



NEC Bridge Festival

Sunday, February 13, 2005
Bulletin Number 7

Editors: Eric Kokish, Richard Colker

Paul Hackett–Junko Nishimura Win Asuka Cup



Paul Hackett



Junko Nishimura

Top Ten Finishers in Asuka Cup

Rank	Pair	Score
1	Paul Hackett–Junko Nishimura	3273.64
2	Bas Drijver–Maarten Schollaardt	3066.61
3	Chen Dawei–Takahiko Hirata	3052.34
4	Hiroko Ota–Kojito Ito	3025.73
5	Lucje Bojoh–Shoko Fukuda	2948.98
6	Teruko Nishimura–Justin Hackett	2947.84
7	Ryo Okuno–Akira Obara	2938.78
8	Yasuyo Iida–Atsuko Katsumata	2938.49
9	Andrew Robson–Rita Shugart	2928.36
10	Migry Campanile–Michael Barel	2906.58

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

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

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NEC Cup Bridge Festival 2005

Domo Arigato

On behalf of all the participants, we would like to congratulate our corporate sponsor **NEC** for once again joining with **JCBL** to produce a bridge event of the highest quality and competitiveness. As we have mentioned before, the **NEC Bridge Festival** now regularly attracts the interest of the best players in the world. Many of the participants consider the NEC tournament one of their best bridge experiences. Once again, congratulations to the sponsors and especially the **JCBL** staff.

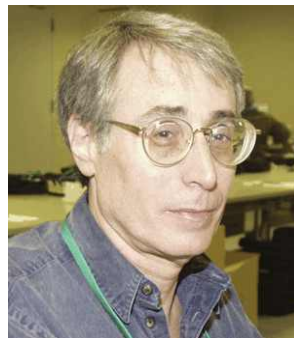
Yokohama, and especially the Pacifico, are wonderful places and the Exhibition Hall has again proved itself a first-class playing venue. The weather was seasonally balmy for much of this year's festival and the people warm and friendly, as always. It is our continuing great pleasure to be reunited each year with our many friends and to share once again the happy times, the fun and the excitement of this tournament. Your kindness and generosity warm our hearts.

The significant prizes and broad participation have made the **NEC Bridge Festival** an important event on the bridge calendar, one which continues to grow in size and prestige. This year's field of 47 teams in the NEC Cup, while smaller than last year's high-water mark of 52 teams, was nonetheless one of the strongest fields ever, as the high quality of play over many difficult deals attested.

The Bulletin Editors are grateful to those who helped us with deals, stories and other material to keep you informed. Many thanks to *Nakatani-san*, for his peerless leadership and enduring friendship. To *Richard Grenside*, tormented director, who as always dealt with the thorny problems accompanying a tournament of this scope and surmounted them all. To *Omasa-san*, who once again spared no effort to provide us with his remarkable technical and computer support—often well into the wee hours of the morning. To *Nakamura-san* for his wonderful pictures (which as usual we subjected to our peculiar sense of humor). To *Suzuki-san* for his help with many things, both technical and otherwise. To the many who brought us gifts, food and moral support, especially during our late-night work sessions. Thanks also to the many other volunteers who performed the myriad functions critical to making this tournament the a success, while we were hopelessly absorbed in our work. We consider all of you part of our extended family here in Japan. And finally, our thanks to the players who produced a rich source of exciting, top-level bridge for us to write about.



Eric



Rich



Bulletin "Staff"

Warmest regards, *Eric, Rich, and the Bulletin Staff*

NEC Cup Final: Russia/Poland vs Israel

by Eric Kokish

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

Israel was sitting on a 37-IMP lead after 48 deals. Russia/Poland was not playing well enough to make up the difference if current form continued, but, as we've seen so often in recent years, anything can happen over 16 deals. If the first board of the final stanza was any indication, R/P's task would not be an easy one...

Bd: 49	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AQ9		
Vul: None	♥ AQ8753		
	♦ QJ		
	♣ Q3		
	West		East
	♠ 7543		♠ K86
	♥ K4		♥ J106
	♦ K743		♦ A62
	♣ AJ9		♣ K642
	South		
	♠ J102		
	♥ 92		
	♦ 10985		
	♣ 10875		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	1♣(1)	Pass	1♦(2)
Pass	1♥(3)	Pass	1♠(4)
Pass	2♥	All Pass	
(1) Precision: strong, artificial; (2) 0-7;			
(3) Artificial, F1; (4) Inquiry			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Rdbl	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♥	Dbl(1)	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

In 2♥, on a trump lead, Gromov cleared that suit, Doron discarding the ♠4, suit preference for clubs. After a club to the ace and a spade switch, the defenders were under no pressure. One down, -50.

Barel had a bad moment when he was doubled in 2♥, having bid a whole lot on a pile of fish guts, but was relieved to learn (from Balicki) that the double was for takeout. Against 3♣, Campanile led her lowest trump, nine, queen, king. Declarer crossed to the ♣J and led a spade, Barel making the beautiful play of the queen (middle from three, in honor of his Polish opponents), Campanile dropping the jack under the king to show the ten. When Balicki played three rounds of diamonds, Campanile won and knocked out the ♣A. Declarer could ruff dummy's losing diamond safely with his last trump, but South won the spade exit with her ten to lead a heart, and the defense had the rest for two down, -100. 4 IMPs to Israel, 132-91.



Michael Barel



Migry Campanile

Bd: 51	North		
Dlr: South	♠ AKQ94		
Vul: E/W	♥ AK65		
	♦ 95		
	♣ A6		
	West		East
	♠ 83		♠ 1052
	♥ 1073		♥ J982
	♦ J1042		♦ 73
	♣ K872		♣ QJ103
	South		
	♠ J76		
	♥ Q4		
	♦ AKQ86		
	♣ 954		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠(1)	Pass	3♥(2)
Pass	3♠(3)	Pass	4♥(4)
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

(1) Game-forcing relay; (2) 3=2=5=3; (3) Sets ♦, RKCB; (4) 2 key cards for plus the trump queen

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

(1) Game-forcing inquiry

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♣	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♥
3♣	Pass	3♦	All Pass

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
1♣(1)	Pass	1♥(2)	1♠
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

(1) Polish, F1; (2) 4+♥, 8+HCP

Israel Yadlin, in 3♦, ducked a trump early after a spade lead, then carefully knockered out the ♥A and started clubs foefore playing the ace of trumps, and could not be prevented from taking eight tricks. One down, -100.

Balicki, in 1NT on the lead of the ♠Q (deuce, seven, ace), knocked out the ♥A, won the spade continuation, cashed one high heart, and chased the ♣A for +120. R/P gained 6 IMPs, 108-132.



Andrei Gromov

7♠ was much easier to make than to bid, but Gromov's strategy—setting diamonds as trumps and extracting the valuable key-card information—worked brilliantly. In practice, Gromov won the club lead, drew trumps, and banked on four-two or three-three diamonds, with the ♥Q as the late entry to dummy, +1510. Barel played the same way in 6♠, +1010. 11 IMPs to R/P, 102-132.

The next deal brought another swing for the trailing team...

Bd: 52	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 1076		
Vul: Both	♥ 1054		
	♦ KQ104		
	♣ 876		
	West	East	
	♠ 832	♠ AK	
	♥ K	♥ QJ73	
	♦ A963	♦ 8752	
	♣ KQJ53	♣ 1042	
	South		
	♠ QJ954		
	♥ A9862		
	♦ J		
	♣ A9		

Bd: 53	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 53		
Vul: N/S	♥ KJ8632		
	♦ Q53		
	♣ Q8		
	West	East	
	♠ A4	♠ KJ92	
	♥ 754	♥ A9	
	♦ AJ74	♦ 1082	
	♣ AK63	♣ J1054	
	South		
	♠ Q10876		
	♥ Q10		
	♦ K96		
	♣ 972		

Israel put an end to their opponents' charge on the next deal...

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)
2NT	Pass	3♣(3)	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
(1) Weak 2♥ or weak 2♠; (2) Pass or correct;			
(3) Stayman			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	All Pass		
(1) Weak 2♥ or weak 2♠; (2) Pass or correct			

West has a difficult decision on the first round of bidding, but it's a bit easier because South's 2♥ is not natural and needn't show any length at all. As it happened, hearts were a problem, but a slower one. In 3NT, Doron won the second heart and passed the ♣J. Two down, -100.

Zmudzinski passed over 2♥, hoping for conversion to 2♠, after which he could double for takeout. It didn't turn out that way, but he his hand kept improving on the bidding. Over 3♠, hearts appeared to be an issue for notrump, and he continued to investigate alternative strains for game. Whether 4♣ was forcing or merely intended as such, Balicki felt he had done enough. Even 4♣ required some good work and a favorable lie of the cards. Zmudzinski ducked the heart lead to the queen, won the low-trump shift with the ace, crossed to the ♥A, and led the ♦2 to his seven and North's queen. He won the spade switch in hand, ruffed a heart with the ♣J, finessed the ♦J, cashed the ♣K to fell the queen, drew South's last trump with dummy's ten, and soon had the rest for +150. 6 IMPs more to R/P, whose 23-IMP mini-run had cut the deficit to just 18 IMPs, 114-132.



Adam Zmudzinski

Bd: 54	North		
Dlr: East	♠ A3		
Vul: E/W	♥ J874		
	♦ Q95		
	♣ 9754		
	West		East
	♠ 852		♠ KJ
	♥ A52		♥ Q63
	♦ AJ10		♦ 8732
	♣ AJ86		♣ KQ103
	South		
	♠ Q109764		
	♥ K109		
	♦ K64		
	♣ 2		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	2♦(1)
Dbl	3♠(2)	All Pass	
(1) Weak 2♥ or weak 2♠; (2) Pass or correct			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
		Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2♠(2)	All Pass	
(1) Weak 2♥ or weak 2♠; (2) Pass or correct			

With the cards as they are, E/W can make 3NT: four clubs, three diamonds, and a trick in each major, but at both tables, N/S stole the pot with their Multi 2♦ openings, Gromov's hyper-aggressive 3♠ cowing Israel Yadlin in a position where it must have been very tempting for him to try 3NT. Barel made 2♠ by using his pointed suit entries to take heart finesses, losing only one spade, one heart, two diamonds, and a club for a superb +110.

In 3♠, Gromov got a high diamond lead to the ten and queen. He cashed the ♠A before playing a heart, and that cost him a trick, as he could not repeat the heart finesse. He went two down, -100, and Israel gained 5 IMPs, 137-114.

Bd: 56	North		
Dir: West	♠ AQ875		
Vul: None	♥ J864		
	♦ 63		
	♣ 106		
West		East	
♠ K10		♠ J	
♥ Q10		♥ AK932	
♦ KQJ94		♦ A10852	
♣ AQ75		♣ K2	
South			
♠ 96432			
♥ 75			
♦ 7			
♣ J9843			
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦(1)	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
(1) Hearts			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
1♦	1♠	4NT(1)	5♠
6♣(2)	Pass	6♦	All Pass
(1) RKCB♦; (2) 2 key cards plus the ♦Q			

Balicki, facing either 5+ diamonds or four diamonds and an unbalanced hand, or a canape into clubs, had reason to believe that slam would be a good bet facing an appropriate number of key cards. It was: +920.



Cezary Balicki

The Yadlin brothers fared far worse in an uncontested auction, after a strong notrump from Doron. It needn't have worked so badly when

Israel showed a game force with at least five-four in hearts and diamonds, but Doron, with strength in the black suits, took a deep position by burying his enormous diamond support to make a regressive bid in notrump. You might argue that East should bid again, with an extra diamond and excellent controls, knowing that he's likely to be facing a doubleton heart, but it looks far easier for West to do something positive: +490. 10 IMPs to R/P, within 13 now, at 124-137.

But the next major swing went the other way...

Bd: 58	North		
Dir: East	♠ K642		
Vul: Both	♥ 1073		
	♦ Q1082		
	♣ 96		
West		East	
♠ J5		♠ A10987	
♥ AQ2		♥ 864	
♦ 53		♦ A6	
♣ KQ10753		♣ AJ8	
South			
♠ Q3			
♥ KJ95			
♦ KJ974			
♣ 42			
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♣	All Pass		
(1) Natural, strong with support, or bal.			

Doron's 2♣ response was forcing to game; Zmudzinski's was not. Whether East should rebid 3♣, 2♠ or 2NT, is a matter of both style

and system, and for the Yadlins, 2♠, to describe a balanced minimum, was the people's choice. That simplified the auction for Doron, and 3NT had nine top tricks on a diamond lead, +600.

In the Polish style, 3♣ would show a fourth club and a non-minimum, while 2NT would indicate stoppers in both red suits, so 2♠ was Balicki's default rebid. As 3♣ would not have been forcing, Zmudzinski had to stall with a new-suit bid, and 3♥ happened to catch Balicki with both a diamond guard and an enormous hand for clubs, in context. When he went past 3NT, Zmudzinski expected diamonds to be a problem and offered delayed spade support to suggest an alternative strain for game. Facing a limited hand with two spades, Balicki had reason to pass or convert to 5♣, but instead, he issued a grand slam try by bidding 5♦. Unfortunately for the Poles, Barel had a shrewd idea that diamonds would be the best lead. When Zmudzinski took an early spade finesse, Campanile won and cashed a diamond for one down, -100. 12 IMPs to Israel, 149-124, with six boards remaining.

The next deal effectively ended R/P's chances...

Bd: 59	North		
Dlr: South	♠ A		
Vul: None	♥ AJ85432		
	♦ 82		
	♣ 1096		
West		East	
♠ KJ1094		♠ 8753	
♥ 976		♥ K10	
♦ AK9		♦ Q763	
♣ Q7		♣ 842	
	South		
	♠ Q62		
	♥ Q		
	♦ J1054		
	♣ AKJ53		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♠	2♦(2)	2♠	1♦(1)
Pass	3♥	All Pass	Pass
(1) Precision, but 4+♦; (2) Hearts			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
			1♣
1♠	2♥	3♠(1)	Pass
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
(1) Preemptive			

With the Russians stopping in 3♥ and the Israeli's in 4♥, there was sure to be a swing. A spade was led at both tables to the nine and ace, and a low heart went to East's king.

Israel Yadlin continued spades. Gromov ruffed, drew trumps, led to the ♣A, ruffed himself in with a spade, and led the ♣10 to dummy's king; +230.

The stakes were higher for Barel in 4♥. Balicki switched to the ♦3 when he won the ♥K, and West played three rounds. Barel ruffed, drew trumps, led to the ♣A, ruffed dummy's last diamond, and eventually dropped the ♣Q, believing East would not have bid 3♠ with that card in addition to the ♥K and ♦Q; +420. Israel gained 5 IMPs to increase the lead to 30 IMPs, 154-124.

Bd: 62	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K5		
Vul: None	♥ KQ732		
	♦ A10		
	♣ QJ74		
West		East	
♠ 43		♠ Q1092	
♥ 10654		♥ A98	
♦ 963		♦ KQ82	
♣ AK86		♣ 53	
	South		
	♠ AJ876		
	♥ J		
	♦ J754		
	♣ 1092		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Doron</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
		Pass	2♠(1)
All Pass			
(1) 5+♠/4+m, 6-10 HCP			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Barel</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Campanile</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♥	Dbl	1♠
Pass	2♣	All Pass	

The defense against Dubinin's 2♠ was interesting: ♣A, four, five, ten, diamond switch, ducked to the queen, diamond to the ace, low heart taken by the ace, ♣3 to the king, club ruff, ♦K to force dummy. Now Israel had to get another trump trick for one down, -50.

Barel, in 2♣, got a low trump lead from Balicki. Zmudzinski took the ♣K and switched to a diamond, taken by the ace. A heart went to the ace, and Balicki led a second club to the ace.

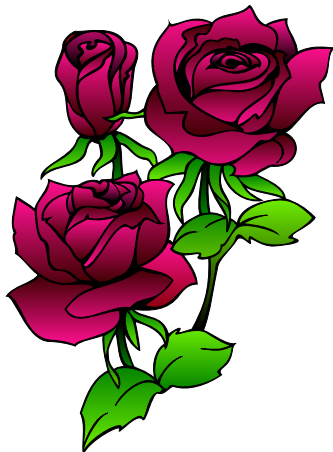
The ♦9 went to the queen, declarer discarding a heart, and West ruffed the fourth round of diamonds. Barel over-ruffed, ruffed a heart with the ♣10, came to the ♠K, drew the last trump, and claimed, +90. Well done, Mikey.

There was nothing important in the final two deals. Russia/Poland won the fourth quarter 36-30, but Israel won the match and the 2005 NEC Cup by 31 IMPs, 158-127.

Special congratulations to the Israeli team—Doron and Israel Yadlin, Michael Barel and Migry Zur Campanile, who have already replaced their disappointment in the 2004 final with shining memories of their triumph in 2005. They will be a tough act to follow in 2006.

Penguin not included.

However, Colker-san, official custodian of the penguin, has already accepted a down payment to secure his client's availability to the Israeli team for next year's NEC Cup. Contract details not available at press time.



A Very Special Thank You

To the treasured patrons of the 2005 NEC Bridge Festival

NEC Corporation

Yusen Cruise

Robson's Squeeze on Declarer

by Matthew Granovetter (bridgetoday.com)

Dir: North	North (dummy)				
Vul: None	♠ 752				
	♥ KQ10876				
	♦ Q2				
	♣ 3 2				
		East (you)			
		♠ 9843			
		♠ AJ9			
		♠ AK95			
		♣ 106			
West	North	East	South		
	2♥	Pass	3NT		
All Pass					

otherwise he would have played the queen. In addition, he almost certainly had a long solid club suit. Andrew thought of switching to a spade, but then it occurred to him that declarer most certainly must hold either a singleton or a void in hearts so he played the ♥A! This brought unbearable pressure on declarer. He tried his best by discarding the ♠J, but a spade switch now doomed the contract.

The opening lead was the ♦3 (fourth best).
 Declarer calls for the ♦2 from dummy. You win the king as declarer follows with the ♦4. Plan your defense.

Squeeze on Declarer

(see diagram, next column)

Martin Hoffman told me about this hand. When the deal came up in a pairs event at the Acol Bridge Club in London, most Souths declared 3NT after North opened a weak two in hearts.

It is important to try to work out declarer's hand at an early stage, since many contracts are won or lost at tricks one or two. At the table where Andrew Robson sat East, West led the ♦3, and declarer played low from dummy. Andrew reasoned that declarer must hold ♦Jxx,

Dir: North	North (dummy)				
Vul: None	♠ 752				
	♥ KQ10876				
	♦ Q2				
	♣ 32				
		West		East (Andrew Robson)	
		♠ K106		♠ 9843	
		♥ 5432		♥ AJ9	
		♦ 10873		♦ AK95	
		♣ 654		♣ 106	
			South		
			♠ AQJ		
			♥ ---		
			♦ J64		
			♣ AKQJ987		
West	North	East	South		
	2♥	Pass	3NT		
All Pass					
Opening lead: ♦3 (fourth best)					

Limousine Buses to Narita Airport

If you haven't already done so, please remember to 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.