



BULLETIN

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Editorial

What is the best way to choose a team for international competition? There are five basic methods: 1. Team Trials; 2. Pairs Trials; 3. Captain's Choice; 4. Administrators' Choice; 5. Combination of Methods. One could say that methods 1. and 2. are democratic and that the rest are autocratic. Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of each method in turn and see if we can actually determine which is best.

1. Team Trials. This is the method followed principally by the USA, and also by India, Pakistan, Canada and others. Those countries have a National Championship, or a Trials, and the winning team becomes their representative for that year, that cycle, or a specific event such as a World or Zonal Championship. There are two circumstances under which this method works well: (a.) the National Bridge Association (NBO) has such a depth of talent that any team winning the Trials is bound to be a worthy representative and have a chance of winning the World Championship. Not many countries fit this mould – the USA springs to mind; (b.) regardless of the level of talent in the NBO, there are a number of roughly equivalently-skilled teams, so that to choose one over another would be a miscarriage. Speaking from personal experience, such is the case currently in Canada, India and Pakistan. The big disadvantage to this method is that the top teams are now all sponsored, usually, but not always, by a lesser player.

2. Pairs Trials. This method used to be in vogue in the USA and produced some great teams, but also some teams which were spectacularly dysfunctional, principally due to the personalities of a few 'rugged individualists' who were not by any stretch team players. Whether this had an effect on North America always losing to Italy has been a subject of debate for decades – I daresay everyone has an opinion, but no one really knows the truth. The biggest disadvantage of this method of selection is that IMP Pairs is the form of the game in which luck plays the largest part. At some point, the USA, Australia and no doubt others followed this method. In North America at least, the method has been largely discredited, perhaps in part due to the failure of North American teams to beat the Blue Team over the years.

3. Captain's Choice. Isn't it remarkable that in soccer, basketball, hockey, cricket, baseball and just about any other team sport you can think of, every country chooses its teams this way? Should that not tell us something? The prime example of this in bridge is, of course, Italy, which, starting with Perroux and continuing on through Lavazza, has always chosen its teams this way (with one year's exception). Their record speaks for itself. However, no one can really say how much their success is a function of the method of selection

Continued on page 16...

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NORWEGIAN DECEMBER LIGHTS

Knut Kjærnsrød, Tored, Norway

In our part of the world, December is the darkest month of the year, but it is still possible to find patches of light, not least at the bridge table. This board from a pre-Christmas simultaneous pairs played throughout the country proved to be a shining experience for the defence:

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

With both sides vulnerable the bidding developed in a way that did not radiate golden light:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♣
2 ♦	2 ♥	Double	3 ♣
3 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

North led her singleton club and ruffed the club return. The heart king was taken by the ace, and three rounds of spades proved a parking place for declarer's second heart. A diamond went to the knave and king, and the heart king was trumped by South's ace. Declarer discarded his last club, but a club from South promoted North's ten of trumps for one down and an 85 % score.

In a local Christmas tournament, Christer Heitun, West, of Tonsberg performed an endplay guided by the bidding:

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

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	2 ♣	2 ♥	Pass
2 NT	3 ♦	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♥	Pass	6 ♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North's two clubs showed a two-suited hand. North started with his singleton trump, and Christer proceeded to cash his trumps and hearts to reach this position

♠ K 9 ♥ — ♦ A ♣ —	♠ A 6 ♥ — ♦ K ♣ —	♠ Q 10 ♥ — ♦ 6 ♣ —	
	♠ J 7 ♥ — ♦ 7 ♣ —		

North was thrown in with a diamond and had to lead away from his king of spades.

BBO is a truly magnificent innovation, and a Sunday tournament in mid-December produced this board

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

Per Bryde Sundseth was North, and with no one vulnerable he ended in four hearts after this auction

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
3 ♣	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The king of clubs was overtaken by the ace, and Per carefully trumped the club continuation with his six of hearts. The ace of diamonds followed, and a second diamond was mistakenly taken by East's king. His diamond continuation was trumped by the nine and overruffed by the queen. The eight of hearts was played to the knave, and a club was ruffed with the ace. This was the six-card ending (see *top of next page*).

The carefully preserved three of trumps enabled Per to finesse the five and clear the trumps. There was only one spade trick left for the defence in the end.

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

BRIDGE AT THE NORTH POLE

Chris Dixon, London

During the first two weeks of April 2008, I embarked upon an expedition to ski the last degree to the geographic North Pole, a distance of some 80 miles. The team of 13 was led by Rune Gjeldnes and David



Chris Dixon (facing camera) and friends ponder the next move (perhaps into the tent).

Hempelmann-Adams, both of whom are world-famous polar adventurers with extraordinary records of achievement in the world's most inhospitable places.

The adventure started with a flight to Oslo and then on to Longyearbyen on the Island of Svalbard, Spitzbergen. Here we stayed two days for some training and testing of ourselves and equipment. We then flew to Barneo. Barneo is a temporary ice camp on the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean approximately 500 miles from the nearest land. It is recreated every year for just five weeks and serves to support scientific and other expeditions to the North Pole. Built on a large ice floe, it is at approximately 89 degrees North and includes an ice runway. The ice here is about one metre thick, under which is more than 4000 metres of ocean.

When we reached Barneo, we were informed that the floe covering the North Pole was drifting at the rate of 15 miles per day - in the wrong direction for us. Had we started skiing North, we might never have arrived! Fortunately, the Russians took us by helicopter to a position which would offer a reasonable chance of success. We were airlifted out and left to fend for ourselves on the frozen Arctic Ocean. The temperature at this point was close to minus 30 degrees Celsius.

We camped in two large tents secured with skis and ski poles as pegs and weighed down by snow on the valances. Cooking in each tent was done with two camping stoves which were used to bring snow blocks to the boil to provide hot drinks, soups and rehydrated expedition food. We slept in double Arctic sleeping bags. The toilet facilities are best left to the imagination. In the mornings, the insides of the tents were thickly covered with frost which had to be brushed away before the stoves were lit. We all took turns in cooking duties.

After waking in the mornings, it took about two hours to cook breakfast, fill the thermos flasks, pack our sleds and strike camp. The sleds weighed about 80 lbs and we were each harnessed to a sled which we hauled over the sea ice.

The weather conditions for our trek were good, with mostly blue skies and light winds, although the temperatures were colder than expected. Excluding wind chill, we encountered a low of -38 degrees C (feeling like -60 with wind chill factor applied). Whilst crossing ice floes, the surface was friendly, with one-metre-thick ice covered by a layer of compacted snow between 12 inches and 4 feet in depth. Between floes were pressure ridges - mounds of ice rubble produced by two floes colliding, and these had to be negotiated carefully. We also encountered areas of open water between the floes, although generally these had frozen sufficiently over the preceding 10-12 hours to allow us to cross safely.

Navigation was difficult as compasses are of no use and using the position of the sun as a guide is very difficult because the longitude lines are so close together that we could never really know our time zone. Fortunately, our modern GPS navigation devices allowed us an unerring route to the Pole. Naturally, so far North, we had 24 hours of sunlight daily. The sun, low in the sky at that time of year, remained at the same level as it circled 360 degrees around us.

Good weather and a much reduced drift meant that we made excellent time in reaching the Pole - but we had to await our helicopter rendezvous to be returned to Barneo. This was harder than it seemed as each 24 hours we were drifting five to six miles away and would have to ski 'back' to the Pole.

At the Pole itself, I was able to play my planned game of bridge on a table carved out of the sea ice. We also met another team of 12 explorers from the Indian Navy. The opportunity was too good to miss, so we challenged them to a game of cricket. The game took place with



India defeat England in the 1st Arctic Test Match

two full sides; we used ski poles for stumps, a snow shovel as a bat, and some taped up bungee cord as a ball. After playing four overs each side, India was declared the winner of this Arctic Test Match.

We were collected on schedule by the Barneo helicopter crew who brought us champagne and other suitable refreshments.

This trip completed a personal treble for me as in 2006 I had travelled to both the South Pole and the Sahara to play bridge (okay, the bridge was incidental).

BEANTOWN BOARDS II 2008 FALL NABC BOSTON, NOV. 20-30

Brent Manley and Paul Linxwiler, Memhis, TN

DEFENSIVE BRILLIANCE OR DECLARER ERROR?

Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Richardson	Narasimhan	Priebe	Wold
—	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Jim Priebe of the Toronto area shared this deal with us. It is from the Senior Knockouts. Priebe was playing with team captain Lew Richardson, also of Toronto, in their match against the squad led by Hansa Narasimhan, playing here with Eddie Wold. Despite losing the match, Priebe and Richardson enjoyed a net swing of 15 IMPs on the deal.

Richardson began with a fourth-best two of hearts. Dummy's jack held the trick (Priebe, East, unblocking the ten), and a spade to declarer's jack also held. Wold then played the king of spades from the closed hand, which Priebe ducked again.

Double dummy, declarer can prevail at this point by cashing dummy's top clubs and playing a heart to the king. West can win, but with only red cards remaining, must put declarer back on lead to cash the long club and the high heart. That would give declarer nine tricks with two spades, two hearts, four clubs and a diamond trick on power.

Wold, however, played the heart king at trick four, allowing the defenders to execute a pretty finish. Richardson refused the trick, and after the ace-king-queen of clubs were cashed, Richardson also ducked the diamond king continuation. Wold tried the effect of the diamond ten next, covered all around. West cashed the ace of hearts and underled the diamond nine to East's eight, allowing Priebe to take the ace-queen of spades for down one.

At the other table, North-South were in a less aggressive two no trump making three. The Richardson team won 5 IMPs on the deal instead of losing 10 had declarer succeeded in three no trump.

LITTLE DEUCE COUP Mark Horton

Little Deuce Coupe was the Beach Boys' fourth album – the title track happens to be on the CD of their greatest hits that I keep in the car for summer days.

Nancy Maidman showed a lot of faith in her partner's not-inconsiderable playing skills on this deal from the Mixed Pairs. As that happened to be Bulgaria's international star, Valio Kovachev, the confidence was not misplaced. What is more, although the same contract was attempted at several tables, only Nancy's partner found a route to twelve tricks.

Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Maidman</i>		<i>Kovachev</i>	
1 ♠	3 ♦	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South led the diamond king and declarer won with the ace. In case North held a singleton heart queen, declarer led the eight from dummy at trick two, the jack losing to South's queen. Declarer ruffed the diamond return, and played the jack of spades, running it when South did not cover. Now came a heart to the ten, a successful club finesse, and three more trumps. This was the situation when declarer led his last trump:

♠ A K 9 ♥ — ♦ 2 ♣ 8	♠ 10 ♥ — ♦ Q J ♣ K 9	♠ 4 ♥ 7 ♦ — ♣ A 6 2	♠ Q 5 3 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ J 10
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In order to retain a guard in spades, South had to throw a club. Declarer discarded dummy's nine of spades and North threw a diamond. Now declarer played a spade to the king and when he tabled the ace of spades, North was faced by this unenviable position:

♠ A ♥ — ♦ 2 ♣ 8	♠ — ♥ — ♦ Q ♣ K 9	♠ 4 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ A 2	♠ Q 5 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ J
--------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Discarding a diamond would allow declarer to score a trick with the deliberately-preserved two, and North's actual choice of a club saw declarer cross to the ace of clubs and take the last trick with the lowest card in the other minor suit to complete a perfect example of a non-simultaneous double squeeze.

That brilliant piece of card reading may put Valio in the melting pot for hand of the year. If South had found the equally brilliant play of ducking the heart jack, the potential award might be going somewhere else!

GOOD LISTENER

In the Bill Keohane North American Swiss Teams, you hold (spots approximate):

♠ K Q 7 6 5
 ♥ K J 5 4
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 8 5 4

You are North and see this auction:

West	North	East	South
2 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
7 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

You are on lead. What will it be? Think it over before checking out the full deal.

Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

Did you find the club lead? If you did, you helped your side to a 16-IMP gain, just as Bart Bramley did in real life, as reported by his partner, Eddie Wold. Bramley hoped for the layout that actually existed – a long, strong club suit in dummy and a singleton club with declarer. The club lead was the only way to cut declarer off from the suit before trumps were pulled. Any other lead would have made declarer's task very easy.

Declarer tried two rounds of trumps, ending in dummy. If the suit was 2-2, the grand slam was still a maker. When Bramley showed out on the second trump, declarer took two pitches on high clubs then finessed unsuccessfully in hearts. At the other table, the contract was six diamonds, making seven.

DEFENSIVE DECISION

Dutch expert and magazine editor Jan van Cleeff pointed out the following interesting deal from here in Boston. (He didn't specify which event!) It's too good to pass up, however, so here it is anyway.

As West, at unfavorable vulnerability, you pick up (spots approximate):

♠ A K 9 7 6 4 3
 ♥ A
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ J 8 2

East is the dealer:

West	North	East	South
<i>You</i>		<i>Partner</i>	
—	—	Pass	Pass
1 ♠	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
3 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After this lively auction, you lead the spade ace and see this:

♠ Q 2
 ♥ J 9 7 3
 ♦ A Q 10 6 5
 ♣ A 4

♠ A K 9 7 6 4 3
 ♥ A
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ J 8 2

On your spade ace, partner gives a count signal showing an odd number (surely three) and declarer follows with a likely singleton. Now what? Consider your next move before reading on.

You have two certain defensive tricks and must find a third somewhere. Partner might have the king of clubs (yeah, right), but if not, what then? You might reason that if declarer has three low diamonds that your inevitable diamond trick can't go away, and therefore, a club switch can't hurt in any event. If you play a club, however, you'll be sorry as this is the full layout:

♠ Q 2
 ♥ J 9 7 3
 ♦ A Q 10 6 5
 ♣ A 4

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

♠ 10
 ♥ K 10 8 6 5 2
 ♦ 8 4 3
 ♣ K 10 6

Declarer wins the ace of clubs, ruffs dummy's last spade, plays a diamond to the queen, cashes the diamond ace

(dropping your king), crosses to the club king and ruffs a club. Next comes (and you *know* it's coming) a heart to your singleton ace. With nothing but spades left, you must present declarer a ruff and a sluff allowing him to get rid of his diamond loser.

Did you remember to play off the trump ace at trick two?

THE RABBIT'S RED CARD OFFENCE

Mark Horton, Bath, England

As the last of the thirty-two boards settled on the table, the Leprechauns enjoyed a 9-IMP lead in their annual match against the Gremlins.

Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

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

♠ K 9 4
 ♥ A 6
 ♦ A K 6 4 3
 ♣ 8 6 3

In the Closed Room, North-South took two bids to reach three no trumps and Colin the Corgi led the three of hearts. Declarer won the second heart and started with the club finesse. When that won, he played a diamond to the ace and a small diamond, which Papa won with the ten. If the defenders cash their hearts at this point, declarer can succeed by way of a double squeeze – the defence being unable to attack the communication-suit (spades) because of its frozen nature. But Papa averted that disaster by returning another diamond, and declarer was doomed. Try as he might he could come to no more than eight tricks.

In the Open room the Rueful Rabbit, as usual under strict instructions to avoid no trumps, opened one diamond. Preparing for his rebid of three no trumps, the Hog responded with a lead-inhibiting one heart, but a minor aberration later the Rabbit discovered he had rebid one no trump, the Hog's raise to three no trumps being accompanied by suitable mutterings.

Well aware of HH's predilections, West led the three of hearts, East playing the jack. The Rabbit nervously surveyed the dummy and could count six tricks. Then he spotted the possibility of the finesse in clubs and without further ado he won the opening lead and played

a club to the jack. When that held he returned to his hand with a diamond and took a second club finesse – at least that was his intention, but the six of hearts was next to settle on the table.

West followed with the eight of hearts and a disconsolate RR covered with dummy's ten. East won with the queen and returned the queen of diamonds. A relieved RR took the trick, West discarding a spade, and played a club to the nine and queen. When that held he cashed the ace, East discarding a heart and West following with the king.

Was the two of clubs good? Trying desperately to remember West's discard RR could only recall it was a black seven. Crossing his fingers he put the two of clubs on the table. When West produced the seven the Rabbit could feel his cheeks burning.

These cards remained:

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

West cashed the king and nine of hearts, East discarding a spade and a diamond and exited with the seven of spades. RR, relieved that West had apparently forgotten to cash a long heart, took East's queen with the king and played back a spade. He was about to go up with dummy's ace, when a memory stirred, and he made his favourite play – the finesse. When the ten held the trick the Rabbit had secured his contract – and victory for the Gremlins.

(As you may have realised, the mistaken exit with the six of hearts is the only way declarer can make the contract. However, if West leads the eight of hearts at trick one, even the Rabbit's Guardian Angel would not be able to help. In TGR's Super League, David Gold, partnering Tom Townsend, found the defence ascribed to Themistocles Papadopoulos.)

INDIVIDUAL TRIPLE SQUEEZE

Marc Smith, Southampton, UK

The winner of the Junior Individual event at the 1st Mind Sports Olympiad in Beijing was Salih Murat Anter, a 27-year old from Istanbul, Turkey playing in his last-ever event as a junior. When I asked this quiet young man for a hand, he modestly claimed that he had done nothing special but just had plenty of help from his oppo-

nents. Even so, you still have to take advantage of the chances that come your way.

Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♠	Pass	Anter
Pass	2 NT	Pass	1 NT
Pass			Pass

Looking at just the North-South cards, you wouldn't bet a dime to a doughnut on declarer making eight tricks from this mess, particularly if you were told that both high black cards were offside. Let's see what happened...

West kicked off the defence with the heart ace and then switched to the queen of diamonds, which was allowed to hold. The club jack came next, covered by queen and king, and East returned a club to declarer's eight, West's ten and dummy's ace. The jack of hearts was now led around to West, who won the king and continued with the seven of clubs. Declarer won with the nine, played a spade to the king and ace, won the diamond return with dummy's bare ace, and crossed to the queen of hearts to leave these cards:

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

When Anter now cashed the king of diamonds, West was caught in a triple squeeze. If he threw a spade, declarer would score the last three tricks with dummy's spades. At the table, West discarded a club, so declarer then cashed the three of clubs to squeeze West in the majors for the eighth trick. Sure, the defenders had chances to break up the squeeze, but take nothing away from the declarer, who took full advantage of the chance he was given.

IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra

Members may use these deals as they wish, without attributing the author or IBPA

467. Matchpoints. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	5 ♠	Pass	6 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After using Roman Key Card Blackwood, which included a five-diamond enquiry and which revealed that North held the queen of spades but not the king of diamonds, you opted for the best matchpoint spot of six no trump.

West leads the queen of clubs, which you take with the ace. As you have twelve tricks no matter who holds the king of diamonds, what is your plan to make a golden overtrick?

An overtrick is only possible if East began with the king of diamonds. If diamonds are 3-2 with the king onside then using the queen and ten of spades as entries for finesses will produce thirteen tricks. The problems come when East began with four or five diamonds to the king, which will then require you to generate three entries to dummy for finesses in diamonds.

The best play at trick two is to lead the jack of spades and, once West follows, overtake it with the queen. When the cards lie as in the diagram, you can finesse the queen of diamonds, return to dummy with a spade to the eight and finesse the jack of diamonds. A spade to the ten will allow a third diamond finesse and give you your precious overtrick.

If both defenders follow to the first spade, you will fall back on the nine of spades falling singleton or doubleton,

to give you the needed entry to dummy for the extra diamond finesse in case East turns up with four or five diamonds headed by the king. Otherwise, you will have to be content with only making twelve tricks.

468. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2 NT
Pass	3 ♣ ¹	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 NT ²	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Stayman
2. Promised four spades

West leads the queen of diamonds to dummy's ace and East follows with the two, indicating an odd number of diamonds. As your hand does not fit well with dummy's, there seems only a slim chance of developing your total of seven winners into nine tricks. What is the best way of achieving that outcome?

As the diamonds appear to be 5-3, there is little point in playing on clubs. A better plan is to attack spades in such a way that you can make three tricks from the suit when the suit lies favourably. Most of the time, this will rely on East beginning with a singleton king of spades or with the king doubleton.

On this layout, you lead the eight (or nine of spades) at trick two, planning to run it if East follows with a low spade. On the next round of spades, you will cash the ace and fell East's king of spades. As a result, dummy's queen-nine will provide two tricks as you will take a winning finesse against West's remaining spade honour.

The defence will fare no better if East plays his king of spades at trick two. You will win the ace of spades and

lead a low spade towards dummy, planning to duck when West plays the jack or ten of spades. You will make nine tricks also when East began with either king-jack or king-ten doubleton. After letting the jack or ten hold, the king will fall under the ace and you will again make two tricks with dummy's queen-nine. (Incidentally, this is why East should play the king of spades at trick two when holding it singly guarded; it reduces declarer's chance of making three tricks in the spade suit from five cases to three.)

Also, if West has the king of spades you can never make more than two tricks in the suit. If it were singleton or doubleton, East would have a spade stopper to prevent you cashing more than two tricks in the suit. Whenever West has at least king third, he can deny you a third spade trick by withholding his king of spades until the third round of the suit.

469. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ten of hearts against your small slam in spades. What is the best play for the contract?

As you have eleven top tricks, the key point of the hand is to minimise the chance of losing two diamond tricks. Of course, you could rely on a simple finesse of the queen of diamonds, which in practice would only be a 50% chance.

Your first move should be to cover the ten of hearts with dummy's jack, forcing the king or ace from East. You ruff in your hand and play a trump to dummy's king, which draws the outstanding trumps. You next lead the queen of hearts, on which you plan to throw a diamond if East plays low. Assuming East covers the queen of hearts with his remaining heart honour, you will ruff and then cash king, queen and ace of clubs to eliminate that suit. Finally, you lead the seven of hearts and discard the four of diamonds from your hand. On the above layout, West has to win the trick and surrender the contract with his return. A diamond will be into your

ace-queen tenace and a fourth round of hearts (or a club, if he held one) would give you a ruff-and-discard. Either way, you will make twelve tricks.

You may ask, "What would happen if West began with the king of hearts or East held the eight of hearts?" The answer is that you would be forced to rely on the diamond finesse. All the manoeuvres in hearts achieved was to make certain of twelve tricks when West began with the ten-nine-eight of hearts and East with the ace-king.

As most players will play the king from ace-king at trick one, if East plays the ace of hearts then you might decide to place West with king-ten-nine. The endplay is now achievable by ruffing the seven of hearts and endplaying West with dummy's remaining heart honour.

470. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
2 NT ¹	Pass	3 ♣	Double
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 5-5 in the minors, 6 to 9 points

West leads the nine of hearts against this dashing slam. After winning the ace of hearts you cross to the ace of spades and West follows suit. How do you plan the rest of the play?

As you have eleven certain tricks, your plan for developing a twelfth should be based on West holding the king of clubs.

One of the equivalent approaches* on this layout is to cash the ace, king and queen of spades, cross to dummy with a heart to the king, which will remove West's last major-suit card, and to then lead the ten of diamonds. If West takes his king of diamonds he will be endplayed, with only minor suit cards left. If he leads a diamond next, you will make five spades, four diamonds, two hearts and a club while on a club exit you will make five spades, two hearts, three diamonds and two clubs.

If West ducks the ten of diamonds, you will play a diamond to the jack. Again if West takes it, he must give you your twelfth trick in whichever minor suit he returns and if he ducks you will play the queen or the

eight of diamonds next, to finally endplay West for a minor-suit return.

Cashing both the jack and ten of spades before leading the ten of diamonds would not work! (You can spare a low club on the jack of spades but you would soon discover that there is no winning discard from your hand if you decide to cash the ten of spades too.)

* Alternatively, on the given deal, you could just lead the five of diamonds, provided you kept at least one spade winner in hand. However, the suggested plan also works when West has opened two no trumps without the king of diamonds.

471. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

♠ A K 2
♥ A Q
♦ A Q 7 5 4
♣ 8 6 3

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

♠ Q J 10 9 5 3
♥ 5
♦ 8 6 2
♣ 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Double	3 ♥	3 ♠
4 ♥	Double	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Even though partner's second double promised extra values in a balanced hand, probably without primary spade support, you decided to press on to game because you had no defensive values. West leads the king of clubs, winning the first trick, and continues with the jack of clubs. East overtakes this win the ace and returns the ten of clubs to West's queen who then exits with a trump. How will you continue?

West is sure to hold both the red-suit kings but as you have only one convenient entry to the South hand, you are unable to take finesses in both suits. So, you will need some plan other than simply finessing in the red suits.

Indeed, you should win the trump switch with dummy's ace, cash the king of trumps and then make the apparently strange move of cashing the ace of hearts.

When you play four more rounds of trumps from the South hand, reducing your hand to three cards, West has to keep the king of hearts and therefore has no option but to reduce to a doubleton king of diamonds. You throw the queen of hearts from dummy, finesse the queen of diamonds, cash the ace, and dummy's last diamond will be high.

If you fail to cash the ace of hearts before running your trumps, you would have to guess which four cards West had decided to keep in the ending. He might fool you by keeping the king-two of hearts and king-jack of diamonds. If you thought that the heart king was bare, you would retain the ace-queen of both red suits in dummy and finesse in diamonds. So the reason for cashing the ace of hearts should now be clear – it was to avoid any drama in the endgame.

472. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 7 6 4 2
♥ Q 7 4
♦ 9 6 5 2
♣ Q J

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

♠ A K Q J 8
♥ A K
♦ A K 10 7
♣ A 8

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

As partner's raise to four spades promised some scattered values without an ace, king, singleton or void, as he would make a second negative with less, you decided to jump directly to six spades. West leads the jack of hearts which you win with the ace. After both opponents follow when you cash the ace of trumps, how do you plan the rest of the play?

Your first step should be to draw the remaining trumps. Then after cashing the king of hearts and the ace of diamonds, you should advance the ten of diamonds. When diamonds are 3-2, you will win the return, cash the king of diamonds and then cross to dummy by leading the seven of diamonds to dummy's nine. Then you can discard the eight of clubs on dummy's queen of hearts; you will make five trumps, three hearts, three diamonds and a club.

The reason for playing the diamonds this way becomes clear when the diamonds are 4-1, and no honour falls on the first round of the suit. The defender who wins the second round of diamonds cannot play a diamond without giving you a trick. Also, West cannot play a club for the same reason. While this line does not guarantee the contract, it does force an entry to dummy. You will need the club finesse unless West has four diamonds and only two hearts.

West will take the ten of diamonds with his jack and exit with a heart, as a minor suit return would give you

an extra trick. After discarding the seven of diamonds on the queen of hearts, you will take the club finesse for the contract. This is also true if East has four diamonds headed by the queen-jack.

When an honour *does* fall under the ace of diamonds, you will always make the contract! If the defender takes the ten of diamonds, then you will have access to the queen of hearts via the nine of diamonds to pitch your club loser. When the ten of diamonds holds, you will play ace and another club. The defender who wins the trick will be endplayed. A diamond exit will give you a trick, a heart allows you to discard your remaining diamond on the queen of hearts, and a club concedes the contract via a ruff-and discard.

GARNER GARNERS LAURELS

Phillip Alder, Hobe Sound FL

(From the New York Times)

Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

As we all know, defence is the hardest part of the game. It usually requires careful cooperation between the partners. And part of that carefulness is drawing the correct inferences from the cards on view. This deal was the second of the final day of the Reisinger Board-a-Match Teams at the Fall Nationals in Boston last November. It is an excellent example of a top pair of defenders in action. East and West were Steve Garner and Howard Weinstein, who finished second with teammates Billy Cohen, Ron Smith, Brian Glubok and Roy Welland.

After North opened one spade, South responded one no-trump, semiforcing. This meant that if North had a 5-3-3-2 minimum opening, he could pass. So he did pass. At both tables, West led the heart queen. (The king-lead would have promised a very strong holding in the

suit, asking partner to throw an honour-card if he had one.)

In the other room, East encouraged a heart continuation. The declarer, Glubok, ducked the first two tricks and took the third heart with his ace. He then ran the club queen, losing to the king. South now had seven tricks (two spades, three hearts and two clubs), and a later misdefence allowed through an overtrick.

Here, Garner paused for thought at trick one. Normally with jack-third, he would have encouraged a heart continuation. However, he noted the nine and ten in the dummy. He knew that if Weinstein had had king-queen to four or five hearts, he would have started with his fourth-highest, not the queen. So West had to have led from a short suit. Realizing it was South with the heart length, East dropped a discouraging deuce. When declarer ducked this trick, West shifted to the spade five, which went to East's queen. East switched to the club five, taken by South's queen.

Declarer could have escaped for down one by playing the ace and another heart, to remove the defence's exit cards in that suit, but that was hard to visualize. Instead, South continued with a low heart from his hand, after which the defence was card-perfect. West stepped in with his king and returned a club. East won with his king and played back a club to dummy's ace, giving this position:

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

Declarer saw his hand would be squeezed if he cashed dummy's top spades, so he called for a diamond. East stepped in with the king, cashed his club winner and returned his last heart to endplay South in his hand. Declarer took three heart tricks, but then had to lead away from his queen-ten of diamonds. East won one trick with his jack and West the other with his ace.

A candidate for the defence of the year had resulted in down two and a win on the board for the Welland team. And South was no slouch. Jeff Meckstroth is one of the world's top declarers and was part of the team that won the Reisinger.

AN INTERVIEW WITH GUIDO FERRARO

Fernando Lema, Buenos Aires

During the Beijing WMSG, I had the opportunity of spending some time with Guido Ferraro, who was selected several times to play on the Italian national bridge team, and won the 2000 Olympiad, the 2002 Rosenblum and the 2003 Transnational Teams. I found him to be extremely polite, knowledgeable and lots of fun. Many thanks for your time, Guido.



Photo: WBF

FL: How did you start playing bridge?

GF: I was 12. One day I went to my father's house when he was having a bridge lesson with a teacher and I watched... when they finished I told my father I wanted to learn. At the time I used to play tennis and there was rubber bridge at the club. I started playing with my dad as partner. At 14, I played my first tournament in addition to the junior championships, and at 17, I partnered up with the star of the Torino tennis club, Italo Santia. That same year, I was invited to join the "Lavazza" team, a selection to play the Common Market tournament, and I qualified to play in the Italian team - we lost in the quarterfinals. In 1980 I continued with Lavazza; my partner was Giorgio Belladonna for three years, and as a junior I played with Giorgio Duboin. It was a great team. With the junior team in 1984 we lost to France, almost at the end. We were way ahead, but we lost the last two matches 24 to 6 against France and Denmark... a tragic experience... our partners were Vittorio Golfarelli and Norberto Bocchi.

FL: What happened afterwards?

GF: The following year I moved on to open. bridge, but was not selected to play in the official team until 1999, when I played with Dano Defalco and we won the European Championship. After that we played the Bermuda Bowl and lost in the quarterfinals against the U.S. by 5 IMPs after discounting a carry-over of 13.

FL: In the year 2000 you played in the team that won the Olympiad. What can you tell us about that?

GF: In 2000 in Maastricht we won the Olympiad over Poland by 11 IMPs after making two consecutive doubled contracts. That year we also won the European tournament in Tenerife. In 2001 we lost the semifinals of the world championship against Norway by 5 IMPs and I retired.

FL: But that retirement has not been final. Lately you have teamed up with an Argentine player... how did you start playing with Agustin Madala?

GF: I met him at the Paris world tournament in 2001, he played for Argentina when he was only 15. We watched him play and realized he was very good. When we were chatting I told him bridge was his calling. And at 17, we invited him to join the Lavazza team as my partner.

FL: Can a player at 17 reach that level?

GF: Yes. His carding was already perfect, only his bidding needed improvement. The truth is he studied little but understood everything. My role was to prepare him to play with Antonio Sementa. We played very well together in the Japan tournament which we won very easily. In Amsterdam we played and easily won the White House, playing excellent bridge. We also played professionally in the U.S. with a sponsor.

FL: Which bridge book would you recommend?

GF: Forquet's book "Play bridge with the Blue Team", I think it's the best bridge book of all time. To me, he was the best player ever, even today Pietro plays very well, I play with him twice a year.

FL: At present, who do you think is the best player?

GF: Right now the best players are Jeff Meckstroth of the U.S., Alfredo Versace from Italy and Marcelo Castello Branco from Brazil.

FL: What can you tell us of Castello Branco?

GF: When I met him I was impressed, not only by his talent and consistency at the table, but that he makes no mistakes playing the cards, his card play is wonderful.

FL: What is your favourite convention?

GF: I like natural bridge, I think all conventions are bad, I don't have a favourite.

FL: How are men's and women's games different?

GF: The big difference is in the play of the cards; I don't understand why they declare well and fail in the carding.

FL: What would you advise youngsters who want to dedicate themselves to bridge?

At the other table Alex Hydes overcalled the opening bid of two clubs with two spades and when Espen Erichsen raised to three spades all East could do was bid three no trump. That was worth 15 IMPs.

It would be no crime to miss this so-so grand slam (provided, of course, you were in a small slam). For the grand slam to succeed, you need hearts 3-3, or the jack-doubleton, or a heart-diamond squeeze (with no diamond lead), or perhaps a heart lead, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 55-60%. – Ed.

BIG DEUCE COUP

Richard Solomon, Auckland, NZ

(Apologies to Brian Wilson)

From The New Zealand National Congress, Hamilton, New Zealand, September 2008...

How can the singleton trump two win trick thirteen? Well, it did happen...just like this!

Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♥
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♠ ¹	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Two clubs would have been check-back

Declarer was Steph Jacob. The heart nine opening lead went to the king, with the spade three disappearing on the third round of hearts. The diamond ace drew the spade five. A club went to the ace and the king of diamonds drew the spade six, over-ruffed by the spade eight. A club to the king followed, and the diamond queen accounted for the spade seven and nine - that's six trumps gone so far.

A small club from West drew the spade four from North and North's exit of the ten of diamonds to dummy's jack got rid of the spade king and ace. Steph's club ten was ruffed with South's spade ten, with the heart four producing the spade jack and queen.

That's twelve tricks; there were just four cards left..the club eight in declarer's hand, the diamond nine in North's, the heart three in South's, and ...that lone two of spades in dummy!

A candidate for the Guinness Book of Records, maybe. Incidentally, no-one seemed to care about the result of the play...we make it eight tricks to the declarer. Is there a moral about leaving a lone little trump in dummy? It went unnoticed for 12 tricks!

Footnote: Steph is the wife of New Zealand international, Tom Jacob.

STICK TO BRIDGE, SON!

Max Wigbout, Wellington, NZ

From The New Zealand National Bridge Congress, October 2008 as reported in the October 2008 issue of New Zealand Bridge Magazine...

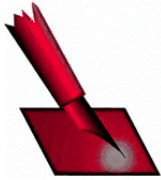
South, Anthony Ker, is a dual New Zealand bridge and chess champion.

<p>♠ 6 3 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ Q 8 4 ♣ K J 7 3 2</p> <p>♠ A 5 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A K J 10 6 ♣ 10 6 4</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 7 ♥ K Q 7 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ A Q 9</p>	<p>♠ K 9 8 ♥ A J 10 9 5 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ 8 5</p>
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New Zealand women's international Jan Cormack was declarer from the West seat in two hearts. Alan Grant (North) led a club to Anthony Ker's queen. Anthony returned a diamond, won by Jan's ace. She played a trump to the jack and queen.

Anthony continued with his other diamond taken by Jan's king. A second trump went to the eight, ten and king. Anthony now played the club nine to his partner's (known) king. The jack won the trick. Alan now cashed the high queen of diamonds on which Anthony pitched the club ace!

A club from North now promoted Anthony's seven of hearts en passant to defeat the contract. Anthony won the Babich Wine "Play of the Day" for his defence (the play of club queen, not the ace at trick one, the diamond, not the more obvious spade switch at trick two, and the discarding of the club ace.). Why does this guy still play chess!?



Correspondence ...

The Editor reserves the right to abridge and/or edit correspondence

Email: ibpaeditor@sympatico.ca

Dear John,

SIX DIAMONDS REPRISÉ Barnet Shenkin, Boca Raton, FL

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

From the Ashok Rui Gold Cup final, both declarers reached six diamonds. One declarer had an easy time after a spade lead while the other went down after a trump lead. The writers, Tribuhan Pant and John Carruthers, suggest on a trump lead declarer should take two rounds of trumps, then top hearts, a trump to dummy and pitch spades on clubs if nothing happens. This is incorrect. (*Mea culpa.* - JC)

This hand is a textbook percentage hand. First, after a trump lead, it is clearly right to play the club king at trick two, then a trump to dummy. When the trumps split 2-2, declarer is already home, pitching his two spades and ruffing a long heart in dummy, making seven were the heart queen to fall doubleton.

Let us say the diamonds split 3-1 - now declarer has two options. He can draw the third trump, pitch his spades, and rely on the heart suit to provide his 12th trick. The correct play in the heart suit is ace and low to the jack-nine, guessing which to play. This succeeds when he can guess right or the heart suit splits. The success rate in the heart suit alone is 78 percent for three tricks (Bridge Encyclopaedia), which combined with the 2-2 diamond split, brings you up to around 87 percent total.

The alternative play when trumps do not split is to cash clubs pitching two spades and play ace-king and another heart. This would make the hand when the heart queen is doubleton or a hand with four hearts to the queen-ten or queen-eight did not have the third trump to play, as declarer could then ruff his heart in dummy. The

probability that he does not have the third diamond is higher than 50 percent, making play two a better bet in the heart suit alone, when combined with the ruff.

However, a 6-2 or 7-1 club break will scuttle this plan, as will a 5-1 heart break with the long trump being in the short club or heart hand. This will happen, perhaps surprisingly, around 16 percent.

I believe this tilts us in favour of the first line of drawing the third trump and relying on the hearts although the other is quite reasonable and would make approx 80 percent of the time.

Similarly, on a club lead, declarer should not be tempted to play one diamond, cash the club ace-queen, pitching spades, and the heart ace-king trying to ruff the fourth heart, as this would fail for the same reasons shown above.

Also...

Barry Rigal writes that Nunes, usually a fine player, could have saved two tricks in his doubled four-heart contract (*No. 526 - November 2008, p. 9*) by rising with the diamond ace, drawing trumps, and guessing spades with A1073 opposite 852, North holding J6.

With South holding KQ94 it would require three entries to handle this suit. Declarer had one entry, the club ace, and could, by exiting his diamond ten, require South to give him a second spade play. It still looks on the surface that it can't be done. However, I might be missing something and invite someone to tell me how it is done.

Best Regards, Barnet Shenkin, Boca Raton, FL

NEWS & VIEWS

REMINDER FOR UNPAID MEMBERS

The February IBPA Bulletin has been published. If you have not yet paid your 2009 dues, please do so immediately with Treasurer Mario Dix, at mario@bridge.org.mt. You will have the access code to the Bulletin from the Treasurer as soon as your payment has been recorded.

IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

US News and World Report listed "Learn to Play Bridge" as one of its *50 Ways to Improve Your Life*. It's a great little blurb that even refers people to ACBL to find a teacher: <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/50-ways-to-improve-your-life/2008/12/18/learn-to-play-bridge.html>

BOB HAMMAN & LANCE ARMSTRONG

Bob Hamman (11 World Bridge Championships) and Lance Armstrong (7 Tours de France) are forever linked by the landmark \$7.5M lawsuit Hamman's company, SCA, lost to Armstrong. Read all about it in the New York Times article.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/sports/othersports/13vesey.html?_r=1&sq=1&sq=hamman%20and%20armstrong&st=cse

UNTIMELY DEPARTURES

Three prominent U.S. players left us recently – Grant Baze, Jim Linhart and Bernie Chazen all died last month, Linhart and Chazen very suddenly and Baze after a short bout (his third) with cancer.

Editorial (Cont.)...

and how much is a function of the players themselves. Guido Ferraro, chosen sometimes, and ignored other times, says simply that, "...it is tops."

4. Administrators' Choice. Sometimes the executive of the NBO or a committee of 'expert selectors' is picked to in turn choose the team. This method was used in Great Britain for quite some time with mixed success – a win in the 1955 Bermuda Bowl and second in 1987, plus some good Olympiad finishes. For Britain at the time, with a very distinct and distinguished, but small, group of superb players, this may have been the best method available.

5. Combination Methods. Many countries have tried combination methods over the years. Canada anointed Murray and Kehela in their heyday, and had four-person team trials to determine the rest of the team. Many countries, Sweden included, appoint a captain and then have 'observation trials' to help the captain with his choices. England last year had a four-person team trials (to reduce the chance that a 'lesser-ability' player, yes, such as a sponsor) would win and weaken the team. That worked out rather well for them, and their young team will be a force for years.

Which method works best? The evidence is inconclusive, and it may well be that no single method is the best one for everyone, but it is difficult to argue against Italy's selection method!

FESTIVAL UPDATES

White House Juniors 2009: March 9-14, 2009 with arrival March 8 and departure March 15.

Dead Sea Festival: March 15-22, 2009.

Easter (London): April 10-13, 2009.

Spring Fours (Stratford): May 1-5, 2009.

Brighton Summer Congress: August 14-23, 2009 (revision to World Bridge Calendar).

Pula International Bridge Festival; Pula, Croatia: September 5-13, 2009; www.crobridge.com/pula. Contact: tihana@pilar.hr

New Zealand National Congress: September 26-October 3, 2009.

Red Sea International Bridge Festival: November 5-15, 2009. Results (there were 150 players from abroad from 20 different countries and 400 pairs in the main event) from the last Red Sea Festival can be found at: <http://www.israbridge.com/ibf/Redsea/results2008.html>

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