with the spade queen! She then shifted to a low club.

Versace won his ace and paused to consider how to continue. Assuming the queen of spades to be a true card (could this unassuming woman in the dark glasses really have ruffed unnecessarily high? Impossible!), North held both outstanding trumps. If Versace drew trumps ending in hand, he could pitch dummy's last two clubs on his two remaining high diamonds, then knock out the ace of hearts. But then the defence could win the first heart, tap dummy with a club, and with the heart suit blocked he would have to win the next heart in hand and lose a club in the ending.

Versace thought he found a solution: he would first cash his high diamonds, pitching dummy's losing clubs as North followed helplessly and South pitched (having no more trumps!?). Then he could knock out the ace of hearts, win any return, unblock the hearts, and draw trumps ending in dummy to enjoy his jack of hearts.

So, having carefully formulated his plan, Versace cashed a high diamond, pitching a club from dummy as North followed and Linda . . . ruffed with the eight of spades! She then led a club to her husband's king to beat declarer two tricks in a cold contract. (If North had earlier unblocked his club king under the ace South could have cashed the club queen and given North a club ruff to beat the contract three tricks!) It's true, the female of the species is deadlier than the male. Move over, Nikita, make room for La Femme Linda.

Standings

1. Karen McCallum-Matt Granovetter (USA) 59.28%
2. Jill Levin-Bobby Levin (USA) 58.75%
3. Joanna Stansby-Lew Stansby (USA) 58.47%

IMP PAIRS

Here is a deal where Tezcan Sen and Okay Gur of Turkey helped themselves to large numbers of IMPs on their way to their big win in the first-ever IMP Pairs Championship. It demonstrates the efficient defence necessary to win an event of this type.

Final 2. Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	Sen		Gur
Pass	1 ♣	1 ♥	Double
Pass	2 ♣	2 ♥	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The first double showed four spades. The second double was for blood. Gur started with the ace of diamonds, switching at trick two to his singleton club. Gur ruffed the club return at trick three, then cashed the king of diamonds and played a diamond to Sen's queen. Now a low spade to the ace and a spade back to the king allowed North to play a third round of clubs – and Gur got his natural heart trick back for plus 800 and 12 IMPs.

Standings

1. Tezcan Sen - Okay Gur (TUR) 178.5
2. Bobby Richman - Zoltan Nagy (AUS) 149.1
3. Irina Ladyzhensky - Alexander Ladyzhensky (RUS) 124.5

MCCONNELL CUP

In the Mc Connell Cup, 4 groups of 9/10 teams would each qualify the top 4 finishers for the KO round of 16.

The Beauty of What Didn't Happen

Our friend Deep Finesse can tell the winning line of play or defence in any contract. After all, DF always looks at all the cards, which is a huge advantage.

On this deal from the McConnell qualifying rounds, Irina Levitina managed ten tricks in a contract of four spades, but she did not consider her performance particularly inspiring. What did excite her was the possibility for a beautiful play – and she worked it out without the aid of Deep Finesse.

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Narasimhan		Levitina	
—	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South started with a low trump, taken in dummy with the ten. Levitina played a diamond to the king and ace and won the trump continuation in her hand. She then played a heart from hand. South won the heart king and exited with a club to dummy's ace. Now Levitina played the club king, ruffed a club, cashed the queen of diamonds and ruffed a diamond, then played dummy's fourth club, ruffing in hand. She picked up the last trump with the ace and played a heart to the jack, queen and ace.

At trick thirteen, North had only a heart left, so she led it perforce to dummy's good ten as Levitina discarded her losing diamond. That was plus 620.

What Levitina appreciated about the deal was what was going to happen on defence – and how on that projected defence, she needed a heart trick for her contract.

Levitina's play depended on exhausting North of exit cards before she played the second round of hearts. On the actual lie of the cards, declarer can also succeed by coming to hand after the club shift (with either the diamond queen or a club ace, king and a ruff) and leading a second heart, *not covering the jack*. This is necessary to keep North, who can lead a third trump, off play. Additionally, should South win the heart king and follow up with the jack, again declarer must let it hold. Nevertheless, Levitina's play is superior.

To demonstrate that she is an honest person as well as a fine bridge player, Levitina did note that she is not sure she would have found the play of ducking the jack of hearts had the opportunity presented itself (although the duck would look pretty silly if South had the last trump!).

Results

Final:

Steiner 140 Narasimhan 90

3rd Place Playoff:

Katt-Bridge 70 China Global Times 67

Semifinals:

Narasimhan 127 Katt-Bridge 97

Steiner 91 China Global Times 88

Rank & Rosters:

1. **Steiner** (RUS/USA): Gromova V, Letizia M, Ponomareva T, Seamon-Molson J, Sokolow T, Steiner C
2. **Narasimhan** (USA): Levin J, Levitina I, Meyers J, Narasimhan H, Rosenberg D, Stansby J
3. **Katt-Bridge** (SWE): Bertheau K, Midskog C, Ryman J, Ryman M
4. **China Global Times** (CHN): Ling G, Wang H, Wang L, Wang W, Zhang Y, Zhang Y

WOMEN'S PAIRS

Missed Chances by Brian Senior

Final I. Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Brock	Severgnini	Dhondy	Gentili
—	—	—	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Double	2 ♥
3 ♣	3 ♠	4 ♣	4 ♠
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

Two clubs was weak with at least four-four in the majors and two diamonds asked. Dhondy doubled to show diamonds and two hearts denied five spades. Brock competed in clubs, and everyone had another go, ending with a double from Brock, who could have found her partner with somewhat more than she actually held.

Dhondy led a club to the queen and Brock switched to a diamond, Dhondy winning and playing two more rounds of the suit, Maddalena Severgnini ruffing. Best would have been to ruff a club now, but cashing a top trump was not fatal. Severgnini's next play, queen and another heart was, however, fatal. She continued with the third heart winner and Brock ruffed. Declarer over-ruffed, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, then another club, but had to give up a trump at the end for down one; minus 100 and only 4 MPs to North-South.

At the point where she cashed the hearts, declarer needed instead to ruff a club, play a heart to the queen and ruff another club. Now she plays the ace and king of hearts and West is powerless. If she ruffs, declarer over-ruffs, ruffs her last club and leads a heart for a trump coup. If West discards on the third heart then declarer throws a club, leads the spade ten and stays in dummy for the same trump coup. Five out of fourteen declarers in a spade contract made ten tricks.

Standings

1. Irina Levitina-Kerri Sanborn (USA) 57.31%
2. Wei Fei Wang-Hong Li Wang (CHN) 56.73%
3. Janice Seamon-Molson-Sabine Auken (USA/GER) 56.51%

SENIOR TEAMS

Surrounded by Maureen Hiron

This was a textbook defence, from round 8 of the Senior Teams.

Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 NT	Pass

North, Irving Gordon, aka Haggis, led a fourth highest spade, to the two, eight and ace. Declarer set about clubs, the ace fetching the nine from North, and the diamond eight to the ace for a finesse of the club jack brought good news and bad news. On lead with the fourth round of clubs, Ian Panto learnedly returned the jack of hearts – the surrounding play – to the queen and king, and the heart return from Haggis, through dummy's ten, gave the defenders the four heart tricks that set the contract.

Results

Final:

Markowicz 59 Finkel 53

3rd Place Playoff:

Netherlands 71 Jean-Marsha 60

Semifinals:

Markowicz 49 Netherlands 32

Finkel 61 Jean-Marsha 50

Rank & Rosters:

1. **Markowicz** (USA/POL/ISR/LIE) Zeligman S, Markowicz V, Melman V, Zaremba J, Klukowski J, Jeziro A
2. **Finkel** (USA) Sutherlin J, Finkel L, Kasle G, Mohan J, Sutherlin J
3. **Netherlands I** (NED) Trouwborst J, Boegem W, Doremans N, Janssens O, Klaver N, Ramer R
4. **Jean-Marsha** (USA/SWE) Fisher A, Sternberg J, Cokin A, Chambers N, Schermer J, Sundelin PO

SENIOR PAIRS

The Teltscher Touch and the Hackett Hatchet by Maureen Dennison

Kitty Teltscher, West, playing in the Senior Pairs with Nicola Smith, both of England, was in six no trump as West on this deal:

Board 6. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

North's club lead was run to the queen, and declarer played four rounds of hearts. North won and switched to a diamond: three, nine, queen and ace. Teltscher cashed her long heart, squeezing South down to the king-ten of spades, having to guard the long club.

Now the club play put North under pressure, having to keep the king of diamonds. He, too, was reduced to two spades. Declarer took the successful finesse in spades and the eight of spades was her twelfth trick.

Paul Hackett, playing with Tony Waterlow, also England, was North at a different table against the same contract by West. The play at his table was identical for the first five tricks but, when Hackett was in with the heart nine, he led a spade and broke up the squeeze – not so easy to see.

Standings

1. Nico Klaver - Roald Ramer (NED) 57.63
2. Julian Klukowski - Aleksander Jezioro (POL) 57.45
3. Entschow Wladow - Reiner Marsal (GER) 56.40

NEWS FROM VERONA

Ralph Cohen 1926-2006

Former ACBL chief and four-time US national champion and Canadian International Ralph Cohen died on June 13 at his home in Memphis, Tennessee, in the USA. Cohen, who had battled cancer for several years, was 79. Earlier this year, Cohen was named the 2006 recipient of the Sidney H. Lazard Jr. Sportsmanship Award.

Illustrious Participants

Among the participants in the Mixed Pairs on Saturday were former Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, playing with world champion Sharon Osberg, both from the USA, and Antoine Bernheim, president of the Generali Group, playing with Blandine de Heredia, French women's title holder.

Commemorative Stamp Issued

A special stamp to celebrate the 2006 World Championships in Verona has been issued by the Italian Mail Service.

Italy's Mind Sport Monopoly

In the field of Mind Sports Italy is certainly holding centre stage in 2006. Just prior to the start of these Championships the Chess Olympiad was staged in Turin.

Damiani Re-elected

José Damiani was re-elected in Verona to a fourth term as president of the World Bridge Federation. During Damiani's tenure, bridge has made inroads with the International Olympic Committee, which has declared bridge a sport, and the WBF is now engaged in a campaign to interest more young people in the game.

Damiani has steadfastly promoted the motto, "Bridge for Peace."

Other WBF elections: Gianariggo Rona, first vice president; John Wignall, second vice president; vice presidents, Panos Gerontopoulos (Zone 1), George Retek (Zone 2), Mazhar Jafri (Zone 4) and Patrick Choy (Zone 6). Also elected were Jean-Louis Derivery, treasurer, and Dan Morse, honorary secretary.

WBF Congress

The revision to the Laws is ongoing, and should be completed in 2007.

Forthcoming Championships:

- 2006 FISU University Championships, Tianjin
- 2007 Bermuda Bowl & Venice Cup, Shanghai
- 2008 Olympiad (and Intellympiad), Beijing

WBF Women's Committee

Zone 6 will host a Women's Festival in Wu Xi, China from 17th - 21st October, following the same lines as the European Festival to be held in Riccione, Italy, from 26th September - 1st October 2006.

World Computer Bridge Championship

The 10th annual World Computer Bridge concluded on Wednesday with Jack (Netherlands), developed by Hans Kuijf, outclassing the field of seven robots from around the world. In the final, a 64-board match, Jack defeated Micro Bridge (Japan), 217-54. It was Jack's fifth world title in a row.