



BULLETIN

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THE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE PRESS ASSOCIATION

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This Bulletin is published monthly and circulated to members of the International Bridge Press Association, comprising the world's leading journalists, authors and editors of news, books and articles about contract bridge, with an estimated readership of some 200 million people who enjoy the most widely-played of all card games.

Bulletin No. 674

March 10, 2021

As of press time, details of the World Bridge Federation's 2021 World Team Championships and its 2021 World Youth Team Championships have not been announced. The ACBL has cancelled the St. Louis Spring NABC, moved the Providence Summer NABC to 2022 and has plans to hold the Austin Fall NABC as scheduled. We are hopeful and cautiously optimistic that face-to-face bridge will fully return in 2021.

On that note, the European Bridge League is planning to hold the European Team Championships in Madeira, from June 12 to June 22, as scheduled. If they succeed in doing so, this would be an important step forward, both in terms of holding the event and also for clarifying the steps that must be taken for success. IBPA asked Jan Kamras, EBL President, a few questions about the EBL's plans for and the logistics of holding the tournament during the pandemic.



European Bridge League

IBPA: Mr. President, in its February Press Release, the EBL says that it is still somewhat hopeful that the situation (the pandemic and related restrictions) will improve sufficiently to allow the EBL to go ahead with the European Championships as planned. Is that to say that you intend to stage the Championships as usual if you deem it possible to bring in your staff, or will you also consider the NBOs' ability to participate?

JK: We are as concerned for the participants as we are for the staff. If a significant number of NBOs are not be able to participate, we will not go ahead with the face-to-face event. There may be questions as to how to interpret 'able' – I can imagine some NBOs that would be 'able' to, in the strictest sense of the word, but may elect not to participate anyway out of an abundance of caution, or for financial reasons.

IBPA: Does this mean that you will let the popular vote among your members determine what to do?

JK: No – and in our communications with the NBOs we have invited their comments, but made it very clear that we will not take a formal poll. There are too many imponderables and NBOs can have different motivations for their preferences, not all related to the pandemic. The EBL Executive will

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have to decide based on a variety of factors, one of them being that the European National Team Championships also serve as the qualifier for participation in the 2021 World Team Championships. (In the Open, Women's, Seniors, and Mixed Team events. – Ed.)

IBPA: Have you, or will you consider hybrid solutions where the NBOs are given a choice between participating in person or virtually?

JK: During 'brain-storming' sessions, it has, of course, been mentioned, among many possible alternatives but, ultimately, not seriously considered a candidate. It would not provide a level playing field, either sportingly or financially, for a long list of reasons.

IBPA: Assuming that you decide to go ahead with face-to-face bridge, how will you prevent the spread of Covid-19 among the participants at the venue?

JK: The protocol will likely include:

- No visitors at the venue, only accredited participants and staff.
- Pre-registration and pre-payment only.
- Pre-printed badges (to minimise waiting in lines).
- Some combination of (i.) proof of vaccination, and (ii.) up-to-date negative Covid-19 test.
- Compulsory wearing of face masks or shields by all.
- About 20 m² space per table.
- As usual, full sets of boards at each table.
- Cards only touched by one player every 2nd or 3rd day.
- Only one player touches the Bridgemates, cleaned between rounds.
- Personal Bidding Boxes.
- No, or very limited, ceremonies (they are always crowded).

IBPA: What does an "Up-to-date negative Covid-19 test" involve? Will you provide Covid-19 testing during the venue?

JK: These are just preliminary thoughts to be discussed with the local host, but I mean within 48 hours of arrival. Regular testing on site will also be considered.

IBPA: Will the Madeira event count as qualification for the World Teams if some nationalities are denied entry to Portugal?

JK: This is exactly the weighing of factors that will have to be done once more facts are known. If a significant number of countries were to be denied entry, we would probably either not stage it face-to-face or possibly use some other hybrid formula for qualification (but not some F2F and some online).

Anyway, all this still has to be decided within the Executive once we know more, both from the local host and feedback from NBOs.

IBPA: In your February Press Release, you also said that if you are forced to cancel this year's European National Team Championships in Madeira, that you intend to move them to 2022. If a significant number of countries are denied entry to Madeira, does this mean there would be (a.) no ENTTC event this year, or (b.) only some sort of qualification (online or hybrid) for the World Team Championships?

JK: I don't want to pre-judge this now. The Executive Committee and the Championship Committee are in the process of evaluating all variables. In any case, such a "Plan B" event would be a very serious one, with European master points awarded (albeit possibly at a reduced scale if 'only' a WTC qualifier).

IBPA: What precautions to prevent cheating will be taken if you are forced to play the qualifications online? Will each NBO be responsible for checking itself?

JK: We have a task force that is, right now, discussing all aspects of arranging an online event, including the one you are asking about. No – unless in exceptional circumstances, an NBO will not 'supervise' itself. Independent observers will be used and each playing area will be required to be set up to a specific pre-determined standard. We would most likely use the RealBridge platform and our goal is to arrange it in a way that is, at least, as safe as the usual face-to-face setup.

IBPA: The "usual face-to-face setup" has not prevented cheating in the past. What, if any, special precautions is the EBL taking to prevent cheating at its next face-to-face Championship?

JK: The main visible addition is that we will have high resolution cameras recording at every table, and all of their recordings will be stored for future use. We hope this will both serve as a preemptive measure and an aid in later investigations of cheating allegations. Not less important is that it will help the TDs (and other officials) in determining what actually happened at the table (alerts, explanations, behaviour, etc.), and verifying slow play (without human monitors), without having to rely on typically self-serving statements by the players. We may also add other measures which will not be advertised.

IBPA: Thank you for your time and patience. We wish you good luck with the difficult decisions that you have to make.



Transatlantic Seniors Championship

Mark Horton, Shrewsbury, Shrops., U.K.

Björn Wenneberg, Stockholm, Sweden

Gunnar Elmroth, Östersund, Sweden

Erdal Sidar, Istanbul

After organising a successful European Senior Championship in 2020, the Polish Bridge Union joined forces with the Canadian Bridge Federation to conduct the 2021 Transatlantic Seniors Championship for the Julian Klukowski Memorial Trophy, with Daily Bulletins very capably edited by Mark Horton and Marek Wojcicki. The latter event was open to national teams from Europe, Africa and the Americas. Thirty-eight teams took part, playing in a two-week, 13-round Swiss (one 20-board match per day) to qualify the top 16 for knockout play (two-day, 48 board matches). The non-qualifiers continued in the Swiss (joined by KO losers) to determine the bronze-medal placing. Teams were allowed to consist of any number of players.

Unless otherwise noted, the deals have been authored by Mark Horton.

Strength in Depth

I haven't had the time to examine the field closely (perhaps tonight over a glass of something red) but it is clearly packed to the rafters with champions. It might easily be the strongest field ever assembled for a Senior event. With so much talent, where to go? I opted for Turkey vs. France Marill in Round 2.

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Pilon</i>	<i>Ekinci</i>	<i>Marill</i>	<i>Karadeniz</i>
—	1♦	Double	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

North led the jack of clubs; declarer won with dummy's king and returned the nine to North's ten. North switched to the ten of hearts and declarer won with the ace and continued with the six of clubs, North winning as South discarded a diamond. North exited with the heart nine. Declarer won in dummy, cashed another heart, North throwing the nine of diamonds, and exited with the deuce of spades. If South goes up with the ten, cashes the jack of hearts and exits with a spade, declarer is doomed, but South played the four and the nine saw North win with the king. He tried the five of spades, but declarer put in dummy's jack and could cash out for nine tricks, plus 400.

Once South has pitched a diamond on the third club, declarer can get home by exiting with a heart rather than a low spade. South wins and doubtless plays a diamond, but declarer takes the ace and cashes two clubs, squeezing North. However, if South throws a spade instead, then this line no longer works, as long as South plays a diamond when in with the jack of hearts.

We are not finished with this deal yet. When North switches to the ten of hearts, suppose declarer ducks? North plays another heart, but declarer wins with his ace and plays the six of clubs, North winning and exiting with a club (a low spade is the best shot, forcing declarer to guess to play dummy's jack), but declarer cashes two tricks in that suit and then cashes dummy's hearts, squeezing North (declarer still has to read the ending).

Finally, and perhaps the key point, North should duck the nine of clubs! That leaves declarer short of an entry to establish the clubs.

West	North	East	South
<i>Zorlu</i>	<i>Bompis</i>	<i>Avcioğlu</i>	<i>Soulet</i>
—	1♦	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North led the ten of hearts. Declarer won with the ace and played a club to the king and another club, North winning with the jack and continuing with the nine of hearts. Declarer was in bad shape, but he won, cashed another heart and played the two of spades. When South followed with the four (it was hard to play the ten!) North won with the king and found the now essential play of returning a spade. Declarer won with dummy's jack but could only score two more tricks; minus 100 and 11 IMPs.

Don't Wake a Sleeping Bear - Björn Wenneberg

In the Swiss match between Germany I and Sweden (Round 4) ...

Board 18. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

The bidding was the same at both tables:

West	North	East	South
Wenneberg	Kozyczkowski	Selldén	Lesniczak
Schilhart	Efraimsson	Buchlev	Axdorph
—	—	Pass	Pass
2♠ ¹	4♦ ²	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Weak: spades and a minor, can be 5-4
2. Leaping Michaels: diamonds and hearts, at least 5-5, GF

The same lead was also made at both tables: the two of spades (showing an odd number) to the king and ace. What would you lead at trick two? You know that declarer has at least 5-5 in the red suits. If your partner exactly ace-fifth in hearts, a heart must be returned for a ruff. But what if he has something else? So, club king? A diamond?

At one table, a diamond was returned, not waking up the bear. After pulling two rounds of trumps, declarer played the ace and king of hearts, which was ruffed by West. West then shifted to the club king and the contract was one down when declarer couldn't establish the fifth heart.

At the other table, Bengt-Erik Efraimsson was declarer and, after the ace of spades, West shifted to a heart. Declarer won the heart return and cashed two rounds of diamonds, crossed to dummy with the ace of clubs and played a heart. The defence couldn't do anything to avoid declarer taking his 11 tricks.

But what is the safest play for 11 tricks? After one round of trumps, just lead a low heart after the ace of hearts, in case of a singleton! However, losing one IMP on playing safe each time will also cost a lot of IMPs in the long run.

Tough Calls

The Round 6 encounter between USA I (Wolfson) and Poland I (Markowicz) contained a number of deals where the bidding was of paramount importance. This was one...

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Bizon	Weinstein	Blat	Becker
—	—	—	1♣
Pass	2NT	3♣ ¹	Pass
3♦	Double	Redouble ²	Pass
3♠	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. "Both majors, I hope"
2. "Same length, I hope"

North led the five of clubs and declarer won with dummy's king and played the two of hearts for the eight, seven and four. South continued with the two of clubs to dummy's ace and declarer cashed the ace of hearts, ruffed a heart, ruffed a club and ruffed a heart with the ten of spades. North overruffed with the jack and switched to the two of diamonds, South winning with the ace and returning the queen. The jack of hearts was ruffed by South who played the queen of clubs, North ruffing with the ace of spades. That ensured two down for minus 500.

West	North	East	South
Sartorius	Kwiecien	Rogoff	Starkowski
—	—	—	1♣ ¹
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
	1. Polish Club		

East led the ace of hearts and continued with the jack, declarer winning with dummy's queen and playing a club for the four, jack and king. The return of the five of hearts went to declarer's king as West pitched the three of diamonds. Declarer cashed four diamonds, East discarding three spades, then crossed to the king of spades and led a spade to the jack. East claimed the rest for two down, plus 200 and 12 IMPs.

A Brilliant Defence - Gunnar Elmroth

The following deal is from Sweden's match against Turkey in Round 6. After unopposed bidding, you, South, are the declarer in four hearts:

Board 20. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ 8
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ A K J 9 8 6 5
 ♣ 10 6 5

♠ A K 5
 ♥ A J 9 6 4 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ 4 2

West	North	East	South
Zorlu	Eliasson	Avcioglu	Elmroth
Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass	3♥ ²
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- 5+ diamonds, 11-15 HCP
- 6+ hearts, GF

The defence starts with the king of clubs, followed by a low one to the ace. East shifts to the ten of diamonds. You would have preferred a spade shift, but not this time. Now what? It sure looks like a singleton diamond, East hoping to find his partner with a heart entry. Well, if it is, your only hope is that West holds either the king-third or singleton king of hearts. If East actually has the king of trumps, there is no threat to the contract.

But what if it was a clever shift from a doubleton? Can you make it whether diamonds are three-one or two-two? That depends. If you try to ruff the spade first and run the trump queen to the king, you will go down if East is out of diamonds. Is it better put up the ace? Not good if West has king-ten-third. But you could still be on the right track. If East has the doubleton-ten of hearts with a singleton diamond, the heart jack after the ace does the job. But if diamonds are two-two, a low heart will be the winner if the king is doubleton. It's a tough decision.

At the table, I played the ace and another heart. This was the full deal:

♠ 8
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ A K J 9 8 6 5
 ♣ 10 6 5

♠ J 9 6 2
 ♥ 10 7 5
 ♦ Q 4
 ♣ K Q 7 3

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

♠ A K 5
 ♥ A J 9 6 4 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ 4 2



After East won with the king of hearts, another diamond finished me off. The clever Mr. Avcioglu of the Turkish team had found the elegant switch from a doubleton diamond and king-low of hearts. Kudos.

Probably it is not necessary to add that I was the only declarer who went down in a heart game.

Return to Action

Having enjoyed their rest day, the players returned refreshed for Round 7. I could not resist following the match between USA4 Lall and Scotland Blue which featured some of the biggest names in bridge – and Bob Hamman and Zia were also involved.

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

♠ 8 6 4 3
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ A K Q J 4
 ♣ A 5

♠ A K Q J 5
 ♥ 8 3
 ♦ 9 8 7 2
 ♣ 9 7

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

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

West	North	East	South
Hamman	D. Diamond	Weichsel	M. Diamond
—	1♦	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South led the three of diamonds. North won with the jack and continued with the queen, declarer ruffing, drawing trumps and enjoying dummy's spades for plus 450.

West	North	East	South
Silverstone	Rosenberg	Shenkin	Zia
—	1♦	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

North led the ace of diamonds and continued with the jack, forcing dummy to ruff. Declarer took the top hearts, pitching a diamond, and North ruffed, cashed the king of diamonds and continued with the queen, South pitching the four of clubs. Declarer ruffed and drew trumps, but North's ace of clubs was the setting trick; plus 50 and a swing of 11 IMPs.

One could write a few pages about the best approach with the East/West hands. For instance would you prefer a two-suited overcall to start?

High Flyers

In Round 9, I decided to keep an eye on England Mossop vs. USA3 Levine.

Board 17. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

<p>♠ 10 5 2 ♥ K J 8 7 5 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ 9 6 4 ♥ — ♦ J 7 5 2 ♣ 10 9 8 7 6 2</p> <p>♠ K ♥ 9 6 4 3 2 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ A 5 4 3</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 8 7 3 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ 10 4 ♣ K J</p>
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West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
—	1♥	Double	4♥ ¹
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Double ²	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Wide range
2. Wants to bid 5♥

South led the two of hearts. Declarer pitched a club from dummy, won with the queen, cashed the ace of hearts, pitching another club, ruffed a heart and played a club for the queen, king and ace. South returned the club three and North ruffed, led the queen of diamonds, followed by the ace, and then switched to the five of spades, declarer smartly putting up the ace for one down, minus 100.

West	North	East	South
<i>Passell</i>	<i>Mossop</i>	<i>Lair</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>
—	1♥	Double	4♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South led the nine of hearts. Declarer ruffed in dummy and played the two of clubs for the queen, king and ace. When South exited with the king of spades, declarer won and cashed all his spades. The last one forced North to come down to the king-jack of hearts and the ace-king-queen of diamonds. The jack of clubs

was the coup de grâce. When North pitched a diamond, he was thrown in and had to lead into declarer's ace-queen of hearts at the end. That resulted in plus 420 and 11 IMPs.

Fifteen players attempted four spades – Mark Lair was the only one to make it.

Under One Flag

In Round 11, the stars were on parade when USA3 Levine faced their compatriots, USA4 Lall.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

<p>♠ Q 10 8 6 5 3 ♥ 8 7 6 2 ♦ — ♣ A K Q</p> <p>♠ A K 7 2 ♥ A K 10 9 3 ♦ 7 ♣ J 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 9 4 ♥ Q J 5 4 ♦ A Q J 10 9 3 2 ♣ —</p> <p>♠ J ♥ — ♦ K 8 6 5 4 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5 4 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Weichsel</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♠ ¹	3♣
4♥	Pass	5♣	Double ²
Pass	Pass	5♦	Double
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Game-forcing raise
2. Suggesting a non-club lead

North led the eight of hearts. Declarer won with the king as South pitched the seven of clubs. When declarer played a diamond, North pitched the eight of spades and, having won with dummy's ace, declarer pitched a club on the queen. North ruffed and shifted to the king of clubs. Declarer ruffed in dummy and was able to ruff another club and a spade to emerge with 11 tricks; minus 100.

West	North	East	South
<i>Passell</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Lair</i>	<i>Zia</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	1♠	2NT ¹	3♣
Pass ²	4♠	5♣	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Limit raise+, 4+ hearts
2. No club control

North led the king of clubs. Declarer ruffed in dummy, played a spade to the ace and a diamond, North discarding the three of spades. Having taken the ace, declarer continued with a heart to the ace as South pitched the four of clubs. A heart to the queen was

followed by the queen of diamonds; North ruffed and continued with the ace of clubs. When declarer declined to ruff with dummy's jack, North exited with a heart, which left declarer with two losing spades, three down and a 5-IMP loss.

The Luck of the Draw

In Round 12, I opted for Austria and Norway, both hoping for a big win.

Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Frydenberg</i>	<i>Feichtinger</i>	<i>Eide</i>	<i>F. Terraneo</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠ ²	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT ³	Pass
5♥ ⁴	Pass	5NT ⁵	Pass
6♦ ⁶	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Transfer
2. Short spades, slam invitation
3. RKCB
4. 2 key cards, no queen of hearts
5. Kings?
6. King of diamonds

North led the four of spades. When both defenders followed to the first round of hearts at trick two, declarer claimed 13 tricks for plus 1020.

West	North	East	South
<i>Franzel</i>	<i>Farstadt</i>	<i>S. Terraneo</i>	<i>Mikkelsen</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠ ²	Pass
4♦	Pass	4NT ³	Pass
5♥ ⁴	Pass	7♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Transfer
2. Short spades, slam invitation
3. RKCB
4. 2 key cards, no queen of hearts

North led a trump. When they proved to be two-two, declarer claimed all the tricks for plus 1510 and a 10-IMP gain to Austria.

You would be unlucky to find a West hand that did not offer a good play for a grand slam, say:

♠ A Q J
♥ J 9 8
♦ A K 2
♣ J 10 7 4

Knowing about the queen of clubs, however, would be good news (if partner does not have the ace-king of diamonds, he might have the ace-king of spades).

The Top 16, qualifying for knockout play, were:

1.	USA3 Levine	161.47
2.	Turkey	155.25
3.	Germany2	152.71
4.	USA1 Wolfson	142.82
5.	Italy	140.67
6.	France Marill	136.53
7.	Belgium	134.20
8.	Canada Fergani	133.52
9.	Portugal CBL	132.62
10.	Lithuania	131.33
11.	Poland1 Markowicz	130.24
12.	USA4 Lall	129.94
13.	Netherlands1	129.00
14.	USA2 Simson	126.47
15.	Germany1	125.82
16.	South Africa	125.19

Never on Sunday

When I logged on to BBO on my iPad on Sunday evening (January 24), the featured match was between Lithuania and USA4 Lall. I decided to keep an eye on proceedings and was rewarded with this interesting deal:

Board 24. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Russyan</i>	<i>Weichsel</i>	<i>Gierulski</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North led the eight of hearts. Declarer took South's king with the ace, cashed the ace-king of spades, ruffed

a heart, came to hand with a diamond, cashed the queen of hearts, pitching a club, ruffed a heart and played winning diamonds. He then exited with the ten of spades and North had to lead a club; plus 980.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kowalski</i>	<i>Rosenberg</i>	<i>Romanski</i>	<i>Zia</i>
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♠ ²	Pass
2♦ ³	Pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass
2NT ⁵	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Polish Club
2. 4+ spades, 6+ HCP
3. Strong hand with 3+ spades
4. Weak hand in context
5. 23+ HCP

South led the six of clubs, restricting declarer to 11 tricks for plus 450 and an 11-IMP swing.

The Round of 16 winners were USA3 Levine, Turkey, Canada Fergani, USA1 Wolfson, Italy, Poland I Markowicz, Belgium and USA4 Lall.

The Agony and the Ecstasy

Going into the fourth and last session of their quarterfinal, USA2 Simson led USA3 Levine 92-72.

Board 44. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Falk</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Lusky</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

North led the five of spades. Declarer won with dummy's ace, played a diamond to the ace and ruffed a diamond. A spade to the king saw South pitch the queen of diamonds and declarer continued with the king of hearts and, when that held, another heart, North taking the ace and exiting with his remaining diamond. Declarer won and exited with the king of clubs, but North won, cashed the queen of clubs and waited for his trump trick; minus 50.

If declarer had tried exiting with two rounds of spades, dummy would have been squeezed out of its third club in order to keep two hearts. Once declarer had pitched a club, North can play the ace of clubs, followed by the queen, and South's nine would have been the setting trick.

However, if declarer had cashed the king of diamonds before playing the second heart, he'd have removed North's exit card.

West	North	East	South
<i>Passell</i>	<i>Rigal</i>	<i>Lair</i>	<i>Milgrim</i>
2♦ ¹	Pass	4♦ ²	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 18-19 balanced
2. Transfer

Here, North led the three of spades. Declarer won with the king and cashed the ace-king of diamonds, pitching a club before playing the king of hearts. When North withheld the ace, the spade ruff went with it and that was plus 420 and 10 IMPs. It was not easy, but more accurate declarer play and defence could have resulted in 10 IMPs the other way.

Levine was ahead for the first time in the match to the tune of 7 IMPs.

Board 48. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Falk</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Lusky</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣ ¹	INT
Pass	2♥ ²	Double	Pass ³
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Could be 2-card club suit if 4-4 in the majors
2. Transfer
3. Denies 3+ spades

East led the king of hearts, then cashed the ace and switched to the six of clubs. Declarer put up dummy's king and West won with the ace and played the two of diamonds, declarer winning with the jack, pitching a club on the queen of hearts, cashing the top spades and then playing a diamond. He could pitch his losing club as West helplessly followed suit; plus 140.

West	North	East	South
<i>Passell</i>	<i>Rigal</i>	<i>Lair</i>	<i>Milgrim</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣ ¹	INT
Pass	2♥ ²	Double	Redouble ³
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Could be 2 if 4-4 in the majors
2. Transfer
3. Second-best penalty try

West led the three of hearts. East won with the king and switched to the queen of diamonds. Declarer won with the ace, cashed the ace of spades and played a spade to the jack. The good news was that it held, the bad that East discarded the six of clubs. Declarer continued with dummy's four of hearts and, when East followed with the seven, declarer put up the queen. He cashed the king and jack of diamonds to reach this ending:

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

If declarer now exits with a low club, West wins and must exit with a diamond. Declarer wins and can now play a heart. East wins and can cash another heart but must then lead into the split club tenace. Even if West was able to win the heart exit with the jack, declarer could afford to pitch a spade, always scoring two more tricks. However, it was much more likely that West held a singleton queen of clubs, so declarer cashed another diamond and then exited with the king of clubs, the winning line if you reverse the location of the ace and queen of clubs. West won, cashed a diamond and played a heart for two down, minus 200 and 8 IMPs. That increased the winning margin to 15 IMPs. What a match!

The semifinal lineups (the two USA teams were mandated to play against each other) were:

USA3 LEVINE

Mark Lair, Mike Levine, Jeff Meckstroth, Bob Morris,
Mike Passell, Eric Rodwell, Eddie Wold

vs.

USA1 WOLFSON

Mike Becker, David Berkowitz, Larry Cohen,
Steve Garner, Bruce Rogoff, Bob Sartorius,
Howard Weinstein, Jeff Wolfson

and

TURKEY

Nafiz Zorlu, Mehmet Emin Copur,
Huseyin Avcioglu, Mehmet Ali Ince,
Namik Kokten, Mesut Karadeniz,
Ali Orhan Ekinci

vs.

ITALY

Andrea Buratti, Amadeo Comella, Giuseppe Failla,
Sergio Freddio, Virgilio Gagliardi, Franco Garbosi,
Gianpaolo Guermani, Bernardo Mancini,
Aldo Mina, Ruggero Pulga,
Stefano Sabbatini, Paolo Uggeri

The American Dream

In USA1 Wolfson vs. USA3 Levine, this was a significant swing:

Board 3. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Sartorius</i>	<i>Wold</i>	<i>Rogoff</i>	<i>Levine</i>
—	—	—	2NT
Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass	3NT ²
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Puppet Stayman
2. No 4- or 5-card major

West led the eight of hearts for the five, ten and king. Declarer cashed the three top diamonds, pitching two spades and one club from dummy, before playing the jack of spades. East won with the ace and switched to the eight of clubs, West taking the king with the ace and returning the four of hearts. East cashed the queen and ace, and another club meant two down; minus 100.

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Becker</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Berkowitz</i>
—	—	—	2NT
Pass	3♣ ¹	Pass	3♦ ²
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Ordinary Stayman
2. No 4- or 5-card major

Rodwell also led the eight of hearts for the five, ten and king. Berkowitz immediately presented the king of spades. When it held, he tried the diamonds and could claim nine tricks – plus 400 and 11 IMPs.

USA3 Levine won handily 113-53.

Turkish Delight - Erdal Sidar

This deal is from the semifinal match between Turkey and Italy. Turkey's win over Italy was as close as they come, 81-80. This deal was crucial to Turkey's victory.

Continued on page 12...



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra



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

1037. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

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

This deal was played in a team match and both South players declared in four spades after identical auctions. Both Wests led the jack of diamonds. When dummy went down, the declarers counted nine tricks and, as they did not want East to gain the lead, both declarers won the first trick with the ace of diamonds.

The first declarer cashed the ace of hearts at trick two and ruffed a low heart with the ten of trumps. Declarer crossed to dummy with a low trump to dummy's queen, noting that both opponents followed. Dummy's remaining low heart was ruffed with the ace of trumps. As the king of hearts had not yet appeared, declarer returned to dummy with a trump to dummy's jack and then led a low club to the queen, king and ace. West exited with the ten of diamonds, which was taken by East with the queen. After East cashed the jack and ten of clubs declarer claimed the balance for down one.

At the second table, declarer led dummy's jack of spades, followed by the two to his king. At trick four, declarer led the five of hearts and finessed dummy's queen when West followed with a low card. When that held, declarer threw a low club from hand on the

ace of hearts. He then tried for an overtrick by leading a club to his king. When that lost to the ace declarer claimed ten tricks.

How do the two lines compare? The first one, of trying to ruff down king of hearts, then falling back on the club ace being with East has around 61% chance of success. The second line relies on either the king of hearts or the ace of clubs being well placed, is nearly a three in four chance – and is clearly the better approach to making a tenth trick. The point is that if the heart finesse loses you will still make if the club ace is onside, since you can pitch your third club on the heart ace. All you risk is a second undertrick.

1038. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	2♣	Pass	2NT ¹
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1. 8-10			

West led the nine of hearts. Declarer ducked in dummy, so East took the trick with the jack and returned a low heart to dummy's king. Declarer had 11 top tricks (12 if hearts were 3-3) and saw that the contract depended on his finding the queen of diamonds if hearts did not break. In order to do that, declarer planned to delay tackling diamonds until he had more information about the unseen hands.

Declarer began this quest by cashing dummy's ace of hearts, discovering that the suit was 4-2. Declarer continued by cashing his four club winners, forcing East to part with two diamonds while he threw a low spade from hand. After noting that the clubs had also divided four-two, declarer played the queen, king and ace of spades. This forced East to part with a third diamond, reducing his holding to the queen of hearts and two low diamonds.

As East was counted as having started with a 2=4=5=2 shape and West with 5=2=2=4, declarer knew that the outstanding diamonds were now two-two. So he cashed the ace and king of diamonds, confident in the knowledge that the queen of diamonds would fall under them. Declarer took three spades, two hearts, three diamonds and four clubs for his contract.

1039. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

This was another deal from a team match; here, both sides reached the grand slam in clubs. At both tables, North's three diamonds was a splinter-bid, based on four-card support for clubs. Thereafter, control-bidding ensued and both South players knew what to do when North bid his ace of spades at the five level.

At the first table, as he disliked leading a singleton trump, West led the king of diamonds. Declarer counted three tricks outside of trumps and saw that if the three aces stood up he could likely cross-ruff the next ten tricks. Declarer threw a spade from dummy at trick one and won the trick with his ace of diamonds. After ruffing a diamond in dummy, declarer cashed the aces of spades and hearts, throwing a diamond from hand on the latter, then ruffed a heart in hand with the three of trumps. Once that held, declarer claimed the rest of the tricks on a high crossruff.

At the second table, West had no qualms about leading a singleton trump and duly led the five of clubs. With only three diamond ruffs available, declarer's only chance was to establish a long card in one of the red suits. As declarer needed to start by ruffing diamonds to keep the ace of spades as an entry to the fifth heart, he took the first trick in hand. He discarded a low spade on the ace of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. The heart ace came next, throwing a spade from hand and the next five tricks were cross-ruffed in the red suits, ending in hand. After drawing East's remaining trump, declarer claimed his contract as dummy's ten of hearts was now good and the spade ace remained as the entry to cash it.

Note that if declarer had won the first trick in dummy he would no longer have had the entries to bring in 13 tricks.

1040. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

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

West led the king of spades. Declarer played low from dummy and took the trick with his ace. It was clear that the spades were 7-1; also, that East would hold the three missing trump honours for his double. Finally, South would need East to hold the queen of diamonds too, in order to park his spade loser on the ace of diamonds.

The question of who held the three of trumps had to be addressed before play continued. On a "Vacant Places" argument, West had six places to accommodate that card while East had eight (after placing the queen of diamonds and four major-suit cards in East's hand). So, it was eight-to-six to play for hearts four-zero. (Another point in favour of assuming this is that it might make the final double even more attractive to East.)

As declarer was assuming that hearts were four-zero, he played a low club to dummy's jack. East took this with the queen and returned the ten of clubs, which was taken in dummy with the ace. Declarer led a low

diamond back to his jack. When it held, he cashed the king of diamonds and played the king and another club. Declarer ruffed the club in dummy then threw his spade loser on the ace of diamonds before leading a trump from dummy. This was the five-card ending:

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

The lead of any card from dummy in the diagrammed position would have restricted East to two trumps tricks no matter how he defended. Declarer would have had to keep his five of hearts to allow it to be overtaken (or over-ruffed) in the dummy in some situations.

Transatlantic Senior Teams (cont.)

Board 28. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Zorlu	Comella	Avcioglu	Sabbatini
—	—	Pass	1♣
1♦	2♦ ¹	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Hearts

West led the two of diamonds. Declarer won with dummy's ace and led a club to the king and ace. West continued with diamonds; declarer won with his king and ran the ten of hearts to East's king. Declarer later led a spade to the queen, losing two tricks in that suit for minus 50.

At the other table ...

West	North	East	South
Garbosi	Ince	Uggeri	Kokten
—	—	Pass	1♣
1♦	1♥	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Paulo Uggeri (East) led the nine of diamonds. Declarer, Mehmet Ali Ince (North), took Franco Garbosi's (West) queen with his ace of diamonds. Ince realised that for the contract to be in jeopardy, the two major-suit kings had to be offside. The problem was how to cope with that eventuality.

When declarer led his singleton club at trick two, West took dummy's queen with the ace and continued with another diamond. Ince took the trick with the diamond king in dummy and ruffed a low club with his eight of hearts, then played a low heart towards the dummy. East played low and declarer won with dummy's ten of hearts and ruffed another club with his nine of hearts. Now when Ince played another low heart from his hand, East had no answer. He took the trick with his king and returned the jack of diamonds, hoping to be able to force out dummy's third trump. However, declarer discarded a spade from dummy and ruffed in hand with the ace of hearts. Ince then led the jack of hearts to the queen in dummy. He was then able to cash two club winners and collect ten tricks and 10 IMPs.

Rondo Alla Turca

After their thrilling semifinal win over Italy, Turkey had little time to celebrate.

Board 24. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Zorlu	Meckstroth	Avcioglu	Rodwell
1♠	Pass	1NT ¹	Pass
2♣ ²	Pass	2♦ ³	Pass
2♥ ⁴	Pass	2♠ ⁵	Pass
2NT ⁶	Pass	3♣ ⁷	Pass
3♠ ⁸	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

(See next page for alert explanations.)

1. Semi-forcing
2. Gazzilli: either natural or 16+
3. 8-12 any
4. Denies five hearts
5. Relay
6. 4-card heart suit
7. Relay
8. Short diamonds

South led the five of clubs. Declarer won with the eight, pitched a heart on the ace of diamonds and played spades, finishing with ten tricks, plus 430.

West	North	East	South
Passell	Ekinci	Lair	Karadeniz
1♠	Pass	1NT ¹	Pass
3♣ ²	Pass	3♦ ³	Pass
3♥ ⁴	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Semi-forcing
2. (a.) 4-card jump shift in clubs or hearts, or (b.) a big spade hand
3. Asking
4. Heart jump shift

North led the five of spades for the jack and king. Declarer played a heart to the six, queen and king. Back came the two of spades and declarer cashed the ace and queen, pitching a diamond from dummy. The four of clubs went to the seven, jack and queen and South returned the nine of hearts. Declarer won with the ace, cashed the top clubs, and exited with a club. If South had been 3=2=4=4 he would have had to play a diamond, but when he produced the eight of hearts, the contract was one down, minus 50 and 10 IMPs away.

Double dummy, declarer can get home – after drawing trumps he cashes the ace of hearts and exits with the four. If South wins, he is endplayed and, if North tries a Crocodile Coup by rising with the jack of hearts and exiting with a heart, declarer wins and can play a club to dummy's eight. Another interesting possibility is that declarer starts with five rounds of spades – that puts a lot of pressure on South. If declarer reads the position, he can even score an overtrick.

Turkey won a hard-fought, exciting match, 81-76 and the title. Italy won the third-place Swiss to take the bronze medal.



Viking Bridge

Nils Kvangraven,
Kristiansand, Norway
Harald Gjellestad,
Kritiansand, Norway
Jo-Gaute Åsgård,
Engerdal, Norway

Great Play Online – Kvangraven

It seems never-ending, this Covid-19 online bridge. I miss the face-to-face game, but online tournaments bring a lot of entertaining deals right into our living rooms. Let me show you some of the fun boards I've been lucky enough to catch during my online-bridge period.

Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Ovesen	Lagerman	Høyland	Sylvan
—	1♠	3♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

First, in an OCBL event, Johan Sylvan from Sweden showed his Norwegian opponents how to handle the cards. Sylvan is one of the Swedish regulars when it comes to international events; in the OCBL, he was a member of the Fredin team that faced a strong Norwegian squad. The bidding pushed Sylvan into a slam most people would fail to make, but Sylvan gave it a chance.

With all 52 cards in view, do you see how Sylvan made his contract?

West led the king of diamonds, won by the ace. Not willing to risk that the ace of spades would be ruffed, Sylvan ruffed a diamond with the ten of hearts. A trump to the jack drew both outstanding trumps and another diamond ruff followed. Declarer led a spade to the ace, and ruffed a spade, led a heart to the king and ruffed another spade, bringing Sylvan to this position (See top of next page):

Sylvan had saved the best for last when he continued with the two of hearts: what was West supposed to discard? A club would set up the suit to make the contract, so West had to discard a spade. That gave Sylvan another chance to shine: he won with the four

and ruffed the spade nine, eliminating the suit from West's hand.

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

In the three-card ending, Sylvan led a low club from hand. West could win the queen but had to give Sylvan his contract when had to play a club back from the king-eight into Sylvan's split menace.

I just say wow, some great play by Swedish international Johan Sylvan.

Sticking to the OCBL, the following defence gave declarer a chance to fail. I'm not sure many bid game, but I haven't found another who was put to the test. Let me give you the test.

Dealer East. NS Vul.

♠ 10 9 8 5 4
 ♥ A K 9
 ♦ Q 8 5
 ♣ 6 4

♠ K Q 7 2
 ♥ J 6 5 3
 ♦ K 6
 ♣ A 10 5

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

1. Spades
2. 4-card support, minimum hand

West led the king of clubs. You hold back the ace and win the next trick when West continues with the queen. It do not look like a great game – you have to pick up trumps and play the hearts without loss. Not the best of chances but, after West made a takeout double, the odds have changed for the better. You can be pretty sure West is 1=4=4=4, 1=3=5=4 or similar. Judged by this, it feels like a double finesse in hearts is a real chance.

You start out by leading the king of spades at trick two. West wins with the ace and returns the ten of hearts! You win with the ace and run the ten of spades

successfully, West discarding a club. What is your plan from here?

What can West have to return the ten of hearts? Does it change your plan to take the double finesse? I hope you stick to your first plan because the full hand looked like this:

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

West could see everything was favourable for declarer, so he did his best to muddy the waters when he returned the ten of hearts. A strong declarer should probably not fall for such a defence. I've checked the results and a lot of strong players decided to play for the drop of the queen in hearts.

The following deal arose in the Norwegian National Knockout Teams – players from all over Norway participate. It comprises six knock-out matches, ending with an eight-team final stage. The event is played over the whole season, so you have about a month to play each match. This board is from the fourth round and was on the RealBridge platform.

Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ A K 8 4 3
 ♥ 7 6 2
 ♦ 7 3
 ♣ 6 5 4

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

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

The ace of diamonds was led: three, king, five. West shifted to the two of clubs: four, queen ...?

How do you plan to play this deal? The defenders play regular count but upside-down attitude, and they lead attitude in the middle of the hand.

Declarer won with the ace of clubs, then led the king of hearts. It was not a winner, the full deal being:

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

West won the king of hearts with the ace and continued with the nine of clubs, won by East with the king. A club was ruffed and the contract went one down.

If you considered holding back the ace of clubs, I think you smile at West and compliment him on his defence.

Necessary and Sufficient – Gjellestad

Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

1. 5 spades and 4 hearts, game-forcing

South liked his jacks and tens and made the forcing three-spade bid. Thus he ended in a difficult game contract.

The opening lead was the eight of hearts. The ace took the first trick and a spade was led to the seven, nine and king. The six of hearts came next, covered by the nine, ten and king. South realised that to have any chance at his contract, the remaining minor-suit high cards had to be in the West hand. Declarer continued with a winning club finesse; one heart loser disappeared on the ace of clubs. Declarer continued with the eight of trumps from dummy to the queen and ace, and the jack of spades, drawing the defenders' remaining trumps.

How could declarer get rid of the second heart loser? South knew the answer. If the West distribution was

3=2=5=3 and included the ace-queen of diamonds and the king of clubs, he was going to make his game. Declarer led the jack of diamonds, covered by the queen and king. The three of clubs went to the king, while South's last heart was discarded. West was left with no reply. With only diamonds to play, he had to give South his tenth, game-going trick.

Instead of covering the jack of diamonds with the queen, West might have played his ace, but he would then have been endplayed. Whatever he played next he could not have prevented declarer from making his game.

FIFA – Åsgård

I come from a small community deep in the forests of Norway, close to the Swedish border. We're best-known for our wild nature, with great possibilities for trout fishing and moose hunting. And for our great skiers, especially Gjermund Eggen, the great Norwegian cross-country skier of the 1960s. We meet every Tuesday for bridge in our local club. We get about five or six tables each week, sometimes seven and sometimes four. As in every other bridge club, we're a fine mix of people: teachers, police officers, carpenters, plumbers, farmers and others.

Some years ago, I introduced a new club for some of our local heroes, in Norwegian called "Finessaholikernes Landsforening" which, in English, would be something like: "The Norwegian Federation of Finessaholics". I guess that this federation might have some potential members around the world, and maybe the name for this organisation could be something like "The International Finessaholics Federation", IFAF if you like. Some may suggest the French variation of this term: "Fédération Internationale des Finesse Aholics", or FIFA.

Membership in this organization requires that you be a player who takes finesses whenever you can. Some nights you will score the top prize and, on other nights, you will find yourself at the bottom of the table.

Maybe you'll meet this play one evening:

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

Sitting East, you find yourself playing six spades. South leads the queen of hearts. You take the first trick in hand with your king. What next?

Our FIFA members will surely take the finesse in spades, then another in clubs. If one of them works, you will take 12 tricks for a satisfying result. If not, you can always blame bad luck. But maybe there is a better line?

At the second trick, suppose you play a diamond to the ace and ruff a diamond. Then, take your ace of spades (both North and South follow with low ones), the ace of clubs (in case the queen drops), the ace of hearts, the king of diamonds and the last diamond for a ruff in hand. If the king of spades hasn't appeared yet, you can play another spade. If North is in, he has to play a club to prevent a ruff and discard. You must now finesse for the queen, hoping it is with North.

However, if South has the king of spades, the contract is safe. South either has to play clubs into your king-jack or provide a ruff and discard. This was the full deal:

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

Some experts may say that the odds for either of two finesses making equals this line, but I'm always satisfied when I've found a line that brings me down to one or no finesse instead of two.

The Mote in South's Eye

Bob Jones, Hypoluxo, FL

Here's an amusing deal from recent Internet play:

Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

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

I was West and led the jack of hearts. South won the heart lead with the king as East shed a low diamond. There were only seven top tricks, so South needed a spade trick or another heart trick, even if the clubs split three-three. He bravely played a spade to the king at trick two, winning the trick. He did this so quickly that I mentally placed him with the queen. Many experts would continue spades at this point, running the nine. This play could only lose if West had a side spade suit of ace-queen-ten-fifth – an impossibility on the auction. It would have been easy to build the jack of spades into a ninth winner on the actual layout.

An alternative play was to cross to his hand with the queen of diamonds and lead a low heart toward the nine. This might seem risky as the spades feel wide open, but there is no danger in the spade suit.

This declarer, apparently, thought he was entitled to a three-three club split after the king of spades held. "The sun don't shine on the same dog's butt all day," is a piece of local homespun wisdom foreign to this declarer. He cashed three rounds of diamonds, discarding a heart from hand. He then cashed three clubs, disappointed when I discarded a heart on the third club. By this time, a good declarer would have had a complete count on the hand. I was known to have started with six hearts, three diamonds, and two clubs. I had followed to the first spade, so my only non-heart left had to be the ace of spades. He should have led a spade, endplaying me into giving him another heart trick.

Declarer missed this play and led dummy's last club. My partner won, leaving this position:

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

In this lovely ending, East led the ten of diamonds. South could not shed a heart or my hand would be good, so he discarded his low spade. I knew that if I kept my ace of spades, East would next have to lead a spade and I would be endplayed, so I discarded the ace of spades. This was a routine bridge play that could not cost. Even if South had the queen of spades, which I thought was the case, the play would break even. South would win the queen of spades, but then he would have to lead a heart into me. East now cashed three spade tricks for down one.

The surprising part of this deal is that I had started with a robust suit and two aces and never took a single trick on defence. My partner started with one lonely queen and one lonely jack and took all five defensive tricks! I suppose it cannot, strictly speaking, be called a suicide squeeze without the count since the squeeze card had been East's ten of diamonds, but it was certainly self-induced.

A Straightforward Procedure

Elena Ström, Solna, Sweden

When I was interviewing the famous English bridge player and world champion Nicola Smith for the Swedish magazine Bridge a few years ago, I asked her if she had a message to those who are trying to improve at bridge. "Yes," she said, "remember, you can call yourself a bridge player only when you stop counting your points."

I found deep wisdom in these words and have registered decent results as a bridge player since then. Let me show you a recent example from a friendly game on BBO. The opponents were two kind, unfamiliar people, one of whom was a top player. We play a Strong Club (17+ HCP). I glanced briefly at my hand and spotted a lot of points. That is what happened after that:

Board 50. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Eras</i>	<i>TOP241</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>svetlina66</i>
—	—	1♣ ¹	Pass
1♦ ²	Pass	2♦ ³	Pass
3♦ ⁴	Pass	4♦ ⁵	Pass
5♦ ⁶	Pass	Pass	Double ⁷
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. I have a lot of points, let's have some fun
2. Not me: 0 to 7 points
3. I have diamonds
4. Me too
5. I have some unreported values
6. Great, I trust you, partner
7. I have had enough of your miserable bidding

Well, I agree, the bidding was unimaginative and kind of sluggish. The lead was the nine of hearts to the three, ace and five. A second heart was ducked(!) and won by the queen. North shifted to a spade to the five, jack and ace. Now partner played a trump to the ace, dropping the bare queen. The rest was easy – two high diamonds and the king-queen of spades were followed by a low diamond to the nine, whereupon two club losers were discarded on the spade ten and the king of hearts.

When I talked to my 86-year-old partner on the phone after the game, he seemed all smiles but wondered where I had seen those "unreported extra values" in my hand.

"Well done, partner, it was a tough game, we got a top score," I replied.

"Yes, I might have got nervous if they had doubled," he answered.

"But they did!"

"Did they? Well, anyway, the play of the cards was a straightforward procedure."

Lead Quiz Part I

Karlis Rubins, Riga

This is the first of a two-part lead quiz. Part II will be presented next month or the month after.

In all five of the following lead problems, you are playing teams. All the questions are from actual play by Latvian or other international players.

The bidding is as it was at the table (or, at least, as I remember it) and you have to choose one of the given alternatives. And finally – all the problems have an accompanying story. Good luck!

Problem 1. Dealer East. Both Vul.

<p>♠ A Q 7 5 4 2 ♥ A K 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ J 9</p>			
West	North	East	South
—	<i>Partner</i>	Pass	<i>You</i>
Double	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠ ¹	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
1. Asks for stopper			

Your lead as South?

- a) ♠5 b) ♥A/K c) ♥4 d) ♦J

Problem 2. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ 8 4
 ♥ 2
 ♦ A K J 10 9 8
 ♣ J 4 3 2

West	North	East	South
	<i>Partner</i>		<i>You</i>
—	3♠	4♥	4♠
6♥	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Your lead as South?

- a) ♠8 b) ♥2 c) ♦A/K d) ♣2

Problem 3. Dealer West. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
	<i>You</i>		<i>Partner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	INT ¹
Pass	Pass	2♣ ²	Pass
2♠	Double ³	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- 12-15
- Both majors
- Takeout

Your lead as North?

- a) ♠10 b) ♥6 c) ♦A d) ♣A

Problem 4. Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ A K 10 8 7 5 3
 ♥ K 9 3 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ 8 3

West	North	East	South
<i>Partner</i>		<i>You</i>	
—	—	—	3♦
Pass	3NT	4♠	4NT
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

Your lead as East?

- a) ♠A b) ♠8 c) ♥2 d) ♣8

Problem 5. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

- Weak 2
- Relay
- Short spades

Your lead as East?

- a) ♠J b) ♥6 c) ♦10 d) ♣3

The Winning Solutions

1. c) ♥4

This board would have been an IBPA Best Defence candidate but, unfortunately, when it was played, no one made a story of it when Ugis Jansons from Team Latvia found the lead of the four of hearts in the quarterfinals of the 2010 Chairman's Cup in Örebro, Sweden. The full deal:

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

Looking at it from Ugis' (South's) point of view, to beat the contract, he needed a lead from his partner through declarer: two tricks in hearts, two tricks in spades and the trick in partner's hand totalled five tricks, just what the defence needed. If he'd led a low spade, declarer would have had both a tempo and the spade trick. A club lead was out of question and the diamonds might have been dummy's suit. So, thought Ugis, he had to lead a heart. If partner had the queen of hearts, then he'd have had a fast down one, but if partner had the jack, then he'd have had magic communication and the story of a lifetime.

While it is true that declarer can always make three notrump double-dummy (on a spade lead, he leads toward the queen of hearts, needing the ace-king outside to prevent the run of the spade suit, either making the heart queen at trick two or squeeze-endplaying South if that defender goes up with the king or ace), that does not detract from the brilliance of the lead. Should declarer have gone up with the queen of hearts at trick one?

Team Latvia gained 12 IMPs on this board and won the quarterfinal by 3 IMPs. In the semifinal Latvia defeated Team Belgium and, in the final, the Swedish team Bubba.

2. d) ♣2

This deal is from the European Mixed Team Championship of 2019. The board is special to us because the Latvian team gained the largest IMP amount on a single board in the whole event: 18 IMPs. Here is the full deal:

♠ A Q 10 7 5 3 2
 ♥ 6
 ♦ 7 6 5 3 2
 ♣ —

♠ J 6
 ♥ K 10 9 7 4
 ♦ Q 4
 ♣ K Q 9 7

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

♠ 8 4
 ♥ 2
 ♦ A K J 10 9 8
 ♣ J 4 3 2

In the Closed Room, where Alfejeva/Rubins were North/South for Latvia, the Austrians reached a seven-heart contract by West. North had opened four spades and East/West had bid seven hearts over the Latvian six-spade save. It is interesting that, from the West hand, seven hearts can be defeated by just one trick.

In the Open Room, North opened 'only' three spades, Romanovska overcalled four hearts, four spades by South, and six hearts by Lorencs. Now North doubled for the lead, but South led the ace of diamonds ... 12 tricks and 18 IMPs for the Latvian team.

3. a) ♠10

The full deal:

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

♠ Q J 5
 ♥ 7
 ♦ K Q 8 2
 ♣ Q J 8 3 2

♠ 6 4 3 2
 ♥ A K 10 8 5
 ♦ 4 3
 ♣ 6 4

♠ A K 9 7
 ♥ Q 4 3 2
 ♦ J 9 5
 ♣ K 10

This deal is nothing special by itself. However, it happened in 2008, when the Latvian Open Team was in fifteenth place after four rounds of the European Championship. In the fifth round, Latvia played Italy and this was the last board of the match. The Italian East balanced with a Landy two clubs and was duly punished when Neimanis, sitting North, made a takeout double and led the ten of spades, leading to three down, minus 800, and 12 IMPs in. The Latvian team lost this match by 13:17, but it gave us a big emotional boost and, from sixteenth place (after the match with Italy), we finished in third place in the qualification portion of the event.

4. c) ♥2

This is a board from the 2012 World championship quarterfinal. Per-Ola Cullin overcalled four spades and had to find a lead against Rodwell's four notrump

doubled. He led a low heart and they defeated the contract by seven tricks; 18 huge IMPs for Sweden (they won the match by 4 IMPs), later another victory against Monaco in the semifinal and the gold against Poland in the final. The full deal:

♠ Q J 9
 ♥ J 8 7 4
 ♦ A 10 7
 ♣ K 5 4

♠ 6 2
 ♥ A Q 5
 ♦ J 9 6
 ♣ Q J 10 9 7

♠ A K 10 8 7 5 3
 ♥ K 9 3 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ 8 3

♠ 4
 ♥ 10 6
 ♦ K Q 8 5 4 3 2
 ♣ A 6 2

5. d) ♣3

This is the final board of 2010 Riga Invites to Jurmala Invitational pairs tournament. You are Russian international Vadim Kholomeev and you have to find the killing lead against Karlis Rubins and Maija Romanovska. Rubins opened two hearts and revealed short spades. Now you have to work it out: did Romanovska like the spade shortage or was it the opposite: she was discouraged by this rebid. If she had liked it, then your partner has something in spades and he did not double the relay. If she had not liked it, then she has good spades and probably some empty suit. If this suit is clubs and your partner has the king, then you might have a chance to defeat four hearts. So, Kholomeev led a low club. The board looked like this:

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

♠ 8
 ♥ A Q 8 7 5
 ♦ J 7 3
 ♣ 10 8 6 5

♠ A Q 5
 ♥ K 10 2
 ♦ A K Q 4
 ♣ J 9 4

♠ K 4 3 2
 ♥ J 9 4
 ♦ 9 6 5 2
 ♣ K 2

After the lead of a low club to the king and three more clubs, Rubins still had a chance to make four hearts. He had to ruff the fourth club with the king of hearts and take the double heart finesse against the jack-nine. However, the chance of this line succeeding was so slim, and worse than the alternative, so he just ruffed with the ten of hearts and was one down.

The Russians won the event on this last board, and the Latvians finished third.

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 – Details of the 2021 World Team Championships and the 2021 Youth World Team Championships are under consideration. See <http://www.worldbridge.org>

ACBL – Has both pair and team events online on BBO. See <https://www.acbl.org> and <https://www.bridgebase.com>. Hopes to begin live bridge again in 2021. The St. Louis Spring NABC has been cancelled; the Providence Summer NABC has been moved to 2022; the Austin Fall NABC is currently scheduled to be held face-to-face.

EBL: Hopes to hold the European Championships live in June – details are currently being worked on.

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. Sweden plans to hold the Swedish Festival in Örebro live in July.

Reynolds Knockouts – TD Tom Reynolds has been organising monthly knockout tournaments and quarterly double elimination knockouts since April, 2020. Information can be found at <http://www.reynoldsteammatches.com>

Alt Invitationals – Invitational tournaments, usually lasting five to 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), Alt Majors (32 teams) and an Alt BAM. 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>. OCBL also produces a daily journal.

Bridgehouse – This organisation is arranging online team events with daily bulletins. Information can be found at <https://bridgehouse.club>

All of the online tournaments named above are on BBO or RealBridge. 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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