



BULLETIN

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Editorial

The last few months have witnessed some very strange controversies and irregularities in the world of bridge.

1. In the semifinal of the European Champions Cup, a contentious appeal by Italy was allowed by the authorities even though the German team claimed that there was no TD call, therefore no ruling to appeal. Not only that, they claimed the appeal was allowed outside the time limit for such an appeal.

2. The German Open Team in the 1st World Mind Sports Games was allowed to withdraw partway through a segment in which they were still playing against the English team. Admittedly, they were down a lot, and it had become worse midway through the session. Nevertheless, it seems undesirable to allow a team to resign in mid-session.

3. In the recent Indian Team Trials final, a player was fined 3 IMPs for having his mobile phone go off during play. The score of the match was 141-138 in his team's favour – until the penalty! A four-board playoff was required, which his team won 12-5, but not before further controversy. One pair on his team was 5 minutes late coming to the table and were fined 3 IMPs. This fine was overturned when it was revealed they were preparing an appeal against their opponents, one of whose pairs, they believed, had not played the required number of boards to continue in the event. What a mess.

4. Two Norwegian teams put in a false result (reporting a near-draw in an unplayed match, qualifying both for further play) in their national knockout teams event. Naturally, they were found out and all concerned were suspended from play in Norwegian events for one year. Some of the players were candidates for the Open European Championships in June and the World Championships in September. So far, they have been ruled out of San Remo – the Norwegian ban did not extend to international play, but the EBL and WBF would naturally look askance at their participation.

Some of these controversies could have been avoided by the players, some by the authorities and some by having better rules in place, or in some cases, simply having a rule.

In the fourth case, some of the banned Norwegian players (Helgemo, Lund, Mølberg) were reportedly trying to join the Australian Bridge Federation to be allowed to compete in San Remo. It was not clear at press time whether or not the ABF and/or the EBL would allow this. The players would only do their reputations further harm by this manoeuvre.

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THE BEST OF HOUSTON

Barry Rigal, NYC

The Lone Star State is a popular destination for NABCs, previous championships having been held in Dallas, San Antonio, Houston and Fort Worth; Corpus Christi also hosted a Pan-American Games for bridge in 1992 while that event enjoyed its brief existence. Only California has held major bridge championships in as many different cities.

Board 64. Dealer South. EW Vul

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

West	North	East	South
—	Sadek	—	el-Ahmady
1 ♦	Pass	2 ♦	1 ♣
3 ♥	4 ♠	Double	2 ♠
Pass	Pass		Pass

Going into the last deal of their Round-of-16 Vanderbilt match, the Jacobs team were trailing by 10 IMPs. The Egyptians bid sensibly enough to their spade game, and East doubtless felt he had more than enough to double given his partner's strong sequence.

On a top diamond lead, el-Ahmady played the diamond ace, diamond ruff, spade to jack, diamond ruff, then carefully left trumps alone and played on clubs. When East ruffed the fourth club, this ending had been reached (see top of next column):

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

East played the heart ace and a second heart, and declarer ruffed and still could not touch trumps; instead he ruffed the fifth club with queen of spades and East was helpless. He could not score more than his trump ace and declarer had his game, and the match by 2 IMPs. In the other room it was five clubs doubled down one for a 12-IMP swing.

As a British convert to the charms of two-over-one game forcing methods, I acknowledge that there are some bad hands for the method, but few as bad as the West cards on this deal from the first qualifying session of the Silodor Open Pairs.

Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

This was our opponents' bidding.

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

I'll wager that few people would have guessed the West hand pattern before dummy came down!

The opening lead of the ten of diamonds went to declarer's king. Declarer cashed two high hearts and ruffed a heart as North and South both lied about their heart length. Then a diamond to the ace and a diamond ruff followed. As the cards lay, ruffing a second heart instead would have made life easy for declarer. When he tried to cash the ace of clubs, South ruffed. This was the ending (see top of next page):

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

South led a diamond, ruffed by the seven and overruffed. Declarer ruffed a heart in dummy and led the king of clubs, pitching his last heart. The fifth diamond, ruffed by the eight of spades made winners of South's two remaining trumps for one down. Six clubs is trivial.

Board 1. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

<p>♠ 10 6 3 2 ♥ 10 5 ♦ A K 10 8 ♣ A 7 3</p> <p>♠ A ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q J 10 8 6 5 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q 9 8 4 ♥ J 6 ♦ Q J 5 3 2 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ J 7 5 ♥ A K 7 4 3 2 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ 9</p>
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I was shown this deal as an example of the benefits of restraint in the auction. At many tables, West heard his partner overcall one spade and chose to punt five clubs, down 500. However, when Craig Huston held the West cards, he sold out to a three-heart contract by South. I marveled at his restraint, but Craig pointed out that four clubs doubled would cost 300 points.

Curiously, South's three-heart contract is makeable – though it was not managed at the table. West will lead his ace of spades, then shift to the club king. As declarer, you'll win dummy's ace and guess to play three rounds of hearts. West wins the third heart and plays a diamond, which you win in dummy. You've now reached this ending:

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

You have eight certain tricks and need to set up one more. You can see that playing a spade or a diamond from dummy will lead to immediate failure. The winning line is two loser-on-loser plays: lead dummy's seven of clubs and pitch a spade from your hand, then pitch a diamond from hand when West leads the next club!

You'll ruff West's next club lead, then run your trumps and squeeze East in spades and diamonds. That's how to rectify the count!

Board 21. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

It sometimes takes me a while to work around to the finer points of an analysis, especially when it involves a contract not reached at our table.

On this deal, our East-West opponents were both lucky and unlucky. They reached four spades after a bidding accident and were fortunate to find the trump suit breaking 4-3.

Although six diamonds can be brought home, the field contract was three no trump, which was supposed to make only ten tricks. The four-spade contract at our table handled for 11 winners, and the unlucky aspect for our opponents was that they received only 27 out of 77 matchpoints for plus 650.

So, let's revisit the defence when West is declarer in the more common three-notrump contract. North's best lead is a low club (the second-highest club six is fatal) to the king and ace. Declarer now works on diamonds. North wins the third diamond lead and leads another club to South's jack. Declarer ducks this, and now what?

South's best defence is a shift to spades, but if he makes the normal exit of his third club, declarer wins his queen and pitches a spade from dummy. Now comes the critical moment. If North is 2=4=3=4, declarer must cash his jack of diamonds and then three rounds of spades, which will produce a simple club-heart squeeze on North.

Far more elegant – after all, who plays for a simple squeeze if he can play for a double squeeze? – is to cash the diamond jack, then the two top hearts. This produces the following ending:

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

On this line, it doesn't matter which defender has the spade length. With North guarding clubs and South forced to keep his high heart, neither can keep a fourth spade, so declarer scores up 11 tricks.

Mark Gordon, playing with Pratap Rajadhyaksha, defended three no trump as South. Pratap led a club to the king and ace. Three rounds of diamonds put Pratap on lead again, and he continued with a low club. When West ducked the club jack, Gordon shifted to the jack of spades to break up the squeeze. Well done!

Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

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

Sam Loyd, the chess composer, loved to set puzzles with unusual endings. This is the bridge equivalent. On which finesse will your game hinge?

The opening lead is the four of hearts. You take the jack with the king and play a club to the king, a spade to the ace, a club to the ace, and the king of spades, followed by the queen of spades, pitching a club. When you ruff a club with the eight, West overruffs with the nine.

West, a fine player, leads the king of diamonds and a second diamond for you to ruff in dummy. You play a spade from dummy, able to claim if East discards, but he follows, so you ruff with the ten. That holds, and you ruff a diamond with the queen of hearts and lead a club from dummy as RHO pitches the diamond ace. Now you have to decide whether to ruff with the heart seven or the heart five in the following position:

The ace and six of hearts are outstanding. Should you ruff with the five or the seven? If you play West to be a superhero, you'll ruff with the five. But anyone who could have resisted overruffing the ten with the then-bare ace left deserves to beat you, so you should ruff with the seven, playing East for an original holding of ace-jack and West for nine-six-four.

Bob Hamman always says that when you have to make a decision in the bidding, if three no trump is in the picture – bid it. On this deal from the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams, Hamman found himself in a decidedly dicey contract of three no trump. You don't get a reputation like Hamman has, however, by giving up.

Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	Zia	—	Hamman
—	—	—	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led a heart to the queen, ducked by Hamman. He inserted the jack on the heart continuation, losing to West's king. Another heart cleared the suit as East discarded a club.

Things looked bleak with the clubs and diamonds blocked, but Hamman cashed the ace of diamonds. No luck. Soldiering on, Hamman cashed the ace and queen of clubs, then played a spade to dummy's ten. East won the spade king and started thinking – good news! Eventually, East returned a low spade to the jack and queen. Hamman cashed the king of clubs as East pitched a spade. Now the diamond jack was covered all around as West pitched a club.

Hamman then played a spade to East, who was forced to lead a diamond from the nine-seven into Hamman's ten-eight. This was the full deal:

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

East had more than one chance to set the contract, but his easiest was to win the king of spades and play the diamond queen. Declarer is now blocked off from his hand. And had he pitched a spade instead of a club at trick three, the defenders would still have prevailed.

TECHNIQUE AND TABLE PRESENCE

John Carruthers, Toronto

Two of the primary attributes of a top bridge player are excellent card-play technique and good table presence. The great players all have both qualities in abundance. The following two deals from the recent Vanderbilt Knockout Teams in Houston, Texas illustrate that there is a time and place for each of these.

The Vanderbilt final featured a team (DIAMOND) in which five of the six players had placed highly at the 1991 World Junior Team Championship in Ann Arbor, Michigan – it was a reunion of sorts.

In that tournament, John Diamond and Brian Platnick had won the gold medal for USA2, Geoff Hampson and Fred Gitelman had won silver for Canada, and Brad Moss had finished fourth for USA1. Only Eric Greco had not been in Ann Arbor (he'd been too young and inexperienced to make either USA team at the time), but he had played the next four World Junior Team Championships after Ann Arbor, winning bronze in 1993 and silver in 1999.

The "juniors'" opponents were KATZ (Ralph Katz-George Jacobs, Bobby Levin-Steve Weinstein and Walid el-Ahmady-Tarek Sadek).

John Diamond and Brad Moss combined beautiful technique at each table to produce this swing in their favour:

Board 47. Dealer South. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Moss	el-Ahmady	Gitelman	Sadek
—	—	—	Pass
1 ♦	1 ♠	Double	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Gitelman wasted no time in reaching the good diamond slam. El-Ahmady led the spade queen and Moss won the king to play three rounds of clubs, ruffing with the six in dummy. Sadek over-ruffed with the eight and shifted to the diamond jack.

Moss won the king in hand and now needed the heart finesse for his contract. If South had started with three trumps, then he could discard a heart on the spade ace and set up clubs, but if South had started with four trumps, declarer needed the spade ace for a club pitch, and thus needed the heart king onside as it rated to be anyway with the vulnerable spade overcall by North. Moss took the heart finesse and embarked on a campaign to get a full count on the hand. He played the spade ace, discarding a club, and ruffed a spade as South pitched a heart. He now had a complete count: North was known to be 6=2=1=4 and thus South was 2=5=4=2 precisely.

Declarer then played a heart to the ace and ruffed a heart, this time North discarding.

West was left with just the ace-nine of diamonds and a club, South with ten-eight of diamonds and a heart. At this point, Moss claimed! The Egyptians folded their cards. Plus 920 for East-West.

But what if North had played the heart king on the first round of the suit? That would have left open the possibility of his holding the seven-five of diamonds, with South holding the jack-ten-eight. Since the play of the diamond jack from jack-ten-eight-five originally would have been a defensive error, perhaps declarer would have played North for 6=1=2=4 rather than 6=2=1=4. Further, if North played the seven, is that a Restricted Choice application? One would have to be at the table to decide.

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Platnick	Levin	Diamond
—	—	—	Pass
1 \diamond	1 \spadesuit	Double	Pass
3 \clubsuit	Pass	3 \spadesuit	Pass
4 \clubsuit	Pass	4 \diamond	Pass
4 \spadesuit	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 \diamond	Pass	6 \diamond	Pass
Pass	Pass		

At the other table, Levin and Weinstein conducted a slower, more scientific, auction to the same contract and Platnick made the same lead as had el-Ahmady, the spade queen. Weinstein played card-for-card the same as Moss, and Diamond also over-ruffed the third round of clubs with the eight of diamonds.

Here, however, Diamond made the brilliant return of a heart into dummy's ace-queen. Why brilliant? Look what followed. Weinstein won the heart queen (here also, North should have played the heart king) and embarked on the same campaign as had Moss. He played ace and ruffed a spade, then ace and ruffed a heart. At this point, Weinstein also knew South to be 2=5=4=2. That being the case, he (as opposed to Moss) now needed North's singleton diamond to be the ten or the jack. He cashed the ace of diamonds and looked hopefully at North. Platnick's diamond seven was a huge disappointment. He ruffed his last club with the diamond queen and was also left with the king-nine of diamonds in his hand. Here, though, South had the diamond jack-ten for the defence's second trick.

"Nice defence," Weinstein congratulated Diamond. Diamond had found the only return to beat the slam. This, however, was not enough for the 'juniors' to win the match.

In an earlier Vanderbilt match, the Meltzer team (Rose Meltzer-Kyle Larson, Alan Sontag-Roger Bates, Tor Helness-Geir Helgemo) faced the Hampton team (Bob Hampton-Gavin Wolpert, John Hurd-Joel Wooldridge, Eldad Ginossar-Ron Pachtmann) in a match (also rife with ex-juniors) which was close all the way. This was the final board of the match.

Board 64. Dealer West. EW Vul.

	\spadesuit —	
	\heartsuit A Q 10 7 5 3 2	
	\diamond K 9 7 2	
	\clubsuit 8 4	
\spadesuit K Q		\spadesuit A J 9 8 5 4 2
\heartsuit K J 8		\heartsuit 6
\diamond A J 10		\diamond Q 4
\clubsuit J 9 7 6 3		\clubsuit A K 5
	\spadesuit 10 7 6 3	
	\heartsuit 9 4	
	\diamond 8 6 5 3	
	\clubsuit Q 10 2	

West	North	East	South
Bates	Pachtmann	Sontag	Ginossar
1 NT	4 \heartsuit	6 \spadesuit	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Alan Sontag had taken about six seconds to bid the hand. He took just about as long to play it. Ginossar led the heart nine to the jack and queen, and Pachtmann returned the heart five, figuring Sontag would not be able to discard for fear that South was also out of the suit. He was right: Sontag ruffed the heart high, going two off with the newly-created trump loser and losing the diamond finesse as well, after the club queen did not drop.

West	North	East	South
Hurd	Helness	Wooldridge	Helgemo
1 NT	4 \heartsuit	5 \spadesuit ¹	Pass
5 NT ²	Pass	6 \heartsuit ³	Pass
6 \spadesuit ⁴	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Do you like your hand for slam?
2. Sure do! I have hearts stopped for no trump as well.
3. If you have the perfect cards, we may have a grand slam.
4. Sorry to disappoint you - I do not.

At the other table, by contrast, Joel Wooldridge and John Hurd took six minutes to bid the hand to the same contract, and then Wooldridge took 15 minutes to play it. Helgemo led the same heart nine as at the other table, and Helness won the jack with the queen.

Unlike at the other table, Helness was not certain that Wooldridge had no more hearts. Could five spades have been lacking a heart control? Helness returned the heart ten, reasoning similarly to Pachtmann that declarer could not afford to discard in case South was out of the suit as well.

The sun rose and fell by the time Wooldridge was ready to play – he discarded the diamond queen! After the heart king won in dummy, Wooldridge cashed the spade king. The sun rose and fell again. Declarer played ace of diamonds and ran the jack, pitching a club! Plus 1430 and 17 IMPs. It was not quite enough, however, as Meltzer won a nail-biter by 7 IMPs.

This was table presence of the highest order. But why had Wooldridge played as he did? Surely the percentage play would have been to ruff high, draw trumps, try the ace and king of clubs, and when the queen does not fall, take the diamond finesse. As Sontag had done. Wooldridge's table presence told him that Helgemo had another heart - Helness had asked to see the first trick after the other players had turned over their cards (he had not). Wooldridge did not believe that a player of Helness' impeccable ethics would have done that looking at all thirteen hearts. In other words, there was one more heart in one of the other hands. Brilliantly reasoned by Holmes...er, Wooldridge.

THRUST AND PARRY

Phillip Alder

Excerpted from the NYTimes

Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Brink</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
—	—	1 ♠	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♠ ¹	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 ♠	Double ²	Redouble ³
Pass	4 NT ⁴	Pass	5 ♣ ⁵
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Good hand – new suit non-forcing
2. Do not lead spades
3. Spade control
4. RKCB
5. 0 or 3 key cards

On the last day of the American Contract Bridge League's Spring North American Championships, the winners of the Jacoby Swiss Teams were Bob Hamman, Zia Mahmood, Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell.

The diagrammed deal from the final session was one of the best bid and played over the 10-day tournament. In the other room, North-South had played in three no-trump and made 12 tricks.

At this table, Meckstroth and Rodwell were playing against Sjoert Brink and Bas Drijver from the Netherlands. East doubled five clubs to indicate a void. He was hoping, after ruffing, to get his partner on lead with the heart queen for a second ruff or to find his partner with a spade void.

When you are giving your partner a ruff, your lead is a suit-preference signal saying where your re-entry lies. Here West, with no entry card, led a middle diamond (the seven) to try to convey that message. East ruffed and found the best defence, returning a trump. Now, with only ten tricks, declarer had to play for a squeeze without the count. He took six rounds of clubs and the diamond ace to give this position:

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

On dummy's two diamond winners, East saw that if he threw the heart ten and another heart, he would be endplayed with his remaining high heart to lead away from his spade king. So East discarded the heart king and ace. But to no avail. South cashed dummy's spade ace, played a heart to his queen and conceded the thirteenth trick to West's heart jack.

Minus 690 and plus 1,000 gave the winners 7 IMPs on the board.

Finally, note that if West had been void in spades, North-South would have been minus 1,000 instead of plus 1,000.

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471. Dealer North. Nil Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	3 ♦	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The South hand becomes quite tricky when partner opens with a pre-empt of three diamonds. One approach is to use Roman Key Card Blackwood immediately, intending to bid six no trump if North admits to two key cards. (This protects the South hand from a club lead and allows the hearts to be established in safety.)

As this was played in a pairs event, South decided to be conservative and responded three notrumps. As it turned out, this modest contract was no better than five diamonds and was not an easier contract to make.

West led the queen of spades and declarer could count only seven tricks if he played on hearts immediately. If the queen of diamonds was played at trick two and it held the trick, that would be eight tricks, still not enough.

Then declarer saw that the best way to try to make nine tricks was to make sure that dummy won the first diamond trick. So, after winning the first trick with the king of spades, declarer played the queen of diamonds and overtook it with dummy's king. As East could not afford to win with this with ace, this held the trick. Declarer now used this entry to dummy to finesse the queen of clubs.

When this won, declarer had five tricks outside of hearts and declarer switched his attention to the heart suit. As four tricks were guaranteed there, his contract was assured.

472. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

As North's two notrump was a second negative, his jump to four spades did not excite South because, although he expected North to hold genuine spade support, the hand opposite would harbour at most a queen and a jack.

West led the queen of hearts and declarer saw that the key to the hand was to avoid three club losers. He took the first trick with the ace of hearts and drew three rounds of trumps. Next, he cashed the king of hearts and then led the king of clubs, which was allowed to hold the trick. The key now was to play on diamonds, which declarer did by playing ace and another.

When East won the trick, he could not play a heart as that would give declarer his tenth trick; he would discard a club from hand and ruff in dummy. As East had no club to play, he had to play a third round of diamonds. Declarer ruffed, eliminating the suit, and exited with the queen of clubs (although any one of his three remaining clubs would do). If this held, it would be the tenth trick. When West took this with the ace, he the choice of conceding a ruff-and-discard by playing a red suit or leading from the jack-nine of clubs, giving declarer a trick with the ten. Either way, declarer had ten tricks.

A natural question to ask is, "How would the play go if West took the king of clubs with his ace at trick six?" The answer is that you would proceed as before, forcing

East to eliminate the diamond suit for you. Next you would lead the five of clubs. Then no matter how the clubs lay, the defender who won the trick would either have to concede a ruff-and discard or lead into your queen-ten tenace in clubs.

A final observation is that if East could produce a second club, declarer would guarantee a second trick in clubs by covering East's club as cheaply as possible.

473. Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♠	Double
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South's rebid of two no trumps promised a hand a little too strong to overcall one notrump, which gave North an easy raise to game. West began with the two of spades to the king and ace. Almost instantly declarer played a low heart to dummy's king and East's ace. After winning the spade return with his queen, declarer tested the hearts and when they did not break he ran the ten of clubs. West took this with the queen of clubs and placed a spade on the table. East cashed three spade tricks to defeat three notrumps by one trick.

"What rotten luck," moaned South. "Given East's opening bid, the chance of hearts being 3-3 or East holding the queen of clubs was a touch over 80%."

As is so often the lot of dummy, North was not impressed. "While I admire your skills of calculation, why would you be satisfied not choosing a 100% line? Simply play the five of diamonds to the ace at trick two and lead the four of hearts from dummy. If East takes his ace, you have nine tricks – two spades, three hearts and the four tops in the minors. If East plays the six of hearts then the queen of hearts wins the trick and, as you would then have five certain tricks outside of clubs, you would just lead the five of clubs to dummy's ten. West would eventually make his queen of clubs but you would have nine tricks."

474. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
3 ♣	Double	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After West's pre-empt, North doubled for takeout and South, hoping that the diamonds would run, opted for that most pragmatic of contracts, three no trumps.

What plan should declarer adopt after West leads the queen of clubs? At the table, declarer took this in hand with the ace of clubs and ran the queen of diamonds to East's king. After winning the club return with dummy's king, declarer ran the diamonds, throwing two hearts from the table. West threw three hearts, the eight of spades and a club. When declarer played a spade, West had the rest for a two-trick set.

What declarer should have done was to play on spades first. Relying on clubs to be 7-2, declarer should win the club lead in dummy with the king and lead the queen of spades. Here, West wins the ace of spades and can do no better than clear the clubs. After winning the king of clubs, declarer runs the queen of diamonds and has at least nine tricks.

What would happen if it was East who had the ace of spades? If East takes the ace and clears the clubs, he will have no club to play after he wins the king of diamonds. If instead East wins the spade queen with the ace and returns a spade, declarer should finesse the ten as a safety play. If the ten holds, there is no further problem. If West takes the ten with the jack and plays a third spade then declarer can lose at most three spades and a diamond. The only difficulty comes when West takes the ten of spades with the jack and shifts to hearts. Then, the best chance is to rise with the ace of hearts to play ace and another diamond.

THE ULTIMATE BOARD

Jon Sveindal, Bergen, Norway

This was the last board in the Houston Spring Nationals for Boye Brogeland and Espen Lindqvist, and it was decisive for the O'Rourke team (O'Rourke-Jacobus, Brogeland-Lindqvist, Duboin-Sementa) in finishing second in the Jacoby Open Swiss Teams. West dealt, and with North-South vulnerable, Brogeland (South) looked at:

♠ J 9 8 7 2
♥ A Q J 10 6
♦ —
♣ K 10 7

The bidding went as follows:

West	North	East	South
Aa	Lindqvist	Molberg	Brogeland
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣ ¹	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	Pass	2 ♥
3 ♦	4 ♣!	Pass	4 ♦ ²
Pass	4 ♠ ²	Pass	4 NT ³
Pass	5 ♣ ⁴	Pass	?

1. Puppet to two diamonds
2. Cue bids
3. Still interested in slam; not Blackwood
4. Nothing further to add

Facing the last board of the last match, Brogeland found it appropriate to make a final slam effort by boarding "the last train" with four no trump. Normally, he would have been obedient and passed Lindqvist's five-club bid. But Brogeland thought that the already-interesting auction, which had started with five passes by Brogeland-Lindqvist(!), would be even more amusing if slam was on. Especially as he was playing against two of his countrymen. So with a smile on his face he raised to six clubs!

This was the complete deal:

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

The lead was the spade three to West's ace. When he returned a club, there was no problem in collecting twelve tricks. Without the trump shift, declarer would have to find the club queen.

At the other table, Duboin-Sementa had been set 1100 in four spades doubled, so plus 1370 was necessary for a maximum win for O'Rourke, which in turn was needed to take second place!

A USEFUL CONVENTION

Pablo Ravenna, Buenos Aires

Translation Mike Jackson (Colombia)

The final of the trials to select the Argentinian team for the 2009 South American Championship in Santiago, Chile, was contested between the Team Ventin (Pablo Lambardi, Juan Carlos Ventin, Carlos Lucena, Alejandro Bianchedi, Pablo Ravenna and Carlos Pellegrini) and the Team Mooney (Martín Monsegur, Guillermo Mooney, Walter Fornasari and Luis Palazzo).

The final was played over 7 sets of 12 boards and was won by Ventin by 205 to 150 IMPS.

At the start of the fourth set Ventin led by 86 - 43. The first board of the set was flat, but on the second Ventin gained a large swing. In the Open room Ventin-Lambardi, N/S played against Fornasari-Palazzo E/W.

Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Palazzo	Ventin	Fornasari	Lambardi
—	—	Pass	2 ♦ ¹
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass			

1. Multi Two Diamonds

East-West bid to the heart game and North led the spade jack. Declarer won the spade lead in dummy, played a club to the ace and a heart to the jack, losing to the queen. South returned the diamond ten which Palazzo took with ace, then played a heart to the king to discard his diamond loser on the spade king. He returned to hand with a top club, cashed the heart ace and when the trumps were 4-2 finished with 11 tricks.

In the Closed room the bidding was very different, and that is what led to the swing...

West	North	East	South
<i>Pellegrini</i>	<i>Monsegur</i>	<i>Ravenna</i>	<i>Mooney</i>
—	—	Pass	2 ♠
4 ♣ ¹	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
5 ♦	Pass	6 ♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Leaping Michaels

When South opened a weak two spades, Pellegrini had a hand ideal for our version of Leaping Michaels. His bid of four clubs showed a good two-suiter (at least 5-5) with hearts and clubs, not forcing in our methods. I showed my first round Spade control - showing slam interest with either clubs or hearts as trumps, and when Carlos showed his diamond control I bid the slam in clubs.

Carlos had shown me 5-5 or better, probably 1=5=2=5, and I could see that my top spades would take care of the second round diamond loser. As you can see, the contract was good, making seven with the 2-2 club break.

COOL HAND NICOLA

Michael Akeroyd, Bradford, UK

Is declarer's task in bridge merely an intellectual puzzle-solving exercise or is it part of a mental contest between fellow human beings? Light can be shed on this question by consideration of the deal below from the final of the 2008 World Mind Sports Games in Beijing.

Board 94. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Liu Yi</i>	<i>Dhondy</i>	<i>Wang W</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣ ¹
Pass	1 NT ²	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 NT ³
Pass	5 ♣ ⁴	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Precision
2. Balanced 8-11 HCP
3. RKCB
4. 1 or 4 key cards

West	North	East	South
<i>Sun</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Wang H</i>	<i>Smith</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	2 ♥ ¹
Pass	2 NT ²	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Strong in this position
2. Positive with spades

When this deal was played, it is not perhaps surprising that those North-Souths who imagined that their team was in the lead took the cautious route and did not explore slam possibilities while those who estimated that their team was trailing or was neck and neck took the optimistic route.

On two occasions when a low club was led against a heart contract, declarer banged on the ace and claimed the obvious twelve tricks immediately after drawing trumps. However, in the China versus England Women's match (described in the World Bridge News, February issue, page 9 as "the match that will be discussed for years"), events took a different course. Both declarers played on as they felt there was also a psychological duel to be fought out.

Wenfei Wang's bidding as South could be criticised by a purist. In this situation, however, it must be the best shot at encouraging a neutral trump lead from West and leaving declarer in control to plan the play. Wang covered East's ten with the jack, ran three trumps and four spades throwing a diamond, then led to the king of clubs and played her last diamond to the king (West erroneously ducking), making all thirteen tricks. Plus 1010 to North-South.

Nicola Smith, however, played the hand differently, covering West's opening club four and East's eight with the king, cashing four rounds of trumps throwing clubs from the dummy, cashing only two top spades, finally testing the diamonds by playing low to the jack. This gave two tricks to the defence, plus 450 to North-South.

Presumably Nicola Smith, on inspecting the dummy, assumed that Wenfei Wang in the open room would drive on to six hearts, playing state of the match tactics. Then, if she played it like Wenfei Wang and ended up making all 13 tricks it would be a considerable psychological boost for her head-to-head opponents. The English pair needed to know the exact nature of the defenders' diamond layout in order to form an opinion as how to assess the result of the board and its effect on their team's estimated lead. It is also important to indicate to the opponents that Wenfei Wang might experience a problem in play if she proceeded via the obvious cue bid of five clubs as a means of slam exploration. Nicola Smith was in a win/win situation here with this little charade: either the opponents might experience some uncertainty or else they will work things out and then realise that declarer must be totally

unfazed by this apparent disaster since she has enough spare brain power to consider playing out such a deceptive manoeuvre.

(We beg to differ. Firstly, state of the match has little to do with bidding this slam – barring atrocious breaks, six hearts is cold on any lead but a diamond and an even-money proposition on a diamond lead, so is worth bidding in any match, no matter the score. Not to mention that six no trump from North is cold, period. Secondly, Smith would have done better to attempt the same manoeuvre as Wang Wenfei. If Wang makes 13 tricks in slam, agreed, it does not matter if Smith makes 11, 12 or 13 tricks – the difference in all three cases is 11 IMPs. However, if Wang makes only 12 tricks (as she would have done, and should have done, had West taken her diamond ace), Smith loses the same 11 by making 11 or 12 tricks, but only loses 10 IMPs if she manages 13 tricks. Should she not try for an extra IMP, given the eventual margin of the match? Thirdly, Smith should have played the king of diamonds, her only chance to make all the tricks. She hasn't gained anything if the jack draws the ace. Fourthly, and finally, these are all very tough, experienced players – to expect that bidding or not bidding a slam and making or not making a slam such as this would have a telling psychological effect on a match is over-stating the case.)

By the way, the 1-IMP win by England was only tied for the third-smallest winning margin in World Championship history. Two World Championships have been won by a fraction of an IMP (the German Juniors and Dutch Women performing that feat) and the USA Open team has won one by a single IMP as well. The closest Senior final was the 2-IMP margin enjoyed by Japan last year. - Ed.

EASTER TRIALS

Ron Klinger, Northbridge, NSW

(From the Sydney Morning Herald)

The New Zealand Trials were held over the Easter weekend. In the Open Teams, CORNELL (Bach-Cornell, Newell-Reid, Ware-Whibley) defeated BURROWS (Burrows-Livingston, Grant-Ker, Miller-Stout) by 293-248 over 128 boards.

Board 125. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Stout	Ware	Miller	Whibley
—	Pass	1 ♦ ¹	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 NT
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Playing a strong club system

Lead: Spade jack

On this deal from the last session of the final, Michael Whibley brought home a very tough four-heart contract. South has two diamonds and a club to lose. With the spade king almost certain to be with East on the bidding, the spade finesse is of no use. Even if it worked, the discard for South would be only mildly useful. South can plan to ruff a club in dummy and perhaps a diamond as well if the diamonds are 4-3. Dealing with the fourth round of diamonds is a problem. If West started with the shorter diamonds, South can still play to ruff two diamonds as long as West does not have the heart jack. As you can see, West does have the shorter diamonds and the heart jack-third as well. If South tries to ruff two diamonds, West will score the heart jack.

This is how Whibley managed it. He took the spade ace and ruffed a low spade at once. Then he led the club jack, won by the queen. East switched to the diamond ten. West's failure to lead a diamond suggested a useful holding there. Whibley decided to find out for sure and played the queen.

West won with the ace of diamonds. That gave West five points and as East had opened the bidding, it was clear that West would have little more. West returned the diamond five and East won with the jack. East shifted to the seven of hearts.

South took the heart ace, cashed the club ace and ruffed a club. These cards remained:

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

South played the S4 from dummy. East's king appeared and South ruffed. South now cashed the heart king, ruffed a diamond with the heart ten, played the spade queen to discard his last heart, and won the last trick with the queen of hearts.

He had left West with a trump right up to trick thirteen. That was ten tricks for plus 620.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
Bach	Grant	Cornell	Ker
—	Pass	1 ♣	1 ♥
Double	3 ♥ ¹	Double ²	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Pre-emptive
2. For takeout

Lead: Spade three

North took the spade ace and South ruffed the spade return. East won the diamond exit cheaply and played the club queen. South took it with the ace and cashed the king of hearts. That was the last trick for the defence, but the result was one down for plus 100, but 11 IMPs to CORNELL.

The player who says the contract cannot be made should not disturb the player making it.

SACRIFICES

Katie Thorpe, Toronto

Taking a sacrifice at IMPs is a tricky business. (Believe me, I know about sacrifices, having lived with your editor for 35 years!) One must be fairly certain, either that the opponents' game is making, or that one's own sacrifice has a chance, however small, of making. Looking at the classic case of favourable vulnerability, a sacrifice of three or fewer off is profitable, but only if the opposing game makes. If there is a decent chance that the opponents' game will go off, the long-run IMP odds favour not taking a sacrifice. Then there is the Holy Grail of all sacrifices, the opponents bidding one more and going down – the chances of that happening are almost impossible to assess.

All that goes out the window at Board-a-Match, where there are no such things as IMP odds and the only thing that matters is beating the result at the other table. So, extraordinary measures are sometimes taken, especially at favourable vulnerability, to enter the auction, and to find that small difference in score leading to a win on the board.

For example, suppose there is a 70% chance that a save will go three down (minus 500) at favourable vulnerability and a 30% chance that it will go for 800 (four off), but there is a 10% chance that the opponents' game will not make. At IMPs, one would have to be insane to accept those odds and take the sacrifice. However, at BAM, assuming such a risk is worthwhile since you have better than a 60% chance to win the board if game is bid at the other table. At IMPs, your win would be so small, and the loss so large, that the risk would not be worth assuming.

Keep all this in mind as you look at the following deal I kibitzed from the 2008 Buffett Cup in Louisville.

Board 53. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

Four spades is an easy make for North-South and, in fact, eleven tricks are there because of the fortunate diamond position; fortunate only because we can see that the heart ace is offside. Those factors make five clubs a good sacrifice for East-West, provided they can get into the auction. If the bidding went one spade from North and four spades from South, East would have to be quite a cowboy to risk coming into the auction in the passout seat. Would it happen? Let's see.

West	North	East	South
Berkowitz	Hanlon	Sontag	McGann
—	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Double	4 ♠	4 NT	Pass
5 ♣	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Here there is an outside chance that five clubs doubled will make. To do so, the defence needs to allow declarer to ruff three spades in dummy and set up the long diamonds for two heart pitches, thus losing only a club and a diamond. Improbable, but stranger things have happened.

Hugh McGann chose to show a Bergen-type spade raise, allowing David Berkowitz to find a lead-directing double and Alan Sontag the thoughtful four-no-trump bid, just in case Berkowitz's clubs were a little shorter than they were.

Declarer was in with a chance when Tom Hanlon kicked off with the heart king. He won the ace and played ... ace and another club, scuttling the contract. Declarer achieved one off by winning the second trump in hand, ruffing out South's diamonds and losing a diamond to North, setting up the suit. They compared with...

West	North	East	South
Kwiecien	Hamman	Pszczola	Zia
—	1 NT	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Here, with no fit yet announced by North-South, it was much too risky for Michal Kwiecien to enter that

auction, even though it was at a level lower, and their chances went away.

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Auken	Garner	Michielsen
—	1 ♠	2 NT	3 ♦
4 ♦	5 ♣	5 ♦	5 ♠
6 ♣	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
7 ♣	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Steve Garner took advantage of the vulnerability to make an aggressive/awful/bold/imaginative (choose your own adjective) Unusual No Trump and Marion Michielsen showed an invitational-plus raise in spades. Now it was Howard Weinstein's turn to show some imagination, bidding four diamonds to direct the lead. His intention was to bid five clubs as a sacrifice and he wanted to help out Garner should the opponents bid to the five level.

The auction got a little out of hand when Garner re-evaluated and realised that East-West could be cold for their sacrifice and bid on to five diamonds. When Weinstein now bid six clubs, it certainly looked to Garner as if *that* were the lead-director. After that, seven clubs doubled was the inevitable contract.

In any case, if one considered par on the deal to be plus 300 to North-South in six clubs doubled, seven clubs doubled was not too terrible a result. However, the play was as interesting as the auction.

Sabine Auken found the extraordinary lead of the club five, both retaining trump control and catering to the slim chance of singleton king in Marion Michielsen's hand. Weinstein won with the queen and followed with the diamond queen. Auken won the king and made another extraordinary play, the two of spades, tapping the dummy. Weinstein ruffed, ruffed a diamond to hand, dropping the jack from South, ruffed a spade and played a third diamond. Here, Michielsen ruffed in with the club ten and Weinstein over-ruffed and ruffed the last spade.

At this point in the play, Weinstein had lost only a diamond, with the club ace the only outstanding trump:

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

We can see that Weinstein could ruff down the diamond ace and lead a heart to the queen, then play good diamonds, discarding his two heart losers for down two. North could take her club ace whenever she wished – the heart ace would be the entry to the last diamond if necessary. However, Weinstein considered the unusual handling of their trumps by the defence. He could scarcely credit that Auken had led low from ace-five, then not cashed the ace when in with the diamond king. It was only slightly less credible that Michielsen had failed to play ace and another at tricks one and two, and then had ruffed in with the ten, knowing she'd be weakening her own trump holding and being over-ruffed anyway. It was all very mystifying.

If Weinstein ruffed the diamonds good and took the heart finesse, AND it lost, AND Michielsen could cash the club ace removing his last trump, the defence would then have two spades to cash for minus 1100, down five. Weinstein could not take that risk and discarded on the diamond, losing two diamonds and a club for three down, minus 500 (although perhaps Michielsen's discard of the spade *king* on the fourth round of diamonds should have given the show away).

Weinstein-Garner's reward for their 'enterprise' was a win on the board when Roy Welland found the bid everyone would have made 40 years ago, four spades, after one spade-pass to him. This shut out the opponents (the Bessis, père et fils) and Björn Fallenius scored up plus 650 for the USA. What a game!

Upcoming BBO Online Transmissions

May 5	Schapiro Spring Foursomes
May 6-10	Cavendish Invitational. Vegas
May 16	Scottish Cup Final
May 16	Belgian Open Pairs Final
May 21-23	SA Championships, Chile
May 21-24	Swedish Team Championship
May 22-24	Bulgarian Team Qualification
May 25-28	US Women's Team Trials
May 30-31	Lozenc Bridge Festival
Jun 5-7	German Team Championship
Jun 6-15	US Open Team Trials
Jun 12-13	Canadian Team Championship



Correspondence ...

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

Email: ibpaeditor@sympatico.ca

Due to the vagaries of the Royal Mail and/or Canada Post, the following letter arrived from Scotland in March 2009:

Dear John,

I refer to the discussion of whether six clubs or six no trump is the best contract on these hands:

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

There is no doubt that six clubs is far superior. *(There was no contention about the better contract, merely that six clubs offered an opportunity to go down not available in six no trump on the actual adverse layout. - Ed.)* After drawing trumps (3-1) and eliminating the side suits, the best play is a heart to the ten. When hearts break 3-2 (67.73%), you make 75% of the time = 50.79%. When hearts break 4-1 or 5-0, the contract is guaranteed, an additional 32.27%, a total chance of 83.06%. Six no trump requires one of two finesses, roughly 75%.

Best regards, Sam Leckie, Glasgow

The success rate in the heart suit is rather better than 75% when hearts are 3-2. There are 20 cases of hearts 3-2. After elimination, low to the ten wins outright on 14 of those and loses outright on two. In the remaining four cases, declarer must guess whether the defender who won the jack has the king or the nine remaining (the defender must return a heart or give the contract via a ruff-and-sluff). Say declarer guesses right half the time, increasing the winning cases to 16 of 20. This gives a total success rate of 54.18% when hearts are 3-2, increasing the overall rate of success to 86.45%, not 83.06%. Of course, this is all predicated on clubs not being 4-0, allowing the elimination in the first place.

NEWS & VIEWS

Alan LeBendig (1948-2009)

Alan LeBendig, Grand Life Master and former member of the ACBL Board of Directors, died April 22, 2009 in Los Angeles. He was 60. LeBendig had battled multiple sclerosis for several years and resided in an assisted living facility, but he managed to play bridge nearly every day. He was a Grand Life Master with more than 15,000 masterpoints to his credit.

LeBendig won the Keohane North American Swiss Teams in 1993. He served on the ACBL Board, representing District 23, from 1998 to 2006 and was owner of the Barrington Bridge Club in Los Angeles for many years.

Bridge for Brain Research Challenge

The Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute will again be running its very popular Bridge for Brain Research Challenge in the week of 1 - 7 May 2009.

Each year more and more players join the Challenge and last year 90 clubs participated Australia-wide which amounted to over 2,500 players.

In 2008, the event raised \$25,000 for research at the Institute and since its commencement in 2004 the event has raised over \$125,000 for research into disorders of the brain such as Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Raising this amount is an incredible achievement - and all bridge players involved in the Challenge should be extremely proud.

Encyclopedia of Bridge (7th ed.)

The 7th edition of the Official Encyclopedia of Bridge is in the works and is scheduled for publication in late 2011 to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the ACBL.

2009 Hall of Fame Banquet

It's the premiere event on the ACBL's annual calendar. This year, Mark Lair will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Also being inducted are Aileen Osofsky, who will receive the Blackwood Award for 2009, and Jerome S. Machlin, the Blackwood Award recipient for 2008. Agnes Gordon will receive the Von Zedtwitz Award. In addition, Peter Boyd will receive the Sidney H. Lazard Jr. Sportsman of the Year award.

Anyone can attend the event with the purchase of a ticket for \$145 at www.acbl.org.

2009 World Bridge Calendar

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION	INFORMATION
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 9-17	66 th South of Ireland Congress	Killarney, Ireland	www.cbai.ie
May 15-28	Festival International de Bridge	Juan-les-Pins, France	www.festivalsdusoleil.com
May 16-24	59 th South American Championships	Santiago, Chile	www.sudamericanbridgechile2009.c
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 23-25	Yeats Country Congress	Sligo, Ireland	www.cbai.ie
May 26-Jun 2	IV Torneo de Bridge en Punta Cana	Punta Cana, Dom. Rep.	bridgepuntacana@telefonica.net
May 28-Jun 4	5 th African Bridge Championships	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	www.egypt-bridge.org
May 29-Jun 6	9 th Alps Adriatic Bridge Festival	Poreè, Croatia	www.bridgeaustria.at
Jun 4-7	8 th Sharm el-Sheikh Festival	Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt	www.egypt-bridge.org
Jun 5-6	Worldwide Simultaneous Pairs	Clubs everywhere	www.worldbridge.org
Jun 5-8	Barrier Reef Congress	Cairns, Australia	www.abf.com.au
Jun 7	Città di Lodi	Lodi, Italy	www.federbridge.it
Jun 7-14	11 th German Bridge Festival	Wyk auf Föhr, Germany	www.bridge-verband.de
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	46 th Pacific Asia Bridge Championships	Macau, China	www.macauabm.com
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
July 10-12	OECS Annual Championships	St. George's, Grenada, WI	www.cacbf.com
Jul 12-19	Over-58 Festival	Riccione, Italy	www.federbridge.it
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 30-Aug 1	Youth NABC	Washington, DC	www.acbl.org
Jul 31-Aug 2	Governor KEPRI Cup	Batam, Indonesia	www.gabsi.or.id
Aug 2-8	Wachauer Bridgewoche	Loiben, Austria	www.bridgeaustria.at
Aug 7-9	Pesta Sukan	Singapore	www.scba.org.sg
Aug 10-16	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.hkcba.org
Aug 29-Sep 4	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.nzcba.co.nz
Oct 3-6	Tolani Grand Prix	Mumbai, India	www.cba.org.in
Oct 8-13	EBU Overseas Congress	Andalucía, Spain	www.ebu.co.uk
Oct 15-18	8 th European Champions Cup	Paris, France	www.worldbridge.org
Oct 17-18	63 rd Lederer Memorial	London, England	www.metrobridge.co.uk
Oct 20-24	Sun, Sea & Slams	Christ Church, Barbados, WI	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.acbf.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 6-8	Città di Milano	Milan, Italy	www.federbridge.it
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
Dec 27-30	EBU Yearend Congress	London, England	www.ebu.co.uk