



NEC Bridge Festival

Saturday, February 9, 2008
Bulletin Number 4

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Assistant Editor: Sue Picus

Mahaffey Tops 2008 NEC Cup Qualifiers

With three more wins Mahaffey (Fredrik Nystrom, Peter Bertheau, Peter Fredin, Bjorn Fallenius, Jim Mahaffey, npc) retained the top spot at the end of the Swiss Qualifying with 161 VPs, 14 ahead of second-place qualifiers The Latin (Frankie Frontaura, Federico Goded, Gonzalo Goded, Diego Brenner). In third place, just 1 VP back, was Not the Empire (Paul Hackett, John Armstrong, Eric Kokish, Gerry Charney, Sue Picus). Israel (Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Zur-Campanile—monkey see, monkey do) finished in fourth place with 144 VPs. In fifth through eighth places were Canada, Lithuania, YOI Returns and Geller, the last of these qualifying over Kitty's via a tie-breaker. The big surprise was that last year's winners from The Netherlands (Ton Bakkeren, Huub Bertens, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen, Jeanne van den Meiracker, npc) failed to qualify when they could only garner 19 VPs in yesterday's final two matches. Five other teams were within 3 VPs of qualifying, while ten others were within 15 VPs of playing in the KO phase. The complete final rankings are shown below while individual results for yesterday's last two matches may be found on page 4.

NEC Cup: Final Standings (Eight Matches)

Rank	Team	VPs	Rank	Team	VPs	Rank	Team	VPs
1	Mahaffey	161	14	Losier	124	27	Charmant	111
2	The Latin	147	15	VEGA*	124	28	Open SESAME!	110
3	Not the Empire	146	16	JAPAN OPEN	122	29	AQUA	110
4	Israel	144	17	Fu-Zhao	120	30	Hong Kong	109
5	Canada	141	18	SKOTII	120	31	makko	108
6	Lithuania	139	19	KURITA	119	32	GIRASOL	105
7	YOI Returns	139	20	Sun Flowers	119	33	ROSEWOOD	99
8	Geller	132	21	ESPERANZA	118	34	MINK	99
9	Kitty's	132	22	KinKi	118	35	Masters Senior	99
10	GIBS	131	23	LAS FLORES	117	36	SOLARIS	95
11	The Netherlands	131	24	BIRD	112	37	Kimura@Yokohama	89
12	NAITO	130	25	ikkyu-3	112	38	MY-Bridge	85
13	HANA	129	26	Fairy Tale	112	39	PS-Jack	77

All (apparent) ties above have been broken

The standings at the half-way mark of each quarterfinals match may be found on page 5. Due to time constraints and the depth of coverage of yesterday's final two qualifying-round matches (see pp. 8-14 and 16-25) our complete coverage of the four quarterfinals matches will appear in tomorrow's bulletin.

Today's 1st VuGraph Match will feature Not the Empire (5) vs YOI Returns (11)

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.

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 Bertheau, 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

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



Your friendly bulletin staff at your service

Friday's Match Results

Match 7

Mahaffey (62)	21-9	YOI Returns (33)
Israel (51)	17-13	CANADA (42)
Not the Empire (39)	19-11	GELLER (22)
The Netherlands (34)	11-19	THE LATIN (55)
SKOTII (53)	20-10	Fu-Zhao (30)
HANA (28)	10-20	Lithuania (50)
NAITO (56)	20-10	Losier (32)
KURITA (46)	13-17	GIBS (56)
VEGA* (52)	22-8	Charmant (18)
JAPAN OPEN (50)	18-12	Hong Kong (37)
ikkyu-3 (43)	12-18	LAS FLORES (58)
Kitty's (56)	22-8	AQUA (20)
Sun Flowers (41)	15-15	ESPERANZA (40)
makko (71)	23-7	BIRD (30)
KinKi (58)	21-9	SOLARIS (30)
ROSEWOOD (43)	12-18	Open SESAME! (57)
MINK (51)	19-11	PS-Jack
MY-Bridge (9)	6-24	GIRASOL (52)
Fairy Tale (51)	21-	(24)
Kimura@Yokohama (21)	11-	(41)
Masters Senior (28)	14 -	(35)

Match 8

Mahaffey (47)	17-13	ISRAEL (37)
Not the Empire (34)	14-16	YOI Returns (38)
The Netherlands (28)	8-22	CANADA (62)
The Latin (118)	25-0	SKOTII (20)
Lithuania (71)	21-9	VEGA* (41)
NAITO (25)	12-18	Geller (39)
GIBS (63)	20-10	Fu-Zhao (39)
KURITA (34)	10-20	HANA (57)
JAPAN OPEN (52)	14-16	Losier (58)
Kitty's (76)	25-4	makko (22)
LAS FLORES (43)	13-17	KinKi (52)
ikkyu-3 (33)	11-19	Sun Flowers (51)
Hong Kong (34)	10-20	ESPERANZA (58)
Charmant (48)	13-17	AQUA (58)
MINK (14)	8-22	Fairy Tale (47)
Open SESAME! (74)	21-9	SOLARIS (45)
BIRD (83)	25-4	PS-Jack (25)
Masters Senior (41)	20-10	MY-Bridge (17)
GIRASOL (41)	20-	(18)
ROSEWOOD (33)	14-	(38)
Kimura@Yokohama (25)	11-	(43)

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

Quarterfinals Standings at the Half (20 Boards)

Team	Carryover	IMPs
Mahaffey	.5	23
Geller		34
The Latin	.5	56
Lithuania		11
Not the Empire	.5	48
YOI Returns		46
Israel	.5	54
Canada		35

Meet Pascale Gardiner

You may have noticed a young, attractive caddie at this tournament, transporting boards to and from your tables. Pascale Gardiner, 19, joins us from Wanganui, NZ where she has been playing bridge for a couple of years. Her first caddying experience was in September 2007, and she enjoyed it enough to want to do it again.

She has completed one year at Massey University in NZ, majoring in history and classical studies. She is taking this year off, and what better way to do that than to accompany her mother to Yokohama and take the job of chief caddy? She plans to transfer to another university next year, most likely in Australia, and resume her studies. She plans to use the year to play more bridge with the goal of improving her game and making the New Zealand junior team at least once before she becomes ineligible for junior bridge in seven years.

(As a personal note, one of the editors, the one with the London background, last remembers seeing Pascale when she was four years old; he used to play bridge with Ian, Pascale's late father. He thinks the last fifteen years have been rather kind to her).



Pascale Gardiner

Registration for the Asuka Cup

If you plan to play in the Asuka Cup (the 2-session Open Pairs on the 11th) and wish to be guaranteed an entry, you must register in advance in the Secretariat, Room E206.

Registration deadline: 7:00 pm Sunday, 10 February.

A Defensive Hand (from the Software DEFENSE)

by Mike Lawrence

Defense is usually the last thing that a defender learns to be efficient at. It is much tougher than playing a dummy for a variety of reasons.

When you are defending, there are many things you can do to help you find the best play. One of these things is to count. What should you be counting?

Among other things, you should count declarer's tricks, his shape, and his points. In the hand here, counting will play a major role for the West defender.

Dlr: West North
 Vul: Both ♠ AK72
 ♥ K762
 ♦ 72
 ♣ 762

West
 ♠ 83
 ♥ 4
 ♦ KQ9853
 ♣ AQ108

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

West opened his nice shaped hand with one diamond. East bid one spade and when South bid two hearts, West was not able to describe the rest of his hand. North cue-bid two spades and when South signed off in three hearts, West was left on lead.

His choice was the ♦K, greeted warmly by East's ten and South's jack. West continued with the queen, but South ruffed this, which was very disappointing to West. It looks like 4♦ is cold for E/W and they are defending against 3♥. A poor result, no matter how many tricks South takes.

South now played three rounds of trumps, East showing up with three to the ten. Now came the ♠A and ♠K, East playing the queen and nine. Finally, declarer led a club to his nine and West's jack. How should West continue the defense? Having lost a makeable partscore of 4♦, is there a way to salvage a small plus score out of this?

Want to know which club East played? A fair question but I did not notice so I can't tell you. You will have to do the best you can without that

information. What do you think West should do here?

West must choose between clubs and diamonds. A diamond will give a ruff and a sluff and a diamond may or may not set up South's king. Neither play is very comfortable. Still, you must make one. Which?

Consider your play and continue when ready. I can offer you a major clue. The correct play is guaranteed to work, no matter what the arrangement of the remaining cards. Since the play and thinking here are instrumental to good defense, I offer that you really should do some thinking before continuing.

	♠ AK72	
	♥ K762	
	♦ 72	
	♣ 762	
♠ 83		♠ QJ109
♥ 4		♥ J84
♦ KQ9853		♦ A1064
♣ AQ108		♣ 54
	♠ 654	
	♥ AQ1095	
	♦ J	
	♣ KJ93	

West must give South a sluff and a ruff by leading another diamond. It does not matter where South takes the ruff. Most likely, he will ruff in dummy and discard his spade. No spade losers for South. Another club is taken by West who leads another diamond. South ruffs this one, but still has two club losers.

The key is this. West counted South's winners. West saw that South has two spade tricks, five hearts tricks, and a ruff in dummy. Leading diamonds ensures that South has only eight tricks. Leading clubs can never win. Even if East has the ♣K, it does not gain a net trick for the defense. By leading diamonds, West gets all the available tricks wherever the ♣K is.

In this case, the key was for West to count South's winners. He has just eight so West defended in a way that could not possibly give South a ninth.

Nice try by South. Against some defenders, this line would have worked.

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

Bad Defense Causes Reindeer Stampede

by Richard Pavlicek

The North Pole Regional has been canceled this year. The host Eskimos could not rebuild the hotel in time after the trampling it received last year when the reindeer ran amok. Tournament chairman Mush Kimook announced it will be scheduled for next July, which as he admits, "is a deliberate attempt to cut down the reindeer attendance." Entry fees also will be increased, although the hoofed creatures have vowed to plunder and pillage if necessary to come up with the money.

Mush wrote that a lot of controversy was spawned by last year's fiasco, including today's deal which captured the front-page headline. His partner Slush McRuff opened the West hand with 1♦, only to hear the "beastly opponents" bid swiftly to 4♥. This contract was made despite its obvious impossibility—declarer can play cards until they come out of his antlers, but he must lose three diamonds and a trump trick. Therefore, Mush and Slush were accused of bad defense, which led to a reindeer spree, which led to a stampede...you know the rest.

Dir: West ♠ AKJ
Vul: None ♥ 983
 ♦ 9876
 ♣ AQ7

♠ Q1043 ♠ 876
♥ 74 ♥ J1065
♦ AQJ5 ♦ 104
♣ K54 ♣ 9863

♠ 952
♥ AKQ2
♦ K32
♣ J102

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dbf	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Mush could not recall the exact play, but he knew that Slush led the ♥7 and the defense was accurate. This contradicts the evidence, of course, so the committee had no choice but to rule them at fault and liable for damages. Was this a fair ruling? Or can 4♥ be made legitimately? You be the judge.

Declarer can win nine easy tricks, but all routine tries for 10 will fail. Note that if declarer leads a diamond from dummy, East can play the 10 to ensure that West will not be endplayed.

But there is a way. Duck the ♥7 lead (East cannot overtake without losing a trick). Win the next heart; three clubs (by finessing); two more hearts; and the spade finesse. Assuming West has not thrown a diamond, cash two more spades to squeeze him in one suit. If he keeps AQJ, duck a diamond; if he keeps AQ5, finesse against East's 10—you can always win a diamond trick.

Should Mush and Slush be exonerated? Fat chance. When was the last time you saw a reindeer play a hand like this?



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.

Match Seven: YOI Returns vs Mahaffey

by Barry Rigal

Jim Mahaffey is the npc of a team that has provided the nucleus of the Swedish national squad over the last decade. Bjorn Fallenius has actually lived in New York City for the last 20 years (ask him to do his Robert de Niro impersonation: 'you talking to ME?' if you don't believe me) but he and Peter Fredin have been playing together for a while and of course share an ex-partner in Magnus Lindqvist. For Yoi Furuta-Chen are a regular partnership, and Yokoi-Furuta won the North American Swiss in San Francisco last fall. Apologies, Hiroki, for failing to give you a share of the congratulations yesterday.). Ino-Imakura have been regulars on the Japanese team recently.

Bd: 1
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ A8
♥ 652
♦ J8532
♣ J73

West
♠ 765
♥ K743
♦ AQ
♣ K1095

East
♠ KQ42
♥ J8
♦ 10964
♣ A86

South
♠ J1093
♥ AQ109
♦ K7
♣ Q42

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dbl	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

On Board 1, Imakura rebid 1NT to show 13-16 and was left in that unappetizing spot. On a heart lead he won and played the ♦K. Bertheau won to switch to a spade, dislodging the dummy entry, and Imakura emerged with only five tricks (three hearts and one in each black suit). Since 2♠ was not much fun in the other room, would Mahaffey break on top? The ♠10 lead made Furuta's life easier, if only because he did not have to decide whether to play for the ♠A onside. After Fredin shifted to a heart declarer emerged with eight tricks: a ruff in each hand and his four plain-suit winners to go with his two top trumps. No swing.

After Mahaffey started the scoring with an overtrick imp on Board 2, there were far moreimps at stake on Board 3.

Bd: 3
Dir: South
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 52
♥ A8432
♦ Q985
♣ J2

West
♠ AK64
♥ Q
♦ 10732
♣ AK93

East
♠ Q973
♥ J96
♦ 64
♣ Q1074

South
♠ J108
♥ K1075
♦ AKJ
♣ 865

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
			1♣
1♠	Dbl	2♥(1)	Pass
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Dbl	All Pass		
(1) Good single raise			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
			1NT
Dbl	2♥	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

Ino misguessed hearts by virtue of his opponents' silence in the auction with so many high cards. Fallenius was faced with an auction where Chen had overcalled in spades and doubled 3♥, and Furuta had not converted back to 3♠ (surely he would not have four spades?). Chen led a top club and shifted to the ♥Q; Fallenius mulled it over and rose with the ace, then finessed for +530. Mahaffey now led 12-0.



"Grab him or the free wasabe will all be gone by the time we get there."

Bd: 4 North
 Dir: West ♠ K10
 Vul: Both ♥ 3
 ♦ AK95
 ♣ Q98765

West	East
♠ Q	♠ AJ86542
♥ KQ10975	♥ J6
♦ 10732	♦ QJ
♣ AK	♣ 32

South
 ♠ 973
 ♥ A842
 ♦ 864
 ♣ J104

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
1♥	2♣	Dbl	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♥	2♣	2♠*	3♣
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Board 4 also offered a significant opportunity for a swing. Bertheau heard Nystrom produce a non-forcing 2♠ bid, so his 3♥ showed extras, enough to persuade Nystrom to give game a shot. The defenders can set 4♥ by force but it is far from easy (lead two rounds of trumps early and do not cover the ♠Q). Ino led a top diamond and shifted to clubs, the normal action given his partner's club raise. Now declarer was apparently safe, although he did not know it, since his choice of lines would be to pass the ♠Q and lead a diamond or to play a diamond. Then he would make it on a spade-diamond squeeze even if the defenders shifted to trumps while spades were still blocked. Bertheau chose the latter course and the defenders took the second diamond to play another club anyway. Now declarer was cold in normal play. He won in hand and ruffed a diamond (a mistake, since the ♦10 was clearly standing up), ruffed a spade low, ruffed a diamond with ♥J and now had to guess whether to ruff the third spade low or high. Since North had shown six clubs, two spades and four diamonds his choice of ruffing high was not inspired. In the four-card ending Imakura had ♥A842 left, with declarer holding ♥KQ107, and the defenders could ensure two trump tricks by ducking high hearts to endplay West at trick twelve.

(On a double-dummy basis, had North shifted to a trump at trick two, with South continuing the suit, North would have had to lead a low spade when in with the ♦K at trick five to cut communications.)

In the Open Room 3♠ could apparently only have been set via the heart ruff; after the club lead even if Fredin ducks the ♠Q declarer can play on hearts to get his fourth diamond away, losing just two hearts and two diamonds.

Bd: 5 North
 Dir: North ♠ A943
 Vul: N/S ♥ 82
 ♦ A72
 ♣ J1063

West	East
♠ KQ76	♠ 105
♥ AK109	♥ 643
♦ QJ63	♦ 10984
♣ 9	♣ KQ85

South
 ♠ J82
 ♥ QJ75
 ♦ K5
 ♣ A742

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
1♦	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♦*	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

On Board 5 Chen-Furuta went hunting big game again. Bertheau was able to show his three-suiter at his second turn (they open 2♦ with single-suited diamond hands so 1♦ always delivers a major or a balanced minimum) and play 3♦ down on a heart lead and eventual heart ruff. But Fredin characteristically balanced with 2♠ on a limited auction and found himself in the soup. Chen could double and Furuta elected to sit for it, despite the bad vibrations from Board 3. Furuta led the ♦10, and Fredin won in dummy to lead a club to the nine, jack and king. A heart to the nine for a diamond continuation won in hand saw Fredin lead a spade to the eight and queen. Chen cashed one top heart, then got out with a third diamond, ruffed in dummy. The ♠J was passed, holding the trick, and declarer ruffed out the ♥K, cashed the ♠A, and led a club to the ace, ruffed by Chen. That player had left himself with the master diamond so he could cash it, but had to concede trick thirteen to dummy's ♥Q. To get an extra trick maybe he needed to have unblocked both

diamond honors earlier in the hand to let Furuta win the fourth diamond and cash a club. Anyway, 6 imps made the match 12-12.

Bd: 6 North
 Dlr: East ♠ 9
 Vul: E/W ♥ KJ985
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ 109642

West
 ♠ K82
 ♥ A73
 ♦ 86
 ♣ A8753

East
 ♠ QJ1054
 ♥ Q642
 ♦ 10742
 ♣ ---

South
 ♠ A763
 ♥ 10
 ♦ KJ953
 ♣ KQJ

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Fredin</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Fallenius</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Bertheau</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Nystrom</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♠	3♣	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

Fredin took the low road in the auction, and was probably regretting his choice after Furuta's unlucky(?) choice of a heart lead. (The card gods were mumbling behind their hands again about ignoring attractive sequences on opening lead.) The defenders set up the ♥Q but shifted in mid-play to spades, and Fredin ended up with an impressive eleven tricks on a deal where an attack on spades might have left him with about eight. In the other room Nystrom's overcall in spades left N/S unable to play notrump. Was 3♣ forcing—should it be? Imakura corrected to 3♦ and the defenders led trumps. Declarer won in dummy, ruffed a spade as Bertheau unlocked the ♠K, and tried to get to hand with a club. Now the roof fell in as the defenders took all their trumps separately, ending up with three clubs, two spades, and the ♥A; down two and 7 imps to Mahaffey, up 19-12.

Where 3NT was attempted it made on just about every occasion. The defenders have to take two spades then switch to hearts to get their winners.

There was more excitement to come...

Bd: 7 North
 Dlr: South ♠ K963
 Vul: Both ♥ 952
 ♦ Q9873
 ♣ J

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AQJ87643
 ♦ 6
 ♣ K1032

East
 ♠ AJ742
 ♥ K
 ♦ AJ102
 ♣ A64

South
 ♠ Q1085
 ♥ 10
 ♦ K54
 ♣ Q9875

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Fredin</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Fallenius</i>
4♣(1)	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦(2)	Pass
5♠(3)	Dbl	5NT(4)	Pass
7♥	All Pass		

(1) Good 4♥ bid
 (2) ♥Q ask
 (3) ♥Q plus second-round spade control
 (4) Grand slam ask

Closed Room

West <i>Bertheau</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Nystrom</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
4♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Bertheau's 4♥ opening meant Nystrom was not looking for more than the small slam. Twelve tricks are easy, the thirteenth is challenging. At Chen's table that extra trick was going to be critical after an optimistic auction had seen Chen jump to the Grand Slam with little excuse. Fredin's lead was going to be vital: On a heart lead declarer would cash the ♠A and ruff a spade and perhaps try to establish the spades as a menace with a club-diamond squeeze a remote additional possibility. It might have reduced to a club guess in the end. But Fredin led the ♣J, and was fortunate that his reputation as a trickster had preceded him. Chen read this as from ♣QJ doubleton and won it in hand, and now had no practical chances anymore. Down one in the fulness of time; 36-12 to Mahaffey, and a mere 30 imp swing on the deal.

Only two tables bid and made 7♥: Balcombe-Campbell made it for Canada, and the Godeds made it for The Latin.

A couple of quiet games followed with no imps changing hands. Then a systemic issue gave Japan

a chance for a swing.

Bd: 11 North
 Dir: South ♠ Q75
 Vul: None ♥ 7
 ♦ AKQ95
 ♣ 7632

West
 ♠ J93
 ♥ 106532
 ♦ J7
 ♣ AK8

East
 ♠ 862
 ♥ AQJ98
 ♦ 108
 ♣ 1094

South
 ♠ AK104
 ♥ K4
 ♦ 6432
 ♣ QJ5



“Relax, how could you know that *weak* notrumps are 12-14, not 10-12?”

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Chen *Fredin* *Furuta* *Fallenius*
 1♣

Pass 1NT All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bertheau *Ino* *Nystrom* *Imakura*
 1♦

Pass 2♦(1) 2♥ 2NT
 4♥ Pass Pass Dbl

All Pass

(1) Inverted (invitational or better)

Fredin, expecting to be facing a balanced 11-13 had no systemic option but to respond 1NT and nobody had anything more to say. On the lead of ♥Q he was in the embarrassing position of knowing either that he had missed game or was going down in 1NT. When the ♥K held he cashed out for +180. In the other room, Bertheau took Nystrom seriously and bounced to 4♥. (What is the Swedish for “\$#@&^ you if you can’t take a joke?”) The double club finesse meant Nystrom could escape for -500, and since N/S were surely going to get 400 from 3NT or 420 from 4♠ this was not expensive, in a sense. When declarer rejected the logical play in clubs it was 12imps not 8. Japan would take the gift-wrapped additional 4imps and invest them wisely somewhere, I’m sure. 38-24 to Mahaffey.



“I know I made a ruling but what is was and I can’t seem to remember.”

Bd: 13 North
 Dir: North ♠ A1092
 Vul: Both ♥ J94
 ♦ 4
 ♣ J9763

West
 ♠ K753
 ♥ Q3
 ♦ AK9653
 ♣ 2

East
 ♠ 6
 ♥ AK107652
 ♦ J102
 ♣ KQ

South
 ♠ QJ84
 ♥ 8
 ♦ Q87
 ♣ A10854

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Chen *Fredin* *Furuta* *Fallenius*
 Pass 1♥ Pass
 2♦ Pass 2♥* Pass
 3♥ Pass 3♠ Pass
 4♣ Pass 4♥ Pass
 4NT Pass 5♠ Pass
 6♥ All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bertheau *Ino* *Nystrom* *Imakura*
 Pass 1♥ Pass
 2♣(1) Pass 3♣* Pass
 3♦* Pass 4♦ Pass
 4♥ All Pass
 (1) Artificial, forcing

No, maybe they would not. Everyone knows that no slam is a favorite to make unless you use Blackwood; it is somewhere in law 43B(2), I think. But though it is necessary to use Blackwood, it is not sufficient. As Chen-Furuta discovered, sometimes the Key Card response leaves you deciding which slam to go down in. We’ve all done this (haven’t we?), but that did not make it any less painful. The Swedish auction featured a relay and shape-showing response, and when East produced a singleton spade West was not going past game, and wisely so.

Nine tables out of 39 went down in slam here, and six other pairs failed at the five-level. Must be a tougher hand to stop low on than one would think; the wasted values in clubs are obviously part of the problem.

Bd: 14
Dir: East
Vul: None

North
♠ K1085
♥ Q9
♦ K9653
♣ 98

West
♠ QJ4
♥ K108752
♦ Q4
♣ 76

East
♠ A63
♥ A6
♦ 2
♣ KQJ10532

South
♠ 972
♥ J43
♦ AJ1087
♣ A4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
1♥	4♦	1♣ 5♣	1♦ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		2♣	All Pass

On this deal the Fredin-Fallenius show got to 4♦ (down only 300) in double-quick time. Furuta guessed to bid 5♣ and the absence of entries to dummy meant that the contract was always going down at least a trick. It was 56-24 to Mahaffey when the 2♣ single-suiter, denying four of a major, was sensibly passed out by Bertheau.

Only six pairs made +420 here, although two other E/W pairs collected 500 from 5♦x.

Bd: 15
Dir: South
Vul: N/S

North
♠ J10982
♥ K1076
♦ Q5
♣ J3

West
♠ KQ53
♥ J842
♦ K1094
♣ 9

East
♠ 64
♥ 53
♦ AJ632
♣ A1085

South
♠ A7
♥ AQ9
♦ 87
♣ KQ7642

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT 2♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♣ 2♣
All Pass			

Somehow it is hard to feel enchanted by either auction here. Imakura rejected the opportunity to open a strong notrump and then took the low road on the rebid. 2♣ was a sensible spot, and despite the four-one trump break it collected +90. Fredin had to transfer out of 1NT since a Stayman sequence to 2♠ would have shown extras. The defenders have six top tricks via the club ruff but the position was never going to be easy for the defenders to read. On the lead of the ♣9 can you blame Furuta for ducking? I can't and I can see how silly it looks. That was the eighth trick, and Fallenius found the ingenious low trump at trick two that was ducked all around and left him in control for eight tricks. 1imps to Mahaffey, up 57-24.

Bd: 16
Dir: West
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 10
♥ Q654
♦ A103
♣ AKJ85

West
♠ AJ9864
♥ AJ987
♦ 96
♣ ---

East
♠ KQ52
♥ 3
♦ K742
♣ Q764

South
♠ 73
♥ K102
♦ QJ85
♣ 10932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Fredin</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Fallenius</i>
1♠ 5♣	Dbl Pass	4♥ 5♠	Pass All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bertheau</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♠	Dbl	4♠	All Pass

The two partnerships went very different ways here.

Furuta thought he had enough for a splinter (perhaps limited by the failure to take a stronger action such as redouble or 2NT) while Nystrom settled for game. Slam is certainly with the odds on this auction, but when Chen asked his partner if he had a diamond control, Furuta repented his earlier aggression and denied it. No swing but a much-needed opportunity missed by YOI. Still 57-24.

Just five pairs bid and made slam here; not surprising given that the hand is, after all, a combined 20 count.

Bd: 17 North
 Dir: North ♠ Q54
 Vul: None ♥ K8732
 ♦ 5
 ♣ J873

West
 ♠ AJ32
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ Q92
 ♣ 10965

East
 ♠ K76
 ♥ 1094
 ♦ AK103
 ♣ KQ4

South
 ♠ 1098
 ♥ AJ6
 ♦ J8764
 ♣ A2

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Chen *Fredin* *Furuta* *Fallenius*
 Pass Pass 1NT Pass

3NT All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bertheau *Ino* *Nystrom* *Imakura*
 Pass 1NT All Pass

Board 17 presented another opportunity for a swing: the 14-16 notrump meant that Nystrom stopped low, while Furuta got to game. 1NT wrapped up seven tricks with the minimum of fuss, but 3NT on a top spade lead was very challenging. Furuta finessed on the second spade, letting Fredin shift to a 3/5th ♣7 to the king, smoothly ducked by Fallenius. Now when declarer led a club to the queen he had eight tricks and no more, even when the defenders did not immediately cash their hearts. It was 61-24 now.

On the next board two undertrick imps for Mahaffey closed the margin to 61-26. Then...



"Silly monkey, tricks are for bridge players."

Bd: 19 North
 Dir: South ♠ A73
 Vul: E/W ♥ 65
 ♦ 105
 ♣ 1098643

West
 ♠ J10986
 ♥ Q82
 ♦ 84
 ♣ KJ7

East
 ♠ KQ54
 ♥ J104
 ♦ KQJ6
 ♣ 52

South
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AK973
 ♦ A9732
 ♣ AQ

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Chen *Fredin* *Furuta* *Fallenius*
 Pass Pass 1NT 1♥
 Pass 3♥ All Pass 3♦

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bertheau *Ino* *Nystrom* *Imakura*
 Pass 1NT* Pass 1♥
 Pass 2♥ Pass 2♦
 All Pass Pass 3♦

Ino-Imakura judged a partscore well here. After the 1NT response Imakura took it slow, and played 3♦ when Ino bailed out as soon as he could. Even on a trump lead declarer simply ruffed a heart and had nine tricks. Fans of *The Bridge World* might remember a series of articles on "The Vondracek effect" touting the advantages of making the weaker suit trump. Defending 3♥ in the other room Furuta led a club, and declarer had an easy task to make nine tricks now, losing a diamond a heart and two diamond overruffs to West. On a spade lead declarer would have won in dummy and led a low diamond; if East splits his honors declarer has no problems, given the fall of the ♦8—if he reads the position. He can simply play on trumps and lose a club, a heart and two diamonds. But if he plays to ruff diamonds in dummy, he goes down.



"Look, *The Sunshine Girls* is on TV tonight."

Bd: 20 North
 Dir: West ♠ Q86
 Vul: Both ♥ 107
 ♦ AJ973
 ♣ J107

West
 ♠ K105
 ♥ Q985
 ♦ K854
 ♣ A9

East
 ♠ A74
 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ Q102
 ♣ 8542

South
 ♠ J932
 ♥ A632
 ♦ 6
 ♣ KQ63

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Chen *Fredin* *Furuta* *Fallenius*
 1♦ Pass 1NT Dbl
 All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bertheau *Ino* *Nystrom* *Imakura*
 1♦* Pass 1NT All Pass

On the final deal of the set Fallenius rather uncharacteristically stepped out of line, and was punished when his partner played him to have his bidding. 1NT made seven tricks easily enough in the other room, but against 1NTx Fallenius led a heart and not a spade. Declarer continued the heart attack and now, although the defenders got clubs going, it was too late. Furuta was able to build up a complete count on the hand and could afford the luxury of the diamond finesse at trick thirteen for the overtrick and a 7-imp gain, making the match margin 62-33. Mahaffey was all but certain to win the round robin, but would YOI be able to recover and retain their qualifying place?

Who Were Those Masked Men?

by Barry Rigal

Ed Lucas brought in this splendid deal from a regional knockout match. Unfortunately, three of the four players at the table asked to remain anonymous, so all we will tell you is that the declarer was Joe Grue.

Dir: West ♠ AQ5
 Vul: None ♥ 942
 ♦ AQ74
 ♣ Q105
 ♠ K107
 ♥ KJ10763
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 842
 ♠ J93
 ♥ AQ
 ♦ 82
 ♣ AKJ963

West **North** **East** **South**
 2♥ Pass Pass 3NT
 Pass 4♣ Pass 4♠
 Pass 6NT All Pass

North's 4♣ was checking on aces. Looking at all four hands, the notrump slam looks hopeless, but West,

in a charitable mood, led a spade, and Grue took the nine to repeat the spade finesse. He then ran six club tricks. This was the ending:

♠ A ♥ 9 ♦ AQ7 ♣ --- ♠ K ♥ KJ10 ♦ 6 ♣ --- ♠ J ♥ AQ ♦ 82 ♣ ---	♠ 86 ♥ 8 ♦ KJ10 ♣ ---
---	--------------------------------

Note that East still must make a discard. If he discards a spade, Grue cashes the ♠A and ♥A, then runs the ♦8 to East for the endplay. If East discards a heart, the ♥A would force the same decision: a diamond discard would allow Grue to duck a diamond and take the rest, and if East parts with a spade on the ♥A, Grue leads a spade to dummy's ace and plays a low diamond from dummy. Curtains.

Defensive Gems

by Barry Rigal

Bd: 11
Dir: South
Vul: None

North
♠ K9
♥ AJ8
♦ AKJ875
♣ 63

West
♠ 1087652
♥ Q7532
♦ 10
♣ 2

East
♠ A43
♥ 94
♦ Q942
♣ QJ87

South
♠ QJ
♥ K106
♦ 63
♣ AK10954

North
♠ ---
♥ 8
♦ J8
♣ ---

West
♠ 108
♥ Q
♦ 10
♣ 2

South
♠ ---
♥ K
♦ ---
♣ A9

East
♠ 4
♥ ---
♦ ---
♣ Q7

Diego Brenner gave me a defensive problem on this deal from Match Six Thursday evening. What do you think your chances are at single-dummy of defeating 6♣?

You appear to have defensive tricks coming out of your ears—not so fast. Say partner makes what seems to be the best lead of a spade, to let you cash your ace before the rats get at it.

You return a spade and declarer leads a club to the ten, a diamond to the ace, a club to the jack and king, and then plays and ruffs a diamond. Now he finesses in hearts, ruffs a diamond, goes to the ♥A, and has achieved this position:

See top of next column

Declarer leads winning diamonds from dummy and East's goose is cooked.

Two possible defenses might occur to you. The first is to duck the ♠A at trick one. This leaves declarer in the wrong hand but he can use dummy's entries to finesse clubs and ruff out diamonds and eventually lead the fifth diamond and pitch his second spade, while East ruffs in with his trump trick.

The second is for West to rise with the ♥Q on the first play in the suit. That would work if the ♥J and ♥10 were switched perhaps, but not here.

So what could the defenders do about this? The mundane answer is to do what Gonzalo Goded did as West and lead a heart at trick one; that takes the entry out of dummy prematurely. Now declarer can't quite arrange the trump coup against best defense.

Haikus from Sploofus Website

We're getting more snow
Storm warning is in effect
I'm getting crabby

—Eesusbejesus

Cards being shuffled
And put into their cases.
Who is the dealer?

Hands slid out of boards
Arranged in various suits.
I'll open two clubs.

We got to six hearts.
I dare you to double me!
This slam's a laydown.

—Maurlin

Bridge play in Japan
Speaking a Worldwide language
Shuffle up and deal

—Tuzilla

Match Eight: SKOTII vs The Latin

At the end of Match Seven there were at least a handful of teams with realistic hopes of snatching the last few qualifying spots, in addition to our two featured tables. The Netherlands was playing Canada, with one or both teams able to qualify, depending on the match result. One of JAPAN OPEN or Losier might make it; similarly, one of GIBS or Fu-Zhao, one of NAITO or Geller, or one of Kitty's or makko might hit the bull's eye. We shall be following the good and bad results for each of these teams.

With one match to go, we reverted to where we came in. We'd seen SKOTII in Match One, when they were very much underdogs to advance to the quarterfinals. Now, with the last match about to start, it appeared that they and The Latin would be fighting for a spot. Two men enter, one man leaves...or however it is the WWF phrases it. In practice a draw might suit either both or neither team, depending on what happened elsewhere; the pack was close behind but 135 VPs would surely be sufficient, Errors and Omissions Excepting.

Bd: 1 North
 Dir: North ♠ 43
 Vul: None ♥ K1043
 ♦ A76
 ♣ K853

<p>West ♠ 10 ♥ AJ86 ♦ 53 ♣ J109764</p>	<p>East ♠ J9762 ♥ Q52 ♦ QJ1084 ♣ ---</p>
<p>South ♠ AKQ85 ♥ 97 ♦ K92 ♣ AQ2</p>	

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Both tables played a 3NT contract on the first deal which appears to need nothing more than a normal spade split, but does not get it.

Frontaura ducked the diamond lead, tested spades, then led a heart to the king. Sakurai ducked the first diamond, tested spades, then passed the ♥9. He won the next diamond, crossed to a club and led a heart to the king. No swing.

Both teams in Mahaffey vs Israel played and made 3NT. Fallenius won the ♣J in hand, cashed the ♠A, and played a heart to the king—what's the problem? Doron Yadlin won the ♦Q lead with the ace, cashed two spades getting the bad news, and played a heart up. Bertheau flew with the ace and that was that—no problem, no swing.

The eponymously named partnership in Fu-Zhao played 6NT here, and could not bring it home. (Yes we've seen worse contracts and the Chinese pair knew they needed a big win, but even so...) GIBS led 11-0.

Both E/W pairs then stayed out of a non-vulnerable game that was a fraction worse than a finesse, but likely to make on the auction, as indeed it did. (Israel's Campanile-Barel blew into 4♠ and scored up +450 while The Netherlands's Nystrom-Bertheau scored +170 in 3♠; 7imps to Israel, leading 7-0.)

To retaliate, both N/S pairs on the next deal returned the favor by staying out of an equivalent if not better game.

Bd: 3 North
 Dir: South ♠ Q743
 Vul: E/W ♥ 9732
 ♦ K963
 ♣ 8

<p>West ♠ J92 ♥ KQ85 ♦ 108 ♣ KJ42</p>	<p>East ♠ K865 ♥ AJ106 ♦ Q ♣ Q753</p>
<p>South ♠ A10 ♥ 4 ♦ AJ7542 ♣ A1096</p>	

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

The identical auctions saw South with fine controls and shape but a minimum and North with nothing but trumps to offer partner. Who should have done more? Maybe one has to blame the opponents for not bidding hearts and improving the South hand.

Fredin-Fallenius for Mahaffey also stopped in 2♦ and scored up +150 but the Yadlin brothers did do more and reached 5♦. Israel won the ♦8 lead in hand and played ♣A, club ruff, spade to the ace, club ruff, spade. Bertheau won the jack and continued trumps. In dummy with the ♦K Doron ruffed a second spade hoping to fell the queen. When that failed he ran the rest of his trumps hoping for a miracle, but his oil ran out after the last trump and he finished down one; -50, 5 imps to Mahaffey. Israel ahead 7-5.

It was 2-1 SKOTII when the first opportunity for a major swing presented itself.

In Canada vs The Netherlands the Dutch played 2♦ while the Gartaganises played 5♦x. Only a trump lead seems to give the defenders a chance, since otherwise declarer can ruff hearts to hand and clubs to dummy. After a top heart lead there was no further defense. Plus 550 to Canada, already leading 16-0.

Bd: 4 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 6
 Vul: Both ♥ AQ1083
 ♦ AJ954
 ♣ Q4

West ♠ J1084 ♥ 6 ♦ 63 ♣ J98765	East ♠ AKQ9753 ♥ 52 ♦ 8 ♣ K32
South ♠ 2 ♥ KJ974 ♦ KQ1072 ♣ A10	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	1♥	3♠	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
Pass	1♥	4♠	4NT
5♠	6♦	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

This deal may be too tough for anyone to handle intelligently, even if the opponents don't get in your face. Frontaura was the beneficiary of a top spade lead and a club switch (yes, maybe a trump would have been better advised). Federico Goded made no such mistake. 18-2, The Latin.

Both N/S pairs in the other match (Campanile-Barel; Nystrom-Bertheau) reached 6♥ with no problem, despite the fact that both E/W pairs were in the auction throughout. Both E/Ws judged well to save in 6♠ for matching -800s; an excellent push for the N/S pairs; still 7-5.

This was another splendid result for the Gartaganises. Canada bid confidently to 6♥, persuading Bakkeren-Bertens to save in 6♠x. The defenders collected 800 while setting 6♥ in the other room. Canada led 30-0.

Both tables saved in GIBS-Zhao. GIBS did so at the seven level for -1100 and 7 imps to Fu-Zhao when the save in the other room was one level lower.

For Geller, Abe-Yamazaki were allowed to make 6♥ for 1430 while in the other room their teammates also found the 7♠ save for 1100 (thank you teammates, we knew you'd have us covered). Sekiyama-Sato for Kitty's brought home 6♥ for a whopping 17 imps to lead 17-1.

Bd: 5 North
 Dlr: North ♠ KQ63
 Vul: N/S ♥ J106
 ♦ K96
 ♣ 975

West ♠ J987 ♥ 984 ♦ A7432 ♣ Q	East ♠ 54 ♥ 53 ♦ QJ1085 ♣ 8642
South ♠ A102 ♥ AKQ72 ♦ --- ♣ AKJ103	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥
All Pass			

SKOTII immediately had an opportunity to recover

the lion's share of thoseimps when Kikuchi reached the rather sporting Grand Slam in rather sporting fashion. Dummy's club holding meant that declarer would need a little luck—or a little skill. Alas, after drawing trump Kikuchi's first play in the club suit was to finesse. The commentators were demanding that South return to 'Finesses 101' for a refresher course: 35-2 The Latin.

In Mahaffey vs Israel, Fredin-Fallenius reached 6♥ and scored up 1460 while the Yadlins inexplicably reached only 4♥ after making three cooperative slam moves along the way. Plus 710 and 13imps away to Mahaffey, who took the lead for the first time 18-7.

Kitty's produced another spectacular result when Nenohi-Matsuo doubled 7♠ for +500 while their teammates were making 6♥. Kitty's led 35-1 now.

Things are never so bad that they can't get worse. SKOTII was aware that they needed more thrust, and the opportunity appeared to present itself on the very next deal.

Bd: 6 North
 Dir: East ♠ 62
 Vul: E/W ♥ 6
 ♦ QJ97642
 ♣ 532

West East
 ♠ 8 ♠ A10943
 ♥ AKJ10973 ♥ Q85
 ♦ 10 ♦ AK3
 ♣ Q874 ♣ J9

South
 ♠ KQJ75
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 85
 ♣ AK106

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Asaoka	Frontaura	Tada	Brenner
		1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
G. Goded	Sakurai	F. Goded	Kikuchi
		1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♦	Dbl	4♥	All Pass

The auction was not exactly scientific; yes, dummy might have put down the ♣K instead of the ♦K but that was not the way things were going for the home team. 13 more imps were duly gift-wrapped and

presented to The Latin, who were only too charmed to accept; up now by 46 at 48-2.

In Mahaffey vs Israel both E/W pairs had their sights only on game. Campanile-Barel were allowed to play 4♥ making +650; Doron Yadlin was confronted with the auction 1NT-Pass-4♥ and duly took the bull by the horns and bid 5♦. Nystrom doubled and settled for +500 against his own +650; 4imps to Israel who closed to within 7 at 18-11.

JAPAN OPEN collected 100 from 6♥ as well. They led 14-1 now but were about to lose 10 imps for missing a game on the next deal, to narrow their lead to 3 imps. Kitty's also picked up a game swing, and led 45-1, already close to maximum win territory.

A merciful flat board followed for SKOTII (on which Israel picked up 2 overtrick imps; closing to 18-13), then a chance to gain imps.

Bd: 8 North
 Dir: West ♠ KQ43
 Vul: None ♥ 752
 ♦ K73
 ♣ J64

West East
 ♠ A1072 ♠ 5
 ♥ AJ98 ♥ 10643
 ♦ 6 ♦ QJ9852
 ♣ K1073 ♣ 85

South
 ♠ J986
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ A104
 ♣ AQ92

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Asaoka	Frontaura	Tada	Brenner
1♣	Pass	1♥	1NT
2♥	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
G. Goded	Sakurai	F. Goded	Kikuchi
1♣	Pass	3♦	All Pass

Federico's jump to 3♦ may not be textbook but it did keep the opponents out. Partner of course put down the shape he was least happy to see. Worse, with the ♥KQ doubleton, 3NT for N/S was worse than hopeless. The defenders were still suffering from shell shock so Asaoka could not work out to cash the heart winners when in with the ♣K. Still, he did manage to cash out at his next turn; 48-5 now.

Fallenius overcalled a natural notrump in fourth seat after the auction started 1♣-Pass-1♦, and Fredin

promptly put him in game. Prospects looked good when Barel got off to a low spade lead. Fallenius played a club to dummy's jack, the ♠K, then a spade to the jack and ace. This time Barel tried a diamond. Fallenius rose with the king, cashed the ♠Q, played a diamond to the ace (Barel pitching a heart), then exited with the ♣Q to Barel's king. Barel tried the ♥J and Fallenius won and led back a heart, but now the defense could cash out for down two and Fallenius never scored his ♣A.

At the other table the Yadlins stopped in 2♠ and took eight easy tricks on a low club lead; +110 and 5 imps to Israel, tied now at 18-18.

Both Losier, against JAPAN OPEN and GIBS against Fu-Zhao set a game in one room and made a partscore in the other. GIBS led 17-15, Losier 16-14.

Bd: 9 North
 Dir: North ♠ QJ3
 Vul: E/W ♥ AQ8
 ♦ KQ53
 ♣ J32

West
 ♠ 62
 ♥ 643
 ♦ 764
 ♣ 108754

East
 ♠ AK10
 ♥ KJ1092
 ♦ J2
 ♣ KQ6

South
 ♠ 98754
 ♥ 75
 ♦ A1098
 ♣ A9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
	1NT	Dbl	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Dbl
Pass	2NT	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Federico did well to stay out after the strong notrump auction. Defending 3♠ he guessed to lead a top trump rather than a diamond (either the low one or the jack is surely going to be passive) and now declarer had nine tricks. In the other room Tada was clearly steaming; but it is tough to recover 43 imps in one deal, and rather easier to lose more by trying to do so. The double of 2NT was not likely to gain more than an imp or two, but on a heart lead declarer has rather more work to do to come to eight tricks. The

club lead and continuation did not paralyze declarer, who eventually endplayed East with a spade to lead hearts for the eighth trick. It was 56-5 now.

Israel gained another 4 imps here when Fredin-Fallenius overreached to 3♠ down one while the Yadlins stopped safely in 2♠ for +110. Israel now had the lead at 22-18.

Bd: 10 North
 Dir: East ♠ AK6
 Vul: Both ♥ 1042
 ♦ A10543
 ♣ QJ

West
 ♠ Q93
 ♥ AQJ653
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ 92

East
 ♠ J1042
 ♥ 98
 ♦ 96
 ♣ 108543

South
 ♠ 875
 ♥ K7
 ♦ KJ82
 ♣ AK76

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♥	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♦	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
		Pass	1♣
2♥	3♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Kikuchi had not had much luck with the minor-suit queens this match and Board 10 provided another example of the genre. In 3NT after a weak-jump overcall perhaps South might have cashed his nine winners. Kikuchi unblocked clubs to take a diamond finesse...oops! (This particular optical illusion was repeated at no fewer than four tables.)

If that was strange, the auction from the other room was even less effective, in theory. Given that declarer was not likely to guess the ♦Q here, a heart lead might have worked well. But of course West was not going to do that. Having said that, the choice of the ♦Q was bizarre, indeed. No matter: Declarer ran his 11 winners and graciously conceded the last two tricks for a surprise gain of 3 imps, increasing their

lead to 59-5.

(The official score sheet for SKOTII vs The Latin indicates that the contract in the Open Room was 2♠ by West making four(!?), +170 for E/W. As silly as that is looking at the hand, it also means that the 1-imp gain for The Latin listed on the official score sheet is actually the 3 imps we noted above.)

Mahaffey also gained 3 imps (!?) against Israel but in a far more mundane manner. 3NT was played at both tables but Fallenius received the ♥Q lead and cashed his diamonds from the top to score up +690. At the other table Bertheau led the ♠Q and Israel Yadlin took the diamond finesse. The play record shows him cashing out his winners (of which there are ten) but the official score sheet shows him making only three for +600. So I make Mahaffey's pickup only 2 imps. You be the judge.

It seems to us that there are more Gremlins around here than just the old AMC cars.

Both tables made 690 in The Netherlands vs Canada (at the half Canada led 32-2). While Canada looked safe enough to qualify barring a series of accidents, The Netherlands, the defenders, and perhaps ante-post favorites, were in real jeopardy of not making it past the first stage.

Losier picked up 13 imps when they set 3NT in one room on the lead of the ♥Q while making 690 in the other room. Losier led 33-14 at the break but needed more action to cement a qualifying spot. GIBS also defeated 3NT on a heart lead (how come no one can count to nine?) to lead 30-15, and be close to the top eight. NAITO-Geller appeared to be playing different boards, or just better bridge. NAITO led 11-10; either team could still qualify here.

Kitty's led makko 47-4. If they retained their lead, Kitty's might just do it.

Bd: 11 North
 Dir: South ♠ J107
 Vul: None ♥ A6
 ♦ 2
 ♣ KQJ8753

West ♠ K542 ♥ K7 ♦ AQ10653 ♣ 2	East ♠ AQ963 ♥ QJ103 ♦ 97 ♣ A9
South ♠ 8 ♥ 98542 ♦ KJ84 ♣ 1064	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
			Pass
1♦	2♣	Dbl	3♣
3♠	5♣	6♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
			Pass
1♦	3♣	Dbl	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♠	All Pass		

We have seen Tada was already "steaming;" given an opportunity to roll the dice one more time, he came up with a jump to 6♠ on this deal. West might have thought he was worth 7♠ now; but he knew his partner. With the diamond finesse succeeding there was no way to go down...was there?

Again the Israelis outbid the Swedes; Campanile-Barel reached 6♠ while Nystrom-Bertheau stopped in five. When both pair took twelve tricks that was 11 more imps to Israel, who were now up by either 12 or 13, depending on what you think the score was on Board 10. (We'll assume for the sake of this narrative that Mahaffey picked up only 2 imps on Board 10, so Israel is now up by 13 imps, 33-20.)

The Netherlands had their first good news of the set when van Prooijen-Verhees defeated 5♦ while their teammates played 5♠ for 480. They still trailed 32-14 but were not out of it yet.

Narita-Ito bid the slam for JAPAN OPEN to narrow the deficit to 24-33, and Shimizu-Hirata bid the slam for GIBS against Fu-Zhao. Makko bid slam against Kitty's; the latter still led 47-14, though.

Bd: 12 North
 Dir: West ♠ QJ632
 Vul: N/S ♥ 52
 ♦ 105
 ♣ 10743

West ♠ 10754 ♥ AQ943 ♦ 63 ♣ J2	East ♠ AK98 ♥ J86 ♦ AJ92 ♣ 85	South ♠ --- ♥ K107 ♦ KQ874 ♣ AKQ96
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
Asaoka	Frontaura	Tada	Brenner
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
2♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
G. Goded	Sakurai	F. Goded	Kikuchi
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	4NT
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Kikuchi heard his opponent show a weak hand with the majors, so he was prepared to gamble on buying a card or two in the minors, and 4NT also worked to get his partner to be declarer in case he had overbid the hand. The defenders won the first diamond and cashed out the hearts for down one.

If that was aggressive by N/S, then the Open Room perhaps erred in the other direction. Brenner sold out to 2♥ and won a top club to play the ♦Q. Declarer drew two rounds of trumps via the finesse, then led a spade to the ace. With the marked spade finesse that translated to eight tricks.

In Mahaffey vs Israel, Fredin-Fallenius played 3♣ as N/S in the Open Room losing the three obvious tricks for +130. Meanwhile, their teammates Nystrom-Bertheau, sitting E/W in the Closed Room, bought the contract for 3♥ scoring up +140 when they lost two clubs, one diamond and a trump. That was 7 imps to Mahaffey, trailing now 33-27.

Fu-Zhao went plus in both rooms on defense here, setting 3♠ and 5♣; it was 21-41 now to GIBS.

By contrast, Kitty's went plus in both rooms, making contracts in each: 2♠ and 3♣. They led 53-14.

Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ K972
Vul: Both	♥ 6
	♦ KQJ652
	♣ A8

West	East
♠ A8643	♠ J10
♥ J984	♥ AQ1053
♦ 1093	♦ A874
♣ J	♣ K3

South
♠ Q5
♥ K72
♦ ---
♣ Q10976542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Asaoka	Frontaura	Tada	Brenner
	1♦	1♥	2♣
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
G. Goded	Sakurai	F. Goded	Kikuchi
	1♦	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Federico's raise of 3♥ to 4♥ looks a trifle sporting. Kikuchi decided to stay out of things altogether and must have been happy to find that no game was making his way. But he had not reckoned with Tada, who found a 4♥ bid with even less justification than the one taken in the other room. When the auction got back to Frontaura he doubled, perhaps on general suspicion, and Brenner (who knew his partner was short in hearts) judged well to sit for it. Down 500 after a club lead and a shift to diamonds to ruff out the ♦A. Had Brenner shifted to spades now might he have got 800? 66-16, The Latin.

In Mahaffey vs Israel both N/S pairs reached 5♣ with E/W competing in hearts but the games were both down one for no swing.

Almost all of our featured matches exchanged small swings here, but nothing more than 3 imps.

Bd: 14	North
Dlr: East	♠ 954
Vul: None	♥ 10
	♦ AK8754
	♣ Q105

West	East
♠ AK6	♠ J10872
♥ KJ86543	♥ AQ2
♦ 3	♦ Q96
♣ 87	♣ 64

South
♠ Q3
♥ 97
♦ J102
♣ AKJ932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Asaoka	Frontaura	Tada	Brenner
		Pass	1♣
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♣
3♥	5♣	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♥	2♥	2♥	3♦
3♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass

N/S have a decent sacrifice in 5♣—and an even better one if the defense does not double. When Asaoka did not bid 4♥ at his first or second turn it made the defenders task far harder. Gonzalo Goded made it far harder for his opponents and the club sacrifice never came to light. Another 8 imps to The Latin, now leading by more than enough for a maximum.

Campanile-Barel bid to 4♥ on the E/W cards and lost just three minor-suit tricks for +420. At the other table the Yadlins sitting N/S gave up 300 in 5♣x, but that was 3 imps to Israel, leading now 36-27.

The Netherlands were making a determined effort to get back into the match (a draw would surely be enough for them). They bid on to 5♥ over 5♣ and were doubled there. The defenders cashed a top diamond, shifted to clubs and now had to guess which minor trick was standing up...but did not do so. That was 12 imps; they trailed 28-32. Their projected VP total was 137, Canada's was 134.

For JAPAN OPEN Narita-Ito made 420 to gain 8 imps; they trailed 33-40, which left both teams out of a qualifying spot.

GIBS also gained 8 imps here; they set 5♥ while doubling 5♣ and collecting 300. They led Fu-Zhao 49-24, giving them a projected 131 VPs, right on the bubble of qualifying.

Geller went down in 5♣x for 300 but were allowed to make 5♥. Just 4 imps but an 18-11 lead and a projected VP total of 131 for them.

Kitty's gained 3 imps for +300 from 5♣x, -200 from 3♥+2 in the other room. 57-14 meant they were headed for 131 VPs. It was all too close to call.

Five teams looked sure to qualify: Mahaffey, The Latin, Not the Empire, Israel, and Lithuania, with YOI Returns a likely sixth. Two of the teams above would fill the last two spot; one or both of Canada and The Netherlands and one other contender.

You can lead a horse to water, but if you can get him to float on his back—you've got something.

Bd: 15	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q65
Vul: N/S	♥ A10543
	♦ 10
	♣ 10943

West	East
♠ K32	♠ J108
♥ KQJ62	♥ 7
♦ 8	♦ AJ943
♣ A652	♣ KQ87

South
♠ A974
♥ 98
♦ KQ7652
♣ J

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
			1♦
1♥	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	2♦
Dbl	All Pass		

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now for Kikuchi, who quite sensibly passed the South cards and backed in over 1♠ (a forcing notrump) with 2♦. A takeout double by Gonzalo was passed back to South, and it left Kikuchi with nowhere to run. On a top heart lead it was incumbent on declarer not to lose his ♠A before East had a chance to discard his spades on West's hearts. In fact, after a club play at trick two and a club continuation Kikuchi led a low spade from hand. Gonzalo hopped up with the king and led out the two top hearts to let East pitch spades. Declarer ended up with one heart and five trumps for down 500. 1NT made 120 in the other room but that was still 9 more imps to The Latin, up 83-16.

Campanile-Barel reached an ambitious 3NT here and Fallenius led a low spade to Fredin's queen, ducking the spade return. Campanile tried a heart to the king and ace but back came a third spade and Fallenius cashed his two spades before exiting with the ♦K. When clubs did not break declarer had only seven tricks for two down; -100. At the other table E/W stopped in 2NT and received the favorable lead of the ♦7. A heart to the king and ace was followed by a spade to the ace and a spade back, declarer rising with the king to test clubs. When that suit failed to break East settled for his eight tricks (two diamonds, three clubs, two hearts and a spade) for +120; 6 imps to Mahaffey, closing to within 2 at 36-33.

Canada collected the same 500 as The Latin from 2♦x; their lead was up to 15imps. So did Fu-Zhao, whose chances of qualifying were gone but who could still act as spoiler to GIBS. Kitty's also collected 500 to move to a 25-5 lead, and be 2 VPs out of the eighth qualifying spot behind The Netherlands.

Bd: 16 North
 Dir: West ♠ AQ98
 Vul: E/W ♥ 1042
 ♦ A72
 ♣ 652

West
 ♠ 106432
 ♥ 86
 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ AQ8

East
 ♠ J75
 ♥ K9753
 ♦ J94
 ♣ J10

South
 ♠ K
 ♥ AQJ
 ♦ 10853
 ♣ K9743

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♠	1NT	All Pass	

There was a little relief to come. Frontaura drove to 3NT facing Brenner's idiosyncratic fourth seat weak notrump and despite the low spade lead to the jack and king Brenner really had little chance unless he could develop clubs. He led a low club from hand and East won to shift to a heart. Brenner's ♥Q won and a second club saw Asaoka find the imperative shift to a top diamond. That was enough to develop the defender's fifth trick. Well done!

In the other match N/S declared and made 1NT at one table and 2♣ at the other for a pair of +90s and no swing.

NAITO equalized their match against Geller at 18-18 when they made 3NT from North on a heart lead. NAITO now had the eighth spot at 135, level with The Netherlands. Four boards to go.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can avoid all together.

Bd: 17 North
 Dir: North ♠ 8632
 Vul: None ♥ QJ10
 ♦ A765
 ♣ KJ

West
 ♠ A954
 ♥ 863
 ♦ 32
 ♣ Q983

East
 ♠ QJ7
 ♥ K97542
 ♦ 9
 ♣ A76

South
 ♠ K10
 ♥ A
 ♦ KQJ1084
 ♣ 10542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	2♥	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
3♥	Pass	2♥	3♦
	3NT	All Pass	

Both tables reached 3NT after a weak 2♥ from East. Federico (who had been supported in hearts) led the ♠Q; the defenders shifted to hearts after two rounds and when declarer misguessed clubs he was two down. Frontaura guessed clubs, and now after the ♠Q was covered all around it only remained for the defenders to cash out accurately. Tada won his ♠Q but did not take the ♥K before returning a third spade. Asaoka led a fourth spade, naturally enough, and declarer claimed his contract. 94-20 now.

In Mahaffey vs Israel both N/S pair reached 5♦ from the South side needing *only* the club guess and either the ♠A onside or the heart ruffing finesse. When the heart king turned up onside both pairs displayed their +400s with pride, but alas no swing.

Losier were allowed to make 3NT by North on the lead of the ♠Q when the defense muddled the cash-out and declarer guessed clubs. Losier led 58-33 for a projected 130 VPs. Kitty's +400 cemented their 25 VPs as well, giving them 132 VPs. But Canada was still in the pole position for seventh; The Netherlands and NAITO each had a projected 135 VPs.

Death is nature's way of telling you "It's time to slow down."

Bd: 18 North
 Dir: East ♠ AQ765
 Vul: N/S ♥ 2
 ♦ 84
 ♣ A10864

West
 ♠ 9843
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ KJ53
 ♣ Q93

East
 ♠ 102
 ♥ AJ86543
 ♦ Q97
 ♣ 7

South
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ K109
 ♦ A1062
 ♣ KJ52

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Asaoka Frontaura Tada Brenner
 Pass Dbl Pass 3♥ Pass
 All Pass 3NT

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
G. Goded Sakurai F. Goded Kikuchi
 3♥ All Pass

Should one reopen over 3♥ with a double, or with 3♠? Sakurai found a third option when he passed. There are days when this might have been the right action but today was emphatically not one of them, and while 3♥ went down 50, it was no consolation since 3NT had nine-plus top winners. 105-20 now.

6♣ needs only the club guess once spades are no worse than four-two, so of course Fredin-Fallenius were bound to be in it. Fredin won the diamond lead and played the ♣K followed by the jack. When Barel followed low Fredin backed his bidding judgment and let it ride and he was soon writing 1370 in the plus column of his score book. At the other table Nystrom-Bertheau competed to 4♥ and the Yadlins stopped to double. On the club led and spade shift the defense had only to sit back and wait to collect their ♦A and king of trump; +500 was worth 13 imps for Mahaffey, who led now 46-36.

Both tables in Canada vs The Netherlands played 3NT. The Canadians somehow defeated the game while bringing it home in the other room. GIBS made 3NT while setting 6♠. Suddenly The Netherlands was down to 133 VPs and GIBS was on 132, level with Kitty's. Geller made 3NT while losing only 100 in 4♥ to move to 131. With two boards to go the last qualifying spot could go to at least those four teams.

Bd: 19 North
 Dir: South ♠ 87
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q542
 ♦ Q9654
 ♣ 103

West
 ♠ AQ1096
 ♥ 876
 ♦ 7
 ♣ K854

East
 ♠ J43
 ♥ A3
 ♦ KJ83
 ♣ AJ96

South
 ♠ K52
 ♥ KJ109
 ♦ A102
 ♣ Q72

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Asaoka Frontaura Tada Brenner
 1♠ Pass 1♣ Pass
 2♠ All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
G. Goded Sakurai F. Goded Kikuchi
 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass
 2♠ Pass 3♣ Pass
 4♠ All Pass

After cue-bidding 2♣ in response to the 1♠ overcall should one advance over 2♠ with a bid of 2NT, 3♣, or simply jump to 4♠? We think we'd like to look for 3NT here but one thing is for sure, we wouldn't pass. 10 more imps to The Latin when they bid game in the other room, ahead now 115-20.

Both E/W pairs in Mahaffey vs Israel played in 4♠ from the East side. Campanile managed to make an overtrick so Israel picked up the final imp of the match to end up down 9 at 46-37.

Another double-figure swing for Geller (who had scored 21 imps in two deals after being held to 18-18 for the first 17 boards of the match). They bid game and made it while conceding only 170 in the other room. They were now on 133, 1 VP ahead of Kitty, The Netherlands (who had dropped an overtrick imp to fall to a 21-9 loss) and GIBS. Each of those teams were on 132. One deal to go. Only those four teams had a realistic chance to qualify.



"To think, I coulda had a V-8."

Bd: 20 North
 Dir: West ♠ KJ75
 Vul: Both ♥ J876
 ♦ 8
 ♣ J752

West
 ♠ 8
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ AQ7643
 ♣ 1064

East
 ♠ 10963
 ♥ K543
 ♦ 109
 ♣ KQ8

South
 ♠ AQ42
 ♥ 109
 ♦ KJ52
 ♣ A93

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Asaoka</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Tada</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>G. Goded</i>	<i>Sakurai</i>	<i>F. Goded</i>	<i>Kikuchi</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	Dbl
Rdbl	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♦	2♠	3♦	All Pass

Your editors are still scratching their heads over why Asaoka passed the West hand in first seat and then chose to double 1NT to show a one-suited hand (any suit). East then passed when we would have bid 2♣ (pass-or-correct) since West's hand and suit could have been significantly weaker than they were. We guess justice was finally served when E/W went for -380. West's diamond lead went to declarer's jack. A spade was led to the king followed by a heart to

the ten and queen. West exited the ♣6 to the queen and ace and declarer cashed two more spades (as West erred by pitching the ♥2) ending in dummy and led a low club toward his hand. East rose with the king and returned a diamond, ducked, then played his last spade to declarer's queen. With four spades, one diamond and three clubs (!) declarer had eight tricks.

At the other table West opened 1♦ and ended up playing 3♦. The defense started with a spade and a spade, West ruffing and leading a low diamond to the ten and jack (when playing diamonds from dummy would clearly have worked much better). South led a third spade and West ruffed and cashed the ♦A. But now the defense had the tempo and was able to eventually score three trump tricks, two clubs and a spade for down two, +200, and 5 more imps to The Latin to win the match by an even 100 at 120-20.

In Mahaffey vs Israel both E/W pairs declared 2♦ and made +130 for a push.

The Netherlands's nightmare had one last chapter. They were defeated in 2♠ in one room and allowed it to make in the other. Canada won 22-8 to cement a qualifying place, and the defending champions were out with 131 VPs. GIBS lost 6 imps to Fu-Zhao for letting both 2♦ and 2♠ make; that cost them a VP and they too dropped to 131 VPs. And Geller had a bad last board too; they let 2♠ make while going two down themselves. The 7-imp loss dropped them to an 18-12 win and they were on 132, level with Kitty's, whose 25-4 win left them on 132 VPs as well. It would take a tie-break, decided by an imp quotient (the fraction of imps won over imps lost) to break the tie in favor of Geller.

13th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
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 SRR & Swiss Teams (1)	
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 SRR & Swiss Teams (2)	
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