



# NEC Bridge Festival

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## NEC CUP: Semifinals Results

	Carryover	1	Quarter			4	Final
			2	3			
GREAT BRITAIN	0	39	75	9.5	21	144.5	
JAPAN (HISATOMI)	0	46	14	68	54	182	
CHINESE TAIPEI	5.6	15	33	27	23	103.6	
INDONESIA/NA	0	29	22	28	28	107	

## NEC Cup Finals Today

The NEC Cup finals will be held today between the winners of the two semifinals matches: Indonesia/North America vs Japan (Hisatomi). Congratulations to the two semifinalists, Great Britain and Chinese Taipei. Both team fought valiantly, and will participate in a 32 board playoff for 3rd/4th place.

Starting times for the two matches will be 10:00, 13:20, 16:00 and 19:40 (the latter two sessions for the finals only). The finals will appear on VuGraph. Grab yourself a seat early. There's sure to be standing room only!

## AN EXTENDED INTERLUDE WITH THE LAW

Dir: W	North	
Vul: Both	♠ J	
	♥ A1085	
	♦ A965	
	♣ AJ62	
West		East
♠ Q109		♠ AK875432
♥ 9743		♥ QJ
♦ Q1043		♦ K
♣ 107		♣ 43
	South	
	♠ 6	
	♥ K62	
	♦ J872	
	♣ KQ985	

In the good (?) old days, nearly everyone would have opened 1♥ with North's hand — the suit below the singleton rule. At the 1996 Cap Volmac World Top Pairs, Sabine Auken was the only 1♥ opener. Over Dennis Koch-Palmund's 4♠, von Arnim had just the right hand for a minimum negative double and Sabine did the right thing by passing. 4♠ doubled was two down off the top; minus 500. Since datum on the board was N/S minus 50, Auken-von Arnim gained 11 imps for this effort.

Michael Rosenberg and Berry Westra opened 1♣. Over 4♠, Zia Mahmood and Enri Leufkens had too much in clubs to think seriously about passing or doubling, and their raise to 5♣ was passed out. Both declarers got out for one down; minus 100. 2 imps to E/W.

Xiaojing Wang and David Berkowitz started with a Precision 1♦ and over East's 4♠, both Souths (Zhong Fu and Larry Cohen) elected to pass. That strikes me as an uncomfortable way to play bridge, but if you open light and short, you tend to be more careful in competitive auctions until a fit is confirmed. When the Norths were able to reopen with a takeout double, the Souths were delighted to take it out.

Fu's choice was 5♦, doubled rather presumptuously by Eddy Manoppo. Presumptuous or otherwise, the double netted the Indonesians 500 on defense, Henky Lasut making a heart trick after switching to the ♥J at trick two. 10 imps to E/W. Cohen's choice was 4NT — pick a minor. Berkowitz chose clubs and there was no double, of course. A 2-imp loss for the Law advocates.

Oh, yes, the Law ... let's hit the rewind button for a moment. The initial Law projection suggests that there will be 20 tricks, and here there are only 18. Well, there is a great deal of impurity in the red suits, which might be expected to reduce the total tricks by one, particularly since there is some duplication of values too. Against that, however, there is a llllooonnnnggg suit out there, which tends to work in the other direction. Once Cohen had made the normal 20-trump estimate, it was virtually certain that he would take out the double; there was simply no way for him to gauge the red suit impurity. And perhaps that should be as far the discussion goes.

There is something bothering me, however. It's the duplicated singletons in the N/S hands. That is always a negative feature for offensive action, suggesting that there will have to be plenty of meat in the side suits to avoid slow losers. As here. It could have been even worse: West might have held North's ♥10. I have always had my reservations about blind faith in strict total tricks conclusions at high levels, but perhaps it takes something special — like the twin spade singletons here — to throw the Law so far out of whack.

At the other three tables, North started with a natural 1♦. At only two of those tables, East overcalled 4♠. Claudio Caponi went on to 5♦, which went minus 300, undoubled; 6 imps to the Helgemo-Helness, their opponents. Paul Chemla preferred a competitive double and was rewarded when Philippe Cronier left it in for plus 500 and an 11-imp gain at the expense of their countrymen Alain Levy-Herve Mouiel.

At the remaining table, Massimo Lanzarotti contented himself with 3♣. Pablo Lambardi raised to 4♦, which Gabriel Chagas seemed to treat as forcing. He tried 4♥, then 5♣ over Lambardi's 4♣. Perhaps Chagas's bids were all natural, but in any case, Lambardi converted to 5♦, ending an exciting run. Down 200 for a 4-imp loss for the South Americans.

Let's go back to 5♣ for a moment. Although you can imagine declarer losing a spade, two diamonds, and perhaps a heart, is one down really such a triumph? After a spade lead and rounded suit switch, Rosenberg and Berkowitz both lost a heart trick, but then got a ruff-and-discard and a third heart trick to lose just one diamond. Westra cashed the ♦A before guessing hearts correctly, but then had two diamond losers. If declarer divines the heart position, he can take FOUR heart tricks, take one diamond discard from South, then exit with a low diamond to endplay East. Now the ruff-and-discard is fatal for the defense. Although it's not easy to get it right, the killing stroke for the defense is for East to cash a spade, then lead the ♦K.

E/W vulnerable. You, North, hold: ♠ 5 ♥ QJ62 ♦ A8 ♣ AQJ965

West	North	East	South
4♠	???	1♠	Pass

Rosenberg, Hamaoui, and Sabine Auken all chose 5♣, putting their faith in the long suit. Berkowitz elected to double for takeout. Which of those actions do you prefer? Or would you have passed in their position?

Bd: I-6	North	
Dlr: E	♠ 5	
Vul: E/W	♥ QJ62	
	♦ A8	
	♣ AQJ965	
West		East
♠ KJ864		♠ A10732
♥ 10853		♥ A9
♦ 7		♦ K10543
♣ 872		♣ 3
	South	
	♠ Q9	
	♥ K74	
	♦ QJ962	
	♣ K104	

5♣ was not doubled and had a play at single dummy, but in practice went two down twice (minus 100) after ace and another spade, the declarers running into a diamond ruff. The sacrifice won 6 imps for Hamaoui-Caponi and Auken-von Arnim against the datum of E/W plus 330. Rosenberg got out for one down after ♠A, ♥A, heart, drawing trumps before taking the diamond finesse. 7 imps to Zia-Rosenberg.

How did Berkowitz's takeout double fare? Put yourself in Cohen's position with the South cards. Inevitably, this means a Law chart analysis. Placing Berk with the classic one-four-four-four, Cohen could project roughly 19 total trumps. That would mean: 4♠ doubled plus 790 vs 5♦ doubled minus 300, 4♠ doubled minus 200 vs 5♦ doubled minus 100, or 4♠ doubled minus 500 vs 5♦ plus 420. With no serious

adjustment factors (although there is often an extra trick available when there are lots of trumps), it would seem that you gain in two of these cases by passing, a total of 9 imps, and only once by bidding, but for 10 imps. How often will E/W make 4♠ opposite a classic takeout double? This is all pretty tenuous, isn't it? I can't help but feel that Larry's instincts were telling him that 20 tricks were more likely than 19, and that bidding 5♦, while it might be wrong, would rarely be far wrong. Berk's dummy was not what Larry was hoping for, and I'm not sure whether he was more irked at going for 800 (four down) or for having to suffer through a futile and fruitless energy-draining Law Chart analysis. 10 imps to Meckstroth-Rodwell.

At three tables, West raised 1♠ to 3♠, nominally preemptive. Cronier overcalled 4♣ and finished in 5♣ doubled after Mouiel, East, introduced his diamonds. Cronier was not tempted to take the diamond finesse and so got out for one down after ♠A, spade, playing one trump, then a heart,

eventually ruffing the fourth heart. 6 imps to Cronier-Chemla. Wang and Chagas preferred to double 3♠ for takeout. Against the Chinese, Lasut passed over the double with the East hand, and Fu jumped to 5♦, down 800. 10 imps to Indonesia.

Against the South Americans, Lanzarotti continued to 4♠, then doubled Lambardi's 5♦ on the way out. At least ninety-five North players out of a hundred would have taken their medicine by passing out 5♦ doubled, but not Chagas, who ran to 6♣. Perhaps he felt that Lambardi was unlikely to hold as many as six diamonds once he failed to come in over 1♠, but with Chagas, there is often a little voice that speaks only to him and he has come to trust that voice over the years. In 6♣ doubled, he ruffed his second spade, drew three rounds of trumps, then led the ♦8. Lanzarotti gave this a long look, but played low, so Chagas avoided a diamond loser. When Buratti showed out on the second diamond, Chagas had a count on the hand and so led a heart to the king and ducked a heart, felling the ace. Down one, for a spectacular minus 100 and a 6-imp gain rather than a 10-imp loss.

Leufkens-Westra have made a nice living over the course of their young career by getting into as many auctions as possible. On this deal, Enri came in over 1♠ with 2♦, an overcall you won't find in anyone's bridge text, Dutch or otherwise. I saw something similar in Australia in January, 1996, perpetrated by the inimitable Bob Richman, on king-ten-fifth of diamonds and a balanced 11-count over a canape 1♠, neither vulnerable. At his table, the bidding continued: negative double, all pass, with the canape 1♠ opener holding AQJ963 of Bob's suit. 1100. Ho ho. At least Enri had the vulnerability in his favour. But that was just about all. Here the bidding continued: 3♠(preemptive)-responsive double from Berry. Enri might have tried 4♣ as a least-of-evils choice, but instead he rebid his diamondlets. Westra took this seriously and raised to 5♦. Yet another route to minus 800. 10 imps to Muller-de Boer.

Had enough yet?

## CLOUSEAU

Before looking at the following hand diagram, cover the North, East, and South hands with an opaque substance and focus on the West hand, which was held by one Nick Krnjevic of Montreal in a home practice match, IMP scoring. East was Lee Atkinson, North and South Gord Crispin and Zyg Marcinski, respectively.

Dir: W	North	
Vul: E/W	♠ K7	
	♥ KQ102	
	♦ AQ9854	
	♣ A	
West		East
♠ A652		♠ Q984
♥ J7		♥ 6
♦ J102		♦ 73
♣ 9832		♣ KQJ754
	South	
	♠ J103	
	♥ A98543	
	♦ K6	
	♣ 106	

West	North	East	South
Krnjevic	Crispin	Atkinson	Marcinski
Pass	1♣(1)	Pass	1NT(2)
Pass	2♦(3)	Pass	2♥(4)
Pass	4♠(5)	Pass	5♣(6)
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

(1) 16+ HCP, any shape; (2) 5+♥, 8+ HCP;  
 (3) see text; (4) see text; (5) RKCB for ♥  
 (6) 1 key card

As you can see from the bidding diagram, N/S employ a strong club system with some serious artificiality. The auction started smoothly enough, with South showing a positive response with hearts. North's 2♦ was intended as an asking bid in hearts. It was interpreted, however, as an asking bid in clubs and implying a club suit.

South's 2♥ was intended as a minimum, denying clubs as good as queen-third. It was interpreted, however, as a minimum denying a heart control. Afterwards, the partnership was on the same wavelength, South admitting to one key card and North driving to 6♥ as a result.

So, there you are as West. You ask a number of questions about the 2♦ bid in particular since your experience with these opponents is that after a positive response, the strong hand usually relays to find out responder's exact shape and often, the precise location of high cards. You are so knowledgeable that you manage to home in on the key issues immediately. Yes, North must have a narrowly-defined hand to prefer a non-relay approach. South expects North to have strong trump support and a long strong side suit ... of clubs. Both North and South are forthcoming with their explanations, describing not only what they intended with their bids but also their interpretations of their partner's bids. So, you've got all the evidence. What do you lead?

If, like Nick, you underled the ace of spades as the only real hope, you are entitled to a pat on the back. But if, like Nick, your search for clues involved a great deal of questioning, perhaps your declarer, like Zyg Marcinski, was able to back his "table feel" and put up the ♠K to chalk up his slam. You resist the urge to stifle the kibitzer who mumbles something about successful operations and dead patients.

This hand was given to me by Nick, the victim, to praise the play of declarer, and indeed, we must agree with all of this. I confess that my purposes go beyond the Caesar and Brutus show.

What is happening to our game? North-South choose to play a complex system, as is their right. West, in order to choose an intelligent line of defense, must ask his opponents for an explanation. In fact, East cannot do any of this asking since it is West's turn to lead. North-South are scrupulously honest in their explanations and there is no question of impropriety. Yet, by the time West is ready to lead, he has said rather more than he might have wanted to say; declarer draws

the inference that West would have led a spade from the queen a lot sooner and so gets the hand right. Declarer has improved his chances of making the slam by the simple expedient of playing a complex system. Perhaps that's too simplistic, but in my opinion that's the bottom line. Sure, West might have asked fewer questions, but he was simply playing the game the way he lives his life. Should you be penalized so severely for being thorough?

So what should happen in real life? Before the opening lead, North-South should explain, without being asked, not only the bidding but the negative inferences, precisely the information that our West was seeking. Is this too much to ask? I'd like to think that it is not. By all means, allow artificial systems and encourage creativity. But put a special onus for explaining these methods on their users.

Not only will some time be saved in the process, but when the hand is over, West will no longer have to don his hair shirt and say, "Me and my big mouth." How can that be bad for this great game of ours?

## ROUND NINE

Bd: 1	North	
Dlr: N	♠ 76	
Vul: None	♥ Q109832	
	♦ K107	
	♣ Q6	
West		East
♠ KQ84		♠ AJ532
♥ 4		♥ KJ7
♦ QJ43		♦ A9
♣ K842		♣ J73
	South	
	♠ 109	
	♥ A65	
	♦ 8652	
	♣ A1095	

The normal spot on the first deal of the final round robin match was 4♠, and the contract was made six of the nine times that it was declared, presumably with the aid of the diamond finesse. There are other ways to play the hand, however. If South has the ♦K and ♣Q, North the club ace, declarer might get home by playing ace and another diamond. If South ducks from length, declarer might be able to eliminate the red suits and play either loser-on-loser in the minors, or play a club and duck in both hands.

We can't be certain about what happened at the table where Kenji Miyakuni went down in 4♠, but we do know that Denny Sacul led the ♣9 against Natsuko Nishida (Taufik Asbi had opened 2♥ and West had splintered, so Denny saw no future in hearts), and soon gave his partner a third-round club ruff. We also know that Henky

Lasut, after a trump lead, won in dummy, led a heart to the jack and ace, and received a low club switch from Etsuko Naito. He ducked, and went down.

There was one final contract that was not 4♠, and it was a wild one — 5♥ doubled by Takayama-Kobayashi of Japan Youth against China's Shi-HT Liu. Takayama took only five tricks for minus 1400. Not much of a save. At least Kaku-Mizuta made 4♠ at the other table.

Bd: 15	North	
Dlr: S	♠ 87	
Vul: N/S	♥ 87	
	♦ K10873	
	♣ AK104	
West		East
♠ AK6532		♠ 10
♥ 2		♥ 1064
♦ 5		♦ AQJ964
♣ 86532		♣ QJ7
	South	
	♠ QJ94	
	♥ AKQJ953	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 9	

Although you won't know it until play has been completed, the game you'd like to be in with the N/S cards is 3NT. Takayama-Kobayashi atoned for their disaster on Board 1 by bringing back plus 600 for the comparisons. Perhaps it's an inevitable part of growing up to go for some large numbers on the way to middle age, but I'm not sure that explains the 1100-point set conceded by Mizuta-Kaku at 4♠ doubled at the other table. An 11-imp loss for Japan Youth.

Armstrong-Paul Hackett also reached 3NT (plus 630) against Hisatomi in their critical match, but the twins (like Hanayama-Hirata for Yamada and SR Wu-Tai for Chinese Taipei) allowed 4♥ to make when West did not play three rounds of spades to give East an overruff.

In fact, only Kaz Yamada-Takahashi and Manoppo-Lasut defeated 4♥. The other N/S pairs defended 4♠ doubled, Ino-Imakura collected 800, Sacul-Asbi 500.

Bd: 16	North	
Dlr: W	♠ 10843	
Vul: E/W	♥ J107	
	♦ 85	
	♣ 7542	
West		East
♠ AQ975		♠ K62
♥ AQ8		♥ K9543
♦ J7		♦ K10
♣ AJ8		♣ KQ3
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ 62	
	♦ AQ96432	
	♣ 1096	

If you're going to play a marginal slam on this one, you'd better play 6♥, because that is the major suit that plays for no loser and because East needs to be declarer to protect the ♦K (a long spade can be established for a diamond discard if South leads something other than a diamond).

Kaku-Mizuta, atoning for their disaster on Board 15 (the symmetry of youth), bid and made 6♥ for plus 1430 and gained 13 imps for Japan Youth when Shi-HT Liu stopped at 3NT (yes, East was declarer) for China.

The importance of choosing the correct strain was demonstrated graphically in Chinese Taipei vs Geller, where Kaz Yamada-Takahashi scored plus 1430 in 6♥ while SR Wu-Tai went minus 100 at 5♠. A cool 17 imps to Geller, the key board in their 18-12 win.

If success is the criterion, Nishida-E Naito outbid Lasut-Manoppo in Japan Women vs Indonesia, reaching 6♥ while their counterparts stopped at four.

A different take on this deal was presented in Yamada vs Nakamura, where Miyakuni-Nakamura finished in 6NT, a contract that might make when 6♥ would not. They were punished severely when Imakura did not lead the ♦A, losing 13 imps when Hanayama-Hirata stopped at 5♥. Yamada won 19-11.

In Great Britain vs Hisatomi, both E/W pairs got the job done by reaching 6♥ for a most honourable "push."

## Two Yanks in the Far East: Chinese Taipei vs Indonesia

### First Quarter:

Chinese Taipei started +5.6 by dint of a sound victory over Indonesia in the round robin. Let's round that up to 6 imps, shall we.

Chinese Taipei struck first when the natural methods of Tai-Wu kept them safe and low while Polish Club got Sacul-Asbi too high. Well, sort of.

Bd: 1	North	
Dir: N	♠ AKQ942	
Vul: None	♥ AK8	
	♦ QJ4	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ 8753		♠ 106
♥ ---		♥ J107642
♦ A8752		♦ K3
♣ AK102		♣ Q75
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ Q953	
	♦ 1096	
	♣ J9863	

Open Room			
Shen	Asbi	Kuo	Sacul
West	North	East	South
	1♣(F1)	Pass	1♦(1)
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
Closed Room			
Manoppo	Tai	Lasut	CH Wu
West	North	East	South
	1♠	All Pass	
(1) NEG, usually			

Tai got the lead of the ♦K from Lasut. Manoppo discouraged and Henky switched to a heart, ruffed. ♦A, diamond ruff, heart ruff, club ... but alas, that was all. Plus 80. Quite a result. Sacul's 3NT was not without

hope, but after a low diamond to the queen and king, Kuo could see that powerful hand in dummy, so he switched to clubs, and the defenders got four clubs and two diamonds. Down 100. 5 imps to Chinese Taipei.

Bd: 7	North	
Dir: S	♠ Q864	
Vul: Both	♥ QJ873	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ J4	
West		East
♠ A753		♠ 1092
♥ K42		♥ A95
♦ 53		♦ KJ62
♣ A1075		♣ 983
	South	
	♠ KJ	
	♥ 106	
	♦ 109874	
	♣ KQ62	

The next swing of any substance came on Board 7, where both Souths declared 1NT ...

CS Shen led a club and defeated the contract. Eddy Manoppo led a spade and did not (Wu made two), so Chinese Taipei gained 6 imps to lead 19-1.

One board later, Indonesia got a lot closer when Lasut-Manoppo bid the E/W cards to 6♠ while Shen-Kuo stopped at four ...



Bd: 8	North	
Dir: W	♠ A5	
Vul: None	♥ J85	
	♦ J1082	
	♣ 9843	
West		East
♠ KQJ84		♠ 932
♥ A		♥ Q1062
♦ AQ93		♦ K6
♣ K102		♣ AQ65
	South	
	♠ 1076	
	♥ K9743	
	♦ 754	
	♣ J7	

6♠ is not laydown, and declarer has some choices in the play if he is not "given" a trick on the lead, the most interesting occurring if North ducks the first trump. Declarer can play a second trump on this layout and ruff a diamond safely, but if someone started with ace-third of trumps, he could play a third trump and kill the diamond ruff. On the lie of the cards, declarer goes down if he ruffs a diamond before playing a second trump, because North plays the fourth diamond when he comes in with the ♠A, and South gets an overruff with the ♠10. If declarer takes no diamond ruff, he can finesse the ♣10 or squeeze North in the minors, or transfer the heart menace and squeeze North in three suits. The bottom line is that Manoppo made it on the ♦J. 11 imps to Indonesia, 12-19.

The only other significant swing in this set went to Indonesia when Tai-Wu missed an easy vulnerable game duly bid by Asbi-Sacul. Indonesia won the quarter 29-15, and after 16 deals, led 29-21.

### Second Quarter:

Bd: 17	North	
Dir: N	♠ Q72	
Vul: None	♥ A10743	
	♦ J1062	
	♣ 3	
West		East
♠ AK10654		♠ 3
♥ K		♥ QJ86
♦ 43		♦ A5
♣ K1098		♣ QJ7654
	South	
	♠ J98	
	♥ 952	
	♦ KQ987	
	♣ A2	

Tai-Wu stopped in 3♣, but game was cold and Kokish-Colker bid it at the other table without much difficulty. 6 imps to Indonesia, 35-21.

Bd: 18	North	
Dir: E	♠ Q86	
Vul: N/S	♥ 42	
	♦ AK86	
	♣ AK74	
West		East
♠ 10972		♠ K3
♥ KQ965		♥ A1083
♦ 7		♦ 1094
♣ QJ2		♣ 9653
	South	
	♠ AJ54	
	♥ J7	
	♦ QJ532	
	♣ 108	

Open Room			
SR Wu	Lasut	Tai	Manoppo
West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
Kokish	CH Wu	Colker	Kuo
West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♥	DBL	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	5♥	Pass
Pass	DBL	All Pass	

This could have been a tragedy for Indonesia in several ways, the most obvious being a low heart lead by Tai against Lasut's 3NT. But Tai led the king of spades (so says the record) and Lasut went plus 630 rather than minus 100. Your editors have strong but different opinions about the Closed Room result, where an atypical weak two-bid and preemptive raise jockeyed Wu-Kuo into a game that they were not going to make on accurate defense - three rounds of hearts. Colker, hoping that the opponents were right about their choice of contracts and hoping for a six-card suit, double-clutched the partnership into 5♥, duly doubled. The defenders lost their club ruff so Kokish was out for three down; minus 500. Not exactly a triumph to include in one's scrapbook, but a very lucky 4 imps to Indonesia, 39-21.

Bd: 19	North	
Dir: S	♠ AK	
Vul: E/W	♥ 2	
	♦ K8743	
	♣ J9764	
West		East
♠ Q64		♠ J5
♥ J764		♥ KQ10953
♦ Q96		♦ A2
♣ 1082		♣ Q53
	South	
	♠ 1098732	
	♥ A8	
	♦ J105	
	♣ AK	

Kuo-Wu stopped in 3♠ with these cards, and Kuo, playing safely, made only three; plus 140. Lasut-Manoppo were in 4♠, where the stakes were higher. There are two main lines of play, trying for one diamond loser, and trying for three-three clubs (win the heart lead, cash ace-king of clubs, cross to a trump, ruff a club, co to the other high trump, throw the ♥8 on a long club, lose two diamonds and a trump). Manoppo did not choose the winning line, so Chinese Taipei gained 5 imps instead of losing 7, 26-39.

There is no doubt in some of our minds that there is a bridge god; his name is The Great Shuffler and he makes his presence felt whenever the mood strikes him. TGS tends to show himself to those who believe in him. Eric Kokish is a believer. Consider that twice in the NEC Cup, he was dealt a blank ace of spades,

four hearts headed by the queen, five-three in the minors, and exactly 14 HCP. On both occasions, he opened 1NT (weak) to spare himself an awkward rebid. On both occasions, partner transferred to hearts and fourth hand bid spades. Kokish bid his hearts and was raised to game and both occasions, partner held ace-king-to five hearts and enough strength to make game easily. Was TGS nooding tacit approval of the eccentric weak notrump opening, or was he simply paying a social visit to the faithful?

Even if you do not believe in TGS just yet, try to keep an open mind on the subject. There are still three days left in the NEC Festival!

All of which is a harbinger of what was to come on Board 21 ...

Bd: 21	North
Dir: N	♠ J4
Vul: N/S	♥ A1052
	♦ K75
	♣ K963
West	East
♠ A10	♠ 9632
♥ K87	♥ J
♦ AQ6	♦ J1098432
♣ J10754	♣ A
	South
	♠ KQ875
	♥ Q9643
	♦ ---
	♣ Q82

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
SR Wu	Lasut	Tai	Manoppo
		3♦	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Kokish	CH Wu	Colker	Kuo
		3♦	DBL
3NT	DBL	Pass	4♦
5♦	5♥	All Pass	

It would be uncharitable to point a finger at Eddy Manoppo for failing to come in over 3♦ in the Open Room, but when he did not, he went minus 130.

On the other hand, I believe that Kuo should be commended for his courageous takeout double. The auction got increasingly interesting after that start and it all ended at 5♥ when CH Wu, expecting a bit more perhaps (would Kuo not have passed the double of 3NT or overcalled 4♦ if he had a real hand, however?), refused to accept a penalty against 5♦.

Had Colker led the ♣A and shifted to a spade, there would be a shorter story, but Rich led a diamond. Wu ruffed, consulted the heavens, and led the ♥Q from dummy! If you've been reading our little rag each day you will recall that in the round robin, MF Tai had to play the same trump combination (also hearts, also against Indonesia) and played it the same way. He too pinned the singleton jack. Do you believe in The Great Shuffler yet, dear reader. Well, back to Mr Wu. When the ♥Q held, he played on spades, and when Kokish won the ace on the second round, he switched to a low club where a second trump might have been better. Wu had no further trouble (we suspect that he would have made it in any case, having come that far). Plus 650 and 13imps to Chinese Taipei, 39-40.

Chinese Taipei reclaimed the lead on Board 23 ...

Bd: 23	North	
Dir: S	♠ 9843	
Vul: Both	♥ Q863	
	♦ AKJ4	
	♣ K	
West		East
♠ AK105		♠ QJ7
♥ AJ1094		♥ 52
♦ 96		♦ Q2
♣ A10		♣ 875432
	South	
	♠ 62	
	♥ K7	
	♦ 108753	
	♣ QJ96	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
SR Wu	Lasut	Tai	Manoppo
			Pass
1♥	All Pass		
Closed Room			
Kokish	Wu	Colker	Kuo
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

1♥ was a better contract than 3NT by a few hundred miles and Chinese Taipei scored plus 200 in the Closed Room and plus 140 in the Open Room to gain 8 imps; 47-40.

CH Kuo made a very good decision on Board 26, where he held:

♠ KQ102 ♥ Q1064 ♦ A10 ♣ J102

With both sides vulnerable, he saw a weak 2♦ on his right. He doubled for takeout and when the tray came back to him, it had gone 4♦ on his right, double from partner, pass. The partnership employs responsive doubles only through 3♠, so this double was "cards," whatever that means. Kuo passed, which was the right thing to do, since this was the full deal:

Bd: 26	North	
Dir: E	♠ 6543	
Vul: Both	♥ J987	
	♦ 8	
	♣ AKQ8	
West		South
♠ A987		♠ J
♥ K5		♥ A32
♦ K764		♦ QJ9532
♣ 975		♣ 643
	South	
	♠ KQ102	
	♥ Q1064	
	♦ A10	
	♣ J102	

4♦ doubled had to go one down; minus 200. At the other table, Lasut-Manoppo were permitted to play peacefully in 2♥, plus 140. 2 imps to Chinese Taipei, 49-41.

Bd: 27	North	
Dlr: S	♠ KJ983	
Vul: None	♥ 953	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ 108	
West		East
♠ 764		♠ A105
♥ A1074		♥ QJ82
♦ 6		♦ QJ74
♣ AKJ52		♣ 73
	South	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ K6	
	♦ 109853	
	♣ Q964	

At both tables, E/W reached 4♥. North led the ace of diamonds and switched to a spade. There are two ways to make the contract. One is to start clubs immediately, taking one ruff, then passing the ♥Q. Ruff a diamond, ruff another club with the ♥J, finesse the ♥10, draw the last trump, and claim. It doesn't help South to cover the first heart. Perhaps that's the attractive line, but in the Closed Room, where Kuo had raised spades on what appeared to be the doubleton queen, he was more or less marked with the ♣Q and at least three clubs, so Kokish played one round of trumps, then took the club finesse, another route to 420. SR Wu went down at the other table and Indonesia gained 10 imps to reclaim the lead, 51-49.

Chinese Taipei went back in front on the next deal.

Bd: 28	North	
Dlr: W	♠ 43	
Vul: N/S	♥ K7	
	♦ K103	
	♣ A106543	
West		East
♠ Q10862		♠ AK9
♥ A42		♥ 983
♦ AJ92		♦ 8654
♣ J		♣ Q82
	South	
	♠ J75	
	♥ QJ1065	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ K97	

Both E/W pairs competed to the three-level. Kokish-Colker played in spades, where they had to lose two hearts, two diamonds, and a club. Tai-Wu played more opportunely in diamonds, where Wu was able to keep South, Manoppo, off play after ace of clubs, king of hearts. He eventually discarded a heart on a long spade and so scored plus 110. 4 imps to Chinese Taipei, 53-51.

Chinese Taipei won the second quarter 33-22, and at the half, led by 3 imps, 54-51. Would the carryover decide the match?

We'll conclude the second half of the Chinese Taipei vs Indonesia/NA match tomorrow.

## Truckin' On the Semis: Great Britain vs Hisatomi

### First Quarter:

Bd: 1	North	
Dlr: N	♠ AKQ942	
Vul: None	♥ AK8	
	♦ QJ4	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ 8753		♠ 106
♥ ---		♥ J107642
♦ A8752		♦ K3
♣ AK102		♣ Q75
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ Q953	
	♦ 1096	
	♣ J9863	

The match started off with a bang when Great Britain obtained "swing" results at both tables. In the Open Room Kikuo Tatai (North) ran into a buzz-saw when he declared 4♠ doubled. Jason the Hackett's ♥J opening lead began a deadly crossruff which ended in down four, minus 800. In the Closed Room John Armstrong declared the same contract with the same lead, but the defense quickly went awry. Tadashi Teramoto (West) ruffed the opening lead and tried the ♣A. Not seeing anything good from his partner (how could he?) he tried the ♦A, on which the strong-armed man dropped the deceptive queen. While this got a long look from West, in the end he tried to cash his second high club. Kaboom! That was plus 590 to Armstrong-P. Hackett, for 16 IMPs.

Hisatomi regained most of their first-board loss on the next board when Armstrong-P. Hackett bid to 6NT on the diagrammed layout. Teramoto, playing it safe and not doubling, led his two top clubs, then cashed the jack when the queen showed up for down two, plus 200. In the other room Tatai declared a sane 4♠ and made five, plus 650, for a 13 IMP gain, to trail 13-16.

Bd: 5	North	
Dlr: N	♠ ---	
Vul: N/S	♥ Q952	
	♦ J10973	
	♣ 10752	
West		East
♠ A943		♠ Q1087
♥ 106		♥ 843
♦ 4		♦ AKQ5
♣ AQJ983		♣ K4
	South	
	♠ KJ652	
	♥ AKJ7	
	♦ 862	
	♣ 6	

Bd: 2	North	
Dlr: E	♠ KJ1083	
Vul: N/S	♥ ---	
	♦ J875	
	♣ 10942	
West		East
♠ 5		♠ 764
♥ J1087652		♥ K93
♦ 96		♦ 1032
♣ AKJ		♣ 8753
	South	
	♠ AQ92	
	♥ AQ4	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ Q6	

Great Britain had extended their lead to 18-13 when Board 5 appeared. In the Open Room the Hackett twins bid to 5♣. Tatai led the ♥5 and Teruyoshi Hara gave him two spade ruffs to beat the contract two tricks, for plus 100. In the Closed Room Hisatomi-Teramoto bid to 3NT and breathed a sigh of relief when the defense could cash only four heart tricks. That was plus 400, and 11 IMPs to Hisatomi, to finally take the lead 24-18.

Great Britain had closed the score to 24-19 when the great battle of the Hackett 1NTs occurred...

Bd: 7	North	
Dir: S	♠ Q864	
Vul: Both	♥ QJ873	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ J4	
West		East
♠ A753		♠ 1092
♥ K42		♥ A95
♦ 53		♦ KJ62
♣ A1075		♣ 983
	South	
	♠ KJ	
	♥ 106	
	♦ 109874	
	♣ KQ62	

In the Open Room Jason the Hackett declared 1NT from the East side. Hara led the ♦9, and Jason managed to develop a second club trick to go with his spade, two hearts, and two diamonds for plus 90. In the Closed Room Daddy Hackett decided to give his offspring a lesson in dummy play when he took his turn at declaring 1NT from the South. The bout ended a draw when Daddy was also only able to develop seven tricks, so the real Hackett-1NT-declaring champion will have to be crowned at a later time. Still, the second plus 90 was worth 5 IMPs to Great Britain, to tie the match at 24 all.

Bd: 9	North	
Dir: N	♠ AQ93	
Vul: E/W	♥ 1043	
	♦ J6	
	♣ 9752	
West		East
♠ J10762		♠ 854
♥ K9		♥ AQ76
♦ KQ75		♦ A98
♣ J6		♣ Q104
	South	
	♠ K	
	♥ J852	
	♦ 10432	
	♣ AK83	

Two boards later Jason flung the gauntlet at his father's feet for the second time when he again declared 1NT. This time there was little challenge to the play when Hara led a diamond, and Jason was able to up the ante to eight tricks, plus 120. Alas, pere was not about to entering the lists this time and allowed Tadashi to declare 2♠ from the West. The defense collected two club tricks to go with their four trump tricks and the contract went down one, minus 100. That was 6 IMPs to Great Britain, to regain the lead 30-24.

Bd: 12	North	
Dir: W	♠ 54	
Vul: N/S	♥ AKJ9	
	♦ J2	
	♣ Q5432	
West		East
♠ 7632		♠ 98
♥ 1032		♥ Q8765
♦ AK53		♦ Q109
♣ 109		♣ A76
	South	
	♠ AKQJ10	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 8764	
	♣ KJ8	

Tatai-Hara bid to only 2♠ in the Open Room, making five even after the ♦K lead for plus 200. In the Closed Room Armstrong-P. Hackett bid the N/S cards to 3NT, and with the blockage in the diamond suit managed to take nine tricks, for plus 600. That was 9 IMPs to Great Britain, to open up a double-digit lead at 39-24.

But the first quarter wasn't over. The Hisatomi team was regrouping for their stretch run.

Tatai (North) declared 2♠ doubled, with the hand holding both good news and bad news. The good news was that Jason's ♥4 lead took the guess out of that suit for Tatai. The bad news was that there was still a heart loser. The bad news was that Tatai could not get to dummy to pick up Justin's trumps. The good news was that the defense had to lead trumps themselves to keep Tatai from ruffing a club in dummy and then picking up the trumps for only one loser as well. The good news was that even after trump leads the placement of both club honors with Justin permitted Tatai to establish a winner in the suit by leading it from dummy. The bad news was that he failed to find the play. The good news was that he made the contract anyhow, albeit without an overtrick. Plus 470 to Hisatomi.

Bd: 14	North	
Dlr: E	♠ AJ9653	
Vul: None	♥ QJ95	
	♦ ---	
	♣ J86	
West		East
♠ KQ7		♠ 42
♥ 103		♥ K874
♦ QJ106		♦ A52
♣ AK107		♣ 9532
	South	
	♠ 108	
	♥ A62	
	♦ K98743	
	♣ Q4	

In the Closed Room Papa Hackett played 2♦ from South — in his six-zero fit. For him the news was almost all bad. While he could pick up the heart suit for no losers, there were still two club losers and a spade loser to go with his three trump losers (the ♦Q was led), for down one, minus 50. That was 11 IMPs to Hisatomi, to close to within 4 IMPs of Great Britain at 39-35.

Bd: 16	North	
Dlr: W	♠ 6	
Vul: E/W	♥ 73	
	♦ AQJ9865	
	♣ 1087	
West		East
♠ A4		♠ Q108
♥ A98642		♥ KQJ5
♦ K3		♦ 742
♣ A62		♣ Q54
	South	
	♠ KJ97532	
	♥ 10	
	♦ 10	
	♣ KJ93	

The final board of the first quarter provided Hisatomi with yet another handsome pickup. In the Open Room Justin the Hackett (West) declared 4♥, failing by two tricks when every card was adversely placed. That was minus 200. In the Closed Room papa Hackett (South) found his way to 4♠ doubled. The defense managed to collect their five tricks for minus 300, and 11 more IMPs to Hisatomi, to end the first quarter leading by a score of 46-39.

We'll continue with the second quarter of Great Britain vs Chinese Taipei tomorrow.