



NEC Bridge Festival

Saturday, February 14, 2004
Bulletin Number 5

Editors: Eric Kokish, Richard Colker, Pietro Campanile

Israel Faces China Ladies in the NEC Cup Final

In the upset match of the tournament, China Ladies (Hou Yunyan, Zhu Xiaoyin, Yan Ru, Dong Yongling, Lu Yan, Wang Yanhong) dethroned the defending NEC Cup champions, England in one of yesterday's semifinal matches, on the same day that they eliminated the round-robin winners, USA. Today they meet the winners of the other semifinal match in which Israel (Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Zur Campanile) defeated perennial PABF power Indonesia. The last half of the quarterfinal matches and the first half of the semifinal matches are covered in this issue. Tomorrow we will conclude with the second half of our semifinal coverage and begin (finish?) the finals.

Quarterfinal Results

Team	Carry	1-20	21-40	Final
USA	.5	42	18	60
China Ladies		67	64	131
Indonesia	.5	58	13	71
Germany/USA		22	35	57
Canada	.5	56	37	93
England		48	49	97
Poland/Russia	.5	47	16	63
Israel		38	26	64

Semifinal Results

Team	Carry	1-20	21-40	Final
Indonesia	.5	30	17	47
Israel		36	56	92
England	.5	33	32	65
China Ladies		54	40	94

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Call your friends and tell them that your exploits are being chronicled on the World Wide Web. They can follow all of the action at the 9th NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

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

– or –

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

NEC Cup 2004: Conditions of Contest

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

V.P. Scale	WBF 20-board scale (a copy can be found in the score book provided in your NEC Bridge Festival bag).
Seating Rights	Blind seating 10 minutes before the start of match
KO-Phase Seating	The winner of a coin toss has the choice of seating in either of the two 20-board segments. In the four 16-board segments of the final, the choices will alternate over segments.
Swiss Pairings	For the first and second Swiss matches, pairings will be determined by randomly pairing each of the teams numbered 1-26 with one of the teams numbered 27-52. 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	<p>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, WBF 2002 Conditions of Contest procedures will apply.</p> <p>In the Knockout Phase, the team with the higher position from the Swiss will be assumed to have a ½-IMP carryover.</p>
Systems	<p>No HUM methods will be permitted in this event.</p> <p>In the Swiss, no Brown Sticker methods will be permitted.</p> <p>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.</p>
Length of Matches	2 hours and 50 minutes will be allotted for each 20-board segment (or 2 hours and 20 minutes for each 16-board segment of the final). In addition a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per WBF 2001 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.
KO Draw	<p>The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4th-8th group. And so on.</p> <p>In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1st in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.</p>
3 rd /4 th Places	Unless the two losing semi-finalists both agree to play off for 3 rd and 4 th place, there will be no playoff and the prize money will be divided evenly between the two teams.
Smoking	No smoking in the playing areas. You may not leave the playing room to smoke.

Team Rosters: 9th NEC Cup

#	Name	Members
1	England:	Brian Senior, John Armstrong, Brian Callaghan, Pablo Lambardi
2	Iceland:	Throstur Ingimarsson, Bjarni Einarsson, Anton Haraldsson, Sigurbjorn Haraldsson
3	Germany/USA:	Sabine Auken, Kerri Sanborn, Janice Seamon-Molson, Mark Molson
4	Israel:	Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Zur Campanile
5	Canada:	George Mittelman, Allan Graves, Joey Silver, John Carruthers
6	Poland/Russia:	Adam Zmudzinski, Cezary Balicki, Andrew Gromov, Alexander Petrunin
7	Indonesia:	Henky Lasut, Eddy Manoppo, Santje Panelewen, Franky Karwur, Munawar Sawiruddin
8	China Open:	Li Xin, Sun Shaolin, Kang Meng, Li Xiaoyi, Fu Zhong, Zhao Jie
9	China Ladies:	Hou Yunyan, Zhu Xiaoyin, Yan Ru, Dong Yongling, Lu Yan, Wang Yanhong
10	Chinese Taipei Ladies:	Fang-wen Gong(PC), Sheau-fong Hu, Lin-chin Liu, Wen-chuan Tsai
11	USA:	Garey Hayden, Jim Robison, Simon Kantor, Mark Itabashi
12	Australia:	Cathy Chua, Simon Hinge, Robert Fruewirth, Bill Jacobs
13	Bulgaria:	Gueorgui Stamatov, Ivan Tsonchev, Rumen Trendafilov, Kalin Karaivanov
14	Happy Bridge (Korea):	SUNG Kyunghae, HWANG Inryung, KWON Sooja, KO Jaehyun
15	Dum-Dum's (Korea):	SYNN Soohi, PARK Myungki, NOH Heajung, KIM Sookyoung
16	Amante (Korea):	HAHN Myungjin, LIM Hyun, SUH Eunae, KIM Yoonkyung
17	Acacia (Korea):	HAN Sunhee, YOO Kyungwon, PARK Jungyoon, YANG Sungae
18	Yeh Bros (Taiwan):	Chen Yeh, Chia-Hsin Wu, Chih-Kuo Shen, Chi-Hua Chen, Jung-Fong Cheng, Yi-Wen Lai
19	Taiwan-NaCS:	Kao Cheng, Tom Cheng, Chen Hung Yu, Lin Yung Yi, C. C. Chen
20	Japan Olympiad Open:	Tadashi Teramoto, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura, Hideki Takano, Hiroshi Kaku, Masaaki Takayama
21	Japan Olympiad Ladies:	Kyoko Shimamura, Ayako Amano, Hiroko Ota, Miho Sekizawa, Nobuko Setoguchi, Shoko Fukuda
22	Japan Olympiad Senior:	Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Makoto Hirata
23	SLAM DUNK:	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Kenji Miyakuni, Sakiko Naito, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta
24	NAGASAKA:	Hiroya Abe, Sei Nagasaka, Liang Ping, Akira Morozumi, Misuzu Ichihashi
25	HAYASHI:	Nobuyuki Hayashi, Seiya Shimizu, Takehiko Nagahama, Takeshi Hanayama, Takashi Maeda
26	MIDORI-KAME:	Natsuko Nishida, Tomoe Nakao, Koji Ito, Tadashi Yoshida, Midori Sakamoto, Yuko Yamada
27	ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Mieko Nakanishi, Mizuko Tan, Yoko Osako, Junko Arai, Toyoko Saito
28	Gryffindor:	Michiko Iwahashi, Michiko Ohno, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kazuko Banno
29	Drami & Alice:	Makiko Sato, Koji Yamada, Yuko Yamada, Eiji Otaka, Yuko Noda, Hiroyuki Noda
30	GIRASOL:	Sachiko Yamamura, Taeko Kawamura, Kimi Makita, Keiko Matsuzaki
31	SKOTII:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Takahiro Kamiyo, Kenichi Izaki, Atsushi Kikuchi, Takehiko Tada
32	AOGUMI:	Yoko Nenohi, Kyoko Toyofuku, Kumiko Matsuo, Toshiko Kaho, Yoshiko Sakaguchi, Hiroko Janssen
33	Spice:	Yukiko Umezu, Etsuko Naito, Makiko Hayashi, Yayoi Sakamoto
34	PS-JACK:	Masako Otsuka, Masakatsu Sugino, Shoko Imai, Takako Fujimoto, Yoko Maruyama, Yukiko Hoshi
35	KACHOFUGETSU:	Akiko Miwa, Kunio Kodaira, Teruo Miyazaki, Makoto Nomura, Fumiko Nanjo, Ryoji Fujiwara
36	KOSAKA:	Kazuko Kawashima, Yasuko Kosaka, Koichi Onishi, Nobuko Matsubara
37	OZAWA:	Toyohiko Ozawa, Toru Nishiwaki, Kenichi Asaoka, Kazuhisa Kojima
38	SWAN:	Minako Hiratsuka, Aiko Banno, Naomi Terauchi, Natsuko Asaka, Kotomi Asakoshi, Michiko Shida
39	MERRY QUEENS & J:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Toyoko Nakakawaji, Toshiko Hiramori, Tomoya Yamaguchi
40	NETORA:	Yoko Saito, Yoshiko Shimazumi, Chieko Ichikawa, Mamiko Odaira, Kuniko Saito, Junko Den
41	NANIWADA:	Takako Nakatani, Masaru Naniwada, Atsushi Kimura, Nobuko Tanai, Harue Iemori, Yumi Yanagida
42	Good Luck:	Osami Kimura, Kinzaburo Nishino, Setsuko Kimura, Toshiko Miyashiro
43	KATSUMATA:	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Misae Kato, Kimiko Kamakari, Keiko Oshio, Mayumi Hirota
44	MY-Bridge:	Noriko Yoshizawa, Masafumi Yoshizawa, Kuniko Miyauchi, Yoshitaka Agata, Shigeyuki Murano
45	COSMOS:	Nobuko Wakasa, Masaharu Wakasa, Keiko Enomoto, Yoko Takahashi, Kazuko Tsumori, Noriko Komiyama
46	Kinki:	Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka, Sonoko Namba, Atsuko Kurita, Chizuko Sugiura
47	ATHENE:	Sachiko Kunitomo, Fumi Hosoda, Kyoko Tsumi, Seizo Hirao, Takehiko Takagi, Mitsuko Yamaguchi
48	MATSUBARA:	Ryo Matsubara, Ayako Matsubara, Kiyoshi Asai, Katsumi Tokiwa, Ryohei Orihara, Naoko Orihara
49	Konishi:	Chizuno Saito, Momoko Kumano, Yoshihisa Konishi, Masaru Yoshida, Minoru Mizuta
50	Fairy Tale:	Takao Onodera, Yukinao Honma, Ryo Okuno, Takeshi Higashiguchi, Kazunori Sasaki, Zhang Shudi
51	POODLE:	Emiko Tamura, Yoshiko Murata, Hiroko Kobayashi, Chizuko Tsukamoto
52	AKQ:	Alan Sia, Shunsuke Morimura, Tomoyuki Harada, Makoto Kohno, Chieko Yamazaki

SPECIAL ALERT

The Daily Bulletin editors would like to remind invited teams to submit short, humorous (if possible) bios of their team. Canada, Israel and Australia (see page 5) have already been immortalized in these pages. Please take advantage of this chance of a lifetime and submit your team's bios today.

Snapshots Of Monte Carlo: She Deserved A Much Better Fate

by Eric Kokish

Bd: 12	♠ KQ8	
Dir: West	♥ Q5	
Vul: N/S	♦ AQ93	
	♣ J972	
♠ 32		♠ J10974
♥ AJ10984		♥ 763
♦ 87		♦ J42
♣ A86		♣ 103
	♠ A65	
	♥ K2	
	♦ K1065	
	♣ KQ54	

takeout double South might well jump to 3NT over 2♥. All three of them feared that a single heart stopper might not be enough if nine tricks were not available in time, so they planned a two-step approach, first doubling for takeout.

As Rodwell did not compete to 3♥, Fantoni was able to mention a suit before Nunes converted to 3NT, so the inference about the thin heart stopper and strong support for both minors was not quite so clear. Rodwell led the ♥10, Rusinow, and although dummy won the queen, Meckstroth's seven (reverse count) clarified the position (as Meckstroth might have raised with a doubleton, Nunes could dare to hope for an error). Declarer tried a club to the king at trick two and Rodwell won, cashed the ♥A and took his winners. Two down: -200.

Venice Cup Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Picus</i>	<i>Hongli</i>	<i>Levin</i>
1♥	Dbf	2♥	Dbf
3♥	Pass	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sokolow</i>	<i>Zhang</i>	<i>Molson</i>	<i>Gu</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Bermuda Bowl Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Freeman</i>
1♥	Dbf	2♥	Dbf
3♥	Pass	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
1♥	Dbf	2♥()	Dbf
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT

All Pass

(1) Possibly only two-card support

Three of the four N/S pairs (all at the tables where West opened 1♥) reached the same losing game contract. Would you have done better on this brutal combination?

With so many high cards facing a vulnerable

Where Versace jammed the auction with 3♥, Freeman's 3NT carried the message he wanted to send: single stopper, alternative strains possible. Nickell, with some help in hearts (picture South with ace and one heart with the king in West) and a full-value takeout double was delighted to pass 3NT. With a sure entry, Versace led the ♥A, sensibly catering to singleton honor in dummy. It didn't matter this time.

In the identical scenario Jill Levin could have tried 3NT with the same implications as Freeman's, but instead found a winning solution by jumping to 4♠. As her double had denied as many as four spades, she felt that Picus would pass only with a decent four-card spade holding and would otherwise correct to five of a minor or offer a choice of minors with 4NT. And if 4♠ were playable, the contract would be declared from her side, protecting the ♥K. With those agreements in place, 4♠ was a pretty bid, and deserved to achieve a good result. Alas, North passed with an unsuitable spade holding, feeling that Levin had either forgotten this "not four spades" agreement that had rarely come up or had deliberately violated the system on the previous round. Although 4♠ had some single dummy chances after ace and another heart, the bad trump break was too much to overcome and Levin finished two down, -200, a result that

would have produced a flat board in the Bermuda Bowl.

In the Venice Cup, however, -200 fared much worse. When Sokolow passed as dealer, Zhang was able to open a 14-16 notrump. Had Gu simply raised to 3NT, Molson would almost surely have led a spade and the contract would

have made. When Gu decided to investigate with 2♣, her side's first move with most game-forcing hands lacking a long suit, the rest of the auction evolved into an exercise in wriggling out of notrump into a minor. Sokolow led ace and another heart against 5♣ but Gu drove out the ace of trumps and claimed when both minors behaved: +600, 13 IMPs to China.

How Aggressive Should Aggression Be?

by Zar Petkov

Should you be aggressive or conservative in bridge? You all know the right answer—both!

♠ Q865	♠ KJ973
♥ QJ3	♥ K92
♦ QJ	♦ K2
♣ KJ64	♣ Q5

Standard bidding: East has 12 HCP with a good five-card suit, West has four-card support and 12 HCP: both opening hands but not a chance for either 4♠ or 3NT.

Zar Points bidding: East has 12+3+3+8=26 points (bare opening) while West has 12+1+2+8=23: not an opening hand even with the correction of +1 for the ♠Q. 23 ZP translate to a limit raise to 3♠ (49 Zar Points, 52 needed for a game). No need for “aggression” when you don’t have enough guns.

Karen McCallum said once “Never in my life have I passed a hand with a void,” and when you think about it, a hand with a void already has at least 14 Zar Points from distribution alone (as opposed to the 8 points that a flat 4-3-3-3 hand would give you—a minimum of 6 points difference). Put a couple of aces in it for another 12 points (4 HCP and 2 CT each) and you have a hand with 8 HCP but with 26 Zar Points! In Goren points, with 3 points for a void, it still only adds up to 11!

♠ A865	♠ KQ973
♥ AJ753	♥ K10962
♦ 9764	♦ 852
♣ ---	♣ ---

Standard bidding: East has 8 HCP and West has 9 HCP; nobody has a suit longer than five cards! Admit it, you would pass BOTH hands!

Zar Points bidding: East has 8+4+9+5=26 Zar Points. West has 9+2+10+5=26. BOTH opening hands! And as Culbertson used to put it: “Two opening hands make a game.” The result: a cold 4♥.

I am sure you have already noticed that if you switch the clubs and diamonds in EITHER hand (but not both) you can make a GRAND! A GRAND SLAM that at most table would be an ALL-PASS board!

Bob Hamman (arguably the most experienced bridge player on Earth) said once that bidding is just 3% of the game (I DON’T BELIEVE IT—PC). Wouldn’t passing a GRAND be a shame even for Bob with his 3% on bidding; that is, if he’d have an ALL-PASS board here (though I am sure he wouldn’t because his 3% is NOT your 3%!). Now, however, you have the tool to come closer to Bob’s 3%.

Looks strange, but only if you are still judging and evaluating the hands based on HCP and that “vague feeling” about things like shape, controls, distribution, offensive power, suit-support, etc., all of which come into place with the Zar Points evaluation system.

You only have to be able to count to 26 and confidently open the bidding.

The Quarterfinals of the NEC Cup: Second Half

by Eric Kokish

After the first twenty boards of the quarterfinals, two teams had managed to establish a sizeable but by no means decisive lead: Indonesia and, perhaps beyond their own expectations, China-Ladies. All the matches featured many significant swings, but they were more evenly divided in the other two encounters, leading to slender leads for Poland/Russia and Canada.

USA-42 vs China Ladies-67

Poland/Russia-47 vs Israel-38

Indonesia-58 vs Germany/USA-22

Canada-56 vs England-48

Second Half:

We'll be focusing on the two close matches, but will again stay in touch with the others, which could easily get closer in a hurry.

Please take note that the higher-ranked team in the Round Robin in each match enjoyed a half-IMP carryover, which meant that the matches could not end in a draw. Once in a while, that makes a difference.

There wasn't much in the first five deals so... "I may not have a lot to give, but what I've got I'll give to you" (with apologies to John, George, Paul and Ringo).

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 853		
Vul: None	♥ Q7		
	♦ J5432		
	♣ 1084		
	West	East	
	♠ AK72	♠ Q106	
	♥ 32	♥ AJ64	
	♦ Q7	♦ AK109	
	♣ AQJ62	♣ 73	
	South		
	♠ J94		
	♥ K10985		
	♦ 86		
	♣ K95		

Seven of eight E/W pairs played in 3NT or 4NT. The eighth—**Jim Robison/Mark Itabashi** of

USA—picked a good moment to shoot out 6NT, which they made against China-Ladies, reducing their deficit to just 14 IMPs. Of course, if you bid like that all the time, the Big Bear eventually bites you in the butt, and in practice this would be the last significant gain for USA while China-Ladies would record five double-digit gains to win the second half in impressive fashion, 64-18, and the match by 71 IMPs, 131-60. That was particularly sweet for the Beijing team as USA had won the Round Robin and selected them as quarterfinal opponents.

Bd: 2	North		
Dlr: East	♠ AQ1064		
Vul: N/S	♥ 9		
	♦ AK105		
	♣ A97		
	West	East	
	♠ K95	♠ J8	
	♥ 1053	♥ KJ72	
	♦ J2	♦ Q74	
	♣ KQ653	♣ J1042	
	South		
	♠ 732		
	♥ AQ864		
	♦ 9863		
	♣ 8		

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

This was everyone's 4♠ yielding ten or eleven tricks, so our interest here lies in the theoretical. **Adam Zmudzinski** could not double 1♥ for penalty, but bid the suit naturally after his partner showed a strong hand with his 1♠ bid. He considered 2♥ forcing, as did **Cezary Balicki**, who continued with a forcing 3♦. That brings us to the central point of this mini-discussion, which is whether 3♠ should be forcing and how many

spades it is expected to deliver. Our boys were on the same page here and all was well, but the nature of their agreements makes it difficult for them to get together in *hearts* when South has a modest hand with length in hearts and North has a normal hand pattern for his takeout double, as South can never afford to mention his suit without overstating his values. Note to outside world: bid majors over a B/Z takeout double even when you don't have them.

P/R vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	1♦	1♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	3♦	4♥	All Pass

John Carruthers' aggressive double was also imaginative, even for a guy with an overactive imagination (let's not go there, kids), and **Brian Senior** made the Canadians pay by bouncing to game. **Joey Silver's** 5♦ has been roundly criticized in the local watering holes, but I consider those critics unkind. After all, he bought a terrible dummy, ran into an unlucky lead for his purposes, and didn't push **Pablo Lambardi** to 5♥. The ♣Q went to the ace and Senior led over to the ♥A to get a club ruff. With a trump and a spade still to come, the number was -800. 8 IMPs to England, just one IMP behind at 56-57.



Adam Zmudzinski



Cezary Balicki

Bd: 5	North		
Dlr: North	♠ J96		
Vul: N/S	♥ J		
	♦ AQ109842		
	♣ K6		
		East	
West		♠ K	
♠ Q87543		♥ A1098642	
♥ K753		♦ K3	
♦ J6		♣ QJ10	
♣ A			
	South		
	♠ A102		
	♥ Q		
	♦ 75		
	♣ 9875432		



Brian Senior

Meanwhile, **Migry Campanile's** 3♦ opening might have jockeyed the Russians beyond their depth, but **Andrei Gromov** has revealed to us in a post-game interview that his jump to 4♥ didn't show a particularly good hand. That explains **Alex Petrunin's** pass and left Poland/Russia with a 10-IMP lead, 49-39.

Canada vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
	1♦	1♥	Dbl(1)
4♥	5♦	Pass	Pass

Dbl All Pass

(1) Values, denies four spades

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
	1♦	1♥	Pass
2♦*	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		



"The medication works, but I can't stop grinning."

Bd: 6	North
Dlr: East	♠ 93
Vul: E/W	♥ A82
	♦ Q1095
	♣ KQ96
West	East
♠ AJ5	♠ 10642
♥ KQ73	♥ 964
♦ J432	♦ K7
♣ 83	♣ A742
	South
	♠ KQ87
	♥ J105
	♦ A86
	♣ J105

hey, it's just one deal. 3 IMPs to Israel, 42-49, and 2 IMPs to England, ahead now 58-57.

Bd: 7	North
Dlr: South	♠ J
Vul: Both	♥ J1082
	♦ 98543
	♣ A54
West	East
♠ K73	♠ Q102
♥ Q954	♥ A
♦ KQ1072	♦ A6
♣ 2	♣ QJ109873
	South
	♠ A98654
	♥ K763
	♦ J
	♣ K6

Canada vs England

Open Room

West <i>Senior</i>	North <i>Silver</i>	East <i>Lambardi</i>	South <i>Carruthers</i>
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Mittelman</i>	North <i>Armstrong</i>	East <i>Graves</i>	South <i>Callaghan</i>
		All Pass	

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West <i>D. Yadlin</i>	North <i>Balicki</i>	East <i>I.Yadlin</i>	South <i>Zmudzinski</i>
		All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Petrinin</i>	North <i>Campanile</i>	East <i>Gromov</i>	South <i>Barel</i>
1♦(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	1NT

All Pass

(1) Precision

The Closed Room bidding in Canada vs England and the Open Room bidding in P/R vs Israel is easy to understand, but the bidding at the other tables is of greater interest. If your methods dictate that you open 1♦ and not 1♥ in third seat with the West hand I submit that you should trade in your methods. The fact that the former led to -90 and the latter to +50 comes as no surprise to those who dislike the 1♦ opening, but

Canada vs England

Open Room

West <i>Senior</i>	North <i>Silver</i>	East <i>Lambardi</i>	South <i>Carruthers</i>
Pass	1NT(1)	2♣	1♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

(1) Forcing

Closed Room

West <i>Mittelman</i>	North <i>Armstrong</i>	East <i>Graves</i>	South <i>Callaghan</i>
Pass	1NT	3♣	1♠
			All Pass

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West <i>D. Yadlin</i>	North <i>Balicki</i>	East <i>I.Yadlin</i>	South <i>Zmudzinski</i>
Pass	Pass	2♣	1♠
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
			All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Petrinin</i>	North <i>Campanile</i>	East <i>Gromov</i>	South <i>Barel</i>
Pass	1NT(1)	3♣	1♠
			All Pass

(1) Forcing

Carruthers was the only South player to get his hearts into the mix and Silver did very well (spectacularly, in my view) to pass 2♥. Senior

did pretty well himself to pass 3♣ and to double Silver's eminently reasonable reopening 3♥. 3♥ doubled was a scary contract to play and Carruthers must have been pleased to scramble seven tricks after the lead of the singleton club. He led a diamond to open up crossruff possibilities and Lambardi won to give Senior a club ruff. Declarer ruffed the diamond continuation, played ♠A, spade ruff, diamond, allowing Lambardi to discard a spade. Carruthers ruffed and ruffed another spade with the ♥J. East overruffed and played a club, but Carruthers ruffed with the ♥K and led a spade winner through West. Senior ruffed in with the queen and exited with a trump, but Carruthers finessed dummy's eight, cashed the ♥10, and lost the last trick to West's ♦Q: -300.

Against Graves' 3♣ **Brian Callaghan** led the ♦J. He won the first trump with the king, played ♠A, gave a spade ruff, got a diamond ruff with the ♣6, and **John Armstrong** got the ♣A for one down, -100. 7 IMPs to England, 65-57.

Zmudzinski led a heart against **Israel Yadlin's** 3♣. That was fatal as he could no longer score the ♣6 on a diamond ruff when declarer played trumps immediately. Balicki got a spade ruff but Yadlin was +110.

Michael Barel led ace and another spade against Gromov's 3♣. Unfortunately for the defense, the "another" was the ♠9, so Campanile returned a dutiful heart rather than a diamond. Now the defenders could take only two more trump tricks: +110 and a push. With a diamond return at trick three South could win the first club, give North another spade ruff with the ♣A, and score the ♣6 on a diamond ruff.



"So, can you see my forehead now?"

Bd: 8	North
Dir: West	♠ Q9632
Vul: None	♥ J43
	♦ A874
	♣ 2
West	East
♠ A105	♠ 874
♥ K982	♥ Q1065
♦ K932	♦ 1065
♣ J4	♣ K107
	South
	♠ KJ
	♥ A7
	♦ QJ
	♣ AQ98653

Canada vs England Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
1NT	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
Pass	2♠(1)	All Pass	

P/R vs Israel

(1) Spades and a minor, weak

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣(1)
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣(2)
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

(1) Polish style

(2) Natural, forcing, stronger than a limited 2♣ opening

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dbl	1♠	Pass	3♣

All Pass

Silver's takeout to 2♠ looks odd to me, but perhaps he feared that E/W would have lots of club tricks. Had he passed Lambardi might well have done likewise and there would have been chances for a two- or three-trick set. Carruthers was +130 in 3♣. Armstrong's 2♠ netted +110 so

Canada recouped an IMP, 58-65.

Barel took eleven tricks in 3♣ on the lead of a low diamond. Balicki, in a weird 4♠, had too much to do on a heart lead. He ducked to the king, won the heart return, passed the ♦J, continued with the ♦Q, covered, took the club finesse, cashed the ♣A to discard a diamond, and ruffed the clubs good. A diamond ruff with the ♠K was followed by a club winner, West discarding. Balicki discarded too and East scored the ♠7. He exited with a trump to the jack and ace and West still had to make the ten of trumps after exiting with a diamond. Had Balicki ruffed the fourth club with the ♠9 to ruff his last loser with the ♠J, he would have scored the ♠Q later for ten tricks. One down, -50. 5 IMPs to Israel, 2 IMPs behind now at 47-49.

(4) Unsolicited, big fit implied

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT(1)	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦

All Pass

(1) Clubs, or weak with diamonds

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	Pass	2♠(1)	2NT
3♠	3NT	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

(1) Spades and a minor, weak

Lambardi had no trouble in 4♠, ruffing the diamond lead, picking up South's trump queen with a second-round finesse, and setting up clubs. South covered the ♥Q: +650. Armstrong/Callaghan judged beautifully on this one to compete to 4NT, presumably on the way to 5♦ if doubled. Silver led the ♠K and continued with the ♠J, ducked. Armstrong took his nine winners and the defenders kept enough of theirs to set the contract: -50. 12 IMPs to England, 77-58.

Bd: 9	North	
Dir: North	♠ 9	
Vul: E/W	♥ 1043	
	♦ J109543	
	♣ A82	
West		East
♠ KJ7		♠ A65432
♥ AJ86		♥ Q5
♦ 862		♦ ---
♣ J64		♣ Q10753
	South	
	♠ Q108	
	♥ K972	
	♦ AKQ7	
	♣ K9	



John Armstrong

Canada vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
	2♦	2♠	3NT

4♠ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT(1)	Pass	3♣(2)
Pass	3♦(3)	3♠	3NT(4)
4♠	4NT	All Pass	

(1) Weak with one minor or strong with both

(2) The expected reply

(3) Diamonds, nonforcing

Both declarers in the other match could have taken ten tricks legitimately by leading a low heart to the nine, then another low heart later, but both Balicki and Campanile started the suit by leading the ten. Gromov did not cover the ten, however, so Campanile was one down in 5♦, -50. Perhaps it was declarer's dazzling smile that did Andrei in. Israel Yadlin covered the ten so Balicki was one down in 4♦, -50. No swing.

In USA vs China-Ladies, Itabashi/Robison sold

out to 3♦ while their teammates defended 4♠ so China gained 13 IMPs to lead 83-55.

Bd 10	North
Dir: East	♠ ---
Vul: Both	♥ 98
	♦ 762
	♣ J10986542
West	East
♠ J873	♠ 952
♥ J1042	♥ KQ65
♦ K5	♦ AQ1083
♣ A73	♣ K
	South
	♠ AKQ1064
	♥ A73
	♦ J94
	♣ Q

diamond ruff to set 3♥. Silver discarded the ♣J on the first high spade and Carruthers switched to the ♣Q, which ended the defenders' chances. Although he ran up with the trump ace on the first round and played ♠A, ♠2 for Silver to ruff, declarer could ruff the club continuation high: +140. 7 IMPs to England, 84-58.

Doron Yadlin's 1NT buried the heart fit and convinced his brother to commit to game, a typically aggressive view. Balicki's decision to suppress his clubs looks strange to me, but I have come to realize that we are of different minds on most bidding issues. 3NT is not much of a contract as it depends on spades being six-zero (else the suit could be cleared while south has an entry) and diamonds coming in. No problems, mate: +600. Some result!



Doron Yadlin

Canada vs England
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
		1♦	1♠
Dbl*	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
		1♦	1♠
Dbl*	2♣	2♥	2♠
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
		1♦	1♠
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		1♦(1)	Dbl
1♥	5♣	All Pass	

(1) Precision

Armstrong got a heart lead against his 3♣, both opponents considering their black suit holdings inappropriate for further competition. Armstrong won and threw losers on winners: +130. We can see that if North discards two or three diamonds on South's high spade leads he can get a

Barel's takeout double of 1♦ is not the call I would have expected from him, but once the Yadlins had secured +600 the Israeli N/S pair was playing with the house's money. Campanile could hardly do less than bid 5♣ and Barel had to table a dummy his partner was not expecting. Here too the lead was the ♥K, so declarer took her discards and went one down, -100. 11 IMPs to Israel, leading now by 9 IMPs, 58-49.

Itabashi/Robson doubled Zhu/Dong in 3♣ and led a heart to concede 870, contributing to a 14-IMP loss as the match slipped further away from USA.



"Let's leave him here—it's too expensive to ship the body."

Bd: 11	North
Dlr: South	♠ 93
Vul: None	♥ J62
	♦ 83
	♣ QJ7542
West	East
♠ QJ7	♠ K1042
♥ AK8	♥ 93
♦ J654	♦ AKQ97
♣ 863	♣ K9
	South
	♠ A865
	♥ Q10754
	♦ 102
	♣ A10

The Yadlins arranged to play 3NT from the East side and had no problems: +430. That was good news for their teammates, who were nicked for 300 in 2♥ doubled on three rounds of trumps. 4 IMPs to Israel, 62-49.

Bd: 12	North
Dlr: West	♠ AQ73
Vul: N/S	♥ 9762
	♦ Q7532
	♣ ---
West	East
♠ KJ965	♠ ---
♥ AKQ5	♥ 1043
♦ ---	♦ A1096
♣ AQ86	♣ KJ9732
	South
	♠ 10842
	♥ J8
	♦ KJ84
	♣ 1054

Canada vs England Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1NT(1)	Dbl	Pass
Pass	2♥	Dbl	All Pass
(1) Forcing			

Armstrong had every reason to lead a heart after Callaghan's overcall: +430. Silver, however, was on his own. With no entry he decided to try to find his partner's suit and, lo and behold, he did, starting the ♥2: +430. No swing. Alas, his natural lead—a low club—would have beaten the contract in practice.

Canada vs England Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT(1)	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
6♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl	All Pass		

(1) Forcing

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT(1)	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
1♣(1)	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♦(2)	Pass	4♠(3)	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

(1) Strong, artificial

(2) Exclusion Blackwood

(3) One Ace

I could write a book on this one, but the anticipated sales numbers would cause me to rethink my position. Before getting into what happened, I will share my theoretical and heretical opinions with you. After 1♠-1NT, I believe that West should settle for 2♥, which gives him his best chance to get his shape across if the bidding continues. And here I am aware that many would pass 2♥, but I wouldn't recommend that either. East bids 3♣ over 2♥ and all is sweetness and light. Blah blah blah. If West jumps to 3♥ I would love to bid 4♣ with the East hand but my agreement is that this would be an advance cue-bid for hearts (5♣ would be natural). What's left for me is 3NT or 3♠ and I'm a 3♠ guy because it leaves opener the most room to finish describing his hand. But then I believe that 3♠ doesn't mean a lot while 3NT does (extras, lots of stoppers, 2=2=(5-4) shape). Over 3♠ West can bid 3NT when that looks right, 4♥ to complete a five-five, 4♠ with an independent suit, or four of a minor with three or four of those to complete his pattern. Here West bids 4♣, after which all is again sweetness and light. And so on. If this doesn't appeal to you, let me refer you to most of the auctions above.

I sympathize with Brian Senior (is that possible?) who was able to bid out his shape only to receive preference to hearts. Lambardi, you see, had so many clubs that he didn't believe 4♣ could be natural. Plus 480. And this, friends, is the second best auction of the four because West was able to bid his clubs! Unlike the Yadlin brothers, who finished in 4♥, which required some play on a diamond lead, six, king, ruff. Doron continued with a spade ruff and a club to hand, ruffed. A trump switch went to the eight and king, and declarer drew trumps: +450.

P/R seemed headed for a handsome gain when the club fit came to light immediately. Petrunin launched into Exclusion RKCB and decided not to shoot out the spades when Gromov showed one key card outside diamonds. Unfortunately, Gromov read 4♦ as simply void-showing and cue-bid his spade control. So there they were in 5♣. Petrunin made seven: +440. No swing. Israel, 62-49.

At least there was one auction that worked, and it was a triumph for natural bidding. Armstrong didn't think a spade lead had to beat 6♣ but was fairly certain that nothing else would be better

and the possibility of trump tricks in South gave it enough luster to risk it. Of course he had not been reckoning on a sharp redouble. By the same token, Mittelman had no idea whether a spade lead would beat the slam but he was fairly certain that Graves wasn't going two down and that the mathematics favored the redouble in that case. And right he was. Callaghan had too many spades to follow Armstrong's advice, so he led the ♥J. Graves won, cashed the ♣A, and led a low spade. When Armstrong put in the queen Graves ruffed, drew trumps, ruffed out the ♠A, and claimed: +1580. 15 IMPs to Canada, who trailed by 11, 73-84 after that well-deserved gain.



Alan Graves



George Mittelman

Yan/Wang also reached 6♣ for China-Ladies while their counterparts stopped in 3NT, bringing China another 10 IMPs and a stranglehold on the match.

This was a hard luck deal for Indonesia because Panelewen/Karwur bid beautifully to 7♣ after starting 1♣*-2♣ (positive)-trump ask, spade ask, etc, only to fail on a low spade lead from Janice Seamon-Molson (North) after East described first-round spade control. With trumps three-zero, the timing was wrong to take three diamond ruffs and the doubleton ♥J didn't help declarer as the suit was blocked. Minus 50 was a particularly cruel blow as Auken/Sanborn reached 4♥ on the same sequence as the Yadlins. There would be only one more big swing in this match, Auken/Sanborn bidding and making a marginal 6♠ on Board 17 that was missed by Panelewen/Karwur. Germany/USA recouped 22 IMPs of their 36-IMP deficit but lost the match 71-57.



Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ 102
Vul: Both	♥ 1087
	♦ KQ87
	♣ A952
West	East
♠ QJ86	♠ AK5
♥ J32	♥ Q54
♦ 643	♦ AJ1092
♣ K103	♣ J7
	South
	♠ 9743
	♥ AK96
	♦ 5
	♣ Q864

IMP to P/R, 50-62.

Bd: 14	North
Dlr: East	♠ A1063
Vul: None	♥ K2
	♦ A72
	♣ Q974
West	East
♠ Q84	♠ KJ752
♥ 10963	♥ Q4
♦ 105	♦ K843
♣ AK53	♣ 62
	South
	♠ 9
	♥ AJ875
	♦ QJ96
	♣ J108

Canada vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
	Pass	1NT	All Pass

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	Pass	1♣(1)	Pass
1♦(1)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	1♥

1NT All Pass
 (1) Strong, artificial
 (2) Negative

Lambardi took only seven tricks after ace and a low heart, establishing the defenders' clubs for them while ensuring his seventh trick. Graves took nine tricks on friendly defense after taking a good view early on to lead the ♦10 from hand. 2 IMPs to Canada, 75-84.

Israel Yadlin did well to make nine tricks on a spade lead but Petrunin was able to develop ten on a heart lead, ducked to his jack: diamond to the jack, ♦10 to the queen, low club switch. 1

Canada vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Dbl
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♥(1)

All Pass
 (1) Hearts and a minor, weak

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣(1)	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥

All Pass
 (1) Polish-style

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	1♠	Dbl
2♥(1)	Pass	2♠	Dbl
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

(1) Good raise to at least 2♠

Silver was two light in 2NT and could not help but notice his partner tugging at his neck in the

fashion of a doomed man on the gallows. Turnabout is fair play. "Sorry, partner," said our man Joe, "actually meaning it." Callaghan was one down in 2♥ after some unfortunate choices in the play, but England nonetheless gained 2 IMPs, 86-75.

Zmudzinski, after a downright weird-looking 2♥ rebid, made 2♥ after three rounds of clubs and a spade switch, losing only a diamond and a late heart trick: +110. Campanile, like Silver, was -100 in 2NT, so P/R gained 5 IMPs to move within 7 IMPs at 55-62.

Bd: 16	North		
Dlr: West	♠ Q862		
Vul: E/W	♥ Q5		
	♦ AQJ		
	♣ AK73		
	West	East	
	♠ K10	♠ J95	
	♥ A1042	♥ J9873	
	♦ 10984	♦ K632	
	♣ Q98	♣ 6	
	South		
	♠ A743		
	♥ K6		
	♦ 75		
	♣ J10542		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

In P/R vs Israel, both Souths declared 4♠. Doron led the ♦9 to the jack and king, got back in with the ♥A and switched to the ♣9. Zmudzinski won the ace and played ♠A, spade. When Doron returned the ♣8, declarer tried the ♣K, got it ruffed, and lost to the ♣Q later for two down, -100.

Petrinin led the ♥A, then switched to the ♦4 when Gromov followed with the suit-preference nine. Barel lost to the ♦K and the ♠K and eventually got the clubs wrong for one down, -50. 2 IMPs to Israel, 64-56.

In the other match both Norths opened a serious notrump and so declared 4♠ from the strong side. Both Easts led their singleton club and Senior did not cover the ♣J while Mittelman did. When he gained the lead with the ♠K, Senior switched to a diamond, but Silver carefully won the ace, drew the outstanding trump, and lost to the ♥A and ♦K for +420. In contrast, Mittelman returned the ♣9 (ah, the ♣Q was suit preference for hearts) for Graves to ruff, got in with the ♥A and switched to a diamond to set the contract. 10 IMPs to Canada, one IMP behind now, 85-86. You can judge for yourself whether anyone was lucky, good, or bad on this deal.

Canada vs England

Open Room/Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

P/R vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
Pass	1♣(1)	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(3)
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Polish-style

(2) Artificial game force

(3) Minimum with only four spades



Joey Silver

Bd: 17	North
Dlr: North	♠ 72
Vul: None	♥ 85432
	♦ J82
	♣ Q97
West	East
♠ KQ83	♠ 10954
♥ 6	♥ AQ97
♦ K9	♦ AQ5
♣ AKJ532	♣ 108
	South
	♠ AJ6
	♥ KJ10
	♦ 107643
	♣ 64

- (1) FG relay
- (2) Four spades
- (3) RKCB for spades
- (4) Two key cards, no ♠Q
- (5) Control-showing

With spades and clubs lying well, 6♠ is cold, but it's no bargain being there. England gained 11 IMPs for +980 vs +480 and led now by 12, 97-85. No swing in P/R vs Israel, the latter leading 64-56 with three deals to play.

Canada vs England
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠*	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Dbl
6♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3NT(2)	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	All Pass

- (1) Inquiry
- (2) Balanced four-trump minimum

P/R vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Dbl
6♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♠(2)	Pass
4♥(3)	Pass	5♣(4)	Pass
5♦(5)	Pass	5♥(5)	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Bd: 18	North
Dlr: East	♠ 743
Vul: N/S	♥ A1098
	♦ Q10632
	♣ 3
West	East
♠ Q1098	♠ KJ
♥ J73	♥ Q52
♦ A94	♦ KJ85
♣ AQ6	♣ KJ102
	South
	♠ A652
	♥ K64
	♦ 7
	♣ 98754

This was a routine 3NT that offered chances for overtricks when the defense led clubs twice, around knocking out the ♠A. It was safe to take the diamond finesse and once North had discarded a diamond on the second club, Petrunin took the deep finesse for +460 while Israel Yadlin took no finesse at all for +400. 2 IMPs to P/R to close within 6 IMPs at 58-64. Graves also made five when Callaghan switched to the ♦7 upon winning the ♠A but Carruthers held Lambardi to four by switching to hearts. 1 IMP to Canada, 86-97.



"The blowfish was a big mistake."

Bd: 19	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q75
Vul: E/W	♥ Q97
	♦ KQ98
	♣ 532
West	East
♠ A93	♠ 862
♥ A6542	♥ J
♦ ---	♦ J7543
♣ AQJ108	♣ K764
	South
	♠ KJ104
	♥ K1083
	♦ A1062
	♣ 9

Petrinin were chalking up +600. That was only temporary, however, as Balicki reopened and gave them a chance to reconsider their position. It's not for nothing that the Yadlins are also known as "the odd couple," thanks to their habitual avoidance of "even" contracts such as 2NT and 4♣. No swing! Israel by 6.

Petrinin's sequence worked better than Senior's as East could count on West for primary clubs in the Russian auction. Senior led ace and another heart, got in with the ♣A and gave Lambardi another ruff. A second club forced declarer, but Carruthers could have gotten out for one down by playing a spade. Instead he cashed ♦AK, ruffed dummy's last club and only then tried a spade, Senior won the ace and a fourth heart promoted the ♦J for -300. Graves' excellent raise to 4♣ made life easy for his side and +600 gave Canada 7 IMPs and brought them to with 4 IMPs of England at 93-97 with one board remaining.

Canada vs England
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>

1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
Dbl	3♦	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>

1♥	2♦	Pass	Pass
3♣	3♦	4♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

P/R vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>

1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♣	2♦	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>

1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♣	2♦	3♣	3♦
3♠	Pass	5♣	All Pass

With Israel hanging on by its fingernails, P/R seemed set to reclaim the lead when the Yadlin brothers closed up shop at 3♣ while Gromov/

Close enough for you?

Bd: 20	North
Dlr: West	♠ K862
Vul: Both	♥ AK
	♦ J7
	♣ Q6532
West	East
♠ Q9	♠ A1043
♥ J1076	♥ Q84
♦ Q1093	♦ A864
♣ J98	♣ 74
	South
	♠ J75
	♥ 9532
	♦ K52
	♣ AK10

Canada vs England
Open Room/Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>	<i>Carruthers</i>
<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Callaghan</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

P/R vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
Pass	2♣(1)	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

(1) Limited: 6+♣ or 5♣/4M

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Petrinin</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The three declarers in 3NT got diamond leads from West. As there was no ninth trick and no endplay they all went one down. No swing in Canada vs England, which left the Brits on the right end of the 97-93 score. England won the second half 49-37 to overcome an 8-IMP half-

time deficit and would move on to the semifinals, where they would meet China Ladies, conquerors of USA, 131-60.

Balicki/Zmudzinski, after a heavy raise to 3♣, stopped short of game, a decision that netted P/R 5 IMPs when Balicki won the trump lead in dummy, led a spade to the king and ace, ducked the spade continuation to the queen, and lost only the ♦A and a spade ruff in addition: +110. Those 5 IMPs gave them a total of 63. Their opponents were sitting pretty on 64. Add in the half-IMP emergency carryover and for the second year in a row a Polish team had gone down to defeat at a late stage in the NEC Cup by that cruel half IMP.

Israel would face Indonesia, 14-IMP victors over Germany/USA, in the other semifinal.

Images of Our Game



"Not even one little trump for me?"



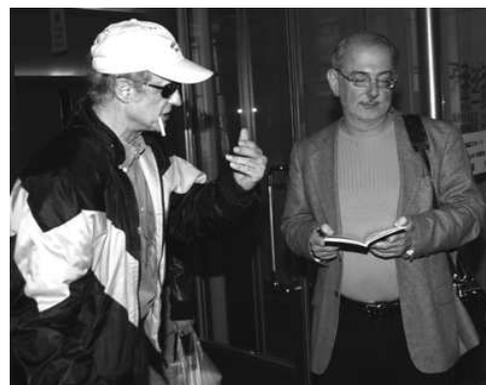
"If I promise I'll be good can I lower my arms?"



"So what if he dresses badly, he's so cute."



"Please, don't leave me like this."



"That's definitely not what Confucius said."

The Semifinals of the NEC Cup: Indonesia vs Israel

by Rich Colker

Israel (Israel Yadlin/Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel/Migry Campanile) and Indonesia (Henky Lasut/Eddy Manoppo, Santje Panelewen/Franky Karwur, with sometimes playing and sometimes non-playing captain—but full-time cheerleader—Munawar Sawiruddin) arrived at their places in the quarterfinals by very different routes. Israel had overcome a 9-IMP deficit at the half by posting a 26-16 second half to nose out Poland/Russia by a single IMP (actually, by a half-IMP since the higher ranked team gets a .5-IMP carryover to avoid ties). Indonesia, on the other hand, had jumped out to a 36-IMP first-half lead and then weathered a 35-13 comeback by Germany/USA in the second half to win by 14. So here they were, fighting for a place in the final, the comeback kids vs the front runners, the Near East vs the Far East, the occidentals vs the orientals, or, as we prefer to refer to this match, “Beauty” vs “The Beasts.”

First Half:

The match started off slowly when both East players opened 1NT with ♠AK94 ♥Q62 ♦KQ74 ♣K6 and played there, failing by one trick when N/S cashed five hearts on the go and later collected two other aces.

Board 2 started off in a similar fashion when both Easts once again opened 1NT, but the similarity ended quickly as the two tables soon followed quite different paths.

Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Israel Yadlin had no trouble scoring up an overtrick in 2♠ losing just two clubs, one spade and one diamond: +140. At the other table Karwur also transferred, but then invited game with 2NT. Panelewen was only too happy to accept. A heart was led to the queen and ace and Panelewen cashed the ♠A, then rode the ♠10 around to the queen. Campanile tabled the ♣K, 2, 8, 6, then switched to the ♥8. When Panelewen covered with the nine Barel ducked hoping to preserve communications, but that was declarer’s ninth trick: +400, and Indonesia was on the board first, 6-0.

The next three boards saw two pushed games followed by an overtrick IMP to Indonesia, who led 7-0. Then...

Bd: 2	North	
Dlr: East	♠ Q94	
Vul: N/S	♥ Q8	
	♦ Q87	
	♣ KQJ54	
West		East
♠ KJ862		♠ A10
♥ 10		♥ AJ965
♦ 9543		♦ AK10
♣ A76		♣ 932
	South	
	♠ 753	
	♥ K7432	
	♦ J62	
	♣ 108	

Bd: 6	North	
Dlr: East	♠ Q953	
Vul: E/W	♥ J83	
	♦ A1096	
	♣ AQ	
West		East
♠ KJ108		♠ A74
♥ AKQ2		♥ 1075
♦ KQ32		♦ 854
♣ 8		♣ 7652
	South	
	♠ 62	
	♥ 964	
	♦ J7	
	♣ KJ10943	

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
		Pass	Pass

1♦ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		Pass	3♣

Dbl Pass 3♦ Pass

4♦ All Pass

In 1♦ Doron Yadlin lost three trump tricks (but not the three you'd imagine) and a club for +110. In the Closed Room Barel's 3♣ bid got Karwur/Panelewen a level too high and when the defense again scored three trumps (this time the ones you'd imagine) and a club Israel was on the scoreboard with +100, and 5 IMPs, trailing now 7-5.

On the next board the Yadlin brothers played in their six-two heart fit at the three level while Karwur/Panelewen chose to stay a level lower in their four-three spade fit. When each pair emerged with precisely the number of tricks they had contracted for, Israel gained another IMP and cut Indonesia's lead in half, now 7-6.

Boards 8 and 9 were two more game pushes.

Bd: 10	North	
Dlr: East	♠ J8764	
Vul: Both	♥ 1052	
	♦ J932	
	♣ 2	
West		East
♠ 105		♠ Q32
♥ J984		♥ AKQ763
♦ 105		♦ A7
♣ Q10984		♣ J5
	South	
	♠ AK9	
	♥ ---	
	♦ KQ864	
	♣ AK763	

Our "to-may-to," "to-maw-to" department: When East opened 1♥ Lasut, South, saw a minor two-suiter and bid (an Unusual) 2NT, eventually

ending in 5♦ making, while Barel saw a three-suiter and doubled for takeout, eventually reaching 4♠ which also made. Plus 620 against +600 was another IMP for Israel, who finally drew apace of Indonesia at 7-all. Now, would you like "to-may-to" or to-maw-to" on that salad?



Henky Lasut

Bd: 11	North	
Dlr: South	♠ Q10	
Vul: None	♥ KQJ1072	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ AQ5	
West		East
♠ 6		♠ AK43
♥ A986		♥ 4
♦ A532		♦ KJ1084
♣ J1097		♣ 832
	South	
	♠ J98752	
	♥ 53	
	♦ 96	
	♣ K64	

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
		Pass	Pass

Pass 1♣(1) Dbl(2) Pass
3♣(3) 3♥ 4♦ All Pass

(1) Precision
(2) ♣+♥ or ♦+♠, at least 4-4

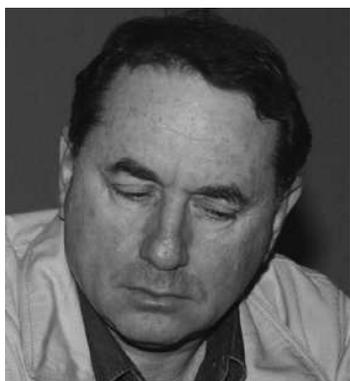
(3) Pass-or-correct

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		Pass	Pass

Pass 1♥ Dbl 1♠
2♦ 2♥ Pass Pass
3♣ 3♥ All Pass

The Yadlins had just the right methods to cope with a strong club opening, and landed in their optimal contract for +130. In the Closed Room it was difficult for the Indonesians to judge the limits of their hands: Panelewen had rather modest values for his initial double and Karwur had already competed twice, to the three level. Campanile held serve on her third bid of her suit and lost the obvious five tricks for -50. 2 IMPs for Israel, leading now 9-7.



Israel Yadlin

and exited with a spade, declarer rising with the ace. Now everything depended on the club suit. Karwur played a club to the queen (eight ever, nine never?) and claimed for one down, -50. Doron played a club to the ten and jack and the defense now cashed three more spades for five down, -250. 5 IMPs to Indonesia to retake the lead, 12-9.

Board 13 was another game push when both pairs of defenders found the trump promotion on the fly to hold 4♥ to ten tricks.

Bd: 12	North		
Dlr: West	♠ KJ85		
Vul: N/S	♥ J83		
	♦ A543		
	♣ 96		
	West		East
	♠ AQ94		♠ 72
	♥ AQ5		♥ K1074
	♦ KQ		♦ 62
	♣ 7542		♣ KQ1083
		South	
		♠ 1063	
		♥ 962	
		♦ J10987	
		♣ AJ	

Bd: 14	North		
Dlr: East	♠ Q5		
Vul: None	♥ AJ43		
	♦ Q532		
	♣ K85		
	West		East
	♠ K10		♠ J7632
	♥ K762		♥ 10
	♦ AJ4		♦ K86
	♣ QJ94		♣ A1063
		South	
		♠ A984	
		♥ Q985	
		♦ 1097	
		♣ 72	

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room/Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♠	All Pass

(1) Precision (could be as few as two)

Both declarers received a low diamond lead and immediately played a club to the king and ace. The defense then cashed four diamonds (both declarers pitching two spades along the way)

Looking at the E/W hands it's difficult to imagine how one would ever get to 3NT (or why one would want to), let alone make it. To find the answers to these questions, let's play, "Ask the Yadlins." Doron: "I opened what was ostensibly a 15-17 notrump but I'm permitted to open some

14- and 18-counts.” Israel: “I chose to force to game with my 8-count since 5-4-3-1 hands play very well.” Doron: Yes, and so now I was along for the ride with my ‘permissible’ 14-count. Manoppo led a heart to the ten, queen and my king and I cashed my four club tricks with the help of the club finesse while South pitched a diamond and a spade and North threw a spade. Next I played a spade to the king, dropping the now stiff queen, and exited with the ♠10 to the ace. The defenders cashed their three heart tricks but I had the rest for +400. Easy game!”

Thanks to the Yadlins for that fine narrative. At the other table Karwur/Panelewen stopped sensibly in 2♠ and took eight tricks for +110. Lose 7: Israel 16, Indonesia 12.



Doron Yadlin

(1) Flannery or 4-4-1-4 three-suiter
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
			1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Manoppo and Campanile seemed to have very different opinions of what the North hand was worth opposite an opening 1♥ bid with spade support (although Manoppo knew his partner would have four-card spade support while Campanile could only hope). As if to justify their bidding, Manoppo took ten tricks on a crossruff after the defense started with the ♣AK followed by a diamond to the ace and a second diamond while Campanile took only nine tricks when the defense got in a round of trumps early on. 10 IMPs to Indonesia, back in the lead 22-16.



Eddie Manoppo

Bd: 15	North	
Dlr: South	♠ AQ73	
Vul: N/S	♥ 10	
	♦ K7654	
	♣ 532	
West		East
♠ 8		♠ 9642
♥ K763		♥ 954
♦ AJ103		♦ Q9
♣ Q1098		♣ AK64
	South	
	♠ KJ105	
	♥ AQJ82	
	♦ 82	
	♣ J7	

Bd: 16	North	
Dlr: West	♠ 1096	
Vul: E/W	♥ AQ6	
	♦ J3	
	♣ AJ875	
West		East
♠ A72		♠ Q43
♥ 987		♥ J542
♦ 10965		♦ AQ872
♣ 432		♣ K
	South	
	♠ KJ85	
	♥ K103	
	♦ K4	
	♣ Q1096	

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
			2♥(1)
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
Pass	1♦(1)	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

(1) Precision (could be as few as two)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♠
3♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Israel led “fourth from his longest and strongest” against 3NT (okay, okay, so he led fifth) and the defense had four diamonds, plus the ♠A and ♣K before declarer knew what was happening. Two down, -100. Campanile/Barel found their four-three spade fit and that proved to be a winner. After a diamond and a diamond Barel crossed to a high heart to pass the ♠10, which held. The ♠6 went to the eight and ace and back came a second heart. Barel won in hand, lost the club finesse and finished with ten tricks for +420 and 11 IMPs. Israel back in the lead 27-22.

Bd: 17	North	
Dir: North	♠ K873	
Vul: None	♥ A6	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ KJ104	
	West	East
	♠ A	♠ QJ54
	♥ K853	♥ J742
	♦ Q76	♦ J43
	♣ Q7652	♣ A8
	South	
	♠ 10962	
	♥ Q109	
	♦ 10952	
	♣ 93	

Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
	1♣(1)	2♣(2)	Pass
3♦(3)	Pass	3♥	All Pass

(1) Precision

(2) Diamonds or both majors

(3) Pass-or-correct

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

The Yadlins rolled out their gadget defense to a strong club but this time they were hoist by their own petard. They ended up in 3♥ off two or three trump tricks, two diamonds and a club. They ended up losing the maximum number of trumps for two down, -100.

In theory, any number of notrump by North should be a touch and go proposition. However, here the defense was friendly and Campanile was up to the task. Panelewen lead a spade to the ace and Karwur shifted to low a diamond, ducked to Panelewen’s jack. Campanile perforce won the diamond return and set about developing two club tricks with a club to the nine and queen. A diamond back cleared the suit and the ♣K drove out the ace. Now Panelewen had no choice but to play one of the majors to his side’s detriment. He tried the ♠Q which allowed Campanile to develop a second spade trick to go with her two clubs, three diamonds and a heart for +120 and 1 IMP to Israel, 28-22.



Migry Zur-Campanile



Michael Barel

On the next board Indonesia won back an IMP when Karwur/Panelewen managed to score an “impossible” overtrick in 3NT: 28-23 Israel.



Franky Karwur

short when the defense cashed their spade and five diamond tricks for –200. Panelewen and Karwur were much more circumspect when they settled in 3♣ and took nine tricks: +110. 7 IMPs to Indonesia, back in the lead, 30-28.



Santje Panelewen

Bd: 19	North		
Dlr: South	♠ AQJ843		
Vul: E/W	♥ 98		
	♦ A985		
	♣ 8		
		West	East
		♠ 106	♠ K975
		♥ A4	♥ KJ1063
		♦ J64	♦ 2
		♣ KQ7432	♣ A96
	South		
	♠ 2		
	♥ Q752		
	♦ KQ1073		
	♣ J105		

Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ AK42		
Vul: Both	♥ 9		
	♦ QJ1073		
	♣ A86		
		West	East
		♠ J95	♠ Q10873
		♥ 76	♥ AQ532
		♦ 982	♦ A5
		♣ K10942	♣ J
	South		
	♠ 6		
	♥ KJ1084		
	♦ K64		
	♣ Q753		

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
1♣	1♠	2♥	Pass
3♣	3♠	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
2♣	2♠	3♣	All Pass

The Yadlins would have done better to settle for a piece of Manoppo’s 3♠ contract. On a diamond lead they can take two hearts, one club and three trump tricks for +300. But Israel got greedy at the prevailing vulnerability and tried for the brass ring in 3NT. He came up a couple of tricks

Indonesia vs Israel
Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
Pass	1♦(1)	2♦(2)	Dbl
2♠	3♦	3♠	4♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

(1) Precision (could be as few as two)
(2) Majors

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	1♦	1♠	Dbl
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♦	3♠	Pass
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦
All Pass			

This time it was Manoppo and Lasut who got greedy: If Manoppo's passing up the chance to double 2♠ holding ace-king fourth of trumps after Lasut had indicated a desire to play for penalties by doubling 2♦ was questionable, his going on to 5♦ opposite what rated to be significant wastage in hearts was borderline irrational. It was only justice that with ten easy tricks available on the Yardlins' chosen line of defense Manoppo ended

up scoring only nine tricks when he had no hope of ever making the contract: -200.

Campanile/Barel also passed up the chance to play 2♠ doubled for valuable prizes and money but at least they managed to stop in 4♦ and scored up an easy +130. 8 IMPs to Israel, who finished the session leading by 6 IMPs, 36-30.

From the "Bridge Academy Best Hands Gallery"

by Avi Cohen

In Boynton, an exclusive small town outside Palm Beach, Florida, in the USA, there is a very peculiar museum annexed to the local bridge club: the Boynton Bridge Academy. Its exhibits are not paintings or sculptures or anything remotely connected with the visual arts but rather consist of one of the largest collections of famous bridge hands ever assembled.

To be selected for admission, a hand has to be proposed by a standing member of the club and has to have been published in a major international bridge publication. An expert committee will then evaluate the merits of the hand: it may be a totally routine hand that was the source of a newsworthy event or it may be the bridge equivalent of a "Mona Lisa," under whose spell every bridge player will readily fall.

Here is one item from this unique collection: a hand discovered by J.R. Vernes, a well-known expert in the field whose ingenuity and creativity in manipulating the 52 cards to produce spectacular results is renowned around the world.

(See diagram, next column)

After a normal bidding sequence, N/S will usually get to 3NT whether East opens or not. It is easy to see that the contract is a hopeless one since both black suits do not split.

"Unlucky partner" would be the normal reaction and the deal would be quickly archived into the

recesses of our mind as another non-event. But there is a lot more to this hand than meets the eye.

Dir: East	♠ 75	
Vul: N/S	♥ A107	
	♦ 432	
	♣ AK864	
	♠ 63	♠ QJ109
	♥ 86432	♥ KQJ
	♦ QJ109	♦ 87
	♣ 75	♣ QJ109
		♠ AK842
		♥ 95
		♦ AK65
		♣ 32

Would you be able to guess if there is any makeable game contract for N/S and if so, which one?

The answer will no doubt be the last thing you expected: no game contract makes...apart from 4♥! Let us see what happens in this unlikely spot. Assuming a heart lead, declarer takes the ace and plays ♦AK, ♣AK, ♠AK, ruffs a spade with the ♥7, ruffs a club with the ♥9 and finally ruffs a spade with the ♥10 while West is drowning in his trumps. Et voila'!

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur Vernes!!

The Semifinals of the NEC Cup: England vs China Ladies

by Pietro Campanile

So close and yet so far: the four teams that had survived the quarterfinal stage had only a little time to savor their success before regrouping for the next challenge. The seeding at the end of the qualifying stage meant that Indonesia would play Israel, while China-Ladies, the upset winners over the American team that won the Round Robin, would play England. So let us put back those champagne bottles, everybody, and get ready for the forty boards which will decide this year's NEC Cup finalists.

Against his 2♠ Lambardi got the lead of the ♠J, followed by the ♠10 and played low on both, then took Wang's ♦6 switch with the ace to play a club to the jack and queen. He then proceeded on crossruff lines gathering eight tricks. China 0-England 2.

First Half:

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ Q752		
Vul: None	♥ A103		
	♦ A953		
	♣ 87		
	West		East
	♠ J10		♠ AK94
	♥ 75		♥ Q62
	♦ J862		♦ KQ74
	♣ Q10943		♣ K6
			South
			♠ 863
			♥ KJ984
			♦ 10
			♣ AJ52

Bd: 2	North		
Dlr: East	♠ Q94		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q8		
	♦ Q87		
	♣ KQJ54		
	West		East
	♠ KJ862		♠ A10
	♥ 10		♥ AJ965
	♦ 9543		♦ AK10
	♣ A76		♣ 932
			South
			♠ 753
			♥ K7432
			♦ J62
			♣ 108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	Pass	1♣(1)	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

(1) Strong

One thing to look out for in this match would be swings caused mainly by systemic differences. Here Armstrong's strong no trump had a much better preemptive effect than Yan's strong club opening. After Hou's fourth-best heart lead the defense got five hearts and two aces for one off.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(1) Spades

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		1♣(1)	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

(1) Strong

"Those who speak too much will end up with flies in their mouth." This Italian saying could easily serve as the caption for this board: the 3♥ call from Armstrong, "en passant," will come back to haunt him as Hou was dissuaded from leading her five-card heart suit. What on paper looked like a great plus position for England with the Chinese playing the contract from the "wrong side" was thus cancelled out. Without a heart

lead, declarer's task is considerably more difficult: Hou found the lead of the ♣10 and Armstrong ducked twice, took his ♣A on the third round, and played the ♥10, queen, ace. He continued with the ♦A hoping for something to happen and then ended up playing for a magic layout in spades with Qxx onside. When that failed, Lu could collect all of her clubs and play a heart to Hou's king, Declarer could not avoid losing another diamond for three down, -150.

Wang got the ♣K lead. Trusting Lambardi's signal, she took the second round of clubs and started playing on hearts, Senior covering the ten. The fall of the eight on the second round meant that she could develop a third winner on power. South switched to a diamond to the queen and ace and declarer drove out the ♥7, South exiting with his last heart. As Senior discarded a diamond and followed to the ♦K, it appeared safe for declarer to play a third diamond to establish the long card in West. Wang took two spades, three hearts, three diamonds and the ♣A for +400 and a 10-IMP gain. China 10, England 2

The next four boards featured only a few overtricks going England's way, allowing them to close the deficit to 6-10.

Bd: 6	North
Dir: East	♠ Q953
Vul: E/W	♥ J83
	♦ A1096
	♣ AQ
West	East
♠ KJ108	♠ A74
♥ AKQ2	♥ 1075
♦ KQ32	♦ 854
♣ 8	♣ 7652
	South
	♠ 62
	♥ 964
	♦ J7
	♣ KJ10943

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		Pass	3♣
Dbl	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
4♦	All Pass		

Lambardi's "gaucho" 3♣ opening in second seat at green vs red may not be everyone's cup of tea but it is the philosophy of this pair to create as many bidding hurdles as possible for the opponents to hurdle in the quest for their par contract. Here Wang was understandably unable to pass her partner's 3♦ and the four level proved to be too high. Despite her perilous position after having dummy shortened by two rounds of clubs, Yan negotiated the hand very well: she led the ♠J from dummy at trick three, Senior covering in case Lambardi had the ace. She won the ace, led a trump to the king, cashed three rounds of hearts and the ♠K, then exited with the ♦Q. Senior could take his trumps but had to play a spade to concede the rest; one down, -100. As Callaghan made 1♦+1, England gained 5 IMPs to square the match.

Bd: 7	North
Dir: South	♠ J742
Vul: Both	♥ 72
	♦ K932
	♣ Q86
West	East
♠ KQ85	♠ 963
♥ K109863	♥ AJ
♦ 5	♦ QJ10876
♣ 42	♣ A5
	South
	♠ A10
	♥ Q54
	♦ A4
	♣ KJ10973

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
			2♣(1)
Pass	2♦(2)	Dbl	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

(1) Limited, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M

(2) Inquiry

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

It's rare that the English bidding bulldog lets go of a tasty partscore bone without a fight, but Senior expected to be outgunned and didn't want to concede a vulnerable penalty in a futile cause. Wang took nine tricks for +140. On the other side, Hou jufged well to bid a third time and finished in 3♣: +110. 6 IMPs to China, back in the lead: 17-11.

comprehensive text on suit combinations. Lambardi gave the heart suit the best technical play (low to the ace, pass the nine) but unfortunately failed on the actual layout. However, on a better day he might have taken heed of a slight inference from the play to improve his chances: he received a spade lead, which he won in hand to play a diamond up. Wang went in with the ace and cashed the ace of clubs, a sequence of plays that hints at a strong trump holding. Two trumps and two aces with the bad guys (girls) meant 4♥-1 while at the other table the ♣A lead from Callaghan activated a warning signal for Hou and convinced her to lead the ♥Q from hand. 4♥ made, giving China and another well-deserved 10 IMPs, China 28, England 11.

Bd: 9	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AQ4		
Vul: E/W	♥ A95		
	♦ KQ1074		
	♣ Q4		
		West	East
		♠ 953	♠ J107
		♥ KJ73	♥ 4
		♦ A32	♦ J865
		♣ A93	♣ J10765
			South
			♠ K862
			♥ Q10862
			♦ 9
			♣ K82

Bd: 10	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J8764		
Vul: Both	♥ 1052		
	♦ J932		
	♣ 2		
		West	East
		♠ 105	♠ Q32
		♥ J984	♥ AKQ763
		♦ 105	♦ A7
		♣ Q10984	♣ J5
			South
			♠ AK9
			♥ ---
			♦ KQ864
			♣ AK763

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣(1)
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

This was not a board for Jean-Marc Roudinesco. The late French expert authored a widely known

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		1♥	4♥(1)
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Strong, both minors

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		1♣(1)	1♦
Pass	3♦	3♥	5♦
5♥	Pass	Pass	6♦

All Pass

(1) Strong, artificial

Perhaps 4♥ suggested this precise distribution, but that would be quite an agreement. In any

case, Lu had no difficulty in 4♠: +620.

At the other table it looks as if Lambardi was willing to take his chances in 6♦ all along once Senior showed some trump support and distribution. A gentleman would have delivered the ♠Q, Tantalus the ♠10 to go with the jack. As it happens, slam still has a play (leading the jack on the second round to smother the ten) but as he didn't find that play it would have been much better for Lambardi to settle for 800 against 5♥ doubled. 12 more IMPs to the now-rampaging China team. China 40, England 11.

Bd: 14	North		
Dir: East	♠ Q5		
Vul: None	♥ AJ43		
	♦ Q532		
	♣ K85		
		West	East
		♠ K10	♠ J7632
		♥ K762	♥ 10
		♦ AJ4	♦ K86
		♣ QJ94	♣ A1063
	South		
	♠ A984		
	♥ Q985		
	♦ 1097		
	♣ 72		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦(1)	All Pass

(1) Oops!

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
1NT(1)	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♥

All Pass

(1) 12-14

Kudos to John Armstrong for making 2♦ in his super-Moysian fit, but rather less impressive is the bidding achievement in landing in such an unlikely spot. Their densely written convention card includes the sequence 1♣-1y-1NT-2♣,

puppet to 2♦, as the main inquiry line to describe most forcing hands, so one can only assume that 2♦ should be a suit and clearly that was also Callaghan's understanding when he passed out the bid. Hou led the ♥8 to Lu's jack but her small club return, taken in dummy with the jack, must have cheered Armstrong a little as the friendly club position was now revealed. He took another club finesse to his ten and then continued with a spade up and again the gods smiled as Hou decided that this was the time to hop in with her ace to play back a spade, sparing Armstrong a guess in the suit. The spade return was taken in dummy with the king and declarer played a third club to the king, the ace and the ♦7 from Hou. Her spade return was ruffed "in the air" by Lu and that meant at last that a dim light could be seen at the end of the tunnel. Armstrong ruffed the ♥A return, played the two top diamonds and a club for North to ruff with the ♦Q. He had now made one spade, one heart, three diamonds and a ruff and two clubs for a make and...a loss of 2 IMPs when Senior and Lambardi went three down in 3♥. China 44, England 14.

Bd: 16	North		
Dir: West	♠ 1096		
Vul: E/W	♥ AQ6		
	♦ J3		
	♣ AJ875		
		West	East
		♠ A72	♠ Q43
		♥ 987	♥ J542
		♦ 10965	♦ AQ872
		♣ 432	♣ K
	South		
	♠ KJ85		
	♥ K103		
	♦ K4		
	♣ Q1096		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
Pass	1♦(1)	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

(1) Precision

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

A conservative pass from Hou over 1NT generated unexpected dividends when 3NT turned out to be no fun for those few who still deny the absolute validity of the dogma stating that the ♣K is always singleton offside. Since Brian Senior belongs to that stubborn minority, he had no practical chance to take nine tricks after a diamond lead. Despite blocking the diamonds, the defense still managed to collect three diamond tricks, the ♠A and, naturally, the SINGLETON ♣K! At the other table Lu took ten generous tricks after the ♦2 to the ♦K, a losing club finesse (West playing an inscrutable ♣3) and a low diamond return to her singleton ♦J. China 48, England 14.

Bd: 18	North		
Dlr: East	♠ Q10		
Vul: N/S	♥ J92		
	♦ QJ4		
	♣ Q9875		
		West	East
		♠ K54	♠ A32
		♥ K76	♥ Q83
		♦ A1085	♦ K976
		♣ AK4	♣ J106
			South
			♠ J9876
			♥ A1054
			♦ 32
			♣ 32

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(1)	Pass	1♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

(1) can be as short as two cards

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(1)	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(1) Strong, artificial

Did I mention before how systemic difference would heavily influence the outcome of quite a few boards in this match? Yes? Good. Now I want to say it again. Here we have two totally normal sequences, getting to the par contract of 3NT, only played from different directions. The normal lead from South is a spade, after which declarer is basically left with no way to make his contract on this layout, while from the North seat a small club from Q9xxx is not an unreasonable choice but it gifts declarer with an otherwise elusive ninth trick and 10 desperately needed IMPs for England. China 51, England 26.

Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ AK42		
Vul: Both	♥ 9		
	♦ QJ1073		
	♣ A86		
		West	East
		♠ J95	♠ Q10873
		♥ 76	♥ AQ532
		♦ 982	♦ A5
		♣ K10942	♣ J
			South
			♠ 6
			♥ KJ1084
			♦ K64
			♣ Q753

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Hou</i>
Pass	1♦(1)	2♦(2)	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl

All Pass

(1) Precision

(2) Majors

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	1♦	2♦(1)	Dbl
2♠	Dbl	All Pass	

(1) Majors

Both East players merrily wheeled out their Michaels Cue Bids and the Norths equally happily applied the axe over 2♠. With the bidding over and done, what is left? Well as Bob

Hamman would have said in the time of the bard, "The play's the thing". Here Lu got the defense off on the right track with her ♠K lead but then switched to the ♦Q, ducked. A second diamond went to dummy's ace and Callaghan ran the ♣J to Lu's ace (Hou following low), rose with the ♥A on the ♥9 return and continued with a small heart. When Lu failed to see the danger and did not ruff her partner's 10 with a small spade, to be able to remove dummy's spades,

declarer could ruff the diamond return and ruff a heart with the ♠9. Lu's overruff with the ace and her spade return stopped Callaghan from making his contract but held his loss to one down, -200. At the other table Senior did not mess about after declarer ducked his ♦Q lead. He played three rounds of spades and now Wang could not avoid losing seven tricks for -500. 7 IMPs to England shored up the deficit, as they ended the half trailing 33-54.

Disaster in Stockholm

by Pietro Campanile

Sometimes it is difficult to even imagine the tremendous pressure that players can be under when they are involved in the last decisive boards of an immensely prestigious event like a World or a European championship.

Let us look together at one of the most incredible boards ever to decide a world championship. We are in Stockholm in 1983, and the final of the Bermuda Bowl is drawing to its end. It has been an amazing struggle between an Italian team trying to recapture its former glory (Belladonna-Garozzo, De Falco-Franco, Lauria-Mosca) and its greatest antagonist: the USA (Hamman-Wolff, Sontag-Weichsel, Becker-Rubin).

There are only two boards left to play out of 176 and the lead has been changing constantly. The players on both sides show on their faces the incredible tension and the stress they are under while the VuGraph theatre is in a frenzy of excitement.

The closed room has already finished and the Italian supporters are confident of their impending victory: Italy leads by 8 IMPs and the last two boards are easy games where nothing should go wrong.

(see diagram in next column)

The Americans played in ♠ doubled making five. The two old Italian masters bid the hand as follows:

Bd: 175	♠ AKJ962	
Vul: E/W	♥ K73	
Dlr: East	♦ KQ3	
	♣ 8	
	♠ 74	♠ ---
	♥ 6	♥ Q10982
	♦ AJ108	♦ 97642
	♣ QJ7643	♣ A95
	♠ Q10853	
	♥ AJ54	
	♦ 5	
	♣ K102	
(Board rotated for convenience)		

West	North	East	South
<i>Weichsel</i>	<i>Belladonna</i>	<i>Sontag</i>	<i>Garozzo</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♠!!!	All Pass	

The stunned Italian fans could simply not comprehend what had just happened, while the Americans themselves were still waiting for the final bid to be corrected to the inevitable 5♠ after the Vu-Graph operator realized his mistake.

But it was no mistake: Belladonna did indeed bid 6♠ after a sequence that looks to the average player like a simple strong spade raise followed by Blackwood. How could he get it wrong? A bridge legend like him miscounting aces?



Giorgio Belladonna

Well it was not quite as simple as that. After Garozzo decided to open 1♠ with his shapely 10 count, Belladonna took the opportunity to bid 2NT, showing a spade raise and an unspecified singleton, either a game or a slam try. The normal continuation would be for Garozzo to bid 3♣ and afterwards a three-level bid would show the suit of the singleton and be a try for game, a four-level bid would invite slam. But Garozzo did not relay and attempted to sign off in 3♠, probably wishing he had never opened. Belladonna was now faced with the unthinkable: his partner, arguably the most eminent bridge theoretician around, had decided not to use the system bid. What could this 3♠ mean?



Benito Garozzo

After a lot of head scratching and no doubt weary and tired from the tense contest, Belladonna took the 3♠ to be a trump-ask, imaginatively wheeled out by his creative partner. Unfortunately, he also worked out that the correct reply to show his spades values would be 4NT.

It's easy to guess what happened next. Garozzo replied to 4NT as if it was RKCB in spades and Belladonna took the 5♦ bid to show a cue-bid in diamonds, denying the ♣A: So the "logical" conclusion was for him to bid 6♠.

After Weichsel led the ♣Q to his partner's ace, Garozzo quickly claimed one off for an 11-IMP gain to the USA, which won the trophy defeating Italy 413-408.

Such an incredible mental block, with the great champion literally thinking himself into such an unlikely and complex spot should serve as a great lesson for all of us. There comes a point towards the end of a long match or a tough pairs session when we feel our lucidity slipping by and yet, instead of acknowledging this by trying to take the simple way out of most bidding and play problems, we often torture ourselves by dreaming impossible scenarios when the unlikely becomes a certainty and the unsound a necessity.

This is the time when one should remember that KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) is not just the acronym for a no-frills system but the golden key to unlock the door of success.

9th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Location
Saturday (Feb. 14)	10:00-12:20	NEC Cup Final 1 & Playoff for 3 rd	F206
	12:30-14:50	NEC Cup Final 2 & Playoff for 3 rd	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	
	16:00-18:20	NEC Cup Final 3	
	18:30-20:50	NEC Cup Final 4	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama Swiss Plate	
Sunday (Feb. 15)	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup	F201-204
	18:00-19:00	Closing Ceremony	F205-206

China Ladies - Team Profile

by Pietro Campanile

One of the pleasant surprises of this 9th edition of the NEC Cup has been the excellent performance of the China Ladies team. Besides playing excellent bridge, their cheerfulness and impeccable behavior at the table has impressed all of those who have met them. So it is with great pleasure that we have enrolled the help of their mentor, Wang Zhi-Ge, to help us draw a brief profile of its members.



Zhu Xiao Yin

Zhu Xiao Yin is arguably the team's best known player. For a long time she ranked as the best lady player in China and, in partnership with Su Ming, she was for years the anchor pair of their national team. After taking a long break to raise a family she is now back to reclaim her top ranking. She teaches high-school Mathematics, so if anyone is looking to check percentages of alternative lines of play, she is the person to ask.



Dong Yong Ling

Dong Yong Ling manages her own company which deals with the prevention of accidents, a very useful field if you can extend it to bidding and avoid paying those nasty 800s. She has been playing occasionally with Zhu, but her regular partner is Huang Yan, another very well known face on the Chinese bridge circuit. She is happily married and she is delighted to have a chance to attend the NEC Cup.



Hou Yun Yan

Hou Yun Yan works in one of the best known museums in Beijing, the Lu Xun Museum, which stores historic artifacts and documents from bygone eras. She and her partner of 5 years Lu Yan have often represented their country at the international

level and have won a good number of national titles. She is married to Pan Kai Jian, probably the best player and coach in China. But of course they are both way too smart to even think of playing together.



Lu Yan

stores in Ginza beware!

Lu Yan works in a real estate company in Beijing and is happily married. She played for a couple of years with Su Ming, with whom she played many times on the national team before starting to play with Hou. She loves bridge but she loves shopping even more, so department



Yan Ru

cuisine, she is the person you want to get in touch with.

Yan Ru loves the game so much that she teaches and plays full time. She is enjoying her new partnership with Wang Yan Hong and has occasionally played on the national team. She is a brilliant cook, so if you are looking for the latest in Chinese



Wang Yan Hong

This team has won several national titles, including the Chinese Teams Championship three years ago.

Wang Yan Hong is an accountant in a financial firm in Beijing. She has been very successful lately winning many national championships and is busy developing her partnership with Yan Ru.



Grand Master or Life Master?

by Pietro Campanile

It is a fact that people actively involved in any type of sport have always been very keen to have their ability tested and matched against that of their fellow competitors, to get an idea of where to aim, of whom to emulate, to gaze with awe at their betters but also sometimes to look with sufferance at the ones reputed to be less accomplished.

This overwhelming wish has led to the setting up in every sport of a multitude of scales weighted in such a way as to enable competitors to get some form of objective assessment of their prowess in their chosen field.

Naturally it is much easier to design and maintain a system that measures achievements related to current performance as opposed to trying to fathom intangibles like skill or talent. Thus, it is no surprise that most forms of rating aim for exactly this type of approach, whether it is the ATP ranking in tennis or the PGA rating in golf. What one can deduce from such lists is a good indication of who is playing more often and achieving consistently better results but not who is the most talented.

For instance, this means that a semi-retired Sampras, ranked 27th in the world, can come back and knock the stuffing out of his supposedly "stronger" opponents to get to the final of Wimbledon. According to the rating system, Sampras was unlikely to perform such a feat simply because, having been injured in the early part of the year, he did not play enough to get a better listing. Since the ATP ranking has no "memory," Sampras' previous achievements did not count towards his yearly total.

In bridge we have quite a diametrically opposite approach to rating. The broad trend within most federations, including the Israeli one, is to reward achievements accumulated over an indefinite period of time. The ranking system, therefore, keeps track of all the results of each player, but simply in order to let him pile up the masterpoints on the way to higher titles and not to produce as output an average of all such results which might actually give a true overall assessment of the player's skill. Furthermore,

unlike what happens in other sports, even after consistently poor results one cannot go back down the scale; irrespective of one's form, the rating points achieved will not be lost.

It is worth noting that the WBF has lately woken up to the need of keeping tabs on players' current form and has introduced a decaying factor for results obtained over a number of years. After all, it can be quite redundant to know that the top 9-10 players in the rankings are either dead or retired.

Since a large part of the income of a national federation comes from masterpoints licences to clubs and festival organizers, it is understandable that their value is protected. After all, how many intermediate-advanced players would risk competing in a tough open pairs event if they knew that the masterpoints they carefully hoarded in a number of local club games could vanish after a few poor sessions?

The run to achieve the top spot, the coveted Grand Master, Diamond Life Master, Chief Dragon Slayer title or however else it is called, can take years. But what happens once you get there? Well, put yourselves at ease: a page one spread on the national newspaper with bio and photo of adoring fans is not really what you should expect. Quite to the contrary, in most federations getting to the top spot is judged to be the end in itself and there are no attached special benefits outside of the gold-leaf framed certificate proudly hanging over the mantelpiece.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions. Some federations, like the Greek one for example, have introduced an interesting incentive for high-ranked players: the possibility for pairs and teams composed of International Life Masters and better (or level 13 and above given their rating scale) to skip the preliminary phases of their national championships.

Some, like the English Bridge Union, offer their highest titled players (Grandmasters) exemption from yearly membership dues. This approach is actually followed up by some English clubs which do not charge them for local tournament

fees, since their regular attendance is considered a huge bonus and a great selling point to attract potential members. Both ideas have a lot of merit and should be given serious consideration. What is the value of a title like Life Master nowadays? Has it merely become the bridge equivalent of a frequent flyer award? You play so many tournaments and eventually you'll get your LM badge and the question remains only how long it will take you? Or is it the attestation of having attained a truly superior understanding of the game? It is an incontestable fact that the average time needed, for instance, to obtain the once coveted Life Master title in the largest national bridge organization, the American Contract Bridge League, has more than halved over the last 20 years.

The ACBL policy of shielding the large majority of its members from so-called unfriendly systems and the ensuing proliferation of stratified events where players can meet only contenders holding masterpoints within a certain narrow range, has led to the paradox that it is now possible to slowly wind one's way to the LM title without ever meeting one! We have come a very long way indeed from the heyday of the record-breaking achievement by Jeremy Flint who became a LM in eleven weeks after a break-neck tour of the USA with Peter Pender in 1966. Now your average Joe Bloggs can achieve the same objective by a careful selection of a number of under-strength regional events to compete in.

What is the way forward if we want to streamline bridge rating methods while inserting them in a frame which allows us to produce true, current assessment of a bridge player's ability? A possible solution is the rating system adopted by OKBridge, one of the first companies to provide internet playing facilities. Their system, named "Lehmann" after its creator, is quite complex but essentially takes into account current and, to a decreasing extent, past performance as well as the kind of partner and opponents one faces.

The most ingenious and, perhaps, controversial feature of the system is the fact that it apportions reward and blame according to the rating of each player, so if a pair made up of two different ranked players has a good result, most of the merit will be attributed to the higher ranked of them because the system will assume that his superior skill has contributed more directly to the positive result. Vice-versa, if the outcome of the session is an unhappy one, the lower-ranked player will inherit most of the blame for it. The Lehmann system is certainly a more accurate meter of a player's skill but it would be naive not to realize that its adoption would go directly against the financial interests of most bridge governing bodies and, more to the point, would be a logistic nightmare to implement and manage.

Another more practical solution would be to bypass the problem entirely, to keep the masterpoint scale as it is but to adopt also a special type of points, call them gold points, to be awarded only in a select number of events, and to use them to create an up-to-date record of which players are really doing well at the national level. This could be incorporated into a "Player of the Year" award, but also it would be possible to let the scheme run over several years, applying a sensible pro-rata reduction for points obtained in previous years like the WBF has introduced.

A similar scheme has been started off with good success in England and has the advantage of requiring very little maintenance given the small number of competitions which need monitoring.

To conclude, the issue of ratings is so extensive that I very much doubt I have managed to deal with it fully within the limited confines of this article. Nevertheless, its contents might still be enough to generate feedback from readers and get the ball rolling to implement much-needed changes which will make this wonderful game of ours even more fun to play.