

Lasocki-Lantaron Win Foreign Minister Cup

In as close a finish in recent years as we can remember the international pair of Krszytof Lasocki (POLAND) and Louis Lantaron (SPAIN) won the Foreign Minister Cup with a score of 1114, only 5 matchpoints ahead of second-place finishers MOROZUMI Akira and SUMITA Takashi of JAPAN with 1109. In third place were Americans Mark Itabashi and Garey Hayden with 1091.



Lasocki-Lantaron



SEKIYAMA-TAN

TAN-SEKIYAMA Win Asuka Cup

TAN Mizuko and SEKIYAMA Hiroko won the Asuka Cup with a score of 1391.50. Second were TSUCHISAKA Kazumi and TANAKA Junko with 1297.00. Third were ICHIHASHI Misuzu and IWAHASHI Michiko with a score of 1290.00.

Congratulations to all the winners. The top ten places in each event are listed on the following page.

The NEC Cup Bridge Festival Is on the Internet

We are happy to announce that our Bulletins are once again available on the Internet. Call your family and friends and tell them they can follow the adventures of the **NEC Cup 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>

Top Ten Finishers in the Foreign Minister Cup

Rank	Names	Score
1	LASOCKI-LANTARON	1114
2	MOROZUMI-SUMITA	1109
3	ITABASHI-HAYDEN	1091
4	GELLER-OGIHARA	1043
5	SACUL-CHEN	1041.56
6	SEKIZAWA-AMANO	1032.72
7	ARMSTRONG-DEL'MONTE	1027.52
8	CHUA-HINGE	1024.50
9	ASAOKA-KAWAKAMI	1018.50
10	MAYER-MARSTON	1012.50

Top Ten Finishers in the Asuka Cup

Rank	Names	Score
1	TAN-SEKIYAMA	1391.50
2	TSUCHISAKA-TANAKA	1297.00
3	ICHIHASHI-IWAHASHI	1290.00
4	ODAIRA-TAKANO	1246.00
5	IMAKURA-MURATA	1236.50
6	SENGOKU-SATO	1231.00
7	CARRUTHERS-MIYAISHI	1204.00
8	TURNER-HIRATA	1191.50
9	MATSUMOTO-KAYA	1186.00
10	NARITA-IWAI	1175.00



2nd in Foreign Minister Cup:
MOROZUMI-SUMITA



2nd in Asuka Cup
TANAKA-TSUCHISAKA



3rd in Foreign Minister Cup
Itabashi-Hayden



3rd in Asuka Cup
ICHIHASHI-IWAHASHI

NEC Cup Bridge Festival 2000

Domo Arigato

On behalf of all the participants, we would like to congratulate **NEC** once again for joining with **JCBL** to sponsor a bridge event of the highest quality. This tournament has received praise from the players; many say it was one of the best bridge experiences they have had. Kudos to the sponsors and especially the **JCBL** staff.

Yokohama, and especially the Pacifico, area are the same wonderful places we remembered from years past. The weather once again has been pleasant and the people warm and friendly as always. It has been our great pleasure to be reunited with our many old friends and to share once again the happy times, fun and excitement of this tournament. Your kindness and generosity warm our hearts.

The inclusion of significant prizes and broad participation makes the **NEC Bridge Festival** an important event on the bridge calendar. It grows in prestige each year and we hope it will continue to grow in stature in the years to come.

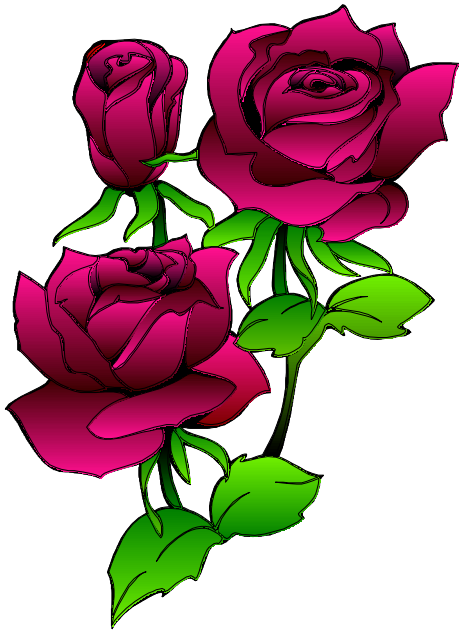
The Bulletin Editors are grateful to those who helped us with deals, stories and other information to keep you informed. Many thanks to Nakatani-san, for his peerless (and fearless) leadership and his enduring friendship. To Richard Grenside, tormented director, who this year dealt with an unusually large number of arcane problems and solved them all. To Omasa-san, who provided us remarkable technical and computer support. To Nakamura-san, for his especially wonderful pictures (which we subjected to our peculiar sense of humor) and other technical assistance. To Hayashi-san and Suzuki-san for their help with many things, both technical and otherwise. To Higashiguchi-san who produced the internet coverage and who put up with our exotic late-night work schedule. Thanks also to the many other volunteers who passed through our office performing the myriad functions critical to this tournament's success, while we were hopelessly absorbed in our computer screens. Our thanks also to the players, who produced a rich source of interesting and humorous stories this year.

And finally, a special thanks to those who thought of us on this holiday. A happy St. Valentine's Day from each of us to all of you.



A Special Thank You

To the treasured patrons of the **2000 NEC Bridge Festival**



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Young Flower

Lost Brilliancy

by Adam Mesbur

The “Hackett” team from Great Britain won the Y2K NEC Cup in Yokohama, Japan. Thirty teams competed in a Swiss with eight going forward to the knock-out stages for quarter-finals, semi-finals and final. An Irish quartet, Hugh McGann, Tom Hanlon, Pat Walshe and Adam Mesbur narrowly missed the final finishing a very close tenth in the preliminary stage. We were beaten by the Hackett team in the last round of the Swiss and just 6 imps would have put us in the next stage. The quality of the field was remarkably high with teams from the USA, two each from Canada, Indonesia, Australia and China and others from GB, Poland, Spain, Australia and a number of top Japanese teams including the defending champions and the Olympiad team.

	North	
	♠ 107	
	♥ A874	
	♦ J95	
	♣ J973	
West		East
♠ AK986		♠ J52
♥ K53		♥ Q96
♦ 4		♦ K10832
♣ A864		♣ K10
	South	
	♠ Q43	
	♥ J102	
	♦ AQ76	
	♣ Q52	

In our second last match against Spain declarers at both tables missed a chance to make 4♠ (see diagram, top of next column). North led the ♦5. Declarer played low from dummy and South won the queen. The ♥J was returned. West should let this run to dummy’s queen. The ♦K is led. South covers and West ruffs. Now he cashes the ace and king of trumps. The queen does not fall but at least they are three-two.

A club goes to the king and declarer ruffs another diamond, North’s jack falling. The ♣A and a club ruff puts West on the table. He cashes the ♦10, South must follow, and then the last diamond. South can ruff but West has discarded a losing club and a heart. He makes ten tricks by way of four trumps, a ruff in dummy, a heart, two diamonds and two top clubs. That might have won the brilliancy prize.



“I’m off to see the wizard...”



“Oops,...sorry, wrong bathroom.”



“Few people realize that we’re actually Siamese twins.”

The NEC Cup Final

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

Bd: 33	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 109432		
Vul: None	♥ A9		
	♦ Q102		
	♣ J98		
West		East	
♠ Q		♠ KJ8765	
♥ Q3		♥ 764	
♦ AKJ97543		♦ 6	
♣ A4		♣ 765	
	South		
	♠ A		
	♥ KJ10852		
	♦ 8		
	♣ KQ1032		

Bd: 35	North		
Dlr: South	♠ A972		
Vul: E/W	♥ 10		
	♦ AJ7543		
	♣ J9		
West		East	
♠ J10		♠ K654	
♥ 7654		♥ QJ9	
♦ Q8		♦ K109	
♣ AQ864		♣ K103	
	South		
	♠ Q83		
	♥ AK832		
	♦ 62		
	♣ 752		

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	Pass	2♠	4♥
5♦	Dbl	All Pass	
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	2♦(1)	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♦(2)	3♠(3)
3NT	Pass	Pass	4♣
4♦	All Pass		
	(1) Multi 2♦; (2) Minimum weak 2♠		
	(3) ♥ and a minor, sound hand		

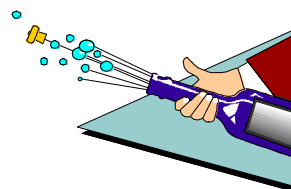
Before passing 4♦ Justin wrote Chen a note, reading, "4♦=F? or NF?" Chen circled "F" for "forcing." Justin passed, awaiting bigger things, but Chen passed too. Director call. Consultation. "If he wasn't sure about 4♦, he should have said so; I'd have bid 5♣." "Play on." Down 100. No game bonus, no penalty, no satisfaction. Ruling? Adjustment to 5♣, making five; plus 400. Papa's 5♦ doubled was down 500. 3 imps to JAPAN, 91-60. This match has had a little of everything so far.



	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	
			1NT	
Pass	3♦	All Pass		
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
			1♥	
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠	
All Pass				

Imakura made 3♦ on a heart lead, discarding a club and losing only two trumps, a club, and one spade on the friendly lie of that suit; plus 110.

Justin's nauseating 3♠ handled as badly as possible. Low trump to the ten and ace, low diamond. Chen won the nine and led a second low trump, ducked to the jack. Ace and a club put Chen back on play to cash the ♠K and continue clubs. Justin took only two trumps, two high hearts, and the ♦A for down four; minus 200. 7 imps to JAPAN, ahead now by 40, 100-60.



Bd: 36	North
Dlr: West	♠ 863
Vul: Both	♥ Q974
	♦ 105
	♣ A984
West	East
♠ A	♠ Q72
♥ J83	♥ AK52
♦ KQJ84	♦ 7632
♣ K632	♣ J5
	South
	♠ KJ10954
	♥ 106
	♦ A9
	♣ Q107

Bd: 37	North
Dlr: North	♠ 1032
Vul: N/S	♥ 75
	♦ AK74
	♣ K1087
West	East
♠ AKQJ5	♠ 764
♥ 83	♥ QJ642
♦ Q	♦ 10852
♣ AQJ94	♣ 2
	South
	♠ 98
	♥ AK109
	♦ J963
	♣ 653

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbf*	2♠	3♦	3♠
4♦	All Pass		
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	2♠
All Pass			

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

The Brits got the job done in the Open Room when they pushed their opponents to 3♠, but Papa went on to 4♦ and undid the good work. One down. Meanwhile, Hirata-Chen produced a very soft result by selling out to 2♠ and giving Jason an easy ride in the play; Chen switched to the ♣5 when he won his side's first heart trick (Hirata did not cover the ten), seven, king, ace, and Jason lost no club tricks. Plus 110.

Japan gained 2 imps on a saved undertrick as 4♠ couldn't quite get home. Is this an example of the modern weak two-bid? Second seat yet.



The Spanish "Armada"

Bd: 38	North
Dlr: East	♠ Q1084
Vul: E/W	♥ AK109
	♦ 87
	♣ 964
West	East
♠ AJ952	♠ 3
♥ 6	♥ QJ32
♦ J5	♦ Q9432
♣ J10753	♣ Q82
	South
	♠ K76
	♥ 8754
	♦ AK106
	♣ AK

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		Pass	1♦
1♠	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Both Souths were too strong for a notrump in their methods. So they started with 1♦. Remarkably, Papa stayed out where Hirata came in, and this decision proved to be critical to the fate of the deal.

Unopposed, Imakura-Teramoto bid comfortably to 4♥, the normal contract. Armstrong led a diamond and Imakura won the ace, came to the ♥A, and led a spade to the king and ace. Papa returned a spade, of course, and Imakura put up the queen. He could not survive that play on this layout. Down one, minus 50.

Meanwhile, the 1♠ overcall and the liberal four-card major style of the partnership combined to convince Justin to bid 1NT rather than dabble with a negative double. That got him a low heart lead against 3NT, and he had time to play spades to best effect and duck a diamond, eventually squeezing Chen in the red suits for a second overtrick; plus 460. 11 imps to GB, 71-102.

It's not often that you can state with confidence that a single deal determined the outcome of a long match, but this is one of those occasions. Buckle up. You're in for a wild ride...



"It's called a 'Kibble,' Ish."

Bd: 39	North
Dlr: South	♠ 543
Vul: Both	♥ J7
	♦ J52
	♣ 97632
West	East
♠ 7	♠ AKQJ1082
♥ KQ10965	♥ 32
♦ KQ1098	♦ A
♣ K	♣ AJ4
	South
	♠ 96
	♥ A84
	♦ 7643
	♣ Q1085

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♥	Pass	7NT	Dbl
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Hirata-Chen chalked up a pedestrian 1430 after using RKCB for hearts and discovering a missing key card. That is not such a good treatment for these cards because 7♠ or even 7NT could be cold with the ♥K the missing key card. But it didn't matter this time.

Papa and Armstrong were off to the same start as their counterparts, but here it was the weaker hand that used RKCB for hearts. Armstrong showed his aces and would have been in good shape had Papa continued with 5NT to confirm all the keys and the ♥Q. Here, however, Papa closed out the auction (he thought) in 6♥, confirming to Armstrong that

one keycard was missing. He knew that it might be the ♥A, but it was just as likely that it was the ♥K. In that case, there figured to be plenty of diamond discards available and 7♠ or 7NT figured to be cold. Unwilling to settle for six when seven might be not only laydown but easier to bid without that wretched RKCB to get in the way, Armstrong took a practical shot at seven, but he chose notrump rather than spades, which deprived his side of certain extra chances on the actual lie. Teramoto saw that 7NT would fail if Imakura found the right opening lead, so he doubled, hoping that his partner could work out what was going on.

After considerable thought, Imakura led a diamond, reasoning perhaps that the ♥A would not go away. With the ♣K as an entry and the ♦J dropping tripleton, Papa soon chalked up his undignified doubled grand slam; plus 2490. A club lead would have beaten 7NT too but not 7♠—declarer could ruff a club with the ♠7 to reach the West hand after unblocking the ♦A. And a spade lead? No. Declarer runs the spades to throw all the hearts, then ♦A, club to the king, and four more diamond winners. How mortifying for N/S.

Does the heart lead stand up to analysis? We think that it does, now that we've had time to consider it in peace. If East is doing something sensible he can only be gambling, holding solid spades, that the missing keycard is not an ace; and that could only be in the trump suit. Our psychiatrist tells us we have a wonderful future in some other game.

14 imps to GB, 85-102. Had Imakura found a heart or club lead, JAPAN would have gained 17 imps. That's a 31-imp difference. Remember that number.



"Grenside to the rescue."

Bd: 41	North
Dlr: North	♠ KQ
Vul: E/W	♥ AKJ1064
	♦ K965
	♣ 4
West	East
♠ 1073	♠ AJ42
♥ 92	♥ Q3
♦ Q432	♦ A10
♣ K852	♣ AQJ106
	South
	♠ 9865
	♥ 875
	♦ J87
	♣ 973

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	1♥	Dbl	Pass
2♣	2♥	3♣	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	1♥	Dbl	Pass
2♣	2♥	Dbl	All Pass

Armstrong's gentle 3♣ is certainly the correct technical action over 2♥ but it's amazing how often players compete to 3♣ with moderate values and a fourth trump and then feel obliged to do more when they have a real hand like this one. West might be broke, after all. Perhaps that is why Chen felt obliged to double a second time with the East cards, but even so, Hirata was not expected to pass it with the hand he held. Chen led two rounds of clubs against 2♥ doubled. Justin ruffed and cashed ace-king of trumps, then led a low diamond. When the ten came up he lost only two diamonds and the ♠A to land a doubled overtrick; plus 570. 12 imps more to GB, 97-104.

Old man Mo, he just keeps rolling...

...he just keeps rolling along...

Bd: 43	North
Dlr: South	♠ A732
Vul: None	♥ A864
	♦ 75
	♣ 986
West	East
♠ Q1054	♠ KJ6
♥ 75	♥ Q3
♦ 983	♦ K10642
♣ KJ32	♣ A104
	South
	♠ 98
	♥ KJ1092
	♦ AQJ
	♣ Q75

Bd: 44	North
Dlr: West	♠ 8732
Vul: N/S	♥ KJ96
	♦ 9
	♣ 9764
West	East
♠ Q106	♠ J54
♥ 10732	♥ 8
♦ A54	♦ KQJ32
♣ AKQ	♣ J1083
	South
	♠ AK9
	♥ AQ54
	♦ 10876
	♣ 52

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	
			1♥	
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	
All Pass				
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
			1NT	
All Pass				

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	
2♦*	All Pass			
(1) No 5-card major				
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
1NT	Pass	2NT	All Pass	

Jason's 1NT ostensibly showed 14-16 points. That didn't get him to 4♥ but it did get him a plus score of 90 points on a spade lead; he guessed hearts but took no finesses.

Teramoto's 1♥ attracted a limit raise and he had roughly enough to accept the invitation. A club lead would have beaten the contract on the go, but Papa led the ♦8 to the king and ace. Placing Papa with short diamonds, Teramoto played him for longer hearts than his partner and finessed through West. Armstrong won the ♥Q and played ace and another club. Two down; minus 100. 5 imps to GB, 102-105.

Against Hirata's 2NT, Justin led the ♥6 to the... ace. Jason cashed the ♠A (attitude), got a discouraging signal, and reverted to hearts. The defenders cashed out the majors for one down; minus 50.

Meanwhile, Armstrong's decision to get out of notrump worked beautifully. Papa was plus 130 in 2♦. 5 imps more to GB, who finally took over the lead, 107-105.



"The subway must be around here somewhere."



"Now the British fleet, under Admiral Hackett, will be anchored in the bay just off the ferris wheel..."

Bd: 45	North
Dlr: North	♠ J643
Vul: Both	♥ ---
	♦ QJ10987
	♣ A75
West	East
♠ 10752	♠ KQ
♥ A109764	♥ KQ3
♦ ---	♦ 6543
♣ 1063	♣ QJ98
	South
	♠ A98
	♥ J852
	♦ AK2
	♣ K42

Teramoto ruffed or threw his remaining spade; Papa would either discard a spade and ruff one with the ♥Q or overruff, ruff a spade with the ♥3, and crossruff. A delightful plus 620. 9imps to GB, 116-105.

Bd: 47	North
Dlr: South	♠ 7643
Vul: N/S	♥ AQ65
	♦ 43
	♣ Q95
West	East
♠ AJ102	♠ K8
♥ J73	♥ 984
♦ Q85	♦ A10762
♣ 632	♣ A84
	South
	♠ Q95
	♥ K102
	♦ KJ9
	♣ KJ107

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	1♣	Dbl
1♥	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

With an awkward bid to make over 1♥ Justin chose an honest 3♦, saving his spades for another day. With hearts not raised, Jason took a sensible shot at 3NT and Justin judged it wise not to retreat to 4♠. Alas, hearts were led and 3NT was soon two down; minus 200.

Teramoto judged to stay out of the bidding and Armstrong dredged up a raise to 3♥. With a maximum for his weak jump response, Papa went on to game. It's easy to see how game might fail and much more difficult to see how to make it, but Papa was equal to the task. He ruffed the opening diamond lead and started clubs, which would have been the wrong line had clubs been four-two and trumps two-two. Teramoto won the first club and played another diamond, ruffed. A second club went to the ace and a spade switch followed. Teramoto took the ♠A and reverted to diamonds. Papa ruffed, crossed to the ♥K, got the revealing news, and played ♠K, ♣Q, ♣J. It didn't matter whether

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Hirata led the ♠J and Chen picked a bad time to follow low. The ♠8 won and Jason knocked out the ♣A. Chen switched to a diamond to the jack and queen, and a second diamond was ducked to the nine. Jason cashed out for a remarkable plus 150.

Papa found the excellent shot of the ♦5 and the defenders cleared the suit. When Teramoto drove out the ♣A, the defense took two more diamonds and four spades for three down; minus 300. A mere five-trick difference!

10imps more to GB, who won the third quarter 66-17 and turned the match around. With sixteen deals remaining, Great Britain led by

21 imps, 126-105.

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

GB led by 21 imps to start the final quarter.

Bd: 49	North		
Dlr: North	♠ Q10872		
Vul: None	♥ Q6		
	♦ AJ107		
	♣ Q9		
West		East	
♠ AK94		♠ J3	
♥ 1042		♥ KJ985	
♦ K9		♦ 86	
♣ J876		♣ AK103	
	South		
	♠ 65		
	♥ A73		
	♦ Q5432		
	♣ 542		

Bd: 50	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J952		
Vul: N/S	♥ 852		
	♦ AKQ87		
	♣ 9		
West		East	
♠ A76		♠ KQ108	
♥ J3		♥ A107	
♦ J963		♦ 1042	
♣ K873		♣ 1052	
	South		
	♠ 43		
	♥ KQ964		
	♦ 5		
	♣ AQJ64		

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>	
	1♠	2♥	Pass	
4♥	All Pass			
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
	1♠	2♥	Pass	
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass	
3♥	All Pass			

You be the judge. Should West let East out below game after a two-level overcall? We would say no, but then half of us might not have overcalled with the Eat hand. The fact remains that 4♥ is not a good contract on the E/W cards after an opening bid by North, but it happens to make, so Imakura's accurate judgment cost his side 6 imps. GB, 132-105.



The Sounds of Silence

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>	
		1♠	2♠(1)	
Dbl	3♥	All Pass		
(1) ♥ and	a minor			
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
		1NT	2♣(1)	
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	
All Pass				
(1) ♥ and another				

Against Ino's 3♥ the defenders led three rounds of spades, the best defense. Ino ruffed in dummy, played ♣A, ♣Q, ruffing in hand when it was not covered. Then four rounds of diamonds, ruffing the last low as Armstrong discarded his remaining club. Dummy's last club was ruffed in the closed hand with the eight, but Armstrong overruffed with the ten and led the master spade. Ino could ruff high or low in dummy but it would not help; the defenders had two more trump tricks.

Against Justin's 4♥ the defense started with ♠K, ♠A, and a diamond switch. Not so good. ♦A, trump to the king, ♣A, ♣Q, covered and ruffed, ♦K, ♦Q, trump. Plus 620; 12 imps to GB, 144-105.

On three rounds of spades, it is always open to East to rise on the first trump and play a fourth spade to promote a second trump trick. Indeed,

this might be deemed the most natural line of defense with the North hand revealed in dummy on a different auction (although East has to worry about the singleton ♠Q in West). Perhaps it's more difficult to see when the South hand is the one exposed.

Bd: 52	North	
Dlr: West	♠ J763	
Vul: Both	♥ 9	
	♦ Q62	
	♣ Q7653	
West		East
♠ 985		♠ A1042
♥ AKQ43		♥ J106
♦ K		♦ A9754
♣ K842		♣ A
	South	
	♠ KQ	
	♥ 8752	
	♦ J1083	
	♣ J109	

type of auction. 13 imps to GB, 147-105.

Do yourself a favor and discuss this hand with your favorite partner; it's an important one for slam-bidding principles.

Bd: 53	North	
Dlr: North	♠ AQ98	
Vul: N/S	♥ J	
	♦ AJ1086	
	♣ Q62	
West		East
♠ K1052		♠ 64
♥ 32		♥ KQ765
♦ 953		♦ KQ
♣ AJ84		♣ K973
	South	
	♠ J73	
	♥ A10984	
	♦ 742	
	♣ 105	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♥	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass

6♥ is excellent for E/W and Papa-Armstrong had no trouble bidding it (any slam auction that uses Blackwood does meet the Daily Bulletin's standards for designation as "difficult to bid"). Even if Teramoto's 3♥ was "stronger than 4♥," his follow-up 4♥ looks very conservative. Meanwhile, if 3♥ was indeed slam-suitable, Imakura, with great trumps and a potentially golden king not yet shown, owed his partner another move. Perhaps, however, he thought that Teramoto's 4♥ denied the missing spade control, a reasonable agreement to have in this

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
	1♦	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	1♦	1♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2♦
All Pass			

Papa's 1♠ response to John's 1♥ overall worked beautifully when it wasn't raised. Not only did it shut Ino out of the auction but it also made it possible to locate the club fit. The play in 2♣ was really interesting. Chen led the five of trumps and John called for dummy's ace to lead a heart to the king and ace. The ♣10 was covered by the jack and ducked by Ino, and a second heart was led from dummy. On this Ino discarded a diamond, which was to prove critical. The ♥Q won and Armstrong turned to diamonds, the king losing to the ace. A third trump tucked him back in hand. He cashed the ♦Q, ruffed a heart, and led the ♦9, discarding a heart as Ino won the ten. When Ino continued with the ♦J, Armstrong discarded another heart from hand and a spade from dummy, and Ino,

out of diamonds, had to give dummy the ♠K. Very pretty, Mr John. Plus 90.

Imakura's pass of 1♥, perhaps the mainstream action, left Justin with a normal reopening double, and Jason's sensible 2♦ ended the auction. ♥K to the ace, club to the queen and ace, ♦K to the ace, club to the ten and jack, diamond return...trumps blocked. The spade switch solved that problem for Justin, who ruffed his club and led the ♠J to pick up the rest of the suit; plus 130. 6 imps to GB, who truly earned them, 163-105.

Bd: 54	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J1084		
Vul: E/W	♥ 1076		
	♦ 9863		
	♣ 75		
West		East	
♠ Q3		♠ A97	
♥ KJ985		♥ 43	
♦ K54		♦ J72	
♣ 962		♣ KQJ43	
	South		
	♠ K652		
	♥ AQ2		
	♦ AQ10		
	♣ A108		

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>	
		1♣	Dbl	
1♥	Pass	Pass	1NT	
2♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl	
Pass	2♦	All Pass		
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
		1♣	Dbl	
1♥	Pass	1NT	Dbl	
Rdbl	2♦	All Pass		

Ino went two down, Justin only one. 2 imps more to GB, 165-105. We believe that it was bad bridge for Chen to double a second time in the scenario he faced, and we're not too keen on Jason's second double either, particularly with an aggressive partner who would strain to compete over 1♥ with four spades or five

diamonds. Doubling 1NT with a pile of high cards and beating it, with no good lead to make, are two different things. GB, 165-105.

Bd: 56	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 762		
Vul: None	♥ QJ9		
	♦ A652		
	♣ Q104		
West		East	
♠ K98		♠ Q1054	
♥ 104		♥ 865	
♦ QJ3		♦ 9874	
♣ AK753		♣ J8	
	South		
	♠ AJ3		
	♥ AK732		
	♦ K10		
	♣ 962		

	Open Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>	
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥	
Dbl	2♠	Pass	2NT	
Pass	3NT	All Pass		
	Closed Room			
West	North	East	South	
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>	
1♣	Pass	Pass	1♥	
Pass	2♥	All Pass		

3NT is a decent contract after an opening bid of 1♣ by West, and Ino-Chen valued their assets nicely to bid it. Chen was not put to the test in clubs when Papa led the king rather than a low one; late in the play, after Papa bared the ♠K and Armstrong discarded two diamonds, Chen was able to cash the ♠A, cash his diamonds, and lead towards the ♠J for an overtrick; plus 430.

It would be unkind to refer to Justin's raise to 2♥ as anything other than normal, and Jason's decision to pass it seems sensible too, so chalk this one up to something special by Ino-Chen rather than something dubious by the twins. 8 imps to JAPAN, 113-165. Eight deals remaining.

Bd: 57	North
Dlr: North	♠ KQ84
Vul: E/W	♥ 432
	♦ A10
	♣ QJ106
West	East
♠ J10963	♠ A72
♥ 985	♥ AKQ10
♦ 875	♦ Q963
♣ A8	♣ 92
	South
	♠ 5
	♥ J76
	♦ KJ42
	♣ K7543

Bd: 59	North
Dlr: South	♠ 106
Vul: None	♥ Q1095
	♦ QJ4
	♣ 9432
West	East
♠ K98	♠ AQ752
♥ 4	♥ A863
♦ A98752	♦ 10
♣ K86	♣ J105
	South
	♠ J43
	♥ KJ72
	♦ K63
	♣ AQ7

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
	1♣	Dbl	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	All Pass

	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
			1♣
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♥
2♠	All Pass		
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
			1NT
Pass	Pass	2♦(1)	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
(1) ♥+♠			

Ino's 3NT looks like a psychic effort rather than a genuine attempt to steal nine tricks, but if so, it didn't work. 3♣ was supposed to be a limit raise, however, so maybe we're out of line. Down 100. Teramoto's raise to 2NT looks like an overbid, smells like an overbid, and was, in fact, an overbid. One down; minus 100. 5 charitably-donated imps to GB, 170-113.

With the N/S cards lying very well for declarer's purposes, E/W can always take ten tricks in spades (Jason led a trump against 4♠, Chen a heart against 2♠). Armstrong's pass of 2♠ looks very conservative to us, but he might have been right. He made four, plus 170, while Teramoto made five, plus 450. 7 imps to Japan, 120-170.



"Yes, Teramoto-san, but we are supposed to be the DEFENDERS...not the *defenseless*."



"I wonder if my underwear are back from the laundry, yet."

Bd: 60	North
Dlr: West	♠ 72
Vul: N/S	♥ AK109
	♦ K92
	♣ QJ54
West	East
♠ 63	♠ AKJ84
♥ Q2	♥ 8653
♦ QJ87	♦ 3
♣ AK973	♣ 862
	South
	♠ Q1095
	♥ J74
	♦ A10654
	♣ 10

Bd: 61	North
Dlr: North	♠ 73
Vul: Both	♥ J842
	♦ Q973
	♣ AK3
West	East
♠ 10985	♠ AKQJ2
♥ AK109	♥ 763
♦ 1086	♦ K52
♣ Q10	♣ 86
	South
	♠ 64
	♥ Q5
	♦ AJ4
	♣ J97542

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
1♦	1♥	1♠	3♥(1)
All Pass			
(1) Preemptive			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	4♠	All Pass
(1) Limit raise			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Teramoto was two down; minus 100, while Ino made 3♥. ♠K, diamond to the jack and king, club to the ten and king, spade to the ace, club. Ino ruffed in dummy, drew trumps, and conceded a club to Papa. He had four trumps, a spade, two clubs, and two diamonds for plus 140. 1 imp to to JAPAN, 121-170.

2♠ was high enough; plus 110. 4♠ was down 200. 7 imps to JAPAN, 128-170.



"Have you noticed that whenever we compare we're surrounded by a bright, white light from above?"

Bd: 62	North
Dlr: East	♠ QJ6
Vul: None	♥ A1065
	♦ AJ5
	♣ K109
West	East
♠ A985	♠ 10
♥ 9	♥ K72
♦ Q1083	♦ K9764
♣ 8754	♣ AQ63
	South
	♠ K7432
	♥ QJ843
	♦ 2
	♣ J2

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Dbl	2♣	2♥
3♦	Pass	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♥
3♦	All Pass		

Both contracts made so JAPAN gained another 6 imps, 134-170. This constituted a rally of sorts, but alas, there were only two deals remaining. One was an easy slam for E/W. This was the other:

Bd: 64	North	
Dir: West	♠ AKQ85	
Vul: E/W	♥ K	
	♦ K1093	
	♣ AJ9	
West		East
♠ 732		♠ 10964
♥ 642		♥ AJ10873
♦ QJ72		♦ A5
♣ K54		♣ 2
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ Q95	
	♦ 864	
	♣ Q108763	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul H</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Armstrng</i>	<i>Chen</i>
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Termoto</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2NT(1)
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

(1) Puppet to 3♣

Ino's swashbuckling 3NT was treated to the lead of the ♥J from Armstrong. Spade to the jack, club to the...ace, spades, club exit to the queen and king. Papa switched to the ♦Q but Ino covered and the defenders had to give him the trick he needed to get home; plus 400. Justin's 3♣ made four; plus 130. 7 imps to JAPAN.

GREAT BRITAIN won the fourth quarter 44-36 and won the 2000 NEC Cup 170-141, a margin of 29 imps. If you can bear to recall Board 39, you will see why we called that deal the match breaker. Had Imakura found a heart or club lead against 7♥, the DEFENDING CHAMPIONS would once again be the Defending Champions.

Congratulations to Brigitte Mavromichalis, John Armstrong, Paul, Jason, and Justin Hackett, the worthy winners. They struggled throughout the Swiss Qualifying phase and snuck in to the Knockout stage only at the very end. They started badly in each of their Knockout matches but rallied strongly each time, showing great poise and character.

The runners-up had an excellent tournament, and came close to repeating as Champions. Congratulations and condolences to Masayuki Ino, Dawei Chen, Tadashi Imakura, Tadashi Teramoto, and Takahiko Hirata, who mixed and matched their partnerships throughout and coped very well with the absence of their spiritual leader, Hiroshi Hisatomi, who was unable to play.



Home Sweet Home

