

## Welcome to the 1999 NEC Bridge Festival

The 1999 **NEC Bridge Festival** began yesterday with the OUCHI CUP, a two-day qualifying Swiss Team Event with 58 teams entered. The field was divided into six sections. The top three finishers in each group qualified for today's Group A Final. The 20 teams with the next highest VP totals will comprise the Group B Final while the remaining teams are eligible for the Group C Final.

### THE SECRETARIAT AND THE D-I-C

Problems, questions, interesting hands? Bring them to us in the Secretariat, Pacifico Room 417. The **Chief Tournament Director** for the **NEC Bridge Festival**, as always, will be the indomitable **Richard Grenside**. Next time you see him, tell him how much you love his neat Alpaca sweater.

### Qualifiers for Today's Group A OUCHI CUP

(Ranks are from yesterday's VP finish and also team numbers for today's matches)

1. FU Zhong, JU Chuancheng, LI Chuan, ZHANG Qiang
2. Nobuko MATSUBARA, Kotomi MATSUBARA, Aiko SAKANO, Minako HIRATSUKA
3. Robert GELLER, Setsuko OGIWARA, Hidenori NARITA, Youichi ITO
4. Kimi MAKITA, Keiko MATSUZAKI, Naoki MESHINO, Tooru AMANO
5. Machiko KANEHARA, Richard ILLINGWORTH, Mizue RYO, Hideko TAKEUCHI
6. Yasuyuki TAKAHASHI, Akira ASATO, Ken SAITO, Ken-ichi KOBAYASHI
7. Yayoi SAKAMOTO, Kyoko TOYOFUKU, Natsuko NISHIDA, Michiko OHNO
8. Haruko KOSHI, Mieko NAKANISHI, Youko OHSAKO, Junko ARAI
9. Yoshiyuki NAKAMURA, Kenji MIYAKUNI, Tadashi IMAKURA, Yasuhiro SHIMIZU, Kazuo FURUTA
10. Mark ITABASHI, Yuichi MASAMURA, Shannon LIPSCOMB, Michael CAPPELLETTI, Eric KOKISH, Richard Colker
11. Ryoga TANAKA, Minoru MIZUTA, Masaaki TAKAYAMA, Toshihiro OGATA
12. Kyoko OHNO, Akihiko YAMADA, Takahiko HIRATA, Makoto HIRATA
13. Hiroshi HISATOMI, Tadashi TERAMOTO, Masayuki INO CHEN Dawei
14. Kyoko SHIMAMURA, Shoko FUKUDA, Tadashi YOSHIDA, Kohji ITO
15. Ayako AMANO, Miho SEKIZAWA, Nobuko SETOGUCHI, Hiroko OHTA
16. Fumiko SAKABE, Kazuko NAKAGAWA, Shizuyo NAKAGAWA, Atsue SHIMIZU
17. Toshinobu KYOSHIMA, Noriko KYOSHIMA, Toshio INABA, Akihiro MIGITA
18. Takashi HIGASHIGUCHI, Kazunori SASAKI, Yoshitaka NARITA, Michiko IWAHASHI

#### **Today's Match-ups (Rds 1 & 2):**

Rd.1:1-10, 2-11, 3-12, 4-13...9-18; Rd.2: 1-5, 2-6, 3-7, 4-8, 9-14, 10-15, 11-16, 12-17, 13-18

## RECEPTION FOR NEC CUP PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Masakatsu Miwa, Associate Senior Vice President of **NEC Corporation**, is hosting a reception for all players tonight in the Pacifico Yokohama (that's the Convention Center for you foreigners), Room 401, at 6:30 pm. Dress is casual. **NOTICE TO NEC CUP TEAM CAPTAINS:** Please be advised that an informal Captains' Meeting will be held in conjunction with tonight's reception, beginning at around 7:00 pm – after the formal festivities are concluded.

### TOMORROW'S SCHEDULE

Play will be held tomorrow on the fourth floor Pacifico, Rooms 415 (Open Room) and 416 (Closed Room). Two-hours and fifty-minutes are allotted for each 20-board match, with a one-hour-and-ten-minute lunch break and a twenty-minute break between matches two and three.

Times	
10:00	MATCH ONE
12:50	LUNCH BREAK
14:00	MATCH TWO
17:10	MATCH THREE

### THE 4TH NEC CUP: CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

#### **General Regulations**

Unless otherwise stated, the regulations for the **NEC Cup** will be those as promulgated for the 1998 Rosenblum Teams as held in Lille, France. A Vugraph will be held during the Semifinals and Finals. Systems up to and including Brown Sticker conventions and defenses thereto will be permitted at the table, providing they are authorized by the Chief Director.

#### **The Round Robin:**

The first numbered team is the home team and sits North/South in the Open Room (Room 415), East/West in the Closed Room (Room 416).

#### **Length of Matches:**

Matches will allotted 2 hours and 50 minutes for 20 boards.

#### **Line Ups:**

Each team will submit their lineup independently at least 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the session.

#### **Corrections and Appeals:**

Law 79C will be regulated as follows:

Qualifying sessions:

For MATCH ONE of the day, up until 14:00.

For MATCH TWO of the day, up until 17:10.

For MATCH THREE, up until 10:00 am the next day, except match 9, when 20:30.

Final sessions: To be announced

#### **Tie Breaking:**

As per the 1998 Rosenblum Teams.

#### **Changes to Systems:**

Only as authorized by the Chief Director. In general, simple additions will be permitted. Major changes may be authorized, but a waiting period of two matches may apply.

#### **Late Arrival, Late Finish, Late Lineups:**

As per Law 81.

#### **The Finals:**

Carryover: 20% of the margin between the teams concerned.

Choice of Opponents in Semis: 1st in Round Robin to choose the 3rd or 4th place team.

Seating Rights: Winner of the toss may select to sit first in the 1st & 3rd or 2nd & 4th segment.

Length of Matches: 2 hours 20 minutes for 16 boards.

# ROSTERS OF NEC CUP TEAMS

## GREAT BRITAIN

Paul HACKETT  
John ARMSTRONG

Jason HACKETT  
Brigitte MAVROMICHALIS

Justin HACKETT

## CHINA

LIU Gang(NPC)  
JU Chuancheng

YU Jiangyong (Interpreter)  
ZHANG Qiang

FU Zhong  
LIU Chuan

## USA

Mike CAPPELLETTI Jr.  
Gene SIMPSON

Shannon LIPSCOMB  
Eric KOKISH

Mark ITABASHI  
Rich COLKER

## JAPAN – PABF OPEN

HISATOMI Hiroshi  
CHEN Dawei

TERAMOTO Tadashi  
MIYAKUNI Kenji

INO Masayuki  
IMAKURA Tadashi

## JAPAN – PABF WOMEN

FUKUDA Shoko  
TOYOFUKU Kyoko

SHIMAMURA Kyoko  
NISHIDA Natsuko

SAKAMOTO Yayoi  
OHNO Michiko

## JAPAN – PABF YOUTH

HARADA Tomoyuki  
AKAMA Keisuke

KOHNO Makoto  
YOSHIDA Masaru

FURUTA Kazuo  
MASAMURA Yuichi

## JAPAN – YAMADA

YAMADA Akihiko  
TAKAHASHI Katsumi

OHNO Kyoko  
HIRATA Takahiko

YAMADA Kazuhiko  
SHIMIZU Seiya

## JAPAN – NAITO

OHTA Hiroko  
AMANO Ayako

SETOGUUCHI Nobuko  
NAITO Sakiko

SEKIZAWA Miho  
MORIYAMA Setsuko

## JAPAN – TAKAYAMA

TAKAYAMA Masaaki  
NAGASAKA Sei

KOBAYASHI Yasushi  
MIZUTA Minoru

TAKANO Hideki  
TANAKA Ryoga

## JAPAN – TATAI

TATAI Kikuo  
HIRATA Makoto

HARA Teruyoshi  
HAYASHI Nobuyuki

SHIMIZU Yasuhiro



# THE NEC BRIDGE FESTIVAL IS ON THE INTERNET

We are happy to announce that our Daily Bulletins are once again available on the Internet. Call your family and friends and tell them they can follow the adventures of the **NEC Bridge Festival** players by surfing the net to either of the following addresses:

<http://bridge.cplaza.ne.jp/necfest.html>

– or –

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp>

## THE (3RD) MARLBORO CHINA CUP

October 11-17, 1998: Beijing, China

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marlboro China Cup invitational cash prize tournament was held in Beijing, China. José Damiani played in the Open Pairs (with WBF Vice President Jens Auken) and met with Wu Shaozu, President of the Chinese Olympic Committee, to discuss the ongoing plans for bridge as an Olympic sport.

The teams events (Open and Women's) were played as double round robins of 32-board matches, IMPs converted to Victory Points, with no finals. With four strong teams in each field, the scores were tightly bunched and the lead changed hands many times in the Open Teams before the winners were determined. In the Women's Teams, the host country was solid throughout and won quite comfortably.

The results for the Open Teams were:

- (1) **Europe** (France: Alain Levy, Paul Chemla, Christian Mari, Franck Multon) 98 Vps (\$18,000)
- (2) **World Stars** (Brigitte Mavromichalis, npc; Geir Helgemo, Paul/Jason/Justin Hackett) 95 Vps
- (3) **North America** (George Mittelman, Fred Gitelman, Peter Nagy, Eric Kokish, Kit Woolsey, Fred Stewart) 84 Vps
- (4) **China** (Jianming Dai, Haojun Shi, Weimin Wang, Xiaojing Wang, Hongjun Xu, Zejun Zhuang) 82 VPs.

The results for the Women's Teams were:

- (1) **China** (Ling Gu, Wenfei Wang, Ya-lan Zhang, Yu Zhang) 112 Vps (\$13,000)
- (2) **Europe** (Jens Auken, npc; Bep Vriend, Marijke van der Pas, Nicola Smith, Pat Davies, Sabine Auken, Kirsten Möller) 100 Vps
- (3) **North America** (Kathie Wei-Sender, Juanita Chambers, Pam Wittes, Stasha Cohen, Dianna Gordon) 81 Vps
- (4) **World Stars** (Katerina Midskog, Linda Långstrom, with Ming Sun and Hongli Wang co-opted from the Chinese team to replace Bettina Kalkerup and Charlotte Koch-Palmund, who had to withdraw) 65 VPs.

In the (Cavendish-style) Open Pairs, Canadians Mittelman and Gitelman had three very good sessions and looked like sure winners, but two of their hosts, Messrs Fu/Ju scored a remarkable +1315 IMPs in the third session to erase a deficit of nearly 700 IMPs to win, going away.

The results for the Open Pairs (32 pairs) were:

Pair	Score	Prize
(1) <b>Zhong Fu/Chuancheng Ju</b>	<b>1914.29</b>	<b>\$4000</b>
(2) George Mittelman/Fred Gitelman	1571.29	
(3) Jihong Hu/Baoqiang Zhu	1114.43	
(4) Jason Hackett/Geir Helgemo	1050.36	

The following deal brought China 10 IMPs in their second meeting with North America:

Bd: 24	North		
Dir: West	♠ Q93		
Vul: None	♥ K7		
	♦ J63		
	♣ 109754		
West		East	
♠ AK6		♠ 42	
♥ AJ962		♥ Q1085	
♦ 102		♦ 84	
♣ K63		♣ AQJ82	
	South		
	♠ J10875		
	♥ 43		
	♦ AKQ975		
	♣ —		
West	North	East	South
Kokish	Dai	Nagy	Shi
1♥	Pass	1NT(i)	2♦
Dble(ii)	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♥	All
		Pass	
(i) Semi-forcing; (ii) Takeout			

Dai led the ♦2 against 4♥. Shi won the king, then smoothly returned the ♦5. Dai won his jack and gave Shi his club ruff. The ♥K was the setting trick. That was pretty defense and earned a game swing when 4♥ was made at the other table. Stewart had shown both his suits wholesale with a Michaels Cue-bid and Woolsey found the normal but unfortunate lead of a spade. Declarer won and played ace of trumps, trump.

But should this really have been a defensive problem? As you can see, North/South are cold for 4♠. Perhaps Shi should have risked 3♠ over 3♦. And at the other table, perhaps the Michaels Cue-bid was the wrong vehicle to describe the South hand.



"Would you look behind me and see if my trousers are ripped?"

## BERKOWITZ-COHEN WIN 1999 CAP GEMINI PAIRS

Americans David Berkowitz and Larry Cohen won the prestigious 13<sup>th</sup> Cap Gemini World Top Invitational Pairs Tournament, held January 14-17 in The Hague, The Netherlands. The eventual winners took the lead on the first board and never looked back, finishing a half match ahead of the second-place pair, Italians Andrea Buratti and Massimo Lanzarotti. The remaining places in the 16-pair field were:

### FINAL STANDINGS

1. Berkowitz & Cohen	886
2. Buratti & Lanzarotti	833
3. Leufkens & Westra	830
4. Helness & Helgemo	822
5. Chagas & Branco	802
6. Lauria & Versace	793
7. Mahmood & Forrester	771
8. Kwiecien & Pszczola	758
9. Jansen & Westerhof	734
10. Maas & Ramondt	722
11. Hackett & Hackett	712
12. Khiuppenen & Kholomeev	698
13. Chemla & Levy	685
14. Fischer & Weigkricht	657
15. Lindkvist & Fredin	648
16. Ozdil & Lesniewski	639



David Berkowitz (left) and Larry Cohen

## HELGEMO-HELNESS WIN MACALLAN PAIRS

The 1999 Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, held January 20-22 in London, England, was won by Norway's Gier Helgemo and Tor Helness. The pair successfully defended their title after their record-setting margin of victory last year. They were only the second pair in the long history of the event to defend successfully, the other being the USA's Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell. The remaining places in the 16-pair field were:

### FINAL STANDINGS

Pair (Country)	VPs	Prize
1. Helgemo & Helness (Norway)	585	£5,000
2. Lauria & Versace (Italy)	517	£2,000
3. Sharif & Mari (Egypt/France)	516	£1,000
4. Chagas & Weinstein (Brazil/USA)	496	£1,000
5. Robson & Mahmood (GB/USA)	492	£ 750
6. Hamman & Soloway (USA)	458	£ 750
7. Zhuang & Xu (China)	446	£ 500
8. Forrester & Mittelman (GB/Can)	444	
9. Chemla & Levy (France)	439	
10. Kwiecien & Pszczola (Poland)	435	
11. Smith & Hackett (GB)	430	
12. Auken & von Arnim (Germany)	424	
13. Price & Townsend (GB)	406	
14. Schapiro & Gordon (GB)	397	
15. Wolff & Deutsch (USA)	390	
16. Meyers & Montin (USA)	323	



### THE 1999 OUCHI CUP: First Session

Bd: 1	North	
Dir: North	♠ K75	
Vul: None	♥ A763	
	♦ 107	
	♣ J765	
West		East
♠ J4		♠ 109832
♥ Q82		♥ 9
♦ KJ432		♦ 86
♣ 1082		♣ AKQ93
	South	
	♠ AQ6	
	♥ KJ1054	
	♦ AQ95	
	♣ 4	

The normal contract was 4♥ by South, often reached after East said something about his hand. If East described a two-suiter, declarer was in a strong position to guess the trumps and make four or five, depending on how he played the diamonds.

Curiously, nearly half the declarers who declared 4♥ went down, apparently after playing ace-king of trumps, losing the single diamond finesse, having West cash the trump queen, and then misguessing diamonds by ruffing the third round in dummy (the fall of the six and eight leave declarer a ruffing finesse against the jack with the nine-five). Unlucky, perhaps, but all the fancy footwork was really not necessary.

Declarer should play a club if the defense has not already done so (to establish a link to his hand while depriving East of an entry), then draw only one round of trumps before taking the diamond finesse. Whatever West plays, declarer can cash the second high trump and go about his business, getting two diamond ruffs in dummy.

Bd: 9	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AK985		
Vul: E/W	♥ 10		
	♦ AJ743		
	♣ 107		
West		East	
♠ Q74		♠ 3	
♥ 9765		♥ AKQ84	
♦ KQ10		♦ 9	
♣ 842		♣ KQJ653	
	South		
	♠ J1062		
	♥ J32		
	♦ 8652		
	♣ A9		

There were very few matches in which the final contract was played below the five-level. East/West can't make 5♣ or 5♥ (although someone was allowed to do so, presumably after North tried ace-king of spades and South played a third spade after winning the ♣A). North/South might come to ten tricks in spades, but it takes some doing; if the defense does not start by forcing declarer, he uses his club entry to South to run the ♠J, then leads a diamond, playing the jack if West plays the ten, ducking West's honor otherwise. Later he enters the South hand with the fourth round of spades to finesse against West's remaining diamond honor.



"V is for Vunderful."

This was a typical auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♠	3♠
4♥	4♣	5♣	Pass
5♥	All Pass		

Some North players doubled 5♥ in a scenario like that one. Do you think that West should bid 4♥? Or should he wait for a second bid from his partner? Once West bids 4♥, East can hardly refrain from competing to the five-level. Might East start with 2♣, emphasizing his six-card suit and concealing his hand for the moment? That wouldn't help here, since North/South would be in 4♠ when the bidding reverted to East, who would bid 4NT to suggest secondary length in one of the red suits.

Bd: 11	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 8		
Vul: None	♥ J4		
	♦ Q10864		
	♣ K9876		
West		East	
♠ K107		♠ J543	
♥ AQ1087		♥ K93	
♦ 5		♦ AKJ732	
♣ Q542		♣ —	
	South		
	♠ AQ962		
	♥ 652		
	♦ 9		
	♣ AJ103		

The popular contract on this one was 4♥ by West, after a 1♠ opening by South, East issuing a slam try. After a spade to the ace and a spade return, North ruffing declarer's ten, North does best to exit with a trump. If declarer does not draw trumps and finesse the ♦J, he is a favorite to go down. If North exits with a diamond, declarer is likely to play ace-king of diamonds. When South ruffs, declarer can count only eight trumps, and a diamond; it appears that he will not be able to score the ♠K if he takes all his ruffs. He overruffs the second diamond, ruffs a club, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a club, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a club, and ruffs a diamond. He is down to one high trump, a losing club, and the ♠K. He cashes the trump and tries the ♠K. Does it live? Well, that depends on whether South has discarded three spades on those diamond ruffs in the closed hand. If

he has not done so, poor North will be out of spades but also trumps.

If North competes over West's light 2♥ overcall with a negative double, declarer has a better chance to get home, taking the diamond finesse.

On Board 12, East held: ♠ Q2 ♥ J63 ♦ 1087 ♣ AK963

With North/South vulnerable, West opened 1♠. North overcalled 2♥. What should East bid?

You could make a case for an off-center negative double, a “nothing fits” pass, or the bid chosen by a nameless Bulletin editor with the initials RC – 2♠. We should see this one in the Master Solvers’ Club in the new millennium. This was the full deal:

Bd: 12	North	
Dlr: West	♠ 8	
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ752	
	♦ KJ93	
	♣ J42	
West		East
♠ A9754		♠ Q2
♥ A8		♥ J63
♦ A64		♦ 1087
♣ Q87		♣ AK963
	South	
	♠ KJ1063	
	♥ 1094	
	♦ Q52	
	♣ 105	

North’s remarkable 2♥ overcall created a serious problem for East and nudged his opponents into a contract that South was delighted to defend, but West had no trouble in 2♠ on the lead of the ♥K. Declarer won the ace, returned a heart to the queen, ducked the diamond switch (low to the queen), won the second diamond, crossed to the ♣A, discarded his remaining diamond on the ♥J. Ruffed dummy’s last diamond, and played a club to the king and a low club. South ruffed, but had only trumps remaining and had to concede a trick to the ♠Q. In practice, declarer made an overtrick when South burned a high trump to ruff the third club.

Note that if North had not overcalled 2♥, East/West were likely to alight in 3♣ via: 1♠-1NT; 2♣-3♣, or in 3NT, West converting 3♣ to 3NT. In the event, 3NT

was attempted several times but was never made.

Bd: 14	North	
Dlr: East	♠ K983	
Vul: None	♥ 10	
	♦ K852	
	♣ KJ104	
West		East
♠ A52		♠ QJ
♥ 9762		♥ KJ843
♦ J10		♦ A73
♣ 8632		♣ A95
	South	
	♠ 10764	
	♥ AQ5	
	♦ Q964	
	♣ Q7	

At our table, Colker-san opened the East hand with a strong notrump and shut everyone out. South led a diamond and we finished three down; minus 150. With 2♥ seemingly due to fail and North/South on for 110 or 140 in spades, that didn’t have to be a tragedy, but it certainly didn’t seem likely that we could gain on the deal. What did we know?

At the other table, after 1♥-Pass-2♥, Shannon Lipscomb doubled for takeout with the North hand. Over East’s 3♥, Mike Cappelletti, Jr jumped to 4♠. With two aces and two trumps to lose, prospects seemed bleak. West led the ♦J, ducked to the queen, and declarer led a trump. West went in with the ace to continue with the ♦10, covered by the king and ace. A third diamond would have retrieved the lost trump trick for the defense, but East switched to a

heart. Declarer won the ace, dropped East’s trump honor, drew the remaining trump, and conceded the ♣A for plus 420. Win 7.



“No, ducky, I’m the cute Hackett.”



“Put me down for 2.000 ¥ on Denver”



Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ K98752		
Vul: Both	♥ J95		
	♦ 10		
	♣ J103		
West		East	
♠ 6		♠ J3	
♥ AK10764		♥ 82	
♦ AK7		♦ QJ832	
♣ AK2		♣ Q854	
	South		
	♠ AQ104		
	♥ Q3		
	♦ 9654		
	♣ 976		

6♦ is a very good contract for East/West, but it is not an east slam to reach. Only four pairs of 58 found a way to get there, and only three of them made it (there is a small handling charge because of the four-one trump break; ruff the second spade, play ace-king of trumps, cross to the club queen, draw trumps, ruff out the hearts, claim). These were the successful auctions:



"Were you *really* on the Titanic, Paul?"

West	East	West	East	West	East
Fukuda	Shimamura	Amram	Hamada	Otsuka	Sugino
2♣	2♦ (0/1 control)	2♣	2♦	2♣	2♦
2♥	3♦	2♥	3♦	2♥	3♦
6♦	Pass	4♦	5♦	4♦	4♥
		6♦	Pass	4♠ (DBL)	5♦
				6♦	Pass

Congratulations to Shoko Fukuda-Kyoko Shimamura, Sayoko Amram-Chiaki Hamada, and Masako Otsuka-Masakatsu Sugino for their wonderful plus 1370s.

I confess that this combination was particularly difficult for us because of science. We started the same way as the successful pairs but our 2♥ rebid is either natural or very strong and balanced. Responder generally relays with 2♠ to find out and anything but 2NT confirms a strong two-bid in hearts (as here: 2♠-3♥). East could have bid 4♦, but 4♥ seemed like a sensible alternative and that was that. Nice treatment, that two-way 2♥ rebid, but it is not always the answer to life. (It is hard *not* to play a convention with your name on it! – R.C.) Perhaps West should rebid 3♣, feigning a two-suiter. If East continues with 3♦, the partnership prevails.

Bd: 27	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 5432		
Vul: None	♥ KQ107		
	♦ AK7		
	♣ KJ		
West		East	
♠ KJ1097		♠ AQ6	
♥ J93		♥ A8	
♦ 9		♦ J854	
♣ AQ65		♣ 8743	
	South		
	♠ 8		
	♥ 6542		
	♦ Q10632		
	♣ 1092		

Although game is not hopeless for East/West single dummy, it is not a good contract. Particularly after North doubles 1♠ for takeout and South bids diamonds. If North plays on diamonds declarer will lose control. At one table that we know of, North led the ♦A, then switched to a trump. Declarer won in dummy and played two rounds of hearts. North won and continued trumps, believing South did not have as many as four hearts (the count notwithstanding). Declarer won in hand, ruffed, his heart loser, and played a club, ducking to North's jack. North played a high heart to force declarer, but it was too late. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps, and played the ♣A, picking off the king. He had two more club winners for plus 420 and an 11-imp gain.

## THE OUCHI CUP: Second Session

Bd: 2	North		
Dlr: East	♠ A9653		
Vul: N/S	♥ AQ1095		
	♦ K5		
	♣ 3		
West		East	
♠ Q4		♠ KJ10872	
♥ J74		♥ K2	
♦ AQ3		♦ 984	
♣ AQ862		♣ K4	
	South		
	♠ —		
	♥ 863		
	♦ J10762		
	♣ J10975		

The East hand is really neither a pure 1♠ nor a 2♠ opening, but we suspect that hardly anyone passed as dealer at favorable vulnerability. We'd bet that there were more 1♠ openings than weak two-bids. About three-quarters of the field reached 4♠ and more than half of them were doubled. As long as declarer remains calm, he can make the contract by drawing trumps, South revealing the trump distribution on the first round. Even on a heart lead, declarer can withstand the force and take five trumps, three clubs, and two red tricks.

Bd: 3	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 2		
Vul: E/W	♥ AK92		
	♦ AQ83		
	♣ 9732		
West		East	
♠ AKQ65		♠ J10983	
♥ Q1043		♥ J765	
♦ K95		♦ 762	
♣ 8		♣ 5	
	South		
	♠ 74		
	♥ 8		
	♦ J104		
	♣ AKQJ1064		

North/South can make 6♣ with the aid of the diamond finesse and about a third of the field bid it. Many of those pairs were doubled, perhaps because West thought they might be sacrificing. Not all the pairs who missed slam scored badly, however, because East/West often conceded a substantial penalty in spades. North/South, you will notice, can take two hearts, two heart ruffs, three diamonds, and a club. The biggest number we saw was 2000, for 6♠ doubled, down seven – twice. There was a 1700 and a raft of 1400s.

Now let's see what the Law of Total Tricks has to say about this combination. East/West have 10 trumps, North/South 11. There out to be 21 total tricks. North/South have 12 but East/West have only...five! Urgent call for Larry Cohen. The Law is *four tricks off* on this one.

Bd: 9	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 9832		
Vul: E/W	♥ K		
	♦ AJ84		
	♣ AK103		
West		East	
♠ 7		♠ AK64	
♥ J852		♥ AQ10743	
♦ Q75		♦ K96	
♣ 97542		♣ —	
	South		
	♠ QJ105		
	♥ 96		
	♦ 1032		
	♣ QJ86		

With the hearts as they are, anyone bidding 6♥ with the East/West cards is likely to make it; declarer can get three ruffs in West and pick up trumps. Only two pairs reached this ambitious slam, and only one of them made it. We'll have to investigate further to give you the details.



"There is no hope – let us pray!"

There were bushels of slams in this session, several of them easy ones. Board 19 was a bit more complex...

Bd: 19	North
Dlr: South	♠ AQ2
Vul: E/W	♥ A10
	♦ J1064
	♣ Q863
West	East
♠ 8743	♠ 10965
♥ QJ843	♥ 965
♦ 52	♦ Q7
♣ 92	♣ KJ54
	South
	♠ KJ
	♥ K72
	♦ AK983
	♣ A107

6♦ needs only the trumps to come in, but although many pairs reached slam, only about a third of them played in diamonds. The rest played in 6NT, which is quite a bit worse because there is no heart ruff in the short hand for the twelfth trick.

We can see that this contract can be made by leading a low club to the queen and king, then finessing the ten on the way back, but at the table very few declarers made 6NT, presumably playing ace and low towards the queen.

It is hardly surprising that East/West did not often reach slam on this deal. A typical auction would be:

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
5♣	All Pass		

or perhaps...

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

Bd: 20	North
Dlr: West	♠ AK10432
Vul: Both	♥ 1052
	♦ J64
	♣ 6
West	East
♠ —	♠ J6
♥ 64	♥ AKJ
♦ Q532	♦ K10987
♣ KJ107542	♣ AQ9
	South
	♠ Q9875
	♥ Q9873
	♦ A
	♣ 83

East/West can make 6♣ legitimately by guessing diamonds correctly, but 6♦ can be defeated on a club lead and subsequent club ruff. Only three pairs reached slam. The declarer in 6♣ misguessed diamonds to go one down, but the two declarers in 6♦ (one of them doubled) made their contracts.



"I am Zhong Fu...I am invincible!"



"Gee, I could do that, too; maybe they'll let me play next session."

Bd: 21	North
Dlr: North	♠ J2
Vul: N/S	♥ A742
	♦ 1086
	♣ AQ75
West	East
♠ 1093	♠ 875
♥ 93	♥ 1065
♦ 7	♦ AQ5432
♣ KJ109842	♣ 6
	South
	♠ AKQ64
	♥ KQJ8
	♦ KJ9
	♣ 3

6♥ is a fair contract on this one, but with both East and West likely to lead a diamond, the slam is likely to fail. Three pairs bid and made 6♥, one the unbreakable 6NT.

6♠ is a flawed contract, but that needn't be fatal. Seven East/West pairs bid it and only one of them failed. For the American team, Lipscomb-Cappelletti made it after the lead of the ♥K, which held. South switched to the ♦A. Perhaps North should overtake to return a heart (South showed length in diamonds in the auction). Alas, their teammates allowed the slam to make also when South led the ♦A after North had doubled to discourage a diamond lead.

Bd: 29	North
Dlr: North	♠ 96
Vul: Both	♥ A107
	♦ K109762
	♣ 94
West	East
♠ KJ732	♠ AQ1054
♥ J865	♥ 942
♦ J8	♦ —
♣ J5	♣ AKQ76
	South
	♠ 8
	♥ KQ3
	♦ AQ543
	♣ 10832



"I knew that wouldn't be good enough – you doubled, huh?"

Six pairs reached slam on this one, but with both black suits lying badly, no one made it. As long as the trump suit comes in, slam is a good bet in either black suit; the other black suit can be established with a ruff. Hard luck for the brave bidders.

Bd: 30	North
Dlr: East	♠ KQ962
Vul: None	♥ 5
	♦ AQ63
	♣ AQ8
West	East
♠ 3	♠ J854
♥ A8643	♥ KQJ109
♦ 872	♦ J54
♣ J542	♣ 7
	South
	♠ A107
	♥ 72
	♦ K109
	♣ K10963

*Good luck today, y'all!*