



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.

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September 10, 2021

Editorial

The opinions expressed here are solely those of the Editor, and do not necessarily represent those of the IBPA Executive or its members.

On August 4, 2021, we learned that Sabine Auken and Roy Welland had withdrawn from the German Open Team in the then-upcoming European Qualification event for the Bermuda Bowl. The reason Welland gave for the withdrawal was the presence of Fulvio Fantoni in the Italian team. Auken and Welland were already widely admired for their handling of the muffed-up scoring of the World Open Pairs Championship in Wroclaw, Poland in 2016. Having been declared the winners and having received their gold medals, a serious scoring error was discovered the day after the event concluded. If changed, the new scores would have moved Ashley Bach and Michael Cornell of New Zealand into first place and dropped Auken-Welland to second. The question was, should the scores be corrected after the normal correction period had expired? Auken and Welland behaved impeccably, even offering to send their medals to the Kiwis. That sportsmanlike gesture turned out not to be necessary since the WBF, with Solomonic wisdom, declared the two pairs joint winners.

Fast forward to August 23 as a peculiar thing happened: when it came time for Scotland to play against Italy in the first round of the Qualification event, no Scottish players were at the table (really, at their computers, since the event was online). It was widely reported that the Scottish NPC had failed to submit a lineup. That turned out not to be true; a lineup had been submitted, but the players, not wishing to place their NPC Anne Perkins in an uncomfortable position, had taken the bull by the horns and refused to play. Perkins also happens to be a District Chair of the SBU Council and would undoubtedly have had conflicting thoughts about the 'correct' procedure.

Wales followed Scotland's lead and so did every other country, all 30 of them. Toward the middle and end of the event, there was considerable pressure on all teams to follow suit and make it unanimous. On those 30 teams, on three separate teams, were (i) Pierre Zimmermann of Switzerland, Fantoni's employer for many years when they played for Monaco, (ii) a player who'd confessed to self-kibitzing and (iii) a pair who'd been kicked out of the Alts for collusive cheating. All 30 teams received 0 Victory Points for their 'forfeits' while Italy received 12 from each, good enough to finish third in the event without ever having played a card or made a bid.

In the aftermath of the Scottish move, I received a flurry of telephone calls and emails from Zia Mahmood, expressing wholehearted approval of the boycotting teams and dismay that the Daily Bulletin of the Qualification tournament declined

Continued on page 11...

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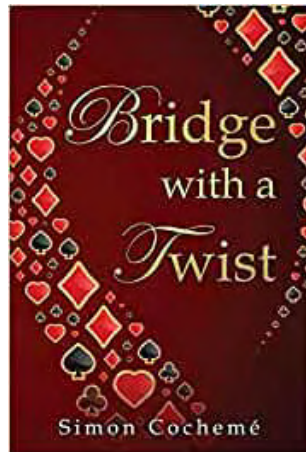
2021 Master Point Press IBPA Book of the Year Shortlist

This year, we have perhaps the widest variety of books ever on our shortlist. The blurbs following are taken from comments submitted by the book publishers and authors, as well as from booksellers and reviewers.

***Bridge with a Twist* by Simon Cochemé; Master Point Press, \$18.95, 191 pages, paperback and e-book.**

Bridge with a Twist is a witty and informative look at the world of bridge – its language, its history, and some of its techniques. It asks the questions:

- Are pigeons more intelligent than some bridge players?
- What do a wooden man, a grandfather, a daydreamer and a donkey have in common?
- Did Zia really go nine down in three notrump?

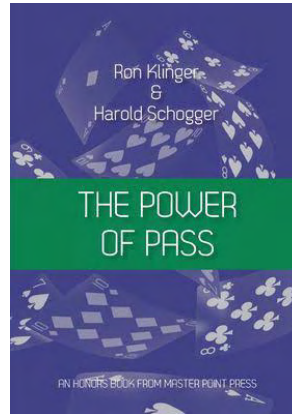


“Interesting, educational and amusing” suggests the modest author. “Brilliant, fascinating and hilarious!” writes the seasoned publicist. Destined to be ranked as a classic, alongside its prequel, *Oliver Twist*.

***The Power of Pass: Is Someone Holding a Gun to Your Head?* by Ron Klinger and Harold Schogger; RonKlingerBridge.com; \$14.95, 96 pages, paperback.**

You compete with three hearts over three clubs. You play very well and manage to come to eight tricks. You are feeling good, until you open the scoresheet and find that three clubs has been defeated most of the time. You have gone minus when you could have been plus.

Not vulnerable against vulnerable, your partner sacrifices in five hearts over five diamonds and is doubled. Partner is two off for minus 300. That would



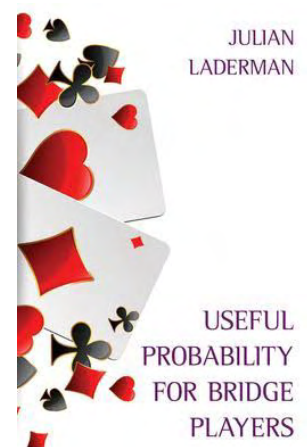
be a fine result versus five diamonds, minus 600. Alas, five diamonds was going to fail. When you and your teammates compare scores, you are minus 300 and your teammates are minus 100, losing 9 IMPs instead of its being a push.

These days, most players bid too much. They are backing their declarer skill against what they hope will be inferior defence or are hoping that you or your partner will bid keep on bidding and then you will fail in your contract. This book shows you when you can profit simply by passing. There are so many situations where passing is the winning action and you will find them here, together with numerous real-life deals taken from club level, the internet and national and international championships. There is immense satisfaction in passing at the right time and being right as a result.

This is a most enjoyable and welcome book, reinforcing the value of discipline and good judgement in the bidding.

***Useful Probability for Bridge Players* by Julian Laderman; Master Point Press, \$19.95, 232 pages, paperback and e-book.**

Beginners rely heavily on bridge maxims. Are they accurate? What is the mathematics behind them? *Useful Probability for Bridge Players* examines these questions. The emphasis here is on ‘useful’. This is not an academic tome, but a discussion of the aspects of probability that every bridge player needs to know and understand. Topics include suit splits, suit combinations, percentage plays, the Principle of Restricted Choice, and even the application of probability to bidding decisions.



Competitive Bids - The Scanian Way by Mats Nilslund; <http://www.itbolaget.nu/bridgelcompetitivebids.asp>, \$21.95, 174 pages, paperback and e-book.



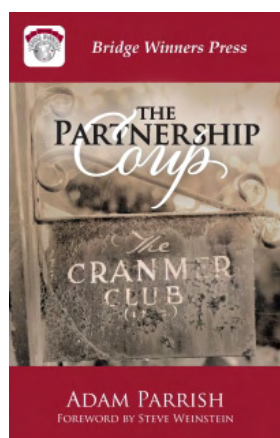
Swedish expert Mats Nilslund has developed bridge systems and conventions for more than fifty years. Here, he sets out the philosophy for contested auctions in greater detail. Nilslund emphasizes the importance of cooperation in the bidding and is skeptical of very weak preemptive raises. He believes that

methods should consider the likelihood of further bidding by the other side and also deal with pre-competitive actions from both sides. He also wants to give more attention to the balance of power and the benefits of constant hand re-evaluation in the light of the bidding so far.

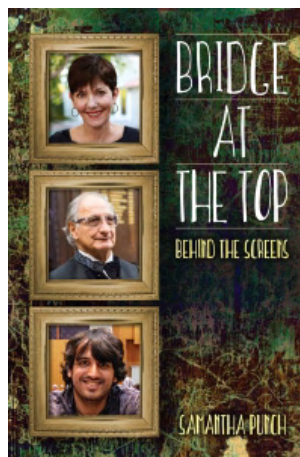
“Essential reading for any aspiring player. The key to better results in competitive auctions lies in a thorough understanding of ‘four-handed’ bridge. This is a difficult area to write about and most efforts on competitive bidding get stuck in just describing various conventions and treatments. *Competitive Bids* goes much deeper and reading Nilslund’s reasoning will improve your bidding judgement.”

***The Partnership Coup* by Adam Parrish; Bridge Winners Press, \$12.99, 169 pages, paperback and e-book.**

Up-and-comer Aaron is back for another night at the Cranmer Club. This time, he’s playing with a partner he’d rather be rid of. Is there a solution to the age-old problem? This long-awaited sequel to *The Cranmer Club* tells another story of a night at Parrish’s fictional club. The familiar club characters and table banter from the original return, with an exciting twist. A fun read with lots of interesting deals and even more interesting characters.



***Bridge at the Top: Behind the Screens* by Samantha Punch; Master Point Press, \$22.95, paperback and e-book.**



In the course of her *Bridge: a MindSport for All* research project at the University of Stirling, sociologist Dr. Samantha Punch has been able to interview many of the world’s top bridge personalities. The topics of these conversations were wide-ranging, and included the dynamics at the table, challenges, motivations, emotions, partnerships,

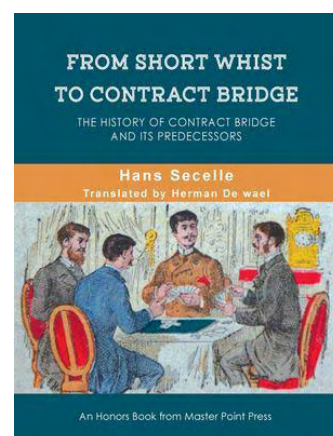
teammates, skill development and gender issues. As a bonus, each subject offers his or her favourite bridge tip. Top players, coaches and even sponsors talk frankly about what life in the top echelons of bridge is all about – and give the reader a revealing glimpse of what it is really like “behind the screens”.

The interviews make the names we see on VuGraph come to life. The tips are tricks of the trade that will be useful to players of all levels. It is a fun and informative read, an intimate and revealing picture of who these stars are, how they got to the top, and what keeps them there.

***From Short Whist to Contract Bridge: The History of Contract Bridge and Its Predecessors* by Hans Secelle, translated by Herman De Wael; Master Point Press, \$89.95, 312 pages, paperback and e-book.**

In *From Short Whist to Contract Bridge*, the author takes the reader on a fascinating journey through space and time and introduces him to such games as Karnöffel, Whist, Hombre, Quadrille, Boston, Cayenne, Vist-Preferans, Russian Whist, Yeralash and Stormwhist. These old and mostly forgotten games will eventually lead to the assembly of a number of ‘proto-bridge’ variants, of which only Collinson’s Biritch or Russian Whist will survive the labour pains.

In its turn, this ‘mother of all bridge variants’ will be superseded by its more sophisticated successors: bridge-opposition, auction bridge, royal auction bridge, plafond and, finally, contract bridge, the world’s most popular, difficult and intriguing card game.



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John Carruthers, Kingsville, Ont., Canada

The Bermuda Bowl Qualification

Round 3. ROM v. DEU

Five-Level Sacrifice – Bird

An unusual sacrifice situation arose in the recent European qualifying event for the World Teams Championship.

Board 30. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Klaus	Dragos	Joerg	Darian
Reps	lordache	Fritsche	Cotescu
—	—	2♦ ¹	Double ²
Redouble ³	2NT ⁴	4♠ ⁵	Double
Pass	4NT ⁶	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	Alerts next column

1. Multi, weak or strong
2. Takeout of spades
3. Bid your suit
4. Lebensohl variation
5. Strong version
6. Pick a suit: at least two places to play

Although Dragos lordache's two notrump was alerted as Lebensohl, it seems more normal to pass on his hand, but perhaps this would have indicated a willingness to defend against a diamond contract. Over North's four notrump, Darian Cotescu wanted to play a small slam, which suggests that there had been some disagreement on the meaning of North's two notrump. South bid five spades, asking North to choose a slam. North had no wish to do this, apparently, and preferred to suffer a barrowload of 50s.

South went eight down, losing 400. Would this be a good sacrifice, of a type perhaps seldom seen before? It depended on whether four spades would be made at the other table.

West	North	East	South
Mihai	Udo	Stefan	Peter
Gregoriu	Kasimir	Iancu	Jokisch
—	—	1♠	Double
2♠ ¹	Pass	4♠	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Weakest raise

Four spades doubled was allowed to make at seven tables, surprisingly. South needs to establish a diamond trick in time and this should not be difficult with the use of count signals.

Peter Jokisch started with the ace and king of hearts, Udo Kasimir playing the nine and two to show an odd number of hearts (reverse count). Stefan Iancu ruffed and led a club immediately. South won with the king, North playing the three to show an even number of clubs. After this start, it was entirely clear for South to switch to the king of diamonds. He duly did this and the doubled spade game went one down. Sadly for the bridge-writing fraternity, South's five spades at the other table turned out to be only a phantom sacrifice against East's four spades doubled.

Some big North/South names (from England, Israel, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Russia and Sweden) allowed ten tricks to be made in four spades. After a start of the ace of hearts, ace of clubs and king of hearts, declarer could ruff, draw trumps and set up a diamond discard on the clubs.

Round 4. ROM v. SWI – Tacchi

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Sjoert</i>	<i>Dorian</i>	<i>Sebastian</i>	<i>Dragos</i>
<i>Brink</i>	<i>Cotescu</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>lordache</i>
—	—	Pass	1♦
Double	1♥ ¹	1♠ ²	2NT
Pass	3♣ ³	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 4+ spades
2. Takeout
3. Diamonds

At first perusal, it looks as though the contract can be made – there are five diamonds, a heart, two or three spades and a club – but all is not necessarily as it seems. Careful defence by Brink and Drijver defeated three notrump.

The defence started with three rounds of hearts and declarer then attacked the spades, remembering to overtake the jack. The defence took the spade ace on the second round and, after a heart to East, switched to a club to knock out declarer's entry back to his hand. Declarer needed to use the ten of diamonds as an entry for the good spade, but he could not both do that and

enjoy the fifth diamond. No matter how he squirmed, he had only eight tricks that he could actually cash, though there were others that couldn't be reached. Of course, had the diamonds been two-two or had the jack been stiff, the contract would have been cold.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mihai</i>	<i>Fernando</i>	<i>Stefan</i>	<i>Pierre</i>
<i>Grigoriu</i>	<i>Piedra</i>	<i>Iancu</i>	<i>Zimmermann</i>
—	—	Pass	1♦
Dble	1♠	2♥	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

As at the other table, North did not believe that three notrump would be a good contract (but here, South respected his wishes) and must have been pleased to see the diamond distribution. Declarer was not sorely tested when, after a trump lead, he could simply draw trumps and play a spade. When West took the jack with his ace, declarer was certain of an overtrick and, when the defence shifted to the king of clubs, ducked, and another club, the count went up to 11; 6 IMPs to Switzerland.

Round 8. WAL v. POL – Tacchi

Board 19. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Piotr</i>	<i>Richard</i>	<i>Mateusz</i>	<i>Paul</i>
<i>Marcinowski</i>	<i>Plackett</i>	<i>Sobczak</i>	<i>Denning</i>
—	—	—	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT ¹
Pass	2♦ ²	Pass	2♥ ³
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT ⁴
Pass	4♦ ⁵	Pass	4♠ ⁶
Pass	5♦ ⁷	Double	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Any 17+, forcing
2. GF, asking
3. 6 hearts
4. Slam try, no shortage
5. Control
6. RKCB
7. 2 key cards, no heart queen

The Welsh pair made full use of their system to reach the nice contract of six hearts. The diamond lead was performed won in dummy and a spade led to the king in hand, ducked by West. Had he taken the ace then, the queen and jack of spades would have provided discards for the clubs in declarer's hand. All declarer needed to do was ruff a diamond in dummy and find the trumps three-two, both of which came to pass, so he gave up a club and had 12 tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Gary Jones	Stanislaus Golebiowski	Paul Lamford	Jakub Patreuha
—	—	—	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Could North have made a further effort? Playing Polish Club, he knew partner's hand was limited to 17 points, so it would need to be a very good fit for the slam to be on. Of course, we can see that, this time, additional exploration would have paid off, but that is not always the case. It was 11 IMPs to Wales.

Round 17. FRA v. NED – Tacchi

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Louk Verhees	Frédéric Volcker	Ricco van Prooijen	Thomas Bessis
Pass	Pass	1♦ ¹	Pass
1♥ ²	Pass	2♥ ³	Double
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

- 2+ diamonds
- Natural, occasionally 3 hearts
- 4-card support

North soon found the best lead of his singleton diamond. Declarer took South's nine with his king and exited with a club to South, who made a good play when he exited with a trump, the ten beating North's eight. A spade was led from dummy and declarer did

not make the best guess when he tried the king, which lost to the ace. A slightly deceptive nine of hearts from North saw declarer misguess again when he rose with the ace. Declarer led the jack of spades to South's queen. When South exited with a high club declarer could not recover – he had to lose a trump and a diamond, so one off, minus 50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Cédric Lorenzini	Simon de Wijs	Jérôme Rombaut	Bauke Muller
Pass	Pass	1♥	Double
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

After the ace of clubs won the first trick, declarer made a good decision when he ran the spade switch 'round to his jack. He continued the suit – finessing against the queen – taken by North's ace. North switched to the two of diamonds and dummy rose with the ace. A trump to dummy's king was followed by a successful finesse against the trump queen. A club ruffed in dummy and the trump finesse repeated gave rise to South having to shed his final club and come down to two-two in the pointed suits. All declarer had to do now was cash the diamond king and exit with a diamond, forcing South to lead spades into dummy's tenace and giving him ten tricks and as many IMPs – well played by Rombaut.

Board 13. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Louk Verhees	Frédéric Volcker	Ricco van Prooijen	Thomas Bessis
—	1♥	Double	2♥ ¹
3♥	4♥	Pass	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

- Weak raise

The ace of hearts and a heart continuation saw declarer ruff at trick two and, when he played the king of clubs, the trump distribution was an open book, so he could cross to dummy to pick up the trumps, only losing to the ace, and that was 11 tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Cédric Lorenzini	Simon de Wijs	Jérôme Rombaut	Bauke Muller
—	1♥	Pass	2♥
2NT ¹	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Minors

East cashed two top spades and continued with a third round. Declarer now seized his chance eagerly. He ruffed with the jack, took a single round of trumps and played a spade from hand and, when West could not overruff, he had an unlikely ten tricks. Had the defence started by taking their diamond tricks and then leading trumps at every opportunity the contract would have failed by two tricks. More than just a scratch – it was a double game swing – 15 IMPs to the Netherlands.

Round 21. RUS v. SWE – Horton

Board 30. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

This was the final deal of the match. Thus far, Sweden had given up only 3 IMPs. However, that was three more than their opponents so, not for the first time, the ‘last board’ might have a role to play.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Andrey Gromov	Simon Hult	Anna Gulevich	Peter Bertheau
—	—	Pass	Pass
INT ¹	2♣ ²	Pass	2♠ ³
Double ⁴	3♠	4NT ⁵	Double
5♦	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 9-14
2. Both majors
3. 4 spades
4. Takeout
5. Minors

North led the king of hearts. Declarer ducked, as South followed with the jack. West took the next round with the ace, played a diamond to the ace,

drew the outstanding trump and played a spade, South taking the ace and playing a heart, minus 100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Ola Rimstedt	Yuri Khyuppenen	Mikael Rimstedt	Vadim Kholomeev
—	—	Pass	Pass
INT ¹	2♦ ²	2NT ³	3♥ ⁴
3NT	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Redouble ⁵	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. 12-14
2. One major
3. Invitational in clubs or weak in a minor
4. Pass or correct
5. ‘No agreement’

North led the jack of spades. South won with the ace and returned the two, declarer winning and playing the two of diamonds. He cashed the diamonds, South discarding three hearts and North two hearts, a club and a spade. A heart to the ace was followed by a club to the ace and a club to the jack for an overtrick, plus 1000, 15 IMPs and a last gasp 14-6 VP win for Sweden.

**Round 31. HUN v. GRE & ENG v. DEU
“Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht” – Carruthers**

The old Yiddish adage: “Man plans, and God laughs,” was no more evident than it was with one board remaining in the last match. The first seven places in the table were set (Switzerland, Netherlands, Italy, Israel, Denmark, Sweden and Norway). Eighth and ninth were almost set: Hungary led England by 345.38 to 337.90. Bulgaria had been behind Hungary at the start of the match, but had killed Turkey to qualify easily, dropping Hungary to ninth, the last qualifying spot, with one board to go. But they were still 7½ VP ahead of England.

At the start of the match, it appeared that England was not even in contention – Hungary was eighth on 334.99 VP, Bulgaria was ninth on 332.89, and England was tenth on 324.35. With one board to go, Hungary was up 1 IMP in their match and England was up 10 in theirs, not nearly enough for the Brits. The Hungarian NPC was on the phone with his travel agent, booking airline flights from Budapest to Milano.

The last board has been decisive in many events; just ask the Italian Bermuda Bowl team in Monte Carlo in 2003 or the USA Venice Cup team in Bermuda in 2000, where their losses were by 1 IMP and 0.4 IMP respectively. Or the Australian teams who lost their Trials three years in a row by 1 IMP or less.

This was the last board of the event:

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Philippos</i>	<i>Gal</i>	<i>Manolis</i>	<i>Balazs</i>
<i>Karamanlis</i>	<i>Hegedus</i>	<i>Protonono-</i>	<i>Szegedi</i>
		<i>Tarios</i>	
—	—	Pass	2♠
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Karamanlis bid what he thought he could make. Hegedus tried the ace of diamonds. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps ending in the dummy and led a low club, in case Szegedi was inclined to split with the king-queen. When the six appeared, declarer put up the ace and later crossed to a trump to lead another club toward the jack. That was an easy plus 1430 to Greece. It was too tough for Hegedus, with an ace, to sacrifice in six spades for minus 800.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Csaba</i>	<i>Nikos</i>	<i>Gabor</i>	<i>Vassilis</i>
<i>Szabo</i>	<i>Delimpal-</i>	<i>Winkler</i>	<i>Vroustis</i>
	<i>dakis</i>		
—	—	Pass	2♠
Double	3♦	Pass	4♦
4♥	4♠	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

As Virginia Woolf said on the BBC in 1937, “Words fail me.” Since a four-triple-three Yarborough with East would have given West a play for six hearts (and East cannot have a boatload of pointed-suit cards on the opponents’ auction), all three of his bids are, being exceedingly generous, doubtful. South lost the obvious five tricks for minus 500, but a gain of 14 IMPs.

Those 14 IMPs resulted in a 31-18 loss for Hungary, 14.28-5.72VP to Greece. Hungary finished on 340.71 VP.

ENGLAND v. GERMANY

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Klaus</i>	<i>Michael</i>	<i>Joerg</i>	<i>Kieran</i>
<i>Reps</i>	<i>Byrne</i>	<i>Fritsche</i>	<i>Dyke</i>
—	—	Pass	2♠
4♣ ¹	4♠	5♣	Pass
7♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Leaping Michaels: clubs and hearts, FIR

Reps could not avoid the loss of a club trick; minus 100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>David</i>	<i>Julius</i>	<i>Tom</i>	<i>Christian</i>
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Linde</i>	<i>Townsend</i>	<i>Schwerdt</i>
—	—	Pass	2♠
3♠ ¹	4♠	Pass	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Hearts and a minor

Bakhshi ruffed the ace of diamonds lead, led the king of hearts and another to the ten, cashed the king and queen of diamonds and led a club to the ace, dropping the queen. He was able to lead another heart to the dummy for a club lead; plus 1430. That resulted in 17 IMPs to England, increasing their margin of victory to 27 IMPs, 39-12. Their Victory Point result was thus 17.34-2.66, totalling 341.69 in the end. That was enough for them to pip Hungary by 0.98 VP.

The Women’s Qualification

Round 1. ENG v. DEU

Frequent Foes – Carruthers

No matter whether it’s something serious like a World War or something frivolous like a World Cup or a World Bridge Championship, Germany and England seem to do battle very often, on every field of endeavour. They’ve won about a dozen World Bridge Team Championships between them in Open, Women’s, Senior and Junior competition, with the women having won seven of those. Although these two teams in the European Venice Cup Qualifier are not quite up to the standard of the teams from the glory years, we expected no less fierce a battle, and so it proved.

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Gillian	Mieke	Catherine	Susanne
Fawcett	Plath	Draper	Kriftner
—	—	Pass	1♣ ¹
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠ ²
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- 3+ clubs
- Unbalanced, usually 5+ clubs and 4 spades

Fawcett led the eight of diamonds. Kriftner won with her king over the jack and led the king of spades, shifting her attention to hearts when East showed out. Declarer cashed the ace of hearts and led a diamond to the ace when West followed suit. She ruffed the jack of hearts and led another diamond. West ruffed that and led the king of hearts. Kriftner ruffed it with the queen of spades, led a spade to the ten, cashed the ace of spades and led diamonds. The defence made just two trump tricks and the ace of clubs for plus 620 to North/South. Well done to Kriftner.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Annaig	Nevena	Gisella	Nicola
Della Monta	Senior	Smykalla	Smith
—	—	2♥ ¹	Double
3♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- 5 hearts and 4+ either minor

The vagaries of the auction put North on play here and East, with not much to go on, led the ace and queen of clubs. Senior ducked the club in dummy, ruffing it in hand, and led a spade to the king, seeing that she was in big trouble. Declarer led a spade to the ten, still on the right track though, but then played three rounds of diamonds. West was able to ruff the third diamond and knock out the ace of spades. This was the position:

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

Declarer no longer had the transportation to make more than three tricks: there was no way back to her hand after the next trick. She led a diamond for West to ruff, discarding a club from the dummy, but West

simply exited with a heart and declarer had to lose a club at the end – she lost two clubs and two trumps for minus 100 and a loss of 12 IMPs.

Declarer would have been much better placed if she'd taken the king of clubs at trick two but, even so, had she played on either hearts or spades after two rounds of diamonds, she could have made the contract.

Round 2. SCO v. RUS Change of Plans – Horton

Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Elana	Liz	Tatiana	Fiona
Khonicheva	McGowan	Ponamareva	McQuaker
—	—	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT ¹
Pass	2♦ ²	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT ³	Pass	5♦ ⁴
Double	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- 15-18
- Game-forcing checkback
- RKCB
- 0/3 key cards

If North had asked about kings, the news that South had two of them would have been enough for her to go 'all in'; plus 1010 left the door ajar.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Fiona	Maria	Julia	Olga
Greenwood	Yakovleva	Palmer	Pavlushko
—	—	Pass	1♣ ¹
Pass	1♠ ²	Pass	2♣ ³
Pass	3♠ ⁴	Pass	4♣ ⁵
Pass	4♦ ⁶	Pass	4NT ⁷
Pass	5♠ ⁸	Pass	6♥ ⁹
Pass	6NT ¹⁰	Pass	7♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Alert explanations are on the next page...

1. Polish Club: (i) 12-14 balanced (ii) 15+ natural (iii) 18+
2. 4+ spades 7+ HCP
3. Asking, 3+ spades, 16+
4. 6 spades, 11+ HCP, balanced
5. Control
6. Control
7. RKCB
8. 2 key cards + spade queen
9. Asking in hearts
10. 2 hearts, no queen

An impressive plus 1510 and 11 IMPs.

Round 8. NOR v. SWE Winning Double – Horton

On this deal from Round 8 in the Women's series, it was vital to play in the stronger suit:

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ylva Johansson</i>	<i>Gunn Tove Vist</i>	<i>Louise Hallqvist</i>	<i>Torild Heskje</i>
2♦ ¹	4♣ ²	Pass	4♦ ³
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT ⁴
Pass	5NT ⁵	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Weak or strong, 1 major
2. Clubs and a major
3. Ask for North's major
4. RKCB
5. 0 or 3 key cards plus a void

The slam was doomed by the spade break, minus 100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Ann Karin Fuglestad</i>	<i>Cecilia Rimstedt</i>	<i>Marianne Harding</i>	<i>Ida Grönkvist</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣ ¹
Pass	3♦ ²	Pass	3♥ ³
Pass	4♦ ⁴	Pass	4♥ ⁵
Pass	4NT ⁶	Pass	5♣ ⁷
Pass	5♥ ⁸	Pass	6♣ ⁹
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Alerts next column

1. Game-forcing relay (normally no void) or game forcing, natural
2. 16+ (or good honours) 5+ clubs
3. Asking in hearts
4. Void in hearts
5. Key card with spades as trumps
6. Odd number of keycards, denies spade queen
7. Asking for the club king
8. Club king but no diamond king
9. 'I hope a suggestion to play (but, if not, perhaps asking for third-round diamond control)'

Knowing the queen of spades was missing, South gave North a chance to play in what might be a stronger suit. Having avoided the doomed slam in spades, declarer now had to find a route to 12 tricks in clubs.

West led the three of diamonds for the jack and ace. Declarer drew trumps, West pitching the four of hearts. When West followed to the ace of spades with the nine, declarer cashed a club, everyone pitching a heart, came to hand with a diamond and played a spade, putting up the king when West discarded the three of hearts. Declarer cashed the last trump, pitching her remaining spade and West parted with the eight of hearts. This was the position:

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

Declarer played a diamond to her queen and exited with the four, forcing West to lead into the ace-queen of hearts for a majestic plus 1370 and 16 IMPs.

Terrific bidding and flawless play! That's what I call a winning double.

This event qualified the top eight teams in each category for next year's World Team Championships in Salsomaggiore, Italy for March 27 through April 9, 2022. In addition to those eight, Italy qualifies as host in all four championships. It is possible that more European teams will qualify if other WBF Zones do not fill their quotas.

The top ten teams of the Open category in this event also qualified their NBOs to send their Club Champions to the European Champions Cup, to be held in Pezink, Slovakia from November 11 to 13, 2021. In addition, Slovakia qualifies as host and BC't Onstein I of the Netherlands qualifies as defending champion.

The qualifying teams were:

For the **Bermuda Bowl**: In the Open series, Switzerland finished well clear of the Netherlands, Italy, Israel, Denmark, Bulgaria, Sweden, Norway and England. Hungary also qualified for the European Champions Cup.

For the **Venice Cup**, the Women's event saw Sweden finish more than a match clear of Poland and Russia, the next five places being occupied by Turkey, France, Hungary, England and Spain. Italy qualified as host.

In the **d'Orsi Trophy** qualification, Netherlands topped the Seniors, way ahead of Bulgaria, France, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Norway and Iceland. Italy qualified as host.

In the Mixed teams qualification for the **Wuhan Cup**, France was the convincing winner, followed by Belgium, Romania, Germany, Portugal, Denmark, Israel and Poland. Italy qualified as host.

Editorial continued...

to publish his letter of support for the teams, the EBL stating that the Daily Bulletin was not an opinion forum, but a vessel for reporting the results of the tournament. At least, not when that opinion might be controversial or at odds with the EBL's. Zia and I decided that Bridge Winners was an appropriate place for his message:

<http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/intrigue-at-the-euro-qualifiers/>

The Italians were apoplectic, feeling their honour had been impugned, and perhaps it had. The Italian NPC and the President of the Italian Bridge Federation (FIGB) both posted letters of outrage on websites and social media. Against that, and very unusually for staid NBOs, England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and the Nordic Bridge Union (Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) all came out publicly in support of the boycotters. You can read public statements by many of these people and organisations at: <https://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/>

What happens next? (i) The FIGB Credentials Committee met on September 2 and 5 to approve the players for their upcoming Bermuda Bowl Trials; (ii) the WBF Credentials Committee meets prior to Salsomaggiore; (iii) the World Championships and the possibility of further boycotts; (iv) France has offered to mediate among the boycotting nations, the FIGB, the EBL and the WBF; (v) a player (Dano DeFalco) on Fantoni's own team has said he won't play in the Trials if his team composition remains intact and the overwhelming Trials favourite, Vinci, which includes Duboin/Madala and Lauria/Versace, has stated they will not compete if Fantoni is allowed to play.

NEWS & VIEWS



The Aftermath Chronology

Zia Enters the Fray

Before we'd even realised what had happened and what was about to occur, Zia Mahmood made a public statement on Bridge Winners (the link to this is in the opposite column) on August 23:

"There are times in every sport when a man or woman must put honour first. Bridge has reached that point and, today, the teams from Scotland and Wales have emerged as giants as they led the way with dignity and refused to play against the Italian team. As other countries have followed in this protest, it is clear the bridge world is today shouting this message to the authorities: Bridge is a game of honour. While we all are bound to accept the rulings of the judiciary, the greatest heroes are those who live by the dictates of their conscience. For what can we win when we don't have honour? The people have spoken, And we are proud again."

The FIGB Responds

Repercussions and recriminations began immediately. First came a letter from Francesco Ferlazzo Natoli, President of the Italian Bridge Federation (FIGB), posted on its website and on Neapolitan Club, the online site run brilliantly by Laura Camponeschi <https://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/>:



"The start of the European qualifiers for the 2022 World Championships and the 2021 Champions' Cup has been disconcerting. The first six rounds took place in the 'European Qualifier 2021', but none of the teams who were scheduled to play against Italy turned up. The teams were Scotland, Wales, Slovenia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Latvia. The Italian team fields Alberto Forcucci npc, Verino Caldarelli, Tiziano Di Febo, Kristian Dimitrov, Fulvio Fantoni, Berardino Mancini and Lanfranco Vecchi.

It is apparent that this is not a coincidence, but a planned and perhaps coordinated protest (*there is not a shred of evidence of this – Ed.*) of those NBOs who did not want to play against Italy. This is not

Continued on page 14...



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra



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

1061. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

South's jump to three spades over North's simple heart raise was a splinter bid. When North showed a diamond control, South used Roman Key Card Blackwood to reach slam.

West led the six of trumps and declarer paused to form a plan. He counted ten top tricks. Declarer saw that to make his contract he would either have to ruff two low minor-suit cards in dummy or three spades in hand. As the former would require too much luck in the minor suits, he judged it a poorer chance than the latter.

So, after winning the first trick with dummy's ten of trumps, declarer cashed the ace of spades and ruffed a spade low in hand. Declarer then crossed to dummy with a low trump to the jack, since a two-two trump break would turn this into a claimer. When East showed out, declarer continued with a second spade ruff with the nine of trumps. Now he did a prescient thing: he cashed the ace of diamonds and then led a low diamond to dummy's king.

Declarer ruffed dummy's remaining spade in hand with the ace of trumps. Then he ruffed the three of diamonds

in dummy with the queen of trumps. After drawing West's last trump with the king, declarer claimed 12 tricks: one spade, four trumps in dummy, three spade ruffs in hand and four winners in the minors.

Notice that, if declarer had not cashed the ace of diamonds before playing a diamond to the king, the contract would have failed on this layout. West would have discarded a diamond on the fourth round of spades and ruffed the next round of diamonds. Declarer would still have had to lose a club and would have finished one trick short of his contract.

1062. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	1♥	Pass	INT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

At the first table in a team game, the declarer was more noted for the speed of his play rather than his skill. West led the six of spades. Declarer played low from dummy and the queen forced his king. Declarer continued with a club to the ace and the queen of clubs, overtaking it with the king. When East discarded on the third round of clubs, declarer could make no more than eight tricks.

At the other table, declarer was more careful and deliberate. At trick one, he called for dummy's jack of spades since he wanted to preserve an entry to hand to cash the four club honours. If the jack of spades had held, then the king of spades would have been the entry. When

East covered the jack of spades with the queen, declarer took it with his king and led a diamond to the queen and East's king. East returned a spade, which was taken in dummy with the ace. Next, declarer cashed dummy's ace and queen of clubs. When both opponents followed to the clubs, declarer claimed nine tricks: a heart, three spades and five clubs. The ten of spades was the entry to his hand.

Note that this declarer's play of a diamond at trick two was a precautionary measure against clubs being five-one: he would then have been able to make a second diamond trick if the honours had been favourably placed.

1063. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

The auction here was fairly straight-forward: two hearts promised spade support and three diamonds was a long-suit game try. North had a near-perfect hand and bid the spade game.

West led a lowest-from-an-odd-number two of hearts. East played the queen, king and ace of hearts, suit-preference for clubs. Declarer ruffed low and saw that he would have ten easy tricks if trumps were not four-zero; East had to have the ace of clubs because West would surely have bid two hearts with that card.

So declarer led a low trump to dummy's king at trick four. When East discarded a diamond, declarer led a low club from the dummy. East rose with the ace and played another round of hearts. Declarer ruffed low to neutralise West's jack of trumps. West saw that it would be pointless to overruff and discarded a diamond instead. Declarer led a low trump to West's five and dummy's eight. After cashing the queen of trumps, declarer returned to hand with a club to the king. When that held, he had ten tricks: six trumps, three diamonds and a club.

Note that it was important to play a club at trick five. If declarer had returned to hand with the king of diamonds, after taking the eight and queen of trumps he would

then have had to come off dummy with a club. East would have risen with the ace, after which a fourth round of hearts would have promoted West's jack of trumps into the setting trick.

1064. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

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

1. Natural, game-forcing
2. Stronger than 4♥
3. RKCB
4. 1 or 4 key cards
5. Trump-queen ask
6. Queen of hearts and king of spades

South thought his fifth heart and diamond queen were too much to make a simple raise to four hearts, so showed some interest with three spades.

At the other table in a team game, South had shown no such enterprise and had simply raised to four hearts. North had deferred to his opinion. Declarer had won the king-of-clubs lead with the ace and had led the ace of hearts. When West had shown out, declarer had breathed a sigh of relief, for now slam was very dicey. Taking some precautions, declarer led a spade to the ace, cashed the king of spades and ruffed a spade with the king of hearts. When East showed out, declarer drew trumps and conceded a spade, making 11 tricks when West cashed a club.

At the second table, declarer needed to make one more trick than his counterpart. Being a careful player, South won the club lead in dummy with the ace and, seeing that he needed spades to be no worse than four-two, led a spade immediately. He cashed the ace and king and led a third spade, ruffing it high in the dummy. Declarer led a trump to the queen, noted the four-zero break, and ruffed a fourth spade high in the dummy, setting up the fifth spade as a winner. Then declarer could lead dummy's last trump, covering East's card, draw trumps and claim 12 tricks and 11 IMPs.

acceptable and it undermines the relationships between our NBO and theirs. Even worse, it is offensive towards the organiser of the event, the EBL, who accepted the Italian team's line up.

Prior to writing this statement, we waited for the publication of the first bulletin and we are pleased to see that the EBL has started an investigation to find out more about why those six NBOs refused to play.

This behaviour can potentially be subject to heavy penalties, reflecting the serious violation against principles of sportsmanship and basic civility. We are almost sure (and we are not scared to face the elephant in the room) that the reason why they refused to play is because one of the players in the Italian team had been subject to investigation and disciplinary action for cheating. Some influential players are still campaigning against him, whilst national and international organisations are silent on the matter, which undermines their own credibility and authority.

As everyone knows, investigations and tribunal proceedings ended with the player's acquittal. Although people have their own views, the Sports Tribunal has spoken and the player has the right to play in all national and internal competitions: but this can happen only if we remember that we live in a civilised society, if we recognise human rights and acknowledge the role of justice, and if we want to keep hoping that bridge will be recognised as a real sport.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of the EBL's inspection and any potential disciplinary measures, hoping that these awful events will not repeat themselves in the future."

Francesco Ferlazzo Natoli
President of FIGB
August 24, 2021



of matches by their opponents in the European online world championship qualifier:

<https://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/eng/eb-qualifier-italian-federations-statement.html>

We believe that international competitions should be free of unethical practice. We have introduced policies that prevent players being selected for England for at least 10 years if they have been convicted of unethical behaviour, and it is difficult to imagine that any England player would consent to play in a team with a player who had consistently acted improperly in international championships over a significant period.

We congratulate all countries who have expressed their displeasure and fully support any decision our own open team makes when it is their turn to play Italy. International players have the right to decide whether or not they want to play against individuals who have taken advantage of them for years. FIGB's statement seems to suggest that players who refuse to play against cheats and NBOs that permit this are acting dishonourably and, in some respect, losing credibility. We do not believe this to be the case."

Ian Payn
Chairman, English Bridge Union
August 25, 2021

The EBL Considers the Issues



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

The European Bridge League did indeed conduct an investigation and decided that no further penalties would be assessed. The teams not fielding a lineup

forfeited the match and received 0 Victory Points, while Italy received 12 VP for each match forfeited to them.

The EBU Reacts

The English Bridge Union quickly replied to the FIGB:

"England is disappointed in the response of the Italian Bridge Federation (FIGB) to the forfeiting

The NPC Speaks Out

The Italian NPC, Alberto Forcucci, sent a message to Neapolitan Bridge in a similar vein to Natoli's:

"The shameful boycott against the Italian team continues. This behaviour damages a small amateur bridge organisation (Pescara Bridge) who organised the event together with the Federation, with the limited amount of resources it has available. Equally, it disrespects all amateur players who love our mind game and who were chosen to represent Italy as a reward for winning the Team Championships in 2019. Initially, Sergio Freddio was supposed to be the sixth player, but he had to give up his place due to work commitments. At that point, NPC Forcucci suggested to the FIGB President to invite Fulvio Fantoni, who had been a friend of Pescara Bridge for a long time.

All players should condemn the boycott, which is beneath the international bridge community and bridge professionals who refuse to compete with a team of amateurs.”

Alberto Forcucci
Captain, Italian Open Team
August 25, 2021

More NBOs and the Press Weigh In

In short order, the NBOs of the Netherlands (August 26), Switzerland (August 26) and Sweden (August 27) published letters on their websites (they can also be viewed at the Neapolitan Club website) in support of their players and the boycotting teams. Somewhat later, the Polish Bridge Union publicly gave support to their players. The Australian Bridge Federation weighed in with a statement against cheating. Natoli gave an interview in the Italian press, reiterating his earlier statement. Articles appeared in *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *USA Today* and other well-known newspapers, offering no opinion, simply stating the facts.

On August 29, the USBF even came out in support of the boycotting players and teams:

At its meeting on Sunday, Aug. 29th, the Board of Directors of the USBF made the following statement:

“The USBF Board unanimously and strongly supports the teams and players who forfeited a match they considered morally impossible to play under the unique circumstances of the EBL Qualification event.”

This was followed the next day by all nations of the Nordic Bridge Union agreeing with the boycott:

“Open letter to FIGB, the WBF, EBL, and the international bridge community.

We concur with the English Bridge Union, the Dutch, the Swedish and the Swiss Bridge Federations in relation to the events at the Qualifier for World Team Championships & European Champion Cup tournament.

Most has been said in these letters. Summarising, it is a question of honour and sticking to the principles. The players have shown remarkable courage which should be listened to. We also strongly appeal to FIGB to reconsider and revise their stance. There is no need for an escalation in our relationships within the Bridge community.”

Finn Wardi
Nordic Bridge Union Chairman
On behalf of Denmark, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland

Not a single National Bridge Organisation came out in support of Italy, the Italian team, the FIGB or its public

posture. The closest was the French Bridge Federation who, on August 27th, offered to mediate:

“We are now aware of the various statements made by the Italian Federation, the EBL and other NBOs on the course of the EBL Online European Qualifier. The events that have just taken place are serious. They require a debate between us, the European NBOs. Therefore it is paramount that we meet promptly.

Our part is to develop our game by giving it a framework respecting the fundamental rules, sport ethics and deontological principles applicable to the various actors. It is also of our duty to protect our “Elite” as well as all passionate players. We will not solve any problem arisen during this competition through media and social networks.

We call on the International Bridge Community to show great restraint and to respect rules and regulations that we have built, all together. We call on our International Authorities to take into account the current events and translate them into appropriate measures to avoid the failure of the next World Championships. We remain available to participate or lead any discussion on how to solve the dysfunctions together with EBL and WBF.”

Franck Riehm, President, French Bridge Federation

The FIGB Announces Its Trials Teams

Earlier in August, the FIGB announced that Trials to form Italy’s Bermuda Bowl team in Salsomaggiore, March 27-April 9, 2022, would take place in two phases, Sept 16-19 and October 14-17, 2021. The following five teams would contest the The Trials:

***BORTOLETTI:** Carlo Bortoletti-Dano De Falco, Paolo Clair-Givanni Genova, Fulvio Fantoni-Massimo Moritsch

BURGAY: Leandro Burgay-Federico Porta, Bernardo Biondo-Francesco Mazzadi, Giovanni Donati-Giacomo Percario

DE MICHELIS: Luca De Michelis-Didi Cedelin, Mario D’Avossa-Fabio Lo Presti, Massimiliano Di Franco-Andrea Manno

****VINCI:** Francesco Vinci-Fabrizio Hugony, Giorgio Duboin-Augustin Madala, Lorenzo Lauria-Alfredo Versace

ZALESKI: Romain Zaleski-Antonio Sementa, Giuseppe Delle Cave-Matteo Montanari, Arrigo Franchi-Massimo Lanzarotti

Several players have indicated they will not play in the Trials as a protest against the FIGB.

* Dano De Falco indicated he will not take place in the Trials; he awaits the FIGB Credentials Committee decision.

** The Vinci team has similarly decided not to play in the Trials as they are currently constituted. They also await the Credentials Committee decision.

The FIGB Credentials Committee had until September 6 to approve/deny players for the Trials.

Fantoni Speaks Out

Let's hear from Fulvio Fantoni himself. He said this on Neapolitan Club:

Fulvio Fantoni: "I Will Not Give Up!"

During the recent European Qualifiers, EBL announced that none of the teams played against Italy. Many NBOs stated that the reason for forfeiting was Fulvio Fantoni's presence.

This morning (*September 1 – Ed.*), Fantoni released a long interview to an Italian national newspaper (*Il Messaggero*). At the end of the interview, Fantoni said that he would wait for the Italian Federation's decision before consulting his lawyer and he would not give up. Fantoni added that this was not just about a championship but rather about his rights. "*One might well ask, 'What about the rights of the players you cheated for 20 years, Signor Fantoni?'*"

Bortoletti's Letter

In sharp contrast to this, however, was (also on Neapolitan Club), Carlo Bortoletti's letter to the President of the FIGB:

Dear President,

Fulvio rang me yesterday and, demonstrating exceptional sensitivity, told me that if he got selected, he would want me to decide whether he'd take part in the Bermuda Bowl. Italy will be the host country, so it is in everyone's best interest to guarantee that the competition is successful.

I thanked him for this honourable approach. Even though losing a unique champion would be tough for the team, I told him that, if he got selected (unlikely but possible) and, if this could not be resolved by the institutions, I would suggest him to step back. I know for sure that he would accept my recommendation.

I share this because I believe that knowing Fantoni's plan can support a more positive atmosphere around the selections. And, by the way, most players who will take part in the selections have already played against Fantoni in the recent festival in Salsomaggiore and will play against him in the next championships. Moreover, other players who have

been penalised in the past could take part in the Bermuda Bowl.

Since this is important I am happy to share this publicly and the Federation can share this far and wide.

Kind regards,
Carlo Bortoletti
September 1, 2021

The Times' Conclusion

On August 30, *The Times* published their take on the controversy. It concluded its article with:



"The rest of the sporting world will be watching how this unfolds, as an example of player power against suspected or convicted cheats."

The Credentials Committee Decision

On September 6, the FIGB Credentials Committee revealed its Solomonic decision:

"The FIGB (Italian Federation) Credential Committee met on 2nd and 5th September to assess the teams' registration for the World Championships selection. The Credential Committee did not find any eligibility issues.

However, following the letter sent by Mr. Bortoletti (team captain) and De Falco's public statement (team player), the Committee has not allowed team BORTOLETTI to play because in case of victory, there would have been insurmountable issues for the open team."

Bortoletti's and De Falco's Responses

Bortoletti wasted no time replying...

"I am reading on the federation's website that my team has been excluded ... If the Committee does not immediately review its arbitrary decision to exclude my team, I will for sure get the lawyers on the case."

Additionally, Dano De Falco, in a letter to the FIGB President, said that he had never made the decision not to play, merely that he was awaiting the Credentials Committee decision.

Conclusion (So Far)

One cannot help but suppress a chuckle at this farce brought about by the FIGB upon itself, and one further wishes that Oscar Wilde or P.G. Wodehouse were still with us to write about it.

Meanwhile, in other news...

An ACBL Regulation

Would This Work for the EBL and WBF?

By becoming an ACBL member or renewing your membership in the ACBL, you expressly agree to waive your right to have disputes between you and the ACBL resolved in a court of law and agree to accept the use of binding arbitration before the American Arbitration Association. The binding arbitration provisions are available for review at www.acbl.org/bindingarbitration.

CAS Finds No Jurisdiction

In a [lengthy opinion](#) released on Sept. 8, 2021, the CAS panel found that it did not have jurisdiction to hear the appeal filed by Huub Bertens against the United States Bridge Federation and therefore rejected Bertens' appeal.



What Dreams May Come
Mark Horton, Shrewsbury, Shrops., U.K.

The ninth round of the OCBL League, signalling the start of the A/B Swiss, featured a number of deals that contained fascinating possibilities in both play and defence. Here are three of them.

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

Given a choice, I think most players would prefer to attempt three notrump here, especially if East has shown a club suit. If the spades behave, you will be able to reach dummy with the jack to take a heart finesse even if you do not get a club lead at trick one.

Bourricot v New Amateurs

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Simson	Boulin	Aker	Bellicaud
—	1♠	4♣	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

South led the three of spades. North won with the king and exited with the two of clubs. Declarer won with the ace and played a diamond for the king and ace, and North cashed the king of clubs and the ace of spades, then continued with the ten of spades. South won and switched to a heart, which meant declarer took only six tricks, minus 800.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bedouet	Baseggio	Vallet	Lo
—	2♣	3♣	Double ¹
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I. 0-3 HCP

East led the five of diamonds. Declarer won with the ace and cashed the ace of spades. When the queen fell, he realised that playing a spade risked East finding the brilliant stroke of putting up the eight, so he looked for an alternative. His next move was to exit with the king of clubs! East took the ace and continued with the queen before exiting with the eight of spades. Now declarer could win with dummy's jack, play a heart to the ten, return to dummy with the six of spades and play a heart to the queen for plus 620, but a 5-IMP loss.

There was counter-measure available – if East, having won the ace of clubs, exits with a low club, West can win with the ten and play two rounds of diamonds, after which declarer must lose a fourth trick. However, there is a counter to the counter! Declarer must exit with the two of clubs rather than the king! If West wins with the ten and plays two rounds of diamonds declarer ruffs high and exits with the king of clubs to endplay East.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

Donner v Ireland

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Moran	C. Rimstedt	Carroll	Dwyer
—	—	—	1♣ ¹
1♠	2♣ ²	4♠	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 2+ clubs
2. Diamonds

North led the two of hearts. Declarer won with dummy's ace and continued with the king, South ruffing as North followed with the nine, and switching to the two of diamonds. (It's hard to see but, if South plays two rounds of trumps, declarer should finish a trick short. Even harder to see is that if declarer continues with a low heart at trick two, he can always make.) North covered declarer's jack with the queen and, after ruffing in dummy, declarer continued with the jack of hearts, ruffed and overruffed, ruffed a diamond and played the ten of hearts. When South ruffed with the ace of spades, declarer pitched a diamond and had ten tricks, plus 790.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Moss	Hanlon	Grue	Garvey
—	—	—	2♣ ¹
2♠	Double ²	4♠	Double
Pass	4NT ²	Pass	5♦
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 11-15, 6+ clubs or 5 clubs plus 4-card major
2. Takeout

West led the seven of spades. Declarer won with the ace over the queen, discarding a heart from dummy, and continued with the queen of clubs, West taking the ace and switching to the eight of hearts. East won with the king and returned the ten of clubs, West ruffing declarer's jack and playing a second heart. Declarer ruffed and played the king of clubs, ruffed and overruffed, and then ruffed a heart. West overruffed and exited with the king of diamonds, leaving declarer with just eight tricks, minus 800, and a flat board.

Four spades doubled was made more than once – it's a tough contract for both sides. As the cards lie, declarer can get home by crossruffing diamonds and clubs, playing South for all four spades. With the first eight tricks in the bag, declarer leads a heart to the dummy and his king-ten-seven of spades will be worth two more tricks since South has no more diamonds. The four-zero trump split does declarer no harm, and he can add a little insurance by ruffing the third club with the six of spades in case North has the five. However, if trumps are three-one, declarer needs to know how the red suits lie – assuming South has a second heart or a fourth diamond.

Slovakia v Scorway

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Kvocek	Levinson	Vodicka	Shenkin
—	—	—	1♣ ¹
1♠	Double	2♥ ²	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 2+ clubs
2. Good spade raise

North led the four of clubs for the ten, jack and ace. Declarer ruffed a diamond, played the nine of clubs, covered and ruffed, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a club with the six of spades, ruffed a diamond and played the eight of clubs, South following with the two. Declarer pitched a diamond, ruffed a club with the three of spades, played a heart to dummy's ace and continued with the king. South ruffed and exited with the nine of spades, scoring the last two tricks with the ace and jack of spades, plus 790.

If declarer had discarded a heart on the eight of clubs, he would have been able to overruff on the second round of hearts and exit with the king of diamonds for an overtrick.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Diamond	Henc	Silverstone	Lohay
—	—	—	1♣
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North led the four of clubs for the five, six and ace. Declarer crossed to dummy with a heart and played a spade to the king, North pitching the three of diamonds. Declarer continued with a heart to the ten and South ruffed and played the king of clubs. Declarer could cross-ruff the minors, but was a trick short, minus 100 and a 13-IMP loss.

Board 15. Dealer South. NS Vul.

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

In the Donner versus Ireland match...

West	North	East	South
Moran	C. Rimstedt	Carroll	Dwyer
—	—	—	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♦ ¹	Pass	5♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. 14-16 HCP, 5+/5+

North led the eight of hearts. Declarer won with dummy's ace and played a diamond to the ten, queen and king. North exited with the two of hearts; declarer won with the king and continued with the jack of clubs, South winning with the king and exiting with six of hearts. Declarer ruffed, pitching a club from dummy, and cashed the ace of diamonds. When South pitched a spade, declarer played a spade to the king and a spade to the ace. North's ruff, followed by a heart, ensured two down, minus 100.

As the play went, declarer could have ruffed the third heart in dummy, discarding a spade from hand. He can then ruff a club and draw trumps ending in dummy, squeezing South in the process.

Having led a heart, the killing defence is for North to switch to the spade four when in with the king of diamonds. If declarer does not draw trumps, South will win the first round of clubs and give North a spade ruff, but drawing trumps leaves declarer a trick short.

The best line in five diamonds is far from clear, but declarer could consider winning a heart lead in hand and leading a club. He wins the next heart in dummy, ruffs a club and can now cash the ace of diamonds and play a second diamond. In due course, South is going to be squeezed in the black suits.

The only way the defenders can be sure of defeating five diamonds is for North to lead the four of spades at trick one, not attractive, but North does have trump control and if South has an entry...

West	North	East	South
B. Moss	Hanlon	Grue	Garvey
—	—	—	Pass
1♣ ¹	1♥	Double ²	1♠
Double ³	2♥	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Strong
2. Game-forcing, artificial
3. Penalty

South led the jack of hearts. Declarer won with the ace and ran the jack of diamonds, North winning and returning a heart. Declarer won in dummy, cashed the diamonds and then played spades, taking the finesse for nine tricks; plus 400 and 11 IMPs.

Only three pairs played in three notrump. If East is the declarer, North could consider trying for four club tricks when in with the king of diamonds, either cashing the ace (hoping partner has the king-queen-ten-low) or switching to the nine of clubs when king-queen-eight-low opposite would be good enough.

Which allows me to reveal how, at double dummy, three notrump can be defeated. South must lead the five of clubs, North winning with the ace and returning the nine for the ten and queen. Now South gets off play and, in due course, North comes in with the king of diamonds and plays a third club.



The Bridge Club
Frank Stewart,
Fayette, AL

Louie Pays Up

I found Unlucky Louie in the club lounge. He and his cheque book were having a tag-team match against a pile of unpaid bills.

"If only I could veto some of these bills," Louie said glumly, "I might avoid the poorhouse. Look at this. The Water Board wants their money; they say they've carried me longer than my mother did. And here's a letter from the power company saying they'd be delighted if I paid up – but if I don't, I will be, 'de-lighted', that is."

Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

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

That afternoon, Louie tried to prop up his bank balance in the penny Chicago game, but he wasn't delighted after this deal. As South, he leapt to four hearts when North offered some encouragement with a two-diamond bid.

West led the jack of clubs. East took the ace, dropping Louie's queen, and did very well to shift to a low spade. West's ten forced out the queen, killing dummy's late entry to the diamonds. Louie drew trumps and led a diamond, but West signalled with the deuce, showing an odd number. East therefore let dummy's king win, but when Louie came back to his king of clubs and led another diamond to the queen, East won and led a club. Louie ruffed, but lost two spades for down one, slipping a little deeper into the hole.

"Nice defence," Louie said grudgingly.

How would you play four hearts?

Louie's contract was unbeatable. After Louie had drawn trumps, he should have taken the king of clubs before leading a diamond to the king, which East must let hold. Louie would then have ruffed dummy's last club and led another diamond to the queen. When East takes the ace, he'd have no more clubs. All East could then have done was to cash the ace of spades, holding Louie to ten tricks.



In the years when Eric Murray and Sami Kehela were at the peak of their game and were one of the best pairs in the world, Edgar Kaplan often played in teams with them, doing well enough to rate many writeups in *The Bridge World*. On those very infrequent occasions when Murray/Kehela had a poor result, Kaplan, in print, would invariably pin the error or misjudgement on Murray, believing, as Murray often stated, and the other top experts of the time agreed, that Kehela made a mistake only about once every 25 years. Similarly, some of Murray's successes were attributed to Kehela. These occasionally resulted in Murray penning a mock-irate and amusing letter to *The Bridge World*, some of which were published in that august journal. Most of these affronts found their way to my ears, sometimes many years later. If he were particularly offended, Murray might phone Kaplan to complain. On one occasion, after listening to Murray's rantings, Kaplan replied simply, "That's the price you pay for getting off my team." Murray's well-deserved nickname at his law firm was *Outrage*.

A telephone call from Bob Hamman is usually a treat. I say usually, since one such call came a while ago and brought to mind the exchanges Murray had had with Kaplan. "I have a bone to pick with you," Hamman intoned.

"Oh," I replied cautiously, with more than a little trepidation.

"Yes, I've been reading the 2015 World Championship book from Chennai. There was a deal on which you ascribed success in five diamonds doubled to Lair (*Mark Lair, Hamman's partner – Ed.*). I was the declarer."

"Well, Bob," I replied, "since the book went to press five years ago, it's a little late to correct the error now."

After searching for the Hamman deal in the World Championship book, I found it in the final match (of the Senior Teams), versus Sweden. It's worth a look here, since it was kind of cute.

Board 35. Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ 3
 ♥ A K 6 5
 ♦ A 10 6 5 3 2
 ♣ 5 3

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

♠ K 9 7 6 5 2
 ♥ J 10 9 3
 ♦ K 8
 ♣ A

♠ A 4
 ♥ Q 2
 ♦ Q J 7 4
 ♣ Q 9 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Bjerregård</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Morath</i>	<i>Lair</i>
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♠
3♦	3♥	4♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

In the book, I switched Bjerregård with Morath and Lair with Hamman in the description of the play. Hamman (not Lair) won Morath's (not Bjerregård's) seven-of-spades lead with dummy's ace, led the queen of diamonds to his ace, led a heart to the queen, ruffed dummy's remaining spade and played hearts from the top, ruffing the fourth round in the dummy. When Hamman finally led a second trump, Morath won with his king and cashed the club ace, but then had to give Hamman a ruff-sluff for plus 550.



Correspondence

The Editor reserves the right to abridge and/or edit correspondence.
 Email: ibpaeditor@sympatico.ca

A dissenting view...

John,

You are certain to receive quite some mail about the happenings at the EBL online event. My views may not be the same as that of the majority, so allow me to contribute. My opinion on the boycott is firm: it should not have happened, and it should certainly not be repeated.

Herman De Wael, Wilrijk, Belgium

The body of Herman's letter began with a factual description of the events which took place during the Qualifying event. Herman went on to say...

The Boycott Against Italy

I don't know yet why Italy chose to use Fantoni in their team. Perhaps the team selected was the national champion, which would benefit from going to the

Champions Cup. At any rate, this does not matter. The FIGB can nominate who they wish and the EBL Credentials Committee can accept or not any player that is suggested.

However, many players around the world were not happy with the inclusion of this player in the field and, as they are allowed to do, they voiced their protests.

However, then something strange happened: when Italy sat down to play against their first-round opponents, Scotland, no one sat down against them. And in the second round, Wales did not appear either. Italy's first two opponents were British teams, known for their fierce ideals about sportsmanship. Italy's next three opponents also decided to forfeit their matches. After another five teams on the second day failed to appear, the EBL issued a statement indicating that there were differing reasons behind the forfeits, but none constituted a 'force majeure'.

The forfeiting teams received 0VP, but the EBL decided that no further action would be taken. This gave all other teams a free path to forfeiting as well, virtually shaming them into doing so. And if a team were not shamed into joining the boycott, after two more days, teams were shamed into forfeiting because they dared not take a position that would give them an unfair advantage by scoring points instead of taking zero like all the other teams.

I know I shall be speaking in the wilderness, but I believe these actions should not be tolerated. When a player is suspected of cheating, he should receive his day in court. If the court cannot justifiably convict him, then he should be considered not guilty. If a bridge court convicts him, but a higher court (CAS or a local civil court) overturns that conviction, then the bridge authorities cannot carry out restrictions. And when a convicted player has served his time, he should be allowed again to compete without restrictions. We cannot put the organizers into a position in which they are seen to condone boycotts. That can be interpreted by the higher courts that the WBF and EBL are showing contempt for their decisions.

Any player has the right to speak out against any non-conviction or conviction, but no player should have the right to take matters into his own hands, for instance, by refusing to play. That should not be tolerated. No sports authority should allow competitors to refuse to play, for whatever reason, against other competitors who have been cleared to play by the sports authority. No reason can be good enough for one player to refuse to play against another one.

When a player is cleared of wrongdoing, all players should respect the organizers' decisions. Some people believe it makes a difference if a player has admitted

to the wrongdoing. I don't believe it does; a player who maintains his innocence should be granted the benefit of the doubt, until proven (or pronounced) guilty. And when he has then served his sentence, he should be allowed back into the fold – again, regardless of whether he admitted his mistakes or not. Otherwise, a wrongly convicted person is treated more harshly than a truly guilty one.

The task of organizing instances is very difficult. It is often hard to prove that cheating has taken place. And it is then even harder to convince superior authorities that a conviction is sound. Whatever we may think of the individuals involved, their human rights must be guaranteed. And if this means that a cheat goes free, then so be it. Imagine how it must feel to an innocent who has been wrongly accused of cheating. And don't say you know better. You've had your chance of contributing evidence, and the people that judged the potential culprit have heard your evidence as well as that of others. Give them some credit.

So let's not call the Scottish players heroes, and let's not accept other players being shamed into copying their behaviour. That is a lynch mob, not an act of justice.

Herman De Wael, Wilrijk, Belgium

Firstly, to characterize Fantoni as "cleared of wrongdoing" is ludicrous. Secondly, at the very worst, the actions of the Scottish, Welsh and, subsequently, all 28 other nations, could be termed 'civil disobedience'. When it is obviously apparent that "the law is an ass" (George Chapman), it is difficult to fault those who flout it. Thirdly, the teams that defaulted against Italy paid the price according to the Conditions of Contest (0 VP). No other sanctions were specified. Furthermore, no other sanctions were decided upon by the EBL. Fourthly, the bridge world has a history of teams refusing to play against one another and the WBF (if not the EBL) turning a blind eye to it: for example, teams refusing to play against Israel, citing difficulties with border crossings, and: asking South Africa to withdraw from world competition; etc.

To deny the players' right to revolt (and the players were unanimous) denigrates the French, American and Russian Revolutions, not to mention the Belgian Revolution itself. Had the Belgians not revolted in 1830, they might still be under Dutch rule. (Or earlier, even Spanish or French rule.)

'Lynch mob'? I disagree: the Scottish players are indeed heroes. – Ed.

To the editor:

(The footnotes are my own. – Ed.)

As we are all very aware, the recently held European Qualifiers Event led to all other Teams failing to submit their line-up⁽¹⁾ for their Match against Italy; the EBL Competitions Committee duly followed its Rules and

Regulations and determined the match as forfeited with Italy being awarded an interim 12 VPs and the forfeiting team being assigned with 0 VPs. If those teams had submitted a line-up and then failed to turn up at the table, the rules generally lead to disqualification from the event^(2.); the device chosen allowed the Organiser to adopt an approach that did not require a more serious sanction on this occasion.^(3.)

Bridge social media has been full of support for the actions taken and the federations have generally approved of the decisions made by its teams. A common theme is that '*players should not have to compete against convicted cheats*', and in acting, as they did, they have done so honourably.

Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes were subject to disciplinary proceedings brought by the EBL on an allegation of collusive cheating; namely that they had improperly communicated information about their cards to their partner by prior agreement. The matter was properly prosecuted by the EBL before the EBL Disciplinary Commission. On 16th July 2016, the players were found to be at fault and were sanctioned by being banned from playing together in EBL events for life and individually banned for a period of five years. The players, as they were entitled to do under the applicable rules, appealed that decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS); the appeal was successful and the conviction (violation of the Disciplinary Code) and sanction were quashed.^(4.)

Without the Appeal, or in the event of the decision of the Disciplinary Commission being upheld, Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes would have been eligible to enter EBL events following 15th July 2021. Neither of them have sought to enter an EBL or WBF event within the period that would have been covered by the original sanction. It is understood that they have no intention of playing together again.^(5.)

Those players who have been sanctioned to a ban for a given period are entitled to play again following the end of the relevant period. Some seek to argue that they should not be so entitled as the EBL and the WBF have rules that allow its Credentials Committees to refuse an entry without giving a reason. Whilst there may be no requirement to provide a reason, the failure to have a legitimate reason may lead to a challenge before CAS and the absence of a good reason would undoubtedly lead to the decision being overturned with the appropriate order for costs made against the relevant body.

Whilst many are understandably upset and annoyed at a decision that was not in accordance with their view, we have to accept that the law and our rules are subject to challenge. Those who say that we are only bound by CAS because of our recognition by the IOC are mistaken if they believe that the EBL and WBF are not

subject to control by other bodies. The case of the disciplinary action taken against the German doctors, following the World Championships in Bali in 2013, is a prime example of other courts hearing and dealing with the action taken by the WBF. That matter is still ongoing with the German doctors currently seeking permission from the German Federal Court of Justice to appeal the last decision of the Regional Court^(6.). The cost to the WBF of these proceedings exceeds 120,000 Euro.

I suggest that we must accept the notion of players being rehabilitated^(7.) after serving their sentence. Bridge is an activity that is subject to rules and law and disrespecting those rules and law is not of benefit for the furtherance and promotion of bridge.

David R. Harris
Honorary General Counsel to the IBPA
8th September 2021

(1.) It is not true that all other teams failed to submit a lineup. Some, including the initial protesters, Scotland, submitted a lineup and then their players failed to take their seats. This was a significant distinction with Scotland, and others, whose players did not wish to place their NPCs in an uncomfortable position.

(2.) This statement is incomplete. Here are the relevant sections of the EBL General Conditions of Contest (18) and the Supplementary Conditions of Contest (2.1.2) for the Qualifying event:

18. Forfeits in Team Tournaments

If a team is unable to play or complete a match, the Championship Committee may find that team to be in default and declare the match forfeited.

2.1.2 Right to Enter

Each participating NBO must play against all other participating NBOs. Entry and subsequent refusal to play may result in disqualification and possible disciplinary measures.

It appears that, rather than disqualify all 30 teams, the EBL decided, wisely, to treat the teams' forfeits as "unable to play" rather than as "refusal to play."

(3.) "...a more serious sanction..." was discussed during the tournament and rejected by the European Bridge League.

(4.) "...quashed..." is not quite accurate. The decision was "not proven". This puts us in mind of the three wise choices in Scottish court cases: "Not guilty", "Guilty" and "Not proven". CAS made it clear that they agreed Fantoni-Nunes had cheated, but the EBL had not fully proved its case.

(5.) Again, this is not quite accurate. Whilst Fantoni and Nunes may have stated that they have no intention to ever play together again (I have never seen such a statement), the EBL has forbidden them to do so, and

it's possible no bridge organisation or tournament would ever admit them as a pair, whether or not they are allowed to play with others.

(6.) Currently, the Regional Appeals Court has overturned the local court's decision against the German Bridge Federation (DBV) and the German doctors are again adjudged guilty, until further notice.

Allan Falk responds to David Harris...

Dear John,

Indeed I do have some comments.

Mr. Harris's letter is mostly accurate, so far as it goes. The fact that the CAS grossly distorted its summary of the ACBL's parallel but independent disciplinary action in justification of its grotesque ruling is neither here nor there – other than confirming ACBL's (and USBF's) wisdom in refusing to subscribe to CAS review of their disciplinary proceedings.

But the fact remains that, after a full and fair hearing before a five-member panel of ACBL's Ethical Oversight Committee (to none of whose members was there any objection, and the result of which Fantoni-Nunes could have taken before an arbitrator, but did not), during which Fantoni-Nunes had the assistance sequentially of both US and Italian legal counsel, Fantoni-Nunes were found culpable of exchanging information by a prearranged method not authorized by the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge, which Law 73B(2) denominates "the gravest possible offense". Both players remain expelled from ACBL, and ineligible to seek reinstatement until 2026. Whether they play with other partners or not, they have been adjudged cheats, and cheats involved in the "gravest possible offense".

Unfortunately, the ACBL disciplinary system does not allow the authorities to require cheats to make full expiation – an apology, refund of professional fees 'earned', reimbursement of concomitant losses caused to other professionals (who lost bonuses and perhaps had to accept lower rates of pay due to inability to effectively compete while playing honestly against cheats), compensatory damages to ACBL for ruining its major championships irreparably (no one will ever know who should have won or placed in events in which Fantoni or Nunes competed), or even payment of the costs of the investigation and hearings. For their part, Fantoni-Nunes have essentially ignored North America and continue to ply their trade in Europe (and perhaps elsewhere), having never apologized, having never revealed all the intricacies of their nefarious methods, and having shown no contrition whatsoever.

From the time Harold S. Vanderbilt invented contract bridge in 1925, it has been recognized that the nature of the game is such that unethical attitudes or conduct destroy its very essence. From the first set of rules

generated by the Portland Club until the present time, the Laws have included a variety of proscriptions originally labeled "Proprieties". Currently, duplicate players are mandated to play "in strict accordance with the Laws" while "complying with the lawful procedures and ethical standards set out in these laws", Law 72A and 74A3. A player may not intentionally violate a law "even if there is a prescribed rectification he is willing to accept." Law 72B1. A player may not attempt to conceal an infraction. Law 72B3. Communication between partners may be "effected only by means of calls and plays" unless otherwise specifically authorized by the laws. Law 73A1. Calls and plays must thus be made without emphasis, mannerism, inflection, undue hesitation or haste. Law 73A2. Any other form of communication is expressly prohibited. Law 73B1. Taking advantage of unauthorized information is forbidden. Law 73C1. Misleading questions, remarks or gestures, sly hesitations or other purposeful deviations from correct procedure are flatly disallowed. Law 73D2 and E2. Premeditated, collusive cheating à la Fantoni-Nunes, falls so far beyond the Pale as to deservedly generate total ostracism as a legitimate reaction from players of integrity. Fantoni-Nunes, as a result of the ACBL proceedings, both bear the bridge equivalent of the mark of Cain (Genesis 4:15).

When the bridge administrators create conditions of contest for a tournament, they have ample precedent for establishing a credentials committee, and for empowering such a group to factor into the balance not only disciplinary determinations made by the Organizing Power (such as EBL), but those made by other bridge organizations as well (ACBL allows reciprocal discipline based on action by EBL among others, surely EBL can do the same). So Mr. Harris' observation that a credential committee might face CAS review and payment of costs for refusing to allow Fantoni or Nunes to enter an event feels like crocodile tears to me. And the players are right to pressure the administrators in the only way the players can – by demonstrating unmistakably their refusal to accept a situation in which EBL's failed disciplinary action forever hamstringed the EBL in protecting itself and the integrity of its championships against proven cheats. Instead of reacting like a bureaucrat – if the public does not like my rules, I'll enforce those rules to the detriment of everyone – Mr. Harris might try to persuade the EBL's board of control to craft a different approach to both mollify the outraged players and safeguard the validity of whatever events EBL chooses to conduct. Here in the USA, an attorney is encouraged to suggest to a client that a course of action, although lawful, may be unwise, impolitic, or otherwise immoral or unethical. Surely our European counterparts can, and certainly ought to, do the same.

Allan Falk, Okemos, MI

Guide to Online Events

Here is information about cancelled live tournaments, current and planned online events, and news about some of the planned-for live tournaments in 2021 and beyond:

WBF – The next World Team Championships will be held in Salsomaggiore from March 27 to April 9, 2022; the World Bridge Series will be held in Wroclaw September 2-17, 2022. See <http://www.worldbridge.org> for details.

ACBL – Some pair and team events are on BBO. See <https://www.acbl.org> and <https://www.bridgebase.com>. Plans to begin live bridge again in 2021. The Austin Fall NABC is currently scheduled to be held face-to-face.

EBL – The 19th Champions Cup is scheduled to be held live in Pezinok, Slovakia, Nov. 11-13, 2020 – see www.eurobridge.org for details.

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, and are continuing to organise, 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, 2020. Information can be found at:

<http://www.reynoldsteammatches.com>

Alt Invitationals – Invitational tournaments, usually lasting five to seven days, have been organised 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 Alt BAMs. 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 events. Details can be found at <https://ocbl.org>. OCBL also produces a daily journal. See also <https://www.worldbridgetour.org>

ACT Bridge & Bridgehouse – Arranges online team events with daily bulletins. Information can be found at <https://bridgehouse.club>

Monthly Invitational Teams – Organised by Christina Lund Madsen (clm@christina-bridge.com) and Denis Dobrin. See <https://mit.bridgeresults.org>. They also organise open mixed events.

All of the online tournaments named above are on BBO (<https://www.bridgebase.com/>) or RealBridge (<https://realbridge.online>). Other useful sites: <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 (www.ibpa.com).



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