



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 1

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

Welcome to the 13th NEC Cup Bridge Festival

This year's 13th NEC Cup once again boasts a very strong international field, including many of the world's top players. Stage One will be an 8-round Swiss Teams consisting of 20-board matches, IMPs converted to Victory Points using the 20-VP WBF scale, qualifying eight teams for the KO phase. The 39-team field has been divided into two groups. The initial pairings match each of the top 18 teams at random against the second 18 teams; teams 37-39 will play in a three-way. Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter-finals and semi-finals will consist of 40-board matches; the final will be contested over 64 boards.

The Daily Bulletin Office/Secretariat and the Chief Director

As always, we need your help to keep everyone informed of what's happening at this tournament. Please report anything amusing, challenging, or skillful that happens in your matches (bridge or otherwise) to the **Daily Bulletin Office, a.k.a. The Secretariat** (E206). If we're not in, leave a note on one of our computers (they're the ones with the LCD displays at the far right of the tables along the rear wall as you enter the room). The **Secretariat** opens each day at 10:00 am. You can contact the Secretariat via a house phone from the hotel (Ext. 7691), or dial 228-6651 (from the Yokohama City area), or 045-228-6651 from outside the city area or +81 45 228 6651 from overseas. If you're trying to reach someone you can't find, you may leave a message with us and we'll do our best to get it to them. The **Chief Tournament Director** for this year's **NEC Bridge Festival** is once again the witty, urbane, unflappable and occasionally immovable **Richard Grenside** (as usual under the close supervision of his wife Sue). Just be advised that if you call him you do so at your own risk.

Players Welcomed at Opening Ceremony

At yesterday evening's opening ceremony emcee **Haruko Koshi** introduced **Kimio Fujita**, President of JCBL, who welcomed participants to the 13th NEC Bridge Festival. **Hitoshi Suzuki**, of NEC Corporation, welcomed players on behalf of NEC and expressed the company's pride in their relationship with JCBL, the NEC Bridge Festival, and the upcoming mind sports demonstrations (Bridge, Go, Chess, Draughts and Chinese Chess) scheduled for this coming weekend. Other speakers were **Eric Kokish** and **Richard Grenside**.



Kimio Fujita, JCBL President



Hitoshi Suzuki, NEC Corp.

NEC Cup 2008: 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 2007 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 2007 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.
Screen Hesitations	When a delay in the return of the tray is suspected, a player on the opposite side of the screen must be the first to call attention to it (by summoning the TD). If the screenmate of the player responsible for the delay first calls attention to it, the TD will rule that no UI is present. In other words, for the TD to rule that UI is present the delay must be clearly noticeable to the players on the other side of the screen without prompting, as evidenced by one of them being the first to call attention to it.

The 13th NEC Cup Guest List

Konichi wa to all, especially those participating in their first NEC Cup or visiting Japan for the first time. We are delighted to see everyone again. This year's NEC Cup has an entry of 39 teams.

Once again, every session of the NEC Cup will be covered on Bridge Base Online, the world's leading Online Bridge site (hi Fred, Sheri, Uday, world), with live VuGraph broadcasts starting with today's Round One match between The Netherlands and SKOTII (we hope more thrust won't be needed). It's become a tradition in this event that it won't be only the favorites who are still playing for the championship on Thursday evening, so don't despair if you start badly; keep your spirits up, and play with heart until they tell you you can't play any longer.

We're thrilled to see the many foreign teams here, especially those with players who are attending this tournament for the first time—or at least the first time in quite a while—and the many familiar faces from around the bridge world.

The defending team, from The Netherlands, includes **Ton Bakkeren** and **Huib Bertens** (winners of the 2007 Cavendish Pairs who were also on the 2002 NEC Cup squad), who this year are augmented by **Louk Verhees** and **Ricco van Prooijen**. Beware their secret weapon, the lovely Jeanne van den Meiracker.

The most successful team from recent years is back. The Israelis anchor pair of **Michael Barel** and **Migry Campanile** have reunited with the **Yadlin** brothers (**Doron** and **Israel**) and they are vowing to work their special kind of magic again. Beware the flying monkey.

From Sweden (with a touch of America) comes Mahaffey. **Jim Mahaffey** was unable to travel but his squad is retaining his name as npc. We're sure they will miss the soothing calm of **Sam Lev** as well. The team is **Fredrik Nystrom, Peter Bertheau, Peter Fredin** and **Bjorn Fallenius**.

Canada is represented by **Nick** and **Judith Gartaganis**, with **Gordon Campbell** and **Keith Balcombe** (Nick was part of the Canadian team that won Gold in the Salt Lake City exhibition of 2002 while Judith was playing for the Canadian Ladies).

Mainland China is represented by one team in the NEC Cup this year. Fu-Zhao includes current World Open Pairs champions **Fu Zhong** and **Jack Zhao**, and the home representatives of **Tadashi Teramoto, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Kazuhiko Yamada** and **Takahiko Hirata**. China Hong-Kong also has a team here: **Alexander Li, K. W. Tam, C. H. Wu, K. F. Tung, Eugene Chan** and **Eurydice Nours**.

The Hackett team, **Paul Hackett**, and **John Armstrong**, will have a strong transatlantic feel at the other table. **Eric Kokish** (perennial bulletin editor and title-winner in 1997) will be playing with both **Gerry Charney** and **Sue Picus** (returning to the scene of her first world title for the first time since the 1991 Venice Cup). Truly Not the Empire!

A triple-headed monster from New Zealand/ Australia/England consists of **Valerie Gardiner, Justin Howard, Peter Gill, Brian Callaghan** and **Peter Hollands**.

We may not have a Polish team here this year but at least one player from Lithuania would probably have claimed Poland as his home team a few years ago. Welcome to **Vyautas Vainikonis, Wojtek Olanski, Andrey Arlovich**, and **Valentin Zhuravel**.

Latin America is once again represented at the NEC Cup. We welcome back **Frankie Frontaura** and **Diego Brenner**, this year playing with **Federico** and **Gonzalo Goded**.

Among the top Japanese teams are Japan Open (**Hiroyuki Noda, Hidenori Narita, Eiji Otaka, Yoichi Ito, Yasushi Kobayashi**, and **Masaru Yoshida**), Yoi Returns (**Kazuo Furuta, Masyuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura, Chen Dawei, Hiroki Yokoi**) and Hana (**Sei Nagasaka, Takeshi Hanayama, Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada**).

Good luck to all!

Team Rosters: 13th NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	Israel:	Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Zur-Campanile
2	The Latin:	Frankie Frontaura, Federico Goded, Gonzalo Goded, Diego Brenner
3	Mahaffey:	Fredrik Nystrom, Peter Berthau, Peter Fredin, Bjorn Fallenius, Jim Mahaffey (npc)
4	Canada:	Gordon Campbell, Keith Balcombe, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas Gartaganis
5	Not the Empire:	Paul Hackett, John Armstrong, Eric Kokish, Gerry Charney, Sue Picus
6	The Netherlands:	Ton Bakkeren, Huub Bertens, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen, Jeanne van den Meiracker (NPC)
7	Hong Kong:	Alexander Li, K.W. Tam, C.H. Wu, K.F. Tung, Eugene Chan, Eurydice Nours
8	VEGA*:	Valerie Gardiner, Peter Gill, Justin Howard, Peter Hollands, Brian Callaghan
9	Lithuania:	Vytautas Vainikonis, Wojtek Olanski, Andrey Arlovich, Valentin Zhuravel
10	JAPAN OPEN:	Hiroyuki Noda, Hidenori Narita, Eiji Otaka, Yoichi Ito, Yasushi Kobayashi, Masaru Yoshida
11	YOI Returns:	Kazuo Furuta, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura, Chen Dawei, Hiroki Yokoi
12	HANA:	Sei Nagasaka, Takeshi Hanayama, Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada
13	Fu-Zhao:	Tadashi Teramoto, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Kazuhiko Yamada, Takahiko Hirata, Fu Zhong, Zhao Jie
14	Geller:	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Hiroya Abe, Chieko Yamazaki
15	Kitty's:	Yoko Nenohi, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kyoko Toyofuku, Kumiko Matsuo, Makiko Sato, Toshiko Kaho
16	ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Hideyuki Sango, Nobuko Matsubara, Misuzu Ichihashi, Michiko Iwahashi
17	Losier:	Michiko Ono, Yayoi Sakamoto, Etsuko Hasegawa, Betty Tajiri, Terumi Kubo, Shimako Yaji
18	NAITO:	Sakiko Naito, Kenji Miyakuni, Janssen Hiroko, Yoko Maruyama, Ryoga Tanaka, Keisuke Akama
19	Fairy Tale:	Kazunori Sasaki, Ryo Okuno, Shunsuke Morimura, Takeshi Higashiguchi, Kyoko Shimamura, Zhang Shudi
20	GIRASOL:	Sachiko Yamamura, Taeko Kawamura, Kimi Makita, Keiko Matsuzaki
21	GIBS:	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Makoto Hirata, Takashi Maeda, Nobuyuki Hayashi
22	Charmant:	Takako Fujimoto, Teruo Miyazaki, Hideo Togawa, Sumiko Sugino, Kazuko Takahashi, Kazuko Kawashima
23	Kimura@Yokohama:	Osami Kimura, Hiroko Kobayashi, Chizuko Tsukamoto, Mamiko Odaira, Yumiko Kichise, Setsuko Kimura
24	SKOTII:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Kenichi Asaoka, Takehiko Tada
25	MINK:	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Kimiko Kamakari, Misae Kato, Midori Sakamoto, Natsuko Nishida
26	BIRD:	Yasuyoshi Toriumi, Yasuko Kosaka, Harue Iemori, Emiko Tamura, Kayoko Kubota, Hideko Hasegawa
27	ikkyu-3:	Kazuhisa Kojima, Kei Nemoto, Yumiko Oda, Kazuo Saeki, Kazuo Takano, Yuichi Masamura
28	ROSEWOOD:	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Hiromu Nishida, Yoshie Nishida
29	LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi, Ryo Matsubara, Mark LaForge
30	SunFlowers:	Takako Nakatani, Sachiho Ueda, Taeko Kuratani, Reiko Fukuda, Yumi Yanagida, Kenichi Ito
31	KURITA:	Atsuko Kurita, Yoshiko Murata, Junko Den, Chieko Ichikawa, Kuniko Saito
32	AQUA:	Shoko Somemiya, Tomoko Sakai, Yoko Shimominami, Akiko Miyata, Kazuko Okamoto, Miyako Miyazaki
33	SOLARIS:	Naomi Terauchi, Akiko Miura, Natsuko Asaka, Sachiko Ueno, Kiyoko Fushida, Hideko Shindo
34	PS-Jack:	Masakatsu Sugino, Akiko Miwa, Masako Otsuka, Shoko Imai, Eriko Ito, Mari Mitani
35	makko:	Atsuyo Miyake, Makiko Hayashi, Ayako Matsubara, Midori Ito, Yukiko Umezue, Etsuko Naito
36	Masters Senior:	Hiroshi Morimoto, Hikoe Enomoto, Masaru Naniwada, Hisami Kataoka, Toshiro Nose
37	Kinki:	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Noriko Takami, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
38	MY-Bridge:	Masafumi Yoshizawa, Iwao Oishi, Kuniko Miyauchi, Shigeyuki Murano, Aiko Nabeshima, Noriko Yoshizawa
39	Open SESAME!:	Megumi Takasaka, Kyoko Sengoku, Hiroyuki Taguchi, Ryo Namiki, Mariko Matsukawa, Shunsuke Gotoda

1st-round match-ups: 1v21, 2v31, 3v22, 4v36, 5v34, 6v24, 7v33, 8v29, 9v20, 10v32, 11v26, 12v25, 13v23, 14v19, 15v30, 16v28, 17v35, 18v27, 37v38v39

Today's 1st VuGraph Match will feature The Netherlands (6) vs SKOTII (24)

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 13th NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/game/nec/necfest.html>

Follow our featured matches on Vugraph each day at: www.bridgebase.com

Hotel Demolished at North Pole Tourney

by Richard Pavlicek

I just got back from the North Pole Regional, which ended early this year when a reindeer stampede demolished the host hotel. It all happened as a result of today's deal.

The top Eskimo pair, Mush and Slush, were playing against a weak reindeer pair, Ralph and Ronald. Mush, North, opened 1NT and Slush, South, responded 2♣ Stayman...or so he thought. The language barrier has always been a problem at this tournament, and the rules committee decreed that all bids must be made in the language of one's opponents. Unfortunately, Slush did not speak fluent reindeer and his bid was misinterpreted.

When Mush passed the "Stayman bid," Slush knew something was awry and asked for a review of the bidding. Ralph cheerfully stated that it went, "1NT-Pass-7♣-All Pass."

Dlr: North ♠ AQ32
Both Vul ♥ 543
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ AJ9

♠ KJ6 ♠ 754
♥ 987 ♥ KJ6
♦ KJ6 ♦ 754
♣ Q1087 ♣ 6 5 4 3

♠ 1098
♥ AQ102
♦ 10982
♣ K 2

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	7♣
All Pass			

"Director!" shouted Slush. Moments later the Tournament Director arrived and Slush explained the problem. The Director thumbed through his rule book as Slush annoyingly persisted, "I want a ruling!"

"The bid stands!" announced the Director. "Play it!" (A later examination of the rule book showed no such rule, but Director Rudolph Blitzen said his decision was impartial and unprejudiced.)

Ralph led the ♥9, and Slush reluctantly agreed to play out the hand. He won the ♥10 as East played low, and led the ♦10; jack, queen. A heart was led to the queen, then came the ♠10; jack, queen. Another heart to the ace was followed by the ♦9 and ♠9, both of which won.

Slushed with success, South led the ♣2 to dummy's nine. It won! He cashed the ♦A, ♠A, and then ruffed dummy's last spade with his ♣K as each reindeer helplessly ruffed low. Dummy won the last two tricks with the ♣AJ over West's queen. 7♣, bid and made! On a three-two trump fit!

Word spread quickly. The floor trembled, then splintered, as the hoofed creatures began to run amok. The hotel was trampled to rubble. Luckily, I escaped with only a few bruises from hoofprints.

For more of Richard Pavlicek on bridge, visit his web site at: www.rpbridge.net

NEC Bridge Festival Smoking Policy

NEC Cup:

Once play in a qualifying-round match or a KO-round session starts, smoking is not permitted (including when a player leaves the playing room to go to the bathroom), except with permission from the TD.

Other events:

Once a session has started, and until all tables have finished, smoking is prohibited at ALL times other than a single designated smoking break, to be announced by the Director.

Smoking area:

Smoking is only permitted outside the building. Penalties for violations may be assessed by the Director.

PCs with Internet access (but no printing capability) are available for player use in the Secretariat (E206), to the left as you enter.

Bridge Defense — What's Going On?

by Mike Lawrence

West deals, E/W vulnerable.

♠ J3
♥ 954
♦ AJ984
♣ Q73

♠ 965
♥ AJ103
♦ KQ3
♣ 985

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the ♠7, won by dummy's jack. South goes to his hand with the ♣A and finesses the ♦J to your queen. You return the ♠9, which declarer wins with the ace.

West drops the ♠Q. What do you make of this?

Declarer continues with diamonds, leading the ten which loses to your king. What now?

This depends on what you think is happening. You can see three diamond tricks for declarer. You know about three spade tricks because of West's thoughtful ♠Q play. It denied the king, so declarer has it.

West's spades must be Q1087 to account for his fourth-best lead of the seven. Declarer is likely to

have the ♣AK. It would be strange for declarer to enter his hand with the ♣A if he didn't have the king.

You should switch to the ♥J, hoping partner has the king and declarer the queen. This is a fair chance because partner can have five points. (South has announced 17, North has 8, and you have 10, leaving West with five.)

♠ J3
♥ 954
♦ AJ984
♣ Q73

♠ Q1087
♥ K87
♦ 76
♣ 10642

♠ 965
♥ AJ103
♦ KQ3
♣ 985

♠ AK42
♥ Q62
♦ 1052
♣ AKJ

The key to the defense was West's "information" signal of the ♠Q. It told East that the spades were not good yet and allowed East to proceed however he felt best. East was able to count declarer's tricks and came to the conclusion there was not time to set up the spades. Hearts were the only hope for the defense and East tried them. This time, the defense had a happy ending. If West had routinely followed suit with the ♠8 East could be forgiven for leading a third spade instead of switching to hearts. West COULD have started with the ♠K1087. Very few defenders would have thought of West's play, but it makes sense if you think of it.

For more of Michael Lawrence on bridge, visit his web site at: www.michaelslawrence.com



The 2007 NEC Cup: POLAND/RUSSIA vs The NETHERLANDS

Last year's (2007) NEC Cup top qualifiers POLAND/RUSSIA chose JAPAN ShyAnt as their quarterfinal opponent while second place CHINA-Beijing chose OZOne Bridge as their quarterfinal opponents. Third place ENGLAND (Hackett) chose D-MaTK as their opponent, leaving fourth place Israel to deal with The NETHERLANDS.

In the quarterfinals, top seeded POLAND/RUSSIA trailed Shy Ant by 10 at the half, but took the second half by 81-17 to move into the semifinals, 126-72. In the first half of their quarterfinal match CHINA-Beijing got off to a 16-imp lead over OzOne Bridge, but the second half saw the Aussies stage a dramatic 96-18 comeback to advance to the semifinals, 128-66. In the third quarterfinal match ENGLAND (Hackett) trailed JAPAN D-MaTK by 9 at the half, but won the second half 74-46 to move into the semifinals, 112-93. In the closest match of the day, Israel fell behind The NETHERLANDS by 9 at the half, only to stage a gritty 36-31 second-half comeback. Alas, the two-time defenders fell a mere 4imps short as The NETHERLANDS advanced to the semifinals, 86-82.

In one semifinal, top-seeded POLAND/RUSSIA led OzOne Bridge 66-29 at the half, then withstood a 48-33 Aussie comeback to advance to the final, 99-77. In the other semifinal, ENGLAND (Hackett) took a 48-31 first-half lead over The NETHERLANDS. But the Dutch took the second half 48-19 to advance to the final, 79-67. So the 2007 NEC Cup final featured top-seeded POLAND/RUSSIA against the dangerous team from The NETHERLANDS.

The four POLAND/RUSSIA team members were no strangers to the NEC Cup, all of them having played in the event numerous times previously (though not always as teammates). Three of the four players on The NETHERLANDS team had also competed in the event previously, but according to our records only once each. All eight of the players had many world, zonal and/or national titles to their credit, so the 2007 NEC Cup final figured to be a knock down, drag out affair among worthy and seasoned competitors. And indeed, the contest lived up to its press.

The Netherlands' Schollaardt-Jacobs play something akin to a regular strong club with a 14-16 notrump, Bertens-Bakkeren play Standard Expert Dutch: five-card majors, a Polish-style 1♣ opening with Multi 2♦ and 2M to show two-suiters. For the "Alliance" the Poles play Polish Club, the Russians play Precision.

First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

Bd: 1 North
 Dir: North ♠ KJ1082
 Vul: None ♥ 73
 ♦ A8542
 ♣ 8

West	East
♠ Q973	♠ A5
♥ AJ1064	♥ Q2
♦ ---	♦ Q10763
♣ 9764	♣ QJ102
South	
♠ 64	
♥ K985	
♦ KJ9	
♣ AK53	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	2♠	AI Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Both tables played 2♠; Gromov played it as North on a club lead. He won, led a spade to the jack (sound on psychological lines since why would the defense shift to hearts), then won the club continuation and finessed in spades. He then cashed the ♠K as East pitched a diamond, but when he led a diamond to the king (an error that only costs against five-zero diamonds) West ruffed and kept up the club attack. Now declarer could make no more than seven tricks.

In the other room Schollaardt as South cashed two top clubs at once and played the ♦K (the position was far less clear at this table). Zmudzinski ruffed and continued the club attack. Declarer had four spade and two club tricks, and was eventually able to build one more trick but was still one down.



Andrei Gromov

Bd: 2
 Dir: East
 Vul: N/S

West
 ♠ KJ10
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ KQ10
 ♣ AK43

North
 ♠ 98732
 ♥ K76
 ♦ J86
 ♣ Q5

East
 ♠ AQ65
 ♥ J8
 ♦ 9752
 ♣ J102

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ 109543
 ♦ A43
 ♣ 9876

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦(1)	Pass	2♥(2)	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(1) 18+, three spades
 (2) Minimum, four spades

Both Wests played 3NT on uninformative auctions (Balicki had shown spades). The defenders started life with three winners, but at one table the ♣Q got away (Zmudzinski led a club towards the ♣J10 and Jacobs ducked) and at the other table the ♥K did not score (Gromov took the ♣Q and shifted to that card). No swing, and still no score.

Bd: 3
 Dir: South
 Vul: E/W

West
 ♠ K106
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ 10873
 ♣ K732

North
 ♠ Q87
 ♥ 96432
 ♦ KJ65
 ♣ A

East
 ♠ J432
 ♥ AK8
 ♦ 94
 ♣ 10864

South
 ♠ A95
 ♥ J105
 ♦ AQ2
 ♣ QJ95

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	2♥
All Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The 12-15 notrump scored well here when Dubinin transferred facing the wide-range notrump and Gromov could not break the transfer with only three trumps. Jacobs, facing a stronger range notrump, invited with 2NT (promising an unbalanced major/minor) and Schollaardt suggested three hearts and a minimum, allowing Jacobs to take a shot at game.

The diamond opening lead by Zmudzinski did no harm—only a spade lead would be fatal. Declarer led a low heart towards his J10x at trick two, but Balicki knew enough to duck and the defenders had no trouble untangling their four tricks. Zmudzinski did not play on spades, and Balicki did so at his first opportunity. 5-0 to the Alliance.

Bd: 5
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

West
 ♠ J983
 ♥ A3
 ♦ K86
 ♣ AQ84

North
 ♠ KQ106
 ♥ Q1098752
 ♦ ---
 ♣ 95

East
 ♠ A742
 ♥ K
 ♦ AQ1043
 ♣ KJ3

South
 ♠ 5
 ♥ J64
 ♦ J9752
 ♣ 10762

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	2♥	2NT(1)	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
5♠	All Pass		

(1) Competitive in a minor or strong in spades

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	2♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	All pass		

After The Netherlands got on the scoreboard with an overtrick the Alliance put up the first big swing of the set—and nicely judged too. In 5♠ Bertens naturally played the overcaller for short hearts, though his delayed entry into the auction with a heart bid might have suggested a hand like this. Be that as it may, playing ace and another spade looks normal enough, but was fatal as the cards lay. We can all see that leading a low spade from dummy might have worked well but even then there would have been an ugly guess on the second round of trumps.

This did not appear to be a tragedy; after all, E/W did have a lot of high cards and might well get overboard. But B/Z bid very carefully to 4♠ and declarer took ten tricks without breathing hard. Zmudzinski did not make a try over 3♠ because his partner's jump in the competitive auction was potentially shaded; credit Balicki with at least the lion's share of the imps here.

Bd: 8	North
Dlr: West	♠ A
Vul: None	♥ K73
	♦ Q107
	♣ AKQJ72
West	East
♠ 1073	♠ 9654
♥ QJ9	♥ A10542
♦ K965	♦ 843
♣ 965	♣ 4
	South
	♠ KQJ82
	♥ 86
	♦ AJ2
	♣ 1083

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinini</i>
	1♣	Db1(1)	1♠
Pass	1NT(2)	Pass	2♣(3)
Pass	2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(4)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

- (1) Majors/Minors
- (2) Relay
- (3) Clubs or balanced
- (4) Minimum balanced

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♥(♠)
Pass	1♠(1)	Pass	2♥(2)
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

- (1) Relay
- (2) Minimum balanced

On this deal the location of the ♣10 would be critical. 6NT by North was as good as anything but on a diamond lead slam was only marginal unless dummy could produce ten-third of clubs (and of course if dummy is 5-3-3-2 the ♣10 is critical). Neither table got that close. For the Russians, North showed a good hand, South a five-card spade suit and no real extra values (for both pairs the South hand must have been absolutely on the cusp since extras start at 12, but this hand is VERY well put-together) and then both Norths elected not to explore further—perhaps via a quantitative 4NT.

Almost exactly the same sequence—though there were different bids made to accomplish the job—produced a push and both N/S pairs must have felt that this was an opportunity wasted. This was definitely a deal where finding the full shape of South before the asks would have been a plus. Mark it down, you lovers of Symmetric or Moscito.

Bd: 9	North
Dlr: North	♠ K9875
Vul: E/W	♥ KQJ10
	♦ 6
	♣ KQ4
West	East
♠ A1063	♠ QJ4
♥ 9654	♥ 8
♦ 10	♦ 97543
♣ A875	♣ J1063
	South
	♠ 2
	♥ A732
	♦ AKQJ82
	♣ 92

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinini</i>
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠(1)
Pass	3♦(2)	Pass	4♣(3)
Db1.	Pass(4)	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

- (1) Relay; (2) 5-4-1-3
- (3) KC for hearts; (4) 1 KC

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣(2)	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠(1)
Pass	3♠(3)	Pass	3NT

All Pass

(1) Relay; (2) 13-15; (3) 5-4-1-3

Another deal with apparent slam potential and both pairs coped well. In the Russian auction Gromov showed his full shape and 4♣ was Key Card. For The Netherlands, Jacobs got to show 13-15 and then his full shape and Schollaardt settled for 3NT—which might well have been the big winner on another day (or equally a big loser). No swing, still 16-1.

Bd: 10	North
Dir: East	♠ J84
Vul: Both	♥ Q1032
	♦ KJ973
	♣ A

West	East
♠ A10953	♠ Q72
♥ 987	♥ AKJ
♦ 104	♦ 852
♣ 863	♣ KJ54

South
♠ K6
♥ 654
♦ AQ6
♣ Q10972

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦(1)	Pass	1♥(2)	Pass
1♠(3)	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥(♠)	Pass	2♠	All Pass

(1) Negative

(2) 12-14 balanced/hearts

(3) Relay

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦(1)	Pass	1♥(2)	Pass
1♠(3)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

(1) Negative

(2) 12-14 balanced/hearts

(3) Relay

Finally The Netherlands had a chance to gain some imps; Bertens played 2♠ while Jacobs bought the hand in 2♦, E/W never really identifying the degree

of spade fit. Since 2♦ made 110 on a low spade lead, the Alliance would need to set 2♠ to avoid a swing out. No problem: ♣A lead, encouraged by South, diamond to the queen, club ruff (after all, if partner did not play the suit when you told him to...), diamond to the ace, club ruff, and now declarer misguessed spades—reasonably enough—and lost a trump for down one. Well defended.

2♦ scored +110 on the unfortunate low spade lead; declarer did not have to guess the suit, but he did. No swing; still 16-0.

Bd: 11	North
Dir: South	♠ 108654
Vul: None	♥ K8
	♦ 7632
	♣ 53

West	East
♠ Q932	♠ K
♥ 654	♥ AQ107
♦ KQ	♦ A1094
♣ AKJ2	♣ Q986

South
♠ AJ7
♥ J932
♦ J85
♣ 1074

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

On this deal B/Z's auction to 3NT was the practical one, but Bakkeren went looking for the gold at the end of the rainbow and found himself in a quite playable slam (note that this was facing a 15-count). The 3♣ bid was systemically a four-card suit, a fine hand for their methods (Stayman guarantees invitational values so they respond 2NT to 2♣ with a five-card major; hence 2M is only four). Accordingly, on the actual sequence West would bid 3NT with three trumps and a minimum and could cue-bid 3♥ or 3♦ with four trumps. This allows the partnership to stop low with only a four-three fit and to identify their total trumps immediately.

Bakkeren had arranged to be declarer here, so on a heart lead he was immediately well-placed. He drove out the ♠K and on a trump shift had the entries to ruff two spades and claim. It was 16-11 now and a really good result for E/W's methods.

Bd: 12
 Dlr: West
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ QJ75
 ♥ A64
 ♦ 102
 ♣ J1092

West ♠ A6 ♥ KJ107 ♦ 93 ♣ 87654	East ♠ K1043 ♥ Q2 ♦ J875 ♣ AKQ
South ♠ 982 ♥ 9853 ♦ AKQ64 ♣ 3	

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Both tables evaluated their hands identically here; there might be a case for bidding 3NT over 2♠ since partner won't know what cards are working. Then again switch the diamond honors and even 2NT is down. Both defenders tried to cash the diamonds. Balicki pitched clubs from dummy and claimed nine tricks, Bakkeren threw a heart and now the bad club break cost him an overtrick. 17-11 to the Alliance.

Bd: 13
 Dlr: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 7
 ♥ AQJ952
 ♦ A
 ♣ 106532

West ♠ 62 ♥ 874 ♦ QJ10952 ♣ Q8	East ♠ A853 ♥ K63 ♦ K764 ♣ KJ
South ♠ KQJ1094 ♥ 10 ♦ 83 ♣ A974	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	1♥	Dbl	1♠
2♦	2♥	2NT(G/B)	Dbl
3♦	3♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♥	Dbl	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

On the next board did Schollaardt earn his swing in or did Dubin earn his swing out? The late John Collings used to pose the question "What do you call an eight-card suit? Trumps." Personally we'd look at the South hand and have our 4♠ bid half out of the box after a 1♥ opening unless RHO bid the suit—and who knows, maybe even then.

That was what Martin thought, but the way the auction timed out Dubin never really chose to show his spades, and then probably felt his partner would not let him play that suit. So he settled for the partscore, and Gromov took +170; but that was obviously not enough. We had a new leader: The Netherlands 21-17. Maybe Zmudzinski's failure to intervene with 2♦ also takes some of the blame too.

Bd: 14
 Dlr: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ K3
 ♥ K8742
 ♦ Q752
 ♣ A2

West ♠ 52 ♥ Q5 ♦ KJ109 ♣ J6543	East ♠ A10987 ♥ AJ106 ♦ 63 ♣ Q10
South ♠ QJ64 ♥ 93 ♦ A84 ♣ K987	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT	2♦(♦+♥)	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Here E/W in the Closed Room had the same auction we would have; 2♠ was a fair spot, but Schollaardt found a sensible defense. After two rounds of clubs he cashed the ♦A and led a third club, allowing Jacobs to ruff with the ♠K and force out the ♠A. Now declarer had to cross to the ♦K to pass the ♥Q, ducked all around. On a heart to the ten and a low heart out Schollaardt's ♠6 was the setting trick.

In the Open Room repeated trump leads left declarer in dummy. He led a spade to his king and the ace. Back came a low club and declarer won in hand and led a heart to the queen for a third trump back. Declarer lost two diamonds, a spade, and three hearts, down one. That was just 3 imps to The Netherlands; 24-17.

Bd: 15
Dir: South
Vul: N/S

North
♠ KJ
♥ Q963
♦ K753
♣ K82

West
♠ A1065
♥ A874
♦ J62
♣ Q4

East
♠ 32
♥ KJ5
♦ A109
♣ J10753

South
♠ Q9874
♥ 102
♦ Q84
♣ A96

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	All Pass	1♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
All Pass			2♠

Schollaardt's decision to remove 1NT to 2♠ looks a strange one, but 2♠ was a respectable contract. On Zmudzinski's diamond lead declarer tried to build a heart trick without success but ended up scoring two heart ruffs and two spade tricks to go with his three side-suit winners. Down one.

1NT in the Open Room was no fun at all on a club lead. Gromov ducked the first club, won the second, then tried to set up spades. Bertens took the second spade and shifted to a low heart, and now declarer

had five tricks only. That made the score 27-17 as the last board of the set hit the table.

Bd: 16
Dir: West
Vul: E/W

North
♠ J6
♥ Q92
♦ J97643
♣ 97

West
♠ 73
♥ J5
♦ KQ5
♣ KQ10652

East
♠ K10542
♥ AK64
♦ A2
♣ AJ

South
♠ AQ98
♥ 10873
♦ 108
♣ 843

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣(Min)	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣(KC)	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Both tables reached slam. Bertens showed clubs and cooperated once, then was driven to slam. Zmudzinski showed clubs and a minimum, then a diamond card, and was also driven to the six level.

When Jacobs led a heart Zmudzinski's first reaction was to ask the Director what to do. When no help was forthcoming he settled for the legitimate percentage play rather than playing for a defensive error. He rose with the ♥A and played on spades in due course; down one.

In the Open Room East's 4♠ was Key Card, and when the tray came through (remember, South and West were screenmates) Bertens, West, said that he noticed South flicker and decided he was thinking of doubling, but was not sure if 4♠xx might be the best spot for E/W. Accordingly, he decided that the ♠A was wrong and it would therefore be better to rely on the hearts behaving. He played low from dummy without a hesitation and was home. It was 43-17 at the end of the set.

Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):

While the first set concluded with a series of swings to The Netherlands, the boards in the second set were so quiet that differences in the two teams' approach in the bidding was all the commentators could find to entertain the BBO audience:

Bd: 17	North	East
Dlr: North	♠ AQ107	♠ K4
Vul: None	♥ A1052	♥ 43
	♦ AQ102	♦ 9654
	♣ 10	♣ AQ843
West		
♠ 9532		
♥ QJ7		
♦ J3		
♣ 9762		
	South	
	♠ J86	
	♥ K986	
	♦ K87	
	♣ KJ5	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠(♥)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Both tables played 4♥. In the Open Room Gromov asked and found four hearts in an 8-11 hand. In the other room after the 1NT response Jacobs produced an anti-relay, opting to describe his own hand and let partner decide where to play. Both tables made +420; still 43-17.



Alexander Dubinin

Bd: 18	North	East
Dlr: East	♠ 108	♠ KQ92
Vul: N/S	♥ J653	♥ K108
	♦ 93	♦ AQ6
	♣ KJ875	♣ Q109
West		
♠ AJ54		
♥ 42		
♦ KJ754		
♣ 64		
	South	
	♠ 763	
	♥ AQ97	
	♦ 1082	
	♣ A32	

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Do you or don't you? There were several players no longer in the event who would have doubled 2♣ for the lead, and maybe that is why they were no longer in contention. Both Norths passed in disciplined fashion and then had to endure the ignominy of having partner poke his head under the screen and ask whether they needed to borrow a red card for the rest of the set.

A club opening lead was necessary for the heart shift to set 4♠. On any other lead declarer could discard on the diamonds after drawing trumps. Those with an active temperament—who would rather concede the odd 840 while triumphing on deals like this—will add this one to their data base.

Bd: 19	North	East
Dlr: South	♠ KQ	♠ 8743
Vul: E/W	♥ QJ2	♥ 9765
	♦ AK98	♦ 1063
	♣ K853	♣ 96
West		
♠ AJ962		
♥ 84		
♦ J42		
♣ QJ10		
	South	
	♠ 105	
	♥ AK103	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ A742	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT(R)	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦(R)	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥(R)	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠(R)	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦(R)	Pass	3♦(1)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) 2-4-3-4

Both tables coped well on this deal where 6♣ must have been a possible contract from Gromov's perspective, but the 12-15 notrump did not give him room to explore. In the other room the 14-16 notrump—or absence thereof—cooled off Jacobs' ardor and he opted for the four-three heart fit in the knowledge of the possible spade problem. No swing. Still 43-17 The Netherlands.

Bd: 20
 Dir: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 43
 ♥ A9832
 ♦ J97
 ♣ K74

West	East
♠ J5	♠ AQ1086
♥ KQ	♥ 75
♦ AQ4	♦ K1063
♣ QJ9853	♣ 62
South	
♠ K972	
♥ J1064	
♦ 852	
♣ A10	

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Both teams treated the West hand as a strong notrump and reached a vulnerable game that might be anti-percentage on a heart lead—whereas 4♠ would go down far less but might also run into overruffs or trump promotions. Minus 300 at both tables for West, and a flat board. Still 43-17 after four flat boards.

On Board 21 an overtrick to the Alliance gave them

the first score of the set; 18-43 was the margin.

Bd: 22
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ KJ52
 ♥ Q975
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ 1032

West	East
♠ 4	♠ A93
♥ 106432	♥ AJ8
♦ AJ10742	♦ 9653
♣ K	♣ 984
South	
♠ Q10876	
♥ K	
♦ 8	
♣ AQJ765	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	1♠
2♦	3♣(♠)	3♦	4♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
			2♣
Pass	2♦(R)	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Another competent display by both teams to reach 4♠, but B/Z had not bid at all. Would that matter? Surely once East showed up with two aces declarer would get clubs right. Well, yes and no. On Bertens' shift to the ♣K at trick two declarer could not go wrong, since although he had no entry to dummy for the discard, West had only one spade. Note that on a heart shift and club back declarer would not know who had the ♠A yet—worth remembering next time as East you have the ♣K and not the ♠A. In the other room, left to his own devices, Schollaardt predictably misguessed clubs; 28-45 now.

Bd: 23
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ AQ5
 ♥ AQJ86
 ♦ 3
 ♣ AK108

West	East
♠ 102	♠ 9876
♥ 73	♥ 1095
♦ AK8654	♦ QJ
♣ Q92	♣ J543
South	
♠ KJ43	
♥ K42	
♦ 10972	
♣ 76	

Open Room

West <i>Bertens</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Bakkeren</i>	South <i>Dubin</i>
			Pass
2♣(♦)	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	Dbf	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Zmud'ski</i>	North <i>Jacobs</i>	East <i>Balicki</i>	South <i>Schollaardt</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥(1)	Pass	2♣(2)
Pass	2♦(1)	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT(1)	Pass	3♦(3)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

- (1) Relay
- (2) 5-7
- (3) Diamonds

Another good hand for the full-relay approach. The key here was South's doubleton club. Jacobs could not find out enough at a convenient level so closed his eyes and hoped he would not buy the perfect hand opposite. Afterwards Schollaardt said the system needed to be modified since there were only ace-asking bids after the full shape was known. With South having shown a semi-positive there are clearly better schemes available.

By contrast, Bertens had a 2♣ opening—diamonds or strong—and that made his opponents' life harder in a way. But Gromov did excellently to suggest a good hand, then to remove 3NT to 4♥. Dubinin could then envision short diamonds opposite; his 5♥ bid focused on diamonds and Gromov bid on, of course. Well done; now all Gromov had to do was to make it.

There are several practical lines, with clubs and hearts both breaking it's not clear what is best—but everything works. By drawing two rounds of trumps with the ace and king Gromov committed himself to ruffing a club low in dummy and hoping West was not 2-3-6-2. The calculation as to what is best is always less critical for us when noimps are at stake. The Alliance had picked up their second huge swing in a row; the match score now was 43-41.



The galleries were packed.

Bd: 25
Dir: North
Vul: E/W

North
♠ J974
♥ Q72
♦ AJ10
♣ 963

West
♠ 853
♥ 10964
♦ 72
♣ Q1084

East
♠ KQ62
♥ J83
♦ 8
♣ AKJ75

South
♠ A10
♥ AK5
♦ KQ96543
♣ 2

Open Room

West <i>Bertens</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Bakkeren</i>	South <i>Dubin</i>
	Pass	1♣	Dbf
Pass	1♠(7+)	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Zmud'ski</i>	North <i>Jacobs</i>	East <i>Balicki</i>	South <i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♣	Dbf
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Dbf	4♣
Dbf	5♦	All Pass	

We all know the problem with a loose club is that you can never 'bid' the suit, only name it. Here the reverse problem arose; Gromov's 2NT makes sense though the 3♣ probe found in the other room seems preferable. But over 3♦ surely 3♥ was right. The initial 1♠ bid promised spades and values; there was no reason to drive to notrump after partner's second diamond bid suggested a problem somewhere. Bakkeren untrustingly led the ♣A, received an attitude signal, and cashed out. The Netherlands' auction seems preferable: both players focused on the problem on the hand and came to a sensible answer. The Dutch were back in front by double digits, 53-41.



Huub Bertens

Bd: 26
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

West ♠ 54 ♥ 643 ♦ AK842 ♣ Q104	North ♠ Q8 ♥ AK9875 ♦ --- ♣ AK987	East ♠ AJ109762 ♥ QJ ♦ J763 ♣ ---
	South ♠ K3 ♥ 102 ♦ Q1095 ♣ J6532	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	4♣	3♠	Pass
All Pass		Pass	5♣

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
1NT	2♠	1♠	Pass
Pass	4♥	3♠	4♣
		All Pass	

Reaching 6♣ would be beyond most of us; making it would be even more of a challenge. The non-leaping Michaels (pause for violent exhortation) got Gromov to the right suit, and since he was only in game he did not have to consider whether to take a first-round finesse. At least he stayed at a sensible though non-optimal level. Balicki's one-level opening kept his opponents from ever getting to slam. An overtrick imp gave The Netherlands a 13-imp lead.

After a quiet partscore deal with no swing, both E/W pairs faced another problem in the auction as to both strain and level.

Bd: 28
 Dir: West
 Vul: N/S

West ♠ J95 ♥ J1054 ♦ Q97 ♣ J43	North ♠ Q1064 ♥ 873 ♦ J10 ♣ Q975	East ♠ A872 ♥ KQ92 ♦ AK642 ♣ ---
	South ♠ K3 ♥ A6 ♦ 853 ♣ AK10862	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2♦	3♣	Dbl	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2♥	3♣	3♥	All Pass

The two auctions saw West have to decide whether to bid a major at his first turn (right if you can hit a fit, very wrong facing only three). Then each player had the chance (or felt a need) to bid again. Both players knew their partner had a stronger initial action available in the Polish Club approach. Mind you, starting with 1♣ on a three-suiter short in clubs is not ideal. The final result was sensible enough in each case; a four-one red-suit break in the suit selected as trumps would have embarrassed both contracts. As it was 3♥ collected overtrick imps. The match score was 56-44.

Bd: 29
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North ♠ KQJ106 ♥ A54 ♦ AK8 ♣ Q8	East ♠ 32 ♥ J ♦ QJ932 ♣ A7543
South ♠ 975 ♥ K9763 ♦ 764 ♣ J10	

West ♠ A84 ♥ Q1082 ♦ 105 ♣ K962

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
3♣	1♣	1NT(min)	Pass
All Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦(NEG)
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦(♥)
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Some N/S pairs would be able to stop at the one

level here, neither of our featured pairs were among them. The two auctions spiraled out of control to 4♠. Schollaardt overbid by at least a jack when he suggested a semi-positive with hearts. Meanwhile the preemption forced Gromov to a mild overbid, but he could hardly do less, and Dubinin felt obligated to bid on with what sounded like a possible trick, plus some potentially useful shape.

Bd: 31 North
 Dir: South ♠ AJ104
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1076
 ♦ AJ76
 ♣ Q6

West East
 ♠ Q9732 ♠ 6
 ♥ Q3 ♥ A942
 ♦ Q1095 ♦ K
 ♣ 105 ♣ AJ87432

South
 ♠ K85
 ♥ KJ85
 ♦ 8432
 ♣ K9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
Pass	1♦	3♣	Dbl
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	1♦	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♠	Dbl	All Pass

The final had so far featured some pretty accurate bridge with virtue and vice being rewarded as appropriate. But things were about to change. On this deal 2♠x had chances for 670—on best declarer play there are four spades, one heart, two diamonds and a club. Conversely, the defense could take one club, two diamonds, two hearts and a ruff if declarer misguessed the play.

Balicki's double of 2♠ was described by an unbiased source (first name Adam) as bizarre, since he had an unambiguous bid of 2NT available to show precisely this hand. If the auction did not work out well for the Alliance, the defense went like a well-oiled machine: ♣A, heart to the queen, ♦10 to the jack and king, ♥A, heart ruff, diamond ruff, and the defense had six tricks in with a diamond yet to come. When declarer misguessed spades (culpably, though maybe he was shell-shocked by then) they had a trump as well. Down 800 dwarfed the result of 3♠ down two from

the other room. The match was now level, and with no swing on the final deal the match ended up all square at the half.

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

The third quarter saw no changes in the line-ups.

Bd: 33 North
 Dir: North ♠ A875
 Vul: None ♥ KQJ10632
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 10

West East
 ♠ Q64 ♠ K103
 ♥ 975 ♥ A4
 ♦ J32 ♦ AQ7
 ♣ 8432 ♣ AKQ76

South
 ♠ J92
 ♥ 8
 ♦ K109864
 ♣ J95

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
Pass	1♥	Dbl	2♣(♦)
4♣	3♥	Dbl	Pass
	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
2♣	1♥	Dbl	Pass
	3♥	3NT	All Pass

Balicki's 3NT was down two before it got out of the starting blocks. What about 4♣? On the reasonable diamond lead (and yes, someone up in the clouds must have muttered "I deal him ♥KQJ10 and what does he lead?") declarer flew with the ace, drew trumps and led the diamond to the queen. On a heart return he needed the spade finesse. No luck, but still 2 imps and the lead to The Netherlands, 58-56.



Ton Bakkeren

Bd: 34
 Dir: East
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ KJ964
 ♥ K7
 ♦ A43
 ♣ 432

West
 ♠ Q1083
 ♥ 6
 ♦ J105
 ♣ AQJ98

East
 ♠ A75
 ♥ 84
 ♦ KQ82
 ♣ K1076

South
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AQJ109532
 ♦ 976
 ♣ 5

Open Room

West <i>Bertens</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Bakkeren</i>	South <i>Dubinin</i>
		1♦	3♥
Dbl.	4♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl.	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Zmud'ski</i>	North <i>Jacobs</i>	East <i>Balicki</i>	South <i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♣	3♥
Dbl.	4♥	Pass	Pass
5♣	Dbl.	All Pass	

The random nature of the minor-suit opening for East had an impact on the auction, since Zmudzinski had no idea how much shape his partner had when Jacobs stayed out of the auction. That discretion gave Jacobs a chance to double 5♣, and the defenders made no mistake, cashing the ♥A and shifting to spades; good enough for 300.

Mind you, it was the result from the other table that was going to be critical, and the defenders needed to lead diamonds at once or after one round of clubs to set the contract. But the opening bid made that easy. Dubinin won the diamond lead and misguessed spades—his best practical chance since the defenders were surely going to be able to work out which minor-suit honors were standing up. That was 11imps, and a 13-imp lead for The Netherlands.



A rare lull in the action

Bd: 35
 Dir: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 109743
 ♥ J1052
 ♦ 1054
 ♣ 4

West
 ♠ Q
 ♥ Q963
 ♦ KQ96
 ♣ 8653

East
 ♠ KJ85
 ♥ 7
 ♦ AJ732
 ♣ KJ10

South
 ♠ A62
 ♥ AK84
 ♦ 8
 ♣ AQ972

Open Room

West <i>Bertens</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Bakkeren</i>	South <i>Dubinin</i>
			1♣(STR)
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠(NEG)	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Dbl	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Zmud'ski</i>	North <i>Jacobs</i>	East <i>Balicki</i>	South <i>Schollaardt</i>
			1♣(1)
Pass	1♦(2)	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦(3)	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

(1) Strong
 (2) Weak
 (3) Relay

Jacobs gambled over the 2♣ bid that his side would have a better place to play. Right he was. 2♥ played like a dream, while in the other room the fact that N/S had apparently found a fit persuaded Bakkeren to double in the middle of a live auction. The club ruff defeated 3♦ but The Netherlands still gained an imp.

Bd: 36
 Dir: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ Q543
 ♥ Q762
 ♦ 52
 ♣ 753

West
 ♠ 87
 ♥ A109854
 ♦ Q109
 ♣ 104

East
 ♠ 96
 ♥ 3
 ♦ AKJ43
 ♣ AKQ98

South
 ♠ AKJ102
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ 876
 ♣ J62

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
2♦(Multi)	Pass	2♥	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♦	All Pass

We've commented about the B/Z aggression, but it is all directed at making the opponents' life difficult. While aggressive, they are clearly not manic. Hence, Zmudzinski passed the West cards, then backed in at his second turn to show a non-forcing hand with hearts. Charmed at knowing of values opposite, Balicki drove to game in the minor of his partner's choice and wrapped up 600. That looks easy enough, but in the other room East made no attempt to try for game on a hand with 3½ losers facing a vulnerable opening bid. One can live knowing you have no way to show the minors immediately or at your second turn, but when partner balances in support can't you find 5♦ now? Surely the Young Chelsea doctrine TTASL (Teach them a Sharp Lesson), which requires you to bid game when they reopen, is in point, even in Amsterdam. It was 66-70 to The Netherlands now, and the action (and sickness) continued unabated.

Bd: 37	North
Dlr: North	♠ 10984
Vul: N/S	♥ 765
	♦ J64
	♣ J75
West	East
♠ A7	♠ Q52
♥ KQJ8	♥ 109432
♦ AQ7	♦ 532
♣ A943	♣ Q8
	South
	♠ KJ63
	♥ A
	♦ K1098
	♣ K1062

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl.	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

1-4-4-4 shapes within one's notrump range may be tough to handle, but hands with four spades are so easy to bid that to see someone open 1NT at unfavorable vulnerability (even with a singleton ace) fair turns the stomach. Justice was not quite done when Zmudzinski could not double for penalties, but the contract went down 300 on the obvious top heart lead, the defenders allowing declarer to come to two diamonds, a spade and a heart, but endplaying him to lead clubs from his hand.

That figured to be a great result for The Netherlands, right? 1NT down three is a good save against 3NT. Well, one can hardly blame the Dutch for bidding to 4♥; only repeated diamond leads and perhaps the unblock of the ♦K would beat that. Dubinin duly led the ♦10. Declarer took a long while, but eventually moved fast. The ♦Q held, and Dubinin was in with the ♥A to lead the ♦K, ducked. Yes, a low diamond by South would have avoided this. Back came a third diamond, then two top trumps from dummy and a club to the seven, eight and ten. What now? Dubinin's low club did not work; declarer won in hand and ran the hearts to squeeze South. Contract made for a hard-earned 3imps. Of course in retrospect we can see that shifting to the ♣K was unlikely to cost, since if North had started life with the ♣Q7 he would have risen with the queen to shift to a spade and take his partner off any endplay. It was 73-66 now.

Bd: 39	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q2
Vul: Both	♥ J9
	♦ AK10852
	♣ 976
West	East
♠ J973	♠ 1086
♥ KQ86	♥ A53
♦ QJ	♦ 764
♣ Q104	♣ AK53
	South
	♠ AK54
	♥ 10742
	♦ 93
	♣ J82

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	Pass
Dbl.	Pass	2♥	All Pass

The absence of a weak 2♦ did not hurt the Russians; they stole the opponents' suit, hearts, and bought the hand in 2♦, making 90 when the defense cashed out. Meanwhile, against Balicki's 2♥ the defense crashed the spade honors, took a ruff, then cashed the top diamonds. Now the ♦10, on which South threw a club, gave the defense the upper hand. However, on Jacobs' play of a club back Balicki took the rest via the trump finesse. Easy game, bridge; 5 imps to the Alliance, making the score 73-71

Bd: 40	North
Dlr: West	♠ A64
Vul: None	♥ 98762
	♦ 973
	♣ A5

West	East
♠ K	♠ QJ8532
♥ J54	♥ KQ10
♦ AK10642	♦ J8
♣ K74	♣ 93
South	
♠ 1097	
♥ A3	
♦ Q5	
♣ QJ10862	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♣
2♦	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Back to virtue and vice again. The merits of opening 1NT with the West cards—as a semi-psych if you like—are open to discussion. But once in a while you steal from yourself, as here. While Balicki had a convenient way to make a mild invite, Bakkeren had enough, he thought, to drive to 4♠ and did so. With trumps three-three the game had play.

On the ♣A lead, Dubin dropped the ♣Q (suit preference) and Gromov got the message, leading a heart and continuing the suit to get the ruff. Well done, and 4 imps to the Alliance, now leading 75-73.

Bd: 41	North
Dlr: North	♠ 952
Vul: E/W	♥ Q42
	♦ 9863
	♣ KQ4

West	East
♠ QJ4	♠ AK63
♥ 109863	♥ J
♦ AK10	♦ QJ42
♣ 73	♣ AJ86

South
♠ 1087
♥ AK75
♦ 75
♣ 10952

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

3NT may be inelegant but it has nine tricks. 4♠ may be elegant and satisfy the restless ghost of Alphonse Moyse, but it does not have ten winners. Bakkeren received the lead of a top heart and a low heart. He ruffed, led a diamond to dummy, a club to the king and ace, a diamond to dummy, and a club up. The defenders could get one ruff but that was it. Not the most comfortable imp Bakkeren has ever gained, but he'd take it. 75-74 now, the Alliance.

Bd: 42	North
Dlr: East	♠ 952
Vul: Both	♥ J652
	♦ KQ964
	♣ 6

West	East
♠ 104	♠ J63
♥ KQ1094	♥ 8
♦ 872	♦ AJ5
♣ 985	♣ AKQJ32

South
♠ AKQ87
♥ A73
♦ 103
♣ 1074

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinín</i>
		1♣	1♠
2♦(♥)	2♠	3♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♣	1♠
Pass	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	All Pass

West's 2♦ transfer was a stretch, but when East bid 3♣ (playing Good-Bad 2NT this showed extras) he could pass happily, whereas in the other room Zmudzinski was looking for game facing an announced good hand. A trump lead might have been best against 4♣, but Martin Schollaardt, believing in a kind and just creator, led his sequence. The defenders then played three rounds of spades, using dummy's entry prematurely. Declarer was left with two diamonds and a heart to lose.

Against 3♣, Dubinin cashed one top spade and shifted to diamonds. To have a chance declarer must duck. Now he can win the trump return and duck a spade, or win the diamond return and exit in hearts or spades; South can't get his partner in for the ruff. When Bakkeren won the diamond at trick two he was doomed, but down one was still 3 imps to lead 77-75.

Two inconsequential overtricks exchanged hands on the next two deals, then came a hand where modern science showed at its best. The rule about making omelets is: you have to break an egg or two. Here one was sacrificed—but not to a good cause.

Bd: 45	North
Dlr: North	♠ Q1095
Vul: Both	♥ 10
	♦ 94
	♣ KQ10762

West	East
♠ J742	♠ A3
♥ Q832	♥ AJ976
♦ Q75	♦ K82
♣ AJ	♣ 985

South
♠ K86
♥ K54
♦ AJ1063
♣ 43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinín</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT(♥)	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♣(♥)	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Both tables felt obligated to play at the three level, since with nine trumps Larry Cohen will come around and rap you over the knuckles if you stop in two. Humph. In these days of lighter and lighter opening bids why do you have to go minus just to prove you can? Of course with trumps not behaving both tables had offered 6 imps to the God of Total Tricks, secure in the knowledge that N/S can make 3♣ and might well have bid it if left to their own devices. One hopes the E/W pairs felt the sacrifice was worth it.

Bd: 46	North
Dlr: East	♠ 853
Vul: None	♥ KQ
	♦ Q3
	♣ K108742

West	East
♠ AQ107	♠ KJ64
♥ 32	♥ A98764
♦ AKJ86	♦ ---
♣ A5	♣ Q96

South
♠ 92
♥ J105
♦ 1097542
♣ J3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinín</i>
		1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Both tables bid competently to 6♠, but appearances are slightly deceptive since Balicki (according to our unnamed source again) had shown a 4-5-2-2 pattern with no club stop. Zmudzinski now figured that even if there were no top losers there would be too much work to do—a little surprising since opposite ♠K, ♥AK and ♦Q the grand slam is playable. By contrast,

Bertens was looking for a grand slam and had he found the ♠K opposite he would have bid one. Both tables elected to duck a heart early since they could survive a bad trump break, but probably could not cope with a bad heart break. Sensible; no swing.

With no swings on the last two deals either, the match entered its last quarter with Poland/Russia trailing The Netherlands by half an imp. In 2004 Russia (with Gromov-Dubinina) defeated Hungary by half an imp, so we could be sure that this would not be the closest international match ever—but expectations were that it would go down to the wire.

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

Bd: 49 North
 Dir: North ♠ K72
 Vul: None ♥ AJ
 ♦ 8743
 ♣ J962

West ♠ J95 ♥ Q983 ♦ Q109 ♣ Q105	East ♠ Q3 ♥ K10752 ♦ A652 ♣ A3
South ♠ A10864 ♥ 64 ♦ KJ ♣ K874	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinina</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

We've not demonstrated our great love for the Law of Total Tricks (LOTT everywhere else in the world, Chiba LOTTE in Japan). Time to come back and support Zmudzinski's 3♥ bid. Yes, IF partner has ♠Kx or ♠Qx this could be wrong, but why should he? Non-vulnerable, you are gambling 3 imps against 6, and while you know partner is likely to be two-five in the majors, your intermediates in the minors may give you play for 3♥, and they may have play for 2♠; and the auction is not yet over—they may bid on.

This is not a unanimous position amongst the editors (RC hates the 3♥ bid) but let's look at the record. 2♠ figures to make (really?—RC): you'd expect declarer to get the diamond guess right, and Dubinina duly did.

Accordingly, bidding on to 3♥ figures to gain you 1 or 2 imps depending on how the play in 3♥ goes. Not so fast. The defenders led a trump to the jack and king, declarer tried a diamond to the king, and now South had a problem. The winning defense is to lead a heart, or possibly to underlead in spades, but when Schollaardt played ace and another spade the club shift came too late. Balicki could take the ♣A, cross to the ♦Q, and pitch the club on the ♠J, then concede a trump. 6 imps and an 83-78 lead

Bd: 51 North
 Dir: South ♠ 2
 Vul: E/W ♥ J9854
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ J873

West ♠ AQ106 ♥ A7 ♦ Q9865 ♣ Q2	East ♠ 8543 ♥ Q1032 ♦ 32 ♣ A94
South ♠ KJ97 ♥ K6 ♦ K107 ♣ K1065	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinina</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Dbl	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2♣	All Pass	Pass

Against 2♠ (both E/W pairs taking adventurous views in the auction) Dubinina led the ♥K. Declarer won and ducked a diamond, took South's ♠9 shift with the queen and ducked another diamond. Back came a heart. Bakkeren took the ♥Q, crossed to the ♠A as South split his honors—declarer would have put in the ♠10 had he not done so—ruffed a diamond and a heart, then ruffed a winning diamond with the ♠8. Dubinina could overruff, exit with a trump, and collect a club at the death, but declarer had eight tricks.

Against 2♣, reached after an interesting decision by Jacobs to reverse with only four clubs, the defenders led a diamond and continued hearts when in with the ♥K. Declarer covered with the eight to force the ten, won the diamond switch, and guessed trumps by leading to the ♣K and continuing the suit. West's

heart play at trick two looked as if he was searching for a trump promotion; therefore, this was a logical play. He lost two clubs, two hearts, and one spade for 6 imps and the lead at 84-83.

Bd: 52
 Dir: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ J10965
 ♥ K1062
 ♦ 95
 ♣ Q9

West
 ♠ A
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ AK874
 ♣ AK542

East
 ♠ K83
 ♥ J987
 ♦ ---
 ♣ J108763

South
 ♠ Q742
 ♥ A53
 ♦ QJ10632
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♣	Pass	1♦	2♦
Dbl.	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
1♣	Pass	1♦	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl.	All Pass

Both tables went head-hunting, but Bakkeren was not interested in defending and one can understand why. 3NT had ten top tricks. 2♦ was not a bad spot, despite the trump break. Schollaardt ruffed the club lead and played a spade. Zmudzinski won and carefully led two top trumps, then pumped declarer with a club. The defenders took two spades and five trump tricks one way or another; down 500, and 4 more imps to The Netherlands, leading 88-83.

Bd: 53
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 1076
 ♥ A9
 ♦ AK43
 ♣ KJ94

West
 ♠ KJ432
 ♥ J4
 ♦ Q8652
 ♣ 7

East
 ♠ A9
 ♥ KQ1052
 ♦ 107
 ♣ 10832

South
 ♠ Q85
 ♥ 8763
 ♦ J9
 ♣ AQ65

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	1NT	2♦(1 Maj)	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠(1)
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

(1) Four hearts, range ask

2♥ is down only one, even on best defense, and you can understand why Dubinin (facing a 12-15 notrump) did not double. Gromov, in a forcing position, tried 2NT but that was enough. Meanwhile, Schollaardt's try for game facing a 14-16 notrump looks pushy at first (or indeed second) glance.

Both tables had reached a delicate spot. Gromov received a low heart lead allowing the defenders to unblock the suit. He won, ran four clubs, and advanced the ♦J. Bertens ducked impassively, and declarer had to weigh up the odds of going three down against making. Eventually he rose with the ♦K and cashed out for down one.

Balicki led his singleton club against 2NT—an interesting choice. (We say interesting when we can't decide if it is successful or unsuccessful, or just plain weird.) Jacobs won in hand and played a diamond to the jack. Zmudzinski won and naturally did not find the spade shift, switching instead to the ♥J, as would we, we must confess. Declarer claimed eight tricks; it was 94-83 now.

Bd: 54
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 982
 ♥ A4
 ♦ K875
 ♣ AQJ4

West
 ♠ AQJ753
 ♥ QJ65
 ♦ 10
 ♣ 72

East
 ♠ K64
 ♥ 1032
 ♦ A632
 ♣ 1063

South
 ♠ 10
 ♥ K987
 ♦ QJ94
 ♣ K985

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Dbl
3♠	4NT	Dbl.	Pass
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Huge differences in hand valuation by the two teams did not create the massive swing that might have materialized on a slightly different lie of the cards. Zmudzinski's 4♠ effort found the perfect dummy and no heart ruff so he got out for down one, on an auction where he was going to buy the hand in 3♠ had he wanted to.

Dubin's light but 'normal' double of 2♠ as a passed hand persuaded Gromov to try a game; maybe one side or the other could make one. On a trump lead 5♦ would have gone for 300, so his decision to play clubs from the North seat (down one on the diamond ruff) was a good one. 4 imps to The Netherlands, leading 98-83 now.

Bd: 55	North
Dlr: South	♠ 7653
Vul: Both	♥ A6
	♦ Q543
	♣ K94

West
♠ J942
♥ K5
♦ 1076
♣ 8753

East
♠ KQ
♥ QJ7
♦ AJ82
♣ AQ62

South
♠ A108
♥ 1098432
♦ K9
♣ J10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	2♥	2NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♥
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Both tables played a notrump partial on a heart lead, Dubin after opening a Multi hand that would have had the commentators frothing at the mouth were they capable of such passion. "My flabber has never been so gasted" as Francis Howard would say. And worse, the call worked, getting Bakkeren a level higher than in the other room.

Both defenders led a heart. Neither declarer found the winning double-dummy play of going low. Both rose with the king as North took his ace and returned the suit. Balicki sneaked one spade through, then the defenders took the next and cleared the hearts. Now Balicki had to decide whether to exit with a club or a diamond. The diamond play looks normal, but Schollaardt signalled for clubs on the third heart. Balicki decided to believe him and played ace and another club. Fool me once, shame on you...

In the other room Dubin had played the ♥8 after winning the ♠A. Bakkeren believed him and exited with the ace and another diamond for down one. No swing, and The Netherlands remained 15 imps in front. But not for long.

Bd: 56	North
Dlr: West	♠ 987
Vul: None	♥ 10
	♦ 92
	♣ AKJ10542

West
♠ QJ10632
♥ K74
♦ Q1083
♣ ---

East
♠ 4
♥ Q9852
♦ AK6
♣ Q973

South
♠ AK5
♥ AJ63
♦ J754
♣ 86

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	3♣	Pass	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Dbl
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
2♦(Multi)	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The issues raised by this board are so many and varied that we do not have time to consider any of them in as much detail as they deserve. Would you consider the West hand an opening bid at the one,

two (or even three) level? Do you consider the North hand an opening bid at the two, three, or four level?

It pains us to have to record imps won by a player who passed the North hand almost as much as it satisfies us to see West's initial pass come back to bite him on the rear end.

The bottom line was that in 3NT on a top spade lead South was a favorite to make; if clubs were not four-zero the defenders were not much better than even money to be able to cash out the diamonds for four tricks, we'd say. But this was not the layout of South's dreams. The four-zero clubs allowed Balicki to duck the first club and kill the suit; down three.

In 4♥x on a club lead declarer ruffed the first trick, led a diamond to hand and a spade up. Dubinin won and played ace and another heart. Bakkeren took three diamonds, a club ruff, and four trump tricks for down two; 10 imps to the Alliance, down by 5 imps.

The next deal saw a lead change:

Bd: 57
 Dlr: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ Q74
 ♥ ---
 ♦ Q876432
 ♣ AKQ

West	East
♠ 863	♠ J1052
♥ KJ52	♥ A1073
♦ K5	♦ A10
♣ J765	♣ 984

South
♠ AK9
♥ Q9864
♦ J9
♣ 1032

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♦
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

Gromov-Dubinin played that 2♣ here showed extra diamond length since they can transfer after major-suit responses (because they never have balanced hands for their 1♦ opening). Dubinin did not show

extras by completing the transfer so Gromov's decision to bid on created the swing. The tempo of the auction was completely different in the other room, where South had to decide whether to stretch for a non-vulnerable game, and wisely chose not to.

In 5♦ Gromov ruffed the first trick and crossed to dummy to pass the ♦9. This guarded against either defender having a singleton honor and was a sensible enough line, though nothing mattered since 11 tricks were a foregone conclusion on any line. The Alliance led 100-99—with more to come.

Bd: 58
 Dlr: East
 Vul: Both

North	East
♠ A98	♠ Q64
♥ KJ106	♥ A98
♦ AKQ43	♦ 8762
♣ J	♣ 873

West	South
♠ J10	♠ K7532
♥ Q74	♥ 532
♦ 5	♦ J109
♣ AKQ10642	♣ 95

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
		Pass	Pass
3NT	Dbl	4♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	4♠
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		Pass	Pass
2♣	2♦	Pass	2♠
3♣	Dbl	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

The level of preemption made the difference here. Dubinin had the pleasant choice of collecting 500 or bidding on to 4♠, and chose the latter. Schollaardt might have bid 4♠ over Jacobs' value-showing second double. It is easy to be wise after the fact. In 4♠ Dubinin got a top club lead and a trump shift. He rose with the ♠A, played a spade to the king, ruffed a club, came to the ♦J, gave up a spade, and claimed ten tricks. Against 3♠ the defense tried two rounds of clubs. Schollaardt cashed the ♠A and then played safely, passing the ♠9. West won and played a heart, and declarer guessed right. It was still 10 imps to the Alliance, up by 11 now. Would it last?

Bd: 59
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 108
 ♦ AJ7642
 ♣ 10985

West
 ♠ KJ742
 ♥ AKJ43
 ♦ 9
 ♣ J6

East
 ♠ Q9653
 ♥ 65
 ♦ K10
 ♣ AK73

South
 ♠ A10
 ♥ Q972
 ♦ Q853
 ♣ Q42

Bd: 60
 Dir: West
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 83
 ♥ AK6
 ♦ A10642
 ♣ 985

West
 ♠ K96542
 ♥ 10
 ♦ K987
 ♣ Q4

East
 ♠ A107
 ♥ Q52
 ♦ QJ5
 ♣ KJ63

South
 ♠ QJ
 ♥ J98743
 ♦ 3
 ♣ A1072

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT(♠)	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
			Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣(♠GF)	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmudzinski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Zmudzinski's decision to bid on without a club control made Balicki think he must have the ace-king of both majors. (Wouldn't he bid 5♠ with that hand?) Mind you, it's not clear that Zmudzinski has enough for a third try without a club control (consider ♠AQxx ♥xxx ♦AKQ ♣xxx opposite).

Bertens got to show his diamond shortage and East, having forced to game, had nothing more to say without a heart control. So their auction was never really in danger of getting out of control. The match was back to level—if you discount the half imp for carry-forward in the glass case that Poland could break open in an emergency.

In 2♠ the defense can take two diamond ruffs and three aces. Jacobs led a top heart and shifted to a club. Back came a diamond for the ruff and declarer had the rest. Plus 140 looked good enough. But in the other room, Gromov heard West invite to game with spades and diamonds. With the possibility of a diamond ruff coming in dummy, he elected to lead a trump, and declarer guessed the suit at once to make +170. It is easy to see why North might have kicked himself for his choice of lead here (declarer's actual shape of six-four ought not to have been a surprise since facing a balanced 12-14 it would be hard to imagine a hand worth a game try as a passed hand without extra shape). The heart losers might go away if you don't cash them, so the lead of the ♦A to look at dummy makes a lot of sense. It was The Netherlands by 1 imp now.



Adam Zmudzinski



Cezary Balicki

Bd: 61
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ AK6
 ♥ 8753
 ♦ 1053
 ♣ 954

West
 ♠ 107
 ♥ 10642
 ♦ QJ
 ♣ Q10862

East
 ♠ J2
 ♥ AKJ9
 ♦ K9874
 ♣ AK

South
 ♠ Q98543
 ♥ Q
 ♦ A62
 ♣ J73

Bd: 62
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ Q10974
 ♦ A1032
 ♣ 85

West
 ♠ A65
 ♥ A52
 ♦ 654
 ♣ 9642

East
 ♠ 1084
 ♥ J86
 ♦ Q987
 ♣ AK3

South
 ♠ Q9732
 ♥ K3
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ QJ107

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
	Pass	1♦	1♠
Dbf	2♠	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
	Pass	1♣	1♠
Pass	2♠	Dbf	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Both tables reached 4♥ here, Bakkeren as East after Bertens' ghastly negative double, Zmudzinski as West after showing an invitational hand facing Balicki's strong Polish-Club sequence. The defense that would surely set 4♥ is to cash two spades and play two rounds of diamonds, whereupon declarer will take a first-round heart finesse. In practice, when the weak hand is dummy this defense is plausible. Dubinin led a spade, and Gromov shifted to diamonds. Dubinin won and played back a spade. Gromov played... a club. Declarer cashed the ♥A and claimed a moment later. Where the weak hand was declarer it seems harder. The defenders cashed two spades, exited with a passive club, and declarer also took one top heart at once and was out of the woods. Still The Netherlands by 1 imp.

Gromov-Dubin only played one 2/1 auction as non-forcing and this was it. Jacobs had a transfer auction to show a mild invitation to game and approximately this major-suit pattern. Well bid by both pairs.

In 2♠ Zmudzinski led the ♣6 and Balicki played three rounds of the suit, threatening a trump promotion on the fourth. Schollaardt countered by leading a heart to the queen, ♠K ducked, as East tossed the ♠8, three rounds of diamonds ruffed low, the fourth club ruffed high, a diamond ruffed with the ♠7, and now declarer had two more trump tricks by force. Bertens' diamond lead was far less threatening. Declarer won cheaply, drove out the ♠A, and the defenders cashed their clubs. But it was all over then. No swing; The Netherlands by an imp.



Leon Jacobs



Maarten Schollaardt

Bd: 63
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 765
 ♥ 964
 ♦ Q9542
 ♣ 85

West
 ♠ KQ42
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ K83
 ♣ 943

East
 ♠ 93
 ♥ 10875
 ♦ J106
 ♣ AKQ6

South
 ♠ AJ108
 ♥ AJ3
 ♦ A7
 ♣ J1072

Bd: 64
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 97
 ♥ AJ983
 ♦ 63
 ♣ 9854

West
 ♠ J1084
 ♥ K10
 ♦ K7
 ♣ Q10762

East
 ♠ A52
 ♥ 76
 ♦ J842
 ♣ AKJ3

South
 ♠ KQ63
 ♥ Q542
 ♦ AQ1095
 ♣ ---

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
All Pass			1NT

Bertens led a low spade. Declarer took the jack and played the ♦A and a second diamond to the queen. So far so good. Next came a heart to the jack and queen and a club shift to the queen for a spade through to the jack and queen. Bertens cashed the ♦K (South pitching the ♥3), played a club to the king, and when a heart came through Dubin took his ace and cashed his ♠A before trying to build a club trick (because hearts were blocked this would have led to down one). He therefore went down two.

Where Zmudzinski led a low spade Schollaardt won the jack, played ace and another diamond, and Zmudzinski took the ♦K—which looks good, does it not? Next came a club to the queen, a spade to the ten and queen, a club to the king, and the ♥8 to the three and queen. The defenders had got everything right to that point, but then a club came back to the ace for a second heart. Schollaardt rose with the ace and played the fourth club; Zmudzinski pitched his diamond but was endplayed with the ♥K to lead spades at trick 12. Three undertrick imps; The Netherlands by 4 imps.



"Wow, that was a close one!"

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertens</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bakkeren</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	2♥(♥+m)	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zmud'ski</i>	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Schollaardt</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	DbI
1♠	2♥	DbI	4♥
All Pass			

The last chance for the Alliance came when both N/S pairs bid to 4♥ on the minority of the high cards. Zmudzinski was happy enough to defend; he did not want to double facing a third-in-hand opener where he did not want partner to take it out. Balicki led a top club, ruffed, cashed the ♠A, and shifted to a trump. Declarer won and took a diamond finesse, losing, but still had enough dummy entries to ruff out diamonds, and the two-two trump break gave him 11 tricks.

Had Bakkeren stretched to double 2♥ bad things would have happened when Dubin bid 4♥. As it was, with only three spades he sold out, and the danger was past. Gromov got a club lead and ruffed to play a spade. Bakkeren won and led a second club. Now declarer played a crossruff and never took a trump finesse, so he lost a heart at the death. 1 more imp to The Netherlands, who won the 2007 NEC Cup 114-109. To hold your opponents to well under 2 imps per board in a 64-board match is impressive; to lose after doing that implies that your opponents have played very well, which was certainly our impression.

The Netherlands had taken a big lead three times in the match only to be pegged back on each occasion. Their ability to fight back at the death was huge; they were truly worthy winners.

Don't Mess With Me

by Barry Rigal

Antonio Sementa is a double world champion and he can read his opponents like a book... apparently.

This was the auction (Sementa, was West, playing with Christal Henner-Welland). The deal occurred in the second qualifying session of the Mitchell Open Board-a-Match Teams.

West	North	East	South
Dbf ??	2♥	4♠	2♦ Pass

Sementa held: ♠K5 ♥A10974 ♦A3 ♣AKJ10. He elected to bid Roman Key Card Blackwood for spades, and over partner's response showing one key card, he checked on the ♠Q. Henner-Welland bid 6♥ to show the ♠Q and ♥K, and Sementa passed!

The full deal:

Dlr: South	♠ J10842	♠ AQ963
Vul: Both	♥ 85	♥ K32
	♦ 10982	♦ J
	♣ 9 5	♣ Q872
	♠ K5	
	♥ A10974	
	♦ A3	
	♣ AKJ10	
	♠ 7	
	♥ QJ6	
	♦ KQ7654	
	♣ 643	

As you can see, 6♥ is laydown after taking the diamond ruff. Even though this turned out to be a flat board, Sementa's auction achieved its real target: letting North know that it does not pay to mess with this particular pair of opponents.

13th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Wednesday (Feb. 6)	10:00-12:50	NEC Cup Swiss (1)	F201/F202
	12:50-14:00	Lunch Break	(20 boards/match)
	14:00-16:50	NEC Cup Swiss (2)	
	17:10-20:00	NEC Cup Swiss (3)	
Thursday (Feb. 7)	10:00-12:50	NEC Cup Swiss (4)	F201/F202
	12:50-14:00	Lunch Break	
	14:00-16:50	NEC Cup Swiss (5)	
	17:10-20:00	NEC Cup Swiss (6)	
Friday (Feb. 8)	10:00-12:50	NEC Cup Swiss (7)	F201/F202
	13:10-16:00	NEC Cup Swiss (8)	
	16:00-17:10	Lunch Break	
	17:10-20:00	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (1)	E204
Saturday (Feb. 9)	10:00-12:50	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (2)	E204
	12:50-14:00	Lunch Break	
	14:00-16:50	NEC Cup Semi-Final (1)	
	17:10-20:00	NEC Cup Semi-Final (2)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama SSR & Swiss Teams (1)	F203-206
Sunday (Feb. 10)	10:00-12:20	NEC Cup Final (1) & 3 rd Playoff (1)	E204
	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)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama SSR & Swiss Teams (2)	F203-206
Monday (Feb. 11)	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	F203-206
	18:30-20:30	Closing Ceremony	F201-204

Swiss, Quarter- & Semi-Final segments = 20 boards; Final & 3rd place playoff segments = 16 boards