



BULLETIN

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From the European Bridge League website...

Following the great organizational success of the third European Open Bridge Championships, held in Antalya, Turkey in 2007, the EBL has announced that the fourth event of the series is to take place in **Sanremo, Italy**, from **12 to 27 June 2009**.

The first three editions of the new event were very well received by the players, thanks to the many innovations introduced. In the European Open, European medals and distinctions are possible for all players, irrespective of level. Everybody is able to take part in the various tournaments without advance qualification. There are competitions for every taste: Pairs and Teams, open to all players or restricted to Women, Seniors and Mixed - and one may choose which to contest.

The European Open welcomes players not only from Europe, but from all over the world. In addition, all events are transnational - that is to say, everybody may play with anybody, without any nationality restrictions.

The Championships comprise the following competitions:

- Mixed Teams (June 13-17)
- Mixed Pairs (June 15-18)
- Open, Women and Senior Teams (June 19-24)
- Open, Women and Senior Pairs (June 22-27)

There will be Opening and Closing Ceremonies and Prize-Giving events for all competitions. Information about accommodations (30-160 Euro) can be found at www.eurobridge.org.

Sanremo is a city with about 57,000 inhabitants on the Mediterranean coast of western Liguria in north-western Italy. It was founded in Roman times and is now best known as a tourist destination on the Italian Riviera and the host of cultural events such as the Sanremo Music Festival.

Sanremo boasts a climate that is often described as one of 'perpetual spring', with warm days and chilly nights and little variation of temperature around the year. Sanremo enjoys special weather conditions throughout the year due to its vicinity to the Mediterranean Sea and the presence of Maritime Alps right behind the town, Monte Bignone, the highest peak, being some 1,300m above sea level. These conditions make Sanremo one of the most attractive tourist destinations on the Italian Riviera.

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THE YEh BROS. CUP

Barry Rigal, NYC

Twenty-four invited teams gathered in Broadbeach Island, Gold Coast, Australia for this year's Yeh Bros. Cup. The field was exceptional, with World Champions littering the field. The venue, Conrad Jupiters Casino, was extraordinary, and the Australian conveners, led by Therese Tully and David Stern, proved that Australia takes a back seat to no one in organising top-class bridge tournaments.

The favourites? Take your pick of Italy, USA, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, or England. Knockout play would follow a 10-board, 10-match qualifying Swiss. More on this later.

The Swiss Qualifying

Day 1 of qualifying threw up three deals worthy of comment in the slam zone. Each of them has distinct points of interest – let's rewind and see what should/might have happened.

Q1. Board 5. Dealer North, NS Vul.

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

Reaching six diamonds was beyond some of the field here, but let's look at what happens on a club or heart lead. The right play, we established, is to play to ruff a heart rather than relying on the clubs to behave. Unless the defenders are accurate and spades 6-2 or trumps 5-1 there is no real threat of a trump promotion.

A trump lead is more challenging – and indeed six Norths did lead a trump against six diamonds. Now the line of playing for a heart ruff fails, of course. Declarer can recover by the slightly unnatural line of taking three

top spades pitching hearts from hand, then running the trumps after ruffing a fourth spade.

Let's see what has happened with one trump to go. West knows that North has five spades and four diamonds so he is surely more likely to have no club honours than two (when cashing the last trump sets up the jack of spades as the second defensive trick).

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

As West leads his last trump North must let go either a heart or a club – and the latter would surely be too revealing so let's say he pitches a heart. Dummy pitches the spade, and now what does South do? If he pitches a heart the sight of an honour appearing will perhaps tempt West to find the winning line of cashing the ace of hearts then taking a club finesse to endplay South.

Two further points: South might do better to pitch a club early and keep three hearts in the ending. Then he can pitch a heart honour and set West up for the fake endplay. Any defender who makes that play deserves to beat you. And there is a double-squeeze alternative that would work as well – though this line looks far better.

Q1. Board 7. Dealer South Both Vul.

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

The second deal is simply an exercise in percentages. How to play the diamond suit for one loser in six diamonds?

Many tables bid to slam here, in some cases after a strong club auction, in others on natural sequences, some auctions contested. What are the three sensible options here?

The first, selected by most declarers, is to run the diamond queen, planning a second finesse. This loses when East has both honours – and therefore pays off to an original West holding of: void, two small singletons and the small doubleton (four cases in all).

The second line is to cash the ace; this loses when West began with a void, or the king-jack plus one or two small cards (four cases as well).

Best (but perhaps not intuitive) is to run the eight from the North hand; this loses when West has jack singleton, or jack doubleton if East ducks stoically (don't we all!) and you misguess, but not to either void (three cases only). Accordingly there is one less losing combination.

Note: if you have a 5-4 fit playing the ace no longer loses to a void in West, but psychologically, running the eight is still the best play.

The percentages from the following deal are perhaps even more complex.

Q3. Board 27. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

<p>♠ 10 8 4 ♥ A J ♦ K 9 5 2 ♣ K J 8 6</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ K 10 7 5 3 2 ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ Q 10 4</p> <p>♠ A K Q J 7 ♥ 9 6 ♦ A Q 4 ♣ A 9 5</p>	<p>♠ 9 6 3 2 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ 7 3 2</p>
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If you reach six spades and the defenders do not lead hearts, then you will surely take an early club finesse and regret you did not play the grand slam. On a heart lead things are more complex. Let's say you first of all consider the endplay, but after two top spades show the 4-1 split you change your mind. Instead you draw trumps and duck a heart, ruff the heart return, then cash a couple of diamonds to reduce to this position. (See top of next column.)

Should you take the 2-in-3 shot of cashing the diamond king and falling back on the club finesse (basically 3-3 diamonds plus half the balance)? Or should you rely on the diamond play because restricted choice gives you better than those odds? My gut reaction is that the first line is better. Opinions differ here, but since at least

two players far better than I disagreed, I'd better not say that too loud.

<p>♠ — ♥ — ♦ K 9 ♣ K J 8</p> <p>♠ — ♥ K ♦ 8 ♣ Q 10 4</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ — ♦ 4 ♣ A 9 5</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ Q ♦ J ♣ 7 3 2</p>
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A curiosity regarding this deal - at least two tables conducted the following auction: 2NT-Pass-4♠-Pass-6♠-Pass-Pass-Pass, where four spades showed a quantitative raise to four no trump with 4-4 in the minors.

Q9. Board 25. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Bakkeren	Paul H	Bertens	Justin H
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
3 ♦ ¹	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
1. Splinter			

West	North	East	South
Townsend	Drijver	Gold	Brink
—	Pass	Pass	2 ♥
Double	3 ♥	Double	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Bertens-Bakkeren obviously had a slight disagreement about what the maximum for the jump to four spades was – West looks to have a move unless three diamonds is a game-force and four spades is drop dead.

On a top club lead and diamond shift the defenders would have collected 1400 against three hearts doubled I believe. So they needed to make 1430 for an extra IMP. It looks to me as if the best line on a heart lead is to finesse, then pitch one or two clubs on the top hearts and ruff clubs in hand – that way you need almost nothing in the way of splits in either hearts or clubs.

The only issue is whether 6-2 hearts is more likely than 5-2 clubs; after the lead of the three of hearts and with North's raise of hearts, Gold cashed three hearts early, which looks right, but this time it did not matter, of course. This might look like 'standard expert' play; but a look at the results around the room would argue strongly to the contrary. One pair did collect a penalty of 1400, seven pairs played game, and eight pairs bid and made slam – leaving us with no less than eight tables where slam was played and defeated.

On a spade lead from North, four Wests could have transposed into the winning line – but did not. On a club lead from North, this line is far less attractive, because the defenders force you to take your high clubs early rather than ruff low clubs after taking the discards. Finally, and surprisingly, three East declarers went down on a heart lead (in some cases the seven, which may have suggested shortage).

The Knockouts

The format of the Yeh Bros. Cup is unique. Sixteen of the 24 teams qualify for knockout play to determine the champion. The remaining teams go into the Swiss Plate, joined along the way by other knockout victims. However, these 16 teams go into two brackets. Teams 1-8 (which include the sponsor's team, designated as the top seed) are slotted into the 'upper' bracket, whose teams are allowed two losses before exiting the main event. Teams finishing 9th through 16th in the Swiss qualifying have their work cut out for them. They must battle through the other seven teams in their bracket and each losing team in the top bracket as they are relegated to the 'lower' bracket. In the latter stages of the lower bracket, there are two three-way matches with which to contend.

The KO matches were 32 boards in length except for the 48-board final and playoff. In the three-way matches, two 8-board sets were played against each of the other teams, also 32 boards in all. If all this is not clear, and for a complete team list, see <http://www.yehcup09.com.au/> for details.

KO1-Set 1. Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

Would you rather play three no trump as West on a club lead or a diamond lead? Paul Hackett, sticking to his Mancunian and cheeseparating principles, went as passive as he could with a diamond lead – an unhelpful (for the declare) diamond two.

Declarer took the queen in hand with the king and drove out the heart ace. The defenders shifted to clubs, so declarer put up an honour, ducked the second club and won the third, and now, after unblocking hearts, he had time to test both red suits. He naturally misguessed and led to the diamond nine, and when the heart ten did not fall he was down.

On a club lead Townsend won and drove out the ace of hearts. South returned a club and the defence cashed out, forcing dummy to pitch two spades, with South erring by letting go a spade – a 'neutrino' to quote Jean Besse. Back came a spade, so Townsend won his king, finessed in diamonds, unblocked hearts, and now had to guess what to pitch on the spade ace. He went with the percentages and threw a heart from the board, then cashed the diamond king, South dropping the queen of course.

When South showed out on the ace of spades, North was marked with 4-4 in the blacks, and had followed to two hearts already; so diamonds had to be 3-3. so Townsend played for the drop and gained 12 IMPs.

In the same position, del'Monte had let go a heart on the fourth club, and now declarer misguessed diamonds in the ending, since South appeared to be 5-3 in hearts and clubs and there was no count available in the spade-suit.

From the semifinal in the undefeated bracket, with the match hanging in the balance...

KO2-Set 2. Board 32. Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

Before we tell you what happened in the Sweden-USA Hampson match, consider what you would expect to happen at a normal (?) table. East will open one club, South will double, and North will happily respond one diamond. South bids one spade, and there the matter rests; it will all be about overtricks. No need for drama, mate.

Ah, but what if East opens a Precision diamond? Now after the double what do you do as North? You bid one heart now in fear and trembling; try and stop low now. That was what happened to Joe Grue; he did bid one heart, Hampson produced an unrefined jump to three hearts and Grue could never reach his hand to take a heart finesse. Eventually the defenders scored their four plain tricks and could lead the 13th club to promote the nine of hearts.

Down one – but not a tragedy, since in the other room Meckstroth also opened one diamond and Fallenius doubled. Rodwell passed, playing a style where this showed nothing about his hand at all, and Fredin produced the sort of call that makes him such good reporting material. He passed one diamond doubled, knowing that Meckstroth would never sit for it even with moderate diamond length. It worked like a charm. Meckstroth escaped to one spade, and when doubled there he ran to two clubs, doubled, down 800.

Even on best declarer play in one diamond, Meckstroth would surely have gone down 100 – so Fredin’s pass would have won the match whatever happened next. USA Hampson was thus relegated to the lower bracket and the purgatory of three-way matches.

The Netherlands then also dispatched Sweden to the lower bracket, where they would then have to face Norway and USA Hampson (both winners of one three-way match already) in another three-way match to get to the final.

From the three-way match to decide Netherlands’ opponents in the final (Sweden versus Bridge I Norge):

Board 34. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

Both tables reached six hearts doubled here from West, Fredin after overcalling a one-spade opening, Svendsen after overcalling a Nystrom two-spade opening. Both defenders led a top spade; both declarers ruffed and drew a round of trumps.

Svendsen cashed the ace of diamonds and played a second diamond. Bertheau won and cashed out for down one. Fredin – never afraid to put his neck on the block and risk looking stupid – led a low diamond from

hand at trick three – now you know why the commentators and journalists love to watch Peter play. Lindqvist’s decision to duck might look ridiculous but Fredin had given him the chance to look silly, and I assume he thought Fredin was not capable of such guile. He knows better now.

Sweden survived this three-way to earn a rematch with the Netherlands in the final, though they would start with a 6 ½ IMP deficit, the Netherlands’ reward for going through undefeated.

From the second set in the Sweden versus Netherlands final, Huub Bertens must have hoped for a more favourable comparison in the scoring than he achieved...

Board 19. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>	<i>Brink</i>
—	—	—	1 NT
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	Redouble
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass
West	North	East	South
<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Bertens, declarer in three no trump from the East seat, ducked the top spade lead, won the heart shift, and then ducked a diamond. Back came another low heart, so he won and led a diamond to the king and ace.

Now, rather than testing diamonds, he played a heart, letting Bertheau cash the 13th heart, on which he pitched a diamond from dummy and a spade from hand. This was what he was left with: (See top of next page.)

When a spade came back he won and ran his winners, pitching spades from hand to squeeze South in the black suits. Since declarer had not yet cashed the spade ace, a club shift by North would have cut declarer’s transportation lines in the ending.

♠ 8
 ♥ —
 ♦ J 2
 ♣ 10 9 2

♠ 7 6
 ♥ —
 ♦ Q 6
 ♣ K 8

♠ A J
 ♥ —
 ♦ —
 ♣ A Q 7 6

♠ K 9
 ♥ —
 ♦ —
 ♣ J 5 4 3

In the other room, Drijver wriggled out to hearts, and the defenders doubled and cashed two diamonds, three clubs, and a spade, then led the 13th club to promote an extra trump trick for 800. Nicely done.

In the final set, with the Netherlands having built a very comfortable, but not insurmountable, lead in the high forties...

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ Q 7 3
 ♦ A J 8 5
 ♣ 10 9 8

♠ K Q
 ♥ A 9 6 2
 ♦ 7 4
 ♣ K J 7 4 3

♠ J 6 5 4 3
 ♥ 10 8 5
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ Q 6 2

♠ A 7 2
 ♥ K J 4
 ♦ K Q 10 9 6
 ♣ A 5

Drijver and Fredin both reached three no trump from the North seat after South had opened one club and kept West out. Both Easts led an attitude spade three. Drijver preferred to play the best technical line (spades 4-3 or a blocked sequence of honours in West). He rose with the ace and knocked out the ace of hearts; nine tricks made.

Fredin, true to his nature, went for the psychological line of ducking the first spade. If spades were continued he would be no worse and might be much better. Alas for him, Bakkeren, West, could see that his partner had a near Yarborough; his only chance was to find the club queen opposite. His reward was two off and plus 100, 11 more IMPs.

The top place-getters were:

Yeh Cup Teams

- 1st **Netherlands:** Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Ton Bakkeren, Huub Bertens
- 2nd **Sweden:** Björn Fallenius, Fredrik Nyström, Peter Fredin, Peter Bertheau
- 3rd **USA Hampson:** Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell, Geoff Hampson, Curtis Cheek, Joe Grue

4th **Bridge i Norge:** Geir Brekka, Boye Brogeland, Espen Lindqvist, Odin Svendsen, Erik Sælensminde

The Yeh Pairs

All players in the teams were invited to participate in the pairs as well. The event was three sessions, with 27 boards played in each session. There were cuts after each session, and no carry-forward to the semifinal or final. All sessions were scored as IMPs against the datum. In a field of ten pairs that contained no weak links Alfredo Versace and Lorenzo Lauria capped a disappointing week in the teams with a runaway victory.

The board that won the most IMPs for them featured an excellent decision by Versace.

Board 21. Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ K J 2
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ Q 7 6 3 2
 ♣ J 9 8

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

♠ 8 5
 ♥ A J 9 8 6 4
 ♦ J 8 4
 ♣ 3 2

♠ Q 10 7 6 4
 ♥ 3
 ♦ A K 9 5
 ♣ A Q 7

West	North	East	South
Shih	Versace	Yeh	Lauria
—	—	—	1 ♠
Double	2 ♠	4 ♥	Double ¹
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass
1. Action			

Lauria's double of four hearts suggested that Versace choose between bidding four spades and passing, depending on whether he had a defensively-oriented hand or not. Versace looked at his spade honours and five-card suit and decided that if his side had the balance of high cards then one opponent or the other had unusual shape.

At favourable vulnerability, it looked safer to remove to four spades – and right he was, since four hearts is cold. When West doubled four spades and led his singleton diamond, Lauria won in hand and played a trump. Shih hopped up with spade ace and shifted to a low heart (might the queen have been a clearer signal?). East won the heart ace and had to decide whether his partner had a singleton diamond – inherently unlikely given his initial double — or two cashing club tricks that might go away if declarer had, e.g., Qxxxx, Kx, AKx, Kxx.

Perhaps there were two clues. Declarer might have opened one no trump with a balanced hand and partner

might not have doubled one spade with the unimpressive collection that this hypothesis would leave him with. But the key is that West's decision to win the first trump ought to be because he wants a ruff.

At the table, when East shifted to a club, declarer had his 590 and a gain to par of 6 IMPs; had the contract been set one trick for -100, with the datum 360, Lauria-Versace would have lost 10 IMPs and moved into a tie for first place.

The results:

Yeh Pairs

- 1st Lorenzo Lauria - Alfredo Versace
 2nd Norberto Bocchi - Augustin Madala
 3rd Adam Zmudzinski-Cezary Balicki



GOLD COAST TEAMS

David Stern, Sydney

The Gold Coast Congress, held annually in Broadbeach, Australia, is truly blessed in having playing conditions that I regard are among the best imaginable. The lighting, air-conditioning, high ceilings, extensive doors to allow players to enter and leave without crowding as well as the spacious corridors, smoking areas, coffee and food outlets make it just superb.

This year, more than 250 teams contested the Gold Coast Teams Championship. Because of the calendar proximity to the Yeh Bros. Cup, many of the teams that had played in the Yeh Bros. stayed on to play in the Gold Coast Congress. Two of those teams, CAYNE (Jimmy Cayne-Michael Seamon, Adam Zmudzinski-Cezary Balicki, Alfredo Versace-Lorenzo Lauria) and SAUCE (Hugh McGann-Tom Hanlon, Alon Apteker-Craig Gower, Howard Weinstein-John Carruthers) met in one semifinal.

Semifinal Set 4. Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Apteker	Balicki	Gower	Zmudzinski
—	—	—	2 ♣ ¹
Pass	2 ♦ ²	Pass	3 ♣ ³
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Natural, 6+ clubs or 5+ clubs and a major
2. Inquiry
3. No major, 6+ clubs

The defence started well with the king of spades and a spade to the ace, ruffed, forcing declarer. Balicki drew trumps, upon which East was forced to make two discards – he threw the spade ten and the diamond ten.

Balicki then showed why he is considered one of the best card players in the world. He counted East inferentially for precisely 4=2=3=4 distribution. He also knew that if East did indeed have four clubs, then the club finesse would not suffice – the queen would not drop and that would be only nine tricks; he correctly deduced that the only layout on which he could make the hand was the one that existed – West holding precisely queen-low in clubs. Following his instincts and backing his reading of the distribution, Balicki played the ace and king of clubs and was duly rewarded.

There was a lot at stake on the board as at the other table, the Irish played three clubs, making 12 tricks and plus 170.

The Cayne team won the match and the event, defeating the Japan Seniors in the final.

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467. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	3 ♦	Double
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After partner's leap to four spades, the least you could do was to bid six hearts. How do you plan to make twelve tricks after West leads the two of diamonds, an obvious singleton?

You can make twelve tricks whenever West holds the ace of spades, which is about as certain as one can get at the given vulnerability. After winning the diamond lead with the ace, you draw the trumps, discarding diamonds from the table. The only way to make twelve tricks is to utilise dummy's spade suit, despite the fact that there appears to be only one (club) entry to the dummy.

One possibility is to seek a second club entry to dummy by leading the two of clubs, intending to finesse dummy ten. This would rely on luck, since you would need West to hold the jack of clubs. In any case, in this column an alert West would always spoil your plan by inserting the jack of clubs.

The above plan would be disastrous here as East would win the jack of clubs and cash a couple of diamonds. In fact, there is no need to rely on such a dubious approach. You should lead the queen of clubs and overtake it with dummy's king. You then play the king of spades, discarding a diamond. West wins with the spade ace and has no good return. A spade will give the lead to dummy, allowing you to throw a diamond and club. Similarly, a club exit will promote the ten-nine of clubs into an entry, no matter who holds the jack of clubs.

468. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

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

1. 5+ spades
2. Pre-emptive

West leads the ten of hearts to dummy's ace. You can see that if trumps are 3-2, you can make all of the tricks – five trumps, a heart, a heart ruff, the ace of diamonds and five clubs. However, there is a good chance that West's pre-emptive raise to three hearts is based on a trump shortage.

Now you have a loser in trumps, but all that does is reduce your thirteen tricks to twelve – provided you are careful. Your plan should be to lose a trump trick at a convenient moment. In fact, the only way to make the slam on this layout is to duck a round of trumps at trick two. Suppose East wins and switches to his singleton club. You win with the king, ruff a heart with the nine of trumps and cash the ace of trumps. You can then return to your hand with the ace of diamonds, to draw the remaining trumps. You have made six tricks already (three trumps, a heart, a heart ruff and a club) and there are six more waiting to be cashed (a trump, a diamond and four clubs).

US News & World Report lists bridge as one of "50 Ways to Improve Your Life". See: <http://www.usnews.com/features/news/50-ways-to-improve-your-life/50-ways-to-improve-your-life.html>

469. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West leads the two of trumps against your spade game. How do you plan to make ten tricks?

You have four potential losers in your hand, three diamonds and a club. West's trump lead is the only one that gives you a problem. On any other lead, you would play ace and another diamond. On winning the trump return you would play a third diamond. If the suit breaks 3-3, your problems are over and when it does not you would ruff your fourth diamond in dummy.

On the trump lead, you could still try and ruff the fourth diamond in dummy whenever the suit does not split 3-3. You win the spade lead with the nine and continue with ace and another diamond. West wins with the queen and plays a second round of trumps. When you concede a third round of diamonds, East can win with the ten but will then have no trump to play. Does this mean that you will be able to ruff the fourth diamond after all? No! West will ruff the third round of diamonds and defeat four spades by playing his last trump.

Is there another plan? Yes indeed there is! Instead of trying to ruff one diamond in dummy, you should aim to ruff three of dummy's losers in your own hand. Your first move must be to cash the ace-king of hearts, cross to the ace of clubs and ruff dummy's remaining heart. Next you give up a club trick and win the trump return in dummy and ruff a club in hand. After crossing back to dummy with the ace of diamonds, you ruff dummy's last club. You will now have nine tricks and dummy's ace of trumps is your tenth trick. You will make four side-suit winners, three trump tricks (the nine, ace and ten) and three high ruffs in the South hand.

470. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥ ¹	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 NT ²	Pass	3 ♣ ³
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	5 ♦ ⁴
Pass	6 ♥	Pass	7 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Five-plus card suit
2. 18-19
3. Checkback
4. Queen ask

How do you plan to make thirteen tricks after West leads the king of clubs?

You have twelve top tricks and the best plan for a thirteenth is by playing to set up a long heart. As the only way to reach any established long card in hearts is with a trump, you will need the trumps to break no worse than 3-1. How will you go about setting up the hearts, though?

After winning the club lead with dummy's ace, you should cash the king-queen of diamonds, followed by the ace of hearts. You then cross to dummy with a trump and play the ace of diamonds, throwing the six of hearts from hand. Now you can afford ruff a heart in your hand with a low trump. You return to dummy with a second round of trumps and lead another low heart, ruffing it with the ace to circumvent any potential overruff.

Next you play another trump to dummy, drawing West's remaining trump in the process. All that remains to do is to you cash the king-ten of hearts, discarding the eight and five of clubs from hand and leaving you with a trump to take care of dummy's jack of clubs. You make six trumps, three hearts, three diamonds and a club.

On the above deal, if you do not discard a heart on the diamond ace, you would end up promoting a trump trick for West. In fact, the recommended line has close to an 11% advantage over playing on hearts without discarding a heart on the ace of diamonds.

2008 GOLD CUP FINAL

Heather Dhondy, Hendon, UK

(Courtesy English Bridge Union)

The final rounds of the Gold Cup are held each year in the beautiful Scottish border town of Peebles. Both of the semi-finals and the final take place over the weekend, with the option also to play the quarterfinals on the Friday.

The final was contested between 2006 winners de Botton (Janet de Botton, David Burn, Nick Sandqvist, Artur Malinowski, Jason Hackett and Justin Hackett), and Collins (Patrick Collins, Derek Patterson, Gerald Tredinnick and Stuart Tredinnick). One unusual feature of this final was that each team fielded a pair of twins – the Hacketts for de Botton and the Tredinnicks for Collins.

It was a close affair from start to finish, with neither side building up any sort of a comfortable lead. Our first deal shows some fine bidding judgement by the Tredinnick twins:

Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Stuart</i>	<i>Burn</i>	<i>Gerald</i>
Pass	1 NT ¹	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	5 NT
Pass	6 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1. 14-16 HCP			

Gerald's three-club bid was natural and forcing, implying four hearts, and when he bid four hearts, that was also natural, stressing the quality of the suit. He followed this up with five no trump, asking Stuart to pick a slam, and six hearts was chosen. This really is a good-quality slam, giving the option of establishing clubs by taking ruffs in the hand with short trumps, and he didn't really want the clubs to be 3-3, since that meant that other inferior slams such as six clubs or six no trump would also be making.

However, since slam was missed at the other table, they gained 10 useful IMPs anyway.

Revenge was to follow soon after, however, on the following deal:

Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Burn</i>	<i>Gerald</i>	<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Stuart</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Stuart and Gerald finished up in a sensible three-diamond contract, after a strong club opening was followed by a non-forcing three diamonds, showing 5-7 points, with seven or more diamonds. This just made for +110.

However, in the other room the Hackett twins had bid to a thin game:

West	North	East	South
<i>Collins</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Patterson</i>	<i>Justin</i>
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Two diamonds was a weak two, and two no trump an enquiry. Three diamonds showed a minimum; three spades was natural and forcing, and the auction rested in the spade game.

This looked to be without hope, but Justin had other ideas. Dummy's singleton jack of clubs won the first trick, and Justin played a trump to the ten and queen. A diamond switch was won by declarer, who led the queen of hearts! It was very hard for the defence to fathom what was going on and East won and played an unsuspecting second diamond.

Justin won, then pitched dummy's remaining two hearts on the clubs and ruffed a heart – 11 IMPs to de Botton.

In the end the margin was just a single IMP to de Botton. Congratulations go to them, but also to Pat Collins's team for producing such an exciting final.

BRIDGE: CELEBRITY GRAND SLAM

Simon Cochemé, London

Bridge is back on TV

Monday 20th April, 2009 Sky Arts 2 and Sky Arts HD, 8 x 30 minutes



Sky Arts 2 and Sky Arts HD in the UK will air a brand new programme on bridge this April, featuring eight celebrity players. **Bridge: Celebrity Grand Slam** shows a side of bridge away from tournaments, complex bidding systems and double squeezes. This is social bridge, as played by millions of people in the world for fun and the love of the game.

The Celebrities

The participants in **Bridge: Celebrity Grand Slam** are (left to right in the photograph):

- **Susan Hampshire**, actress, most famous for her role as Fleur in *The Forsyte Saga*.
- **Mike Gatting**, former cricket captain of England and Middlesex.
- **Sue Lawley**, radio and TV presenter, host of *Desert Island Discs* for 18 years.
- **Pattie Boyd**, photographer and writer, former wife of George Harrison and Eric Clapton.
- **Clive Anderson**, host of the programmes.
- **David Rowntree**, drummer with pop group Blur.
- **Val McDermid**, best-selling author of crime thrillers, including *Wire in the Blood*.
- **James Mates**, ITN journalist and newscaster.
- **Kay Burley**, Sky news anchor. Kay is a bridge novice who only started to learn to play bridge

three and a half weeks before the series was filmed.

The players use a simple Acol system - weak no-trump, strong twos, Stayman and Blackwood.

The Format

The programmes are emceed by **Clive Anderson**, who played bridge at university. He is assisted by bridge experts and England internationals **Glyn Liggins** and **Andrew "Tosh" McIntosh**, who chose the hands. Andrew also taught Kay to play.

There are eight half-hour programmes in the series. In each episode the celebrities play four hands with a new partner. Then they swap. Over the course of the series everyone ends up partnering everyone else with a special twist in the 8th and final show. The same deals are played at both tables, greatly reducing the element of luck, and aggregate scoring is used. Tosh and Glyn are in the control room with Clive Anderson, commenting on the bidding and play. Once the bidding is over they are joined by dummy to comment on the play of the hand.

The players are competing for a £20,000 charity pot. The winner will donate £10,000 to his or her chosen charity, the runner-up £3,000, down to eighth place, who will donate £250. The real winners will be the eight charities!

The programmes were filmed over two days at St Michael's Manor, a hotel in Hertfordshire. The series was the brainchild of bridge-playing TV producer Hugh Dehn and was shot in High Definition TV using a multitude of cameras, including eight overhead cameras.

"We are delighted to be bringing Bridge back to TV," comments James Hunt, acting channel manager. "We recognise the popularity of bridge across the UK and felt our programming should reflect that popularity, whilst aiming to bring an entirely new audience to the game."

Bridge journalists and columnists in the UK and Ireland have been sent the press release and a

deal from one of the programmes. They were told who the declarers were, but not the contracts reached, nor the results. They were invited to explain in their columns how experts might bid and play their hands, and then (not quite so easy) predict how the social players might handle it. So, for example, this deal has been sent to a journalist in each of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales...

Dealer West. East-West Vulnerable

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

The deals were selected by Glyn and Andrew, rather than constructed. This one appears to have been selected to test West's declarer play in six diamonds. North will lead the queen of spades. West must draw trumps and lead a small heart towards dummy. This Morton's Fork Coup, enabling West to avoid losing a trick in hearts if North ducks the ace, or in clubs if he wins the ace, will be easier to find if North overcalls one spade.

The declarers on April 22nd will be Kay Burley and David Rowntree. How do you predict they will do? I have seen rough cuts of a few of the programmes - the bridge is at the social end of the scale, but the programmes are great fun to watch.

Bridge: Celebrity Grand Slam will be shown on Sky Arts 2 (channel 257) from April 20 and ending with the grand final on Sunday 26 April. The programmes will also be available on Sky Arts HD (channel 258).

For updated information on the hands, please visit skyarts.co.uk/bridge.

To request interviews or for more images, please contact Manisha Ferdinand at Sky Arts: Manisha.ferdinand@bskyb.com / 020 7705 2842

or:

Grand Slam consultant Simon Cochemé: simonx@simonx.plus.com / 020 7603 3032

KITZBÜHEL 2009

Fritz Babsch, Vienna

The tournament boomed this year and so did the snow! I have not seen so much of it for many years. Thirty-two teams from Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland competed in the Swiss Teams (nine rounds of ten boards). Here is a deal where the top players missed the defence:

Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Fucik</i>	<i>Bieder</i>	<i>Purkarthofer</i>	<i>A.Babsch</i>
—	2 ♣	2 ♥	2 ♠
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West	North	East	South
<i>Berger</i>	<i>Pürstl</i>	<i>Hansen</i>	<i>Lindermann</i>
—	1 ♣	1 ♥	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The bidding was different, according to different systems, but the contract was four spades in both rooms. In the Open Room it was doubled.

The lead at both tables was the jack of hearts. In the Open Room, Babsch covered with the king, losing to the ace, and now Purkarthofer could have beaten the contract by shifting to a spade. But for unknown reasons, he cashed the tops in diamonds and the contract was made.

In the Closed Room, Lindermann let West remain on lead. Berger could now beat the contract by leading his spade but he found a more elegant way to beat the contract: he shifted to a club! Lindermann inserted the queen and played a diamond. Miss Hansen now had three ways now to beat the contract: she could take the trick and play a spade; she could take the first diamond and underlead the other diamond honour to get a club ruff; or, finally, she could duck the diamond to get her club ruff.

Alas, she tried to make the setting trick with the ace of hearts....

Babsch gained 5 IMPs but the match ended 15:15. As Andreas remarked, defence is one of the weak spots of the top Austrian players.

The Teams was won by Fucik, Purkarthofer, Lindermann and Pürstl. They were 4 VPs ahead of Kubak, Milavec, Tilman and Wolf Seidel.

Fucik/Purkarthofer also won the Pairs, with Marjai/Zöld from Hungary second and Maria Erhart/Gangolf In der Maur third. In der Maur (78) represented Austria in the sixties and seventies in five World Championships and five European Championships.

I would like to remind all players and journalists in Europe of the Tournament of Loiben. It will be the last time that it is organised (the owner of the restaurant where we play wants to rebuild his locality – it is threatened by high water every year – and after this there will be not enough space for a tournament). The Tournament will be held from August 2nd to 8th, 2009.

A CLEVER IDEA

Vlad Racoviceanu, Bucharest

Here is a deal played in a Teams Tournament in Bucharest. Loan Szakacs (North) found a clever idea when he chose the final contract. His hand:

Dealer South. NS Vul.

♠ 10 9 8 5 2
♥ 9
♦ A K Q 9 8 5
♣ J

West	North Szakacs	East	South Racoviceanu
—	—	—	2 ♦ ¹
Pass	2 ♥ ²	Pass	2 NT ³
Pass	3 ♦ ⁴	3 ♥	Double
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣ ⁵
Double	4 ♦ ⁶	Pass	4 ♥ ⁶
Pass	4 NT ⁷	Pass	5 ♣ ⁸
Pass	5 ♥ ⁹	Pass	6 ♥ ¹⁰
Pass	7 NT	Pass	Pass

1. Multi - weak in either major or 21-23 balanced
2. Pass or correct
3. 21-23 balanced
4. Looks for a suit contract
5. Cue bid with good support in spades
6. Cue bids
7. Roman Key Card Blackwood
8. Four key cards
9. Queen of spades?
10. Yes - and the king of hearts

Now the full deal:

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

Now Szakacs could count thirteen tricks. Or so he thought. So he determined that the final contract should be seven no trump.

After a heart lead from West, declarer won the heart king and played the ace, king, and queen of spades, discovering the bad break. Was this a bad result? Not at all. Declarer followed with the heart ace and then ran the diamonds: on the last diamond, East had to discard a club to protect hearts, and West had to throw a club to guard spades. A club to the ace was guaranteed to drop the king when East followed suit with a low one since East's last card was known to be the heart jack and West's was known to be the spade jack.

In the other room, North-South bid to seven spades – one down!

NEWS & VIEWS

Houston NABC Winners

North American Pairs: Jim Krekorian-John Rengstorff

Open Pairs: Larry Cohen-David Berkowitz

Silver Ribbon Pairs: Daniel Suty-Jim Hilton

Mixed Pairs: Karen Walker-Tom Kniest

IMP Pairs: Nicolas l'Ecuyer-Nikolai Demirev

Women's Pairs: Lisa Berkowitz-Joann Glasson

Vanderbilt KO Teams: Ralph Katz-George Jacobs, Bobby Levin-Steve Weinstein, Walid el-Ahmady-Tarek Sadek

North American Swiss Teams: Bob Hamman-Zia Mahmood, Eric Rodwell-Jeff Meckstroth

Women's Swiss Teams: Tobi Sokolow-Janice Seamon-Molson, Jill Meyers-Jill Levin, Shannon Cappeletti-Phyllis Fireman

Sidney H. Lazard Sportsman of the Year: Peter Boyd

Hall of Fame Inductees: Mark Lair, Agnes Gordon (von Zedtwitz Award), Aileen Osofsky (Blackwood Award)



Correspondence ...

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To: Sven-Olov Flodqvist, Handbook Editor, responsible for content; Per & Britt Jannersten, Handbook Research & sponsors, Handbook Printing; Dilip Gidwani, Handbook distribution; José Damiani, as representative of Generali, Handbook sponsor of postage; For information: John Carruthers, IBPA Bulletin Editor; and Mario Dix, IBPA Membership Secretary & Treasurer

Dear all,

Today I received my printed copy of the 2008 IBPA Handbook (accompanied by the printed version of the IBPA January 2009 Bulletin). It is a publication of which all those who contributed to its creation can be proud. Thank you for the part you played in its production. Well done.

For all bridge journalists and many bridge administrators it will be a highly useful reference document combined with being a source of historically-interesting bridge stories and high-quality bridge material. All people registered as current IBPA members are entitled to receive a copy and should do so in the near future. Extra copies should be made available at European and World Championships for new members signing up. The Handbook on its own would justify the joining cost for such a person.

Any member who has NOT received a copy and wishes to do so should notify Dilip Gidwani of this, so he can check whether that member should have received a copy.

Mario Dix will inform Dilip of any new member who should receive a copy.

Yours sincerely, Patrick Jourdain, IBPA President

Dear John,

2008 was a very interesting and productive year:

- ◆ Our new website at www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org was launched and there are some pages on the WBF Website, under Categories/Women about Women's Bridge, that you may find useful.
- ◆ We have arranged, together with BBO, tournaments each Wednesday, just for women players, where they can enjoy the challenge of competitive bridge in a relaxed and social atmosphere.

- ◆ The Women's Committee created for women players, wherever they are, a Festival of Bridge Online which women players from all over the world can enjoy!

The 2nd Festival of Bridge online, just for women Players organized with Bridge Base Online will be held from 13th – 19th April 2009. Information about this can be found at:

<http://www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org/festival2009/>
For this exciting event, certificates will be awarded to the winning pairs and individuals, and the overall winner will have the opportunity to play a BBO tournament with World Champion Fulvio Fantoni. During the Festival, the tournaments, which are played every Wednesday will be suspended, to start again in the month of May. Please we need your support to publicise this event, so that as many women players as possible are aware of it.

I recently made a presentation to the EBL Seminar and copies of this, which contain much more detail of our Women's events, can be downloaded from <http://www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org/newschat.html> - you will see the link near the top of the page.

With warm regards,
Anna Maria Torlontano,
Chairman, WBF Women's Committee

Dear John,

As for revising the IMP scale, the assumption that "mathematical lumpiness" is "wrong" or "undesirable", when it is acknowledged to be inherent in the existing underlying scoring, strikes me as off the mark. The present scale was designed to reduce the impact of huge total point swings - at worst, a gigantic disaster costs 2 vulnerable game swings - and satisfies its objectives very well.

The suggested revised scale proposes extending the 3 IMP swing from 90-120 to 90-150, and so on until it takes at least 420 for an 8 IMP swing instead of 320. If we were looking to grade a classroom of students on a curve, the "smoothing" notion that drives the proposal might have merit, but we are striving for a scale that, within its upper and lower finite limits (0-24 IMPs), reflects certain principles about how much a game swing should be worth at

various vulnerabilities and similarly a partscore swing (under the new scale, a nonvulnerable game swing of 420 is only 8 IMPs instead of 9 (almost 10).

The new scale would alter the odds on bidding games (currently, if you have to decide whether to continue to four spades over three spades vulnerable, you win 6 if you are correct in passing [+140 versus -100] and lose 10 if you are wrong [+170 vs -620], so you bid vul games needing just a 6 in 16 chance of success (37.5%); under the new scale, you win 5 if you pass and are right and lose 8 if you are wrong, so bidding vulnerable games now requires a 5 in 13 chance (38.5%). Non-vul the odds change from 5 of 11 (45.4%) to 4 of 9 (44.4%). One percent may not seem like much, but most of us have spent hours trying to find another 1% chance as declarer, and moreover the swing is double - we would need 1% better odds for vulnerable games and 1% worse odds for non-vulnerable games than is the case now.

Of course, there would be changes for partscore competition and slam bidding as well, and sacrifices that go for 500 or 800 against 650 would become 3 instead of 4 IMP swings, among other changes that might prove to alter the game as we know it.

Changes to the IMP scale should be linked to what is desirable in terms of the dampening effect of using IMPs so large total point swings are not insuperable, not to theories of mathematical "smoothness". Of course, certain swings are currently disproportionately frequent - that is inherent in the underlying scoring, which is by quanta, not a sliding scale of infinitesimal increments.

Allan Falk, Okemos, MI

Dear John,

What would be the aim of a new IMP scale? Is it to get a smoother curve for frequencies? What purpose would that serve? Perhaps a mathematician's perception of harmony is disturbed if the scale doesn't conform to Gauss or some other established name. The existing scale may not be perfect, but to me it seems reasonable to let the range for additional IMPs increase 10, 20, 30, 30, 30, 40, 40, 40, 40, 50, etc.) rather than jump around randomly as in Kaj's suggested table (20, 40, 60, 50, 30, 40, 90, 50, 20!!, 70, 110 etc.). So what if there is a shortage of 8s or an abundance of 17s?

PO Sundelin, Stockholm

John,

Kaj Backas's article is interesting. It may well be sound in theory for the IMP scale to behave like a "(half) Gauss curve", but it does not seem to me to make bridge sense. The current scale is rooted in bridge logic and perfectly adequate for its purpose. Any changes along the lines suggested would have substantial impact on the strategy of the game. Two aspects stand out:

Small gains would be disproportionately rewarded, for example, collecting 100 rather than 90 or 110 rather than 100 would each be worth an IMP, and losing 50 rather than 90 would gain 2 IMPs; and the reward for bidding vulnerable games would reduce drastically, becoming 8 IMP most of the time rather than 10.

Richard Fleet, Berkhamsted UK

JC,

The data collected and the mind-boggling research done on the proposed IMP scale are simply amazing. My salutations to the gentleman from Finland. I am in the process of contacting some good bridge academicians/players in India to get their views on the proposal, and will forward them to you as soon as they are received.

Meantime, just a thought...in tennis, it is arithmetically possible for one player to beat another 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, where the winner wins 72 points whereas the loser wins 84 points. Match won by "straight sets"!

By the way, I erred in my analysis of the second deal of my report of the Ahmedabad Cavendish (March Bulletin, pp 12 & 13) by asserting that the only makeable contracts are two hearts (by EW) and two spades (by NS).

In three hearts by West, declarer can draw trumps, eliminate the black suits and then pull the QUEEN of diamonds from the table and South is end-played for declarer's ninth trick. It may be double dummy, but is still beautiful.

Very interestingly, as defenders in three spades, EW will have to resort to the same manouevre and play the same card to defeat the contract!

A rare instance of the same end-play card succeeding in making a contract (three hearts) AND defeating the opponents' contract (three spades).

Cheers, R Jayaram, Baroda, India

2009 World Bridge Calendar

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION	INFORMATION
Apr 7-12	114 th Canadian Nationals	Toronto, Canada	www.unit166.ca
Apr 9-12	24 th International Festival	Dobrich, Bulgaria	www.bgbridge.org
Apr 10-12	Easter Congress	Singapore	www.scba.org.sg
Apr 13-19	Women's Online Bridge Festival	BBO	www.worldbridge.org
Apr 14-19	Grand Prix of Portugal	Estoril, Portugal	www.fpbridge.pt
Apr 19-26	Summer Nationals	Pune, India	www.cba.org.in
Apr 30-May 3	Slavonice Cup	Slavonice, Czech Republic	http://chaosbridge.wz.cz
Apr 30-May 3	28 th International Festival	Plovdiv, Bulgaria	www.bgbridge.org
Apr 30-May 3	XX EcoSoft Trophy	Balatonföldvár, Hungary	http://foldvar.ecosoft.hu
Apr 30-May 4	Australian Autumn Nationals	Adelaide, Australia	www.abf.com.au
May 1-8	Scottish BU Overseas Congress	Marmara, Turkey	ap.cohen@virgin.net
May 6-10	35 th Cavendish Invitational	Las Vegas, NV	www.cavendishinvitational.com
May 8-10	Grand Prix of Košice	Košice, Slovakia	vojtechbelcak@iol.sk
May 8-15	South African Nationals	Western Cape, RSA	www.sabf.co.za
May 10-17	Killarney Congress	Killarney, Ireland	www.cbai.ie
May 15-28	Challenge International de Bridge	Juan-les-Pins, France	www.festivalsdusoleil.com
May 16-24	59 th South American Championships	Santiago, Chile	www.sudamericanoibridgechile2009.cl
May 18-24	XXII International Tournament	Costa Cálida, Spain	www.bridgecc.com
May 20-21	24 th Bonn Nations Cup	Bad Godesburg, Germany	www.bridge-verband.de
May 22-26	20 th International Bridge Festival	Limassol, Cyprus	cybridge@valicom.com.cy
May 22-30	26 th CACBF Zonal Championships	Le Gosier, Guadeloupe, WI	www.cacbf.com
May 26-Jun 2	IV Torneo de Bridge en Punta Cana	Punta Cana, Dom. Rep.	bridgepuntacana@telefonica.net
May 28-Jun 7	8 th Sharm el-Sheikh Festival	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	www.egypt-bridge.org
May 29-Jun 6	9 th Alps Adriatic Bridge Festival	Poreč, Croatia	www.bridgeaustria.at
May 31-Jun 4	5 th African Bridge Championships	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	www.egypt-bridge.org
Jun 5-6	Worldwide Simultaneous Pairs	Clubs everywhere	www.worldbridge.org
Jun 7-14	11 th German Bridge Festival	Wyk auf Föhr, Germany	www.bridge-verband.de
Jun 7-17	PABF Championships	Macau, China	antoniopr00@yahoo.com
Jun 12-27	4 th European Open Championships	San Remo, Italy	www.eurobridge.org
Jun 16-27	27 th International Festival	Albena, Bulgaria	www.bgbridge.org
Jun 18-28	Pacific Asia Bridge Championships	Macau, China	www.worldbridge.org
Jun 30-Jul 12	International Festival	Biarritz, France	www.biarritz-bridge.com
Jul 4-5	All-Africa Bridge Challenge	Piggs Peak, Swaziland	www.gbu.co.za
Jul 4-12	Dansk Bridge Festival	Vingsted, Denmark	www.bridgefestival.dk
Jul 8-18	22 nd European Youth Championships	Brasov, Romania	www.eurobridge.org
Jul 16-29	International Festival	Deauville, France	www.deauvillebridge.com
Jul 23-Aug 2	ACBL Summer NABC	Washington, DC	www.acbl.org
Jul 24-Aug 2	Swedish Bridge Festival	Örebro, Sweden	www.svenskbridge.se
Jul 31-Aug 2	Governor KEPRI Cup	Batam, Indonesia	www.gabsi.or.id
Aug 2-8	Wachauer Bridgeweche	Loiben, Austria	www.bridgeaustria.at
Aug 7-9	Pesta Sukan	Singapore	www.scba.org.sg
Aug 11-16	Festival International	Cannes, France	www.ffb-competitions.net
Aug 13-16	HCL Invitational	New Delhi, India	www.cba.org.in
Aug 14-23	Brighton Summer Congress	Brighton, England	www.ebu.co.uk
Aug 15-16	Selangor Congress	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	www.mcba.org.my
Aug 15-23	World Youth Championships	Istanbul, Turkey	www.worldbridge.org
Aug 19-23	Hong Kong Inter-City Championships	Kowloon, Hong Kong	www.hkcca.org
Aug 29-Sep 3	33 rd International Festival	La Grande Motte, France	www.ffb-competitions.net
Aug 29-Sep 12	29 th World Team Championships	São Paulo, Brazil	www.worldbridge.org
Sep 5-13	International Bridge Festival	Pula, Croatia	www.crobridge.com
Sep 10-13	43 rd Isle of Man Congress	Douglas, Isle of Man	www.ebu.co.uk
Sep 18-27	Guernsey Congress	Guernsey, Channel Is.	www.ebu.co.uk
Sep 26-Oct 4	New Zealand National Congress	Hamilton, NZ	www.nzcca.co.nz
Oct 3-6	Tolani Grand Prix	Mumbai, India	www.cba.org.in
Oct 15-18	8 th European Champions Cup	Paris, France	www.worldbridge.org
Oct 8-13	EBU Overseas Congress	Andalucía, Spain	www.ebu.co.uk
Oct 17-18	63 rd Lederer Memorial	London, England	www.metrobridge.co.uk
Oct	Sun, Sea & Slams	Barbados	www.cacbf.com
Nov 8-14	1 st Asian University Championships	Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia	www.gabsi.or.id
Nov 14-21	9 th Cuba International Festival	Havana/Varadero, Cuba	www.cacbf.com
Nov 26-Dec 6	ACBL Fall NABC	San Diego, CA	www.acbl.org
Dec 5-9	31 st ASEAN Bridge Club Championships	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	www.mcba.org.my
Dec 6-13	1 st Regional-on-a-Cruise	Miami, FL (Embark)	www.acbl.org
Dec 11-13	Geologi Cup	Bandung, Indonesia	www.gabsi.or.id
Dec 18-20	Junior Channel Trophy	Belgium	www.ebu.co.uk