



# NEC Bridge Festival

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## Welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup Bridge Festival: 2001

This year's 6<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup boasts one of the strongest international fields ever, including many of the world's top players. Stage One will be a 10-round Swiss Teams consisting of 16-board matches, imps converted to Victory Points, qualifying eight teams for the KO phase. The 32-team field has been divided into top and bottom halves and the first two Swiss matches arranged so that each team in the top half is matched at random against a team from the bottom half; subsequent match pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter-finals and semi-finals will consist of 48-board matches while the final will be contested over 64 boards. Good luck to all the participants!

## The Daily Bulletin, the Secretariat and the Chief Director

We need your help. Please report anything amusing, challenging, or skillful that happens at this tournament (bridge or otherwise) to the **Daily Bulletin Office** (Room 422). If we're not there, please leave us a note on one of our computers (they are in the back on the far right as you enter the room). Room 422 is also the **Tournament Headquarters**, a.k.a. the **Secretariat**. It will open each day at 10:00 am. If you're trying to reach someone you can't see with the naked, leave a message and we'll do our best to get it to its target. The **Chief Tournament Director** for the **NEC Bridge Festival** will be the witty, urbane, unflappable, occasionally immovable, but currently beaming (lease bear with him, he's still in the honeymoon phase) **Richard Grenside**. Call him at your discretion.

## Starting Times

<u>Swiss Match</u>	<u>Starting Time</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
1, 5, 9	10:00-12:20	418 & 419
2, 6, 10	12:40-15:00	418 & 419
Lunch Break	15:00-16:00	
3, 7	16:00-18:20	418 & 419
4, 8	18:40-21:00	418 & 419

One hundred and forty minutes (2 hours and 20 minutes) have been allotted for the play of each set of 16 deals. In addition, a 5-minute grace period will be permitted. If you are unable to finish in that time, remember the words of the immortal Nakatani-san, "Play badly if you must, but play quickly."

## Perkumpulan Bridge "Djarum"

The Djarum Bridge Club cordially invites your team to participate in its annual Djarum Bridge Championship, to be held in the Grand Candi Hotel, Semarang, Central Java, from April 12-15, 2001. The entry fee for foreign participants, which includes board and lodging in the Grand Candi Hotel (a Five-Star hotel) for a maximum of six persons, is \$250US. Those interested please notify the organizers either by fax (62 24 8312143) or e-mail (bsusan@detik.com) before April 1, 2001.

Budi Susanto, Organizing Committee

# NEC Cup 2001: CONDITIONS OF CONTEST

A 10 round Swiss, qualifying the top 8 teams to the Knockout phase; no playbacks.

V.P. Scale            WBF 16-board scale.

Seating Rights        Toss of coin 5 minutes before start of match. Failure will constitute loss of rights.

KO-Phase Seating    The winner of a coin toss has the choice of seating in any of the 16-board segments. The loser then chooses any of the remaining segments and the two teams alternate choices until all segments are assigned.

Swiss Pairings        For the first and second Swiss matches, pairings will be determined by randomly pairing each of the teams numbered 1-16 with one of the teams numbered 17-32. Subsequent match pairings will be based on current VP totals.

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

Tie-Breaks            At the end of the Swiss: ties will be broken by the result of the head-to-head match (if one was played) or an IMP quotient otherwise. If more than two teams are involved, Bermuda 2000 Conditions of Contest procedures will apply.

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

Systems                No HUM methods will be permitted in this event.  
In the Swiss, no Brown Sticker methods will be permitted.  
In the KO Phase, Brown Sticker methods will be permitted only if filed before the start of the Swiss. Written defenses to such methods may be used at the table.

Length of Matches    2 hours and 20 minutes will be allotted for each 16 boards. In addition a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per Bermuda 2000 Conditions of Contest.

Appeals                The WBF Code of Practice will be in effect. The Chief Director will have 12C3 authority. Appeals which are found to be without merit may incur a penalty of up to 3 VPs.

Match Scoring        Pick-up slips are to be completed and all match results are to be verified against the official result sheet (posted at the end of each match); score corrections and notifications of appeals will be permitted up until the start of the next session, a session being defined as the start of a group of two matches or segments.

KO Draw                The team finishing 1<sup>st</sup> in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The team finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> group. And so on.

In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1<sup>st</sup> in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.

## Roster of the 6<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup

Team No.	Name/Country	Members					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Great Britain	Paul Hackett	Jason Hackett	Justin Hackett	B. Mavromichalis	John Armstrong	
2	Sweden	P.O. Sundelin	Johan Sylvan	Bjorn Fallenius	Magnus Lindkvist		
3	Argentina/Australia	Pablo Lambardi	Pablo Ravenna	Ishmael Del'Monte	Paul Marston		
4	USA	Garey Hayden	Gaylor Kasle	Jim Robison	John Onstott		
5	England	Brian Senior	Glyn Liggins	Joe Fawcett	Espen Erichsen		
6	e-bridge	Sam Lev	John Mohan	Jacek Pszczola	Piotr Gawrys	Pinhas Romik	
7	GB-Morris	Jeff Morris	Bill Hirst	Howard Melbourne	Ron Morrish		
8	Austria	Gerhard Schiesser	Andreas Gloyer	Sascha Wernle	Martin Schifko		
9	Australia	Barry Noble	Terry Brown	Phil Gue	Mike Prescott	Peter Fordham	
10	Indonesia	Henky Lasut	Freddy Manoppo	Santje Panelewen	Robert Parasiani		
11	PABF Open	Makoto Hirata	Takeshi Hanayama	Nobuyuki Hayashi	Takashi Maeda	Yasushi Kobayashi	Seiya Shimizu
12	PABF Women	Kyoko Shimamura	Shoko Fukuda	Nobuko Setoguchi	Hiroko Ota	Makiko Hayashi	Yuko Yamada
13	TERAMOTO	Hideki Takano	Takahiko Hirata	Chen Da-Wei	Tadashi Teramoto	Masaaki Takayama	Hiroshi Hisatomi
14	Chinese Taipei	Wei-Wei Tsao	Chih-Mou Lin	Donny Chen	Michael Ting		
15	OHNO	Kyoko Ohno	Akihiko Yamada	Katsumi Takahashi	Masaru Yoshida	Tadashi Imakura	Masayuki Ino
16	SLAM DUNK	Kikuo Tatai	Teruyoshi Hara	Yasuhiro Shimizu	Kazuo Furuta	Kenji Miyakuni	Yoshiyuki Nakamura
17	PABF Youth	Yuji Tashiro	Hideyuki Sango	Keisuke Akama	Hideaki Yoshimi	Masakazu Ochi	
18	GELLER	Robert Geller	Setsuko Ogihara	Hiroya Abe	Akira Morozumi		
19	Esperanza	Haruko Koshi	Mieko Nakanishi	Youko Osako	Hiroko Janssen	Junko Arai	Michiko Ohno
20	MEIRIN	Betty Tajiri	Kazuko Senga	Aiko Mizuuchi	Yoshiko Fukuda	Michiko Iwahashi	Misuzu Ichihashi
21	HANAGUMI	Yayoi Sakamoto	Kyoko Toyofuku	Yukiko Umezu	Etsuko Naito		
22	SKOTII	Tsuneo Sakurai	Yoshio Tsuji	Kenichi Izaki	Kuniaki Kawakami	Kenichi Asaoka	Takehiko Tada
23	APPLE	Emiko Tamura	Yasuko Kosaka	Hiroko Kobayashi	Chizuko Tsukamoto	Takako Nakatani	Harue Lemori
24	Eucalyptus Village	Toshiko Hagiwara	Tetsuo Sakashita	Akiko Minamino	Fumiko Kubo	Eiko Hasegawa	Kayoko Kubota
25	YOKO	Yoko Saito	Mamiko Odaira	Yoko Nenohi	Zhang Shudi	Kumiko Matsuo	Chizuno Saito
26	Merry Queens	Teruko Nishimura	Toyoko Nakakawaji	Yoshiko Hiramori	Junko Nishimura		
27	SWAN	Michiko Shida	Kotomi Asakoshi	Minako Hiratsuka	Aiko Banno	Kukuko Niwa	Shizuko Hanai
28	MAIKA	Naomi Terauchi	Sachiko Nakatani	Kiyomi Shibata	Yoshiko Maeda	Nobuko Matsubara	Noriko Ishikawa
29	DREAM	Chieko Ichikawa	Kuniko Saito	Toru Tamura	Mimako Ishizuka	Chizuko Sugiura	Sonoko Namba
30	Cosmos	Nobuko Wakasa	Masaharu Wakasa	Ikuko Kinkyo	Kazuko Tsumori	Keiko Enomoto	Yoshitaka Agata
31	PS-Bridge	Masako Otsuka	Masakatsu Sugino	Ryoji Fujiwara	Takako Fujimoto	Shozo Yamagata	Naoko Hishikawa
32	Yokohama Tornados	Osami Kimura	Reiko Watanabe	Kei Watanabe	Kiyoko Fushida	Setsuko Kimura	Kinzaburo Nishino

Round-1 Match-ups: 1 vs 28; 2 vs 25; 3 vs 31; 4 vs 26; 5 vs 29; 6 vs 20; 7 vs 27; 8 vs 18; 9 vs 17; 10 vs 21; 11 vs 24; 12 vs 22; 13 vs 19; 14 vs 30; 15 vs 32; 16 vs 23

Round-2 Match-ups: 1 vs 19; 2 vs 20; 3 vs 30; 4 vs 24; 5 vs 17; 6 vs 26; 7 vs 25; 8 vs 21; 9 vs 31; 10 vs 28; 11 vs 23; 12 vs 29; 13 vs 32; 14 vs 18; 15 vs 27; 16 vs 22

## The NEC Cup 2000

Last year's NEC Bridge Festival (February 8-13, 2000), sponsored by the NEC Corporation and hosted by the Japan Contract Bridge League, was another stunning success. The festivities were made even more gala by the expansion of the main event from the usual 10 or 12 teams to a star-studded field of 30 teams: 16 from Japan and 14 foreign teams. The Ouchi Cup, a two-day qualifying Swiss Teams previously held on the first two days of the tournament and run as a tune up for the main event, the NEC Cup, was moved to days four and five (opposite the knockout phase of the NEC Cup).

Play in the NEC Cup began on day one with a 10-round Swiss Teams (with 16 board matches) from which the top eight teams qualified for the knockout phase, featuring three-session (48-board) quarter-final and semi-final matches and a four-session (64-board) final. There was also a two-session (32-board) playoff for third place.

The opening ceremony on Monday evening bid welcome to all the competitors and was filled with the warmth that is typical of our Japanese hosts. It didn't hurt that this was all accompanied by a lavish buffet. Preliminary to the Swiss stage of the competition, lots were drawn to randomly pair each Japanese team with a foreign team (the Japanese Defending Champions played Japan Youth) for the opening Swiss match.

### The Qualifying Swiss:

Bd: I-2	North	
Dlr: East	♠ Q73	
Vul: N/S	♥ 8764	
	♦ 973	
	♣ Q103	
West		East
♠ J964		♠ A1052
♥ Q		♥ J10
♦ KQJ1064		♦ A
♣ 95		♣ AKJ764
	South	
	♠ K8	
	♥ AK9532	
	♦ 852	
	♣ 82	

This Round II deal was usually a dull 4♠, but in the "Battle of Canada" Robert Lebi and Nader Hanna climbed to 5♠ from the West seat. The defense started with two rounds of hearts, Hanna ruffing to pass the ♠J around to the king. South tucked dummy in with a diamond and Hanna started clubs, hoping to ruff the third round in hand to take a second trump finesse. But on the ace-king of clubs North, Roy Hughes, dropped the ten and queen. This piece of deception created an attractive and genuine losing option for declarer in the form of the ♠A. (After all, if the club is going to get over-ruffed, why not play for the legitimate doubleton ♠Q with North?) Hanna paid his countryman a great compliment by continuing with a third club and when South showed out, he was able to ruff and lead a spade to dummy's ten for a breathless plus 450.

Bd: V-7	North	
Dlr: South	♠ 109	
Vul: Both	♥ 32	
	♦ QJ42	
	♣ K9653	
West		East
♠ QJ6		♠ A754
♥ J874		♥ 1065
♦ 853		♦ AK1076
♣ J108		♣ 7
	South	
	♠ K832	
	♥ AKQ9	
	♦ 9	
	♣ AQ42	

3NT and 5♣ are both viable contracts for N/S. There are eight top tricks in 3NT and the ♠K is readily available for the ninth. 5♣, however, takes careful play — usually aided by information from the bidding. Either two diamonds must be ruffed in the South hand (unless East cashes a high diamond to create a ruffing finesse position in that suit) or South's three losers must be ruffed in the North hand. But due to communication problems, neither of these is so easily done. On a heart lead by West (or a diamond lead and a heart shift) declarer wins, plays a diamond (if one was not led), wins the heart return, draws two rounds of trumps with the ace-queen, cashes the remaining

high hearts pitching a *spade* from dummy, then ruffs the fourth heart and leads dummy's remaining spade. If East wins the ace, South's ♠8 sets up for the eleventh trick (win the spade return, ruff a spade, ruff a diamond, then cash the good ♠8). If East ducks, declarer wins, ruffs a spade, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a spade and ruffs another diamond for his eleventh trick. Both declarers made 5♣ when Canada's Olympiad team met USA — but USA was in only 4♣ for a 10-imp gain for Canada. The strangest pair of results on this deal occurred in Australia Chua versus Japan Hirata. At one table Hirata's E/W pair played 2♣ down six (minus 600), while at the other table Hirata's N/S pair went down two in 3NT (minus 200); lose 13 IMPs.

Bd: VI-10	North	
Dlr: East	♠ 6	
Vul: Both	♥ AJ54	
	♦ K743	
	♣ KQ53	
West		East
♠ 92		♠ AJ53
♥ 9873		♥ K62
♦ QJ96		♦ A108
♣ J97		♣ 1042
	South	
	♠ KQ10874	
	♥ Q10	
	♦ 52	
	♣ A86	

Bd: V-9	North	
Dlr: North	♠ A5	
Vul: E/W	♥ A2	
	♦ A9	
	♣ QJ109652	
West		East
♠ KQ8643		♠ J72
♥ 653		♥ KQJ94
♦ J86		♦ 107
♣ 8		♣ K73
	South	
	♠ 109	
	♥ 1087	
	♦ KQ5432	
	♣ A4	

6♦ can only be made on a minor-suit lead, but the play in 6♣ is fascinating. Only a major-suit lead presents a problem. Declarer wins the suit led and finesses the ♣Q (East must duck), then cashes three high diamonds pitching the loser in the major suit led. East can ruff, but the ♣A remains as a dummy entry to pitch the other major-suit loser. Each slam was bid only once, and in practice as in theory, only 6♣ was made—by Miho Sekizawa-Shoko Fukuda for Japan Olympiad Women.

This was a potential trouble deal for E/W if East started with a weak notrump, and there were several penalties incurred at those tables. While more than half the N/S pairs attempted 3NT, less than half of them made it, usually with some inspired dummy play. In Canada Olympiad versus Poland, the Canadian East, Robert Lebi, found the excellent lead of the ♦10 against Piotr Gawrys' 3NT. Nader Hanna did not overtake, but Gawrys did not duck — he had too much work to do. Now the defenders were in full control and set the contract two tricks. At the other table Poland's Erwin Otvosi opened the East hand with 1♠, which led to:

West	North	East	South
<i>Borewicz</i>	<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Otvosi</i>	<i>Kokish</i>
		1♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	Pass	Pass
1NT	Dble	All Pass	

George Mittelman led his singleton spade, giving his partner a good read on the distribution. Eric Kokish won the ♠10 at trick one and returned the ♠Q to dummy's ace. Marek Borewicz, who was desperate to piece together five tricks, called for dummy's ♦10, effectively duplicating Lebi's play from a rather different perspective. Here, however, the ten was overtaken. Mittelman made a very good play by withholding his king (South could have held a singleton) but now Borewicz led the ♦Q, adding new definition to the term "two-way finesse." When the ♦Q held, he led a heart towards the king and so took five tricks for minus 500 — a 12-imp loss for his efforts.

When powerhouses and pre-event favorites Great Britain and Poland met in the next to last Swiss match, both teams were barely hanging on (holding down 12th and 13th places, respectively). In spite of being only 5 and 6 Victory Points out of the last qualifying spot, they each had to believe that it would take two solid performances in their final two matches to reach the knockout stage. So with the threat of elimination in the balance, these two proud international teams squared off for a fight to the finish — no prisoners.

Bd: IX-6	North	
Dlr: East	♠ 95	
Vul: E/W	♥ KJ1098	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ QJ93	
West		East
♠ AJ4		♠ Q87
♥ AQ2		♥ 53
♦ 4		♦ AJ10963
♣ 1087654		♣ AK
	South	
	♠ K10632	
	♥ 764	
	♦ K875	
	♣ 2	

Great Britain led 18 IMPs to 12 when one of the most incredible deals of the tournament found both tables declaring 3NT from opposite sides. Papa Hackett (West) received the ♣Q lead and had to decide which minor suit to attack. He chose clubs, cashing the two high clubs and finessing the ♠J to drive out one of North's two club stoppers. On the low diamond return, Papa rose with the ace and played a second spade to dummy's ace, driving out North's last club. Had North started with the king and one diamond instead of the queen, he would have been endplayed for the ninth trick in hearts. But with the cards sitting as they were, Papa ended up down one; minus 100.

At the other table against Great Britain's twins, Piotr Gawrys (East) received the ♥7 lead (best for the defense) from Jason. He thought for a long time before winning dummy's ace as Justin played the "encouraging" jack. Like Papa earlier, Gawrys also chose to attack clubs, cashing the ace-king

and receiving the bad news. He then played the ♠Q to the king, ace and five and exited with a club. Justin won and tried the ♠9, ducked all around, and got out with the ♦Q to declarer's ace. After what seemed an eternity, Gawrys produced the ♦10 and Jason was at the crossroads. He eyed the card suspiciously as he reviewed the previous play for clues. Justin's ♥J at trick one suggested a jack-high suit (wouldn't he just encourage with the ten or nine holding the king?) and shouldn't Justin hold the ♦J for his ♦Q play? So he ducked. Wrong!

When his ♦10 held the trick (dummy pitching a club), Gawrys' took several minutes to work out the position, then played with complete confidence. A spade to dummy's ace was followed by a fourth and triumphant club, endplaying Justin to yield the game-going trick to dummy's ♥Q. Plus 600 earned 12 IMPs for Poland, who took the lead in the match for the first time, 20-18 IMPs.

Great Britain won the match 56-52, a fitting end to a closely and fiercely contested battle but hardly the convincing victory needed to insure entry into the knockouts.

The Swiss ended with several surprising finishes, none more amazing than that of Japan's Olympiad Women. In twenty-first place after seven matches, in eighteenth place after nine matches, they pulled off one of the most dramatic comebacks and unlikely parlays in NEC Cup history. They blitzed their tenth match by a whopping 71 IMPs (a fact the relevance of which will become evident shortly) while Canada Olympiad, in sixth place after the ninth match, suffered a 29-imp loss to throw the two teams into a dead tie! The Japanese accounting firm of Omasa, Omasa, Omasa and Omasa had to be called in to break the tie. Using a complicated, mathematical computer-based tie-breaking scheme the details of which we can't divulge to you (or we'd have to kill you), an IMP-quotient was computed for the two teams. Faster than you can say "Olympiad Women," the giant Omasa Corporation computer spit out the numbers: Canada Olympiad 1.1495, JAPAN Olympiad Women 1.1873. So the Japanese Women advanced to the knockout round, while the heavily favored Canadians spent the evening looking for a cool nightclub in downtown Yokohama.

Along with Japan Women who qualified eighth, two other Japanese teams made the playoffs: the Defending Champions qualified second and Japan Going qualified fifth. The top qualifying spot went to USA, while the two Indonesian teams qualified in third and fourth positions. Rounding out the qualifying octet were Australia Newman (sixth) and Great Britain (seventh), the latter staging a strong comeback in the tenth match to qualify.

The top four qualifying teams got to pick their quarterfinal opponents. USA picked Japan Olympiad Women, while the Defending Champions picked Japan Going. The top Indonesian team picked Australia Newman, while Indonesia's second team (Pattimura) was left to play mighty Great Britain, the pre-tournament favorite that had sleep-walked through the Swiss.

**The Quarter-finals:**

The quarter-finals ran true to form for the top two seeds, with heavily-favored USA defeating Japan Olympiad Women (in the highest scoring of the four matches) 159.5-101 IMPs and the Defending Champions besting Japan Going 144-73. The top Indonesian team (which had finished second in the World Olympiad in Rhodes, Greece three years ago) lost to underdog Australia Newman 89-134, while underdog Indonesia Pattimura lost to sleeping giant Great Britain, 44-88. Note the differential in the match—44 IMPs. In Lille in 1998, two British teams faced one another, one with John Armstrong, the other chock full of Hacketts (four of the five players on the British team here). One team in Lille won the first quarter by...44 IMPs. The other won the second by...44 IMPs. Then the other won the third by...44 IMPs. In the fourth set the trailing team was doing splendidly and at one point the lead was up to ...44 IMPs. Rather than go into extra innings, the rallying team gave up a nonvulnerable game swing and so won the fourth set by only 34 IMPs. True story...but we're still not through. The telephone country code for Great Britain is...drum roll...44.

Would you have conceded the match to these guys down only 44 IMPs, as Pattimura had to do in order not to forfeit their air tickets? Perhaps they would have thought better of it had they known this at the time. But alas, off they went to the airport.

Now fast-forward two days. Word reached us at the tournament that the Pattimura team was still in Japan. Indeed they had gone to the airport as planned, but unfortunately they had failed to make timely reservations on the flight they intended to take home. At the airport they learned that their flight was full—not a seat to be had. A fellow countryman offered them a place to stay in Tokyo while they waited for a flight with seats available, and two days later they were still in Tokyo...and showed up briefly back at the tournament to say hello. It was then that they found out about "44"!

**The Semi-finals:**

The USA chose Japan's Defending Champions as their semi-final opponents, the other semi-final match pitting the ex-colony, Australia, against the ex-empire, Great Britain. USA took a narrow 4-imp lead (14-10) over Japan in the first segment but in the second Japan outscored the Americans, 60-20. When Japan also took the final segment 30-23, the Defending Champions were back in the finals to try to repeat; Japan 100, USA 57. A similar pattern emerged in the match between Australia and Great Britain. The Aussies broke on top 49-27, but a huge second segment saw the Brits outscore Oz, 70-29. Britain continued their dominance in the final segment, 37-11, to cement their spot opposite Japan in the NEC Cup finals, 134-89. Here's a look at some of the semi-finals action.

Bd: 3	North	
Dlr: South	♠ J972	
Vul: E/W	♥ 92	
	♦ 763	
	♣ Q873	
West		East
♠ K8		♠ A64
♥ QJ		♥ AK543
♦ AK1092		♦ QJ4
♣ KJ96		♣ A2
	South	
	♠ Q1053	
	♥ 10876	
	♦ 85	
	♣ 1054	

This is a grand we'd all like to bid. But only the

twins got the job done. This was their auction:

West	North	East	South
<i>Jason</i>	<i>Browne</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Bagchi</i>
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♠(2)	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT(3)	Pass	5♣(4)	Pass
5♥(5)	Pass	5NT(6)	Pass
7♦	All Pass		

- (1) Relative minor-suit lengths undefined;  
 (2) Fourth-suit forcing; (3) RKCB (♦);  
 (4) 0-3 keycards; (5) ♦Q?; (6) Yes, plus the ♥K

Jason had a tough bid over 2♠ and chose to show his strong doubleton in Justin's first suit rather than stall with a positional 2NT. When Justin supported diamonds, Jason checked on key cards, then the ♦Q (learning about the ♥K). In the end, he had to choose between notrump and diamonds and catered to certain positions in which he could neutralize a bad diamond break with length on his right. Perhaps 7NT has more going for it, because 7♦ may have no play while 7NT may be laydown. 12 IMPs to Great Britain.

Bd: 7	North		
Dir: South	♠ 54		
Vul: Both	♥ KQ874		
	♦ 107543		
	♣ 2		
West		East	
♠ AK8		♠ QJ109	
♥ 93		♥ A2	
♦ AJ2		♦ K86	
♣ KQ843		♣ A976	
	South		
	♠ 7632		
	♥ J1065		
	♦ Q9		
	♣ J105		

USA versus Japan  
 Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Robison</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Freed</i>
<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Hayden</i>	<i>Chen</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

What can you do? It could happen to anyone, right? Yes, maybe West is too strong for a 15-17 HCP notrump, but he's not really worth a jump rebid of 2NT either, with a weak main suit and a notrump flaw. And East doesn't have enough to invite slam in notrump either. Painful but human. Weak notrumpers would start with 1♣ and East could show support relatively early; they might get to slam. Alternatively...

Australia versus Great Britain  
 Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Jason</i>	<i>Browne</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Bagchi</i>
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT(1)	Pass
5♣(2)	Pass	5♦(3)	Pass
5♠(4)	Pass	6♦(5)	Pass
6♠	Pass	6NT	All Pass

- (1) RKCB (♣); (2) 0-3 keycards; (3) ♣Q?  
 (4) Yes, plus the ♠K; (5) ♦K

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Del'Monte Paul</i>		<i>Newman</i>	<i>Mavromichalis</i>
1♣(1)	1♥	1♠(2)	2♥
Pass(2)	Pass	Dble(2)	Pass
2♠(2)	Pass	3NT(2)	Pass
4♣(2)	Pass	4♥(2)	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

- (1) Strong

We love the twins' natural auction. Too strong for a 14-16 notrump (and not right for 15-17, either), Jason started with 1♣. Over 1♠ he invented a reverse, showing his fifth club and preparing a strong move in spades. Justin set trumps, then used RKCB, found out about the ♣Q and the ♠K and showed his ♦K as a seven-try—safe, as he could count 12 tricks in notrump. With the ♦Q instead of the jack, we think that Jason would have bid seven, or at the least hedged with 6♥.

We might love the Ish-Peter auction, too, if we knew what it meant, but it got the job done so it must be at least likeable. 13 tricks for everyone and 2 IMPs to Great Britain.



Bd: 31	North	
Dlr: South	♠ Q9	
Vul: N/S	♥ 86542	
	♦ J53	
	♣ 532	
West		East
♠ AKJ5		♠ 863
♥ KJ		♥ 973
♦ A98		♦ Q42
♣ KJ64		♣ Q1097
	South	
	♠ 10742	
	♥ AQ10	
	♦ K1076	
	♣ A8	

### Australia versus Great Britain

Open Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Jason</i>	<i>Browne</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Bagchi</i>
			1NT
Dble	2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥
Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	All Pass		
Closed Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Del'Monte</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Paul</i>
			1♠
Dble	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Against Justin's 3♠, Khokan Bagchi led a low trump. Justin won the ace and led a club to the queen and ace. Khokan played the ♥AQ but Justin played off the king of trumps, cashed the jack, crossed to a club, ruffed his remaining heart and reverted to clubs. Khokan could ruff in and lead away from the ♦K or allow Justin to cash his clubs; plus 140.

Against Ishmael Del'Monte's 2NT, the defense started with the ♥4 to the queen and king. Papa won the ♣A and cashed ♥A10, Ish discarding a diamond as John Armstrong followed with the ♥9. When Papa switched to spades, Del'Monte played the ace and king (no strong notrump) for plus 120 and 1 imp to Great Britain.

Here's a scenario for you. In first seat, at favorable vulnerability, someone picks up:

♠1096 ♥Q76 ♦8 ♣J108542.

He opens 3♣ and sees it go Pass-Pass-DbI-All Pass. The penalty passer's clubs are... ♣AKQ963 and the wretch also holds another ace and a king. Our someone sees his life passing before his weary eyes. The \$64,000 question: is our hero (a) a Hackett; (b) a hairy-chested young Aussie; (c) a fierce Oriental warrior; or (d) an older gentleman from California?

If you did not choose (d) you are no longer eligible for our "Lucky Stiff" draw, the first prize in which is a two-session event with the guy who opened 3♣. (Second prize is a four-session event with him.)

### USA versus Japan

Open Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Hayden</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>
			1♦
Dble	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Freed</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
			1♦
Dble	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Jim Robison got a diamond lead against 2NT and, placing Tadashi Teramoto with most of the missing high cards for having opened, ducked when the ten was played. He won the spade switch with the ace and knocked out the ♣A. On the spade continuation he put up the king and had time for a heart trick; plus 120.

Dawei Chen, in 3NT, won Mark Itabashi's lead of the ♠2 with the ace and led the ♣K. Itabashi won and played the ♥AQ, looking at dummy's king-jack doubleton, as Garey Hayden followed with the deuce-four. Chen played two rounds of clubs, Itabashi hastening to dispose of his offending ♥10. Now Chen led a spade to the jack and queen as Hayden won and played ... a heart. Chen scooped in the nine, cashed his club, and played two rounds of spades to endplay Itabashi to score the ♦Q...to which we must say, "Wow!" 6 IMPs to Japan.

Bd: 35	North
Dir: South	♠ AJ74
Vul: E/W	♥ K432
	♦ A542
	♣ 7
West	East
♠ K2	♠ Q853
♥ A8	♥ J1095
♦ 1097	♦ KQJ63
♣ AKQ963	♣ ---
	South
	♠ 1096
	♥ Q76
	♦ 8
	♣ J108542

Teramoto discarding a club. Mark cashed two high clubs (a heart and a spade from dummy), smiled ruefully, and reverted to diamonds, Tadashi Imakura winning as Teramoto released the ♠10, a thoughtful play. Imakura had a good read on the whole layout now and cashed the ♠A before switching to the ♥K. This was very good defense but it was not good enough. Itabashi won the ♥A and exited with a heart. Teramoto won the queen and played the ♣J, but Itabashi ducked that and Teramoto had to either give dummy the rest or lead a club from the guarded ten to Itabashi's queen-nine; plus 600.

Bridge at its most beautiful, guys. Lose 5 IMPs.

#### Australia versus Great Britain

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Jason</i>	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Del'Monte</i>
			Pass
1♣	Dble	1♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Browne</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Bagchi</i>	<i>Paul</i>
			Pass
1♣(1)	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
(1) Strong			

Both Norths led a spade to the nine and king. Jason played ♦10, ♣A, ♣K, diamond. Peter Newman elected to take the second diamond and that was that; plus 600. Seamus Browne played two diamonds immediately, John Armstrong withholding the ace as Papa discarded a club. Seamus tried two high clubs (a heart and a spade from dummy), then a third diamond. Armstrong won as Papa threw the ♥7. Armstrong decided to exit with a diamond, so Browne had a spade, a heart, three clubs, and four diamonds; plus 600. No swing.

#### The Final:

It was Japan, the Defending Champions, facing Great Britain, the pre-tournament favorites, over 64 boards for the NEC Cup 2000. The match would be one of reversing fortunes.

#### USA versus Japan

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Robison</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Freed</i>
			3♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Hayden</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Gene Freed, this is your life.

Can any of us possibly imagine how Dawei Chen must have felt during this memorable auction? Against 3♣ doubled, he led the ♥A, 2, 5, 7. Then he switched to the ♠K, A, 8, 6. That's better. Now picture everyone's reaction to the next trick: ♣7...♦K...J, Q. Spade to the queen, spade ruff, diamond. Freed won and could have played diamond ruff, ♥K, diamond ruff. Instead, he played ♥Q, heart. Chen scored another small trump, but had to play a diamond now himself. Freed was down to trumps and had to lead one when he ruffed the diamond, so Dawei scored all six of his trumps which, along with their two major-suit winners, gave the defense eight tricks. Down only four; minus 800. Not so bad, really.

Mark Itabashi had to negotiate 3NT on the lead of a low spade to the nine and king. The ♦10 held at trick two, as did the ♦9 at trick three, Tadashi

Bd: 6	North
Dir: East	♠ 108
Vul: E/W	♥ KJ10975
	♦ 4
	♣ J1083
West	East
♠ J7653	♠ AK4
♥ 8	♥ A42
♦ 102	♦ AKQ875
♣ AK542	♣ 7
	South
	♠ Q92
	♥ Q63
	♦ J963
	♣ Q96

Bd: 11	North
Dir: South	♠ A103
Vul: None	♥ J7
	♦ AJ652
	♣ K103
West	East
♠ 87652	♠ KQJ4
♥ 982	♥ AKQ65
♦ 9843	♦ Q10
♣ 8	♣ QJ
	South
	♠ 9
	♥ 1043
	♦ K7
	♣ A976542

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

Credit Papa's 3♥ bid for some of the 12 IMPs won by Great Britain on this deal. Teramoto had a tough decision over 3♥ and bid what he thought he might make. Should Imakura have passed 3NT? That's a partnership matter.

On an unlikely trump lead against 6♦, declarer draws trumps and clears spades. On any other lead, declarer ruffs his hearts in dummy, throws a spade on the ♣K, and loses a trump trick. Well bid by the twins, we think.

If the following auctions are correct, we suspect that we are traveling through another dimension. A dimension not of sight and sound, but of mind and imagination. That's the signpost up ahead—our next stop, the Twilight Zone!

	Open Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	
<i>Jason</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Chen</i>	
			3♣	
Pass	3NT	Dble	4♣!	
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass	
	Closed Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	
<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Mavromichalis</i>	
			Pass	
Pass	1NT	Dble	2♣	
Pass	Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Even 2♥ was too high in the Closed Room. Spade lead, spade ruff, ♣A, ♦7 to the ace, spade ruff, ♦K; minus 50. But who would have picked the bidding to end at 2♥, given South's hand facing a not-so-weak notrump?

In the Open Room, Chen had a good hand for a nonvulnerable three-bid and Ino took a practical shot at 3NT. When Justin doubled (as well he might), it's difficult to understand why Chen would run. Perhaps Ino would have done so on his own, but here the net effect of Chen's unilateral escape was to get him doubled in 4♣ when Jason decided to try for four tricks on defense rather than ten on offense. Jason's heart lead was the only one to

hold Chen to eleven tricks, but Justin won the ♥Q and switched to a spade. Now the hearts went on the established diamonds for twelve tricks; plus 710. 4♠ would have been only one down. 12 IMPs to Japan. Apologies to Rod Serling.

The first quarter ended with Japan in the lead, 50-32 IMPs.

Bd: 29	North	
Dlr: North	♠ 86	
Vul: Both	♥ AKQ83	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ J54	
West		East
♠ J4		♠ A10532
♥ 96		♥ 10752
♦ J9653		♦ 1087
♣ Q1083		♣ 2
	South	
	♠ KQ97	
	♥ J4	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ AK976	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Chen</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Jason</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♣(1)
Pass	2♦(1)	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	
(1) Alerted			

Chen's 6♣ had no chance on the lie of the cards and he finished two down after cashing the ace-king of trumps; minus 200.

Jason's 6NT was more promising. He got a diamond lead (the honest five), won the ace, and led a spade to his king. He cashed the ♣A, then the ♦Q, and ran hearts, Ino discarding the ♠5 on

the last. West discarded the three-nine of diamonds, then the ♣8 after Jason threw his last small club. Had Jason cashed the ♦K before leading a second spade, he would have made his contract easily. Instead, he led the spade first. Had Ino played low, he would have taken the last two tricks with the ♠A10. Instead, he went in with the ace (Teramoto's jack falling) and exited with the ♠3. Suddenly, Jason was back in the running. But could he really finesse dummy's ♠9? To do so would mean that he had been given a chance to make a contract that had to fail with normal defense in a clear endgame. Meanwhile, playing the ♠Q was entirely legitimate. If Teramoto had started with the ♠J104, there would be no defense in the endgame. If Ino ducks the spade, the king wins and declarer cashes the ♣K before exiting in spades to collect the ♦K in the end. We can't tell you whether Jason was thinking of the Grosvenor Gambit possibilities in this torment-laden position, but in the end he put up the ♠Q and lost the last trick to Ino's ♠10 for one down. Minus 100 and 3 IMPs to Great Britain.

Japan continued their winning ways in the second quarter, outscoring Great Britain 38-28 to lead at the half, 88-60. But Great Britain was not through—not by a long shot.

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...

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</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♥	Pass	7NT	Dble
All Pass			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason</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...or did it?

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 key cards and the ♥Q. Here, however, Papa closed out the auction (he thought) in 6♥, confirming to Armstrong that one keycard was missing. John 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 his partner could work it out.

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 diamonds. How mortifying for N/S.

Does the implication of a heart lead by the double stand up to analysis? We think 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. But then what if East is not being sensible? Our psychiatrist tells us we have a wonderful future in some other game.

So 14 IMPs swung to Great Britain. Had Imakura found a heart or a club lead, Japan would have gained 17 IMPs. That's a 31-imp difference. Remember that number.

Bd: 41	North	
Dir: 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</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	1♥	Dble	Pass
2♣	2♥	3♣	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason</i>
	1♥	Dble	Pass
2♣	2♥	Dble	All Pass

Armstrong's gentle 3♣ is certainly the correct

technical action over 2♥, but it's amazing how often players compete 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 Dawei Chen felt obliged to double a second time with the East cards, but even so, Hirata was not expected to pass with the hand he held. Chen led two rounds of clubs against 2♥ doubled. Justin ruffed, cashed the ace-king of trumps, then led a diamond. When the ten came up he lost only two diamonds and the ♠A to land a doubled overtrick; plus 570. 12 IMPs to Great Britain.

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

	Open Room		
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
(1) Weak			

	Closed Room		
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hirata</i>	<i>Justin</i>	<i>Chen</i>	<i>Jason</i>
	Pass	1♣	Dble
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.

When Teramoto judged to stay out of the auction, bidding at the three level became too rich for Imakura. Armstrong is a wily competitor. Perhaps he sensed the tension at the table or perhaps (more likely) he intended it as a blocking maneuver. Whatever his motivation, he chose to raise to 3♥. With a maximum for his weak jump response and no sense of humor at the prevailing vulnerability, 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 wrong 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 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 and 9 IMPs to Great Britain.

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		
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Imakura</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Hirata	Justin	Chen	Jason
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Takahiko Hirata led the ♠J and Dawei Chen picked a bad time to follow low. The ♠Q 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. But Jason just 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! 10 IMPs to Great Britain.

Great Britain won the third quarter 66-17 and led in the match, 126-105.

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		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
Paul	Ino	Armstrong	Chen
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
Imakura	Justin	Teramoto	Jason
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass

6♥ is excellent for E/W and Papa-John Armstrong had no trouble bidding it.

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 type of auction. Do yourself a favor and discuss this hand with your favorite partner; it's an important one for slam-bidding principles. 13 IMPs to Great Britain.

Great Britain won the fourth quarter 44-36 and the match 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 ♠, the Defending Champions would once again have been the Champions.

The VuGraph room was packed during the finals and players and spectators alike could be found biting their nails until the very last score was posted. Great Britain had fulfilled their pre-tournament promise to win the NEC Cup in a match that was the closest of the event. It doesn't get much better than that.

Congratulations to **Brigitte Mavromichalis, John Armstrong, Paul, Jason and Justin Hackett**, the worthy winners. They struggled throughout the Swiss Qualifying phase and snuck into 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.

In the playoff for third place, Australia was clearly the better prepared. After a 4-imp loss on the first deal, the Aussies peeled off 25 straight IMPs. Another 5-imp pick-up for the USA was followed by 17 more IMPs for the Aussies, who cruised through the remaining ten boards to lead 75-34 at the half. Most of the early boards of the

second-half were flat, and the Aussies gained the first two double-digit swings before USA finally struck back with a 17-IMP gain of their own. But that was it for the Americans. Australia won the second half 32-22 and the playoff for third place 107-56. Congratulations to **Peter Newman**, **Ishmael Del'Monte**, **Seamus Browne** and **Khokan Bagchi** for taking the bronze, and to **Mark Itabashi**, **Gene Freed**, **Garey Hayden** and **Jim Robison** for making it to the NEC Cup semi-finals—no mean feat this year.

## Get the Message



"We welcome you to Japan..."



"...and we hope you enjoy your stay..."



"...but you must obey the rules..."



"...I have no idea what I'm reading."