



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 1

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Welcome to the 18th NEC Cup Bridge Festival

This year's NEC Cup boasts one of its toughest and most impressive international fields, including many of the world's top players. Stage One features a 12-round, three-day Swiss Teams qualifier with 14-board matches, imps converted to Victory Points using the new 14-Board WBF scale. (Note: the last page of the player score book still contains the "old" scale. The new scale may be found in several places including: the reverse side of the Conditions of Contest sheet in your player bag; posted outside the playing area; page 5 of this bulletin.) The top eight teams will qualify for the final KO phase. For Match One, the top 22 teams from the 47-team field have been paired at random against teams 23-44, with teams 45-47 playing a three-way of 7-board matches (see page 6). Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter- and semi-finals will consist of 32-board matches, while the final will be contested over 64 boards (with the two losing semi-finalists tying for 3rd/4th). On Friday, April 19, the Yokohama IMP Pairs will be held followed on Saturday, April 20, by the Yokohama Swiss Teams (A, B & C) and on Sunday, April 21, by the Asuka Cup (Open Pairs). (Note the Convention Regulations for pair games on page 6.)

The Daily Bulletin Office/Secretariat and the Chief Director

As always, we need your help to keep everyone informed of the happenings at this tournament. Please report anything amusing, challenging, or skillful that happens in your matches (bridge or otherwise) to the **Daily Bulletin Office, a.k.a. The Secretariat** (Conference Center, Room 511). If we're not in, leave a note in front of either of our computers (they're the two PCs on the table in the rear of the room). The **Secretariat** opens each day 30 minutes before starting time. You can contact the Secretariat via a house phone from the hotel (Ext. 3511), or dial 228-6466 (from the Yokohama City area), 045-228-6466 (from outside the city area), or +81 45 228-6466 (from overseas). The editors may also be contacted via e-mail at rcolker@gmail.com or barryrigal@mindspring.com. If you're trying to reach someone you can't find here at the festival, you may leave a message with us and we'll do our best to get it to them. The **Chief Tournament Director** at the **NEC Bridge Festival** is once again the witty, urbane and occasionally immovable **Richard Grenside**, as always under the close supervision of wife Sue. Be advised that you call him at your own risk. The Co-Director of the NEC Cup is **Tadayoshi Nakatani**.

PCs with Internet access are available for player use in front of the Secretariat (Room 511), along the wall to the right of the door.

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 18th NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/home/English/nec/tabid/662/Default.aspx>

Follow our featured matches on Vugraph each day at: www.bridgebase.com

NEC Cup 2013: Conditions of Contest

A 12-round Swiss of 14-board matches will qualify the top 8 teams to the Knockout phase; no playbacks.

V.P. Scale: New WBF 14-board scale (20-point scale, continuous and given to two decimal places).

Seating Rights: Blind seating 10 minutes before the start of match.

KO-Phase Seating: The winner of a coin toss has the choice of seating in either of the two 16-board segments of the quarter- or semi-finals. In the four 16-board segments of the final, the choices will alternate over segments.

Swiss Pairings: First-round Swiss matches were made by randomly pairing each team in the top half with a team from the bottom half.

Home and Visiting: 1st numbered team sits N/S in the open room, E/W in the closed room.

Tie-Breaks: At the end of the Swiss, ties will be broken by IMP quotient. If more than two teams are involved, WBF 2008 Conditions of Contest procedures will apply.

In the Knockout Phase, the team with the higher position from the Swiss will be assumed to have a ½-IMP carryover.

Systems: No HUM or Brown Sticker methods are permitted in this event. However, pairs may prepare written defenses against a two-level opening bid in a minor that shows a weak two-bid in either major, with or without the option of strong hand types. These defenses are deemed to be part of the opponents' convention cards.

Length of Matches: 2 hours will be allotted for each 14-board segment (or 2 hours and 15 minutes for each 16-board segment of the KOs). In addition, a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per WBF 2012 Conditions of Contest.

Appeals: The WBF Code of Practice will be in effect. The Chief Director will have 12C1c authority. Appeals found to be without merit may incur a penalty of up to 3 VPs.

Match Scoring: Bridgematic scoring terminals will be used. Match results should be verified against the official result sheet (posted at the end of each match); score corrections and notifications of appeals will be permitted up until the start of the next session.

KO Draw: The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4th-8th group. The team finishing 3rd will then have their choice of any one of the remaining teams. In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1st in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.

Security: No player may leave the playing area during play without permission, due to security concerns arising from the Bridge Base Online Broadcast.

Smoking: Once play in a qualifying-round match or a KO-round session starts, smoking is prohibited at ALL times (including when a player leaves the playing room to go to the bathroom), until the player completes the play of all boards in the match or session. (For those wishing to smoke at other times, smoking rooms are located on the 3rd and 5th floors of the Conference Center.) Automatic penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director as follows: Qualifying Swiss — 1 VP for the 1st offense, 3 VPs for all subsequent offenses; KO — 3imps for the 1st offense, 10imps for all subsequent offenses.

Screen Hesitations: When a delay in the return of the tray is suspected, a player on the opposite side of the screen must be the first to call attention to it (by summoning the Director). In case of dispute the call from the wrong side will be ignored, but in situations where the wrong side calls or a late call is made and there is no dispute the Director may accept the fact of the delayed call.

Electronic Equipment: Any and all electronic equipment capable of receiving or transmitting information to/from outside the playing room (e.g., cell phones, iPads and the like) must be turned off at all times from the beginning of a match/session until the player has completed all boards in the match/session and left the playing area. The Director may authorize exceptions in emergency situations. Penalties for violations are the same as for smoking violations.

Photography/BBO Vugraph: By entering the event, players (and kibitzers) agree to authorize still and/or video photography by the JCBL and also to appear on BBO VuGraph whenever requested by the Director.

The 18th NEC Cup Guest List

Konichi wa, and welcome to the 18th NEC Bridge Festival. As always, every session of the NEC Cup will be on Bridge Base Online, the world's leading Online Bridge site (hi Fred, Sheri, Uday, everyone), with live broadcasts starting with our Round One matches: Down Under (1) vs JAPAN Kacho Fugetsu (35) and JAPAN SARA (19) vs JAPAN Otvosi (37). As is the history of this event, not just the favorites will be playing for the championship come Saturday. So if you start off poorly, keep your chin up, play with heart, and fight until the man from down under (his name is Richard) says you're retired. As always, we're thrilled to see the many foreign teams here (19 this year), and we offer a special welcome to those attending the festival for the first time as well as to those who are back for the first time in a while. As always, it brings joy to our hearts to see so many friendly and familiar faces from around the bridge world. We're all family here.

The defenders, Down Under (**Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Martin Reid, Peter Newell**), are back, this time joined by **Peter Gill**. Gill is no stranger to the NEC; he most recently played here in 2010. Our spies inform us that the defenders have been described as being the strong silent types. Though Gill's addition will certainly not weaken the team, it could impact the "silent" element of the description.

Five of the six members of Team USA (**Curtis Cheek, Joe Grue, Joel Wooldridge, John Hurd, Justin Lall**) are NEC first-timers. The "odd" man out, **Ishmael Del'Monte**, has been here many times, most recently as a member of the quarter-finalist Oz Players in 2010. Ish, as he is known, won the Vanderbilt last year and is now playing with Curtis Cheek in US events. Joe Grue has been partnering Brad Moss while John Hurd and Joel Wooldridge remain one of the world's strongest young pairs. The last member of the team, Justin Lall, has taken up with some whippersnapper named Hamman who may well have a future in the game.

The young Australian team (**Justin Howard, Peter Hollands, Michael Whibley, Liam Milne**) includes the nucleus of the squad that won the 2012 Gold Coast Teams in Brisbane last year. This is Milne's first time at the NEC while Howard and Whibley were members of the Oz Players team here in 2011 and Hollands was on team VEGA* in 2008.

Five members of Team India (**Arun Jain, Manas Mukherji, Sumit Mukherji, Subir Majumdar, Debrata Majumdar**) are new to the NEC. Only **Subhash Gupta** has played here (several times) before, most recently as a member of team KISS in 2011. Welcome.

The members of the euphonious Pharon team (**Paul, Jason and Justin Hackett, Tom Hanlon**) are certainly no strangers to the NEC. Much the same team (with Hugh McGann replacing Jason) lost narrowly to NEDUK, the eventual winners, in the 2011 semi-finals. Papa Bear is once again extending his record attendance at NEC events while adding to his frequent flier miles. (What comes after platinum?) The twins, aka the Two-Headed Monster, will be playing together here for the first time since 2007. This is Hanlon's second NEC appearance without Hugh McGann (2009). (Presumably McGann's absence will have no affect on Hanlon's willingness to partake of the wares of the Yokohama Brewery, a "pale" substitute for his preferred Guinness.) Our spies tell us that if Pharon manages to bring home the bacon Hanlon has agreed to change his name to Hackett. We wouldn't bet against it.

Team Italy (**Norberto Bocchi, Giorgio Duboin, Guido Ferraro, Agustin Madala, Antonio Sementa, Maria Teresa Lavazza**) are back intact from their 2010 NEC Cup victory, and the rest of the NEC Cup field may well add to Japan's seismological issues as a result. It is a pleasure to see Madame Lavazza (fresh off her "personality of the year" award from the IBPA) playing here again. There is not much one can say about the Italian team, who have more World Championship gold medals than they can count.

Team NEDUK (**David Bakhshi, David Gold, Jan Jansma, Ricco van Prooijen**), with Louk Verhees in place of Jan Jansma in previous versions of this team, lost to the Bulgarians in last year's semi-finals but won here in 2011. The two Davids have played with great success in Dutch-UK pairings over the last few years. Jansma and van Prooijen may not be a regular partnership but both have awesome pedigrees. The odds-makers tell us that this team could present Italy with their biggest challenge to this year's title.

Team Mixed (**Reese Milner, Hemant Lall, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland, Michael Kwiecien, Jacek Pszczola**) are half NEC Cup veterans and half first-timers. (Isn't that what the team name refers to?) Sabine (last here

in 2004) and Roy are fresh off their 2013 Vanderbilt win, while the 2002 WC Pairs winners (Pszczola and Kwiecien, last here in 2006 and 2007, respectively) are as well known as they are unpronounceable (try Pepsi and Quicken). Reese and Hemant won last year's Transnational Mixed Teams (though not playing together).

The Oz Players (**Ron Klinger, Matt Mullamphy, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson**) have become regulars at the NEC. Members of this team have achieved considerable success both here and in other events, Most recently Matt and Ron won the 2013 Gold Coast Teams while Bill and Ben were 2011 ANC Open Teams champions.

Team PolUS (**Michael Nowosadzki, Dominik Fillipowicz, Jacek Kalita, Jessica Pifsky**) is back at the NEC with all new (to the NEC) players. What might be the youngest team in the event has two of the top Polish under-30s playing with Jacek and Jessica, who just missed out on a National Pairs title last spring in Memphis (USA). Welcome.

The Yeh Bros (**Chen Yeh (Captain), JY Shih, Dawei Chen, Kazuo Furuta, Patrick Huang, Grace Lin**), featuring Chen Yeh (the first Asian to win a gold medal for bridge and sponsor of the Yeh Bros Cup, which immediately follows the NEC Bridge Festival here this year), is a team that mixes age with youth. (We leave you to decide which is which.) All are NEC veterans with the Japanese pair of Chen-Furuta replacing ChiMou Lin and Herstein Liu from last year's Yeh Bros team that narrowly missed qualifying for the KOs.

Team Russia (**Andrey Gromov, Evgeny Gladysh, Alexander Dubinin, Mikhail Krasnosselski, Sebastiaan Drijver, Sjoert Brink**) include four NEC Cup veterans and two newcomers (Gladysh and Brink). The Russians have added Drijver and Brink from the Dutch Bermuda Bowl winning team of 2011. Members of this team have come agonizingly close to winning this event at least twice. Maybe the third time is the charm. Another good dark-horse choice.

Team Beauchamp (**Bruce Neill, Kim Morrison, Nathan van Jole, David Beauchamp, Michael Ware, Simon Hinge**) features a combination of Australasian pairs that mixes long-time partnerships with some interesting young newcomers. Neill, Ware and Hinge have been here before while Morrison, Jole and Beauchamp are NEC Cup first-timers. Welcome.

The Australia/India squad (**Magnus Moren, Neville Francis, Pranjal Chakradeo, Ajit Chakradeo**) are all NEC first-timers, presumably playing their patented brand of germ-warfare. The Chakradeos are a father-and-son combination from Melbourne with a host of good showings in Australian events. Welcome.

The Bulgarian All Stars (**Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Hristo Hristov, Manol Iliev**), twice NEC Cup runners-up and four-time semi-finalists, have never managed to close the deal—and they're not at all happy about it. We make them one of the favorites for the title in what is a very tough, competitive field.

Team Thailand/Japan (**Nophanai Niyomchoke, Arnond Rotrugsa, Tomohiro Kiyama, Tadahiro Kikuchi**) features four NEC first-timers (although the Japanese surnames are not totally unfamiliar, possibly related to NEC regulars). Welcome and good luck.

Team England (**Sandra Penfold, Brian Senior, Nevena Senior, Roumen Trendafilov**), a mixture of Bulgarian and English players (in some cases both), will be the editors' bet for the loudest post-mortems. Penfold is the only NEC first-timer on the team. Welcome (and shhh!).

Teams from China (other than Yeh Bros) are conspicuously absent from the competition this year (last year we had a record five Chinese teams entered). Hopefully this is merely due to the timing of this year's Festival and is not an omen for the future.

The top Japanese teams feature many familiar names, most notably members of the SARA, Yamada and Women teams. It is not unusual for one or more home teams to qualify for the KO stage, but with several top Japanese players on "visiting" teams this may prove more difficult than usual this year.

So welcome to the 2013 NEC Bridge Festival. May all your bids be inspired. May all your plays be double-dummy, and may your fiercest competitors finish one place below you in the standings. Good luck, all.

NEC Bridge Festival Smoking Policy

NEC Cup:

See the Smoking section of the CoC (page 2).

Other events:

Once a session has started, and until the player has finished all boards in the session, smoking is prohibited at ALL times other than a single designated smoking break, which may be announced at the option of the Director.

Smoking areas:

Smoking is only permitted in the smoking rooms located on the 3rd and 5th floors of the Conference Center.

Penalties:

Penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director.

New 14-Board IMP Scale

IMPs	VPs-Won	VPs-Lost	IMPs	VPs-Won	VPs-Lost
0	10.00	10.00	29	16.88	3.12
1	10.33	9.67	30	17.04	2.96
2	10.66	9.34	31	17.19	2.81
3	10.97	9.03	32	17.34	2.66
4	11.28	8.72	33	17.49	2.51
5	11.58	8.42	34	17.63	2.37
6	11.87	8.13	35	17.77	2.23
7	12.16	7.84	36	17.91	2.09
8	12.44	7.56	37	18.04	1.96
9	12.71	7.29	38	18.17	1.83
10	12.97	7.03	39	18.29	1.71
11	13.23	6.77	40	18.41	1.59
12	13.48	6.52	41	18.53	1.47
13	13.72	6.28	42	18.65	1.35
14	13.96	6.04	43	18.76	1.24
15	14.19	5.81	44	18.87	1.13
16	14.42	5.58	45	18.98	1.02
17	14.64	5.36	46	19.08	0.92
18	14.85	5.15	47	19.18	0.82
19	15.06	4.94	48	19.28	0.72
20	15.26	4.74	49	19.38	0.62
21	15.46	4.54	50	19.47	0.53
22	15.66	4.34	51	19.56	0.44
23	15.85	4.15	52	19.65	0.35
24	16.03	3.97	53	19.74	0.26
25	16.21	3.79	54	19.83	0.17
26	16.38	3.62	55	19.91	0.09
27	16.55	3.45	56	19.99	0.01
28	16.72	3.28	57	20.00	0.00



Team Rosters: 18th NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	Down Under:	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Peter Gill, Martin Reid, Peter Newell
2	USA:	Curtis Cheek, Joe Grue, Joel Wooldridge, Johnny Hurd, Justin Lall, Ishmael Del'Monte
3	Australia Youth:	Justin Howard, Peter Hollands, Michael Whibley, Liam Milne
4	India:	Subhash Gupta, Arun Jain, Manas Mukherji, Sumit Mukherji, Subir Majumdar, Debrata Majumdar
5	Pharon:	Paul Hackett, Tom Hanlon, Jason Hackett, Justin Hackett
6	Italy:	Norberto Bocchi, Giorgio Duboin, Guido Ferraro, Agustín Madala, Antonio Sementa, Maria Teresa Lavazza
7	NEDUK:	David Bakhshi, David Gold, Jan Jansma, Ricco van Prooijen
8	Mixed:	Reese Milner, Hemant Lall, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland, Michael Kwiecien, Jacek Pszczola
9	Oz Players:	Ron Klinger, Matt Mullamphy, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson
10	PolUS:	Michael Nowosadzki, Dominik Filipowicz, Jacek Kalita, Jessica Piafsky
11	Yeh Bros:	Chen Yeh (captain), JY Shih, Dawei Chen, Kazuo Furuta, Patrick Huang, Grace Lin
12	Russia:	Andrey Gromov, Evgeny Gladyshev, Alexander Dubinin, Mikhail Krasnosselski, Sebastiaan Drijver, Sjoert Brink
13	Beauchamp:	Bruce Neill, Kim Morrison, Nathan van Jole, David Beauchamp, Michael Ware, Simon Hinge
14	Australia/India:	Magnus Moren, Neville Francis, Pranjal Chakradeo, Ajit Chakradeo
15	Hammer:	Sung Kyunghae, Hwang Inryung, Chung Ilsub, Yang Sungae
16	Bulgarian All Stars:	Valio Kovachev, Vladislav Isportski, Hristo Hristov, Manol Iliev
17	Thailand/Japan:	Nophanai Niyomchoke, Arnond Rotrugsa, Tomohiro Kiyama, Tadahiro Kikuchi
18	England:	Sandra Penfold, Brian Senior, Nevena Senior, Roumen Trendafilov
19	JAPAN SARA:	Tadashi Teramoto, Kumiko Sasahira, Masayuki Ino, Hideki Takano, Shugo Tanaka, Takeshi Niekawa
20	JAPAN Yamada:	Tadashi Yoshida, Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Makoto Hirata
21	JAPAN Women:	Kyoko Shimamura, Makiko Sato, Michiko Ono, Natsuko Nishida, Yuki Fukuyoshi, Akiko Yanagisawa
22	JAPAN Morimura:	Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Shunsuke Morimura, Tadashi Imakura, Masayuki Hayasaka
23	JAPAN ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Hideyuki Sango, Nobuko Matsubara, Fumiko Kimura, Terumi Kubo
24	JAPAN NAITO:	Ryoga Tanaka, Sakiko Naito, Ayako Miyakuni, Kenji Miyakuni
25	JAPAN Kitty's:	Yoko Nenohi, Kyoko Toyofuku, Yoshiko Sakaguchi, Kumiko Matsuo, Toshiko Kaho
26	JAPAN sawa sawa:	Motomi Shirogane, Naoko Orihara, Michiko Iwahashi, Yumiko Oda, Ayako Shimazaki, Etsuko Takano
27	JAPAN Golden Bull:	Hiroaki Miura, Hiroya Abe, Kazuko Takahashi, Takako Fujimoto, Sumiko Sugino
28	JAPAN AYB 56:	Misae Kato, Yasuyo Iida, Takako Nakatani, Kimiko Kamakari, Atsuko Katsumata, Shoko Somemiya
29	JAPAN Setsu Gekka:	Junko Tsubaki, Kazuko Kawashima, Akiko Miyata, Yoko Tokushige, Kazuko Okamoto, Miyako Miyazaki
30	JAPAN Etsuko Naito:	Etsuko Naito, Yukiko Umezu, Midori Sakamoto, Nobuko Setoguchi, Setsuko Moriyama, Yoshihisa Konishi
31	JAPAN Surfrider:	Chieko Ichikawa, Kuniko Saito, Junko Den, Atsuko Kurita, Kei Nemoto
32	Verdure:	Katsumi Takahashi, Lee Bok Hee, Osamu Iiyama, Shunichi Haga, Yoichiro Kurihara
33	JAPAN Iza Yokohama IV:	Osami Kimura, Yoshiaki Aida, Setsuko Kimura, Harue Iemori, Chisato Kiriya, Yoko Shimominami
34	Seoul:	Hiroki Yokoi, Hye Young Kim, Hyemin Oh, Yasuhiro Shimizu, Nobuyuki Hayashi
35	JAPAN Kacho Fugetsu:	Akiko Miwa, Kunio Kodaira, Teruo Miyazaki, Makoto Nomura, Masako Otsuka
36	JAPAN River Side:	Yumiko Kawakami, Hiroko Tanaka, Masakatsu Sugino, Toyohiko Ozawa, Ryoichi Yasuhara, Toshiharu Hirose
37	JAPAN Otvosi:	Mizuko Tan, Akio Kurokawa, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kazuo Saeki, Yoshinori Kurachi, Ervin Otvosi
38	JAPAN Sakurai:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Kenichi Asaoka, Takehiko Tada
39	JAPAN LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi, Yoko Komuro, Shimako Yaji
40	JAPAN NANIWADA:	Toshiro Nose, Masaru Naniwada, Hikoe Enomoto, Hisami Kataoka, Hideo Togawa
41	JAPAN LANDOLT:	Kyoko Kadono, Mitsuko Matsushima, Toru Amano, Takumi Seshimo
42	JAPAN Friends:	Yoko Saito, Mamiko Odaira, Koichi Onishi, Taiko Bando, Yumiko Kichise, Mitsuko Suyama
43	JAPAN akage:	Yukiko Hoshi, Megumi Takasaka, Yoko Yanagisawa, Yuko Kimura
44	JAPAN KinKi:	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
45	Korea/Japan:	Akiko Kawabata, Keisuke Akama, Kim Yoonkyung, Park Jungyoon
46	JAPAN Aces & Deuces:	Masaru Yoshida, Takeshi Higashiguchi, Kim SunYoung, Tina Cho
47	JAPAN Youth:	Takashi Sugimoto, Yuki Harada, Tomoaki Matsunawa, Takahiro Honda, Tomoaki Nakanishi

1st-round match-ups: 1 v 35; 2 v 29; 3 v 28; 4 v 39; 5 v 41; 6 v 32; 7 v 25; 8 v 38; 9 v 31; 10 v 23; 11 v 44; 12 v 27; 13 v 43; 14 v 30; 15 v 34; 16 v 26; 17 v 33; 18 v 24; 19 v 37; 20 v 36; 21 v 42; 22 v 40; 45 v 46 v 47

**Today's 1st VuGraph Matches will feature Down Under (1) vs JAPAN Kacho Fugetsu (35)
and JAPAN SARA (19) vs JAPAN Otvosi (37)**

Convention Regulations for Side (Pair) Games

(An explanation for foreign players)

Unlike the NEC Cup, which is an international event, and the Yokohama Swiss Teams, in which all non-brown-sticker conventions are permitted, the Yokohama IMP Pairs and Asuka Cup are rated as Japanese regional or national events, for which JCBL regulations for domestic events apply strictly. We ask for your compliance with the regulations explained below. If you have any questions about what is allowed, please ask the JCBL staff. Please note that use of unauthorized conventions may be penalized. We thank you for your cooperation.

All side games at the NEC Bridge Festival (the Yokohama IMP Pairs and Asuka Cup) are restricted to "List C" conventions as described below. The use of the Multi-2♦ is strictly prohibited and will be subject to penalty.

LIST C (Yokohama IMP Pairs/Asuka Cup)

Opening Bids

- 1♣ or 1♦ may be used as an all-purpose opening bid (artificial or natural) promising a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g.: Precision 1♣ and 1♦; Polish 1♣, etc.)
- 2♣ artificial opening bid indicating one of:
 - a strong hand, balanced or unbalanced
 - a three-suiter with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Roman 3-suiter, etc.)
- 2♦ artificial opening bid showing one of:
 - at least 5-4 distribution in the majors with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Flannery, anti-Flannery etc.)
 - a strong hand, balanced or unbalanced
 - a three-suiter with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Roman 3-suiter, etc.)
- Opening suit bid at the two level or higher indicating the bid suit, another known suit, a minimum of 10 HCP and at least 5-4 distribution in the suits.
- Opening notrump bid at the two level or higher indicating at least 5-4 distribution in the minors, 10 or more HCP.
- Opening 3NT bid indicating:
 - any solid suit or
 - a broken minor suit.
- Opening four-level bid transferring to a known suit (e.g., Namyats, etc.).
- Strong opening at the two level or higher, asking Ace, King, Queen, singleton, void, trump quality.

Responses and Rebids

- 1♦ as a forcing, artificial response to 1♣.
- 1NT response to a major-suit opening bid, forcing for one round; may not guarantee game invitational or better values.
- Conventional responses which guarantee game forcing or better values. May not be part of a relay system.
- 2♣ or 2♦ response to 3rd- or 4th-seat major-suit opener asking the quality of the opening bid.
- Single or higher jump shifts (including into notrump) to indicate a raise or to force to game.
- All responses to:
 - artificial strong opening bids with 15 HCP or more.
 - opening bids of 2♣ or higher (weak 2s must guarantee 10 opening points: opening points=HCP + number of cards in longest suit).

- All constructive calls starting with the opening bidder's second call.
- Calls that ask for aces, kings, queens, singletons, voids, trump quality and responses thereto.
- All calls after a natural notrump (including those that have two non-consecutive ranges, neither of which exceeds 3 HCP). No conventional responses are allowed over natural notrump bids with a lower limit of fewer than 10 HCP or with a range of greater than 5 HCP.

Competitive Bids

- Any conventional balancing calls.
- Conventional doubles and redoubles and responses (including free bids) thereto.
- Notrump overcall for either:
 - two-suited takeout showing at least 5-4 distribution and at least one known suit. (At the 4 level or higher there is no requirement to have a known suit.)
 - three-suited takeout (as with a takeout double, at least 3 cards in each of the 3 suits).
- Jump overcalls into a suit to indicate at least 5-4 distribution in two known suits, and responses thereto.
- Cuebid of an opponent's suit and responses thereto, except that a cuebid that could be weak, directly over an opening bid, must show at least one known suit.
- Comic 1NT overcall.
- Defense to:
 - conventional calls (including takeout doubles).
 - natural notrump opening bids and overcalls.
 - opening bids of 2♣ or higher.
- Nos. 5 through 9 under "Responses and Rebids" above apply to both pairs.
- Transfer overcall to show a specified suit at the four level.

Carding

- All leads and signaling methods are approved except for: a) odd-even signals, b) encrypted signals, c) dual-message carding strategies, except on each defender's first discard, d) any method when the pair using it are deemed to be playing it in a manner which is not compatible with the maintenance of proper tempo.

LIST D (NEC Cup/Yokohama Swiss Teams)

Category 3 of WBF Systems Policy applies

The 2012 NEC Cup: Bulgarian All Stars vs Down Under

Last year's top qualifier China Geely Auto chose eighth-place qualifier Down Under as their quarter-final opponent. Second-place ONI-TAKA chose China Women 2, who tied for the fourth/fifth-qualifying spot, as their opponent, while third-place qualifier Bulgarian All Stars chose sixth-place Oz Players. That left the fourth/fifth qualifiers NEDUK to play seventh-place qualifier Stamatov in the last quarter-final match.

Underdog Down Under got off to a 10-imp lead over top-seeded Geely in the first half of their match and never looked back, winning 81-55. The other three higher-qualifying teams all advanced to the semi-finals as ONI-TAKA beat China Women 2 74-61, Bulgarian All Stars beat Oz Players 68-52, and NEDUK dispatched Stamatov 74-45.

In semi-final one underdog Down Under continued their winning ways, dismissing ONI-TAKA 79-49 to earn a place in the NEC Cup final. In the other semi-final match Bulgarian All Stars trailed NEDUK 40-33 at the half, but won the second half 41-22 to advance to the final, 74-62.

The 2012 NEC Cup final pitted two teams playing four-handed. All eight players were no strangers to the NEC Cup. The Bulgarian All Stars (Kovachev, Isporski, Iliev and Hristov) had been NEC Cup semi-finalists in both 2011 and 2010. One of the Down Under pairs (Hans-Nunn) had been NEC Cup quarter-finalists in 2011 and 2006 while the other pair (Reid-Newell) were 1996 NEC Cup veterans.

First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

Bd: 1 North
 Dlr: North ♠ 87432
 Vul: None ♥ ---
 ♦ A109753
 ♣ A2

West
 ♠ AQ106
 ♥ KQ103
 ♦ 2
 ♣ 9874

East
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ J92
 ♦ KQ84
 ♣ Q653

South
 ♠ 95
 ♥ A87654
 ♦ J6
 ♣ KJ10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
	Pass	1NT	2♦(♥)
Dbl	Pass	Pass	2♥

All Pass
 Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
	1♥(♠)	Pass	2♦(1M)

All Pass

Isporski's pass of 2♦x may or may not have shown a strong desire to play diamonds (though it surely showed a desire not to play in at least one of the majors, or he would have bid a pass-or-correct 2♥) — some pairs play a pass as simply neutral. When that came back around to Kovachev he bid his suit, perhaps because Isporski's pass didn't guarantee a real diamond suit or perhaps because he had not yet shown which major was his and because he had six of them. In any case the 6-0 fit was probably not going to play as well as the 6-2 fit would have, but playing undoubled certainly had an attraction.

Nunn got off to the expected diamond lead, Kovachev winning the ace and exiting with a spade to Hans' king. Hans cashed the ♦Q (Nunn pitching the ♣9), then played the ♦K, ruffed with the eight and over-ruffed with the ten. Next Nunn cashed the ♠A and switched to the ♣8, perhaps not the best choice. Kovachev ducked, took Nunn's queen with his king, and played ace and a trump. When Nunn's queen held he was able to play the ♠10 for Hans to ruff with the ♥J and the defense still had a trump trick coming for down two, +100. Maybe a double of 2♥ by someone wouldn't have been such a bad idea. (Or maybe Nunn thought his pass of 2♥ was forcing.)

A temporarily dyslexic Editor who shall remain nameless saw nothing strange about the Closed Room auction — North bid his diamonds and South bid his hearts! Oh, well, at least the Kiwis knew how to find *their* 6-2 fit. Iliev led the ♣9 and Reid hopped up with the ace to lead a spade from dummy. Hristov stepped up with the king, which held, and tabled a low diamond — presumably to stop declarer from ruffing spades in hand. That probably did not work as well as was hoped when dummy's seven won the trick. Hristov won a second spade and thought better about playing a second trump, instead trying a club. Reid stepped up with the king, eschewing the extra club trick being presented him, cashed the ♥A pitching a spade, ruffed a heart, ruffed a spade in hand (Hristov pitching his last heart), ruffed a club, and called for a spade. Hristov ruffed and the deal mercifully ended when nine tricks were agreed for declarer; +110. First blood, 5 imps to Down Under.

Bd: 2 North
 Dlr: East ♠ Q64
 Vul: N/S ♥ AJ65
 ♦ A83
 ♣ AK10

West
 ♠ K53
 ♥ Q73
 ♦ KQJ7
 ♣ 952

East
 ♠ A107
 ♥ K108
 ♦ 1042
 ♣ 8743

South
 ♠ J982
 ♥ 942
 ♦ 965
 ♣ QJ6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
		Pass	Pass
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

N/S in both rooms played 1NT with their four-triple-three hands facing one another and no eight-card fit. In the Open Room Hristov led a low club, which did not exactly terrorize declarer. Newell won the king in hand and tabled the ♠Q, which held. So far, so good. A low spade now went to the ten, jack and king and Iliev rather woodenly switched back to clubs when his diamonds seemed (at least to us) to scream "Me, me!" (This is especially so when the partnership's preferred opening lead from a suit such as 8743 is the three.) Newell carefully won the ♣A in hand (preserving the ♣Q as an entry to the fourth spade) and played a third spade. Hristov won the ace perforce and triumphantly played a third club, finally establishing his ♣4 as a winner. In dummy with the ♣Q Newell cashed the ♠9 and eventually scored his two red-suit aces for +90.

In the Closed Room, where Nunn had gotten in his third-seat diamond lead director, Hans led the ♦2. Nunn's jack held and he continued the suit, Isporski winning and exiting with a diamond. Nunn won, cashed his last diamond (♠4, ♣8, ♥2), and with a choice to make between the majors led a spade (Hans' ♣8 discouraged clubs and appears to have had suit-preference implications) to the ace. A spade was returned, ducked to the queen, and now Isporski simply cashed out for down one, -100. Another 5 imps to Down Under, leading now 10-0.

Bd: 3	North
Dlr: South	♠ J5
Vul: E/W	♥ 109
	♦ J63
	♣ Q87543
West	East
♠ 84	♠ AK963
♥ Q86	♥ KJ54
♦ A97542	♦ KQ10
♣ K9	♣ A
	South
	♠ Q1072
	♥ A732
	♦ 8
	♣ J1062

Did you know? 2000 pounds of Chinese Soup = Won ton

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
		Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(3)	Pass
2♠(4)	Pass	2NT(5)	Pass
3♣(6)	Pass	3NT(7)	All Pass

(1) Gazzilli, 16+ or ♠+♣; (2) 8+ hcp
 (3) Puppet to 2♠; (4) As instructed
 (5) 5♠+4♥; (6) Ask; (7) BAL (5=4=2=2)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
		Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣(STR)	Pass
1♥(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

(1) 3 controls (we think)

In the Open Room Hans eventually decided to treat his hand as balanced after showing 5-4 in the majors, which may explain why Nunn decided not to pursue a possible diamond contract. The brunt of the blame therefore seemed to rest on Hans' decision to treat his hand as balanced rather than to bid out his shape (3♦ over 3♣ would have shown a non-specific 5=4=3-1 and Nunn could have asked which), after which Nunn would surely have inquired. There was not much to the play. Isporski led a club and Nunn tested diamonds, claiming 12 tricks when the suit broke (giving up the ♥A); +690.

In the Closed Room Iliev and Hristov conducted an auction equal in length, if not in artificial complexity, to the one in the Open Room and landed in 6♦, which made easily for +1370. 12 imps to the All Stars, ahead now 12-10.

Bd: 4	North
Dlr: West	♠ J42
Vul: Both	♥ A82
	♦ J7432
	♣ K6
West	East
♠ AK7	♠ 98653
♥ Q96	♥ 10543
♦ 108	♦ 5
♣ AJ1032	♣ 754
	South
	♠ Q10
	♥ KJ7
	♦ AKQ96
	♣ Q98

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
1♣	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
1NT	Pass	2♥(♠)	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

A system decision plus some luck propelled the Open Room All Stars into another big pick-up here. Nunn decided his 14 points and good five-card club suit were too good for a weak notrump, so he opened a natural 1♣. When this came around to Kovachev he made a bid that few would think of (it certainly would never have occurred to us) — 3NT. Fortunately for him, on the lie of the cards, with the spades being blocked and East lacking even a prayer of an entry, the contract was cold. Nunn led ace, king and a third spade and Kovachev diddled around in the diamond suit a bit before finally playing a club towards dummy. When Nunn flew with the ace Kobachev had 10 tricks for +630.

In the Closed Room Iliev opened the West hand 1NT and Hristov showed his spades via a transfer. Reid was blown clear out of the auction and defended 2♠. To add injury to injury, the defense was anything but simple. Newell led the only suit capable of defeating 2♠: a diamond. Reid won and continued the suit, ruffed, and Iliev played a club to the jack and king. A trump now was the best defense (a heart to the king works too but South must then shift to a trump immediately) but Newell returned his low club to the queen and ace and now declarer was home free (with the defense unable to force three heart tricks). He drew trumps, taking four clubs and four trump tricks for +110. (In practice Iliev drew only one round of trumps before playing the ♣10, but when Newell ruffed, this line reduced to the other. Had Newell pitched and had Iliev continued clubs without drawing one more trump the contract could have been set.) That was 12 more imps to the All Stars, leading now 24-10.

Bd: 5
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ K10
 ♥ K9
 ♦ KQJ10
 ♣ Q9842

West
 ♠ A9874
 ♥ Q865
 ♦ 7542
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ J3
 ♥ J42
 ♦ 83
 ♣ AK10765

South
 ♠ Q652
 ♥ A1073
 ♦ A96
 ♣ J3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	1♦	2♣	Dbf
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT

3NT was not anyone's idea of a great contract, but it was unbeatable from the North side. (If South is

the declarer a low heart lead is fatal, although in practice it would be difficult for West not to lead a spade.) The defense in both rooms was similar. Both Easts led a low club, declarer winning an intermediate spot as West discarded (a spade by Nunn, a diamond by Iliev). In the Open Room declarer then played three rounds of diamonds, ending in hand (East pitching a club), and exited with a low club to the king (West pitching his last diamond). Hans tried the ♠J. Declarer won in hand, cashed his last diamond, and set up his ninth trick by playing the ♠10; +600.

In the Closed Room there was an opportunity for a big swing. After winning the club lead in hand Newell immediately returned a low club to the king, Iliev pitching a second diamond. Hristov got out with a diamond. Newell won the ace, led a spade, and when Iliev followed low Newell had to rise with the king in order to insure his game. Instead he inserted the ten and now the stage was set for the contract to fail. Hristov won the jack and switched back to diamonds. Newell cashed out the suit (Iliev pitching one spade along the way), then led the ♠K to the ace. Iliev played back a spade to the queen and Newell returned the favor by playing the last spade to Iliev's nine, leaving the three-card ending below.

♠ ---	♠ ---
♥ K9	♥ J2
♦ ---	♦ ---
♣ 9	♣ A
♠ ---	♠ ---
♥ Q86	♥ A107
♦ ---	♦ ---
♣ ---	♣ ---

With four tricks already in for the defense Iliev simply needed to exit with his low heart to set 3NT. Instead he tabled the ♥Q. Newell won the king and when the jack appeared on the next round he wrote down +600 on his scorecard. A push; still 24-10 for the All Stars who were shining just a little bit dimmer after that.

Bd: 6
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K10852
 ♥ Q3
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ KJ74

West
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ AJ9872
 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ 105

East
 ♠ J4
 ♥ K10654
 ♦ K9876
 ♣ 6

South
 ♠ A763
 ♥ ---
 ♦ 1042
 ♣ AQ9832

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♥	1♠	4♥	4♠
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
		2♥(♥+m)	3♣
4♥	5♣	All Pass	

When Hans led his singleton club against 4♠ in the Open Room Isporski simply drew trumps and claimed 13 tricks; +510. Against 5♣ in the Closed Room Iliev knew his partner had the red suits and chose the right one to lead. He continued with a second diamond and declarer claimed +400. Three more imps to the All Stars, who led 27-10.

Bd: 7		North	
Dir: South		♠ 74	
Vul: Both		♥ A1074	
		♦ AK964	
		♣ Q10	
West		East	
♠ J953		♠ AK10862	
♥ KQ862		♥ 5	
♦ J7		♦ Q853	
♣ 76		♣ 84	
		South	
		♠ Q	
		♥ J93	
		♦ 102	
		♣ AKJ9532	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
			3♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
			3♣(1)
Pass	3♦(R)	3♠	Pass
4♠	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) 6+ clubs, 10-12 hcp			

There wasn't much to the play in 5♣ in the Open Room. Nunn led the ♥K and declarer claimed 11 tricks for +600.

Against 4♠x in the Closed Room Reid cashed the ♣AK, then found the obvious (from the sight of dummy) diamond shift. Newell cashed the ace-king of that suit and sat back to wait for his heart trick for +500, a 3-imp loss. All Stars, 30-10.

Did You know? The time between slipping on a peel and smacking the pavement = 1 bananosecond

Bd: 8		North	
Dir: West		♠ Q865	
Vul: None		♥ 1084	
		♦ A3	
		♣ 10876	
West		East	
♠ KJ942		♠ 10	
♥ 7		♥ 532	
♦ J1064		♦ K952	
♣ 932		♣ AKQJ5	
		South	
		♠ A73	
		♥ AKQJ96	
		♦ Q87	
		♣ 4	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♥
1♠	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
Pass	2♦(♠+m)	3♣	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The only danger to the play in 4♥ was for East to win a club lead and switch to his singleton ♠10. Now declarer must rise with the ace to avoid giving up a ruff — and the contract. And that's precisely what the South player did at both tables. A push at +420; still 30-10 All Stars.

Bd: 9		North	
Dir: North		♠ Q98	
Vul: E/W		♥ 542	
		♦ 764	
		♣ AQ72	
West		East	
♠ 42		♠ KJ10	
♥ 87		♥ J109	
♦ J103		♦ AQ852	
♣ K98653		♣ 104	
		South	
		♠ A7653	
		♥ AKQ63	
		♦ K9	
		♣ J	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	Pass	1NT	Dbl
Rdbl(1)	Pass	2♣	Dbl(T/O)
Pass(♣)	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) Puppet to 2♣, usually a one-suiter			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
	Pass	1♦	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

The Open Room auction left one of your Editors scratching his head with wonder. Yes, sometimes a 2♣ bidder will not really have long clubs but if the partnership has ways to show various two-suiters, as this one did, then West will almost always have at least five clubs (unless he has a 3=3=3=4 Yarborough and the partnership runs with such hands). The chances of 2♦ being a better spot go way down if West really does have clubs, and here, with six of them, he was a 2-to-1 underdog to have more than two diamonds — and may have had fewer. Scratch, scratch. On the actual hand 2♣x figured to go down just a single trick. Against 2♦x Kovachev led the ♥K, then switched to the ♣10, K, A, 4. Isporski cashed the ♣Q and led a third club, at which point play ceased and declarer was given six tricks; down two, -500.

There was really nothing to the play in 4♠, declarer having just two trumps and a diamond (which was led) to lose. Plus 420 sent another 2 imps to the All Star (and it could have been far worse), who now led 32-10.

Bd: 10 North
 Dir: East ♠ AQ10
 Vul: Both ♥ AKJ3
 ♦ 1073
 ♣ 742

West
 ♠ K75
 ♥ Q985
 ♦ 962
 ♣ K63

South
 ♠ 8643
 ♥ 10742
 ♦ J
 ♣ QJ105

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♦	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
		1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Hans' 2♦ rebid looked a bit timid to us, but on this deal with the major-suit cards all sitting wrong for declarer it worked out rather well. Kovachev led the ♣Q. Hans won in hand, drew trumps, led a heart to the eight and king, won the club return, and came off dummy with a spade. When Isporski took the queen Hans claimed nine tricks; +110.

In the Open Room Hristov rebid a more normal 3♦ and the Bulgarians reached 3NT. Newell led the ♥A, got discouragement from Reid, and switched to the ♣7. When Reid's ♣10 held the trick he made a well-judged switch to a spade and Newell quickly cashed out for down one, -100. That was 5 imps to

Down Under, their first gain since Board 2. 32-15 now, All Stars.

Bd: 11 North
 Dir: South ♠ AKQ2
 Vul: None ♥ 64
 ♦ J854
 ♣ 1052

West
 ♠ J74
 ♥ AJ8
 ♦ KQ1097
 ♣ 73

East
 ♠ 10865
 ♥ 9532
 ♦ 32
 ♣ J86

South
 ♠ 93
 ♥ KQ107
 ♦ A6
 ♣ AKQ94

The auctions in both rooms were lengthy and complex, leading to 3NT by N/S. In the Open Room where Isporski (North) played it Nunn had overcalled 1♦. Hans led a diamond, ducked to Nunn's queen, and Nunn returned a low diamond holding declarer to 10 tricks; +430. In the Closed Room where E/W had been silent Reid (South) played it and Iliev led the ♦K. Reid won, crossed to dummy, led a heart to the king, ducked, and then led a diamond up, emerging with 11 tricks, +460, for a 1-imp pick-up. 32-16, All Stars.

Bd: 12 North
 Dir: West ♠ J1075
 Vul: N/S ♥ Q4
 ♦ AK1043
 ♣ Q5

West
 ♠ AQ3
 ♥ KJ109
 ♦ 2
 ♣ A10973

East
 ♠ K84
 ♥ 532
 ♦ J75
 ♣ K842

South
 ♠ 962
 ♥ A876
 ♦ Q986
 ♣ J6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nunn</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣	1♦	2♣	3♦
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Reid</i>
2♣(♣)	2♦	3♣	3♦
3♥	Pass	4♣	All Pass

The age-old story, clubs versus diamonds. In the Open Room diamonds won — and wished they hadn't. Hans led a trump. Isporski won, drew trumps, and led a club. Hans won the second club, led a heart to the king, and now the defense cashed their spade winners for +200.

In the Closed Room Iliev had some extras and a secondary heart suit in reserve, so he made a 3♥ game try and Hristov quickly retreated to 4♣. With trumps 2-2 there were only a diamond and two hearts to lose; +130. That was 2 moreimps for Down Under, trailing now 32-18.

Bd: 13
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 1032
 ♥ 9
 ♦ AQ98754
 ♣ A10

West
 ♠ Q64
 ♥ J842
 ♦ 10
 ♣ J8765

East
 ♠ 85
 ♥ A10763
 ♦ J32
 ♣ 432

South
 ♠ AKJ97
 ♥ KQ5
 ♦ K6
 ♣ KQ9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥(F1)
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♦	Pass	6NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
	1♠(♦)	Pass	1NT(F)
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥(F)
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	5♣	Pass	6NT

All Pass

Both tables reached the excellent 6NT. In the Open Room Nunn led a club and when the heart-spade show-up squeeze against East failed to materialize he claimed 12 tricks; +1440. In the Closed Room Iliev led a spade and Reid claimed all 13 tricks for +1470 and another 1-imp pick-up. The All Stars had picked up imps on four straight boards to trail now by just 13 at 32-19.

Bd: 14
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ Q862
 ♥ K875
 ♦ K104
 ♣ K4

West
 ♠ 73
 ♥ J942
 ♦ AQ9
 ♣ QJ65

East
 ♠ KJ10954
 ♥ A63
 ♦ 8
 ♣ A103

South
 ♠ A
 ♥ Q10
 ♦ J76532
 ♣ 9872

Both E/W pairs bought the hand cheaply for 2♠ after uncontested auctions. In the Open Room Hans received a club lead and when dummy's queen held he used his two entries to take spade finesses. Since the suit split 4-1 he had to lose two hearts and two spades and had no more entries to repeat the club finesse (if indeed the king was onside). So at trick 12 with only the ♣A10 left Hans banged down the ace and when the king fell he had his overtrick, +140.

The play was even more interesting in the Closed Room where Reid led a diamond. Hristov won the ace, tried the spade finesse, ruffed the diamond return, led a low heart to the queen, ruffed another diamond return, cashed the ♥A and then exited with his last heart, establishing dummy's ♥J. Newell won and found the only exit that didn't give up a trick immediately, the ♠8. Hristov won, cashed the ♣A, and got out with a club to the queen. With no diamonds left whatever Newell returned would provide Hristov with the rest of the tricks. In practice Newell tried the ♥7 but Hristov jettisoned the ♣10, won the ♥J in dummy, and had a trump coup to pick up the ♠Q. All that for a push at +140. No swing, still 32-19 All Stars.

Bd: 15
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 1086
 ♥ QJ54
 ♦ K62
 ♣ Q74

West
 ♠ AQ9
 ♥ 1096
 ♦ A973
 ♣ J86

East
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK872
 ♦ J854
 ♣ A1053

South
 ♠ KJ75432
 ♥ 3
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ K92

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
			2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
			1♥(1)
Pass	2♠(WK)	Dbl	3♠
3NT	All Pass		
(1) 4+ clubs,			
9-13 hcp			

Both tables received a spade lead against 3NT. Declarer won, passed the ♥10, which held, then played the ♥9 to the jack and king, later repeating the heart finesse for nine tricks. A push at +400; still the All Stars by 13 at 32-19.

Last dance, last chance...this set.

Bd: 16
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K962
 ♥ 105
 ♦ A6
 ♣ K8754

West
 ♠ AJ3
 ♥ AJ9
 ♦ K1093
 ♣ A63

East
 ♠ Q104
 ♥ Q8732
 ♦ J752
 ♣ J

South
 ♠ 875
 ♥ K64
 ♦ Q84
 ♣ Q1092

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Nunn	Isporski	Hans	Kovachev
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT(STR)	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♦	All Pass		

(1) Puppet to 2♦

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Newell	Hristov	Reid
1NT	Pass	2♦(♥)	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

Against Nunn's 2♦ in the Open Room Isporski led ace and another trump. Nunn won, drew a third round, and played hearts from the top, claiming 10 tricks for +130 when the spade finesse lost. Against Iliev's 2♥ in the Closed Room Newell also led a trump, ducked to declarer's nine. Iliev played ♣A, ruffed a club, then repeated the heart finesse. When that won he tabled the ♦10. Newell rose with the ace, not suspecting the actual diamond position (and not wanting to be endplayed later), and played a third club. Iliev ruffed, passed the ♠10 to the king, and Newell got out with his last diamond. When the ♦J was covered by the queen Iliev claimed 11 tricks; +200. That was 2 imps back to the All Stars, who finished the first quarter leading the NEC Cup final 34-19.

Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):

The All Stars added to their 15-imp lead on the first board out.

Bd: 17
 Dir: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ K103
 ♥ K96
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ KQ65

West
 ♠ A6
 ♥ Q752
 ♦ K10983
 ♣ 98

East
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AJ1084
 ♦ J2
 ♣ AJ1072

South
 ♠ QJ98754
 ♥ 3
 ♦ A74
 ♣ 43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Reid	Isporski	Newell	Kovachev
	1♣	1♥	4♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Iliev	Hans	Hristov	Nunn
	1NT	2♥(♥ + m)	4♦(♠)
	4♠	Pass	Pass

DbI
 5♥ All Pass

West's 5♥ bid looked wild, but who other than the Editors would argue with success? East came through with the right singleton, a good diamond guess and the heart finesse behaved as it should. Plus 450 went well with -50 from 4♠ (a heart lead to the eight and a diamond shift putting paid to any minimal chances declarer might have). There was no realistic way either East or West could have competed over 4♠ (though someone might have doubled). It was 43-19 All Stars now.

Bd: 18

Dir: East

Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ AQ72
 ♥ Q842
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ 843

West
 ♠ 4
 ♥ 73
 ♦ AK98632
 ♣ KQ2

South
 ♠ KJ1083
 ♥ AK95
 ♦ J7
 ♣ J5

East
 ♠ 965
 ♥ J106
 ♦ 54
 ♣ A10976

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Reid	Isporski	Newell	Kovachev
Iliev	Hans	Hristov	Nunn
4♦	4♠	Pass	1♠
		All Pass	

As Johnny Miller once said about a golfer's chances: "They are between slim and none — and Slim has just left the building." Technically the chances of 4♥ making were between slim and none. The chances of 4♠ making had definitely left the building. Both Norths had beaten par here (to continue our golf metaphor) since 4♦ was cold and E/W had carelessly failed to double 4♠ for 200. Unconvinced, East asked to move on to the next deal...and so we shall.

Did you know? The time it takes to sail 220 yards at 1 nautical mile per hour = Knotfurlong

Bd: 19
 Dlr: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ AQ102
 ♥ A9
 ♦ AK9
 ♣ KQ84

West
 ♠ 973
 ♥ 764
 ♦ 1065
 ♣ J932

East
 ♠ 864
 ♥ QJ1053
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ A65

South
 ♠ KJ5
 ♥ K82
 ♦ J8432
 ♣ 107

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣(1)
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠(2)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Puppet Stayman
 (2) Transfer to 3NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

You would not want to get beyond 3NT here until you found the ♦Q falling in two rounds. Both pairs bid competently to the best spot and pushed the board at +490. Still 43-19, All Stars.

Bd: 20
 Dlr: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ QJ1074
 ♥ Q6543
 ♦ 10
 ♣ 74

West
 ♠ 653
 ♥ K972
 ♦ AKJ6
 ♣ KJ

East
 ♠ K982
 ♥ ---
 ♦ 9542
 ♣ A10652

South
 ♠ A
 ♥ AJ108
 ♦ Q873
 ♣ Q983

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣(STR)	Dbl(♥+♠)	1♦	4♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	All Pass

2NT on a top spade lead, ducked in dummy, saw the ♠A put in a welcome appearance. So far so good for Iliev. But the defense shifted to the ♥J, then the ♥10 when that was ducked. Iliev went up with the king (pitching a club and a diamond from dummy) and took the ♦A, dropping the ten. Maybe the best play now was to run the ♣J, but nothing worked. Declarer actually led the ♣J to the ace, took a diamond finesse and had seven tricks but no more.

The bad trump break meant Kovachev was fighting to escape for down one in 4♥x. E/W cashed the ♦A (East playing the discouraging nine), the ♣K, then led the ♣J to the ace. Back came a diamond so Kovachev's seven forced the jack. One round of trumps revealed the bad news, as declarer put in the jack and East ducked, which didn't feel right to us. Now declarer ruffed out the diamonds and cross-ruffed. West trumped the third club with the ♥7 to force the queen but he still had his one trump trick and no more. 7 imps to Down Under, down 26-43.

Bd: 21
 Dlr: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ A10863
 ♥ KQ107
 ♦ 92
 ♣ 64

West
 ♠ J2
 ♥ J9632
 ♦ K1083
 ♣ A10

East
 ♠ K75
 ♥ 8
 ♦ J6
 ♣ KJ87532

South
 ♠ Q94
 ♥ A54
 ♦ AQ754
 ♣ Q9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
All Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♦

What might appear a silly result here was actually nobody's fault. If you open 3♣ at unfavorable vulnerability in second seat many (including both your Editors) would expect rather more in the way of internal solidity. RC wanted either the ♣109 or the ♣Q; BR would have settled for the ♣10 — but "He'd feel conflicted about it" (Robert De Niro in Analyze This).

3♣ in the Open Room came in for a painless +130. In the Closed Room Hans' reopening double had a number of ways to win and one way to lose badly, and this was it. 3♦ received the defense of two rounds of clubs and a heart shift. If declarer had

played ace and another diamond he might have escaped for two down, but why couldn't a finesse work? When the $\diamond Q$ lost to the ace the defenders had a heart ruff and two trump tricks and a spade still to come. Down 300 meant 5imps for the All Stars, leading 48-26.

Bd: 22
Dlr: East
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 97643
♥ AQ8
♦ J53
♣ A7

West
♠ 102
♥ J962
♦ 104
♣ K5432

East
♠ AQJ8
♥ K753
♦ 92
♣ Q109

South
♠ K5
♥ 104
♦ AKQ876
♣ J86

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2♠

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
		1♦	All Pass

1♦ is not a contract you'd wish on your worst enemy (well, maybe it is the contract you'd want him to play at unfavorable vulnerability). The defense gave declarer a chance at more than three tricks (it is hard for South to know who has the trump length and thus how many rounds to draw) so Nunn played three rounds of trumps, then a club to the ace for a club back. Declarer won the second club in dummy and took a losing spade finesse. Nunn ran his trumps and triple-squeezed East out of his fourth trick.

That meant N/S would have to make 3NT to flatten the board, and Kovachev opened a 15-17 notrump (who's counting?) to get to that spot. After the lead of the $\clubsuit 3$ to the queen Newell tried to be a hero: he played ace and another spade "knowing" declarer had at most one spade, one heart and one club trick. East could see he would get in with his $\heartsuit Q$ after declarer cashed his diamonds...and so he did, though not at the moment he would have liked. West must have been very sympathetic; we know we would have been. No swing; still 48-26.

Did you know? 365.25 days of drinking low-calorie beer = 1 Lite year

Bd: 23
Dlr: South
Vul: Both

North
♠ Q43
♥ 743
♦ Q62
♣ Q875

West
♠ AJ1065
♥ QJ85
♦ K73
♣ 2

East
♠ K82
♥ 96
♦ AJ10954
♣ 104

South
♠ 97
♥ AK102
♦ 8
♣ AKJ963

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	1♣
Pass	4♣	All Pass	3♥

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
1♠	Pass	3♦	1♣
4♠	All Pass		3♥

Despite appearances to the contrary, the general philosophy of the Aussies was not nearly as close to the all-out aggression of the All Stars. Here again the Bulgarians bought the hand in both rooms, but this time a declarer error meant they recorded a small loss and not a large gain.

In the Open Room Newell found a heavy spade raise and N/S bought the hand in 4♣, losing the obvious three fast tricks and a slow heart. In the other room we liked East's fit-jump in diamonds with only three trumps: its playing strength and honor location made it close to ideal. Nunn joined in along the way but Iliev jumped to 4♠ and just had to make it. Hans led a heart. Nunn cashed his three winners, then played a second club. Declarer tried a couple of hearts to see what North would do (perhaps ruff with $\spadesuit Q9x?$) but when North pitched he guessed trumps right, then played $\diamond K$, $\diamond A$ to go one down. At the moment he misguessed he likely knew South had ten cards in hearts and clubs (with nine he'd have doubled 3♦ or North might have bid 5♣) so the diamond finesse was near a sure thing. But Down Under took the 5imps to trail 48-31.

Bd: 24
Dlr: West
Vul: None

North
♠ AQ95
♥ ---
♦ KQ94
♣ Q10874

West
♠ K72
♥ KQ8742
♦ 6
♣ KJ3

East
♠ J10864
♥ J6
♦ J10
♣ A962

South
♠ 3
♥ A10953
♦ A87532
♣ 5

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
1♦(♥)	1♥	Pass	3♦

All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
1♥	Dbl	Pass	4♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

The question of how high to go as South and whether to raise as North was all about system, not judgment. The 4♦ bid looked dangerous, with partner potentially having spades and a good hand, while Kovachev's bid looked reasonable (but from North's pass we wonder if he thought he had already shown great heart shortage, since perhaps he had a double of 1♥ for more balanced hands). Both Wests led a top heart. Declarer ruffed and led a low club from dummy. Hristov ducked and declarer eventually established a long club for 11 tricks. Newell flew with the ♣A and established the clubs for two tricks and +170. It made no imp difference; Down Under had 6 imps and trailed 48-37.

Bd: 25	North
Dlr: North	♠ AQ1095
Vul: E/W	♥ 42
	♦ 974
	♣ K97

West
♠ K7
♥ AKJ96
♦ 85
♣ AJ32

East
♠ 32
♥ 873
♦ AJ632
♣ Q85

South
♠ J864
♥ Q105
♦ KQ10
♣ 1064

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

1♣(STR)	1♠	Pass	2♣
2♥	Pass	4♥	4♠
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
2NT	1♠	Pass	2♠
4♥	All Pass	3♦	Pass

It appeared that E/W might not have been on the same wavelength here, since East appears to have been trying to get to diamonds and West appears to have been bidding a natural 2NT...or not. We just couldn't tell from looking at his hand. Yet again Bulgaria bought the hand in both rooms and again they regretted it, despite the moderately helpful trump lead from Hans. All Iliev could do was hope for a defensive error but none was forthcoming.

Eventually South won a diamond trick and broached spades, and declarer was down like a stone.

In the Closed Room Kovachev's decision to sacrifice was exceptionally aggressive; after all, his partner rated to be balanced and weak, and so the sacrifice could not cost less than 300 and rated to be 500 unless all the finesses worked, in which case you would defeat 4♥. So it proved. The spade, club and diamond finesses worked but that was still -300 against nothing. 9 imps to Down Under; 48-46.

Bd: 26	North
Dlr: East	♠ AJ1042
Vul: Both	♥ AQ3
	♦ AQ3
	♣ Q8

West
♠ 5
♥ K976
♦ 10765
♣ AJ52

East
♠ 73
♥ 1082
♦ J84
♣ K10963

South
♠ KQ986
♥ J54
♦ K92
♣ 74

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	2NT(♠)	Pass	2♥(♠)
Pass	3♠(♠)	Pass	3♥(♠)
All Pass		Pass	4♠

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥(♠)
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Both tables showed 19-21, found the spade fit, and both declarers managed to endplay West to lead hearts and bring home an overtrick. Only an imp at stake — and these matches are never decided by an imp, are they?

Bd: 27	North
Dlr: South	♠ K7
Vul: None	♥ 97
	♦ 109876
	♣ AQ107

West
♠ 2
♥ AQJ432
♦ KQJ3
♣ K5

East
♠ A1098
♥ K1085
♦ 42
♣ J98

South
♠ QJ6543
♥ 6
♦ A5
♣ 6432

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
		3♥	2♠
Dbl 4♥	Pass All Pass		Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
		Dbl	3♠
4♥	4♠		All Pass

It must have been the strength of Nunn's intermediates in the black suits that tempted him into the excess of the three-level preempt. Or maybe he had the ♣2 mixed in with his spades. He gave his opponents a chance to seriously misjudge the board. Unluckily for N/S Hristov had good enough spades to opt to double 4♠ rather than bid on. As a result the All Stars collected two trumps and one trick in each side-suit for +300. After a top diamond lead Nunn played to ruff diamonds in hand (had spades and diamonds broken that would have led to 4♠ making). Of course 4♥ handled very easily for ten tricks so Down Under gained 3 imps anyway, and led 49-48.

Bd: 28
Dlr: West
Vul: N/S

North
♠ K97
♥ AQJ9
♦ Q962
♣ 75

West
♠ 63
♥ 6532
♦ KJ43
♣ Q109

East
♠ Q542
♥ 87
♦ A
♣ AJ8643

South
♠ AJ108
♥ K104
♦ 10875
♣ K2

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
2♣(1)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
2♦	Dbl	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

(1) weak: hearts and another
Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠(1)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Two outstanding results for the N/S pairs here. Both tables bid to 3NT on a combined 23 HCP (the All Stars in the face of an artificial barrage from their opponents) and both guessed the ♠Q to collect 600. Of course you could argue that Newell missed his chance to get more in his opponents' faces but he knew they did not have the values for game and he was simply looking to avoid playing a foolish contract. Had he responded he would surely have kept them silent. When he passed over 2♣ Kovachev balanced and now Isporski was not

going to stop short of game if he could find a club stopper opposite.

Both declarers won the club lead and cashed four hearts, East pitching a spade and a club. With East marked with only one diamond and two hearts Kovachev knew whom to play for the ♠Q. In the other room where North was declarer the low club lead meant Hans knew less about the hand. He too cashed off the hearts and East threw first a spade, then a club (pitching two spades would not have worked; declarer is in the wrong hand to finesse against West for the ♠Q). No swing. Well done by both N/S pairs. Still 49-48 Down Under.

Bd: 29
Dlr: North
Vul: Both

North
♠ A53
♥ K542
♦ K53
♣ 532

West
♠ 106
♥ A3
♦ A10976
♣ QJ87

East
♠ J984
♥ QJ10
♦ J8
♣ K1096

South
♠ KQ72
♥ 9876
♦ Q42
♣ A4

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♦	Dbl	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
	All Pass		

The Closed Room sequence might be a common one at duplicate, South being unwilling to open his only "lead-directing" suit. Kovachev opened a Polish-style club without worrying about really showing the suit. When everyone joined in South had succeeded in getting his opponents to declare the contract with less than half the deck between them, plus his side had the advantage of the opening lead. So far so good. But despite South's being able to lead his side's eight-card fit declarer set up clubs and came to seven tricks with a minimum of trouble; 52-48, Down Under.

Bd: 30
Dlr: East
Vul: None

North
♠ Q3
♥ 10765
♦ K986
♣ QJ2

West
♠ K87
♥ AJ843
♦ 104
♣ 1075

East
♠ AJ1052
♥ Q2
♦ 53
♣ A984

South
♠ 964
♥ K9
♦ AQJ72
♣ K63

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
2♥(♠)	Pass	1♥(♠)	3♦
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
2♠	Pass	1♠	3♦
3♥	Pass	3♠	All Pass

It's not clear whether this board proves anything. Our instincts are that when the opponents compete to the three level with just an eight-card fit they are taking an odds-against position, which was the case here. 3♦ went down one after the defenders took two spades and two hearts and collected their ♣A later.

Meanwhile, 3♠ needed the heart and spade finesses for nine tricks. When Hristov did what was necessary (Nunn did his best by leading a club but declarer picked the position) that was 3 imps back to All Stars, down 53-52.

Bd: 31
Dir: South
Vul: N/S

North
♠ A543
♥ J98743
♦ 43
♣ A

West ♠ Q2 ♥ AKQ ♦ K75 ♣ Q10754	East ♠ K76 ♥ 105 ♦ AJ108 ♣ 9863
South ♠ J1098 ♥ 62 ♦ Q962 ♣ KJ2	

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
1♦	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Notrump partscores at both tables but when Reid declared he won the heart lead and ducked a club. Now he set up clubs for three tricks and came to nine winners without relying on diamonds. Nunn led a top spade and held 1NT to +90: three spades, two clubs and one in the wash. 55-52 to Down Under.

Bd: 32
Dir: West
Vul: E/W

North
♠ A96
♥ 1082
♦ KQ10
♣ A873

West ♠ Q1083 ♥ K43 ♦ 42 ♣ K954	East ♠ KJ52 ♥ J6 ♦ AJ65 ♣ QJ2
South ♠ 74 ♥ AQ975 ♦ 9873 ♣ 106	

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1♣	1♦	Dbl(♥)
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Two more quiet results here. In 2♥ on a top club lead declarer took two heart finesses and eventually set up a long diamond for +110. In 1NT on a spade lead declarer came to four heart tricks and one in each of the other suits for +90. It was 55-53 to Down Under at the half.

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

Bd: 33
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ KQ76
♥ ---
♦ Q10852
♣ 10943

West ♠ 984 ♥ K82 ♦ AK9763 ♣ 5	East ♠ A2 ♥ AQ75 ♦ J ♣ AKQJ62
South ♠ J1053 ♥ J109643 ♦ 4 ♣ 87	

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
3♦	Pass	1♣	2♥
4♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
		6NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
2♦	Pass	1♣	1♥
3♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
		6♣	All Pass

Both tables started with a strong club (Newell's beginning at 13) and once Reid set up a game force Newell knew his side had values to spare. He opted for the notrump slam to protect his heart tenace and perhaps for fear of a heart ruff.

Against 6NT Kovachev led a spade, setting up his side's trick, but it was one they could not get until trick 13. Meanwhile Hans did well not to double 6♣ to get a ruff when it might come at the expense of partner's heart trick. Nunn led a diamond. Declarer won, drew trumps, then took his discard. Neither declarer could get a squeeze going for the overtrick. 2 imps for Down Under making the score 57-52.

Bd: 34
Dlr: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ Q54
♥ A762
♦ 1086
♣ A97

West
♠ K873
♥ KJ10
♦ 942
♣ 832

East
♠ A2
♥ Q9854
♦ KJ73
♣ 106

South
♠ J1096
♥ 3
♦ AQ5
♣ KQJ54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
2♥	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3NT	All Pass	3♣

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1NT(♥)	Dbl	2♥	Dbl
Pass	Pass	3♦	3♣
3♥	All Pass		Pass

Kovachev's reentry into the opponents' auction made his partner think they could make game. He followed a sequence that expressed doubt about notrump risking giving South the chance to run to 4♣. That looks easy to make since he could have pitched dummy's diamond loser if the defenders took a spade ruff. 3NT was apparently hopeless. Declarer held up the ♥A 'till the third round pitching spades from dummy, took the diamond finesse, and peeled off the clubs. Had East come down to the bare ♠A, a master heart and the ♦KJ and he would have beaten the hand whenever it could have been beaten. But he kept two spades and two diamonds while West hung on to four rather than three spades and one diamond. Declarer now exited with a spade and when West made the final defensive error of ducking (as opposed to winning and returning the suit) West had to concede the last trick to declarer's ♠Q.

The defenders let Hristov out for down one in 3♥ by cashing their diamond winners prematurely, so the All Stars retook the lead with an 11-imp swing 63-57.

Bd: 35
Dlr: South
Vul: E/W

North
♠ AK832
♥ A754
♦ QJ8
♣ A

West
♠ J5
♥ 108
♦ A742
♣ K10743

East
♠ Q107
♥ J93
♦ K963
♣ J85

South
♠ 964
♥ KQ62
♦ 105
♣ Q962

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
Pass	4♠	All Pass	2♠

4♠ was bid at both tables, a contract that might survive a bad heart break but not a bad trump split. Careful play on a club lead is to lead a diamond at once (if you play one round of trumps, as Isporski discovered, the opponents can play three rounds of trumps and you don't have any trumps left in dummy to survive the bad heart break). Hans received a heart lead and played on diamonds at once. No imps for him but maybe a small tick in St. Peter's record.

Bd: 36
Dlr: West
Vul: Both

North
♠ 875
♥ 982
♦ 7
♣ J98765

West
♠ J102
♥ KJ7
♦ Q2
♣ Q10432

East
♠ 96
♥ AQ6
♦ AK109843
♣ A

South
♠ AKQ43
♥ 10543
♦ J65
♣ K

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♠
3♠	Dbl	3♦	Pass
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
		5♦	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
2♠(1)	Pass	1♣	1♠
3NT	Pass	5♦	All Pass

(1) GF balanced no spade stop

Both tables flirted with 3NT in the face of their opponents having bid spades. Hristov knew that his partner did not have more than half a stopper but did have values, so he knew where he wanted to play. Reid's pass of 3♠x denied a half-stopper so Reid could also avoid embarrassment here. The play took a few seconds and they moved on with matching E/W +600s. Still 63-57 All Stars.

Bd: 37	North
Dir: North	♠ K642
Vul: N/S	♥ K875
	♦ 2
	♣ A862

West
♠ QJ7
♥ 1096
♦ Q9853
♣ 43

East
♠ A10953
♥ J2
♦ A
♣ KQJ95

South
♠ 8
♥ AQ43
♦ KJ10764
♣ 107

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
2♠	3♥	1♠	Dbl
		4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
2♠	Pass	1♠	2♦
Pass	Dbl	Rdbl	3♥
4♠	Pass	4♣	Pass

It's not clear why Hristov needed to paint a picture of his hand for the defense as opposed to blasting 4♠ earlier but it worked to get South off to the one lead that would let 4♠ through (a trump), so he obviously knew best. To succeed after a trump lead declarer must play three rounds of trumps at once and then rely on the ♣10 coming down; far from obvious. In fact, Hristov played a club at trick two and now he could only reach dummy via a club ruff, thus losing a trump trick when the king turned up on side fourth.

Kovachev did exceptionally well to lead the ♥A and continue the suit. Declarer ruffed to play clubs and the defenders won the second club to lead a fourth heart. When Newell ruffed in dummy he had transposed into the same position as was reached at the other table and could not avoid one down; no swing again.

Bd: 38	North
Dir: East	♠ K3
Vul: E/W	♥ QJ842
	♦ 10954
	♣ Q5

West
♠ AQJ10972
♥ ---
♦ KJ76
♣ 98

East
♠ 864
♥ 10953
♦ ---
♣ AJ10743

South
♠ 5
♥ AK76
♦ AQ832
♣ K62

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
3♠	Dbl	4♠	1♦
All Pass			Dbl

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
3♠	Dbl	4♠	1♦
Pass	5♦	Pass	Dbl
Dbl	All Pass		Pass

If you only looked at the N/S cards and knew the ♠K was a trick on defense you'd be happy you were defending 4♠, right? After all, you have one trick in each black suit and surely you can manage two tricks from the red suits. Sorry, wrong number. The 4-0 breaks in the red suits meant that after the ♥Q lead declarer could happily cross-ruff for +790. Of course the bad breaks meant that 5♦x was no fun either. The defenders led the ♠A, shifted to a club to the ace followed by a heart ruff, and took their two trump tricks; +500 for the All Stars. But the 7 imps went the other way. Another lead change; 64-63, Down Under.

Bd: 39	North
Dir: South	♠ A863
Vul: Both	♥ 1074
	♦ A953
	♣ 93

West
♠ QJ9
♥ ---
♦ K102
♣ QJ86542

East
♠ K74
♥ QJ63
♦ QJ4
♣ K107

South
♠ 1052
♥ AK9852
♦ 876
♣ A

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
2♣	3♣	3NT	1♥
5♣	Dbl	All Pass	4♥

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

5♣x lost one trick to each of the three cashing aces (shades of the previous deal but at least neither the ♠A nor the ♦A got ruffed away). A more restrained approach by everyone in the Closed Room produced a more interesting contract. The defenders led a top club — one could hardly blame them — and Nunn won in hand and ducked a diamond. Back came a spade, ducked, and a club ruffed. Nunn cashed the ♥A and ducked a heart to East, who now had a choice of plays with these cards remaining:

	♠ A86	
	♥ 7	
	♦ A95	
	♣ ---	
♠ J9		♠ K7
♥ ---		♥ Q6
♦ K2		♦ QJ
♣ 654		♣ K
	♠ 105	
	♥ K98	
	♦ 87	
	♣ ---	

A club would let declarer pitch a loser, ruff in dummy, then ruff out the suit from which he had discarded and lose just one more trick one way or another. A diamond or spade back would let declarer win in dummy and take the trump finesse, then give up a trick in the suit led to establish a discard for the loser in the other suit. Still a 2-imp loss for Down Under, though; All Stars 65-64.

Bd: 40	North
Dlr: West	♠ J3
Vul: None	♥ K973
	♦ 106
	♣ J9652
West	East
♠ A76	♠ Q94
♥ 654	♥ J10
♦ AQ3	♦ 8752
♣ AQ87	♣ K1043
	South
	♠ K10852
	♥ AQ82
	♦ KJ94
	♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦(WK)	1♠
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♣ (MAJs)
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

For the first time this match (maybe ever) Kovachev was seriously outbid, and given the result here it likely wouldn't happen again soon. Throughout the match the Bulgarians had bid whenever it was feasible — and sometimes even when it wasn't — so South's decision to bid spades, then stay silent, looked very strange. 1NT on the lead of the ♦J saw declarer win in dummy, cash the ♣A, then play two more clubs finessing. Now a diamond to the queen led to South being endplayed eventually to lead spades for +120.

In the other room East led a trump against 2♥. Hans won in hand and played a spade to the nine and ten. West ducked so Hans led a low spade from dummy and West won to force dummy with a club. Declarer ruffed, ruffed a spade, drew trumps and had +110 for 6 imps to Down Under. The fourth lead change of the set; 70-65 Down Under.

Bd: 41	North	
Dlr: North	♠ 4	
Vul: E/W	♥ Q9753	
	♦ J1093	
	♣ AQ4	
West		East
♠ QJ63		♠ K9
♥ AK6		♥ 42
♦ 865		♦ AK74
♣ 1063		♣ KJ875
	South	
	♠ A108752	
	♥ J108	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ 92	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	2♠	1NT	2♦(♥/♠)
Closed Room		All Pass	
West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
All Pass	Pass	2NT	3♥

Hans-Nunn had recently decided to reduce the strength of their major-suit openings at favorable vulnerability, but they lowered the bar to new depths here and emerged smelling of roses. While Isporski discovered that the reward for passing the North cards was to get to 2♠ on his singleton, Hans played 3♥. The defenders led a top diamond and shifted to clubs, rather than trumps, for which one could hardly blame East. Nunn won the club shift cheaply, ruffed a club in dummy, then knocked out the ♦A. All he had to lose were the two top trumps for +140.

Against 2♠ the defenders led a top diamond and shifted to a club, but when declarer played a trump to the nine, ten and jack the defenders took their heart ruff and collected seven tricks for +100 and 6 imps to Down Under; 76-65 now.

Bd: 42
Dlr: East
Vul: Both

North
♠ Q832
♥ Q754
♦ J87
♣ 83

West
♠ J5
♥ AJ2
♦ AK9532
♣ J9

East
♠ 10976
♥ 83
♦ 10
♣ AQ7652

South
♠ AK4
♥ K1096
♦ Q64
♣ K104

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		2♦(1)	2NT

All Pass
(1) spades and a minor, 5-8

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
		Pass	1♣

1♦ All Pass

It somehow felt wrong that opening 2♦ with the East hand should gain imps (indeed, even mentioning the spades seems perverted), but we admit we're biased here. Had Kovachev passed, the final contract would have been 2♦. As it was West must have been very tempted to double 2NT. Would you lead a high or a low diamond here? Of course it did not matter. Reid led a top diamond, then a low one, and declarer played on hearts, letting West cash out for +200.

In 1♦ Iliev scored the same seven tricks as in the other room: five diamonds and two aces for +70. But Down Under had another 4 imps to lead 80-65.

Bd: 43
Dlr: South
Vul: None

North
♠ AJ864
♥ 1062
♦ KQ2
♣ K8

West
♠ KQ75
♥ AK75
♦ A7
♣ A74

East
♠ 92
♥ 983
♦ 9643
♣ QJ63

South
♠ 103
♥ QJ4
♦ J1085
♣ 10952

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣(STR)	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1♣(STR)	1♠	All Pass	

Iliev's decision to pass out 1♠ seems wrong-headed. Even if partner has 0-4 you bid 1NT and play in a contract you hope to make out of your own hand. Hans played 1♠ on a top club lead ducked around to his king. He advanced the ♥K, ducked, then exited with a club to let West cash the ♣A, ♥AK, and play a third club. Hans ruffed and played the ♦K, won by West who then exited in diamonds. Declarer was up to four tricks now. He led the ♣10, ruffed with the ♠7 and over-ruffed, then led his remaining diamond for West to ruff. In the three-card ending declarer had ♠AJx facing ♠10x and was sure of two trump tricks whatever happened next.

Isporski's low spade lead let declarer win in hand and advance a low club. Isporski took his king, returned the suit and now Reid ducked a heart. With that suit 3-3 he had three tricks in each rounded suit and one in each of the others for +120. Perhaps a top diamond lead is the indicated defense at trick one, given partner's silence. Even a shift to a top diamond would have beaten 2NT. The lead for Down Under was up to 20 imps.

Bd: 44
Dlr: West
Vul: N/S

North
♠ AQ953
♥ 1082
♦ ---
♣ AQ1084

West
♠ J10
♥ KJ
♦ A108532
♣ K53

East
♠ 762
♥ A76
♦ KQJ76
♣ J7

South
♠ K84
♥ Q9543
♦ 94
♣ 962

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♠(♦)	2♠	5♦	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1♦	3♣(♣+♠)	3♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Both tables reached a poor 5♦ contract, partly because they didn't know what their opponents could make and didn't want to find out. (The answer appears to be 3♠.) The difference between

the two tables was only which way up the game was played. Hans led a heart from the North hand and now declarer was on the club position to make. Sorry, down one. Kovachev led the ♠K against 5♦ and shifted to a club when his partner followed with the five. Well done, though in fact whether he continued spades or shifted to clubs he was always defeating the game by two tricks. 2imps for the All Stars, reducing the lead to 18.

Bd: 45
 Dlr: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 962
 ♥ KJ632
 ♦ AQ9
 ♣ Q8

West
 ♠ A54
 ♥ 975
 ♦ 87652
 ♣ A10

East
 ♠ KQ3
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ J10
 ♣ KJ7654

South
 ♠ J1087
 ♥ A104
 ♦ K43
 ♣ 932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
	1♥	2♣	2♥

All Pass

Both tables played 2♥ after identical auctions. Each East led a diamond honor, and the contract reduced to finding the trump queen. East's club length and failure to lead a spade might point one way, his presumed diamond shortage another. One Editor swears by a Buffalo Nickel he reserves for precisely this position; our other Editor, a mathematician, tells us that the answer is stochastic, or aleatory. But then again he always did like long words. Regardless, it came down to a guess and Isporski got it right, Hans got it wrong. 5imps to the All Stars, down only 13 now.

Bd: 46
 Dlr: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ AKQ1074
 ♥ KJ2
 ♦ J97
 ♣ 7

West
 ♠ 95
 ♥ 964
 ♦ 64
 ♣ Q109643

East
 ♠ 832
 ♥ 87
 ♦ AQ1053
 ♣ AJ8

South
 ♠ J6
 ♥ AQ1053
 ♦ K82
 ♣ K52

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
2♠(♣)	3♠	1NT	Pass
All Pass		Pass	4♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
		1♦	1♥
2♣(NF)	3♠(FIT)	4♣	4♥

Against 4♠ Newell led the ♣A, then shifted to the ace and another diamond. Declarer claimed. Leading the ♦A trying to give partner ruffs looks reasonable.

In the other room Iliev's decision to lead a trump as opposed to a diamond looks like it's worth at least a 1-imp loss. Down Under took the first 12 tricks and 1 imp to go up 14.

Bd: 47
 Dlr: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ J7
 ♥ J98
 ♦ J1043
 ♣ AJ94

West
 ♠ 932
 ♥ AQ7
 ♦ 52
 ♣ K8653

East
 ♠ K10865
 ♥ 532
 ♦ Q8
 ♣ 1072

South
 ♠ AQ4
 ♥ K1064
 ♦ AK976
 ♣ Q

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	1♦
All Pass		Pass	3NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2NT

Neither auction is without flaws. After Isporski's single raise Kovachev blasted 3NT with a singleton in a side-suit, while Hans declared 3NT from the weak hand. Both players received a lead from a black suit into a tenace. The difference was that the club lead did not cost a trick and the spade lead did. Hans played on hearts to make +660 while Kovachev ended up with +630. No harm, no foul. On to the last deal of the set, Down Under leading by 15.

Bd: 48
 Dlr: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 9763
 ♥ AQ864
 ♦ 63
 ♣ 75

West
 ♠ AQ85
 ♥ 9732
 ♦ 9
 ♣ Q1084

East
 ♠ K2
 ♥ K10
 ♦ KJ842
 ♣ AJ63

South
 ♠ J104
 ♥ J5
 ♦ AQ1075
 ♣ K92

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♣(♥+♠)	2♦	Dbl
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Iliev's blast of 3NT was on the optimistic side. Nunn led a low diamond and had just enough time to be happy with his lead before the ♦9 scored the trick, as it always seems to do in Yokohama. Declarer was then in with a realistic chance but when he took a club finesse and it lost Nunn simply exited in clubs. Declarer won in hand, played a third club to dummy and a heart up. Hans won the ace, played a diamond through, and Nunn won cheaply to exit in hearts. Declarer had one trick in each red suit and three in each black suit but no play for a ninth.

In the other room Isporski balanced over a 12-15 notrump showing the majors. Then, when Newell came again, Kovachev tried to teach him a sharp lesson. Instead, though, it was he who learned the hard way that you can never rely on partner to do what you want him to. Isporski either thought the double asked for his longer suit or ran from fear, and Kovachev played 2♠ on a diamond lead to his ten. A losing heart finesse saw Newell exit with the ace and another club. Declarer won his king, played a heart to dummy and a trump to the jack and queen, and Reid returned a low spade to his partner's king. Now a diamond honor would have let Reid ruff, draw trumps, and exit in clubs to collect a heart at the end. Instead Newell played a club. Declarer ruffed, cashed the ♥Q, ruffed a heart and had six tricks. But when he tried to cash the ♦A West ruffed, drew the trump, and had the ♣Q for trick 13. Down 300 and 9imps to Down Under, leading by 24 with 16 to play.

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

Bd: 49
 Dlr: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ AJ853
 ♥ 53
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ 875

West
 ♠ K74
 ♥ KQJ74
 ♦ K72
 ♣ A6

East
 ♠ 1096
 ♥ A
 ♦ A98543
 ♣ KQ2

South
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ 109862
 ♦ 6
 ♣ J10943

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠(♦)	Pass
1NT(1)	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣(1)	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

(1) Relays, GF

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
3♥	2♠	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
	All Pass		

3NT by either East or West has nine top tricks while 6♦ or 6NT by West are sporting contracts. The same cannot be said for either 4♦ or 6♦ when played by East. East presumably showed a single suiter, short hearts, 6331, five controls, and no spade control.

If you received a top club lead against 6♦, however, you'd count yourself unlucky to go down, since you need only 2-2 trumps or the hand with three diamonds to have at least three hearts. We make that about an eighty-percent chance.

Of course to add insult to injury, when Nunn led a spade against 4♦ in the other room, Hristov having passed a forcing bid for some reason, the defenders took two spades, a ruff and a trump trick. Down one and no swing.

Bd: 50
 Dlr: East
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ Q107
 ♥ A987
 ♦ Q94
 ♣ QJ7

West
 ♠ K9654
 ♥ K6
 ♦ KJ75
 ♣ 82

East
 ♠ A8
 ♥ J10432
 ♦ 632
 ♣ 963

South
 ♠ J32
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ A108
 ♣ AK1054

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT
Pass	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
Pass	2♠(1)	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	3♣

(1) Range ask

Deals like this are what make the game fascinating. There is a bluff and double-bluff element that leaves us wondering whether anyone will ever really master this game.

The unsuccessful declarer, Tony Nunn, saw his LHO lead a fourth-highest spade to the ace and East return the eight. He false-carded with the jack and West ducked, playing the six. Now Nunn did not know if spades were 4-3 or 5-2 but he played a heart to his queen, hoping the king was onside. Simple — but unsuccessful.

In the other room Kovachev followed with the ♠2 and ♠3, deliberately revealing the position to West, who won his king and exited with a middle spade. Declarer won and ran five clubs, West pitching his small heart, then two diamonds. Now declarer played West to have started life with one of the red kings. He led to the ♥A and had the king not fallen would have had the choice of trying to drop the ♦K, pin the ♦J, or endplay East in hearts to lead away from the ♦K. All of this was moot when the ♥K put in an appearance. 12 imps to the All Stars, down 12 now.

Bd: 51	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q4
Vul: E/W	♥ Q1032
	♦ 87542
	♣ K8

West	East
♠ AK873	♠ 6
♥ 74	♥ K96
♦ AK103	♦ J6
♣ 53	♣ AJ109762

South
♠ J10952
♥ AJ85
♦ Q9
♣ Q4

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
1♣	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦(1)	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	All Pass

West relayed after his strong(ish) club received a GF natural club response. He found short spades, then a 7321 type and gambled out 5♣ — alas, playing it the wrong way up. On a heart lead the defense had three tricks, but on any other lead the entries would have been good enough to allow declarer to make an avoidance play in trumps, then play diamonds for the second discard needed. Plus 100 went well with +150 from 3♣ on a spade lead. Declarer “forgot” to unblock the ♦J but the fall of the ♦Q made that irrelevant. The lead was down to 6 imps now.

Bd: 52	North
Dlr: West	♠ 964
Vul: Both	♥ K1087
	♦ A
	♣ K9632

West	East
♠ K102	♠ AQ7
♥ Q9	♥ J543
♦ QJ8543	♦ K10962
♣ J5	♣ Q

South
♠ J853
♥ A62
♦ 7
♣ A10874

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦(♥)	Pass
2♣(♦)	Pass	3♦	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

The Bulgarians had a simple auction, the New Zealanders a complex one, but both achieved their aim of shutting out the opponents. But it was only a moral victory this time, 3♣ being the limit of the N/S cards. But which of these two sequences would you rather defend against? Give us the second one every time; you know the opponents’ hand-types far more clearly and both North and South get the chance to “balance.” The play in 3♦ was brief and uneventful at both tables. A push with both E/Ws +110.

Did you know? Half a large intestine = 1 semicolon

Bd: 53
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 93
 ♥ 94
 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ 1098763

West
 ♠ K72
 ♥ KQJ5
 ♦ 10984
 ♣ AJ

East
 ♠ A106
 ♥ 102
 ♦ Q765
 ♣ KQ52

South
 ♠ QJ854
 ♥ A8763
 ♦ 32
 ♣ 4

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
	Pass	1NT	2♣
Dbl	Pass(♣)	Pass	Rdbl
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
All Pass			

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
		1♦	1♠
Dbl	2♣	Pass	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

How would 2♥x have fared on East's trump lead? (Here the ♥10 worked far better than the low one.) Declarer might as well duck, win the second heart, then cross to a top diamond and lead a spade up. If West wins and draws trumps, then leads the ♠A and ♣J, declarer must discard from dummy to escape for -500. As it was, 3NT by East was extremely comfortable. South led a club. Declarer unblocked that suit, then went after hearts and had nine winners without breaking a sweat.

By contrast Sartaj Hans' spade lead made life very awkward for West. He won in hand, cashed the ♠A, then played a heart to the ten. Nunn ducked this and the next heart, won the third, and got off play with a diamond. Hans won that to play a spade. Nunn was allowed to win this trick and exit in spades, but declarer could take the ace, cross to his ♣J, take the ♥J and lead a diamond up to dummy to win two of the last three tricks. No swing; Down Under still led 96-90.

Bd: 54
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ Q74
 ♥ 102
 ♦ AQ63
 ♣ AQ73

West
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ KQJ9753
 ♦ J2
 ♣ K10

East
 ♠ 852
 ♥ A64
 ♦ 75
 ♣ J9854

South
 ♠ K10963
 ♥ 8
 ♦ K10984
 ♣ 62

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦(WK)	1♠
2♥	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Dbl	2♥	4♠

A 4♥ opening by West would probably not have worked here; the aggressive Norths in this match would surely have doubled (and yes, a case for passing can be made) but even if they did not, South might have balanced with 4♠. As it was, both Souths did well to construct auctions to 4♠, though in the Open Room North did a lot and in the Closed Room it was South who took a somewhat aggressive position.

Against 4♠ each South player ruffed the second heart, led a trump up, and later took the club finesse to push the board at +450. Problem? What problem?

Bd: 55
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ KJ83
 ♥ K752
 ♦ 97532
 ♣ ---

West
 ♠ Q1076
 ♥ 98
 ♦ KQ104
 ♣ 987

East
 ♠ 42
 ♥ QJ64
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ A10543

South
 ♠ A95
 ♥ A103
 ♦ 86
 ♣ KQJ62

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
			1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT

All Pass
 Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Of course there is a time and a place for unbridled aggression (when it works). The Editors, working as Monday-morning quarterbacks with 20-20 hindsight are, to a man, result-merchants. On this deal both Souths treated their hand as a strong notrump and both Norths took an aggressive position. Isporski drove to game, showing a three-suiter, Hans invited game with a relay and could

not go back to 2♥ when he got the wrong response.

In 3NT Reid led a top diamond. Newell overtook, cashed the ♦J, then exited with a low spade to the queen and king. Desperate for entries to hand Kovachev led a low spade to his nine. Reid won and cashed his diamonds, with the ♣A to come at the end.

4♥ was hopeless but on the lead of the ♣A declarer had a few tricks in the bank. He led a cunning ♦9 from hand and when East won the ♦J the suit was blocked. Back came a club. Hans ruffed and played king, ace and a third heart. East had his three red-suit winners but declarer had the rest. Down one was an unexpected 3imps for Down Under, up 99-90.

Bd: 56 North
 Dlr: West ♠ K106
 Vul: None ♡ 109742
 ♦ 10752
 ♣ 2

West
 ♠ QJ98
 ♡ A83
 ♦ 94
 ♣ A1086

East
 ♠ 75
 ♡ KQ6
 ♦ KQJ86
 ♣ QJ7

South
 ♠ A432
 ♡ J5
 ♦ A3
 ♣ K9543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1♦	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Isporski led a top heart against 3NT. Declarer led a diamond to dummy and passed the ♣Q, ducked all around, then led the ♣J, covered all around. A second diamond lost to South, who shifted to a spade to the queen and ace. When the ♠10 came back declarer conceded a trick to the ♠K, claiming +430.

Hristov in 3NT won the club lead cheaply in hand, repeated the club finesse, then drove out the ♦A. Nunn exited in clubs and declarer tried for 11 tricks by playing to drop the ♦10. When it failed to fall he had only nine tricks. An imp to Down Under, leading 100-90 half way through the set.

Did you know? 1,000,000 aches = 1 megahurtz

Bd: 57 North
 Dlr: North ♠ A8
 Vul: E/W ♡ AKQ74
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ A652

West
 ♠ J974
 ♡ 102
 ♦ AJ753
 ♣ 94

South
 ♠ Q1032
 ♡ J83
 ♦ K1062
 ♣ J8

East
 ♠ K65
 ♡ 965
 ♦ 84
 ♣ KQ1073

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Both Easts led a top club against 4♥. Isporski ducked, won the next top club, ran the ♦Q, ducked, then took the diamond finesse losing to the jack. West exited with a spade (a trump looks more effective). Declarer took the ace and played a spade up, Newell winning the king to lead a third club. Declarer ruffed high (West pitching a spade), cashed the ♠Q and claimed.

Hans lived more dangerously, in a sense. He won the first club and led the ♦Q. Iliev won and returned a club. Hristov won and played a second diamond. Declarer now led a spade to the ace and a second spade. Hristov elected to win the king and play a top club. Declarer ruffed high in dummy and took Isporski's winning line. On an initial trump lead declarer would surely need to guess spades right to make. Even as the play went, the defenders had chances if declarer did not get the spades right.

Still Down Under by 10 with seven deals to play.

Bd: 58 North
 Dlr: East ♠ K983
 Vul: Both ♡ K8
 ♦ 105
 ♣ 108532

West
 ♠ AQ542
 ♡ 762
 ♦ AK98
 ♣ 4

East
 ♠ 6
 ♡ AQ9
 ♦ QJ4
 ♣ AQJ976

South
 ♠ J107
 ♡ J10543
 ♦ 7632
 ♣ K

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♥(♠)	Pass	1♣(STR)	Pass
2♦	Pass	1♠(R)	Pass
3♦(1)	Pass	2♥	Pass
(1) 5-3-4-1		3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
1♥	Pass	1♣(STR)	Pass
2♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
		3NT	All Pass

Both Easts found out their partner's values and approximate shape and played 3NT. On a low heart lead both declarers won in hand and paid appropriate homage to Leonard Helman (who had played at this tournament a few years earlier and set up a foundation to assist junior bridge) by following the Rabbi's Rule. The ♣K is always singleton (and generally offside, since where would be the fun of dropping that card onside?). When the ♣A brought down the house Newell took the club finesse for overtricks, finishing with +630. Hristov played on clubs and because hearts were 5-2 could not be prevented from taking 11 tricks. The margin was down to 9 imps with six deals to go.

Bd: 59	North
Dlr: South	♠ J632
Vul: None	♥ Q9873
	♦ K32
	♣ J

West
 ♠ K84
 ♥ AK64
 ♦ 764
 ♣ A107

East
 ♠ Q1075
 ♥ 105
 ♦ 9
 ♣ KQ6532

South
 ♠ A9
 ♥ J2
 ♦ AQJ1085
 ♣ 984

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Dbl	1♥	2♣	1♦
Pass	Pass	2♠	2♦
3♣	3♦	4♣	Pass
			All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Dbl	1♥	1♠	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Even members of MAFIA (the majors-first brigade) might cavil at that 1♠ response (in competition you will have to bid your suits uneconomically and in the wrong sequence of length). When Iliev found a most unwise raise of spades — maybe it was his extra shape that persuaded him — Iliev trustingly drove to game. The defenders led a heart. Declarer won in dummy and came to hand with a club to play a spade up. South ducked, won the next spade, and went after diamonds. Declarer discarded clubs twice to retain control and now a club ruff meant two down. No disgrace, but no triumph either.

It was not entirely surprising that the 6-3 fit played better than the 4-3 fit. On a trump lead declarer needed a friendly spade position for his overtrick and found it. 6 imps made it 106-91 for Down Under.

Bd: 60	North
Dlr: West	♠ 2
Vul: N/S	♥ AQ9852
	♦ KQJ108
	♣ J

West
 ♠ J8654
 ♥ K
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K98432

East
 ♠ KQ1097
 ♥ 10764
 ♦ 632
 ♣ A

South
 ♠ A3
 ♥ J3
 ♦ A974
 ♣ Q10765

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
2♦(♠+m)	2♥	4♠	Dbl
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
2♠	4♦(♦+♥)	4♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♠	Dbl
All Pass			

With the heart finesse succeeding (not that one would expect it to work) 6♦ cannot be defeated. So 6♠ is par, costing 500. The Bulgarians exceeded par, the Antipodeans fell a little short. On a matter of theory, should a direct 5♦ by South be a better (or worse) hand for partner than a direct bid of five of a red suit? And if South passed 5♠, as perhaps he should, would North's extra card in his two suits make up for the lack of aces? Perhaps not.

5♦ was easy to play for 12 tricks; declarer could draw trumps ending in South and set up hearts thanks to his spot cards. In 5♠x declarer lost the red aces, then North played a spade to South's ace for a second trump. Declarer had seven spades and two clubs but that was it. 8 imps for the All Stars; 7 imps down with five deals to play.

Bd: 61	North
Dlr: North	♠ AJ53
Vul: Both	♥ KQ952
	♦ QJ
	♣ 65

West
 ♠ Q107
 ♥ A1043
 ♦ 9872
 ♣ J8

East
 ♠ K864
 ♥ J7
 ♦ AK6
 ♣ KQ109

South
 ♠ 92
 ♥ 86
 ♦ 10543
 ♣ A7432

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
	1♥	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
	1♥	Dbl	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	All Pass

In a curious echo of Board 59 the Bulgarians found a seven-card spade fit, boosted themselves higher than they needed to, and again regretted it. The defenders led a top diamond against 2♠ and declarer won and led a trump. South won to shift to a heart to North's queen and a second diamond went to dummy's king. Now declarer tried to cash the clubs to pitch his diamonds. North ruffed the third and led a low heart back to dummy's jack. Locked in dummy, declarer led a fourth club to pitch his last diamond. North ruffed again and led a third heart, the ♠9 promoting the sixth trick for the defenders.

2NT by Reid on a low heart lead was easy enough. Declarer won cheaply in hand, knocked out the ♣A, then won the ♥A and set up a spade for his eighth winner. 6 imps for Down Under, and a little extra breathing space with a 13-imp lead.

Bd: 62	North
Dlr: East	♠ KQJ7
Vul: None	♥ 8
	♦ 983
	♣ Q9642

West	East
♠ 6	♠ A102
♥ AKJ542	♥ 1096
♦ 5	♦ QJ742
♣ AKJ75	♣ 103
South	
♠ 98543	
♥ Q73	
♦ AK106	
♣ 8	

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦(WK)	Dbl
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(STR)	1♠	Dbl	4♣
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	All Pass		

We remarked earlier that the All Stars' worst results had come when Kovachev-Isporski did not bid enough. This had not happened very often in this match but here it happened again — and with the same consequences. Hans' flier of an overcall

scored a goal when Nunn saved in 4♠ and drove his opponents to the five level. The play in 5♥ was not of great interest. Declarer needed clubs not to be unusually hostile so he cashed the ♣AK early and was more hurt than surprised when South ruffed. Now there were two more tricks to lose whatever he did.

That was good news in a sense, since now Reid might have trouble making ten tricks in hearts. On the spade lead declarer won in dummy, then led a heart to his hand and a diamond to the jack. When South shifted to a club Reid won his ace and ducked a club, and now whether North took his ♣Q or South ruffed he could arrange another club ruff in dummy and hold his losers to one more trump trick. Well done; 11 imps, making the lead 24 and the match almost safe for Down Under.

Bd: 63	North
Dlr: South	♠ 10
Vul: N/S	♥ J65
	♦ AQJ2
	♣ AK753

West	East
♠ K96	♠ Q432
♥ Q973	♥ K
♦ K864	♦ 1097
♣ J8	♣ Q10962

South
♠ AJ875
♥ A10842
♦ 53
♣ 4

Open Room

West <i>Reid</i>	North <i>Isporski</i>	East <i>Newell</i>	South <i>Kovachev</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥(1)
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Iliev</i>	North <i>Hans</i>	East <i>Hristov</i>	South <i>Nunn</i>
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Both tables played 4♥ here. Nunn won the club lead, cashed a second club, then played ♠A, spade ruff, ♦A, diamond ruff, spade ruff. Next he ruffed a diamond and led a fourth spade. West ruffed high with the ♥Q and the ♦Q and ♠Q also put in an appearance to make a very estrogen-driven trick. Iliev played back a heart and declarer gave up a trick to the ♥9 and claimed +650.

In the other room Kovachev played a similar cross-ruff except that at one point he tried to ruff a club. Now West over-ruffed and returned a trump to hold declarer to +620. The lead was 25 imps; never a bad number with one deal to go.

Bd: 64
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ J83
 ♥ AQ875
 ♦ A32
 ♣ J5

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Nunn</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

West
 ♠ Q10754
 ♥ ---
 ♦ K964
 ♣ K732

East
 ♠ 96
 ♥ 4
 ♦ QJ10875
 ♣ AQ96

South
 ♠ AK2
 ♥ KJ109632
 ♦ ---
 ♣ 1084

There was nothing to the play, the spade loser going on the ♦A. E/W had a good save at unfavorable vulnerability, of course, but North would have bid on if they had found it. The match margin of 25 (with 223 imps scored in 64 deals) indicated that the match was not only a close one but had also been played with commendable accuracy — in the context of the fact that all four pairs played “pressure” bridge, bidding to the maximum in competitive auctions. This style inspires forced errors and the fact that the imp total is rather on the low side for an encounter of this sort suggested that everyone had played well. It was certainly entertaining.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♥(♠)	Pass	2♣(♦)	4♥
All Pass			



2012 NEC Cup Winners

18th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tuesday (Apr. 16)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (1)	414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (2)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (3)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (4)	
Wednesday (Apr. 17)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (5)	414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (6)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (7)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (8)	
Thursday (Apr. 18)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (9)	414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (10)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (11)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (12)	
Friday (Apr. 19)	09:00-11:15	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (1)	513, 514
	11:35-13:50	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (2)	
	13:50-15:00	Lunch Break	
	15:00-17:15	NEC Cup Semi-Final (1)	513, 514
	17:35-19:50	NEC Cup Semi-Final (2)	
10:00-17:00	Yokohama IMP Pairs	503	
Saturday (Apr. 20)	09:00-11:15	NEC Cup Final (1)	513, 514
	11:35-13:50	NEC Cup Final (2)	
	13:50-15:00	Lunch Break	
	15:00-17:15	NEC Cup Final (3)	501, 502
	17:35-19:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
10:00-17:00	Yokohama Swiss Teams	501, 502	
Sunday (Apr. 21)	10:00-17:30	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	501, 502
	18:00-20:00	Closing Ceremony	503

NEC Cup Qualifying Swiss: 12 rounds of 14-board matches

NEC Cup Quarter- & Semi-finals: two 16-board segments

NEC Cup Final: four 16-board segments

