



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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Editorial

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

It is easy to be critical of bridge organisations – they do so much wrongly, incompetently, expediently or downright sleazily. The United States Bridge Federation (USBF) is an exception: it is run for the expressed purpose of determining USA international representation (non-selection tournaments are run by the ACBL, a very political organisation); the USBF is run by the players, for the players. The current President is Brad Moss; other previous presidents include Mike Becker, Marty Fleisher and Howie Weinstein. Those are four world-class players with not a politician among them. These four and all other USBF presidents have been united in their love for the game, the desire to do what's right for bridge and, not least, the wish to produce the best U.S. teams possible for the World Championships. Other presidents have been Joan Gerard and Jan Martel, two of the most brilliant and dedicated bridge administrators ever.

Take the recent Trials for Salsomaggiore, for example. Any team of four, five or six players could have entered the Open, Women's, Senior and/or the Mixed Trials. These were the entry conditions for the players:

- U.S. citizenship or resident status
- USBF membership in good standing (i.e., could not be under suspension or discipline by the USBF, ACBL or ABA)
- Must have been vaccinated against Covid-19
- Must have signed the USBF's *Competitor's Agreement*
- Must agree to abide by all WBF rules.

Players could enter multiple qualification events. However, if they won the Open Trial, they had to play on that team and were ineligible to play in other Trials. For the other three Trials, they had to declare in advance which event they'd play in if they won more than one Trial. Most of 'the usual suspects' played.

The scheduling did not overlap except that the final stages of the Open coincided with the opening match of the Women's. The Open was played first, then the Women's, Mixed and Seniors in that order.

The Open Trial was organised into three phases. The first two (round-robin) phases were played online on RealBridge. The third, knockout, phase was played on Lovebridge with tablets and two players (West and South, or North and East) in each playing room.

In Phase 1, the 21 teams played a complete Round Robin, with the top 12 going through to Phase 2, another Round Robin. From that RR, the top eight qualified

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LETTER FROM NORWAY

Knut, Kjærnsrød,
Tored, Norway



A Star Is Born



Nicolai Heiberg-Evenstad

Watch out, Helgeness and Meckwell! A new generation is on the move. The 2021 Norwegian Pairs Championships, played in the beautiful Storefjell resort at 1000 metres above sea level, produced a sensational result when 13-year-old Nicolai Heiberg-Evenstad, partnered by his father Stian, captured the silver medal. The youngest person ever to win a medal in an open Norwegian bridge championship may be one of the youngest even in the rest of the world. To accentuate the power of our young generation, the gold medal was taken by internationals Christian Bakke and Tor Eivind Grude, still in their twenties.

Nicolai started with chess at the age of six and, in his first year at school, he became the school champion, where pupils up to the age of 16, as well as a few teachers, participated. At the age of eight, he was introduced to bridge, and ever since he has been passionately dedicated to the game. Despite being just in his early teens, he can already look back on a remarkable career. He was selected for the national Under-16 team at 11; he earned a Nordic title in 2019 and became an online world champion in 2020. At 11, he also became the youngest-ever to win a gold-point tournament in Norway.

Following are a few examples of Nicolai's winning efforts, and we start with a defence:

Dealer West. Neither Vul.

<p>♠ A 8 ♥ 6 5 4 3 ♦ A J 6 ♣ K 10 8 7</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 6 4 3 ♥ J 8 7 ♦ 9 4 3 ♣ A 5</p>	<p>♠ K ♥ A Q 10 9 ♦ K Q 10 8 7 5 2 ♣ 3</p>
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<p>♠ J 10 7 5 2 ♥ K 2 ♦ — ♣ Q J 9 6 4 2</p>	<p>West 1♣ Pass 5♥ Pass 1. Void</p>	<p>North 1♠ 4♠ Double Pass</p>	<p>East Double 5♦ Pass</p>	<p>South 4♦¹ Pass Pass</p>
---	--	---	---	--

North started with the diamond three and Nicolai ruffed. I know a few players who would rather automatically shift to partner's suit, but Nicolai completely trusted his father's lead of a low diamond and returned a club to get his second ruff for one down and an 85% score.

The next examples show solid declarer technique:

Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

<p>♠ 10 3 2 ♥ A Q 7 6 4 3 2 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ —</p>	<p>West — Pass Pass</p>	<p>North — 3♣¹ Pass</p>	<p>East 1♣ Double Pass</p>	<p>South 1♥ 4♥</p>
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1. Heart support, invitational-plus

West led a club. Nicolai was never in doubt: he ruffed, played a trump to the king, ruffed another club, cashed the ace of hearts, led a heart to the ten and ruffed dummy's last club. Nicolai then played a spade to the eight and East's nine. The opponents could cash two more spades but had to present the 13-year-old declarer with his tenth trick.

This deal is my favourite:

Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

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

West started with a diamond to dummy's ace. Nicolai also cashed the king of diamonds, getting rid of two of his club losers. Three rounds of trumps were followed by the knave of spades, covered by West's queen. Nicolai saw that he would run into transportation problems if he took the trick, so he ducked!

West led a high diamond, ruffed, and Nicolai played a spade to the nine, cashed the ace and still had a trump left as the entry to his king of spades.

A Star Shines Brightly

Espen Lindqvist showed off his skill in an OCBL Cup on RealBridge:

Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

Against Sabine Auken and Roy Welland, he and Boye Brogeland bid:

West	North	East	South
Auken	Brogeland	Welland	Lindqvist
—	—	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Auken started with a trump, taken by dummy's knave. A diamond to the king and ace, and Auken played back another diamond, trumped low. Lindqvist ruffed a spade and ruffed a diamond with dummy's trump king, followed by the king of spades. When East ducked, Lindqvist threw a diamond, felling West's queen. He ruffed a spade, removed West's remaining trump, and crossed to dummy with a heart, leaving this ending:

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

The knave of spades fetched East's ace, and the ace of hearts was the entry to the ten of spades.

It would not have helped the defence to play another trump. Espen would then have taken the finesse with the knave of hearts and taken two ruffing finesses in spades.

The Norwegian Bridge Festival

This year, the Festival took place in Lillehammer in August and the Skeidar Prize for the best-played deal went to Jan Aril Olsen for this effort:

Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

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

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

West led the two of diamonds. East cashed his king and ace before switching to the five of hearts, taken by the ace. A spade went to the queen and ace and East played back the five of trumps. Olsen paused to do some counting and, since West most likely had three diamonds and five hearts, and had to have four clubs if South should have any chance to land his contract, he played low, and his calculations proved right when West discarded a heart. The rest was routine. Olsen played his remaining trumps and West was squeezed in hearts and clubs.

Had East continued with diamonds at trick three, declarer would have been set one trick.

Salsomaggiore Qualification

Qualification for next year's World Championships in Italy was played late August, and Norway qualified in both the Open and Senior events.

Senior Jan Mikkelsen landed a precarious game against Estonia on this board:

Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

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

1. Splinter

West started with the king of diamonds and shifted to a spade to the king and ace. Mikkelsen played a club to the ace and ruffed a club. The knave of spades was taken by the queen and a third round of spades was won by Mikkelsen's ten. A trump to the king revealed the distribution, and a club was ruffed low and overruffed by West's six. A diamond was ruffed in dummy, leaving this ending:

When Mikkelsen played the ten of trumps from dummy, East was squeezed. If East threw a diamond, Jan would overtake with his knave and ruff a diamond, and if East let a club go, Jan would leave the lead in dummy and ruff a club, felling East's king.

West could have avoided the situation by playing back his nine of trumps after ruffing but, nevertheless, it was very nicely played by Mikkelsen.



OZ BRIDGE
Ron Klinger,
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Sophie Ashton by Ron Klinger

Sophie Ashton of Sydney is an extremely talented player. Here she is in action as South on two deals from the North Shore Bridge Club Board-a-Match Teams.

Dealer West. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦(!)
1♠	3♦ ¹	Pass	Pass

1. Mixed raise, 6-9 points, 4+ diamonds

West began with the ace, king and queen of spades. South ruffed the third spade, cashed the ace of diamonds and played the king of hearts. East took the ace and returned the four of hearts to dummy's queen. A diamond to the jack was followed by the king of diamonds. Next came the jack of hearts, discarding a club from dummy, and the eight of hearts, ruffed with dummy's last trump. These cards remained:

♣ A J 9
 ♣ 8 7 3 ♣ K Q 4
 ♣ 10 5 2

Ashton played the nine of clubs from dummy. Whether East won the trick or ducked, South was assured of two club tricks, making three diamonds, plus 110.

The normal way to play this club combination is to take two finesses. How did Ashton find the winning line to play for both club honours offside? West, a passed hand, had led the three high spades. With another high card, West might have opened one spade initially. Without both the king and queen of clubs, East might not have opened when vulnerable, even in third seat. It was a fine piece of card-reading by Ashton.

The same description applies here:

Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	Pass	INT
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1. Stayman			

It looked as though South had four losers, a spade, two hearts and a club, but watch what happened. West led the ace of hearts, followed by the heart four: jack – king – ten. East shifted to the six of spades. That gave Ashton her chance. The normal play with this holding is to finesse, but Ashton went up with the ace of spades. With the spade king as well as the heart king, East would have responded to West's one-heart opening. Without the king of spades, West would not have had enough to open, and so Ashton placed the spade king with West.

After taking the ace of spades, Ashton ruffed the queen of hearts winner with dummy's ten of spades, just in case East had started with only two hearts (East followed anyway). Next came the king and queen of diamonds. That stripped West of diamonds. West was down to the king of spades, two low hearts and the four clubs he'd begun with.

When South exited with a spade, West won and had a choice of poisons. A club would have given declarer two club tricks at once. West chose the six of hearts, but that did not help. South ruffed with dummy's last trump and discarded the six of clubs from hand. After a club to the ace, South led the nine of spades to draw the last trump and had ten tricks, plus 620.

To avoid losing a club after East switched to a spade, South needed West to have two-two in spades and diamonds, as it was. She played for that and was rewarded.

Liam Milne by Peter Gill

Here are two deals from the North Shore Board-a-Match Teams Championship Final in which my team won and Liam Milne's team came in fourth.

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Van d.Vlugt</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Kanetkar</i>	<i>Bloom</i>
1♦	Double	1♠	Double
2♠	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Avi Kanetkar led the six of diamonds to the jack and king. Mauritz Van der Vlugt shifted to the four of hearts: ace, three, two. I led a diamond to the queen and ace; West led a third diamond to my ten – Kanetkar pitched a spade and I ruffed with the ten of hearts in order to play clubs from the dummy. On a club to the queen, Kanetkar tried the ten but, with no convenient entry back to the dummy, I cashed the ace of clubs, dropping the king. The king of hearts was followed by a club to the jack, stripping East of his exit cards. When I led the jack of hearts to East's queen, he had only spades left and the ace and another went to my king for plus 140 and a win on the board.

A bit more spectacular was this result by Liam Milne.

Board 27. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ 9 7
♥ J 9 4
♦ 8 7 6 4
♣ Q 5 4 3

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

♠ J 8
♥ A 6 2
♦ Q 10 9 5 2
♣ J 10 8

West	North	East	South
Milne	Clifford	Coutts	Foster
—	—	—	Pass
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²	Pass
1♠ ³	Pass	2♦ ⁴	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 2+ clubs
2. 4+ spades
3. 2/3 spades, weak notrump strength
4. 4th suit forcing

North led the seven of diamonds. Milne won in dummy with the ace, drew trumps with the queen and ace and led the king of hearts. South won and got out with the queen of diamonds to the king. Declarer led the ten of spades to the king and cashed another spade, leading to:

♠ —
♥ J 9
♦ —
♣ Q 5 4 3

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

♠ —
♥ 2
♦ 10 9
♣ J 10 8

Milne led a spade from dummy, discarding the ten of hearts. South let go the nine of diamonds, but North was rather stuck. A heart discard would have allowed declarer to lead to the queen of hearts, go to the king of clubs and make the eight of hearts, so North threw a club. Now Milne played a club to the king, a club to the ace and ruffed a club, making the seven high. The queen of hearts was the entry to it. That was worth plus 480 and, naturally, a win on the board.

Why did Liam Milne take such an anti-percentage play with the finesse of the ten of hearts available? Here's

what Liam had to say: "With six cards left, I had to decide whether to play another trump discarding the ten of hearts, to play for the trump squeeze, or play three rounds of clubs then the last trump for a show-up squeeze on South."

"Firstly, the show-up squeeze only 'works' when clubs are five-two. Otherwise, I wouldn't know who had the thirteenth club, so I'd have been putting myself in the position (as here) where I had to guess whether to rise with the queen of hearts at the end (potentially, the heart jack might have been inside the whole time, an easy way to lose the board) or finesse, potentially losing to a bare jack (in that case, North could decide to pitch a heart and hold me to ten tricks if I'd adopted that line). I didn't fancy that decision."

"Secondly, South had thrown the six of hearts promptly at her second discard, with plenty of diamonds left. At the table, it felt like she was signalling the heart situation to her partner rather than doing something tricky from an original ace-jack-to-four hearts. I strongly felt that North controlled hearts (with both the jack and nine remaining, otherwise South could have discarded the nine), in which case I was free to attempt something fancy without much danger."

"Contributing to this impression was North studiously and slowly pitching diamonds on the third and fourth trump, like a man who guarded multiple other suits. I agree this looks against the odds but I usually prefer to back my read of the table mannerisms."

And right he was.



**Okay Gur Turkish Open
Team Championship**

Here are two deals from the 2021 Okay Gur Turkish Open Teams Championship, which finished on August 14.

Forty-nine teams took part. The tournament was won by CARSİ, the Besiktas Sport Club's supporter group, against ABSKD, by 94-78 IMPs.

The winning team comprised Zafer Senguler, Murat Molva, Ender Padir, Osman Gemici, Osman Demirel and Okay Simsar.

One of the deals is from the semifinals; the other is from the three-session final.

I. What was the best play?

SF, Session 2. Board 6. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Mumcuoglu	Senguler	Ogus	Molva
—	—	1NT	Pass
Pass	Double ¹	Pass	2♦ ²
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. 4+ cards in either major and 5+ cards in either minor
2. Bid your major

East leads a diamond. How do you play as North?

Declarer, Zafer Senguler, ruffed the second diamond and led a low heart from dummy, nine, jack, ace, East returned a club, but declarer guessed the heart layout and made his contract by leading the queen of hearts from hand. Was this the best line of play? Maybe.

I think playing the jack of hearts from hand at trick two might be better (the jack instead of the queen might increase the problem for East and reveal more information for the declarer). Later, declarer could ruff the second diamond and lead a heart from the dummy. Is this better than the actual play?

At the other table three notrump was down one trick; 10 IMPs to CARSI.

2. What is your lead?

Final, Session 3. Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Cengiz	Senguler	Ahipasaoglu	Molva
—	—	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
4NT ¹	Pass	5♥ ²	Pass
6♣	Pass		

1. RKCB
2. 2 key cards, no club queen

You are North again and, this time, you're on lead. What would be your choice? It's now or never. At the table, Zefer Senguler led the ace of hearts and that was that: it was then too late to play a spade. Declarer, Nurettin Cengiz, won the shift, drew trumps, discarded a diamond on the king of hearts and set up the thirteenth diamond with a ruff. He could then claim, discarding the losing spade. At the other table, five clubs just made and 11 IMPs went to ABSKD.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, I wrote a series of articles about "Bridge at the Maiden Club" for Turkish Bridge Magazine. The club was real and all the characters were based on real bridge players. Some of the characters have since died, but I gave this lead problem to some of the surviving club members.

The Venetian Trader, who enjoys Morgan's idiosyncratic ideas, asks: "Morgan, what do you lead?"

Captain Morgan: "Of course a spade, my boy, a spade!"

Elegant Elephant (lost): "Why a spade? Why not any other suit?"

Captain Morgan: "Lead the other black suit when defending against a black-suit contract!"

Everybody together: "Huh?"

Tipster: "Is that a scientific adage or just your lead fantasy?"

Psychic Son: "It's just Morganstific nonsense."

Captain Morgan: "My boys, let me teach you some bridge! There ought to be a law!"

Everybody together (making choking sounds): "Uck, Uck, Uck."

IBPA AGM, Sat. Dec. 11

<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Date</u>
San Francisco	07:00	Sat. Dec. 11
New York, Toronto	10:00	Sat. Dec. 11
Buenos Aires, Rio	12:00	Sat. Dec. 11
London	15:00	Sat. Dec. 11
Amsterdam, Oslo	16:00	Sat. Dec. 11
Tel Aviv, Cape Town	17:00	Sat. Dec. 11
New Delhi	20:30	Sat. Dec. 11
Beijing	23:00	Sat. Dec. 11
Tokyo	24:00	Sun. Dec. 12
Sydney	02:00	Sun. Dec. 12
Auckland	04:00	Sun. Dec. 12



The USBF Trials USAI KO

John Carruthers, Kingsville, ON

The knockout phase of the Trials was conducted face-to-face on tablets and was broadcast on Lovebridge with a delay of approximately an hour.

Quarterfinal – NICKELL vs. DONNER

Segment 1. Board 14. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Greco</i>	<i>Del'Monte</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>F. Kolesnik</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Del'Monte and Kolesnik had a 'normal' auction (by today's standards) to a 'normal' contract. Plus 460.

West	North	East	South
<i>Rotaru</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Nestor</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	4♣ ¹
Pass	6♣	Pass	Pass

- 4 clubs to an honour, an outside ace and third-round diamond control!

Levin and Weinstein had a brief auction, but with an extraordinary agreement that allowed them to bid the slam with complete confidence. Levin could win any lead, draw trumps and claim 12 tricks for plus 920 and 10 IMPs to NICKELL.

On the following deal, it was moderately amusing that both Rotaru and Nestor lied about their heart holding: Rotaru showed an extra heart and Nestor showed the queen, neither of which they had; instead they each had what the other had promised.

Segment 4. Board 51. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Rotaru</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Nestor</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
—	—	—	Pass
1NT ¹	Pass	2♦ ²	Pass
2♥ ³	Pass	3♠ ⁴	Double
3NT ⁵	Pass	4♣ ⁶	Pass
4NT ⁷	Pass	5♠ ⁸	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

- 13+-16
- Transfer
- 3 hearts
- Any shortage
- Asks
- Club shortage
- RKCB
- 2 key cards and the heart queen

Levin led a trump. Declarer drew trumps, led the queen of clubs to the ace and ruffed a club to see if anything good would happen. When it did not, declarer led a spade to the king and ace. Levin was able to get out safely with a high club and, eventually, Rotaru lost another spade trick.

Why had Levin not led a spade? There were two likely reasons: (i.) he didn't have any, or (ii.) he had the singleton ace. With any other holding he probably would have led one. In either of those cases, low to the jack was the winning play.

West	North	East	South
<i>Greco</i>	<i>F. Kolesnik</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Del'Monte</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	3♣	3♦ ²	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
5NT ³	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- 14-16
- Hearts, invitational-plus
- Pick a slam

Since Hampson could have had spades as well as hearts (but not diamonds, with which he'd have bid four diamonds), Greco invited him to choose. Hampson knew which to bid.

Ishmael Del'Monte led the six of clubs. Greco won with dummy's ace, ran a few trumps and diamonds, discarding a spade, ruffed a club and led a spade to the jack. Plus 1430 won 17 IMPs for NICKELL.

Segment 7. Board 91. Dealer South. NS Vul.

♠ J 8 6 3
♥ 7 6 2
♦ 8 7 6 5 2
♣ 10

♠ A 9 7 4 2
♥ A Q 5
♦ Q J 10
♣ 9 7

♠ K Q 10 5
♥ J 8 4
♦ —
♣ A Q J 8 4 3

♠ —
♥ K 10 9 3
♦ A K 9 4 3
♣ K 6 5 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Greco</i>	<i>Del'Monte</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>F. Kolesnik</i>
—	—	—	1♦
1♠	2♦	4♦ ¹	Double
Pass	Pass	Redouble ²	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT ³	Pass
5♥ ⁴	Pass	5NT ⁵	Pass
6♠ ⁶	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Splinter
2. First-round control
3. RKCB
4. 2 key cards, no spade queen
5. King-ask
6. No side kings

Greco ruffed the diamond lead and cashed the king of spades. Upon receiving that awful news, he led a heart to the queen, a spade to the ten and cashed the queen of spades. A heart to the ace and the ace of spades drew North's last trump. When the next trick went nine of clubs, ten, jack, king, Kolesnik had three red-suit winners to take. Minus 150, down three.

How good a contract is six spades? So-so. Despite there being no immediate losers, coming to 12 winners is no easy task. However, had spades been two-two, declarer would have been in good shape, needing just four club tricks for his contract. Had spades been three-one (a better bet than two-two), with no jack dropping, declarer would still have been in trouble, only slightly less so than Greco had actually been.

West	North	East	South
<i>Rimstedt</i>	<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Donner</i>	<i>Katz</i>
—	—	—	1♦
1♠	Pass	4♦ ¹	Pass ²
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Splinter
2. Okay with diamond lead

Sandra Rimstedt showed the way to 12 tricks. Nick Nickell led the ten of clubs. Rimstedt won with dummy's ace and tried the effect of the queen of clubs. When Ralph Katz ducked and Nickell ruffed, that was the last trick for the defence; plus 480 and 10 IMPs to DONNER. Was that ruse worth trying in slam?

The Quarterfinal scores were:

NICKELL	275	—	DONNER	253
HILL	242	—	BRAMLEY	237
SPECTOR	236	—	LEVINE	213
FLEISHER	257	—	GU	148

Semifinal – SPECTOR vs. FLEISHER

Segment 2. Board 25. Dealer North. EW Vul.

♠ Q
♥ A K Q 10 6 5 3
♦ —
♣ A Q 9 8 4

♠ A 10 6 3 2
♥ 9 4
♦ Q 6 5 3
♣ 6 3

♠ K 8 7 4
♥ 7
♦ K J 9 7 2
♣ J 10 7

♠ J 9 5
♥ J 8 2
♦ A 10 8 4
♣ K 5 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Korbel</i>	<i>Spector</i>	<i>Lee</i>	<i>Wolpert</i>
—	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	5♦ ¹	Pass	5♥ ²
Pass	6♥	Pass	Pass

1. Exclusion Blackwood
2. No aces outside diamonds

This auction was simplicity itself: had Wolpert shown an ace (spades), Spector would have asked for specific kings, hoping for the king of clubs. As it was, once Wolpert had the king of clubs, there was nothing to the play for plus 980.

West	North	East	South
<i>Hurd</i>	<i>Martel</i>	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Fleisher</i>
—	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	5♦ ¹	Pass	5♥ ²
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Exclusion Blackwood
2. No aces outside diamonds

Martel passed five hearts, unwilling to risk having no losers in clubs with the suit full of holes. Plus 480 lost 11 IMPs.

Segment 3. Board 36. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ Q J 10 2
♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ J 9 7
♣ 9 6

♠ K 9 8 6 3
♥ J
♦ K 5 4 3
♣ A Q 10

♠ A 4
♥ A K Q 7 6 4
♦ A
♣ 8 5 4 3

♠ 7 5
♥ 5 2
♦ Q 10 8 6 2
♣ K J 7 2

Continued on page 12...



IBPA Column Service

Tim Bourke, Canberra



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1069. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

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

After cue-bidding to show a limit raise or better in hearts, North planned to bid three notrump if South rebid anything else at the three level. However, South removed that possibility with his leap to the spade game. South later said that he should have rebid three hearts to get the partnership to three notrump.

West led the nine of hearts against four spades. Declarer rose with dummy's ace of hearts and then led the ten of spades. East played the six of trumps. Declarer played the seven from hand, preserving the option of returning to dummy if trumps were two-two. At trick three, declarer called for dummy's five of trumps and was temporarily delighted to see East's king of the suit, as it looked like the suit was two-two. However, West's discard of a low diamond put paid to that hope.

Declarer was about to run his winners in the hope that he could exert pressure on East and guess the endgame when he cracked a small smile. Instead of that flawed plan, declarer cashed the ace and king of clubs before exiting with his two of trumps to dummy's three and East's four. East was endplayed because, no

matter what suit he played now, the result would be that dummy would score at least two winners. Declarer would make five trumps, a heart, three clubs and one winner from the queen of hearts, the king of diamonds or the ten of clubs.

You should note that, if declarer decides to run all of his trumps instead, then East should come down to two hearts and pitch the queen of diamonds. Then declarer will have to guess whether East began with six hearts or five.

1070. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	INT ¹	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Forcing

After this fairly simple auction, West led the ten of hearts. When East played the jack of hearts, declarer tentatively placed him with the three top heart honours. Declarer could see nine tricks and it seemed that he would have to rely on West's holding the ace of clubs to make his contract.

However, declarer saw a slight extra chance and decided to play for it. After winning the first trick with the ace of hearts, declarer drew trumps. Now came the key play: instead of playing a club, declarer took

the ace and king of diamonds, then ruffed dummy's remaining diamond. Declarer got off play with a low heart. East took his king and queen of hearts but then had to play a club to give declarer his tenth trick.

Nothing was lost by this approach: if East had either a heart or a diamond left, then declarer would have ruffed the red-suit exit and played a club himself. The chance that East had 3=3=3=4 distribution was low, perhaps five or six percent, but the combined chance of West holding the ace of clubs and East his precise shape gave declarer about a six in ten chance of making his contract.

1071. Dealer North. EW Vul.

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

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

1. Shortage with heart support

This deal was played in a team match. One North jumped to three hearts and the other used the jump to three diamonds to show a raise to three (or five) hearts with a singleton diamond. Both Souths ended up in game.

Both West players began their defence by leading the ace and king of spades. Both declarers ruffed the second spade then led a club towards dummy, which saw the king of clubs win the trick. Thereafter, their paths diverged.

At trick four, the first declarer played the ace and king of trumps. The four-one trump division left the declarer with no winning continuation. He ruffed dummy's last spade and played a club to the ace, but East ruffed and played his fourth spade. After South ruffed and gave West his club trick, a further spade produced a trump trick for East; down one.

At the other table, declarer crossed to hand with a trump to the ace at trick four to lead a second club toward dummy. Unfortunately, East ruffed the ace of clubs but could do no better than play a second trump. Declarer won this in dummy with the jack, then ruffed dummy's last spade. Next, declarer cashed the ace of diamonds and led the ten of clubs to West's queen.

After ruffing the spade continuation in dummy with the queen of trumps, declarer cashed the king of trumps to draw East's remaining trump. Declarer then claimed two club winners for his ninth and tenth tricks.

1072. Dealer South. Both Vul.

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

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

1. Roman Key-Card Blackwood
2. 1 key card

South reasoned that his partner would hold four or five trumps and a shortage somewhere and declarer's money was on the singleton or void being in spades.

West led the five of trumps against the slam. Declarer won this in hand with the nine and then advanced the queen of clubs. West won with the ace and exited with a second trump. Declarer was pleased to see that East followed.

Now South pinned all of his hopes on clubs being four-three and ruffed a spade in dummy. After discarding a low diamond on the king of clubs, declarer ruffed a club and got the bad news that the suit was five-two. South's next move was to ruff another spade and when East followed with yet another low spade declarer had to concede that he was one trick short of his contract.

Dummy was unimpressed when declarer complained of his misfortune.

Dummy retorted: "Instead of ruffing a spade at trick four, you should cash the king and ace of diamonds. Then, after using the king of clubs to discard your remaining diamond, ruff a club in hand. You would get the bad news that clubs were five-two, but this would be good news as well; when West discards a spade, this reveals his likely distribution as 6=2=3=2. So, after ruffing a spade in dummy, a diamond ruff in hand establishes a diamond trick in dummy. All that would then remain for you to do would be to ruff a second spade in dummy and discard your queen of spades on the good diamond."

West	North	East	South
Grue	Kranyak	Moss	Spector
1♠	Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass
2♠ ²	Pass	2NT ³	Pass
3♥ ⁴	Pass	3♠ ⁵	Pass
4♣ ⁶	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Artificial game-force
2. 11-15, 4 diamonds
3. Relay
4. 5=1=4=3
5. Relay
6. 8 ZZ points (A=3, K=2, Q=1)

From Moss' point of view, six hearts might have been cold and, at worst, might depend on a three-three break in spades, hearts or clubs. That was well done, especially when West showed up with the heart jack. There were still chances even if he'd not had it. Plus 1460 when a club was led to the king and ace and a later finesse of the ten worked for the overtrick.

West	North	East	South
Hurd	Lee	Bathurst	Korbel
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Hurd and Bathurst did not even sniff at slam. On a low club lead, Bathurst put in the ten and was soon inscribing plus 710 on his scorecard and minus 13 IMPs in the "Out" column.

Segment 5. Board 65. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Korbel	Bathurst	Lee	Hurd
—	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♦	1♠	2♥	Double ¹
4♣ ²	Pass	4♥	Double
Pass	4♠	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. 3-card spade support
2. Splinter-bid

Roger Lee found a pretty good lead of the ten of clubs. Bathurst rose with the ace, played the ace and ruffed a heart, then led a spade to the king and ace. Daniel Korbel cashed the king of diamonds and led a trump to Lee's

queen. Lee shifted to the nine of clubs. Bathurst, having misguessed spades, made no mistake here, putting in the jack for plus 790.

West	North	East	South
Wolpert	Moss	Kranyak	Grue
—	Pass	1♥	2♣
4♣ ¹	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Splinter-bid

The opening bid and tempo of the auction meant that North/South's nine-card spade fit went missing.

Joe Grue led his singleton diamond. He ducked when John Kranyak led a heart to his king, but won with the ace on a second round of trumps. Having received no clear suit-preference signal from Brad Moss, South cashed a high club and shifted to a spade. Declarer ducked, drew the last trump and gave North his diamond trick, but that was 10 tricks for declarer; plus 420.

Segment 8. Board 114. Dealer East. EW Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Moss	Wolpert	Grue	Kranyak
—	—	2♥	Pass
4♥	5♣	5♥	Double
Pass	Pass	Redouble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Kranyak, not taking any chances, led the ace of hearts, then took the top diamonds for one off, minus 400.

West	North	East	South
Hurd	Martel	Bathurst	Fleisher
—	—	2♥	Pass
3♥	4♣	4♥	Double
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

Bathurst led a diamond, won by the ace. Martel led the jack of spades to the king and ace and a club to the ten, ducked. Another club went to the ace and the king of hearts was won by the ace. Declarer led a trump to the six and played two top clubs, discarding hearts from the dummy as West ruffed. That was the defence's last trick, since a further heart lead could be ruffed in dummy to draw trumps; plus 690 to North/South – 7 IMPs to FLEISHER.

In GU vs. LEVINE for USA2, the same deal produced more excitement.

West	North	East	South
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Sheng</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Wei</i>
—	—	Pass	1♦ ¹
1♠	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦ ²
Pass	6♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. 2+ diamonds, 11-15
2. Control for clubs

Steve Garner concluded that no call other than pass described his hand in first chair, vulnerable. By the time the bidding got around to him again, nothing had happened to alter that view. Garner led a heart. Sheng won with dummy's ace and, knowing from the bidding that playing on spades at this point was hopeless, led a club to the king and another to Meckstroth's ace. West exited with the king of hearts and declarer ruffed.

By this time, declarer had 'seen' ten of Meckstroth's cards: five spades, two hearts and three clubs. There was room for only three diamonds at most in the West hand, so Sheng drew the last trump, led a diamond to the jack, cashed the ace and king of diamonds for spade pitches and led a spade to the queen. That earned him 12 tricks and the admiration of his partner; plus 920.

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

1. RKCB
2. 2 key cards, no spade queen

Ao Hailong led the ten of hearts. The appearance of the dummy provided Mike Passell with good news and bad news: the good news was that the two key cards laid down by Mark Lair were both aces; the bad news was that the heart lead had knocked out a vital entry for spade plays. With not quite as much information as had Cheng at the other table, Passell won with the ace of hearts at trick one and led the jack of spades. When that was covered by the king and ace, then ruffed by East, declarer was one off for minus 100 and 14 IMPs to GU.

Final – NICKELL vs. SPECTOR

The Final match of the USA1 qualifying phase was between NICKELL (Greco/Hampson, Katz/Nickell, Levin/Weinstein) and SPECTOR (Bathurst/Hurd, Kranyak/Spector/Wolpert).

Segment 2. Board 26. Dealer East. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Hurd</i>	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>
—	—	Pass	1♣
Double	2♠	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Hurd ruffed the club lead, drew trumps and led a diamond to the jack and king. He was soon totting up plus 980.

West	North	East	South
<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Spector</i>	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Wolpert</i>
—	—	Pass	1♣
Double	2♠	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

When Katz declined to bid three spades, it was 11 IMPs to SPECTOR.

With NICKELL trailing 125-69...

Segment 4. Board 59. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Hurd</i>	<i>Hampson</i>	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Greco</i>
—	—	—	2♦ ¹
Double	2♠	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 11-15, 4=4=1=5 minus one card in any suit

Bathurst led the queen of hearts. Hampson won in dummy and led a club. Hurd won with his ace and continued clubs. Declarer ruffed and led the diamond jack to the queen. Bathurst got out with a trump, ducked to North's eight. Hampson led a heart, ruffed by East, and declarer unblocked the ten. East got out with another spade, this time won by the queen, and declarer ruffed a club to hand, using his last trump. Hampson ruffed a diamond to the dummy, drew East's remaining trump, pitching his last diamond and ran the hearts for a very good, and surprising, plus 420.

While it is true that Hurd could have beaten four spades by giving Bathurst two ruffs, it was hard for him to visualize the entire layout. It was also unnecessary, since Bathurst could have beaten the contract by discarding on the heart toward dummy instead of ruffing.

West	North	East	South
Levin	Wolpert	Weinstein	Kranyak
—	—	—	1♣
1♦	1♥	3♣ ¹	3♥
4♣	4♥	5♣	5♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Mixed raise of diamonds

The defence led two rounds of clubs. Declarer lost a trump and a diamond as well, for minus 50 and a loss of 10 IMPs.

On the last board of the day, Wolpert got a bit careless and Bathurst and Hurd went overboard. The cost was 23 IMPs: 15 away instead of 8 in.

Segment 4. Board 60. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Levin	Wolpert	Weinstein	Kranyak
Pass	1♠	2♠ ¹	4♥ ²
Double	4NT ³	Pass	5♦ ⁴
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Hearts and a minor
2. Splinter
3. RKCB
4. 1 or 4 key cards

Wolpert took a chance that Kranyak had a club control or, failing that, that Weinstein would lead a heart. When Weinstein did indeed lead a heart, Wolpert's gamble

had paid off: win the lead with a high heart, ruff a heart, cross on a spade, ruff a heart with the queen of spades, cross on a spade, finish trumps and discard a club on a high diamond. Instead, after a long day, a weary Wolpert won the heart lead and cashed the spade ace, leaving himself an unenviable choice when Levin had all three trumps: (a.) ruff one heart, draw the trumps and take a finesse of the jack of diamonds, or (b.) try to cash two high diamonds immediately. He chose (b.) and was chagrined to discover that he was one off, minus 100.

West	North	East	South
Hurd	Hampson	Bathurst	Greco
Pass	1♣ ¹	2♥ ²	3♦ ³
4♥	Pass ⁴	Pass	Double
Pass	4♠ ⁵	Pass	4NT ⁶
5♣	Double	Pass	Pass
5♥	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. 16+
2. Hearts and a minor
3. 5+ diamonds, forcing to game
4. Forcing, requests double
5. Weaker than a direct four spades would have been
6. RKCB

Here, Hurd bid clubs to ensure the lead and in case that was Bathurst's other suit. Greco led the king of diamonds and shifted to his heart. Hampson took the ace and king of hearts, then led the king of spades. Bathurst ruffed and led the king and ten of clubs. When Greco followed with the nine, Bathurst paused for thought. He had an inferential count on the North hand: 6=4=1=2 and could see that either North or South could hold the queen of clubs on the bidding. If declarer could guess clubs, he'd make eight tricks for minus 500, a 4-IMP pickup. If he lost to a doubleton-queen with North, Hampson would lead another trump, holding him to three trump tricks and a high club. On the other hand, if he went up with the ace and dropped air, he'd make four trump tricks and two club tricks. After an eternity, Bathurst rose with the ace of clubs and accepted five down for minus 1100 and 15 IMPs away to make the score a more-manageable 125-94 to SPECTOR with 60 boards to play.

Segment 6. Board 81. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Wolpert	Katz	Spector	Nickell
—	Pass	Pass	1♦
1NT	2♠	3♦ ¹	Pass
3NT	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1. Hearts			

Whether Nickell had a real opening bid or a lead value in diamonds, Katz felt confident enough to double. A diamond to the king, the ten of spades and another through the king, six spade winners and the diamond ace meant four off, minus 800. That was very disciplined (no two-spade opening) and aggressive bridge.

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Bathurst	Levin	Hurd
—	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	Pass	3NT ¹	Pass
4NT ²	Pass	5♣	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	
1. Two suits			
2. Bid your lower suit			

Weinstein thought he had enough to play in game in diamonds or clubs, whichever suit Levin would bid. Hurd thought otherwise and took a diamond and two spades to prove it. He made plus 100, but lost 12 IMPs.

Board 88. Dealer West. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Wolpert	Katz	Spector	Nickell
Pass	1♠	4♥	5♣
5♥	6♣	Pass	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Spector's failure to make a Lightner Double convinced Wolpert to take the save. He lost one heart and two diamonds for minus 300, when he ought to have been plus 500 on a spade lead.

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Bathurst	Levin	Hurd
Pass	1♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	4NT
5♥	Double	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Levin extracted that 500 to win, a bit surprisingly, 13 IMPs.

NICKELL (Greco/Hampson, Katz/Nickell, Levin/Weinstein) went on to win the match to become USAI for Salsomaggiore. SPECTOR (Bathurst/Hurd, Kranyak/Spector/Wolpert) barely had time to lick their wounds before their next-two-days match against BRAMLEY (Becker/Kamil, Bramley/Woolsey, Lall/Weichsel) for the USA2 spot, won by SPECTOR.



Many of us fondly remember Peter Sellers in as serious a role as he had ever played, as Chance the Gardener, in the intelligent satire by Hal Ashby. Sellers lost the 1980 Best Actor award to Dustin Hoffman (*Kramer vs. Kramer*) in a controversial decision.

Zia's play on the following deal was well-reasoned and slightly entertaining, if not exactly satirical. Nevertheless, he had to 'be there'. With his team (GUPTA) trailing LEVINE 164-123 in Segment 6 (of eight) of the USAI Senior Trials Final...

Board 77. Dealer North. Neither Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Gupta	Passell	Lall	Levine
—	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♠ ¹	3♣	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 4-card spade support

Naren Gupta missed an opportunity to stick it to Mike Passell and Mike Levine by declining to go on to five clubs. Against four spades, Gupta led the king of diamonds. Levine won with dummy's ace, led a spade to the ace and lost the obvious three tricks for plus 420.

There was a bit more excitement at the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Garner</i>	<i>Wold</i>	<i>Mahmood</i>
—	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♠ ¹	3♣	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 4-card spade support

Meckstroth also led the diamond king. Zia won with the ace and led the deuce of spades to the three and four! Plus 450 was a tough way to win an IMP.

I asked Zia how he had diagnosed the layout. Here was his reply:

“There were several reasons:

- (1.) I was in a room with Meck, so trusted his bidding more than most.
- (2.) He saved in five clubs on an auction where we had shown strength and one on which he was clearly always saving (I had cue-bid earlier). Why did he not save earlier? That was very fishy. The answer was that he wanted to get doubled and not have us bid on. When he bid five clubs, I told him, ‘Jeff, you’re unlucky I know how good you are, because a good player only bids like that when he want to be doubled. You must have a void.’ A weaker player would just be saving belatedly.
- (3.) The worst form of the game to me is online bridge. It takes away the ability of a natural player to feel the table. This time I was lucky that my key opponent was in the same room and I could ‘feel’ that Jeff was comfortable in saving.

After all, how often do you have a chance to play the two-three-four as a first round finesse? How could I resist?”



Two highly-fancied teams flying the Cross of St. George, BLACK and HARRIS, met head to head in an OCBL Cup match. At half of the 16 tables, East/West were

allowed to play in four hearts, scoring plus 620 or 790. At the other eight tables, North/South bid on in spades, but only one declarer timed the play accurately, albeit after a defensive miscue:

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Tredafilov</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Tihilov</i>	<i>Hult</i>
—	—	2♥	Double
4♥	4♠	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		



Gunnar Hallberg

The Bulgarians quickly got to their game in hearts, but Gunnar Hallberg was never going to be shut out after Simon Hult had doubled the weak-two opening. Todor Tihilov kicked off the defence with the ace of hearts and a second heart, declarer ruffing in dummy. When declarer led the jack of spades, Rumen Trendafilov stepped up with the ace, cashed the ace of diamonds, and played a third round of hearts. Hallberg ruffed in hand, crossed to the king of diamonds, and took the marked trump finesse against West's queen.

Now came the key play: Hallberg crossed to dummy in clubs and led the queen of diamonds. When West followed suit, though, Hallberg ruffed dummy's winner, thus reducing his trump length to match that held by West. A club returned the lead to dummy, and declarer led a winning diamond. West pitched his last heart, so Hallberg threw his remaining club but, whatever West did, he could not score a trick with his guarded queen of spades. Nicely played! North/South plus 790 and 14 IMPs to BLACK when declarer at the other table went one down in the same contract.



**Karlis
Rubins,
Sigulda,
Latvia**

“O Grande Circo Místico” (The Great Mystic Circus) is a 2018 Brazilian drama. One evening, I decided to watch a foreign film and this picture, with Vincent Cassel in one of the leading roles, caught my attention. Those who have read and enjoyed Gabriel Garcia Márquez’s “One Hundred Years of Solitude” might find it enjoyable. There is no bridge in it, but the Great Mystic Circus could have been applied to one in the boards from the Polish Team Championship final, when one famous magician, Piotr Gawrys, held this hand as West:

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K 10 6
♥ 8 6
♦ A 5 4 3 2
♣ K 5 4

With both sides vulnerable, his right-hand opponent, Włodzimierz Starkowski, South, opened one club (Polish), Gawrys passed, and the bidding continued as follows:

West	North	East	South
Gawrys	Kwiecien	Jassem	Starkowski
—	—	—	1♣ ¹
Pass	1♦ ²	Pass	2♠ ³
Pass	3♦ ⁴	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Polish: (a) weak NT, (b) 15+ with clubs, or (c) any 18+
2. 0-7 or some semi-positive minor-suit hands
3. Natural, strong, but not forcing to game
4. Natural

Gawrys led the six of hearts (low from a doubleton) and this dummy came down:

♠ 4
♥ J 10 5 2
♦ Q J 10 9 6
♣ Q 9 8

♠ K 10 6
♥ 8 6
♦ A 5 4 3 2
♣ K 5 4

Trick 1: six of hearts – jack – three – four
Trick 2: four of spades – eight – queen – king

How would you continue?

The wizard continued with the five of clubs to the eight, jack and ace, took the diamond king continuation with the ace and finished the job with the four of clubs. This was the full deal:

♠ 4
♥ J 10 5 2
♦ Q J 10 9 6
♣ Q 9 8

♠ K 10 6
♥ 8 6
♦ A 5 4 3 2
♣ K 5 4

♠ 9 8 2
♥ K 9 7 3
♦ 8 7
♣ J 10 3 2

♠ A Q J 7 5 3
♥ A Q 4
♦ K
♣ A 7 6

It is difficult to blame Starkowski for playing the nine of clubs – after the ten of clubs and a club to the king, the defence had taken one spade, one diamond and two clubs. Gawrys exited with a spade and East took the setting trick with the king of hearts. That was magnificent defence by the two Polish magicians and a 13-IMPs gain when the same contract was made with two overtricks at the other table.



The other morning, I was reading a few pages from the IBPA Bulletin issue of August 2017. On page 18, I came across the following deal:

From the 2017 Grand National Teams semifinal with COREN versus SHORE...

Board 3. Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ 10 9 5 4
♥ 6
♦ A J 8 5
♣ 9 5 3 2

♠ K Q 7
♥ A 10 5 3
♦ K Q 7 4
♣ K 4

♠ A J 8 6 3
♥ K Q J 9 8 7 2
♦ —
♣ 6

♠ 2
♥ 4
♦ 10 9 6 3 2
♣ A Q J 10 8 7

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Gill	Meckstroth	Shore
—	—	—	4♣
Double	5♣	6♥	Pass
Pass	7♣	7♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South led the ace of clubs; down one, plus 100 to North/South.

Given that Michael Gill decided to bid on to seven clubs, I thought he missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a master bid: six notrump, to suggest a diamond lead, lest the opponents happen to bid seven hearts. (Six spades was available to ask for a spade lead.)

I turned on the computer, opened the browser, and saw Alan Frank's post on Bridge Winners, where he quoted a deal from 2021 Open USBC in which Drew Casen, after an almost identical auction, was in the same hot spot and he did bid six notrump!

In the 2021 Open USBC Round Robin 2, SIMSON versus FLEISHER..

Board 82. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Casen	Lee	Krekorian	Korbel
—	—	3♣	Pass
5♣	6♥	Pass	Pass
6NT	Double	Pass	Pass
7♣	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Krekorian misguessed the trump layout, trying to drop the king of clubs offside, to go four off; minus 800.

Could somebody please calculate the odds of this rare chain of events? (No. – Ed.)

...Editorial – continued

for two-day knockout matches to determine USA1. USA2 was determined by further KO matches among the losers of the USA1 bracket, some of which were two-day matches, but some of which, of scheduling necessity, were restricted to one day. Similar structures

were in place for the Women's, Mixed and Senior Team Trials, albeit with fewer teams. This was excellent design. There is no doubt that all eight USA teams will be among the favourites in their events in Salsomaggiore.

Of particular note in the USBF Trials was the diversity of the participants. I counted 68 players from 19 countries other than the USA who participated in the four Trials. Even if my numbers are off by a couple (I had to guess at one or two), no other country in the world can boast such a wide variety of nationalities in its Trials.

Contrast this with the disaster (albeit of their own making) that befell the Italian Contract Bridge Federation (FIGB) in their Open Team Trials. By allowing Fulvio Fantoni to compete in their, originally scheduled, five-team Trial, subsequent to the results from the European Qualification event, they ignited an inferno. Teams withdrew from the Trials, were excluded from the Trial, appealed to higher authorities to be allowed back in, and eventually, four of the initial participants played (one had to withdraw due to its unavailability on the dates eventually settled on). A player on Fantoni's own team said he'd not play if the team remained as originally constituted, then denied that he'd said that. All players on the four teams played in the Trials. The FIGB got lucky in that the favourites (including Lauria/Versace and Duboin/Madala) won, avoiding a potentially embarrassing repeat in Salsomaggiore of what happened in the European Qualification event, had Fantoni's team won.

NEWS & VIEWS



Italian Trials (Final) Update

These were the five teams originally registered to play in Italy's (FIGB) Trials for the Bermuda Bowl.

BORTOLETTI: Carlo Bortoletti/Dano De Falco, Paolo Clair/Giovanni 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

Luca De Michelis announced before the Trials began that Furio Di Bello and Stelio Di Bello would replace Massimiliano Di Franco and Andrea Manno.

Bortoletti, Vinci and Zaleski all had withdrawn/resigned or had been removed by the FIGB from the Trials at one time or another for various reasons. All three had been readmitted upon appeal to various bodies.

The FIGB announced on October 11 that the Trials would consist of two phases: the first from Oct. 14-17 and the second from Oct. 21-24. The FIGB also felt it necessary to announce these contingency plans:

- If one, two or three teams withdrew, the Trials would be held in one phase, from Oct. 14-17.
- If four teams withdrew, the Trials would be cancelled and the President of the FIGB, Fernando Ferlazzo Natoli, would “select the Open Team for the Bermuda Bowl”.
- Any team that refused to play any match would be considered to have withdrawn from the event.

The Di Michelis team then withdrew, citing unavailability on the announced dates, so the Trials was held in a single stage, with two-day, 96-board, matches for the semifinals and final.

The team captained by Vinci won the Trials, defeating Burgay 251–165 in a semifinal and Zaleski 279–124 in the final to qualify handily to represent Italy in the Bermuda Bowl. Zaleski had beaten Bortoletti (the team containing Fulvio Fantoni) in the other semifinal, 209.4 to 204.6 (decimals due to slow-play penalties).

Antonio Riccardi Suspended by FIGB

Antonio Riccardi, for years the Head Tournament Director of the WBF, EBL and FIGB, has been banned from acting as a TD in his home country, Italy, for the remainder of 2021. He has been ‘put on ice’ (Riccardi’s term) by Fernando Ferlazzo Natoli, President of the FIGB.

Riccardi was reportedly told by FIGB Counsel Stefano Back that FIGB President Ferlazzo was unhappy with Riccardi’s handling of the Italian Bermuda Bowl Trials (*There was no indication about how Ferlazzo felt about his own performance.* – Ed.). Before the Trials was scheduled to begin in September, there was some uncertainty about whether the Bortoletti team (containing Fulvio Fantoni) would be allowed to play (they eventually were, but the decision came down the day before the Trials were to commence and necessitated a change in format for the Trials, something that the other four teams were not pleased about).

Riccardi’s positions within the WBF and EBL were not affected by the ruling. Reports that Riccardi had been demoted or that the suspension was Covid-related are false. Riccardi had disagreed with Ferlazzo’s dubious statement that: “The Trials are not a competition but

rather an internal process to identify the team to represent Italy.” When asked by a National Sports Tribunal judge whether the Trials was indeed a competition, Riccardi answered: “I believe so.” As supporting evidence, according to Riccardi, the Trials is identified as a competition on the FIGB website. (*Obviously, being a “competition” and “an internal process to identify the team to represent Italy” are not mutually exclusive conditions.* – Ed.)

An interview of Riccardi by Laura Camponeschi of the Neapolitan Club website can be read at:

<https://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/eng/antonio-riccardi-the-figb-put-me-on-ice.html>

Jacqui Mitchell (1936-2021)



Jacqui Mitchell, one of the greatest women’s players ever, died on October 27 after a bad fall walking her dogs. Mitchell won five major women’s World Championships: the Women’s Olympiad Teams (twice), the Venice Cup (twice) and the World Women’s Pairs. Mitchell also won 15 North American Bridge Championships and was inducted into the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame in 2003. From her Hall of Fame biography:

‘If Jacqui was seen at the bridge table minus her needlepoint, knitting or a mystery book on her lap, one would suspect she was an impostor. Despite the combination of her signature jeans and T-shirt appearance and nonchalant table demeanor, she is an intensely serious, competitive, brilliant, analytical and calculating player – the antithesis of what meets the eye!’

According to close friend and partner Amalya Kearse, “She is not only a terrific player, but she also has such a love for the game that she never treats a hand casually, even if it is near the end of an event she no longer has a chance of winning or placing well. Every hand gets the attention it deserves.”

David Berkowitz said: “Vic (*Jacqui’s husband Victor* – Ed.) put Jacqui and me together for a mixed squad many moons ago. I agreed to play her system (Neanderthal Standard), but she graciously said she would allow me two of my own conventions. After mulling it over, I said support doubles, for one. She walked away, saying ‘forget the offer’. She will be missed.”

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 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 (www.ibpa.com).



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