



BULLETIN

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The New Face of Bridge The 2020 Chinese Premier League



The live broadcast, with commentators.



The Shanghai playing area: there were four clubs and 18 players.



One of the Beijing sites, with three clubs and 11 players.



All of the playing areas, being videotaped by the CCBA.

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First Leg

With the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, live bridge has changed to online bridge. The Chinese Premier League is played as a double round robin over two legs. This year, the first leg was from September 22nd to 26th, and was held online; the platform being the Chinese App: *Bridge-Friends*. The second leg was also held online from October 10th to 14th. After the double Round Robin, the top four teams qualified for the Final.

The Chinese Premier League is the highest-level bridge tournament in China. This year, the difference was that it could not be played face to face. In order to avoid cheating and unfair competition, the Chinese Contract Bridge Association (CCBA) adopted these strict measures:

1. There were 11 playing areas in nine cities, all under the supervision of TD supervisors.
2. The players used computers, laptops and pads only. All tournament equipment was checked to ensure there was no social media and other communications software.
3. Any delay, disconnect or pause caused by the network had to be reported to the TD.
4. All matches were broadcast live on the internet with a delay of half an hour.
5. There was a professional TD team and Appeals Committee.

Sixteen teams played a round-robin format of 15 boards per round. All match records can be watched and researched on the internet; gathering statistics is very easy. All players were actors in this film, the new height of bridge broadcasting.

CCBA did not reject foreign players, but due to the pandemic and quarantine requirements, only one foreign player participated in the tournament this year. He was Poon Hua, a Singaporean player who lives in China.

These were some of the excellent deals from the League:

Take My Queen Away!

Leg 1. RR 4. Board 1. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Wang	Wang	Kang	Yang
Xiaojing	Kui	Meng	Lixin
—	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	2♠
Double	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

One notrump was 15-17 HCP; two diamonds was a transfer; double was for takeout. South led a trump. Declarer won with dummy's king and led another trump to the ace. Declarer played a low diamond. What would you play?

Yang Lixin, who is a former Chinese Open Team member, and one of the best players in China, played the queen of diamonds on this trick! That was the killing defence. Yang knew his partner held at most one point, and that it had to be the jack of diamonds, so he could force an entry for a lead through the king of spades. "Take my queen away, but bring the contract to me!"

An Accurate Endplay

Leg 1. RR 9. Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♥	Zhu Chenyu	2♦ ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. A better raise than a direct two-heart bid

Zhu Chenyu is a member of the Chinese Under-26 team. Here, he was the declarer in four spades doubled. The opening lead was the queen of hearts. Zhu ruffed the second heart. Most declarers played to split clubs out three-three to set up a club trick to pitch a diamond loser, but they all failed. According to the auction, Zhu thought that North had seven cards in hearts because he didn't have the queen of the suit. With three-card support North could have made seven tricks in hearts. Since North had bid three notrump, he had no shortage in a side suit. So Zhu decided to play North for 2=7=2=2 shape, meaning clubs were four-two.

Zhu cashed one top trump, and then ducked a diamond. North won and continued the suit. Declarer won with his ace and cashed the ace of clubs (North didn't unblock his queen, fatally). Zhu played a second top trump and led a third trump to dummy, North discarding a heart. When Zhu played a club from dummy and North followed with the queen, Zhu ducked! North was endplayed and had to surrender the last four tricks via a ruff-sluff.

Trump Squeeze

Leg 1. RR15. Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	<i>Qian Jinsong</i>
1♥	1♠ ²	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♥ ³	Pass	4NT ⁴
Pass	5♣ ⁵	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Strong club
2. 5+ spades, 8+ HCP, forcing to game
3. Splinter raise with clubs
4. RKCB
5. 1 or 4 key cards

Eight North/South pairs went to six clubs, but only three declarers made it. Two Easts put up the ace when declarer led a low diamond from dummy, so those declarers had two diamond tricks.

At the third table, the opening lead was the queen of spades. Declarer, Qian Jinsong, won with the ace and

played a low diamond to the queen and East's ace. East continued with another spade. Declarer ruffed high and West pitched a diamond. Declarer could not cash dummy's king of spades before drawing the defenders' trumps, so Qian cashed the ace of hearts and tried the queen next, hoping for jack-low or nine-eight doubleton with East. When that failed, Qian drew trumps and crossruffed spades and hearts to reach:

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

When declarer led the nine of spades from dummy and ruffed it, West was squeezed. If he pitched a heart, declarer would ruff a heart to set up a long card in the suit heart; if West pitched a diamond, declarer would cash his king of diamonds to set up dummy's nine.

That was very beautiful play!

Second Leg

Keeping Control

Leg 2. RR 6. Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♠	Pass
INT	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

When South led the diamond four, North won with the ace and returned a diamond. How would you play? Here is the full deal:

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

If trumps were three-two, the contract was cold. The problem is a four-one break, in which case you need to keep control.

Wang Xiangyang, who is a Wuhan Dongfang Club team member, won with the king of diamonds at trick two, played a club to the ace, and then ruffed a low club with the king of hearts. He then led a low trump to dummy. He stopped drawing trumps to cash the king of clubs for a diamond pitch, not concerned whether the defenders ruffed or not. Then, he could ruff the third diamond in hand and draw trumps. At most, he would lose two trumps and one diamond to make his contract.

Repeat Endplay

Leg 2. RR 7. Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	<i>Jin Kai</i>		
	1♣ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Two or more clubs
2. Spades

Jin Kai is a young player who is Zhu Chenyu's partner (the player who made four spades doubled on Board 5 from Round Robin 9 in the first leg). Jin Kai is also a member of the Chinese U-26 team. Here he was declarer in four spades.

When East led the ace of hearts and another heart, Jin Kai ruffed. According to the auction and opening lead, declarer knew that West had eight hearts, so the trumps were almost certain to be three-one or four-zero. So, Jin played the queen of spades! The East player was endplayed at the third trick.

If East had won and played a club, declarer would have avoided a club loser; if he had played a diamond, declarer would have won and cashed the trump ace and the diamonds. Then, if East had ruffed, he would have been endplayed again; if he hadn't ruffed, declarer would have thrown him in with a trump to lead a club.

Jin Kai was the only declarer to make four spades.

Suit Play

Leg 2. RR 3. Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

How would you play six spades after this auction?

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

1. Strong club
2. 5+ spades, 8+ HCP, forcing to game
3. Heart control
4. RKCB
5. 2 key cards, no queen of spades
6. King ask, guarantees all 5 key cards and the queen of trumps
7. One king

This is a very good contract, depending on the loss of only one club trick, provided trumps are no worse than four-one. West led the six of hearts. You win with the ace and draw trumps in three rounds, finding East with three and West with two. Now, how do you play the clubs?

If clubs break three-two, the contract is cold. If they are four-one, who has the one? East is slightly more likely to hold a singleton, based on Vacant Places. If West has king-ten-nine-seven of clubs, you have no path to success. You need East's singleton club to be the king, ten, nine, or seven. If you play the ace, you'd win against a stiff king; if you lead the jack, you gain against a stiff ten, nine, or seven. That is 3:1 odds, so you have to lead the jack of clubs.

The full deal was:

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

Two players made this correct suit play. They were Chen Jien, a Zhejiang Qiantang club player, and Chen Jun, a Beijing Shouchuang club player.

The qualifiers for the Final were:

1. **Wuhan Dongfang:** Lian Ruoyang, You Jianyong, Wang Xiangyang, Liu Jun, Liu Chuan, Cai Yang
2. **ORG:** Sun Yanhui, Zhang Yizhuo, Liu Yinghao, Hu Linlin, Hu Junjie, Chen Yichao
3. **PD Times:** Chen Ji, Fu Zhong, Dong Lidang, Hou Xu, Huang Yan, Yan Shi
4. **Zhejiang Qiantang:** Dai Jianming, Chen Jien, Chen Gang, Qian Jinsong, Poon Hua, Zhang Yu



With so many events online these days, but few for Seniors and Women, Włodzimierz Starkowski decided that a European Seniors Championship would be appropriate. When the European Bridge League declined to host or sponsor such an event, the Polish Bridge Union stepped in and the PBU Online European Seniors Cup was born. All EBL member NBOs were allowed two teams of any number of players and several took advantage of this; when the entries totalled 19 teams, Poland, as hosts, were allowed a third team to make up an even number.

The event consisted of 11 x 20-board Swiss matches, followed by 32-board Quarterfinals, 48-board Semifinals and a 48-board Final. The teams were seeded according to average EBL Senior masterpoints, and the first round of the Swiss featured No. 1-ranked Poland III versus No. 2 Poland I, No. 3 Sweden against No. 4 Italy I, and so on.

After the Swiss Qualifying, the non-qualifiers would continue in a five x 20-boards-per-round Swiss to determine third place, with the knockout losers dropping in. The pace was a leisurely single-round-per-day until the knockout/third-place playoff stage. All in all, it was a brilliantly conceived and executed tournament. Kudos to Starkowski and the PBU.

Round 2: NED I v. NED II

In football, derby matches are always the most interesting. Even if the technical standards are not so high, the supporters of each team are loyal and fanatical. In bridge it is the same – during prestigious events, when two teams of the same country play against one another, it is always worth seeing. When the two Netherlands teams met in the second round of the Swiss Qualifying, it was exactly as everyone expected. The teams exchanged close to 100 IMPs in 20 boards!

The start of the match was rather slow – the first three boards gave 4 IMPs to NETHERLANDS II. The big swings started on Board 4, where disciplined passes by the Netherlands II players at both tables led to a large gain:

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

Walker/Lucassen found three notrump on the East/West cards with their balanced hands...

West	North	East	South
<i>Walker</i>	<i>v.d.Voorden</i>	<i>Lucassen</i>	<i>Veger</i>
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♦ ²	Pass
1♥ ³	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Natural or balanced; 2+ clubs
2. Hearts
3. 2-3 hearts, usually balanced, 11-13 HCP

Peter van der Voorden, with such sterile shape, declined to enter the bidding in his opponent's 'suit'. However, he expressed his view of the final contract with the double, asking for a club (first suit bid by dummy) lead. What could East-/West have done? East had four cards in clubs, West the jack. A disciplined South led the ten of clubs and the defenders cashed the first six tricks; plus 500 for NETHERLANDS II.

In the replay, West did not open, and the bidding was 'won' by North:

West	North	East	South
<i>Hofland</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>v.d.Hoek</i>	<i>Carwell</i>
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Leo Hofland made a disciplined pass as West, allowing Jan Verhees an undisciplined 3=2=2=6 vulnerable preempt. The defence was merciless. East led the ace of hearts, cashed the king and switched to the jack of diamonds – king – ace. West shifted to the seven of spades to the ten; ace of spades, queen of spades. It was already two down, but it wasn't the end of the story. West let the queen of spades hold, so East played a diamond. West won the trick and played another diamond, promoting a trump trick for the eight of clubs. Four down, plus 400 and 14 IMPs for NETHERLANDS II. Had East/West been able to do it, a double by them would only have increased the IMP total by three.

Revenge came on Board 6...

Board 6. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Walker</i>	<i>v.d.Voorden</i>	<i>Lucassen</i>	<i>Veger</i>
—	—	1♦	1♠
Pass	2♦ ¹	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Invitational or better with a spade fit

Walker/Lucassen bought the deal in three hearts, North not following the Law by passing over three hearts, despite such high-card strength and a four-card fit. Probably he expected to score a plus anyway. Contrast this with Verhees' bidding at the other table.

North led the five of spades to South's king. South continued with the ace of spades and declarer ruffed in the dummy. Then followed the ace of diamonds, a diamond ruff, a spade ruff, the two high clubs and another diamond ruff, leading to this end position:

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

Declarer was in hand to lead the eight of hearts. North could win with the ten and exit with his last spade, but declarer ruffed and in turn exited with the jack of hearts, trump-endplaying North for an ignominious minus 140. Any lead of a heart or club, the queen of spades or a top diamond would have led to declarer's defeat

In the replay, North just leapt to the spade game:

West	North	East	South
<i>Hofland</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>v.d.Hoek</i>	<i>Carwell</i>
—	—	1♦	1♠
Pass	2♦	3♣	Pass
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led his singleton diamond. East took the trick with the ace and, not certain that West had a singleton, decided to bet on the jack of diamonds making a trick. He cashed the two top clubs and exited with the jack of spades. Declarer won in hand, led a spade to the nine, then a low heart. With the king about to fall on the second round of the suit, East popped up with his king, only to have it ruffed out. Declarer ruffed a club and cashed two high hearts to leave this ending:

♠ Q
 ♥ 10
 ♦ Q 10
 ♣ —
 ♠ 7
 ♥ J 9 8
 ♦ —
 ♣ —
 ♠ K 10
 ♥ —
 ♦ 7
 ♣ 10

With a complete count, declarer cashed dummy's queen of spades and ruffed the ten of hearts, squeezing East in the minors for a magnificent plus 620 and 11 IMPs for NETHERLANDS I. Note that attempting to ruff the fourth club would not have worked and that only by obtaining a diamond ruff could four spades be defeated.

Round 4: NED II v. ITA II

What is your opening bid with:

♠ A J 9
 ♥ A K Q 3
 ♦ Q
 ♣ K J 4 3 2

in first hand at red vs. white? I saw two notrump at a few tables, including this match, where Hofland raised van der Hoek to six notrump. Let's look at the complete board:

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

East led a spade and van der Hoek made an overtrick. At the other table, the Italians bid precisely to a grand slam:

West	North	East	South
<i>v. Leeuwen</i>	<i>Garbosi</i>	<i>la Hays</i>	<i>Uggeri</i>
Pass	1♣ ¹	Pass	1♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥ ²
Pass	3♠ ³	Pass	3NT ⁴
Pass	4♣ ³	Pass	4♦ ³
Pass	4NT ⁵	Pass	5♣ ³
Pass	5♦ ³	Pass	5♠ ³
Pass	7♥	Pass	Pass

1. 2+ clubs
2. Forcing
3. Control-bids
4. Turbo: an even number of key cards
5. Trump queen

At the point when Uggeri bid five spades, Garbosi knew that South had four hearts and five diamonds (the one-diamond response), both minor-suit aces (three notrump), no singleton (no splinter bid), and thus the king of spades. So he knew that South had just four cards in the black suits and that North/South held the ace-king in both suits. Well bid.

With hearts three-two, there were no problems in the play and Italy II gained 10 IMPs.

Round 5: SWE v. ITA II

The first double-digit swing occurred on Board 2. Could you have avoided it? After the bidding:

West	North	East	South
<i>Axdorph</i>	<i>Garbosi</i>	<i>Efrainsson</i>	<i>Uggeri</i>
—	—	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Partner leads the jack of hearts and you see:

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

Declarer plays the ace from dummy and continues with a spade. You take it with the ace. Three from declarer, eight from partner. What now?

I do not know the Swedish pair's signalling style exactly, but if it is more or less standard, the eight of spades suggests a heart. Efrainsson played a heart, but partner did not ruff. This was the complete deal:

Board 2. Dealer East. S Vul.

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

The Italian West in the same position followed with the four of spades to his partner's ace, and East cashed the club ace and continued with the ten of clubs to the West's king. Then a club ruff set the game by one trick.

There was a bigger (10 IMPs) swing to Italy on Board 11, where the Italians displayed a perfect defence:

Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

At both tables, East was declarer in three notrump. The Swedes were on defence after a club lead:

West	North	East	South
Mancini	Eliasson	Freddio	Elmroth
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♥ ¹	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. 5 spades and 4+ hearts, weak

South led the jack of clubs. Declarer took the trick with the king, cashed the ace of diamonds and continued with the jack. North won with the king and continued with a club to the ace. Declarer cashed all the diamonds – South discarded three hearts and a spade, dummy three spades and a heart, and North three spades. Declarer took the queen of clubs, discarding a heart from dummy, and led a spade ducking it to North's ace. North led a heart; declarer misguessed, but South could only take the ace of hearts and a club. The spade king was the ninth trick for declarer.

At the other table, the bidding was quite different:

West	North	East	South
Axdorph	Garbosi	Efraimsson	Uggeri
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣ ¹	Pass
1♦ ²	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Strong
2. Negative

Here, South led his fourth-best heart four: eight, three, five. Declarer finessed the queen of diamonds, cashed the ace of diamonds and cleared the suit. North, in with the king of diamonds, played a heart to the declarer's king and South's ace. Uggeri played the queen of spades through dummy's king and the defenders had five tricks – 10 imps to ITALY II.

Round 9: POL III v. ISR

In the battle for eighth place, Poland III (8th) met Israel (9th) in Round 10. System issues were evident in the match...

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

Romanski (Poland III) chose the 'fashionable' one-notrump opening with the East hand and it worked perfectly:

West	North	East	South
Gierulski	Orenstein	Romanski	Kalish
—	—	1NT	Pass
4♥ ¹	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Texas transfer to spades

Although East/West play a 15-17 notrump, the East hand, despite only 14 HCP, seems to be worth a one-notrump opening with its good five-card suit, particularly taking into account that after a one-diamond opening and a one-spade response by partner, there is no ideal rebid available. Both one notrump and two diamonds have obvious flaws in a 'better-minor' style.

This contract was quite safe as the cards lay. When declarer lost the diamond ace and North played a heart, ten tricks were taken.

At the other table, Frydrich opened one diamond and the bidding became competitive:

West	North	East	South
Engel	Olanski	Frydrich	Vainikonis
—	—	1♦	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♦	3♣
?			

After three clubs, West has a problem: three spades looks like an underbid, four spades looks like a wild gamble (Partner did not make a three-card, fit-showing double, so he has at most two spades), and three diamonds is also a serious underbid. Engel decided on five diamonds. Maybe double (a three-level double in the freely bid opponents' suit should always be an informative or power double) would have worked better? After double, East might have bid three hearts and now three spades would surely have been forcing.

(The West hand's choice over three clubs is an excellent problem for a bidding panel. If you decide the hand is a competitive effort only, three diamonds or three spades might be your choice; if you decide it is an invitational hand, four diamonds might be your choice; while, if you decide the hand is worth a game, you might try four clubs as a choice-of-games effort, a wild four spades or, as Engel did, five diamonds; leaving double for Partner to guess what you have. In my opinion, double should show something like 5=3=3=2, with unsure direction – one could bid three hearts with four hearts. So, if West did double, East should bid three spades, not three hearts, since West should not have four of them and East has denied three spades. That makes at least seven choices. – Ed.)

Frydrich lost the same three tricks as Romanski in four spades, so it was 10 IMPs for Poland III.

Another swing for Poland was created by the system approach on the following deal:

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

Both North players opened one club. Vainikonis took a practical approach with the South hand:

West	North	East	South
<i>Engel</i>	<i>Olanski</i>	<i>Frydrich</i>	<i>Vainikonis</i>
—	1♣	Pass	3♠ ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1. Puppet to NT			

It looked from the South hand that it would be better to protect partner's major-suit holdings than his own diamonds and Vainikonis transferred the notrumps to his partner's hand. East led a spade, and declarer, after the ace of spades, played a club to the queen and ace. West tried the king of hearts, ducked. Declarer lost one more club and had nine tricks in some comfort.

At the second table, South started with an inverted raise of two clubs (10+ HCP):

West	North	East	South
<i>Gierulski</i>	<i>Orenstein</i>	<i>Romanski</i>	<i>Kalish</i>
—	1♣	Pass	2♣
2♦	Pass	3♦	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After a diamond lead, declarer played a club to the king and a club back, so had to be set; 10 IMPs for Poland. At the first table, declarer could still have made three notrump if West had shifted to a diamond into the ace-queen, but the contract would nevertheless have been in doubt.

Round 10: DEU II v. POL III

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

In Round 10, we again saw two teams involved in the battle for eighth place. They were Germany II and Poland III. The battle was tough – 111 IMPs were exchanged in 20 boards. This was the first swing:

Both East/West pairs used the same convention here, but with different continuations:

West	North	East	South
<i>Gierulski</i>	<i>Vogt</i>	<i>Olanski</i>	<i>Fresen</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass
3NT ²	Pass	4♦ ³	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Puppet Stayman
2. 5-card heart suit
3. Transfer to hearts

Gierulski won the diamond lead and played a heart to the king. South won with the ace and exited with a diamond. Declarer entered dummy with the club ace and played the trump nine: jack, queen. Now, having two black exit-cards, declarer could make all the trumps in his hand, bringing home the contract.

At other table, the contract was the same:

West	North	East	South
<i>Straeter</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Kratz</i>	<i>Romanski</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass
3♥ ²	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Puppet Stayman
2. 5-card heart suit

Here, North also led the jack of diamonds. Declarer won and played a trump to the king (North discarding a diamond), taken with the ace. South continued with a diamond. Declarer cashed the club king and ran the club ten successfully. Next came the jack of clubs, ruffed by South, who exited with a spade. Declarer played three rounds of the suit. South took the third spade trick with the queen and exited with a diamond, ruffed in hand and overruffed in dummy. Now the ace of clubs was ruffed and overruffed. South still had the trump jack for the setting trick; plus 50 for Poland III and 10 IMPs.

It was ironic that the declarer who guessed the queen of clubs went down while the declarer who spurned a club guess made the contract.

On the following deal, the Acol-style system of the German pair worked well. Good bidding was followed by very good play.

Board 16. Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Gierulski</i>	<i>Vogt</i>	<i>Olanski</i>	<i>Fresen</i>
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West led a spade. Olanski cleared the suit, playing the king, ace, and jack. Declarer cashed dummy's diamonds (club from East) and the king of hearts, then entered hand with the heart ace. Now, when he played the diamond jack, East discarded the club nine. Declarer threw East in with a spade and East had to lead away from the club king in the two-card ending.

West	North	East	South
<i>Straeter</i>	<i>Rusyan</i>	<i>Kratz</i>	<i>Romanski</i>
Pass	1♣ ¹	1♠	Pass
Pass	Double ²	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Polish Club
2. Strong (18+HCP)

Romanski probably hoped that partner, after two spades, would be able to bid two notrump with something like king-doubleton, but not this time ... three hearts could have been a five-plus-card suit, but the heart game was hopeless. Germany II scored 11 IMPS and won the match 56-55.

Round 11: POL II v. ISR

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Mintz</i>	<i>Tuszynski</i>	<i>Limor</i>	<i>Zawislak</i>
—	—	2♥ ¹	Pass
4♠	5♥	5♠	6♥
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Weak two-suiter with spades and a minor or various strong hands

In the last round of the Swiss qualifying, some teams prayed for flat boards, others for big swings. Poland II needed a big win even to think about qualification – they were fifteenth, 9 VPs from the qualification zone. It seemed that Board 2 offered a chance:

For West, it seemed obvious that partner had the weak version, so he followed the principle of bidding what he thought he could make and jumped to the spade game. That could not stop Tuszynski, and both East and South felt obliged to bid one more.

East made an unfortunate lead – the diamond jack. Declarer won with the ace, took the ruffing finesse in clubs, preparing a place for the spade loser, and played the heart jack. West won and tried to give East a ruff, so the contract was made; plus 1660 for Poland II.

At the other table, East did not open, and probably North/South had in their heads the old Polish saying, “After one notrump, there is no play for the opponents at the three level.” North/South did try the three level, but no higher:

West	North	East	South
<i>Klapper</i>	<i>Orenstein</i>	<i>Michalek</i>	<i>Kalish</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
1NT	3♥	4♥	Double
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Transfer to spades

Who should have bid more? If the double of four hearts had shown a fit, I think North could have bid. But more probably it showed only a heart honour for the lead, so it was difficult. But from the other side, if North/South play a conservative style, after three hearts red versus white, South surely covers three or four losers in partner's hand and maybe he could bid five hearts? But there is also one more saying: “The five level belongs to the opponents.” 19 IMPs to Poland III.

IRE v. POL I

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

The Irish pair played in a safe three notrump with the East/West hands:

West	North	East	South
<i>M.O'Briain</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>P.O'Briain</i>	<i>Blat</i>
—	—	2♦ ¹	Pass
2NT ²	Pass	3♥ ³	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Weak two in either major
2. Inquiry
3. Good hand with hearts

The defence started with a diamond, so declarer lost a diamond and a spade for 11 tricks. The Polish pair had more sophisticated bidding tools at their disposal:

West	North	East	South
<i>Starkowski</i>	<i>Walsh</i>	<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Goodman</i>
—	—	2♥ ¹	Pass
2NT ²	Pass	3♣ ³	Pass
3♦ ⁴	Pass	3♠ ⁵	Pass
4♦ ⁶	Pass	4♥ ⁷	Pass
4♠ ⁸	Pass	5♦ ⁹	Double
6♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Weak two-suiter, hearts and any other suit
2. Game-forcing relay
3. 6 cards in hearts (!)
4. Relay
5. Clubs is my second suit
6. Establishes clubs as trumps and asks shape
7. 1=6=1=5 hand
8. RKCB
9. 1 key card plus the club queen.

(How many hours in the bidding room of BBO do you have to dedicate to bid in such a way?)

That system display did not reveal the most important card: the ten of spades. South followed his own lead-directing double and cashed the diamond ace and continued diamonds. After that start, it was easier for declarer. He found the best way: to take four spade tricks. He cashed two rounds of trumps and played for the ruffing finesse for the spade queen. That worked and Poland gained 10 IMPs to win the match by 4 IMPs. It was enough for seventh place and qualification.

Quarterfinals: ITA II v POL I

Bidding Matters

In my opinion, in today's high-level competitions, bidding is the crucial factor. The technical skills of most top players are on a similar level, so a board where better card play can result in a substantial gain are no more than one in 30 or 40. In the bidding, decisions are much more random as there is usually some level of uncertainty, so the swings created in that field are much more frequent. Let's look at this board from the quarterfinal match between Italy II and Poland I:

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

When a board comes along, the scores are usually compared something like this: "Board 4?" "One hundred for East/West." "Push."

South opens one notrump in fourth seat and is raised to three notrump. A heart lead is obvious from both hands, and when there is no miracle in the diamond suit, it is one down.

That was exactly what happened at one table in the match. But at the other table, South also opened one notrump, but North had a useful tool – three diamonds – asking for a five-card major:

West	North	East	South
<i>Mancini</i>	<i>Starkowski</i>	<i>Freddio</i>	<i>Kwiecien</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠(!)
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Kwiecien knew that North, when asking for a five-card major, is more often afraid about a low doubleton in a major than in a minor; so, if North has two low spades, nothing is lost, but if he happens to have two low hearts ... Taking that into account, Kwiecien decided to show his strong four-card spade suit as five, and it was like Coke, the real thing!

After a trump lead, 11 tricks were taken and 13 well-deserved IMPs went to Poland I.

Semifinal: POL I v. POL III

To undo, or not to undo, that is the question...

One of the boards of the Polish semifinal was highly unusual. You are sitting North (both vulnerable) with: ♠ KQ8765 ♥ 83 ♦ A7 ♣ 532, and the bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	2♣ ¹
Pass	2♠ ²	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
Double	??		

1. Artificial, game forcing
2. Natural, positive, at least three controls (A=2, K=1)

Continued on page 14...



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra



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1021. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

West led the jack of diamonds to the queen and king. As a club shift looked unattractive, East returned the two of diamonds. Declarer took West's nine with dummy's ace and led a low trump to his queen and West's ace. West tried to cash the ten of diamonds but declarer ruffed low and then drew trumps with his jack and dummy's king to lead a spade to his queen and West's king.

West tried a fourth round of diamonds, on the grounds that it gave nothing away that was not already known. Declarer ruffed with dummy's last trump and the contract depended on finding the queen of clubs. However, declarer cashed the ace and jack of spades in case more information could be obtained. When West threw a club on the latter, West could be counted for two spades, three trumps and four diamonds, marking him with four clubs. So, declarer led a low club to the king and a club. When West played low, declarer played dummy's jack of club to win the trick. Declarer had made two spades, three trumps, a diamond, a diamond ruff and three clubs for a total of ten tricks.

An important lesson from this deal is to delay a crucial decision until as much information as possible is gathered about the unseen hands. If everyone had followed to the third spade, declarer would still have been in a better position than not having cashed the spades.

1022. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

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

West led the ten of diamonds. Declarer counted ten top tricks, assuming spades were not 5-0. The extra tricks would have to come from either hearts or clubs. Declarer rejected playing on hearts because of the danger of a heart being ruffed by a defender with a trump higher than those in dummy. Instead, he decided to focus on the club suit. As he might need later entries to hand, declarer won the first trick with dummy's ace of diamonds and drew trumps in four rounds, while discarding dummy's low heart from dummy.

Declarer continued with ace, king and another club. When West followed to the third club with the ten, declarer threw a heart from dummy instead of ruffing.

While he would have lost an overtrick with this manoeuvre had clubs been three-three, this play ensured he maintained his entries to hand and controls in the red suits in case the clubs were four-two. West exited with a diamond to declarer's king. Declarer ruffed a club to establish the suit and claimed, as his hand was high. Declarer had made five trumps, one heart, two diamonds and four clubs and so fulfilled his contract.

You should note that it was important for declarer not to ruff the third round of clubs whenever they were divided four-two. (Doing so would have seen declarer lose control of whichever red-suit he used to return to hand to play another club.)

Also, declarer had an alternative play in clubs. He could have ducked a club on the first round of the suit and still have the entries to establish the suit whenever it was divided four-two.

1023. Dealer North. EW Vul.

```

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

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

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

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

This deal came up as the last board in a team event, with the North/South pair trailing in the match. Thus, seven diamonds.

West led the ten of spades and declarer surveyed a somewhat disappointing dummy. Declarer counted 12 tricks on top and saw that the only hope for a thirteenth was to establish a long heart. On most layouts this could only occur on a two-one diamond break together with finding hearts four-three. This plan would probably require ruffing three hearts in hand and being able to negotiate four entries to dummy.

The spade lead was inconvenient as it attacked one of those entries, but declarer found a neat countermeasure. After winning the first trick with the ace of spades, he led a low heart to the ace. Next he played the six of trumps to dummy's seven and ruffed a heart. A trump to the queen allowed another heart

ruff, which revealed the good news that the suit had divided four-three. Declarer then crossed to dummy with a low club to the ace to ruff a third heart, establishing the jack as a trick. Declarer ruffed the queen of clubs and threw his remaining spade on the jack of hearts then claimed his contract: one spade, two hearts, seven diamonds, two clubs and a club ruff.

1024. Dealer South. NS Vul.

```

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

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

      ♠ A K J 4 2
      ♥ 6
      ♦ 9 8 6
      ♣ K J 9 3
  
```

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

1. 5+ hearts and 5+ in a minor suit

West led a hopeful two of diamonds. After winning the trick with dummy's ace as East followed, West's five-card minor suit was revealed to be clubs. The lead reeked of being a singleton and suggested that West would have at least one trump. Declarer counted ten top tricks and noted that it was improbable that he could develop an extra trick in each minor. Instead, he decided to ruff two clubs high in dummy and hope that he could make five trumps in hand.

At trick two, declarer cashed the ace of clubs and led a club towards his king. When East produced a second club declarer was almost home. As the clubs were now known to be five-two, declarer ruffed a club in dummy with the ten of spades then ruffed a heart back to hand. Declarer's last club was ruffed in dummy with the queen, with East discarding a heart. Declarer continued with the ace, king and jack of trumps, discarding low diamonds from table. This left him with a trump and two diamonds in hand while East had a high trump and two diamonds.

Finally, declarer condensed his two apparent losers to one by crossing to dummy with a diamond to the king to lead dummy's carefully preserved nine of hearts. What could East do? If he ruffed high, declarer would discard his last diamond and make his twelfth trick with the four of trumps. Discarding would do no better, for then declarer would ruff the heart with his trump, making the contract.

Maybe you should redouble, maybe pass, waiting for further developments ...

At the table, North passed, and four hearts doubled became the final contract. There was nothing to the play and, after trick two, when the trump queen appeared, declarer claimed all the tricks. West was surprised when BBO showed 1390 as the North/South score, and at first, wanted to correct the mislick, but he soon realised that it was better to let the result stand. :-) Look at the complete deal:

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

What should a Tournament Director do? Can a mislick be corrected at the request of the 'non-mislicking' side?

At the other table, South decided to open one heart (Polish Club, limited to 18 HCP) with the South hand. South had to find a rebid after partner's one-spade response and realised that there was no forcing bid available! What would be your choice? At the table Michal Kwiecien found the imaginative bid of five hearts, and Starkowski added one more, to six hearts. It was plus 1460 and 2 IMPs. Would a six-diamond bid by North have led to the grand slam?

Semifinals: SWE v. DEU I

Declarer can usually be proud when he avoids finessing against a king that is singleton behind the ace. Sometimes it requires luck, sometimes it is simply a matter of logic. On Board 5 of the last segment of the Sweden – Germany I semifinal, Jurek Kozyczkowski landed in a heart game

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

<p>♠ K J 7 4 ♥ A Q J 10 8 ♦ A K ♣ 9 5</p>	<p>♠ 8 3 ♥ 7 5 4 3 2 ♦ 5 ♣ J 8 7 6 3</p>		
West	North	East	South
Jurek K.	Sellden	Lesniczak	Wenneberg
—	INT ¹	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♥	3♦	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
1. 14-16 HCP			

North led the two of diamonds, third/fifth; South played the queen. It was obvious to Kozyczkowski that North, who did not lead a club, did not have the ace-king in the suit so, in the minors, he had a maximum of the jack of diamonds and the ace-queen of clubs. Together with the ace-queen of spades gave him 13 HCP. That pretty much ensured that the king of hearts was in the North hand. Even if South had it (and North had 13 points), it would have been a singleton. Without much hope, at trick two he cashed the trump ace, and the king fell, as North's one notrump was slightly off-shape:

The contract was made for plus 420. At the second table, the German pair was one down in five diamonds, so Germany I won 8 IMPs, a crucial part of the 9-IMP difference in the match.

Final: DEU I v. POL I

Jurek Kozyczkowski often plays in Poland, but he lives in Germany. He did not make life easy for our players. Look at this nice defence he had against Markowicz:

Board 32. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

The bidding was the same at both tables:

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	Buchlev	Kwecien	Schilhart
Jurek K.	Markowicz	Lesniczak	Moszczyński
Pass	Pass	3♦	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

At both tables, the eight of hearts was led. Both declarers won with the ace, cashed two spade honours from dummy and led the club king.

Wlodek Starkowski won with the ace and it was all over. Kozyczkowski, however, ducked the club king. Declarer continued with a low club. Kozyczkowski won with the ace, played a diamond to partner's ace. Lesniczak now played a club, giving the (over)ruff and the contract was set by one trick; 11imps for Germany I.

Both sides had their chances on the next board:

Board 33. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Jurek K.	Markowicz	Lesniczak	Moszczynski
—	1♣ ¹	Pass(?)	1♦ ²
Pass	1♥ ³	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass

1. Polish Club
2. Usually negative, up to 6 HCP
3. Natural or semi-natural, can be three cards if 12-14 HCP, balanced

Not surprisingly, East did not find the only lead which could have created a problem for declarer (the ten of clubs), but instead tried the heart queen. When the jack and nine fell, declarer should have won with the ace, but he ducked. East continued hearts and declarer had an easy nine tricks.

At the other table, North/South preferred a spade game, doubled by West:

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	Buchlev	Kwiecien	Schilhart
—	1♣	2♥	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

Wlodek Starkowski led the nine of hearts. At this point, declarer could have tested Starkowski, who could not afford to throw a single low club, having to unblock twice with honours and play for the most important card of the board – the ten of clubs – in partner's hand. Throwing a low club would have given declarer the chance to endplay Starkowski in a rare throw-in squeeze. But that was double-dummy, and declarer went one off, hoping for a doubleton ace of diamonds with West.

The match was not decided until the last deal – after 47 boards the score was 96-93 for Poland I.

Board 48. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

The Polish East/West pair stopped in one notrump and was set by one trick, 50 for Germany I. On a club lead, declarer could not take more than six tricks. At the other table, it was not so easy:

West	North	East	South
Jurek K.	Starkowski	Lesniczak	Kwiecien
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠(?)	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Two spades doubled could have led to a juicy 500 for North/South, but two notrump was a good move, showing a weak five-five, and North/South found quite a good contract.

West led a spade, won by East with the ace(!) and a trump was returned: low, jack, low and a second spade was led to the king. Another heart was led. The ace was an obvious move and, when West followed with the nine, Kwiecien went into the tank.

The kibitzers already knew the result from the other table, so we could calculate that if declarer made the contract, Poland would win and, if he went down, the gold would go to Germany. It looks obvious that for just a 12-HCP opening West should have the club queen but, from a different point of view, why had West bid two spades? Would that have been sensible with:

	♠ x x x
	♥ K J 9
	♦ A Q x x x
	♣ Q x?

A one-notrump rebid looks more natural.

It took a few minutes, but at last Kwiecien played the ace of clubs and a club, claiming when the queen appeared. The PBU trophy would stay in Warsaw!

You can re-watch the transmission with my English commentary at my Twitch channel www.twitch.tv/jcchochlik



Cheating Investigations

Nicolas Hammond, Johns Creek, GA

The explosion of online bridge because of Covid-19 has generated an enormous amount of data, including that on players and pairs that have been cheating. But how do, and how should, Bridge Organizations (BO) conduct an investigation? I'm currently involved with over ten different groups, comprising both official and non-official bodies. They all have a similar philosophy, but vary differently in terms of resources, capabilities and methodology.

The cheating cases range from top players to beginners. Cheating can be self-kibitzing or collusive. The number of boards examined can range from 50 to over 7,500 (the largest case so far). Different approaches are needed for each type of case. The general process is allegation, initial investigation, simple investigation, detailed investigation, report, and hearing.

An allegation can start with a Player Memo or an email. Let's say someone made an unusual lead against you, it worked, and you file a Player Memo. In most organizations, a single Player Memo on a player will be recorded, but no action taken. It requires a number of incidents before a player will be investigated. Allegations can also start from statistical analysis of players and detecting outliers, or unexpectedly good results.

An initial investigation consists of checking a database, or asking an investigator to look at some sample sessions. For example, if a BO suspects PLAYERX is cheating on opening leads, and has access to a database of all of his opening leads, they can find out how accurate he is on opening leads. The expert average is 81% accuracy against double dummy. Very few players are above 85% for a large number of leads. The likelihood of a player cheating will increase as their double dummy opening lead accuracy rate (DDOLAR) increases and the number of times they are on lead. If the BO finds his opening leads are below average, they immediately know that it is unlikely he is cheating on opening leads. Some players in ACBL BBO games are

averaging over 90% with 400-plus leads. Checking a database takes approximately 30-60 seconds. Asking a volunteer to check some sample sessions of a suspected player takes typically two or more hours of work.

If the initial investigation suggests possible cheating, then a simple investigation starts. This begins with scope assessment. If a pair has played fewer than 250 boards, it is conceivable to do human analysis on all boards played. For pairs with 250-1,000 boards played, the scope should be narrowed, for example, by examining only opening leads. For pairs with 1,000-plus boards played, the scope should be narrowed even further, for example by examining only unusual leads, or by examining leads only against an uncontested auction. The simple investigation is usually done by one person, against a subset of the data. For example, examine only the first 50 boards on a pair. If you have not discovered something by then, you are unlikely to find anything later. Top-level players normally require an analysis of all boards played.

If the simple investigation determines there is probable cheating, then a full investigation starts. This can be from two to five players looking at all selected boards and documenting the results. Assuming the scope has been narrowed, this may take an estimated four to eight hours of work per expert.

A lot of this work is data management and can be simplified:

- with the effective use of software tools
- by using consistent spreadsheets across all investigations
- by adopting a common methodology for evaluation.

The ACBL uses a 1-5 scale for opening leads and hands with one being an anti-cheating example and five being suspicious. Other organizations use a letter scale of A to E. Other groups use various letters to indicate the likelihood of cheating on a board.

Humans are a lot better at determining cheating based on the bidding. This requires knowledge of the pair's convention card and systems. Computers are better at analyzing cheating based on card play, but human analysis is usually required to confirm the data for a hearing. Computers can only process deals double-dummy, whereas a player can analyze single-dummy.

The difference between a top-level bridge player and a cheating top-level bridge player can be as little as one played card every eight boards as declarer, or one played card every 10-12 boards as a defender, or one lead every 15-20 boards (carding agreements can be an important factor here, sometimes difficult for a computer to recognize). This can be difficult for a human player to pick up. Experience helps; therefore

every investigation should be assigned at least one experienced reviewer and one junior reviewer.

Detecting cheating is detecting the absence of errors. All players make mistakes, including cheating players. It is the lack of mistakes, or the types of decisions made, that determines if a player is cheating. Proving a player is cheating may include:

- analyzing every time that player had a bridge decision to make: either what call to make or what card to play
- recording the decision
- comparing the decision that would be expected if the player had information about his partner's hand.

Analysis is then done to show that the cheating player made more correct decisions than wrong decisions. Proving a player or pair is cheating could also include looking at a subset of their leads and showing that they consistently make the best lead if they could see both hands. The number of right-v.-wrong decisions is subjective. There are some cases where I can see that a pair is cheating, but I also know that they are not likely to be found guilty in a hearing because there are a number of anti-cheating deals.

Great care must be made to avoid "cherry-picking", the selection of boards only favourable to the prosecution. The defense must have access to all the boards that were reviewed.

Ultimately, the case may end up in a disciplinary hearing. Bridge players then have to review the actions of other bridge players, and read reports written by other bridge players. A typical ACBL case is estimated to take 200-400 hours of volunteer time by the time the hearing is over.

The process is significantly improved with the use of computer technology in the storing of data, and the analysis of that data. It is now possible to generate a complete case on a pair/player, by, for example, just focusing on their set of unusual leads, and then manually reviewing those. For pairs with 1,000-plus boards played, a complete case can take under an hour.

In a recent case, I was contacted by the head of a BO. A player was suspected of cheating. I asked the BO not to identify the player, but provide at least five BBO names of players at the same level as the suspect. This avoids any confirmation bias. After analyzing the data, the software identified a suspect; the BO confirmed it was the same player. The boards played by the suspect were then anonymized and sent out for independent review. The level of the player and of the tournaments were included with information to the reviewers. It is important that the data is anonymized to avoid any confirmation bias. The reviewers came back with their report; I provided a statistical report that identifies

the statistical ability of the player, including comparison to top level face-to-face competition. The BO now has data, including expert analysis of the anonymized data, for its hearing. The rest is up to the Bridge Organization.

Analysis shows that about 10-20% of top players were cheating when the top-level private bridge events started earlier this year. About 1-5% of pairs in ACBL speedballs are cheating and about 1% of players in ACBL Virtual Club games are cheating.

Next month we shall see "Detecting Cheating by Non-experts."



Despite the pandemic, the Norwegian Bridge Federation managed to arrange this year's Pairs and Teams Championships live. The beautiful resort of Kragerø on our south coast hosted the Pairs and, on this board, Kenneth Syversen handled his notrump contract very well indeed:

Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

Kenneth was South, and the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	1♣	INT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led a low club to the ten and knave. Syversen led a heart to the seven and queen. East shifted to a spade and, on a diamond towards dummy, the knave was allowed to win. The knave of hearts secured three tricks in that suit for a total of nine.

On the next board, Rune Kjos declared three notrump as South and landed 12 tricks, albeit with a little help from his opponents:

Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led a low spade. When Kjos ducked it in the dummy, East won with his ten and shifted to a low heart. Kjos went up with the ace to cash his diamonds. Before the last one the position was:

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

On the two of diamonds, South discarded his seven of clubs; West, squeezed in three suits, wrongly decided to part with his queen of clubs. On the following two club tricks, he was squeezed again in the major suits, and 12 tricks netted a formidable score. A spade discard on the ultimate diamond would have held declarer to 11 tricks.

The Teams Championship was played in mid-October. The venue was Larvik, a seaport, also on our south coast. Again Kenneth Syversen had a chance to shine:

Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♣ ¹
Pass	1♦ ²	Pass	2♥ ³
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass
1. 2+ clubs			
2. Hearts			
3. 4 hearts, minimum hand			

West led the ten of clubs. Syversen won with his ace and ruffed a club in dummy. The spade knave ran to the queen, and the heart return was taken by dummy's ten. Declarer led a spade to the king and ace and West led another heart to the king. Syversen played a diamond to his ace, finessed the seven of spades and threw his diamond loser on the ten. Two diamond ruffs in hand and a club in dummy secured ten tricks, plus 790 and 12 IMPs since the contract was three clubs by East, down one at the other table.

On this board, silver medalist Tom Johansen set a neat trap to catch his opponents:

Dealer South Neither Vul.

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

Johansen was North and the bidding was simple:

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

East led the queen of diamonds. Johansen won with dummy's king and three rounds of trumps cleared the suit. A diamond to the ace, and Johansen realized that establishing a long heart would inevitably cause the opponents to shift to clubs. Instead he played the ten of clubs, which ran to East's ace, who felt himself to be in an awkward position. After careful consideration, he shifted to the knave of hearts and thought he had found the right move when his partner followed with the seven and Tom with the nine! Another heart followed and the trap was revealed when Tom took his ace and finessed the eight for a club discard.

Cranky Pärnu

Karlis Rubins,
Sigulda, Latvia



Pärnu, the fourth-largest city in Estonia, lies near the Baltic Sea, just a two-hour drive from my home city of Sigulda. I have been there many times, mostly for bridge tournaments – the Estonian Pairs Cup is held there every autumn; also, the Summer Festival and the Baltic Cup have been played there. In the summer, the city is great: sunny, with a sandy beach, pubs, cafés, its own theatre, and museums. In the autumn, it becomes like most of the Baltic – windy, rainy, cold, and sad. But this time it was even cranky!

The Covid situation in the Baltic states is better at the moment than in most parts of Europe. Latvia was a long-time leader, but now the stats are better in Estonia. Bridge is played live both in clubs and tournaments and, as there were no restrictions to enter or leave Estonia, a few Latvian pairs went to play the Estonian Pairs Cup held in Pärnu on the 17th and 18th of October.

The format is 17 rounds of Swiss, six boards per round, IMP-scoring converted to VP. Thirty-nine pairs took part in the tournament, a little fewer than usual. I played with Martins Lorencs, with whom I've been playing for the Latvian Open team, but the last time we played had been in July. We made too many mistakes this time, but still had a good game and finished in second place.

The best single result we had was on the ninth board of the tournament. I was the dealer, with only the opponents vulnerable, and picked up this collection:

♠ 8
♥ J 10 8 3 2
♦ J 10 3
♣ 9 8 7 3

I was reaching the green card, when I remembered that Lorencs and I play very weak three-level major pre-empts when we are at favourable vulnerability. Jack-empty-sixth is okay, but, here, I had an extra jack for my missing heart. I opened three hearts and my adrenaline-level was elevated while waiting for the development of the auction. The bidding continued:

West	North	East	South
—	Rubins		Lorencs
—	3♥	Pass	Pass
3NT	Pass	4NT	Double(!)
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The rest was easy: Martins' double asked for an unusual lead and, normally in such situations, it asks for the

unbid major. After the spade lead, we took the first seven tricks and won 15 IMPs when the complete deal looked like this:

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

The results of the event can be found at:
<https://old.bridge.ee/klubid/krk20All.html>

But why was Pärnu “cranky”? After 60 boards of live bridge, I had to play the final of the JOUST tournament at <http://bridgezone.org/WB/Default.asp>. Our team – “Cranky” (Alfejeva-Rubins from Latvia, Curlin-Koldzic from Serbia, Prokhorov-Voronov and Vorobeichikova-Gerasimov from Russia) – had to face a 36-board final against an American team and, due to differences in the time zones, the only possible time to play was Saturday night. After being down 11 IMPs in the first segment, we had great results in both rooms and a clear victory by 55 IMPs (the second segment results are here: <https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=33152-1602959247&u=karlisr>).

One very interesting tactical decision occurred on the sixth board when I held:

♠ A K Q 7 5
♥ 8
♦ Q 8 5
♣ K Q 7 3

With just the opponents vulnerable, the bidding started with one heart from my LHO, pass from Jelena and one forcing notrump from RHO. Now I had three options: (i) start with double, (ii) bid two clubs, showing both clubs and spades, or (iii) bid just two spades, planning to reopen on the next round. Two clubs usually shows better clubs and secondary spades, and the double may make the situation complicated on the next round, especially if the opponents reach three or four. So, I decided to start with two spades and the bidding continued ...

West	North	East	South
—	Rubins		Alfejeva
—	—	1♥	Pass
1NT	2♠	3♥	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Jelena started with the three of spades and we had an easy defence when the full deal looked like this:

Board 6. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

I played 3 rounds of spades and declarer made a mistake ruffing with the six of hearts. Then he unblocked the ace of diamonds and played a low heart, Jelena took the ten and switched to clubs. Later we took one club and three more trump tricks, when I led a spade through declarer's jack-seven-four-three of hearts and Jelena refused to overruff the seven, promoting her five into a trick.

My best memories of October were of Cranky Pärnu until I had a fun defence in our regular Wednesday practice match. I was dealt the following:

♠ K Q J 9 2
 ♥ Q 7 6
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ 9 4 3

I opened with one spade and the bidding ended quickly:

West	North	East	South
Rubins	Khazanov	Alfejeva	Lebedeva
1♠	Double	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I led the king of spades and soon regretted that I had not picked the two. This dummy came down and Jelena followed with the seven (upside down).

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

The longer declarer thought, the more I realized that we had a chance: if Alfejeva could take a trick and play a spade – we could take five tricks. But, from the bidding, it looked like all the missing aces were with Lebedeva. A low diamond from the table followed and I unblocked my king under the ace. Declarer played a diamond to the queen and a low heart from the dummy to the ten (thank you), king, and I unblocked my queen. Honour on honour they say, and soon after that we defeated the game. The complete deal looked like this:

♠ 10 8 6 5 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ A J 8 ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ Q 10 6 5	♠ K Q J 9 2 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ K 4 ♣ 9 4 3 ♠ A ♥ K 8 5 4 ♦ Q 10 8 6 3 ♣ K 7 2
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**The Dog
That Barked
in the Night**
**Mark Horton,
Shrewsbury,
Shrops., UK**



Having enjoyed one of Mrs. Hudson's delightful late-night suppers, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were enjoying a second glass of Cockburn's 1847 Vintage Port as they prepared to review the boards from the evening's duplicate at the Diogenes Club. Pausing only to recharge his pipe with a mixture of Old Shag from one of his Persian slippers, Holmes presented Dr. Watson with these cards:

Dealer East. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Mycroft	Dr. Watson	Lestrade	Sherlock
—	—	Pass	INT
3♦	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“You will recall the deal, Watson. It may be suitable for your next book, *The Bridge Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.”

“Indeed I do Holmes, although I cannot for the life of me see how you worked it out,” replied Watson.

Mycroft had led the jack of spades and Holmes had won with the ace, crossed to the ace of hearts, overtaken the queen of hearts with the king and cashed the jack and ten. On the third round of the suit, East discarded the three of clubs and then threw the nine of diamonds on the fourth heart. Having paused for reflection, Holmes continued with a spade to the ace, West following with the seven, and called for dummy’s four of clubs. When East played the ten, Holmes followed with the two! West won the trick with the jack and, having only diamonds left, had to surrender a trick to the king of diamonds, giving Holmes his contract..

“How the deuce did you know that Mycroft held the singleton jack of clubs?” enquired Watson.

“I didn’t,” replied Holmes, “but unless he did or, for that matter, held the singleton king, then the contract could not be made. When dummy appeared, my initial thought was that West was likely to hold the king of clubs for his intervention. If East could gain the lead, a diamond through would have been fatal, so it was essential to avoid that eventuality. My plan was to remove all the major-suit cards from West’s hand and then play two rounds of clubs, hoping to achieve an endplay. When West proved to have four hearts, his pattern was likely 1=4=6=2 or 2=4=6=1. The precaution of playing a second round of spades, crossing to dummy’s ace, proved it was the former. Had West shown out of spades, I would have played two rounds of clubs. The appearance of the seven of spades forced me to rely on West’s singleton club being the jack or king.”

“Why was that Holmes?”

“If East were to be kept off lead, it was essential that West’s singleton club be either the jack or king to force him to lead diamonds for me.”

“I see,” said Watson, “but why didn’t you cash the fifth heart before playing the second spade?”

“Because, my dear fellow, it would have afforded West the opportunity to dispose of the jack of clubs.”

“Incredible, Holmes.”

“Elementary, my dear Watson.”



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

PRESS RELEASE

FED UP WITH CORONA? FACE-TO-FACE EVENT

If you, like most of us, are longing to get back to playing face-to-face international bridge, you should reserve the dates 8-13 February, 2021 in your calendar. Together with the Bulgarian Bridge Federation, the EBL is hoping to arrange an Open Teams and Swiss Pairs event in Sofia open to all members in good standing with a WBF NBO.

We are aiming at a deadline of December 15 to make the final decision to go ahead, depending on the COVID-19 situation.

The playing environment itself will be set up in the safest way possible, with good distance between tables, private bidding boxes, full sets of boards at each table and only one person permitted to touch bridge mates. Only pre-registered players will be allowed to participate. All sessions will be of 10 boards each.

The probable format will be a 3-day Open Swiss Teams, from which the top 16 teams play a full “round robin” over 3 days. The remaining players will play a MP-scored Swiss Open Pairs over those days (at which new players/pairs are welcome). Subject to certain minimum participation requirements, separate awards will be given to the best Women, Seniors, Mixed and U26 teams, but all will play together in an Open category event.

Generous European Master Points will be awarded.

The event website will soon be opened at <http://www.eurobridge.org/> with all necessary information for registration requests, accommodation options, etc.

In order to keep proper distance between tables we may have to limit the number of participants, so it is imperative that you register as early as possible as requests will be accepted on a “first come first served” basis.

Payments must be made in advance, but not until December 16 when the final go-ahead is given. We hope that you take this opportunity to get back to the green tables for an exciting international event!

NEWS & VIEWS



Master Point Press



Ray Lee

52 Entertainment, in its quest to take over the bridge world (it already holds *Le Bridgeur*, BBO, CBO, Funbridge and Bridge Baron), has announced the acquisition of Master Point Press of Toronto. Ray Lee will stay on as CEO of MPP.

Giorgio Duboin – Yet Another Sad Day for Bridge



Giorgio Duboin

Bridge Winners reported on November 5, <http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/the-hand-records-speak-giorgio-duboin/>

“...Mr. Duboin obtained and used unauthorized information (UI), very likely from self-kibitzing.”

That conclusion was drawn by an expert panel consisting of Sjoert Brink, Michal Nowosadzki and Steve Weinstein from an exhaustive analysis of 708 deals played online by Duboin in May and June of 2020. Their analysis was supplemented by statistical data from Jonathan Cooke and Nicolas Hammond and subjected to peer review by Bob Hamman and Geir Helgemo. A

full 189-page report of their analysis has been written by a team led by Oren Kriegel.

Duboin has won six World Championships, 15 European Championships and 15 North American Bridge Championships and serves on five WBF committees. A shadow is now cast over all of these.

LINKS:

The folder with the report and appendices: <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd>

The main report: <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd-mainreport>
Appendix A (A full record of all deals played by Duboin): <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd-duboinrecords>

Appendix B (A spreadsheet with all analysis of deals played by Duboin): <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd-duboin-analysis>

Appendix C (A spreadsheet with all analysis of deals played by Simon de Wijs and Bauke Muller, a known non-cheating pair, for comparison): <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd-dutchdealanalysis>

Appendix D (Hammond's report): <https://tinyurl.com/thrsgd-hammondreport>

Reaction was swift, if a touch political and/or defensive (presented here unedited):

The European Bridge League produced a statement from its president, Jan Kamras, which stated: “Neither EBL nor I can comment on third-party reports over which we have no control or influence. Players are not members of the WBF or the EBL – only NBOs are. The EBL has no right to control what private individuals say in public forums simply because they are from Europe. This has nothing to do with any ‘procedure’, just free speech and the reconcilability of those expressing and publishing the accusations.”

Gianarrigo Rona, president of the World Bridge Federation and a past-president of both the EBL and the FIGB (the Italian Bridge Federation) said, “I see this in exactly the same way as EBL president Jan Kamras did. The matter that you raise is a cause for concern to all who care about the future of bridge and the fairness of any process that seeks to challenge the action of bridge players. I understand that the matter is currently before the Court in an action brought by Giorgio Duboin against various people who he believes have caused him damage. As such, that is a private matter but it is clearly *sub judice* and as such, in my opinion, should not be subject to public comment at this time. It is important that the Rule of Law is respected.”

The president of the Federazione Italiana Gioco Bridge, Francesco Ferlazzi Natoli, was incandescent with rage: “The umpteenth attack to Italian bridge and to its leading representatives, this time against Giorgio Duboin, is perpetrated by people who define their moral mark by cowardly hiding behind a professional website (this time it's Bridge Winners).”

Natoli continues, "...I wish to show to Giorgio Duboin all my personal esteem and solidarity, which I think are in tune with the feelings and the thoughts of all Italian bridge players..." "...I am surprised by President Rona's and President Kamras's statements. I totally disagree with the alleged impossibility of intervening, declared by the two Presidents. The Italian Bridge Federation (FIGB), thereby, formally asks WBF and EBL for a sanctioning action against those who have made a serious defamation, and this not only to protect the dignity and honourableness of the good name of Italian Bridge and its representatives, but also to protect Bridge."

WBF Executive Council Elections



Left to right: Helen Kruger, RSA; Fernando Lema, Argentina; Wang Yannan, China

The World Bridge Federation has announced that at the Residual Congress Meeting held on 3rd November, 2020, Helen Kruger from South Africa, Fernando Lema from Argentina and Wang Yannan from China were elected as members of the WBF Executive Council for the term 2020-2022.

Statement from the ALT

The ALT events are invitational events. The original idea behind the ALT was to organise tournaments with world class players on BBO to provide an opportunity for top level bridge and potentially creating an income for professional players during corona. Furthermore the ALT wanted to give a chance to all the bridge enthusiasts isolated in their homes to be entertained by world class bridge.

The ALT allowed and encouraged kibitzers and stated that invitations were granted to participants, who were not only world class, but also highly ethical players. Sadly it became clear during the spring of corona that some players deliberately violated the ethical conduct of bridge and the ALT's Conditions of Contest.

We are now ready to move on. A player who has not been welcome due to violation of our CoC will now have the opportunity to play again in our world class online events on the following conditions:

- The player has to declare that he/she has violated the ethical conducts of bridge during online matches with the risk of influencing the results of the match/tournament.
- The player must agree to make such a statement in the ALT bulletin – a statement for the ALT organisers alone is not sufficient.

The ALT provides the player with a second chance by revoking the non-invite decision, effective the next tournament after the statement made by that player. Should the player once again violate the ethical conducts of bridge (including online bridge), the player will not be allowed back ever. The ALT has taken this first step to move on. We have now become used to the temporary reality in the online bridge world and we are of the hope that all players are now fully aware of the consequences of their actions.

This statement also means that players who have previously publicly confessed will from today no longer be denied an invitation to participate in the ALT events based on their history. We hope that we can encourage others to follow their example.



Correspondence

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JJ Wang on Bidding of the Year Candidate

Dear John,

I have some comments on Whibley/Brown's deal. (one of the nominees for IBPA's Bidding of the Year deal), IBPA Bulletin No. 659, page 12.

Theoretically, if focusing on the heart distribution (to simplify the calculation a little bit), six diamonds would gain 14 IMPs only if South holds the jack-fourth of hearts (an 11.2% chance), or 1.57 IMP on average. However, six hearts would win 2 IMPs if hearts were three-two or North had a singleton jack, jack-fourth or -fifth (an 87.8% chance), or 1.76 IMPs on average.

Both six hearts and six diamonds would go down if South had jack-fifth (a 2% chance), as North could get a heart ruff when defending six diamonds.

So, with six hearts beating six diamonds by 0.19 IMPs on average, I am not sure if we can say six diamonds is a superior contract.

Of course, it would be quite different if East/West did not have the ten-nine of hearts. However, it was Brown who decided to play six diamonds when holding the ten-nine of hearts (if partner had the jack of hearts, six hearts would have more of an edge).

Regards, JJ Wang, College Park, MD

(That's all very well, JJ, but, in a team match, losing 2 IMPs when you reach a slightly superior contract is accepted with equanimity, however rare it may be. However, when the opponents win 14 or 16 IMPs for reaching a superior slam contract, however slight the margin, it is disastrous, both mathematically and psychologically. – Ed.)

Guide to Online Events

With the Covid-19 pandemic forcing the cancellation of bridge tournaments worldwide, there has been a proliferation of online bridge events. Here is the information we have been able to gather to date:

WBF – Cancelled the 2020 Online World Championship until such time as a live final can be played. See <http://www.worldbridge.org>

ACBL – Has been organising pair events on BBO for some years now. See <https://www.acbl.org> and <https://www.bridgebase.com>

Zonal Organisations – Some Zones of the World Bridge Federation have run and will continue to run online championships until the pandemic ends. Check the Zonal websites for information.

NBOs – Many National Bridge Organisations have organised, or are in the process of organising, online events for their own members. Check the NBO websites for specifics.

Reynolds Knockouts – TD Tom Reynolds has been organising monthly knockout tournaments and quarterly double elimination knockouts since April. Information can be found at <http://www.reynoldsteammatches.com>

Alt Invitationals – Invitational tournaments, usually lasting five-seven days, have been organised since April by bid72 and netbridge.online. To date, there have been Alt Invitationals (open team tournaments), Alt Mixed events (all comprising eight teams), and Alt Majors (32 teams). Information can be found at <https://bid72/events>. Each event has a daily bulletin. Email info@netbridge.online for an invitation (Jan van den Hoek).

OCBL – The Online Contract Bridge League organises Open and Mixed events. Details can be found at <https://ocbl.org>

Bridgehouse – This new organisation is now arranging online team events with daily bulletins and pretty hefty registration fees. Information can be found at <https://bridgehouse.club>

All of the online tournaments named above are on BBO. Other useful sites for information are <https://bridgescanner.com> and <https://bridgewinners.com>

Anyone organising an online tournament can submit details to Marek Wójcicki at marek.wojcicki@bridge.com.pl for inclusion on the IBPA website.



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