



# NEC Bridge Festival

Sunday, February 15, 2004

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Editors: Eric Kokish, Richard Colker, Pietro Campanile

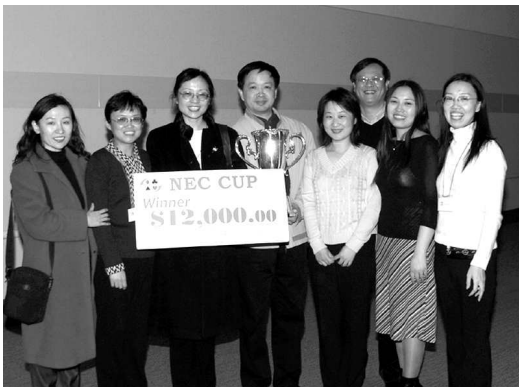
## China Ladies Wins NEC Cup

They beat the top seeded USA team in the quarterfinals. They beat the defending champions in the semifinals. They won three of the four quarters in the finals to defeat the team that beat the high-powered Poland/Russia team in the other semifinal match. They are the 2004 NEC Cup champion China Ladies. Coverage of the first two sessions of the finals begins on page 15. The last two sessions will be covered in today's late bulletin.

### NEC Cup Final: Quarter-by-Quarter Results



Team	C/O	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Final
Israel	.5	40	40	30	20	130
China Ladies		49	44	24	46	163



NEC Cup Champion China Ladies



NEC Cup Runners-Up Israel

### 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 9<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

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

– or –

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

## 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 Tstsumi, 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

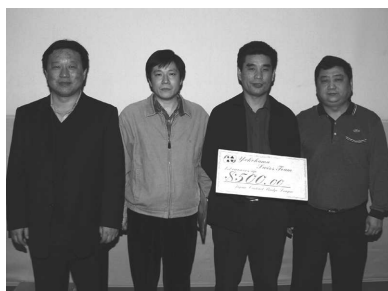
The Daily Bulletin editors would like to remind invited teams to submit short, humorous (if possible) bios of their team. Canada, Israel and Australia (see page 5) have already been immortalized in these pages. Please take advantage of this chance of a lifetime and submit your team's bios today.

## Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Results

1.	POLAND/RUSSIA	192	Adam Zmudzinski, Cezary Balicki, Andrew Gromov, Alexander Petrunin
2.	CHINA OPEN	189	Li Xin, Sun Shaolin, Kang Meng, Li Xiaoyi, Fu Zhong, Zhao Jie
3.	CANADA	185	George Mittelman, Allan Graves, Joey Silver, John Carruthers
4.	KINKI	183	Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka, Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura
5.	USA	180	Garey Hayden, Jim Robison, Simon Kantor, Mark Itabashi
6.	ONODERA	173	Shunsuke Morimura, Takao Onodera, Yukinao Honma, Ryo Okuno
7-8.	ARAI	164	Ikuko Arai, Kazuko Ebisawa, Teruyo Tsuruno, Taiko Bando
7-8.	ICELAND	164	Throstur Ingimarsson, Bjarni Einarsson, Anton Haraldsson, Sigurbjorn Haraldsson
9-10.	KATSUMATA	159	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Misae Kato, Kimiko Kamakari
9-10.	MIDORI-KAME	159	Natsuko Nishida, Tomoe Nakao, Henky Lasut, Tadashi Yoshida, Midori Sakamoto, Yuko Yamada
11.	ENGLAND	158	Brian Senior, John Armstrong, Brian Callaghan, Pablo Lambardi
12.	CH. TAIPEI LADIES	155	Fang-wen Gong, Sheau-fong Hu, Lin-chin Liu, Wen-chuan Tsai
13-14.	ABE	153	Hiroya Abe, Liang Ping, Akira Morozumi, Misuzu Ichihashi
13-14.	GERMANY /USA	153	Sabine Auken, Kerri Sanborn, Janice Seamon-Molson, Mark Molson
15-17.	AUSTRALIA	151	Cathy Chua, Simon Hinge, Robert Fruewirth, Bill Jacobs
15-17.	HIGASHIGUCHI	151	Takeshi Higashiguchi, Kazunori Sasaki, Tetsuya Shirogane, Seiji Kazama
15-17.	TAJIMA	151	Mitsue Tajima, Tadashi Teramoto, Hideki Takano, Fu Zhong, Zhao Jie
18.	SLAM DUNK	149	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Kenji Miyakuni, Sakiko Naito, Chen Dawei, Takahiko Hirata
19.	DRAMI & ALICE	145	Makiko Sato, Eiji Otaka, Yuko Noda, Hiroyuki Noda
20.	INDONESIA	144	Noriko Domichi, Eddy Manoppo, Santje Panelewen, Franky Karwur, Munawar Sawiruddin
21.	TAMURA	141	Emiko Tamura, Atsuko Kurita, Yasuko Kosaka, Koichi Onishi
22.	IWAHASHI	140	Michiko Iwahashi, Michiko Iwahashi, Susumu Kido, Nasaaki Kimura
23.	GELLER	139	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Sei Nagasaka, Yuichi Masamura
24.	YAMAMURA	138	Sachiko Yamamura, Akiko Yanagisawa, Kimi Makita, Keiko Matsuzaki
25-26.	GRYFFINDOR	136	Michiko Ohno, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kazuko Banno, Mieko Nakanishi
25-26.	JAPAN OLYMPIAD SR	136	Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Makoto Hirata
27.	KACHOFUGETSU	135	Akiko Miwa, Kunio Kodaira, Teruo Miyazaki, Fumiko Nanjo
28-29.	KAIWA	134	Fumio kaiwa, Kenichi Akita, Kunio Ueda, Sachio Uenaka
28-29.	BULGARIA	134	Gueorgui Stamatov, Ivan Tsonchev, Rumen Trendafilov, Kalin Karaivanov
30-31.	SPICE	133	Yukiko Umezu, Etsuko Naito, Makiko Hayashi, Yayoi Sakamoto
30-31.	NISHIWAKI	133	Toru Nishiwaki, Kunihiro Takahashi, Kazuo Saeki, Atsushi Kuwabara
32-33.	FUKUYOSHI	130	Yuki Fukuyoshi, Takeshi Hanayama, Chieko Yamazaki, Sia Chong Meng
32-33.	YOSHIMORI	130	Yukiko Yoshimori, Etsuko Miyaishi, Zenko Shimada, Susumu Shimada



Winners: Yokohama Swiss



Runners-Up: Yokohama Swiss



Third Place: Yokohama Swiss

# The Semifinals: China Ladies vs England; Indonesia vs Israel

by the Editors

## Second Half:

At the end of first half, England, in search of a third consecutive NEC Cup title, was trailing the remarkable China-Ladies by 21 IMPs, a late improvement from their nadir at -35 IMPs. The pressure bidding and light actions by Senior/Lambardi had not been as successful as earlier in the tournament, while Armstrong/Callaghan had not yet asserted themselves in their usual fashion. Although a 21-IMP deficit with 20 boards to play is by no means insurmountable, the English will feel the clock ticking if they fail to obtain some plus positions early on. This Chinese team, while composed of experienced, sensible players, has not been in international competition in some time. They have played very solid and determined bridge, evading the many traps laid by their wily opponents. Their declarer play and bidding judgment have been consistently strong and at times outstanding, and their performance shows the world how much depth there is in the Chinese bridge community.

Indonesia has for many years been a force in the PABF and in the past 10 years a consistent contender at the world level with silver medals in the 1996 Olympiad and the 2002 Rosenblum Teams. Their semifinal match against Israel, a member of WBF Zone 1 with a strong international record, was a close, low-scoring affair over the first 20 deals and figured to continue in that vein in the second half.

## China Ladies vs England

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♦(2)	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠(3)	Pass
4♣(3)	Pass	5♣(3)	Pass
5♥()	All Pass		

(1) Forcing raise

(2) Diamond shortage

(3) Control-showing

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	3♦	DbI	3♥
DbI	Pass	Pass	3NT
DbI	Pass	Pass	4♦
DbI	Pass	4♥	All Pass

## 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>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	2♦	2♠	3♦
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

6♥ is the sort of slam you don't want to bid unless it happens to make, but then you'd prefer to be in 4♥ (as **Lu Yan/Hou Yunyan** were) rather than five (as **John Armstrong/Brian Callaghan** were). **Pablo Lambardi's** weapons of mass destruction proved ineffective in the sense that his opponents defused the bomb with confidence and stayed out of the mediocre slam, but if his teammates had stumbled into 6♥ and made it, Lambardi would be running for Presidente in the next Argentinian election. With the ♦A onside, declarer could discard a club and try for the doubleton ♣Q before relying on the spade finesse for a twelfth winner and +480, but Lu did not play a diamond first and lost to the ♣Q for +450. One IMP to England, 34-54.

By our lights **Israel Yadlin** and **Santije Panelewen** did an awful lot of (identical) bidding

Bd: 1	North	
Dlr: North	♠ K10	
Vul: None	♥ 76	
	♦ QJ10982	
	♣ Q32	
West		East
♠ 94		♠ AQ75
♥ AJ54		♥ KQ932
♦ K5		♦ 6
♣ AJ1064		♣ K75
	South	
	♠ J8632	
	♥ 108	
	♦ A743	
	♣ 98	

to reach 6♥, which made on the lead of the ♦A and a diamond continuation. Their teammates were happy that they did. No swing at E/W +980.

Bd: 2	North
Dlr: East	♠ K3
Vul: N/S	♥ 7
	♦ AK863
	♣ KJ875
West	East
♠ J92	♠ A76
♥ AQ6	♥ J85432
♦ Q5	♦ 972
♣ AQ963	♣ 4
	South
	♠ Q10854
	♥ K109
	♦ J104
	♣ 102

China Ladies vs England  
Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
2NT(2)	3♦	2♦(1)	Pass
Pass	4♣	3♥	Pass
All Pass		Pass	4♦
(1) Multi			
(2) Inquiry			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
1NT	2NT(1)	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	3♥	3♦
Pass	Dbl(2)	All Pass	Pass
(1) Minors			
(2) Takeout			

Indonesia vs Israel  
Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
2NT(2)	Pass	2♦(1)	Pass
(1) Multi		3♥(3)	All Pass
(2) Inquiry			
(3) Minimum, natural			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
2NT(1)	3♦	2♥	Pass
3♥(2)	All Pass	Pass	Pass
(1) Inquiry			
(2) Invitational			

Perhaps inspired by his partner on the previous deal, **Brian Senior** went for the throat by reopening 3♥ with a takeout double on modest values. **Lambardi**, expecting a bit more, took his chances with a courageous penalty pass and led the ♣10. Lu won the ace and tried the ♦Q. Senior won the king as **Lambardi** contributed the jack. North duly underled to the ten for a second club play and declarer ruffed to lead a heart to the queen. She cashed the ♥A, came to the ♠A and ruffed her last diamond, but North had safe exits when he won the ♠K for one down, -100, thus sparing North the realization that the jugular he had attacked was his own. Lu had the right idea by starting diamonds but the key to the deal is to have North win the *second* diamond. Thus, declarer can get home by leading the ♦5 from dummy on the first round. Say that North allows South to win for a second club play. Declarer ruffs, leads a trump to the queen, and plays the ♦Q. North wins and has no safe exit other than a third diamond, ruffed in dummy. Declarer cashes the ♥A and ruffs a club. South can overruff or not but will be endplayed with a trump to break spades for declarer, who can always make a winning play in the suit. "I knew I had them," gasped Pablo.

4♦ went one down at the other table for -100, so England gained 5 IMPs, 39-54.

Against **Israel Yadlin's** 3♥, **Henky Lasut** led the ♣10 to the queen and **Manoppo's** king, who could not do much else apart from playing a heart back to the eight, the nine and the queen. Declarer continued with the ♦Q and North cashed both diamonds, South signaling high-low with standard count, and exited with the ♦6 ruffed in dummy with the ♥6. **Israel Yadlin** ruffed a club in hand, cashed a heart and played the ♣A pitching a spade and South ruffing with his ♥K. That meant eight tricks and 2 IMPs when **Panelewen** went two off after **Campanile** led her two top diamonds, **Barel** playing a suit preference jack at the first trick, and switched to

the ♠K, ducked by declarer, a spade to the queen and a spade ruff. Who needs aces one should ask when one can take two tricks with Kx facing Q10xxx ? Indonesia 30, Israel 38.

Bd: 3	North		
Dir: South	♠ 1095		
Vul: E/W	♥ 74		
	♦ AKJ92		
	♣ Q106		
West		East	
♠ K873		♠ J42	
♥ KJ65		♥ 1082	
♦ 86		♦ 10743	
♣ A54		♣ KJ2	
	South		
	♠ AQ6		
	♥ AQ93		
	♦ Q5		
	♣ 9873		

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
			1♦(1)

Pass 1NT All Pass

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
			1NT(1)

Pass 3NT All Pass

(1) 12-14

Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
			1♦(1)

Dbl Rdbl(2) Pass Pass

1♥ 2♦ Pass 2NT

Pass 3NT All Pass

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
			1♣

Pass 1♦ Pass 1♥

Pass 1NT All Pass

Zhou had a tough call over Dong's 1♦ opening, systemically showing a balanced 14 count or a variety of unbalanced hands. She had at her disposal a forcing 2♦ reply or a range showing

notrump bid. Given the vulnerability she opted for 1NT, which closed the auction. Armstrong led the ♥10, taken by Zhou with her ace. She immediately played all the diamonds, pitching a spade and two clubs from dummy, while West pitched two spades and a heart and East a heart. The ♥7 was played next and the queen lost to West's king. The defense could now collect their club tricks and restrict declarer to seven tricks. At the other table Lambardi and Senior had no problem getting to 3NT once Brian took the view that his prime 10 count and excellent spots were worth a direct raise to game. Playing the contract from the South seat brought Lambardi the nice bonus of a spade lead to the ten, jack and queen. He continued with a club to the ten, losing to Lu's jack, who played back a small spade to declarer's ace. Lambardi now cashed all his diamonds on which West pitched two hearts and a small club...well not quite so small actually since it was the ace. What happened? Well, Hou had a big problem given that had she bared her ♣A she would have been thrown in and forced to give declarer two spade tricks. Of course she could have avoided all her trouble by hopping in with ace on the second round of clubs but that would have shown a truly remarkable insight. After the ♣A pitch, declarer could now revert to simply knocking out the ♣K and collect his game bonus with an overtrick, after taking two spades, a heart, five diamonds and two clubs.

In Indonesia vs Israel, Lasut and Manoppo were in 3NT after Manoppo stretched to find a raise over his partner's 2NT. Declarer got the same friendly ♠3 lead to his ♠Q and continued with a club to the ten and the jack but did not rise with the ace on the spade return from East and West was able to play another spade back setting up his seven. Declarer now played another club to the queen and king and after refusing the heart finesse on the ♥8 played back by Israel Yadlin, he proceeded to whittle out five diamonds hoping for something good to happen. When it did not he was left with the eight tricks he had started with.

Israel thus gained 4 IMPs to lead 42-30, while England pulled back to 47-54.



Bd: 4	North
Dlr: West	♠ 8
Vul: Both	♥ 653
	♦ QJ10874
	♣ 752
West	East
♠ KQ4	♠ A1097653
♥ 2	♥ QJ10
♦ AK652	♦ ---
♣ 10963	♣ AJ4
	South
	♠ J2
	♥ AK9874
	♦ 93
	♣ KQ8

Bd: 5	North
Dlr: North	♠ J107
Vul: N/S	♥ A1076
	♦ 109753
	♣ J
West	East
♠ AK6	♠ Q943
♥ 8	♥ QJ9
♦ AK84	♦ 62
♣ 108642	♣ AQ95
	South
	♠ 852
	♥ K5432
	♦ QJ
	♣ K73

### China Ladies vs England

#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥
Dbl(1)	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦(2)	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

(1) Three-card spade support

(2) Cue

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥
Dbl(1)	3♥	4♠	All Pass

(1) Three-card spade support

### 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>
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥
Dbl(1)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	All Pass

(1) Three-card spade support

6♠ is not the most awful contract on the face of the earth and needs a spade lead to defeat it, which may or may not be the normal lead from South's hand. We suspect that 999 players out of 1000 will lead the ♥A after which *les jeux sont fait!* None of the pairs, however, bid the slam: Callaghan-Armstrong gave it a jolly good try but understandably their sacred fire got quenched by Armstrong's 4♦ cue-bid.

### China Ladies vs England

#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥(2)	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♣	All Pass

(1) Precision

### 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♣	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(1) Inverted

#### Closed Room

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

(1) Precision

Lu once again showed excellent bidding judgment and her sequence to get to 5♣,

exploring all possible alternatives on the way, was a good demonstration of how effective this pair can be. 5♣ rates to be a much better spot than 3NT but once again the amusing blockage in heart comes to the rescue of a resourceful declarer. Both Armstrong and D. Yadlin got a heart lead but from different sides. At the Englishman's table the ♥3 from South went to the ace and the ♥10 back was ducked correctly by Dong. That meant that Armstrong was unaware of the blockage and decided to run his tricks *before* taking the club finesse. So he cashed four rounds of spades and two top diamonds and then finessed in clubs. However, the first card that North was desperate to get rid of was that cursed ♥7 that was blocking the suit. As a result, Dong could now cash her two winning hearts when she got the lead with the ♣K. 3NT down one and 10 more "heavy" IMPs to China. China 64, England 47.

Doron Yadlin got the ♥8 lead, ducked to his queen, and saw no reason to delay the club finesse, hoping that if that failed the opponents would not have as clear an idea of his values and his distribution and might decide not to continue hearts. His foresight was rewarded when the actual layout meant that the defense could not extricate their heart winners. Since the Indonesians stopped in 4♣ after an auction that was similar to that of the Chinese until the critical pass over 4♣ by Karwur, Israel gained 6 IMPs. Israel 48, Indonesia 30.

Bd: 10	North	
Dlr: East	♠ K52	
Vul: Both	♥ A105	
	♦ A952	
	♣ 876	
West		East
♠ 964		♠ QJ73
♥ Q942		♥ J87
♦ 73		♦ J6
♣ AK52		♣ Q943
	South	
	♠ A108	
	♥ K63	
	♦ KQ1084	
	♣ J10	

### China Ladies vs England Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	2♣(1)	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♦
(1) NF Stayman		All Pass	

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT
		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	2♦	Pass	1♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	3♦
		All Pass	

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

Good bidding can hurt you. Besides the Chinese who stopped in 2NT, both English and Indonesians got to 3NT without having made any effort to check if that really was a viable spot. Lambardi and Senior had a fast weak notrump auction with the typical "I don't know but neither do the opponents" approach which, combined with good declarer skills, has made them so successful. There was nothing to the play and England chalked up 10 effortless IMPs. China 69, England 57.

The Indonesians were hampered by their nebulous 1♦ opening which meant that the diamond fit was only established at the three level and Manoppo was faced with the choice of bidding game or embarking on a potentially treacherous path with 3♥. He chose the practical option and was rewarded with nine top tricks. Of the four pairs, the only one to ascertain their club weakness were Campanile and Barel who had a controlled auction to 3♦ and lost 11 IMPs for the privilege. Israel 53, Indonesia 43.



Bd: 11	North
Dir: South	♠ 75
Vul: None	♥ 9752
	♦ AQ653
	♣ Q10
West	East
♠ 42	♠ QJ8
♥ 1043	♥ AKQJ86
♦ J72	♦ 109
♣ AK842	♣ J7
	South
	♠ AK10963
	♥ ---
	♦ K84
	♣ 9653

the final contract seemed to have been heavily affected by the degree to which the opponents competed with their own heart fit: both Dong and Barel bid on to 4♠ over 4♥ as a two-way shot, while at the other China vs England table the auction stopped in 3♠ once Lu decided to pass her partner's 3♥ bid. Lasut and Manoppo were never in any danger of being pushed to bid the right contract once the Yadlins did not compete beyond 3♠. China 75, England 57.

The highest stakes in the play were at Barel's table where the contract was doubled. After the standard ♣A lead declarer was comfortably placed to take ten tricks. Things got even better for Barel when he saw the ♣J played by East. He ruffed the heart switch and could now simply clear the spades since, thanks to his now powerful ♣9, he did not have to worry about losing three clubs and a spade. In fact, after he ruffed the second heart return and played a club to set up his tenth trick, without having to rely on a kind diamond split, he made an unexpected overtrick when West failed to play his ♣K. Israel 63, Indonesia 43.

### China Ladies vs England

#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	1NT	2♥	1♠
3♥	3♠	4♥	2♠
			4♠

#### All Pass

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	1NT	2♥	1♠
3♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
			3♠

#### 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	2♠(2)	Dbl	2♦(1)
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
			3♠

#### All Pass

#### Closed Room

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

Apart from Lasut, who rated his hand as a weak two, the other three Souths were happy to open 1♠ and indeed we cannot see any fault in their evaluation. The development of the auction and

Bd: 12	North
Dir: West	♠ 63
Vul: N/S	♥ 87642
	♦ AJ4
	♣ K64
West	East
♠ AJ987	♠ K5
♥ ---	♥ A1093
♦ 753	♦ Q862
♣ QJ1082	♣ 973
	South
	♠ Q1042
	♥ KQJ5
	♦ K109
	♣ A5

### China Ladies vs England

#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
2♠(1)	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦(2)	Pass	4♥

#### All Pass

- (1) Weak with five spades and a minor
- (2) Transfer

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
2♠(1)	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Dbl	All Pass

(1) Weak with five spades and a minor  
Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Manoppo</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Lasut</i>
2♠(1)	Pass	2NT(2)	Dbl
3♣	3♥	Pass	4♥

All Pass

(1) Weak, five spades and a minor

(2) Asks for minor

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♠(1)	3♦	Pass	3♥

All Pass

(1) Spades and a minor

A very popular structure nowadays involves using 2♦ as Multi while 2♥ and 2♠ show two-suited hands with the bid major and an undisclosed minor. Despite the obstruction, three of the four tables found their nine-card heart fit but Senior opted for 3NT, probably thinking that Lambardi was unlikely to hold four hearts on the auction and that a five-three fit might run into all sorts of control and overruffing problems, given his small heart spots. Anyway, once Lu doubled to ask for a spade lead, declarer could never hope to get more than eight tricks even after guessing the ♦Q.

At the other two tables 4♥ was condemned by the four-zero split and went one off after declarer had an easy time locating the ♦Q. Barel's task was easier and more difficult at the same time. He was declaring only 3♥ but did not receive as much information from the auction as his counterparts. He got the ♣Q lead which he took in dummy to play a heart to the king, getting the bad news. He cashed the ♣A, played the ♥Q to East's ace, won the ♥10 return and misguessed diamonds so East could now cash his trump and the third club for two down and a 3-IMP loss.



Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ QJ
Vul: Both	♥ KQ32
	♦ A9873
	♣ Q8
West	East
♠ A9762	♠ 853
♥ 985	♥ AJ106
♦ K54	♦ 102
♣ K10	♣ J532
	South
	♠ K104
	♥ 74
	♦ QJ6
	♣ A9764

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	1NT	All Pass	

Indonesia vs Israel

Open Room

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

All Pass

Closed Room

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

All Pass

Facing a 13-15 notrump, Dong's decision to invite game will be too aggressive for some, but the vulnerability was clearly a big incentive to justify her decision. Luckily for Zhou, Armstrong elected to lead the ♣3, which ran to his partner's king and not even the ♥9 switch could create problems for the Chinese declarer. She covered and won the heart return after ducking one round, knocked out the ♠A and took a diamond finesse, playing East for the doubleton ten. Nine tricks and 10 more IMPs to open a sizeable lead

of 31 IMPs with seven boards to go.

The other declarer involved in 3NT got the nastier lead of the ♠5, which Doron Yadlin ducked to declarer's queen. Manoppo continued with a low diamond to the queen and Doron's king. Once he played back a small spade, declarer could take only eight tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Karwur</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Panelewen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Karwur's decision to push to slam was probably heavily affected by match considerations and one cannot really blame him for that. However, what strikes us as an offense to the esthetics of the game is that 2♣ reply with 76432 in the suit, something that was equally repellent to all three of the other three players in the West seat, who elected to bid 2♦. Anyway, 6♠ was not a success and the 10 IMPs lost meant that Indonesia would now need a near miracle to overcome in six boards the 33 IMPs deficit. Israel 79. Indonesia 46

Bd: 14	North
Dlr: East	♠ KJ7
Vul: None	♥ J654
	♦ J1043
	♣ Q10
West	East
♠ Q65	♠ A98432
♥ A	♥ 72
♦ AK82	♦ 97
♣ 76432	♣ AK8
	South
	♠ 10
	♥ KQ10983
	♦ Q65
	♣ J95

Bd: 15	North
Dlr: South	♠ KQ872
Vul: N/S	♥ 8643
	♦ QJ65
	♣ ---
West	East
♠ AJ63	♠ 954
♥ KQ9	♥ J72
♦ 42	♦ K987
♣ KQ74	♣ 852
	South
	♠ 10
	♥ A105
	♦ A103
	♣ AJ10963

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣(1)	Pass
4♥(2)	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠(1)	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	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>
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	All Pass

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
			2♣
2NT	Dbl	All Pass	

Closed Room

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

Closed Room

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

Callaghan's 2NT bid over Dong's 2♣ opening looks a tad aggressive, especially since, with a guaranteed club shortage, partner will strain to reopen in fourth position with most hands opposite which we might make game. Here Zhou doubled the stakes with relish and led the ♠7 to declarer's jack, who played a top heart, ducked by Dong, and the ♥Q taken by her ace. Dong continued with the ♣10 and when declarer played low, continued with the ♣A and the ♣9 to his king. Declarer could only take his ♠A and lose the rest of the tricks for -300. China 94, England 57.

Bd: 17	North	
Dlr: North	♠ K76542	
Vul: None	♥ 73	
	♦ 106	
	♣ K102	
West		East
♠ J98		♠ AQ103
♥ A984		♥ 10
♦ KJ2		♦ Q854
♣ 853		♣ Q974
	South	
	♠ ---	
	♥ KQJ652	
	♦ A973	
	♣ AJ6	

China Ladies vs England

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Zhou</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)
All Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥

(1) Multi  
(2) Pass or correct

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hou</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
All 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	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)
All Pass	2♠	Pass	4♥

(1) Multi  
(2) Pass or correct  
Closed Room

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

(1) Multi  
(2) Pass or correct

Once you discount the possibility that partner might have a weak hand with hearts for his Multi, it may not be so strange to answer 2♥ in order to be able to bid 3♥ over his expected 2♠ reply. This was the option chosen by Dong and Lasut but with different outcomes: the Indonesian was raised to game while Zhou passed. Barel decided to discount any chance of game with a void in his partner's suit and bid 2♠ which was obviously passed out. 4♥ needs some handling but both declarers got a huge boost by an "uber"-friendly, albeit normal, club lead. Their club guess solved, the two declarers parted ways. Lambardi played a seemingly normal diamond looking to set up a ruff in dummy and that caused Hou to step in and play ♥A and a heart, making the second trump loser disappear. Declarer took the heart return and after clearing trumps and playing two more round of clubs, finishing in dummy, he played the ♦10 to Lu's queen and his ace and then exited with a small diamond, setting up the ♦9 as the tenth trick. China 94, England 65, which was the final score of the match. Lasut immediately tackled trumps, which meant that eventually he had to lose two trumps and two diamonds. Another 5 IMPs for Israel who eventually closed the match with a 92-47 score.

The final of the NEC Cup will feature China Ladies vs Israel.

# Snapshots Of Monte Carlo: They Talk Too Much

by Eric Kokish

Bd: 14	♠ AKQJ4
Dir: East	♥ A6
Vul: None	♦ 10652
	♣ J6
♠ 108765	♠ 2
♥ 9753	♥ 102
♦ J7	♦ K9843
♣ 87	♣ K9532
	♠ 93
	♥ KQJ84
	♦ AQ
	♣ AQ104

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
Pass	2♠(1)	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	6NT
All Pass			
(1) 5+ spades, FG			

6NT was the normal contract for N/S and the two pairs who had the auction to themselves got there.

## Venice Cup Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Picus</i>	<i>Hongli</i>	<i>Levin</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♣(1)
Pass	3♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	6NT	All Pass	3NT

(1) Strong, artificial

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sokolow</i>	<i>Zhang</i>	<i>Molson</i>	<i>Gu</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♣(1)
Pass	2NT(2)	1NT	2♥
Pass	6NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

(1) Strong, artificial

(2) Good hand, less than honor-third of hearts

## Bermuda Bowl Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Freeman</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥
Rdbl(1)	Pass	1NT	Dbl
All Pass			

(1) Equal length in the minors

Terence Reese would have had a field day with this one!

Giving a lesson on how to get rid of losers, I prepare a hand and then ask one of my pupils how she plans to get rid of her losers. She says: "I am going to lose them right away so I don't have to worry about them any more."

# The Lady Loves a Grand

by Pietro Campanile

Migry Zur Campanile is making her first appearance this year at the NEC tournament together with an Israeli team which includes the current European Open Teams champions, Israel and Doron Yadlin, ably supported by another mainstay of the Israeli Open team, Michael Barel.

Despite her many bridge achievements, Migry does have one weakness: she cannot resist the tantalizing lure of a Grand Slam. Such irresistible hunger for the magic seven became common knowledge after her opening match against Venezuela at the 2001 Venice Cup in Paris.



Migry Zur\_Campanile

After Poplilov showed her two-suiter with slam-invitational values with her 3♦ and 4♣ bids, Migry agreed clubs with her 4♦ cue-bid. 4NT was a six-key card ask (including the ♥K), a useful systemic tool adopted when a two-suiter has been shown opposite a balanced hand. 5♦ showed four of six key cards and 5♠ asked for both ♥Q and ♣Q. Once Poplilov found that both queens were present it was straightforward to bid 7♣ with thirteen tricks there for the taking.

Amazingly enough, later on in the same match this board came up:

Bd: 12	♠ J95		
Dlr: North	♥ A103		
Vul: E/W	♦ A6		
	♣ AKJ93		
♠ 7		♠ 843	
♥ 98754		♥ KQ2	
♦ Q1092		♦ 8754	
♣ 764		♣ Q102	
	♠ AKQ1062		
	♥ J6		
	♦ KJ3		
	♣ 85		
(board rotated for convenience)			

West	North <i>Poplilov</i>	East	South <i>Campanile</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Rdbl	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	5NT
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Migry's 3♠ bid was forcing since she had a 3♣ relay followed by 3♠ to show a spade one-suiter with non-forcing values. After Poplilov cue-bid in clubs and hearts, showing first-round control in the latter with her redouble, 4NT was RKCB and 5NT asked for extras towards 7♠, which was promptly reached. Neither of the grand slams was bid at the other table and, in fact, only one other pair in the field managed to bid both of them.

Bd: 6	♠ K		
Dlr: South	♥ 87542		
Vul: N/S	♦ Q5		
	♣ AK532		
♠ J109652		♠ Q87	
♥ J9		♥ 63	
♦ J974		♦ K8632	
♣ 9		♣ 1087	
	♠ A43		
	♥ AKQ10		
	♦ A10		
	♣ QJ64		
(board rotated for convenience)			

West	North <i>Poplilov</i>	East	South <i>Campanile</i>
	3♦(♥)	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	4♦
Pass	5♠	Pass	5♦
Pass	7♣	All Pass	6♥

# The NEC Cup Final: China Ladies vs Israel

by the Editors

## First Quarter:

If would have taken the foresight of a clairvoyant to envision that the final of the 2004 NEC Cup would be contested between these two teams. While Israel (**Doron and Israel Yadlin/Michael Barel/Migry Campanile**) was expected to contend for a quarterfinal spot, very little was known of this Chinese team (**Hou Yunyan/Lu Yan, Zhu Xiaoyin/Dong Yongling, Yan Ru/Wang Yanhong**) apart from the usual tradition of excellence enjoyed by Chinese women's teams in the international arena. Both Israeli pairs play their own home-made versions of 2-over-1 while the Chinese all play Precision. These two teams met in the Swiss, with Israel enjoying a 24-6 win. But that was "another time, another day," as the legendary Bing would sing.

Bd: 1	North		
Dir: North	♠ 10853		
Vul: None	♥ AKQ3		
	♦ Q107		
	♣ Q7		
	West	East	
	♠ QJ97	♠ 642	
	♥ 97	♥ 62	
	♦ J	♦ A986	
	♣ KJ9865	♣ A1042	
	South		
	♠ AK		
	♥ J10854		
	♦ K5432		
	♣ 3		

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Dbl	2♥	3♣	4♥

All Pass

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥

All Pass

Against 4♥ both West players led the ♦J, seven,

ace, low. East returned the ♦6 and both declarers followed with the five, concealing two lower spot cards in an attempt to convince West that the six was a *high* diamond suggesting a switch to spades. **Wang Yanhong** was not deceived and switched to the ♣6 (fifth from six). **Yan Ru** won the ace and dealt her partner another diamond ruff for one down, -50. **Michael Barel** got it wrong at the other table by switching to the ♠Q: +450. 11 IMPs to China.

Sweden's **Anders Wirgren** has just written a fantastic article on signaling systems, pointing out (among things) that each method has its bad cases but that it's important to play with the percentages when trying to resolve ambiguous situations. Let's look at this one:

East's possible relevant diamond holdings for suit-preference purposes after South has followed (say) deuce-five are:

A986 (low)

A96 (low, but...)

A86 (low, but...)

A9864 (semi-neutral)

A9863 (semi-neutral)

A9643 (semi-neutral)

A8643 (semi-neutral)

A963 (neutral)

A964 (neutral)

A863 (neutral)

A864 (neutral)

A98643 (neutral)

A643 (high)

A64 (high, but...)

A63 (high, but...)

If South follows three-five, the cases are identical. If these numbers are correct, it would seem that West's choices are exactly even money. Those with better math skills, more time and fewer cobwebs are invited to assist us with this exercise.

Bd: 2	North
Dir: East	♠ A8752
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ9
	♦ AQ106
	♣ Q
West	East
♠ K94	♠ Q10
♥ J863	♥ A2
♦ 93	♦ J542
♣ J1073	♣ A8642
	South
	♠ J63
	♥ 10754
	♦ K87
	♣ K95

Bd: 3	North
Dir: South	♠ AQ2
Vul: E/W	♥ 108743
	♦ 1074
	♣ J5
West	East
♠ 6	♠ 9743
♥ J95	♥ AK62
♦ AK3	♦ Q95
♣ K97432	♣ Q6
	South
	♠ KJ1085
	♥ Q
	♦ J862
	♣ A108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
Pass	Dbl	1NT(1)	Pass
Pass	2♠	2♣	Pass
		All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	1♣(1)	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦(2)
Pass	3♠	Pass	2♠
			4♠

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

Trade the eight and nine of spades and declarer can hold the trump losers to one by leading low toward the jack. If East plays the queen, the jack next time pins the ten. Nineless in Yokohama, **Doron Yadlin** and **Dong Yongling** had to lose two trumps and two aces. Israel won the board with +140 in one room and +100 in the other for 6 IMPs, 6-11.



"What's trump? No, I really mean it. What is a trump?"

Open Room

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

(1) Limited, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M  
 (2) Inquiry  
 (3) Minimum, 6+♣

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
2♣	2♠	Dbl*	1♠
3♣	All Pass		Pass

Dong opened the thin South hand where **Israel Yadlin** did not, but that didn't affect the outcome as both E/W pairs stopped safely at 3♣, losing two trumps and a spade for +130.



"Let's win one for the moose!"



Bd: 4	North
Dir: West	♠ K10752
Vul: Both	♥ Q3
	♦ A104
	♣ Q42
West	East
♠ J943	♠ AQ86
♥ KJ10854	♥ 96
♦ 9	♦ Q83
♣ 63	♣ KJ85
	South
	♠ ---
	♥ A72
	♦ KJ7652
	♣ A1097

Bd: 6	North
Dir: East	♠ J9
Vul: E/W	♥ 10753
	♦ Q853
	♣ AK7
West	East
♠ 7	♠ K3
♥ AKQ2	♥ 94
♦ A92	♦ J10764
♣ J10832	♣ 9654
	South
	♠ AQ1086542
	♥ J86
	♦ K
	♣ Q

#### Open Room

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

- (1) Precision, could be singleton
- (2) Allegedly a cue bid showing support
- (3) Hopeful, but not confident
- (4) You were right not to be confident

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl*
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Dbl	4♣
Pass	4♦	All Pass	

The Yadlins landed in an undignified contract when the potentially very short diamond opening tested their agreements and found them lost at sea in different dinghies, neither having an oar. Doron played tenaciously and pieced together seven tricks to escape for -200.

3NT doubled would have been touch and go at the other table, but Dong retreated to 4♦ and made five on a heart lead without guessing the ♦Q by running the ♣10 to the jack to endplay East: +150. 8 IMPs to China, 19-6.



#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠

All Pass

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠

All Pass

This proved to be an easy hand for Wang/Yan when East followed to the ♥A with the nine. West cashed two more hearts and the ♦A: -50.

In contrast, Barel/Campanile had their problems. Barel led the ♥K, asking for count, and **Migry Campanile** followed with the four, even cards showing an even number of cards (when even cards are available). West switched to the ♦A, three, ten, king. East was trying to discourage a diamond continuation (lowest even is the most discouraging card, suit-preference implications not relevant in "unknown-length" situations) but West "knew" that East could not hold the ♦4 or ♦6, which would be more clearly discouraging, in that order. As the ♦10 was most likely to be from relative shortness, declarer figured to indeed be short in hearts. Therefore, Barel did not revert to hearts and continued diamonds, hoping that East could ruff and would also hold the ace of trumps to set the contract. Perhaps he was unlucky in finding the actual layout, but our brains are swimming trying to figure out the carding subtleties. Dong discarded hearts on the

♦Q and ♣K and took the trump finesse for +450.  
11 IMPs to China, 30-6.



Michael Barel

from E/W. He opted to concede a club trick to West to set up a third-round finesse in the suit, but Wang switched to the ♠J and the defenders took four spade tricks to set the contract.

The first two tricks were the same in **Zhu Xiaoyin's** 2NT, but after the first club trick she played on diamonds, cashing four rounds when the jack capitulated, East discarding two spades. Declarer cashed the ♥A, then led a club to the jack. East, preparing to claim, inadvertently discarded a heart to keep the ♠Q, so North exited with a heart to collect the ♠K at the end: +150. 6 IMPs to China, 36-6.

Bd: 7	North		
Dlr: South	♠ K52		
Vul: Both	♥ J82		
	♦ AQ10		
	♣ AJ73		
		West	East
		♠ J84	♠ AQ106
		♥ 53	♥ K109764
		♦ 8643	♦ J2
		♣ Q984	♣ K
			South
			♠ 973
			♥ AQ
			♦ K975
			♣ 10652

Bd: 8	North		
Dlr: West	♠ J10864		
Vul: None	♥ 98		
	♦ J43		
	♣ K63		
		West	East
		♠ AK9	♠ 75
		♥ K7	♥ A642
		♦ 87652	♦ KQ10
		♣ 1075	♣ J842
			South
			♠ Q32
			♥ QJ1053
			♦ A9
			♣ AQ9

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>

Pass	1NT	2♣(1)	2♥(2)
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

(1) Majors

(2) Stopper

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>

Pass	1NT	2♦(1)	Pass
2♥(2)	Pass	Pass	2NT

All Pass

(1) Hearts or spades

(2) Pass-or-correct

In 3NT, Doron Yadlin won the ♥Q at trick one and led the ♣10, collecting both high honors

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>

Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥(1)	Pass	2♠

All Pass

(1) Spades

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>

Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT

All Pass

In 2♠, Israel Yadlin won the diamond lead and returned a diamond. Yan switched to a heart and Wang had a chance to beat the contract by clearing trumps. Instead, she played a third diamond and Yadlin ruffed in hand. He lost only two trumps and the ♥A now for +110. Dong's

1NT was hopeless on a diamond lead, the defense coming to four diamonds and both major-suit ace-kings: -100. 5 IMPs to Israel, 11-36.



Wang Yanhong

Bd: 9	North		
Dir: North	♠ 8		
Vul: E/W	♥ J7		
	♦ J10842		
	♣ Q9765		
	West	East	
	♠ AK4	♠ Q975	
	♥ KQ84	♥ 953	
	♦ 53	♦ AK976	
	♣ J1082	♣ 4	
	South		
	♠ J10632		
	♥ A1062		
	♦ Q		
	♣ AK3		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D.Yadlin	Yan	I.Yadlin
	2NT(1)	Pass	3♣

All Pass

(1) Minors, weak

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Zhu	Campanile	Dong
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♦	Dbl
All Pass			

Doron's 2NT opening lived up to its reputation as a weak two-suiter, Israel allowing for it by converting to 3♣ with quite a good hand. Wang sensibly led a trump, choosing the deuce, and dummy's five held. Yan played low on the ♦2 and the queen won. On a low spade led towards

dummy, Wang went in with the king (another thoughtful play) and continued trumps. Israel ruffed a spade and ruffed a low diamond with the ♣A, ruffed a spade with the ♣9, cashed the ♣Q, and led the ♥J. Had he passed it, he would have made his contract, collecting two hearts on the endplay. When he rose with the ace and exited with a spade, he could take no more tricks: -50.

Zhu was pleased to convert Dong's takeout double of 2♦ to penalty but that sensible decision didn't turn out very well. Dong led the ♣A, saw the encouraging seven, and switched to the ♠3, which ran to the nine. Campanile led the ♥5 towards dummy and South took her ace to give her partner a spade ruff. Declarer ruffed the club return, cashed a high trump, crossed to a high heart, and led a trump, North splitting her honors. Declarer won and led a spade, which North ruffed, but declarer had control and lost only one more trump trick for +180. 4 IMPs to Israel, 15-36.

Bd: 10	North		
Dir: East	♠ A8764		
Vul: Both	♥ Q3		
	♦ KJ987		
	♣ 5		
	West	East	
	♠ 9	♠ KQ	
	♥ KJ10975	♥ A82	
	♦ 542	♦ Q6	
	♣ 632	♣ AKQJ74	
	South		
	♠ J10532		
	♥ 64		
	♦ A103		
	♣ 1098		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D.Yadlin	Yan	I.Yadlin
		1♣(1)	Pass
1♦(1)	Dbl(3)	2♣	2♠
3♥	3♠	3NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
(1) Strong, artificial			
(2) Negative			
(3) Clubs and hearts, or diamonds and spades			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
		2NT	Pass
4♦(1)	Dbl	Pass	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
(1) Hearts			

If E/W are going to make 4♥, N/S will do well to save at 4♠ even if they misguess the ♦Q, but Zhu/Dhong could not easily find their fit while the Yadlins were not sufficiently confident that they had enough trumps and that 4♥ was going to make. In fact, that was a good decision by the Yadlins because Wang lost to the ♥Q to go one down after North led the ♣5, a clear singleton: -100. Sure, North might have had two singletons, but not this particular North. Barel, who got the same lead, got the trumps right and made seven, +710. 13 IMPs to Israel, 28-36.



"Let's get our stories straight before they separate us."

Bd: 11	North	
Dlr: South	♠ K10874	
Vul: None	♥ 1053	
	♦ K8	
	♣ K98	
West		East
♠ 96		♠ J5
♥ K98		♥ AQ762
♦ A3		♦ J109762
♣ AQ10752		♣ ---
	South	
	♠ AQ32	
	♥ J4	
	♦ Q54	
	♣ J643	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
			Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass
(1) Limited, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
			Pass
1♣	1♠	Dbl	2♠
2NT(1)	Pass	3♦	All Pass
(1) Usually a competitive 3♣ bid			

In 3♦, Campanile lost two spades and two trumps: +110. In 4♥, Yan got the lead of the ♦4, won the ace, threw a spade on the ♣A, and played a diamond. North won and played spades but declarer ruffed the second and ruffed a diamond with the ♥8. Zhu overruffed but that was the last trick for the defense: +420. 7 IMPs to China, 43-28.

Bd: 12	North	
Dlr: West	♠ A9	
Vul: N/S	♥ 2	
	♦ J943	
	♣ K87653	
West		East
♠ J843		♠ KQ5
♥ AQ96		♥ KJ3
♦ K7		♦ 10852
♣ A109		♣ Q42
	South	
	♠ 10762	
	♥ 108754	
	♦ AQ6	
	♣ J	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
1NT(1)	All Pass		
(1) 12-14			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Wang took nine tricks in 1NT on a low club lead: +150.

Campanile declared 3NT from the East side and got the lead of the ♠7 to the nine and king. She led a diamond to the king, attacking her weakest suit early as a tactical move. A low spade from dummy brought the ace and Zhu switched to a low club to the jack and ace. Campanile took her nine tricks for +400. 6 IMPs to Israel, 34-43.

Bd: 14	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K65		
Vul: None	♥ K954		
	♦ A52		
	♣ A85		
West		East	
♠ J8		♠ 109	
♥ AJ102		♥ Q73	
♦ Q97		♦ KJ63	
♣ J732		♣ KQ96	
	South		
	♠ AQ7432		
	♥ 86		
	♦ 1084		
	♣ 104		

the ♥2, encouraging, then the ♣7, the ♥J and the ♣3. East released two low diamonds and two low hearts. While the opening notrump suggested that the ♥A would be in East, West's double and carding suggested the opposite. Doron led a heart from dummy, and when West contributed the ♥10, followed low from hand. Aarggghhh! That was -100 rather than +550, and China gained 6 IMPs where a 9-IMP loss seemed certain. 49-34, China.

Bd: 15	North		
Dlr: South	♠ K9876		
Vul: N/S	♥ 732		
	♦ KJ8		
	♣ 93		
West		East	
♠ J10		♠ Q32	
♥ 1095		♥ AKQ86	
♦ 543		♦ Q6	
♣ J8742		♣ AKQ	
	South		
	♠ A54		
	♥ J4		
	♦ A10972		
	♣ 1065		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D.Yadlin	Yan	I.Yadlin
		1NT(1)	2♣(2)
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass

Dbl All Pass  
 (1) Ostensibly 12-14  
 (2) Any one-suiter

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Zhu	Campanile	Dong
		Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2NT(2)	Pass	3♠(2)

All Pass  
 (1) Multi  
 (2) Inquiry  
 (3) Minimum with spades

Dong scored the ♥K to make 3♠: +140.

Doron Yadlin had to do the same to make 3NT doubled on the lead of the ♣Q, which he ducked after West encouraged. He won the low club continuation and ran spades, West discarding

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D.Yadlin	Yan	I.Yadlin
		Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣(1)	Pass
1♦(2)	Pass	2NT	All Pass

(1) Strong, artificial  
 (2) Negative

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Zhu	Campanile	Dong
		Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass

2♥(2) All Pass  
 (1) Strong, artificial  
 (2) Artificial, Very weak

Campanile scored a coup of sorts by not opening a 20-22 2NT, then judging to pass her partner's "second negative" 2♥ response. Barel lost two spades and two diamonds on the lead of the ♣9: +140.



Migry Campanile

Wang/Yan reached 2NT instead, in normal fashion. Five diamonds and two spades later, Yan was two down, 100. 6 IMPs to Israel, 40-49.

Bd: 16	North		
Dir: West	♠ Q3		
Vul: E/W	♥ K93		
	♦ KQJ1053		
	♣ A7		
		West	East
		♠ KJ752	♠ 109864
		♥ 8654	♥ AQ
		♦ 6	♦ A72
		♣ 1092	♣ QJ8
	South		
	♠ A		
	♥ J1072		
	♦ 984		
	♣ K6543		

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Zhu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Dong</i>
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

It's interesting that both North players thought a 1NT opening the best way to describe their hand, particularly because Zhu's was a 13-15 notrump while Doron's was a "flexible" 15-17.

Zhu took eight tricks on a spade lead for +120. With E/W on for 3♠, that was a nice result for China.

The strong notrump also acted as a preempt in the Open Room, but if 1NT was perhaps a trifle off-center, what can we say about Israel Yadlin's pass of his brother's no-major response to Stayman? If you or I did such a thing, North would be 3=3=2=5 with something like: ♠xxx ♥KQx ♦AK ♣Axxxx. We'd miss 6♣ and go down in 2♦. Israel's truly bizarre decision cost nothing as he had ten easy tricks: +130. What courage! What chutzpah! What a nose for the table!

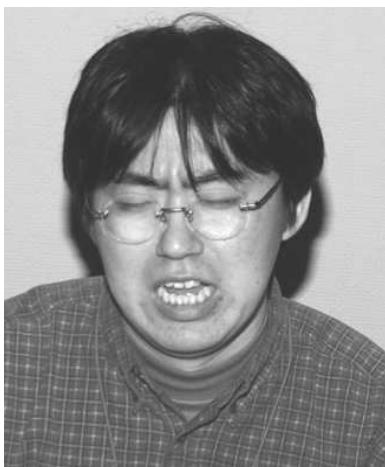


Israel "the nose" Yadlin

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

China won the first set 49-40.



"Aaaarrghhhh!!"



"Now where could we have picked up those 34 IMPs?"

## Drama in Tenerife

by Pietro Campanile

The recent, thrilling final of the Bermuda Bowl and its astonishing conclusion, viewed online by more than 5000 spectators on bridgebase.com, has served as a powerful reminder that bridge can be a great spectator sport, within certain constraints. As in most other sports, the viewing interest is directly proportional to the importance of the event and the uncertainty of its outcome. Not many people will be rushing to watch the live relay of the qualifying round of the Liechtenstein national championships or indeed the final round of a match where one team is leading by 90IMP with 20 boards to go.

The idea that bridge can be turned into a spectator sport dates back to the 1930s, when Ely Culbertson established his empire on the huge public interest arising from his "Match of the Century" against Sidney Lenz. Culbertson's Blue Book achieved the amazing record of selling more copies in one month than the other top ten publications ranked on the New York Times' Bestsellers list combined!



Ely Culbertson

Since then bridge has obviously come a long way, but has never managed to recapture such wide appeal among the public at large. The live screening of important events has greatly benefited from the huge technological advances of the last half-century and nowadays almost all international events will provide a highly refined Vu-Graph service for the benefit of the local audience and, more recently, online viewers.

Such a service can be great fun for your average bridge addict but it can turn into an exquisite torture for the players looking at their teammates' efforts live on screen.

Let us move on to Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands and the venue for the 2001 European championships. The event itself has historically been dominated by Italy and before the last round of the tournament the top four positions were basically locked up. What was yet to be decided was the outcome of the race for the all-important fifth place, the last qualifying spot for the Bermuda Bowl. France, Israel and Denmark were involved in a very close finish with the French slightly ahead but due to play their toughest opponents, the highly talented but temperamental Bulgarians.

It was no surprise, therefore, that this was the match the organizers decide to show for the last session of the VuGraph and by the time we got to the last board, the theater was completely full and the tension running very high.

The French had not been doing well but because of the other results they only needed a decent score on the final board to get their ticket for the 2001 World championship. Here is Board 20, the last of the event:

Bd: 20	♠ 543
Dir: West	♥ K109753
Vul: Both	♦ 64
	♣ 102
♠ KJ876	♠ A9
♥ J	♥ AQ86
♦ 52	♦ KQ3
♣ KQJ96	♣ A543
	♠ Q102
	♥ 42
	♦ AJ10987
	♣ 87

In most of the other matches E/W managed to get to the easy 6♣ quite comfortably and the commentators predicted the same result here; in their estimates, that would have been enough to

keep France in fifth place.

West	North	East	South
Palau	Mihov	Allegrini	Nanev
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Dbl
Pass	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♣	Pass	?	

Palau and Allegrini looked weary and incredibly tense; the pressure on them was enormous. The qualification for the World Championships was the very least that the ever-ambitious French Federation expected of its players.

The bidding proceeded normally until Palau opted for an exuberant 4♣ reply to his partner's 2♣. He did have great support, but with an aceless hand he would have been better advised to bid only 3♣. The auction went on, but when his partner continued to express a strong wish for slam with 4♥, Palau started to get cold feet and the feeling that his first reply might have exaggerated his values led him to another surprising action: he denied any further interest and bid 5♣ instead of showing his spade control.

Allegrini was now on the spot. He was looking at a powerhouse, and yet his partner was firmly breaking on the way to slam. The tension and fatigue were obviously big factors in the French player's decision-making process. He was afraid of losing a diamond and a spade and finally put the ill-fated green card on the tray, causing dismay among the French supporters in the audience—especially a certain Monsieur Michel Abecassis, who had been witnessing the bidding

slowly unfolding like the last terrifying scenes of a horror movie, with himself and his team as the unwilling protagonists. The French champion could not understand how Allegrini could bring himself to believe that Palau might have bid 4♣ with a hand like ♠Qxxxx ♥K ♦Jx ♣KQJxx, where 6♣ would have no play. Even ♠QJxxx would have made the slam no worse than 50%. Unfortunately for him, there was not an awful lot he could do from his seat in the VuGraph theater.

Anyway, all's well that ends well. Thanks to a late rescheduling of the venue, the French team was invited to the 2001 Bermuda Bowl—as the host nation.



Michel Abecassis, not looking happy after Allegrini passed 5♣. (Photo by Ron Tacchi)



## BRIDGE CLUES

PROVIDING CLUES TO WINNING BRIDGE

with Daily Hands by Mike Lawrence



### Get a Clue

Mike Lawrence, famous bridge champion, writer and Internet bridge maven, is supporting a new Internet bridge site at [www.bridgeclues.com](http://www.bridgeclues.com). The site contains two bridge hands every day. The hands come with questions which readers can answer if they wish.



## NEC Team Profile: Bulgaria

by Jerry Stamatov

The members of the Bulgarian team have been playing together since 1996. They've won five National Team Titles, placed in the top five at the European Championships several times, won a bronze medal at the Third Transnational Open Teams in Bermuda in 2000 and reached the quarterfinal stage of the last Bermuda Bowl in Monte Carlo in 2003.



Kalin Karaivanov

**Kalin Karaivanov**, 37, has been playing with Roumen Trendafilov since 1987, a remarkable achievement given the ebullient character of the average Bulgarian player. Their partnership is by far the most successful in Bulgaria. Besides their countless national trophies they have twice won the coveted "Cino Del Duca" trophy (1994, 1995). Kalin is a full-time bridge professional and lives in the delightful resort of Varna on the Black Sea with his wife and his daughter.



Roumen Trendafilov

**Roumen Trendafilov**, 42, a Machinery Engineer by trade, wisely decided to set aside his

profession to dedicate his heart and soul to the 52 cards. Life as a full-time bridge professional is no picnic in Bulgaria, but so far he has been managing pretty well. He also lives in Varna with his wife.



Jerry Stamatov

**Jerry Stamatov**, 31, lives in Sofia with his wife and their 1-year old boy. He can be credited with being the one who had the idea to get this team together. Owner of a small software company and web developer, he is also the team public relations agent and the right person to get in touch with for those interested in inviting the team to international events.



Ivan Tsonchev

**Ivan Tsonchev** – 32 years old, has the dubious distinction of being Jerry's partner. He is the latest arrival in the team and is the current National pairs champion. He manages a private company and is almost ready to tie the knot. Congratulations Ivan!

# NEC Cup Final: China Ladies vs Israel

by Rich Colker

## Second Quarter:

The second segment began with China Ladies leading Israel, 49-40.

Bd: 17	North		
Dir: North	♠ K104		
Vul: None	♥ 1087		
	♦ K84		
	♣ AQ76		
	West	East	
	♠ A63	♠ QJ97	
	♥ K2	♥ Q9543	
	♦ AQ9652	♦ 3	
	♣ 105	♣ K92	
		South	
		♠ 852	
		♥ AJ6	
		♦ J107	
		♣ J843	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
	1♣	1♥	1NT

2♦ All Pass

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
	1♦(1)	1♥	Pass

2NT All Pass

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

While some might perceive Wang's 2♦ bid to be a bit conservative, she was aware of the liberties her side might take with their one-level overcalls. Doron led the ♥8 to Wang's king and he rose with the ♣A when she played a club, returning a club to dummy's king at three. Wang ruffed a club, led a low spade to Doron's king, ducked the heart return to Israel's jack and ruffed the ♥A continuation. She cashed two rounds of spades ending in dummy, played a diamond to the jack, queen and king, ruffed the club return and tried the ♦A. When the jack failed to fall she claimed eight tricks; +90.

At the other table Barel took a more aggressive approach with the West cards and found himself

in an inferior 2NT. Lu led the ♣6 and Hou failed to play the jack, allowing Barel to win cheaply in hand with the ten. When a low spade to the queen held, Barel led a heart to the king, cashed the ♠A, and exited with a third spade. Lu won and played ace and a third club, Barel pitching a diamond. The ♠J was followed by the diamond finesse, Hou splitting with the ten. Lu cashed the ♣Q and played a heart to the jack. Hou cleared the hearts and exited with the ♦J, and Barel had the rest: one down, -50. 4 IMPs to C-L, leading 53-40.

Bd: 18	North		
Dir: East	♠ K1096		
Vul: N/S	♥ 8543		
	♦ J4		
	♣ Q75		
	West	East	
	♠ A874	♠ J3	
	♥ AKQ9	♥ J762	
	♦ 109	♦ AQ87	
	♣ 1062	♣ AJ8	
		South	
		♠ Q52	
		♥ 10	
		♦ K6532	
		♣ K943	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
		1NT	Pass

2♦(1) Pass 2♥ Pass

4♥ All Pass

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		1♦	Pass

1♥ Pass 2♥ Pass

4♥ All Pass

Yan received a spade lead against 4♥. She rose with the ace (not best), passed the ♦9 to Israel's king, won the heart return in dummy and played a second diamond to the jack and ace. A heart to dummy now revealed the bad trump split and when she shifted back to spades her spade play

at trick one came back to haunt her. Doron rose with the ♠K and tabled a third round of trumps, leaving Yan a trick short. One down, -50.

Barel received a trump lead. he won in hand and played the ♦10 to the jack (not best), queen and king. Hou shifted to a spade and Barel ducked, won the spade return and ruffed a spade. With the ♦9 an entry to ruff his fourth spade with the ♥J, Barel had the necessary communications to draw trumps and cross back to dummy with the ♣A to cash his last two diamonds. Losing only a spade and a diamond: +450. 11 IMPs to Israel, now trailing 53-51.

Israel picked up an overtrick-IMP on each of the next two boards to close to tie C-L at 53.

Bd: 21	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AK2		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q1042		
	♦ K32		
	♣ 1062		
West		East	
♠ 109873		♠ Q65	
♥ A6		♥ J53	
♦ 4		♦ QJ1098	
♣ AQ983		♣ 75	
	South		
	♠ J4		
	♥ K987		
	♦ A765		
	♣ KJ4		

would open 1♦ with equal or longer diamonds than clubs, Israel's 1♦ response with four-four in the reds would never be right unless Doron held four-five (or an equivalent) in the minors. But a 1♥ response would be right any time Doron held four hearts. *N'est-ce pas?*

Doron ducked the ♦Q lead, won the continuation in hand, and guessed the hearts by playing low to the seven, ace. Back came the ♠10, ducked to the queen, and Yan accurately exited with a second spade. A club to the jack and queen was followed by a third spade and now it Doron could only cash out his hearts for one down, -100.

Lu/Hou managed to play 3♥ from the right side of the table (played by North East can lead a club to West who shifts to a diamond at trick two, giving the defense two clubs, the ♥A and two ruffs). Hou won the diamond lead in hand and led a heart up. Barel rose with the ace hoping to find a quick entry to Campanile's hand to obtain a diamond ruff but alas, it was not to be and Hou emerged with an easy nine tricks: +140. 6 IMPs to C-L, leading 59-53.



"Open wide and say 'Ah.' "

Open Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D.Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I.Yadlin</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♦
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbf
Pass	1NT	2♠	2NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
	1♦(1)	Pass	1♥
1♠	2♥	2♠	Dbf(2)
3♣	3♥	All Pass	

Something is wrong with your bidding system if you can't locate your four-four heart fit given the first two bids in the auction. Assuming North

Bd: 22	North		
Dlr: East	♠ 5		
Vul: E/W	♥ 643		
	♦ J9863		
	♣ 10654		
West		East	
♠ Q9764		♠ AK1032	
♥ 10		♥ 9752	
♦ KQ754		♦ 2	
♣ A8		♣ 932	
	South		
	♠ J8		
	♥ AKQJ8		
	♦ A10		
	♣ KQJ7		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D. Yadlin	Yan	I. Yadlin
		Pass	2♦(1)

All Pass

(1) Multi, weak with one major or 20-22 bal.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Lu	Campanile	Hou
		Pass	1♣(1)

1NT(2) Pass 4♠ Dbl

All Pass

(1) Precision

(2) Diamonds and spades

Doron chose exactly the wrong time to get fancy with Multi with Israel holding the moose, game in hearts a near certainty, and diamonds splitting rather unkindly. Israel finished three down, -150.

Some days you eat the bear, some days the bear eats you. Hou opened her powerhouse 21-count a strong club and before she could say "peep" she was staring down the barrels of a 4♠ bid. She doubled to show balanced strength and that ended the auction. Unfortunately for her, 4♠ could not be beaten with a sledgehammer; +790. 12 IMPs to Israel, who took the lead, 65-59.

On the next deal the C-L picked up 1 IMP for an overtrick, closing to 65-60.

Bd: 24	North		
Dir: West	♠ AQ8		
Vul: None	♥ 3		
	♦ AKJ1094		
	♣ KQ4		
	West	East	
	♠ J43	♠ K9752	
	♥ 642	♥ AQ875	
	♦ 852	♦ 7	
	♣ J832	♣ 65	
	South		
	♠ 106		
	♥ KJ109		
	♦ Q63		
	♣ A1097		



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D. Yadlin	Yan	I. Yadlin
Pass	1♦	2♦(1)	Dbl
2♥	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2♠	Dbl	All Pass	

(1) Majors

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Lu	Campanile	Hou
Pass	1♣(1)	1♥(2)	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

(1) Precision

(2) Majors

We're guessing that Doron's first double was takeout (why?) and his second double penalty; both seem a bit eccentric. The overriding feature of North's hand is his diamonds, so he should not be so intent on doubling the opponents at a low level before he has described his own hand to his partner. Still, he did not deserve the fate that befell him. The Yadlins managed to collect 500 against 2♠ doubled, which should have produced at least a small gain for them on the board.

In the Closed Room Lu/Hou overbid to 6♦, which had little chance on simply passive defense. But Campanile, after cashing her ♥A at trick one and getting the ♥6 from Barel (Shouldn't this be count? Was the ♥6 intended as suit-preference for spades with only the jack?), switched to a low spade and 6♦ rolled home: +920. 9 IMPs for C-L, back in the lead 69-65.



"Listen, let he who is without sin..."

Bd: 25	North	
Dir: North	♠ J42	
Vul: E/W	♥ Q1087	
	♦ KQ752	
	♣ 9	
West		East
♠ K1096		♠ 53
♥ AJ62		♥ K9
♦ J94		♦ A1086
♣ KQ		♣ J10652
	South	
	♠ AQ87	
	♥ 543	
	♦ 3	
	♣ A8743	

Bd: 26	North	
Dir: East	♠ 1073	
Vul: Both	♥ QJ9762	
	♦ ---	
	♣ AQ104	
West		East
♠ 9		♠ AK862
♥ 4		♥ A10
♦ KQJ108652		♦ A4
♣ 976		♣ KJ32
	South	
	♠ QJ54	
	♥ K853	
	♦ 973	
	♣ 85	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dbl	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1NT	All Pass

In the Closed Room Campanile scored up nine tricks in 1NT on the ♠7 lead. In the Open Room Israel could not resist showing his “solid” heart sequence (“I wanted to play hearts in the four-three fit with the ruffs in my hand”) but could not quite handle things. Two down, -100. 2 IMPs to Israel, 69-67.



“You know, your eyes are really quite beautiful when you’re angry.”

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
		1♣(1)	Pass
1♦(2)	Dbl(3)	1♠	Pass
2♦	2♥(4)	Pass	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♦	All Pass

(1) Precision

(2) Negative

(3) ♣+♥ or ♦+♠ (at least 4-4)

(4) ♣+♥

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT(1)	Pass	3♣	Pass
5♦	All Pass		
(1) F1			

We can’t help thinking that there must be a more descriptive bid for the West hand over 1♣ than a negative 1♦. Still, this did not seem to prevent Wang/Yan from bidding to the cold 6♦ contract: +1370. Barel/Campanile did not fare nearly as well in the absence of informative interference from Lu. 5♦ made six, +620. 13 IMPs to C-L to increase their lead to 82-67.



Bd: 27	North	
Dlr: South	♠ Q6542	
Vul: None	♥ 82	
	♦ J652	
	♣ A6	
West		East
♠ J10		♠ K8
♥ AKQ963		♥ 10754
♦ 9843		♦ Q7
♣ 2		♣ KQ1097
	South	
	♠ A973	
	♥ J	
	♦ AK10	
	♣ J8543	

Bd: 28	North	
Dlr: West	♠ KJ9832	
Vul: N/S	♥ 5	
	♦ AK6	
	♣ KQ10	
West		East
♠ 64		♠ Q7
♥ AK76		♥ QJ1093
♦ 854		♦ QJ
♣ A852		♣ J743
	South	
	♠ A105	
	♥ 842	
	♦ 109732	
	♣ 96	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
1♥	1♠(1)	3♣(2)	1♣
All Pass			3♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
2♥	Pass	4♥	2♣(1)
			All Pass

As so often seems to happen when one table stops in a partscore while the other bids game, the results resemble the contract at the other table more than the one at their own table. So it was again here, where Barel/Campanile bid the E/W cards to 4♥ with four top losers while Wang/Yan stopped in a spade partscore cold for game. Plus 170 for C-L and -50 for Israel: 3 IMPs to Israel, down 82-70.



"That wasn't one of your choices, Munawar, heads or tails."

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wang</i>	<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>
1♦(1)	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♣	2♠	3♣	All Pass

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Lu</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Hou</i>
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Israel Yadlin seems to have had a temporary problem with his bidding hand on this deal when he first failed to raise to 2♠ the first time and then couldn't find a way to bid 3♠ the second time. And wouldn't you know it, this time his partner actually had his bids for his vulnerable against non-vulnerable 1♠ and 2♠ bids. Go figure. 3♣ went down two, -100.

At the other table Hou had no such inhibitions and Lu/Hou managed to reach the cold spade game. To add insult to injury, Lu scored up an overtrick when the "quack" of diamonds fell doubleton: +650, 11 IMPs to C-L, ahead 93-70.



Bd: 29	North	
Dlr: North	♠ K102	
Vul: Both	♥ A653	
	♦ 86	
	♣ AQJ10	
West		East
♠ AQ98653		♠ J4
♥ J102		♥ K84
♦ A		♦ KQ109432
♣ 32		♣ 4
	South	
	♠ 7	
	♥ Q97	
	♦ J75	
	♣ K98765	

Bd: 30	North	
Dlr: East	♠ J97	
Vul: None	♥ QJ84	
	♦ A5	
	♣ J1072	
West		East
♠ K43		♠ A10862
♥ 963		♥ K2
♦ Q1073		♦ 982
♣ 654		♣ KQ8
	South	
	♠ Q5	
	♥ A1075	
	♦ KJ64	
	♣ A93	

Open Room/Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D. Yadlin	Yan	I. Yadlin
Barel	Lu	Campanile	Hou
	1NT	3♦	All Pass

With both South players leading their singleton this should have been a push board at -100. But in the Closed Room Lu inexplicably failed to play king and a spade after winning her ♣A at trick three (both declarers won the ♠A at trick one, cashed the ♦A, and then led a club) to promote a trump trick for Hou. 5 IMPs to Israel, trailing 93-75.

Open Room/Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wang	D. Yadlin	Yan	I. Yadlin
Barel	Lu	Campanile	Hou
		1♠	Dbl
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

Neither South player could find a reason to bid game with the wasted ♠Q, so this was a push at +170.

The final two boards produced small gains of 2 and 3 IMPs for Israel, who finished the second session down 13, 93-80.

Thirty-two more deals to go to decide the 2004 NEC Cup champion.



"I think I can still catch the last bus to the Ginza."



"Now where the hell did I put my beer?"



"Shvitz, shvitz, shvitz."

# China Ladies - Team Profile

by Pietro Campanile

One of the pleasant surprises of this 9<sup>th</sup> 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

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

stores in Ginza beware!



Yan Ru

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

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



Wang Yan Hong

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.

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





## 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

Terence Reese, one of the all-time greats of bridge, after witnessing a particularly poor declarer effort by one of his pupils, took him aside and with a fatherly tone advised him: "Look Andrew, you must concentrate more, your declarer play is getting worse every day. You played the last hand as if it were tomorrow!"

# Over-Aggressive Slam Bidding

by Zar Petkov

Here is a board from the 2002 World Teams Championship in Montreal, Canada. The players “on the spot” are the famous pair of Lauria-Versace from the Italian Lavazza Team.

Italy vs. Sweden:

♠ K86	♠ A1032
♥ A76	♥ J
♦ KJ10	♦ A72
♣ KJ93	♣ AQ1052

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>		<i>Lauria</i>	
		1♣	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	7♣	All Pass

The Italians play the sequence 1♣-2♣ game forcing. Even after guessing the ♦Q and a dummy reverse there is still no chance for thirteen tricks—nowhere to place the spade loser. So, let’s count: East has 13 DP (9+4 for the 5-4-3-1), 6 controls, and 14 HCP

(discounting the singleton jack) for a total of 33 Zar Points—a 7 points surplus over the opening, meaning at least one level “in his pocket.” West has the minimum possible DP for the 4-3-3-3—8 points, 5 controls, and 15 HCP for a total of 28. The upgrade of the ♣KJ and the ♠K brings him 3 more points for a total of 31.

This brings the Zar Points count limit in both hands to 64, two levels above the minimum of 52 needed for the four level: that’s the six level. The corresponding minimum for a GRAND slam is 67 Zar Points and you are short of this mark here.

Move one of the spades in West’s hand to clubs and watch how the count changes. The distribution gets to 5-3-3-2 or 11 points, bringing 3 additional points, and the fifth club brings another 3 points for the additional trump length (the bid promises four), ending up with 70 Zar Points against the previous 64, and the prospects for the GRAND have improved considerably, as you might have already noticed. Yes, that’s true, just by moving a single card in a single hand. A change well-reflected by the Zar Points.

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## 9<sup>th</sup> NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Location
Sunday (Feb. 15)	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup	F201-204
	18:00-19:00	Closing Ceremony	F205-206



“One more Kirin here, if you please.”



“Er, make that two more Kirin. We lost.”