



NEC Bridge Festival

Saturday, February 12, 2005
Bulletin Number 5

Editors: Eric Kokish, Richard Colker

It's Russia/Poland versus Israel in today's NEC Cup Final

Japan Open overcame a 9-IMP deficit in yesterday's quarterfinals to defeat highly favored Poland 74-50 and earn a spot in one NEC Cup semifinal. Their opponent will be Israel, who ran away from USA/Egypt 135-43 in their quarterfinal match. In the other quarterfinals, Japan Hana hung on to beat USA 67-54. They will meet Russia/Poland, who scored a stirring 105-71 comeback victory over The Netherlands. In last night's semifinals, Russia/Poland easily outdistanced Japan Hana 128-49 to earn a spot in today's NEC Cup final. Their opponent, Israel, a finalist for the second straight year, scored a narrow 86-70 victory over Japan Open. Congratulations to both home teams for a terrific showing. They will face off in today's 32-board 3rd/4th playoff. Quarterfinalist rosters are on page 5.

Quarterfinal Results

Team	Carry	1-20	21-40	Final
Poland	.5	36	14	50
Japan Open		27	47	74
Russia/Poland	.5	33	72	105
The Netherlands		49	22	71
USA/Egypt	.5	20	23	43
Israel		40	95	135
Japan Hana	.5	38	29	67
USA		12	42	54

Semifinal Results

Team	Carry	1-20	21-40	Final
Japan Hana	.5	12	37	49
Russia/Poland		64	64	128
Japan Open	.5	40	30	70
Israel		42	44	86

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the3 Web

Our home page is at <http://bridge.cplaza.ne.jp/necfest.html> – or – <http://www.jcbl.or.jp>

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(Download the free BBO software at http://www.bridgebase.com/online/download_main.shtml)

NEC Cup 2005: 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	First round Swiss matches were made by randomly pairing each team in the top half with a team from the bottom half.
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 IMP quotient. If more than two teams are involved, WBF 2004 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	No HUM or Brown Sticker methods will be permitted in this event.
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 2004 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>
Smoking	No player may leave the Annex Hall during play without permission due to security concerns arising from the Bridge Base Online broadcast.

Yokohama SRR & Swiss Teams: February 11-12, 2005

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Imagination

by Steve Landen

Japan will be a force to be reckoned with in future World Bridge Federation events. Witness Japan Hana on this hand in the last round robin match versus the United States team.

Bd: 14	North		
Dlr: East	♠ Q3		
Vul: None	♥ AKQ10		
	♦ KQ9		
	♣ 10965		
West		East	
♠ 10984		♠ AK652	
♥ 4		♥ 8632	
♦ J103		♦ 752	
♣ AKQJ4		♣ 2	
	South		
	♠ J7		
	♥ J975		
	♦ A864		
	♣ 873		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kobayashi</i>	<i>Mori</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>	<i>Koneru</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Landen</i>	<i>Nagasaka</i>	<i>Casen</i>	<i>Hanayama</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1NT	2♣(1)	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♥	3♠	All Pass
(1) Stayman			

Kobayashi decided to muddy the waters with a slightly off-shape third-in-hand 1NT opening. He continued the charade by showing his four-card major in response to Stayman and arrived in 4♠. His partner Shimizu showed no sense of humor. Mori led the ♥K and continued with the queen. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps and claimed the rest; +480.

In the other room Landen opened a rather unimaginative 1♣, and Casen eventually took the push to 3♠. Nagasaka led the ♥K, then shifted accurately to diamonds. Hanayama won the third round and played the thirteener, putting paid to the contract; -50. Japan Hana outplayed USA by four tricks and went on to win the match and to finish second in the round robin. Good luck, guys!

Team Rosters for Quarterfinalists: 10th NEC Cup

Name	Members
Poland	Piotr Gawrys, Dariusz Kowalski, Piotr Bizon, Michal Kwiecien, Radoslaw Kielbasinski (NPC)
USA/Egypt	Rita Shugart, Andrew Robson, Walid Elahmady, Tarek Sadek
Netherlands	Jan Jansma, Louk Verhees, Bas Drijver, Maarten Schollaardt, Erik Kirchhoff (coach)
USA	Steve Landen, Drew Casen, Venkatrao Koneru, Larry Mori
Israel	Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Campanile
Russia/Poland	Andrei Gromov, Alexander Dubinin, Adam Zmudzinski, Cezary Balicki
Japan Open	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta, Makoto Kono
Japan Hana	Takashi Maeda, Seiya Shimizu, Takeshi Hanayama, Nobuyuki Hayashi, Sei Nagasaka, Yasushi Kobayashi

The Quarterfinals, Bds 1-20: Poland vs Japan Open

Poland, the round robin winner, elected to face the 2005 PABF Japanese Open team in the quarterfinals, providing the native sons with an extra measure of incentive. Tough to do the right thing in these situations, of course. By the lunch break on Friday, we would know whether Poland had chosen wisely...

spade low, ruffed a diamond winner in hand, and, having survived all of his investigatory work, played East for the outstanding spade, and therefore 4=1=5=3 shape: club to the ten, +110. That was 4 IMPs to Japan, 6-0.

Bd: 3		North	
Dir: South		♠ KQ75	
Vul: E/W		♥ 864	
		♦ Q	
		♣ AK862	
West		East	
♠ 642		♠ AJ109	
♥ AKQJ3		♥ 9	
♦ 9542		♦ J10873	
♣ 9		♣ J75	
		South	
		♠ 83	
		♥ 10752	
		♦ AK6	
		♣ Q1043	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
			Pass
1♥	2♣	Dbl	2♥
Pass	3♣	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
			Pass
1♥	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

Bd: 5		North	
Dir: North		♠ Q73	
Vul: N/S		♥ K85	
		♦ K74	
		♣ 9874	
West		East	
♠ 10642		♠ AKJ95	
♥ Q94		♥ 62	
♦ AQ1098		♦ J52	
♣ J		♣ K103	
		South	
		♠ 8	
		♥ AJ1073	
		♦ 63	
		♣ AQ652	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
	Pass	1♠	2♥
3♥(1)	Dbl	3♠	All Pass
(1) Limit raise or better			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	Pass	1♠	2♠(1)
4♦(2)	4♥	4♠	All Pass
(1) ♥+m; (2) Raise to 4♠ with ♦ length/strength			

At both tables the defense started with four rounds of hearts, declarer ruffing the last with the ♣K. Gawrys continued with ♣A, club to the queen, and so went one down, -50. Nakamura, who had seen Bizon discard three diamonds, played the ♠K at trick five. Bizon won as Kwiecien gave false count with the two, and switched to his penultimate diamond. Nakamura won, cashed the ♠Q, cashed the ♣A, ruffed a

I much prefer Kwiecien's descriptive 4♦ to Chen's "guess what I have" artificial raise, even though Michal's action in effect cost his side 5 IMPs. Switch East's minors, for example, and we'd all like to be in 4♠ and even on this layout, game needs only the diamond finesse through overcaller and a guess in trumps. The problem with "general" limit-plus raises on hands containing both a good suit and a side singleton is that opener is not able to evaluate the degree of fit, so on hands of this type, it's winning bridge to spare opener a decision and bid game

yourself. If that sounds like a commercial message for the fit-showing jump, it is, but it's at least as much a rant against the cue-raise. Both declarers got the trumps right for +140 and -50. 5 IMPs to Japan, 11-0.

It's interesting to note that in USA versus Hana, both Landen/Casen and Hanayama/Nagasaka stopped in 3♠, presumably on a similar sequence to Furuta/Chen's. Everyone else was in game.

On the next deal, it's fair to say that Bizon/Kwiecien again deserved a better fate...

Bd: 6	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K10873		
Vul: E/W	♥ 2		
	♦ J		
	♣ AQ10987		
	West		East
	♠ Q96		♠ J42
	♥ KJ953		♥ AQ87
	♦ AQ4		♦ K108
	♣ 43		♣ KJ6
		South	
		♠ A5	
		♥ 1064	
		♦ 976532	
		♣ 52	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥(1)	Pass
2♠(2)	Pass	2NT(3)	Pass
3♣(4)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
(1) Four trumps; (2) Puppet to 2NT; (3) Forced, unless special holding; (4) Short-suit trial bid			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦(1)	1♠	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
(1) Hearts			

Had Gawrys led a low spade or the ♣A, then a low spade, he would have beaten 4♥. He led his singleton diamond, however, and now Chen had a chance. He drew trumps and led a club. Gawrys won and switched to the ♠10, shortening the play: +620.

Kwiecien's 3NT could not be defeated. Nakamura led the ♣10, dummy's jack holding. Declarer took his nine top tricks, but by then he could take no more: +600. 1 IMP to Japan, 12-0.

Apart from the table at which Jansma/Verhees played in 5♠ doubled with the N/S cards, down 300, all the other results were E/W +620. We know that Hana's Maeda led the ♣A, but didn't switch to spades. Otherwise, our opening-lead information does not help much.

Bd: 7	North		
Dlr: South	♠ J1073		
Vul: Both	♥ 43		
	♦ Q763		
	♣ J102		
	West		East
	♠ AK		♠ Q6542
	♥ KQJ2		♥ 10987
	♦ J84		♦ 92
	♣ 9853		♣ A6
		South	
		♠ 98	
		♥ A65	
		♦ AK105	
		♣ KQ74	

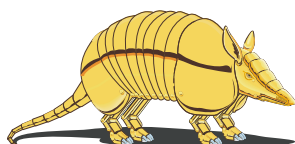
The popular auction on this one was 1NT by South, passed out, making one or two. At two tables, however, East bravely protected with a bid that showed both majors. Cezary Balicki reacted to that by bidding 4♥, which had to go one down. Rita Shugart settled for 2♥ and won 5 IMPs for +110. If you believe it's okay to bid with the East hand and also with real ones, perhaps there is a middle ground.



Bd: 8		North	
Dir: West		♠ KQ98	
Vul: None		♥ 842	
		♦ 752	
		♣ A98	
West		East	
♠ J7		♠ 43	
♥ 953		♥ AQJ1076	
♦ KJ10963		♦ AQ	
♣ 104		♣ K65	
		South	
		♠ A10652	
		♥ K	
		♦ 84	
		♣ QJ732	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣(1)	2♠	4♥	All Pass
(1) Diamonds			

At both tables, South led the ♣Q over to the ace, and North switched to the ♠K. Gawrys continued with the ♠Q and switched to a trump. Furuta finessed for -50. Nakamura, who had contented himself with a spectacularly heavy raise to 2♠, returned the ♠8 at trick three. Shimizu won and exited with...the ♣2! Bizon won with the ten, wondered why he was being given certain access to dummy, and led a trump to...the ace, for +420. 10 IMPs to Poland, trailing now by 2, 10-12.

Andrew Robson and Sei Nagasaka also dropped the ♥K. Gromov/Dubinina and Jansma/Verhees bought the contract in 4♠, which seems like a good idea looking at their cards: it might be making.

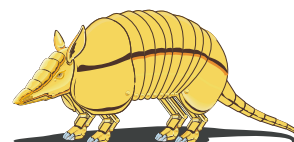


Bd: 9		North	
Dir: North		♠ 76	
Vul: E/W		♥ AJ	
		♦ 987653	
		♣ J108	
West		East	
♠ Q52		♠ A108	
♥ 74		♥ KQ6	
♦ AQJ4		♦ K102	
♣ AK65		♣ Q732	
		South	
		♠ KJ943	
		♥ 1098532	
		♦ ---	
		♣ 94	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
	Pass	1♣	2♦(1)
2♠(2)	4♥	Dbl	Pass
Pass	5♦	Dbl	
(1) ♥+♠; (2) Club support, limit-plus			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	Pass	1♣(1)	2♣(2)
2♥(3)	Pass	3NT	All Pass
(1) 11-21, nat. or bal.; (2) ♥+♠; (2) Values, no ♥ stopper			

Bizon took 12 tricks on a spade lead, +690, and lost only 14 IMPs for this effort.

Kowalski took four tricks in 5♦ doubled, for -1700. What happened? Apparently Gawrys saw Kowalski's 2♦ bidding card as 1♦ and therefore natural. His 4♥ bid was a combination theft/lead gambit on the way to 5♦. As Kowalski did not consider himself involved, he left it to Gawrys to extricate himself. At least they weren't vulnerable.

Japan led now by 16 IMPs, 26-10.



Bd: 13		North	
Dir: North		♠ KQJ62	
Vul: Both		♥ 532	
		♦ A53	
		♣ 83	
West		East	
♠ 3		♠ A10874	
♥ 9864		♥ AK7	
♦ J942		♦ K108	
♣ Q1052		♣ 76	
		South	
		♠ 95	
		♥ QJ10	
		♦ Q76	
		♣ AKJ94	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Two relatively quiet results, but with both contracts going one down, Poland gained 5 IMPs.

Bd: 15		North	
Dir: South		♠ 8	
Vul: N/S		♥ K109	
		♦ 986	
		♣ AQJ974	
West		East	
♠ Q92		♠ J765	
♥ Q8542		♥ J73	
♦ AKQ102		♦ 54	
♣ ---		♣ 10863	
		South	
		♠ AK1043	
		♥ A6	
		♦ J73	
		♣ K52	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
			1NT
2♣(1)	Dbl	2♦(2)	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Dbl	5♣	All Pass	
(1) Puppet to 2♦: various hand types			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
			1NT
Dbl(1)	2NT(2)	Pass	3♣
3♦	3NT	All Pass	
(1) 5M and an unspecified second suit; (2) Clubs			

I don't think Chen should have doubled 3NT, but after he did, he had to sweat it out waiting for Furuta to find the vital diamond lead against the "escape" 5♣. However, as many of the hand types for his multi-colored 2♣ overcall included one of the minors, there was a good chance that Furuta would lead diamonds, and he did. The big news from Chen's perspective was that both his opponents had three of those little creatures: -100.

Kwiecien, who values his sleep, did not double 3NT and cashed out his suit to tie the board.

Bd: 16		North	
Dir: West		♠ K852	
Vul: E/W		♥ 96	
		♦ QJ4	
		♣ Q643	
West		East	
♠ Q10764		♠ J93	
♥ Q87		♥ AJ	
♦ 1086		♦ K9752	
♣ 75		♣ J92	
		South	
		♠ A	
		♥ K105432	
		♦ A3	
		♣ AK108	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣(1)
Pass	1♠(2)	Pass	2♥(3)
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
(1) Polish, F1; (2) 4+♠, 8+ HCP; (3) Strong, nat., unrelated to clubs			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
All Pass			

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
2♥	3♦	3♥	3NT
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♦
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
2♥	2NT(1)	3♥	4♦
4♥	5♦	Dbf	All Pass
(1) Competitive 3♣ or 3♦ bid			

My sympathies are with Shimizu. He has a complex hand that needs room to develop, and jump-shifting to 3♣ will often rob him of a practical third call. I'm a firm believer that Nakamura should give preference to 2♥, even with those soft values, but I'm prepared to concede that most would follow his route. 2♣ made five. As did 4♥. Plus 150 for Shimizu, +450 for Kowalsi. 7 IMPs to Poland, 22-26.

As both Wests were willing to bid 4♥, it would seem that their partners are advised not to raise them with two-card support, but even more normal three-card support won't be enough to make 4♥ a comfortable contract. And here, where East was going to deliver a fourth trump, the price would have been at least 300. However, unsound though 4♥ may have been, it succeeded in pushing N/S to 5♦ at both tables, so the poker element must be considered in evaluating its effectiveness. 5♦ was down two at both tables, so Bizon's double netted an extra 200 points and 5 IMPs, giving Poland the lead, 27-26.

Bd: 17	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 4		
Vul: None	♥ 82		
	♦ KQJ974		
	♣ AK98		
		East	
West		♠ 1095	
♠ AK63		♥ J765	
♥ KQ1043		♦ A32	
♦ ---		♣ Q52	
♣ 7643			
	South		
	♠ QJ872		
	♥ A9		
	♦ 10865		
	♣ J10		

Bd: 18	North		
Dlr: East	♠ ---		
Vul: N/S	♥ AQ862		
	♦ K985		
	♣ Q643		
		East	
West		♠ AKJ53	
♠ 1092		♥ J43	
♥ 95		♦ J643	
♦ A72		♣ 10	
♣ AKJ75			
	South		
	♠ Q8764		
	♥ K107		
	♦ Q10		
	♣ 982		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Dbl	Pass	2♥
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(1)	1♥	Dbl(2)	2♦(3)
Dbl(4)	2♥	2♠	All Pass

(1) 11-21, nat. or bal.; (2) 4+♠; (3) Constructive heart raise; (4) Three-card spade support

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Kowalski</i>
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kwiecien</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Bizon</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
2♠(1)	3♥	4♠	4NT(2)
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♥
Dbl	All Pass		

(1) 5+♠/5+ other, 5-10 HCP; (2) Takeout, with conversion to hearts a slam try

Even after Bizon's initial pass, it was still possible that his side might get too high, but when Nakamura did not compete to 3♥, 2♠ bought the contract. The defense started with two rounds of hearts, and a switch to the ♦Q, ace, nine, four. The ♠10 was passed to the queen, and Shimizu continued diamonds to get his ruff, Bizon finessing against the ♦8. That was all for the defense, +110.

Furuta's light 1♠ opening didn't fare as well as Bizon's initial pass, landing him in 4♠. Mercifully, there was no double, but Furuta went three down by taking the club finesse, -150. That was 6 IMPs to Poland, ahead 33-26.

Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 93		
Vul: Both	♥ KJ10542		
	♦ Q985		
	♣ K		
		West	East
		♠ KQ10872	♠ AJ4
		♥ 96	♥ Q8
		♦ ---	♦ K762
		♣ QJ754	♣ A862
			South
			♠ 65
			♥ A73
			♦ AJ1043
			♣ 1093

Gawrys led the ♣K against Chen's 4♠, and declarer soon claimed six, getting a heart ruff in dummy when trumps went two-two, +680.

Nakamura took a chance and stepped in with 3♥ over Kwiecien's two-suited 2♠. That escalated the auction and gave Kwiecien a chance to make a Lightner double when his opponents reached 5♥. Bizon read the situation accurately and led the ♦7, suit preference. Nakamura did not play dummy's ace, so escaped for three down (two spades, a club, and two diamond ruffs), -800. Those 3 IMPs gave Poland a 9-IMP lead at the half, 36-27.

In the other matches, The Netherlands led Russia/Poland by 16 IMPs, 49-33, Israel was 20 IMPs ahead of USA/Egypt, 40-20, and Hana was 26 IMPs ahead of USA, 38-12.



"Eat your heart out, Greside."

The Quarterfinals, Bds 21-40: Russia/Poland versus The Netherlands

The Netherlands (Jan Jansma, Louk Verhees, Bas Drijver, Maarten Schollaardt) led Russia/Poland (Andrei Gromov, Alexander Dubinin, Adam Zmudzinski, Cezary Balicki) by 16 (49-33) as the second half got underway. IMPs began to fly immediately.

cashed the ace of trumps and ruffed a club in dummy as Verhees over-ruffed and cashed his last high trump. Eight tricks; +110.

In the Closed Room, the auction was not as efficient and Balicki had to venture to the three level to rebid diamonds. If Drijver's double was pure penalty. Schollaardt really ought to have passed, but he seems to have been expecting a maximum 2♥ bid with only four hearts and more general defensive strength. Balicki led the ♥K, and continued when Drijver ducked. He flew with the ace when Drijver led a club towards dummy and played another heart, holding Drijver to eight tricks, -50; 4 IMPs to R/P, reducing the lead to 12 IMPs at 49-37.

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ A107		
Vul: None	♥ J853		
	♦ K10743		
	♣ 7		
	West		East
	♠ K9852		♠ J4
	♥ 62		♥ KQ4
	♦ 6		♦ QJ9852
	♣ KJ942		♣ A5
		South	
		♠ Q63	
		♥ A1097	
		♦ A	
		♣ Q10863	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
	Pass	1♦	Dbl
1♥(1)	Dbl	2♦	2♥
All Pass			
(1) Spades			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♦	Dbl
1♠	2♥	3♦	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

The auction in the Open Room allowed Gromov to double to show his hearts and Verhees to rebid diamonds at the two level. When Dubinin competed to 2♥ no one had anything more to say. Jansma led the ♦6 to Dubinin's ace, and the ♣3 went to the four, seven and ace. Dubinin pitched a spade from hand on Verhees' ♦5 return, Jansma ruffing, and a spade from dummy on Jansma's ♣2, winning cheaply in hand. He

Bd: 3	North		
Dlr: South	♠ K1062		
Vul: E/W	♥ 43		
	♦ J10		
	♣ AKJ104		
	West		East
	♠ AQ9		♠ J843
	♥ 10752		♥ KQJ9
	♦ Q9532		♦ K6
	♣ 2		♣ Q83
		South	
		♠ 75	
		♥ A86	
		♦ A874	
		♣ 9765	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
			Pass
Pass	2♣	Dbl	2NT
3♣	Dbl	3♥	3NT
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass



"So, come here often?"

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Zmudzinski	Drijver	Balicki	Schollaardt
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Dbf	Pass
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♦
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
Mori	Maeda	Koneru	Hayashi
2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣(3)	Pass
3♦(4)	Pass	3NT	All Pass
(1) Weak 2♥ or strong, bal.; (2) Pass or correct; (3) Puppet Stayman; (4) Not four hearts, perhaps four spades			

Without the double, Dubinin's 2NT would have been artificial: a weak club raise, a limited hand with long diamonds, or limit-plus with at least five-five in the majors. But perhaps the meaning changes in competition and/or by a passed hand. It seems certain that he was seduced into bidding 3NT by Gromov's double of 3♣, but with two aces for defense, 5♣ seems ill-advised, although taking some action over 4♥ seems clear. A double would have netted N/S at least 200 (more likely 500); instead N/S conceded -300 in 5♣ doubled. The reader can judge who gets the greater portion of the blame. In the Closed Room 3♣ resulted in the obvious +110; 9 IMPs back to The Netherlands, leading 58-37.

Takashi Maeda led...a spade. Larry Mori did not guess the ♦Q and eventually finished three down, -300, which was a 14-imp swing to Hana, giving them the lead in the match.

"Why did you lead a spade, Maeda-san?"

"Oh, because I thought dummy would have four hearts...do you think I should have asked about the bidding? ..." Lost in Translation.

Bd: 4	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 9543		
Vul: Both	♥ AJ8642		
	♦ 7		
	♣ A7		
West		East	
♠ AK6		♠ 108	
♥ KQ5		♥ 1097	
♦ AJ643		♦ K1082	
♣ K4		♣ QJ93	
	South		
	♠ QJ72		
	♥ 3		
	♦ Q95		
	♣ 108652		

Bd: 5	North		
Dlr: North	♠ KJ1085		
Vul: N/S	♥ K3		
	♦ 73		
	♣ K853		
West		East	
♠ 9		♠ AQ763	
♥ Q98752		♥ J4	
♦ 85		♦ QJ10	
♣ QJ94		♣ A62	
	South		
	♠ 42		
	♥ A106		
	♦ AK9642		
	♣ 107		

This was everyone's 3NT, E/W, making at least nine tricks on a heart lead. There was one exception, however...

Against Drijver's 3NT, Balicki led a spade, giving declarer an eighth winner. When Drijver won and ducked a diamond, Zmudzinski contributed the eight, hoping it could be read as suit preference for hearts—not that it was clear he wanted a heart switch more than a club switch. Balicki duly switched to hearts, choosing the four. Drijver played low from dummy, took the eight with the king, and ran diamonds, reducing to the following ending:

	North	
	♠ KJ	
	♥ 3	
	♦ ---	
	♣ K8	
West		East
♠ ---		♠ AQ
♥ Q97		♥ J
♦ ---		♦ ---
♣ QJ		♣ A6
	South	
	♠ 2	
	♥ A10	
	♦ ---	
	♣ 107	

Bd: 6	North		
Dlr: East	♠ KQ5		
Vul: E/W	♥ Q1087		
	♦ K2		
	♣ K962		
West		East	
♠ J93		♠ 10864	
♥ AK		♥ 432	
♦ 8754		♦ Q93	
♣ Q1084		♣ AJ3	
	South		
	♠ A72		
	♥ J965		
	♦ AJ106		
	♣ 75		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥
		All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT(1)
Pass	3♥	Pass	2♥
All Pass		Pass	4♥
(1) 10-12			

Cashing the ♥A and exiting in spades would have brought home the contract, but Driver led a club to the queen, king, and ace, and Balicki could exit with the ♥J for one down. Well done by the defense after after an unfortunate start.

At the other table, Verhees found the promising lead of the ♣2 against Gromov's 3NT, seven, nine, king. When Gromov ducked a diamond, Jansma also contributed the eight, but in this case, it was a Smith Signal, encouraging a club continuation. Verhees cashed the ♣A and Jansma huddled before producing the ♣4. At this point the Bridge Base Online commentators engaged in a full-blooded debate on the proprieties of East continuing clubs. Perhaps with his actual holding, West should have played the ♣J on the first round. In any case, Verhees switched to the ♥J, and Gromov, with no ninth trick, cashed only some of his diamonds before playing a spade and so lost his ♥A to go two down. 3 IMPs to the Netherlands, 61-38.

With the ♣A wrong, both contracts yielded nine tricks, +140 for Dubinin and -50 for Schollaardt. 5 IMPs to R/P, 43-61.



"From here I can see every mistake they make. Who do you think gives those editors all that inside info?"



"It really is on my convention card. It just so happens this isn't my card."

Bd: 7	North	
Dlr: South	♠ QJ86	
Vul: Both	♥ 83	
	♦ AKQ1098	
	♣ 7	
West		East
♠ 104		♠ AK9
♥ J1062		♥ AK975
♦ 754		♦ J63
♣ AKJ5		♣ 106
	South	
	♠ 7532	
	♥ Q4	
	♦ 2	
	♣ Q98432	

Both E/W pairs reached 4♥, a contract that can be defeated legitimately on four rounds of diamonds, promoting the ♥Q. In the Closed Room, Drijver won the lead of the ♦2 with the ace and switched to a club, an imaginative effort. Balicki won cheaply, played ♥A, ♠A, ♠K, spade ruff, ♥J, passing it. With South marked with a singleton diamond on the bidding (North had bid diamonds twice voluntarily) and opening lead, this was a safety play. Balicki could enjoy his club discard now for +620.

We're disappointed to report that we have no bidding and play records from the Open Room, due to an Internet problem, but as the contract went one down at the other table, we're going to credit Gromov/Dubin in with the winning defense rather than attribute a misguess in trumps to Verhees -100.

What should South discard on the second and third diamonds to ensure getting a fourth round from North? A discouraging spade is easy. Then perhaps the spectacular ♣Q. But maybe the main reason to play a fourth diamond is that South, with only small trumps, should ruff the *third* diamond to prevent North from giving a potentially unpleasant ruff and discard.

12 IMPs to R/P, 55-61.

Bd: 9	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 62		
Vul: E/W	♥ 10873		
	♦ 42		
	♣ Q9653		
West		East	
♠ K75		♠ 843	
♥ J4		♥ AK62	
♦ Q1087653		♦ AK	
♣ 8		♣ AK104	
	South		
	♠ AQJ109		
	♥ Q95		
	♦ J9		
	♣ J72		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubin in</i>
	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠(1)	Pass	3NT	All Pass
(1) Puppet to 3NT			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	2♥(1)	Dbl	2♠
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass
(1) 4/5♥, 0-5(6) HCP			

I confess that I'm not favorably disposed towards purely destructive openings like Drijver's 2♥, so I consider it poetic justice that the creature achieved a particularly poor result. 6♦ could not be beaten and although it's not absolutely clear that Balicki/Zmudzinski knew exactly what they were doing at every turn, their +1370 was well-deserved. I can't bring myself to shed a tear for my Dutch friends this time. Meanwhile, Verhees' 3NT would have made in comfort had South not led a spade, but, of course, Dubin in did lead a spade—the sneaky nine. Verhees ducked, but covered the continuation of the ♠10. Unfortunately, diamonds were blocked, and dummy's ♥J entry came too late to avoid defeat in 3NT. One down, -100, and 16 IMPs to R/P.

The brothers Yadlin were the only other E/W pair

to reach 6♦, but in USA vs Hana, the E/W pairs (Mori/Koneru and Shimizu/Kobayashi) achieved a most undignified near-push by stopping “safely” in 3♦. Everyone else was going down in 3NT.

Bd: 11	North		
Dlr: South	♠ A2		
Vul: None	♥ AK107		
	♦ J3		
	♣ AKJ97		
	West	East	
	♠ QJ106	♠ K4	
	♥ 5	♥ 8432	
	♦ A7654	♦ KQ9	
	♣ 1086	♣ Q543	
	South		
	♠ 98753		
	♥ QJ96		
	♦ 1082		
	♣ 2		

At all eight tables, North declared 4♥, which looks impregnable at first glance. However, four of eight declarers went down, at least two of them on trump leads, which indicates that they did not win cheaply and establish clubs.

Gromov made it on a trump lead by playing ace-king and a club ruff, spade to the ace, club ruff, trump to hand to draw trumps and claim, +420.

Drijver did not fare as well after the same lead. After winning with the ♥7, he tried the ♠2. Balicki went in with the ♠K to cash two diamonds before playing a second trump. To get home from here, Drijver needed to play ace-king-jack of clubs (or the like), but he had no obvious reason to play that way. He ruffed a low club on the third round, and could only come to nine tricks, -50.

Without a trump lead, declarer can play ace-king of clubs, ace and another spade, and wait for the trump shift that would allow him to score a small trump, then cross-ruff with high trumps. With no trump shift, the defenders will have to let him set up one hand or the other with little risk.

Bd: 13	North		
Dlr: North	♠ Q86		
Vul: Both	♥ A1063		
	♦ 643		
	♣ 865		
	West	East	
	♠ K973	♠ A42	
	♥ 74	♥ QJ98	
	♦ KJ975	♦ Q82	
	♣ A10	♣ K94	
	South		
	♠ J105		
	♥ K52		
	♦ A10		
	♣ QJ732		

Only half the E/W pairs bid 3NT, and those that did got a low club lead from South to allow an early ninth trick. Remarkably, in each match both pairs favored the same approach, either bidding game or avoiding it, so there were no swings!

Bd: 14	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J984		
Vul: None	♥ 85		
	♦ J72		
	♣ J984		
	West	East	
	♠ KQ63	♠ 102	
	♥ 9	♥ AKJ76	
	♦ 8654	♦ AK1093	
	♣ AQ75	♣ 6	
	South		
	♠ A75		
	♥ Q10432		
	♦ Q		
	♣ K1032		
	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass

3NT made four on a club lead: +430.

In 6♦, Balicki got the ♠A lead and a low club switch. He could hardly finesse, but on the actual layout, he had to make his slam. ♣A, ♦A, ♥A, heart ruff, diamond to the ten, heart. Had this ruff passed off cleanly, Balicki would have been +920, but Drijver over-ruffed for the setting trick, -50. 10 IMPs to The Netherlands, 71-83.

Bd: 17	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 1042		
Vul: None	♥ 1072		
	♦ A108752		
	♣ 4		
	West		East
	♠ 95		♠ AJ876
	♥ Q8653		♥ K
	♦ ---		♦ KQ
	♣ AKJ1052		♣ Q9763
		South	
		♠ KQ3	
		♥ AJ94	
		♦ J9643	
		♣ 8	
	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	3♦	3♠	5♦
6♣	All Pass		
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	2♣(1)	2♠	2NT
3♣	Pass	5♣	5♦
6♣	All Pass		
(1) Weak 2♦, or strong, artificial			

Gromov cleverly led a heart and Jansma could

not avoid a spade loser. One down, -50.

Drijver led the ♦A against 6♣, allowing the slam to make. Zmudzinski had a discard on the ♦K and could establish hearts for +920. 14 IMPs to R/P, 97-71.

Bd: 19	North		
Dlr: South	♠ AQ84		
Vul: E/W	♥ 985		
	♦ 984		
	♣ QJ10		
	West		East
	♠ KJ9763		♠ 102
	♥ A103		♥ QJ642
	♦ AJ6		♦ KQ10
	♣ K		♣ 872
		South	
		♠ 5	
		♥ K7	
		♦ 7532	
		♣ A96543	
	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	All Pass		
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
			3♣
3♠	5♣	Dbl	All Pass

Jansma's 2♠ made four, +170: 4♠ is a pretty good contract.

Schollaardt's 5♣ doubled was treated to the lead of the ♥A, but declarer lost to the ♣K, and could not avoid three diamond losers, for three down, -500. I don't much care for South's 3♣ opening, but I'm fussy about three-bids. If you're going to bid 5♣ with hands like Drijver's, I can't help but wonder whether Drijver was expecting something like the hand his partner actually held.

R/P won the match 105-71, Japan Open beat Poland 74-50, Israel skated past USA/Egypt 135-43., and Japan Hana pipped USA 67-54.

The Semifinals, Bds 1-20: Japan-Open versus Israel

Japan's Open Team for 2005 (Yasuhiro Shimizu, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta, Makoto Kono), fresh from their 74-50 upset victory over Poland, was riding high when they met Israel (Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Campanile), who had rudely shown USA/Egypt the door by an astounding 135 to 43 in their quarterfinal match. At stake, a berth in the 2005 NEC Cup final.

It didn't take long for the IMPs to run freely...

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ Q62		
Vul: None	♥ AKJ		
	♦ K74		
	♣ Q1084		
	West		East
	♠ 1075		♠ J4
	♥ 105		♥ Q62
	♦ Q9865		♦ AJ32
	♣ J62		♣ AK95
		South	
		♠ AK983	
		♥ 98743	
		♦ 10	
		♣ 73	
	Open Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥(1)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
(1) 5+♥/5+♠, invitational			
	Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
	1NT	Dbl(1)	2NT(2)
Pass	3♣(3)	Pass	3♥(4)
Pass	3NT(5)	All Pass	
(1) Many hand types, ostensibly a puppet to 2♣; (2) Undiscussed, but "surely a two-suiter"; (3) "I don't know what 2NT means, so I'll make the cheapest bid and see what happens"; (4) "Surely, he'll know if I have majors"; (5) "Better my hand should be declarer"			

Against 4♥, the lead of the ♦6 went to the king and ace, Shimizu ruffing the diamond return to play a heart to the ace, a spade to the king, and second heart to the jack and queen. Shimizu ruffed the ♦J return, played a spade to the queen, then drew trumps and conceded two clubs for down one, -50.

Against the arcane Closed Room 3NT, Furuta led the ♣A, three, six, four, then continued with the ♣5 to the jack and queen. Barel cashed the ♥A, crossed to the ♠A, and tried the heart finesse. Furuta won the queen and hopefully tried the ♣K. When that failed to bring down the ten, he wisely cashed the ♦A, holding declarer to nine tricks. Plus 400, 10 IMPs to Israel.

In the other semifinal between Japan Hana and Russia/Poland, Kobayashi, who was defending 4♥ in the Open Room, cashed his three minor-suit winners at tricks one, two and three, and then sat back and waited for his trump trick; -50. In the Closed Room, Maeda, defending 4♠, adopted the same approach but this allowed declarer, Adam Zmudzinski, to score ten tricks via five spades, two hearts, two clubs, and a diamond for +420. 10 IMPs also to R/P.

Bd: 2	North		
Dlr: East	♠ 43		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q10874		
	♦ J754		
	♣ 93		
	West		East
	♠ A852		♠ J97
	♥ A5		♥ J3
	♦ AK102		♦ 9863
	♣ A74		♣ Q1052
		South	
		♠ KQ106	
		♥ K962	
		♦ Q	
		♣ KJ86	
	Open Room/Closed Room		
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
		Pass	1♣
Dbl	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

“Holy mirrors, Batman!” Both rooms *in both matches* produced exactly the same auction, and in both matches the declarer in the Open Room made his contract while the declarer in the Closed Room went down one. How did two declarers make 1NT you ask? Well, we’d like to tell you but the play records are frustratingly incomplete. What we know for sure is that both Norths obtained the lead with a diamond and cashed their four remaining hearts. The most likely scenario (or an equivalent) is that at trick ten, South had correctly pitched down to the ♣KJ and ♠KQ. If North now exits with the right suit (which depends on declarer’s black-suit holdings—he’ll likely keep Ax in each), say a club, South will take three of the last four tricks. But if North errs and exits with the wrong suit, say a spade, declarer wins and throws South back in with a spade to lead away from his ♣KJ. The defense takes four hearts, one diamond and one spade while declarer takes three diamonds, two major-suit aces and two clubs. Both leaders gained another 4 IMPs: Israel ahead of Japan-Open 10-0; R/P ahead of Japan-Hana 10-0.

you want to be any higher than a partscore. Indeed, in our featured match, both Wests played in 2♠, Doron Yadlin making eight tricks for +110 and Dawei Chen making only seven for –100. Doron won the ♥Q lead and played a spade to the ten and jack. Shimizu switched to a low diamond, and when Doron’s king held, he played a second spade to the eight and ace, eventually losing just two spades, two ruffs and the ♦A. Barel led the ♦9 to Campanile’s ace and she switched to the ♥9—one singleton nine deserves another! Chen won the ace and played a spade to the ten and jack. Now came diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff, and Chen was down one; 5 IMPs to Israel, ahead 19-0.

In the other match, both E/W pairs surprisingly reached the excellent (on the lie of the opposing cards) contract of 3NT and made it, R/P with an overtrick. One IMP to R/P, ahead 15-0.

Bd: 4	North		
Dlr: West	♠ Q65		
Vul: Both	♥ QJ6532		
	♦ 9		
	♣ Q65		
West		East	
♠ 73		♠ K10982	
♥ AK8		♥ 1074	
♦ KQ103		♦ J86	
♣ A972		♣ K10	
	South		
	♠ AJ4		
	♥ 9		
	♦ A7542		
	♣ J843		
Open Room/Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥(1)	Pass
2♠	All Pass		
(1) Spades			

Looking at just the E/W hands it’s not clear that

Bd: 5	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 10863		
Vul: N/S	♥ AKJ		
	♦ Q75		
	♣ 1054		
West		East	
♠ K72		♠ AJ	
♥ 87542		♥ 93	
♦ 86		♦ KJ1092	
♣ K87		♣ QJ92	
	South		
	♠ Q954		
	♥ Q106		
	♦ A43		
	♣ A63		
Open Room/Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

Once again, the auctions were duplicated in the Open and Closed Rooms. Doron won the spade lead in hand, played a club to the queen and ace, won the spade return, came to the ♣K, ruffed a spade, and exited with a heart to

Nakamura's jack. Doron won the club return and played the thirteenth club, pitching a diamond when South ruffed with the ♥10 and eventually scored two more ruffs. But that was all; down one, -50. Barel led the ♥K against Chen to get a look art dummy, then switched to the ♣5, low, low, eight. Chen led back a second heart, Campanile overtaking Barel's jack with the queen to cash the ♣A, Chen unblocking the king and then leading a spade to dummy's jack. Chen cashed the ♠A, led a diamond to Barel's queen, won the spade return, played another heart, and claimed his contract when the defenders failed to cash their second diamond; +110. Four IMPs to Japan-Open, trailing 19-4.

In the other match, both Easts played two of a minor, Gromov 2♣, Maeda 2♦. Both made exactly eight tricks for offsetting +90's. Still 15-0, R/P.

2♠ involved some interesting play after two rounds of hearts. Shimuzo won the ♥K and played the ♥J, but Israel ruffed and led the ♠K. Doron won the next spade and exited with his remaining spade. Shimizu won in dummy and led a club, playing the king when East ducked. Now he could play diamonds from the top and so lost two of those, two trumps, and the ♥A for +110. Had Israel gone up with the ♣A to continue clubs, The ♣Q would have ruffed out tripleton, and a diamond towards the king would have brought home the contract.

Campanile hated her hand enough to double for takeout rather than overcall 1NT, but when her opponents wriggled into 3♣, she sensed that they might be in trouble and doubled for penalty. She led the ♠A (lovely hand from which to lead) and was not delighted to see dummy's powerful clubs. She continued spades, then followed low on declarer's low diamond lead towards dummy. Barel took the ten with the queen and returned his trump to the king. A second club was won in dummy with the nine, and Furuta threw the ♥Q on the ♠Q, crossed to the ♥A, then played ♦A, diamond ruff, felling the king. Campanile still had to get a trick with the ♣J, but Furuta chalked up +670 for a 13-IMP gain, 17-19.

Bd: 6	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J10973		
Vul: E/W	♥ 843		
	♦ Q842		
	♣ 7		
	West		East
	♠ Q85		♠ K2
	♥ 109765		♥ AQ
	♦ 106		♦ AJ75
	♣ Q92		♣ A10543
		South	
		♠ A64	
		♥ KJ2	
		♦ K93	
		♣ KJ86	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
		1♣	1NT
Pass	2♥(1)	Pass	2♠
All Pass			
(1) Spades			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
		1♣	Dbl
Pass	1♠	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Dbl
All Pass			

Bd: 10	North		
Dlr: East	♠ AJ8		
Vul: Both	♥ A3		
	♦ A1096		
	♣ KQ87		
	West		East
	♠ 9764		♠ KQ10
	♥ 9862		♥ KQJ5
	♦ KQ7		♦ J84
	♣ 103		♣ 965
		South	
		♠ 532	
		♥ 1074	
		♦ 532	
		♣ AJ42	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	All Pass	

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	3NT	Dbl	2♣
Pass		All Pass	

It's not easy to stop in 1NT or 2♣ if South responds to 1♣, and Barel/Campanile were unable to do so (although 2NT would have been plenty with Barel's balanced hand). 3NT was two down, -200, on a heart lead, while Nakamura's 1♣ produced an overtrick, +90. 7 IMPs to Japan-Open, 24-21.

Bd: 11	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 42		
Vul: None	♥ J43		
	♦ QJ8		
	♣ A9863		
		West	East
		♠ J6	♠ Q1095
		♥ Q98	♥ K1052
		♦ AK10732	♦ 654
		♣ 75	♣ J10
			South
			♠ AK873
			♥ A76
			♦ 9
			♣ KQ42
		Open Room	
		West	North
		<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>
		2♦	Pass
		Pass	2♠
		Pass	All Pass
		Closed Room	
		West	North
		<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		2♦	Pass
		Pass	3♦
		Pass	All Pass

Nakamura never showed any sign of life, while Barel was willing to compete with an off-center negative double, a strategy that worked well this time, the partnership coasting into 3NT for +400. Shimizu took eight tricks in 2♠ for +110. That

was 7 IMPs back to Israel, 28-24.

Bd: 13	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 542		
Vul: Both	♥ 976		
	♦ 1076		
	♣ J982		
		West	East
		♠ A10763	♠ KQJ98
		♥ 5	♥ AJ10
		♦ Q985	♦ J42
		♣ 654	♣ K10
			South
			♠ ---
			♥ KQ8432
			♦ AK3
			♣ AQ73
		Open Room	
		West	North
		<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>
		2♠	Pass
		4♠	3♠
			Pass
		Closed Room	
		West	North
		<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>
		2♥(1)	Pass
		4♠	3♠
		All Pass	Pass
		(1) Spades	Dbl

With East declaring 4♠, doubled or otherwise, the contract can't be legitimately beaten, as Campanile soon discovered. She led three rounds of diamonds, but declarer drew trumps, discarded a club on the ♦Q, lost a club trick and claimed, +790.

Even with West declaring, there's no reason for North to lead a club, and in fact, Nakamura led a routine heart. Doron started diamonds by leading low to the jack, and Shimizu spared him a nasty guess by continuing with the ♦A and another diamond. As North still had trumps remaining, Doron could not afford to finesse, and he was soon chalking up +620. 5 IMPs to Japan-Open, 29-28.

This was a spectacular deal in R/P vs Japan Hana...

This was everyone's 3NT, N/S, with plenty of overtricks. Well, not quite everyone: the irrepressible Balicki/Zmudzinski cruised into 6NT on an auction too artificial to include here or on their convention card. Just as well, because someone impressionable might see it and get the wrong idea. 6NT, you will note, is quite cold, with clubs coming in, so R/P gained another 11 IMPs and led Japan-Hana 56-1.

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Kobayashi</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	Pass	1♠	2♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	5♥	Dbl	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hayashi</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Maeda</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
	Pass	1NT	Dbl
2♥(1)	Pass	2♠	3♥
3♠	Pass	4♠	Dbl
All Pass			
(1) Spades			

Kobayashi's brave 5♥ would show a profit if Maeda could make 4♠, as both declarers did in Israel vs Japan Open, as Seya Shimizu went only two down, -500.

But that was not to be. Zmudzinski led the ♦A and switched to the ♥K when the seven and four appeared on the first trick. Maeda drew trumps and led a diamond, six, jack, king. Zmudzinski exited with his remaining diamond and Maeda inexplicably finessed (Balicki had followed high low and had not been given a diamond ruff). Balicki won the ♦10 and a club through the king gave the defense five tricks. Two down, -500. That was 14 IMPs to R/P, ahead now 45-1.

Bd: 15	North		
Dlr: South	♠ J1054		
Vul: N/S	♥ AJ5		
	♦ Q54		
	♣ KQ2		
		West	East
		♠ Q	♠ K97
		♥ KQ10864	♥ ---
		♦ K108763	♦ J92
		♣ ---	♣ 10987654
			South
			♠ A8632
			♥ 9732
			♦ A
			♣ AJ3
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
			1♠
2♥	3♥(1)	Pass	4♠
5♦	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) Spade fit, limit-plus			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
			1♠
2♠(1)	3♥(2)	Pass	4♠
5♦	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) ♥+m; (2) Good spade raise			

Bd: 14	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K832		
Vul: None	♥ 643		
	♦ AK97		
	♣ K9		
		West	East
		♠ 105	♠ QJ964
		♥ A1072	♥ 98
		♦ QJ532	♦ 1086
		♣ 105	♣ Q72
			South
			♠ A7
			♥ KQJ5
			♦ 4
			♣ AJ8643

Chen elected to ruff two low hearts in dummy and lost an extra trick to go -300. Doron led the ♥K to ruff out the ace, then ruffed a low heart later, and so got out for one down, -100. 5 IMPs to Israel, 34-29.

Bd: 17		North	
Dir: North		♠ A1083	
Vul: None		♥ QJ65	
		♦ J8	
		♣ 1097	
West		East	
♠ QJ5		♠ K74	
♥ A8		♥ K1093	
♦ AQ1092		♦ 743	
♣ K84		♣ 532	
		South	
		♠ 962	
		♥ 742	
		♦ K65	
		♣ AQJ6	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1NT	2♣(1)	Pass	2♦(2)
Dbl	Rdbl(3)	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass
(1) ♥+♠; (2) Equal length in the majors; (3) Ditto			

Doron took seven tricks in 1NT for +90, but that wasn't nearly good enough on this deal because Furuta pounced on 2♥ like a crouching tiger, and Campanile could scramble only five tricks for -500. Japan Open gained 9 IMPs and took the lead, 38-36. Over dinner last night, Barel explained to us that someone upstairs may not like him. Why is that, Michael? "Because earlier in the match an opponent had used the same 2♣ treatment against us with a considerably worse four-four hand, found a four-card fit and some prime values opposite and scored a delightful +140. See what I mean?" We see.



"Oh, good grief."

Bd: 19		North	
Dir: South		♠ AQ98	
Vul: E/W		♥ AQ9	
		♦ KQ9	
		♣ 654	
West		East	
♠ J104		♠ K632	
♥ K2		♥ J874	
♦ A8762		♦ J43	
♣ KJ9		♣ 32	
		South	
		♠ 75	
		♥ 10653	
		♦ 105	
		♣ AQ1087	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Nakamura</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Shimizu</i>
			Pass
1♦	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
			Pass
1♦	1NT	All Pass	

Despite Israel Yadlin's uninspired heart lead against Nakamura's thin 3NT, Doron had time to switch to diamonds, and with the spade finesse wrong for declarer, 3NT went one down just the same, -100.

In 1NT, Barel made two on a diamond lead for +120. 6 IMPs to Israel, who led at the half by 2 IMPs, 42-40.

In the other Semi-final, Russia/Poland had done virtually everything right, and led Japan Hana by 52 IMPs, 64-12.



"Five, 9, 14, carry the 1..."

Two for Bridge: Sacrificial Lamb

by Eric Kokish and Beverly Kraft

Beverly: "So, Kokes, I'm pleased to see that you brought home more than T-shirts, fans and kimonos from Japan this year. I'm not surprised that today's deal was the highlight of the quarterfinals of the 2004 NEC Cup, a wonderful international tournament sponsored by NEC Corporation and Japan Contract Bridge League. It's such a wild thing that if we didn't know better we'd suspect that our playful friends on the JCBL staff had poured sake into the dealing program."

Dir: South		North	
Vul: E/W		♠ 42	
		♥ 1097643	
		♦ K32	
		♣ 98	
West		East	
♠ KQJ765		♠ A10983	
♥ ---		♥ ---	
♦ Q106		♦ J98754	
♣ QJ63		♣ K5	
		South	
		♠ ---	
		♥ AKQJ852	
		♦ A	
		♣ A10742	
Poland/Russia vs Israel			
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>D. Yadlin</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>I. Yadlin</i>	<i>Petrinin</i>
			1♣(1)
2♠(2)	Pass	4♠	6♥
Pass	Pass	6♠	Dbl
All Pass			
(1) Strong, artificial; (2) Sound overcall (!)			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Campanile</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Barel</i>
			2♣(1)
2♠	Dbl(2)	Rdbl	5♥
Pass	Pass	5♠	6♥
Pass	Pass	6♦	Dbl
All Pass			
(1) Strong, artificial; (2) Very weak			

Canada vs England			
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Graves</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Mittelman</i>
			1♥
1♠	2♥	4♥(1)	6♥
Pass	Pass	6♠	Dbl
All Pass			
(1) Splinter raise to 4♠			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Carruthers</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
			2♣(1)
2♠	Pass	3♠	4♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	5♥
Pass	6♥	6♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) Strong, artificial			

Eric: "In Poland/Russia vs Israel, South took the reasonable view that North would cover one of his two 'Losing Trick Count' losers or that E/W would wrongly sacrifice in spades. Both Norths led the ♣9 against 6♠ doubled; declarer had to lose two diamonds for -500, the par result.

"That not every two-loser hand is a strong two-bid was illustrated by Canada's George Mittelman, a man who has learned through bitter experience that there is nothing more humiliating than opening 2♣ and having to sacrifice against the opponents' vulnerable game or slam. Hence, a gentle 1♥. Allan Graves, a classmate of Mittelman's in the School of Hard Knocks, emulated his partner in trying to slow down the dangerous auction. Hence, a gentle 2♥. Despite the Canadians' best efforts, they too could not talk their opponents out of sacrificing. Graves led a trump and the defenders got their three tricks: -500.

"By now I hope you can trust me to report only the truth. Here's what happened at the fourth table. If the other three results, thoroughly infused with tactics, deception and insurance, were enlightening, consider the sandbagging efforts of Canada's own Joey Silver, who patiently bid to 3♠ and 4♠ before having to

sacrifice in 6♠, much as he expected he'd have to do all along.

“North, Brian Senior appreciated that a heart lead was not only pointless but also potentially dangerous, but couldn't tell whether the defenders' outside trick source was in clubs or diamonds. Hoping to know more after seeing dummy and thinking it might be important to hold the lead, Brian made the expert lead of...the ♠K. Unfortunately for him, he was in no position to lead to trick two. Pablo Lambardi, who had been bestowed with that privilege, was not keen to cash the ♣A at the potential cost of a 300-point undertrick, and saw no pressing need to worry about dummy's diamonds as Senior would normally hold the queen. Accordingly, he decided to exit passively with a heart to force dummy. John Carruthers, the declarer, was pleased to accept that force, but was even more

pleased to discard one of his four clubs. The other three went on dummy's diamonds after trumps were drawn and JC chalked up +1660. I am incapable of making up a story as good as this one, 19 IMPs to Canada.

“Indonesia gained 11 IMPs against USA when the US N/S pair forged on to 7♥ but were unable to convince their Indonesian opponents to sacrifice. And China-Ladies, the long-shot winners of the tournament, gained an unusual IMP by selling out to 4♥ in one room for -480 while doubling 6♠ for +500 in the other.”

Beverly: “You know, my love, that if there were lots of deals like this one I'm glad I stayed at home to hold down the fort. Much less dangerous! Poor Brian really paid an unbelievable price for a well-reasoned opening lead.”

Meet Team USA/Egypt



Rita Shugart

Rita Shugart is the architect of one of the most successful teams on the American bridge scene. She and Andrew Robson won the Reisinger Board-A-Match Teams at the Fall NABC twice running, in 1998 and 1999, something that only three other teams have done in the 81-year history of the event and its predecessor (the Chicago Trophy). Rita first met Robson in 1992 and they began playing together a few years later. They have since compiled an admirable record. Along with their teammates, Norway's Geir Helgemo and Tony Forrester they were one of the most successful squads in North American teams events despite playing only four-handed. Rita believes strongly in playing throughout because there is no chance to let down and because she couldn't bear the thought of enduring a loss from the sidelines. Rita's husband, Alan, is the co-founder of disk-drive power (Seagate Technology). Away from the

bridge table, Rita manages to juggle a spectrum of interests ranging from raising birds and animals to day-trading on the stock and options markets. She is also an accomplished artist. She loves the tournament world and its many interesting characters and travels all over the world (private planes and limousines are her favored means of transportation) to compete in the best events. She lives in Carmel, California, and cherishes her relationships with her daughters, whose lives are also quite interesting. Rita is also the Godmother to Andrew's baby girl, Hannah.



Andrew Robson

Andrew Robson, 40, was born in Chester, England. He studied Psychology at the University of Bristol, gaining a Bachelor of Science degree, and then went on to earn his Post-Graduate Certificate of Education in Mathematics. Away from the table, he enjoys tennis, golf and walking, particularly hill-walking.

(He was injured badly in a hill-walking accident in 2001 when he slipped on some black ice and fell about 50 feet, breaking more bones in his body than most of us can name. Happily he seems to have recovered from his injuries quite nicely.) In August of 1998, Andrew was featured in Harper's and Queens, an English ladies magazine, as one of their four Hot Properties of the Month (London's most-eligible bachelors). Not for long. Andrew is now married, to Lorna, and their first child, a baby girl named Hannah, was born in June 2000. Needless to say, Hannah has a devoted Godmother—Rita. Andrew and his family now live in Wimbledon, on the south side of London, not far from center court. A bridge teacher and professional player, Andrew is widely acknowledged to be Britain's number one player/teacher. He first taught bridge at the London School of Bridge in the Eighties, and over the last decade has managed the Acol Bridge Club and led many teaching seminars around Britain, establishing the reputation as a brilliant teacher. His uniquely practical methods of communication and carefully constructed teaching courses have proved very successful and the standard of play at the Andrew Robson Bridge Club has risen meteorically since its birth in September 1995. In September 1995, barely in his thirties, he decided to set up his own club. So, after tracking down friend and colleague Simon Stocken in the Himalayas, The Andrew Robson Bridge Club started out above the Goat in Boots pub at 333 Fulham Road, Chelsea, London. At first there was one playing area—used five nights each week as a lively night-club—and one teaching room, which became affectionately known as the dungeon. But, huge enthusiasm for the unique atmosphere of 333 from as far a field as Scotland and Paris signaled the need for expansion; Zebedee Stocken, who had partnered his brother Simon as a junior international, came down from Yorkshire to join the team, the club hired a new teaching room down the road and membership shot up. The ARBC rapidly earned its reputation as the best place to learn and play bridge, far removed from the austere and intimidating atmosphere of those bridge clubs you might know of but never dare enter. Three and a half years after its inception, the team has grown to nine and the membership to over 1700, necessitating the move in April 1999 to dedicated premises in Parsons Green, Fulham. Andrew is a WBF World Master. he won

the World Junior Teams in 1989, the European Teams in 1991, the Sunday Times Invitational Pairs and the Statenbank Pairs in 1990. He was second in the Transnational Teams at the 2002 World Bridge Championships in Montreal in 2002, third in the 4th Generali World Masters Individual in Ajaccio in 1998, and second in the 6th Generali World Masters Individual in Verona in 2004. With partner Rita Shugart and teammates Geir Helgemo and Tony Forrester Andrew won the Reisinger Board-A-Match Teams twice, in 1998 and 1999. Andrew has his own Website (<http://www.arobson.co.uk/>) where the viewer can read some of his bridge columns, appearing in the Times Online (located at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,1703,00.html>). Andrew has contributed many bridge articles to bridge and other magazines and is the author of Partnership Bidding (12993) with co-author Ora Segal. Andrew writes for The Country Life Magazine, The Spectator, The Express on Sunday and has recently been appointed as the bridge columnist to The London Times.



Sadek & El Ahmady

Tarek Sadek, 45, and Walid El Ahmady, 44, are from Cairo, Egypt, own a software company together and have been partners for 20 years. Each is married with two children: Tarek has two girls, Walid two boys. Tarek and Walid have what is currently considered one of the Middle East's most formidable bridge partnerships. This past summer at the New York City Summer NABC Sadek and El Ahmady won the Blue Ribbon Pairs, their first North American Championship together. (El Ahmady also won the six-session Von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs at that same tournament playing with Zia Mahmood.) They also finished second in the prestigious Cavendish Invitational Pairs twice running—in 2002 and 2003. "The fact that we are bridge partners and business partners does not cause friction," said Sadek. "We are friends."

Helgemo's Famous Hand

by Matthew Granovetter (bridgetoday.com)

Dir: West		North (Kaplan)	
Vul: Both		♠ 973	
		♥ 9762	
		♦ K1086	
		♣ 92	
West		East	
♠ 84		♠ QJ105	
♥ KQJ84		♥ A1053	
♦ 5		♦ 3	
♣ K10753		♣ QJ64	
		South (Helgemo)	
		♠ AK62	
		♥ ---	
		♦ AQJ9742	
		♣ A8	
West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	4♥	6♦
All Pass			

The award-winning play by Helgemo was written up by his partner on that occasion, Edgar Kaplan of New York. It occurred at an American Spring Nationals. Here's what Kaplan wrote:

"My team had a rather short run in the Vanderbilt (the Spring Nationals knock-out team event), but there was a consolation prize at the finish. With a somewhat different team, Norman Kay and I won the concluding Open Swiss Teams. Our teammates were Bart Bramley, Brian Glubok, Geir Helgemo and Walter Schafer.

"Helgemo is the young Norwegian who has been producing superb results for the last five years. The reason for this became clear when I played a match with him and he produced a brilliant dummy-play on this deal, which hinged on an eight-spot.

"When an opposing weak two-bid is raised to game, the fourth player holding a good hand must guess well. Helgemo took a reasonable shot at ♦6.

"He ruffed the opening heart lead, happy to have escaped a club lead. The ♦A removed the missing trumps, and it was now necessary to score three spade tricks. (The object was to set up the fourth spade in the South hand, with which to discard one of dummy's two clubs. Then the ♣8 could be ruffed in dummy.) The only obvious chance was a three-three split in spades, but Helgemo saw another possibility. He led a spade from the South hand to the seven, a rare finesse against an eight on the first round.

"East made a tricky play by winning with the jack and returning the five. Helgemo guessed what was happening. He played low from his hand, won with dummy's nine, and threw dummy's club loser on the fourth round of spades to make a slam that failed at the other table.

"There were two psychological clues to this remarkable winning play. East's spade return was slightly suspicious, since he could obviously have led a heart. And if West had been able to win the third trick (when a spade was led toward the 973), he might have done so, or at least

The opening lead was the ♥K.

Geir Helgemo is now, I think, a veteran, in his late 30's. At the age of 27, he became the youngest player ever to win the "Le Bridgeur" award for the Best Played Hand of the Year. To appreciate what a nice play Helgemo made, try it yourself looking at all four hands. You are South, declarer in 6♦, and West leads the ♥K against your slam. How do you make 12 tricks? (Answer at conclusion.)

Helgemo learned the game at the age of 12 from his father, whom he candidly admits, "was not a good player." His first year, he partnered his father in the bridge club of the old copper town of Roros, which is known through the novels of Johan Falkberget. At the age of 17, Helgemo represented Norway internationally for the first time on their Junior Team. After high school, he began to study computer engineering at the University of Trondheim, but, as is the nature of the "bridge addict," he dropped out to devote his full time to the game he loved. He is now a columnist in Norway's leading newspaper, co-editor of a number of magazines, and a professional player.

hitched fractionally.

“None of the experts who were shown South’s problem found the solution, and all were in awe

of Helgemo’s effort. If East had returned an obvious heart at the fourth trick (after winning the spade trick), South could still have succeeded by ruffing, crossing to dummy, and leading the ♠9.”

Meet Team Russia/Poland



Andrei Gromov

Andrei Gromov, 34, born in the former Soviet Union, lives in Moscow with his wife and daughter and works as an executive manager. Andrei’s wife, Victoria Gromova, is also a well-known bridge player who has won the European Mixed Pairs Championship and the 2004 Olympiad Women’s Teams. Andrei has been playing bridge since 1989 and has enjoyed considerable success from the early days of his career. Since the Russian Federation introduced an objective rating system in 1992, Andrei topped the list for 192 consecutive weeks. In 1999, he started a new run as the overall leader and has maintained his position ever since. He was the first player in Russian bridge history to become an International Master in September, 1992, and was the first and (at the time) only EBL Life Master in Russia. A multiple winner of the Russia Bowl, Andrei has won virtually every important title in his country, dating back to the time of the Soviet Union. He was named Russian “Player of the Year” four times (1995, 1998-2000), and in 2000 was honored as “Personality of the Year.” There would be little argument in his country that Andrei is the best bridge player in the history of Russian bridge; he is also a WBF Master. In 2000, Andrei finished third in the Generali Masters Individual in Athens and third in the European Mixed Teams. His Russian team reached the quarterfinals at the Rhodes World Teams Olympiad in 1996. He has reached the finals of many different European and World events, including a second-place finish in the 1999 Internet World Teams

Championship. In 2000 Andrei, with “Sacha” Petrunin and Polish stars Cezary Balicki/Adam Zmudzinski, won the Open Board-A-Match Teams at the ACBL Fall North American Championships in Birmingham and finished fourth in the Reisinger Teams, a remarkable achievement for players with little experience at Board-A-Match scoring. This team followed up on that success in 2001 by winning the Vanderbilt Knockout at the Spring North American Championships in Kansas City. Their consistently strong performances have attracted interest from several American sponsors and it seems likely that they will now be well-placed to earn a decent living as bridge professionals.



Alexander Dubinin

Alexander Dubinin, 30, lives in Moscow, works for Andrei’s company, and is still unmarried, ladies. After successful partnerships with Mikhail Krasnosselski and Max Khven Alexander began playing with Andrei Gromov about a year ago. In that short time they have achieved several notable successes (third in the Olympiad Open Teams in Istanbul, first in the Russian Open Teams, second in the Russian Open Pairs). Andrei & Alexander have excellent teammates: Cezary Balicki and Adam Zmudzinski. They plan to play together in other events, in particular in the Tenerife European Championship[s. Adam, Cezary and Andrei have already won several competitions together including the Vanderbilt Cup.



Cezary Balicki

Cezary Balicki, 46, lives in Wroclaw Poland and is a former chess instructor who is now a full-time bridge professional. At the 1998 World Championships in Lille, Cezary finished a strong fourth in the Individual Par Contest for the Jean Besse Trophy. Although he is widely regarded as one of the best technical players in the world, his partnership with Adam is best known for its first-class consistent defensive play. Although today Cezary and Adam favor a fairly straightforward version of Polish Club, they used to play a forcing pass system known as Suspensor. While the system was difficult to play against and achieved some remarkable successes, its glaring weaknesses were highlighted in the 1989 Bermuda Bowl semifinals and problems of disclosure and a generally poor reception by the WBF and the world's best players convinced them to give up the system a few years later. Balicki-Zmudzinski have been playing together for more than 15 years and have anchor successful Polish teams for more than a decade. They won their first European Teams Championship at Turku, Finland, in 1989, qualifying for the Bermuda Bowl later that year in Perth, where they won the Bronze medals. Two more third-place finishes soon followed, in the 1990 World Open Pairs in Geneva and in the 1991 European Teams in Killarney, the latter achievement earning them a trip to the Bermuda Bowl in Yokohama. They fought their way through to the final but had to settle for Silver when they could not overcome the gallant team from Iceland in a wild encounter. Two years later, they won the 1993 European Teams Championships in Menton, France, and qualified for the Santiago, Chile Bermuda Bowl, where they lost in the quarterfinals. They earned their second World Championship Silver medals the following year in the Rosenblum Teams in Albuquerque, losing an emotion-charged and controversial final to an American team. Poland finished second in the 1997 European Teams in Italy and qualified for the Bermuda Bowl in Hammamet, where they bowed to France, the

eventual winners, in the quarterfinals. By winning the World Transnational Teams in Bermuda in January, 2000 they earned their first Gold medals in WBF competition. Later that year they had to settle for Silver when they lost an exciting final to Italy at the 11th World Bridge Teams Olympiad in Maastricht. That result gives Cezary and Adam a unique "Triple Crown" of Teams Silver medals: they have lost in the finals of the Olympiad, the Bermuda Bowl and the Rosenblum. Balicki-Zmudzinski are frequent invitees to major events around the world. They won the Macallan Invitational Pairs in London in 1994, and have recently become regulars at the North American Championships. They won the 1997 Spingold in Albuquerque and lost the same event a year later in Chicago. In 1997, they also finished second in the Reisinger Board-A-Match Teams at the Fall NABC in St. Louis and won the Open Board-A-Match Teams at the 2000 Fall NABC in Birmingham, playing with the young Russians Andrei Gromov-Aleksander Petrunin. Cezary and Adam are always in demand and in the past decade have won many big Pairs and Teams tournaments in their own country, Europe, North America and Australia.



Adam Zmudzinski

Adam Zmudzinski, 44, lives in Katowice, Poland, where he is an electronics engineer as well as a bridge professional and instructor. Often described as the bridge player most likely to be confused with a movie star, Adam's warm personality has earned him many friends and supporters around the world, not all of them women. Balicki-Zmudzinski's partnership began in 1985 and they have played an important role in the success of Polish teams since the late eighties. They won their first European Teams Championship at Turku, Finland, in 1989, qualifying for the Bermuda Bowl later that year in Perth, where they won the Bronze medals. They earned two more Bronze medals soon afterwards in the 1990 World Open Pairs in Geneva and in the 1991 European Teams in

Killarney. Later in 1991, at the Bermuda Bowl in Yokohama, Japan, they reached the final but lost to Iceland's team of destiny in an exciting match. Their Polish team won the 1993 European Teams Championships in Menton, but lost heavily to Norway in the quarterfinals of the Santiago, Chile Bermuda Bowl that followed. They earned a second WBF Silver medal in the 1994 Rosenblum Teams in Albuquerque, bowing to an American team in a match involving a controversial penalty to Balicki-Zmudzinski for inadequate disclosure of certain conventional methods. Poland finished second in the 1997 European Teams to qualify for the Hammamet

Bermuda Bowl, but they lost to France, the eventual winners, in the quarterfinals. After years of near misses Adam and Cezary earned their first World Championship by winning the World Transnational Teams in Bermuda in January, 2000 on a professional team with American teammates. Eight months later they added another Silver medal to their list of credits when they lost a tight final match to Italy at the World Bridge Teams Olympiad in Maastricht. Adam and Cezary are enterprising bidders but are quite conservative by today's standards. Their hallmark is exceptional partnership defense.



"Minus 500, -470, -1660,... where will it all end?"



"I volunteered to write an article on 'cold' contracts."



"It's my lucky shirt because it makes my opponents dizzy."

Hong Kong Inter-City Bridge Tournament

16-21 August, 2005

Venue:

- The event will be held at the Excelsior Hotel in Causeway Bay (a prime shopping area on the Hong Kong side with easy access via major transportation).

Rates:

- Superior Rooms (285 sq. ft.) are \$900 plus 13% tax.
- Superior Rooms with harbor view are \$1,000 plus 13% tax.
- Suites for up to \$2,850 plus tax.

Playing area:

- The playing area is on the third floor and faces a beautiful harbor.

Other:

- The entry fees for all events are the same as last year (\$6,000 for visiting Open Teams).
- The hotel will be issuing discount coupons to players for meals if consumed on the premises.
- An additional event—a Transnational Board-A-Match Teams (maximum from each country permitted)— will be scheduled.
- The qualifying stage of the Open teams will be played over 2.5 days (28 hours) with an estimated total of nearly 58 hours of bridge over 6 days—or around 70 boards per day!

10th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Saturday (Feb. 12)	10:00-12:20	NEC Cup Final (1) & 3 rd Playoff (1)	F206
	12:30-14:50	NEC Cup Final (2) & 3 rd Playoff (2)	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	
	16:00-18:20	NEC Cup Final (3)	
	18:30-20:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
Sunday (Feb. 13)	10:00-17:00	Yokohama SRR & Swiss Teams (2)	F201-204
	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup	F201-204
	18:00-20:30	Closing Ceremony	F205-206

Semi-Final segments = 20 boards; Final and 3rd place playoff segments = 16 boards

Registration for Yokohama SRR & Swiss Teams and Asuka Cup

Anyone planning to play in the Yokohama SRR & Swiss Teams on Friday and Saturday, February 10 & 11, please make sure to register by 5:00 PM on Thursday, February 10.

Anyone planning to play in the Asuka Cup (Open Pairs) on Sunday, February 13, should please register by 6:00 PM on Saturday, February 12.

Limousine Buses to Narita Airport

Please make your reservation for your return limousine bus to Narita airport at the Bell Desk on the ground floor of the Grand Inter-Continental Hotel.



“Do I *look* like a honey bee?!”