

Sorry, English only.

Editors:Eric Kovich
Beverly Kraft

EUROPE LEADS IN NEC CUP

If the first day is any indication, the battle for the four qualifying spots will come down to the wire.

The rankings after 3 rounds:

EUROPE	61
JAPAN (YAMADA)	58
CANADA	58
INDONESIA	51
JAPAN (HISATOMI)	49
JAPAN (YOUTH)	43
NEW ZEALAND	39
CHINESE TAIPEI	35
JAPAN (GELLER)	32
JAPAN (TATAI)	19

Round 1

NEW ZEALAND	(45) 16 - 14 (42)	CHINESE TAIPEI
HISATOMI	(43) 13 - 17 (54)	YOUTH
INDONESIA	(35) 19 - 11 (16)	EUROPE
GELLER	(44) 14 - 16 (47)	CANADA
TATAI	(22) 7 - 23 (61)	YAMADA

Round 2

EUROPE	(67) 25 - 5 (14)	NEW ZEALAND
CANADA	(54) 17 - 13 (42)	CHINESE TAIPEI
HISATOMI	(43) 14 - 16 (48)	GELLER
TATAI	(35) 8 - 22 (67)	YOUTH
INDONESIA	(24) 7 - 23 (61)	YAMADA

Round 3

CHINESE TAIPEI	(28) 8 - 22 (63)	HISATOMI
YOUTH	(11) 4 - 25 (68)	INDONESIA
EUROPE	(94) 25 - 2 (28)	GELLER
CANADA	(68) 25 - 4 (9)	TATAI
NEW ZEALAND	(37) 18 - 12 (23)	YAMADA

THE EDITOR'S IDIOT'S FINESSE

	NORTH		Kovich	Lai	Kraft	Yen
BOARD: II-18	S:104		WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
DEALER: E	HA842		1S	DBL	2H(1)	3D
VUL: N/S	D:AK7		4S	P	P	DBL
	C:QJ95			All Pass		
WEST	EAST					
S:QJ875	S:A98			(1) constructive spade raise		
H:KQJ10	H:97653					
D:4	D:865					
C:AK10	C:3					
	SOUTH					
	S:K32					
	H:None					
	D:J10932					
	C:87642					

You might recall Board 18 from the second round robin match of the NEC CUP. In our match against Chinese Taipei, we overlooked our heart fit and blasted into 4S, which was doubled rather sportingly by YN Yen. South. He was thinking sweet thoughts about Mr Lightner's invention, but that was hardly obvious to Jennifer Lai, who led the DA. YN followed with the jack, trying again to send his message in hearts, but unfortunately the jack was simply the normal upside down count card from the very holding he possessed. With that singleton club in dummy, Jennifer switched to a trump and she wisely led the four, not the ten. Now I knew that South held at most one heart, but I couldn't stop the ruff if it were coming, so I was committed to ducking the trump in an attempt to keep control. Since South was a favourite to hold king-ten-fourth, I got dummy's nine out of the way, with a plan in the back of my mindlet. South won the SK and I was expecting to see a diamond come back in an attempt to shorten my trumps, but instead, he returned the C8. Could the trumps really be three-two all the time? Why this club play? Perhaps South was so anxious to get his heart ruff that he had passed up the almost-sure-thing diamond play in order to try to get partner in with the CA. Or was South afraid that I would discard a loser on a diamond continuation, then another loser later, with North continuing to stay off hearts? Of course, these were unkind thoughts that I was entertaining, but there was this beautiful plan I had developed, you see. So, here's what I did

I won the CA, ruffed a club with the ace of trumps, and led the S6 to my seven, preparing to draw trumps and claim, conceding the ace of hearts. Picture how I felt when North won the S10. Perhaps The Great Shuffler was feeling sorry for me at this moment, because North exited with a club, enabling me to draw South's last trump and escape for one down; minus 100. So poor South never got his heart ruff, after all. He was not amused. Neither was my partner. So sorry, Kraft-San, your partner was a true idiot.

A QUICKIE

BOARD: II-12					
DEALER: W					
VUL: N-S					
	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	P	1D	P	2C	
	P	2D	P	3C	
	P	3H(stop)	P	3NT///	

You hold: (W) 10866 A8432 AJ7 7

What would you lead?

... SEE BELOW

THE QUICKIE SOLUTION

BOARD: II-1 2	S:75				
DEALER: W	H:KQJ				
VUL: N-S	D:Q10984				
	C:A54				
WEST	EAST				
S:10886	S:KQJ3				
HA8432	H:975				
D:AJ7	D:653				
C:7	C:J92				
	SOUTH				
	S:A42				
	H:106				
	DK2				
	C:KQ10863				

Well, dummy didn't promise two heart stoppers, and South seems ready for spades. East didn't overcall 1S or 2S. You have an entry. But there is something about that spade sequence that screams, "lead me" ... so ...

As you can see, the spade lead is the killer. If I were an Australian, I couldn't show my face anywhere near Paul Marston, who has been touting four-card leads rather than longer suits for many years. I led a heart and they soon made four; 630. This effectively destroyed a very good result achieved by Kyoko Shimamura-Etsuko Miyashi (our teammates), who collected plus 500 by playing a sacrifice of 4S doubled. How did E/W get all the way to 4S? Well, West doubled for takeout after 1D-P-2C. I must confess that I thought about it.

TWO TIMES FOUR HIGH-LEVEL DECISIONS

DLR: N	S:3	Shimizu	Yamada	Yoshida	Ohno	
VUL: Both	H:74	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D AQ108743	ID	P	P	1S	
	C AKQ	2H	3D	4H	4S	
WEST	EAST	P	P	5H	P	
S A9864	S J	P	DBL	All Pass		
H KJ1082	H A9653					
D J5	D 6	Imakura	Hirata	I no	Hanayama	
C 9	C J107642	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	SOUTH		ID	P	1S	
	S KQ10752		2H	3D	4H	4S
	H O		DBL	5D	5H	P
	D K92		P	DBL	All Pass	
	C 853					

Here's one from the OUCHI CUP. The first bidding problem falls to South, over East's 4H. His diamonds strongly suggest a raise, but his spades are pretty good too and 4S might be the only making game for his side. In the event, both Souths tried 4S. Do you agree with their decision? Then turn to North. Would you sit for 4S, doubled or not? Very tough. Yamada did, but Hirata did not. In both cases, East went on to 5H.

Do you think that N/S are in a forcing situation now? Well, it's not clear that anyone has the balance of power, is it? So, strictly speaking, the answer should be "no." It would be different, I believe, if South had raised diamonds. Now there is a proven fit that is unlikely to cost 800. Therefore, double the bad guys or save. One of these solutions should be mathematically rewarding. That sounds good, perhaps, but at the table, no one really knows what's going on with these distributional hands. There is always the feeling that one side has pushed the other side up a level or that "they must be saving." Still, I suspect that both Souths passed without having any true conviction about North having to bid again. Do you agree with their decision, or would you prefer 6D?

Then, at last, we return to North, who has not heard his partner mention diamonds. He has clubs locked up, the ace of his suit, a misfit for spades. Is he not a big favourite to beat 5H? Well, that's what he (they) thought too. Would you have done otherwise?

Yoshida made six when Yamada cashed a club and switched to a trump. Imakura made five, losing two aces.

Some secondary issues that come to mind are these:

- (1) Should South's 4S be defined as a suggestion or a virtual signoff? Consider how you'd bid with no diamonds and eight decent spades.
- (2) Should South simply give up on perfection in situations like this and settle for an honest diamond raise, letting North know about the potentially critical support?

Readers who believe they can discern the truth about this deal are invited to submit their analysis for publication.

THE GREAT SHUFFLER'S DAILY DOUBLE

by Noboyuki Hayashi

This is a hand from the OUCHI CUP (Flight B)

First, try an opening lead problem:

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	P	4NT	P	6NT	
	All Pass				

You (West) hold: QJ108 K1085 5 J1096

South's 3NT showed 13-15 HCP, no four-card major; 4NT was either Blackwood or quantitative - South was not sure. This looks almost too easy, doesn't it?

So, I led the queen of spades, of course. Wouldn't you. Alas, this was the full hand:

DLR: N	S:753				
VUL: Both	H AK2				
	D 8				
	WEST	EAST			
S QJ108	S 962				
H K1085	H Q94				
D 5	D 10976				
C J1096	C 754				
	SOUTH				
	S A4				
	H J73				
	D J82				
	C AKQ32				

Declarer has eleven tricks on top. It looks as if there is little chance unless clubs are four-three, and declarer (Shoko Fukuda) played three top clubs immediately, conceded the fourth round to me, and claimed her slam when diamonds behaved. Perhaps she should have ducked a club immediately, catering to some squeeze chances), but that is not the point of my story. 6NT was duly made after my painfully natural spade lead.

Now why do you think that The Great Shuffler gave me two easy-to-lead beautiful sequences that allow the contract to make and one hard-to-lead suit which would set the contract (or would the heart lead do it)? I don't even want to think about the possibilities of a compound squeeze now after declarer ducks the heart; let's just say that the heart lead would apparently beat 6NT? Perhaps I should have figured it out. The Great Shuffler has a weird sense of humour and I know the guy pretty well. He was teasing me all the time, and somehow I missed the clues. Next time I'll lead a heart and give declarer the twelfth trick. Bridge is such a difficult game!

Why don't you switch seats now and test your play ...

	NORTH				
DLR: N	S A4				
VUL: Both	H J73				
	D J82				
	C AKQ32				
WEST	EAST				
S 962	S QJ1085	P	3D(FG)	P	2D(5+D)
H Q94	H K1085	P	3S(cue)	P	3H(cue)
D 10976	D 5	P	4NT(RKCB)	P	5D(S/T)
C 754	C J1096	P	5H(DQ?)	P	5S(+SK)
	SOUTH		6D	All Pass	
	S K753				
	H A62				
	D AKQ43				
	C 8				

The opening lead is the S9, high from two or three small cards, fourth best, standard honour leads. How would you play?

If the trumps are three-two, you can draw two rounds of spades with the ace and king, then ruff the third spade with the DJ. But in order to ruff a spade and draw trumps safely, you must win the lead with dummy's SA. Then, if you find out that trumps are four-one, it will be too late to set up the long club and use it - the entries will not be there.

Instead, you may decide to set up a long club. The four-three club break is a 62% chance, not as good as the three-two trump break (68%), but if you take this line, you must win the spade lead in the closed hand.

Apparently, this is a trick one problem, and the percentages dictate that you try for the spade ruff-diamond split. So you win the spade in dummy and you go one down only to discover that the alternative line would have succeeded.

After the session (please don't ask how we did), we went out for a drink and our usual post-mortem discussion. When this deal came up, Masayuki Ino, one of Japan's leading players, showed his class by presenting an elegant solution for this hand

Win the lead in dummy, then draw two trumps with the ace and king, going for the percentage line. When the trumps break four-one, there is still a chance. Cash the ace of hearts. This is the key play. Cash three high clubs to discard your hearts, ruff a heart, ruff a spade in dummy, then, finally, ruff dummy's last heart with your last trump as West follows helplessly. The high trump and the high spade take the last trick together. If West is exactly three-three-four-three, your prayers are answered.

If you've been wondering how The Great Shuffler fits into the play problem, it's another teaser: First the guy tempts you into believing that the inferior line wins while the better line loses; then his sense of justice prevails and he shows you (through the persona of Mr Ino) that you must have faith in him.

OUCHI CUP: PART TWO

by Herbst Incorporated

This hand was played in the first match of the Flight A Final:

BD: 5	NORTH					
DLR: E	S 987	Ilan	NORTH	Ophir		
VUL: N/S	H Q10854	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D Q7		2H	P	3H///	
	C K84					
WEST	EAST					
S K2	S Q3					
H KJ762	H A93					
D J3	D 1098654	Kovich	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
C AQJ7	C 65	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	SOUTH					
	S A,10654		2H	2S	3H	1S
	H ---					4S///
	D AK2					
	C 10932					

With spades and clubs behaving the spade game was never in jeopardy. At our table North decided to trap over 2H and was soon defending 3H. The spade lead went to the ten and king. Declarer crossed to the H9, and played a club to the queen and king. This confirmed his belief that N/S could make 4S. North now played a second spade and South won with the DA, DK, and a third diamond. Ilan ruffed with the HJ, but North overruffed and played a club. Declarer now finished the clubs with a low ruff in dummy. The H9 from dummy now employed North for two down and an 11-imp gain.

The last hand of this match was most spectacular.

BD: 7	NORTH					
DLR: S	S A,2	Ilan	WEST	Ophir		
VUL: BOTH	H 9876	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D K95		ID	P	1S	2C
	C A63		1D	P	3C///	
WEST	EAST					
S Q3	S 1098765					
H QJ32	H A104					
D AQJ104	D 873	Kovich	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
C 54	C K	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	SOUTH					
	S 765			P		
	H 10987			ID	P	1S
	D AJ7			P	3NT	P
	C Q87			DBL///		
	C 62			DBL///		

At our table, the opponents played in 3C and scored 11 tricks when declarer guessed the CK at trick one. There was more excitement at the other table, when Eric declared 3NT doubled. The contract would seem to depend on a club guess after a diamond lead, but in practice East led a spade and declarer could afford a club loser. He didn't lose one, however, and with the C6 an entry to his hand to cash the third spade, scored plus 950 and 13imps.

We were happy with our auction on this deal from Match 5X.

DLR: W	S 103	Ilan	WEST	Ophir		
VUL: E/W	H 6	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D 6542		2D	P	2H	P
	C QJ10876		3S	P	4C	P
WEST	EAST		4S	P	6D///	
S KJ2	S Q6					
H AK92	H 1087		2D	Multi		
D AK93	D QJ1087		2H	P/C with weak hand type		
C 2	C AJ9		3S	4441, short C		
	SOUTH			4C control ask		
	S A9874			4S 7 controls		
	H QJ543					
	D ---					
	C 543					

North led his singleton heart and Ilan took the queen with his ace. Then he crossed to the CA, ruffed a club with the DA, went to the DQ, ruffed a club with the DK, drew trumps and conceded a spade for twelve tricks. At the other table, Eric overcalled the 1D opening with a preemptive 3C and East ended the auction with 3NT.

In the sixth match, we faced the strong Indonesian team. There were two major swings that helped us to a win. The first was an aggressive game but it might have been worse for the Indonesians.

DLR: 2	NORTH					
DLR: E	S J10	Ilan	WEST	Ophir		
VUL: N/S	H K87	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D K987		2D	P	2S	P
	C K1075		3NT	P	3H(S)	DBL
WEST	EAST					
S 864	S AK9752		P	DBL///		
H Q1096	H 2					
D AQ102	D 43	Joey	WEST	Rhoda	EAST	SOUTH
C A6	C J932	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	SOUTH					
	S Q3			2S///		
	H AJ543					
	D J65					
	C Q84					

The auction at our table was lively. West liked the Multi opening enough to inquire. West showed a weak two-bid in spades with the 3H call and South doubled. West's 3S constituted an invitation, and East had enough. The 4H bid placed the vulnerable Indonesians in severe jeopardy but, instead of doubling to show his acceptance of the invitation, Ophir bid 4S. Perhaps that is the right view with such a distributional acceptance. 4S proved unbeatable and so we scored +590.

The next swing was a partscore played in the same contract by both our pairs!

DLR: N	S Q1043	Ilan	WEST	Ophir		
VUL: N/S	H Q6	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
	D K6		P	INT///		
	C A10932					
WEST	EAST					
S KJ2	S A98					
H J32	H AK54					
D 109542	D Q83	Joey	WEST	Rhoda	EAST	SOUTH
C 5						