



# NEC Bridge Festival

Tuesday, February 10, 2009  
Bulletin Number 1

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

## Welcome to the 14<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup Bridge Festival

This year's 14<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup once again boasts a strong international field, including many of the world's top players. Stage One will feature a 12-round, three-day Qualifying Swiss Teams with 14-board matches, IMPs converted to Victory Points using the 14-Board WBF scale; eight teams will qualify for the KO phase. The 46-team field has been divided into two groups with each of the top 23 teams paired at random against one of the 23 remaining teams (see p.5). Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter- and semi-finals will consist of 32-board matches; the final will be contested over 64 boards (the two losing semi-finalists will tie for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>). This year we introduce a new event, the Open IMP Pairs, held on Friday, February 13 with the Yokohama Swiss Teams contested as a one-day event on Saturday, February 14.

### 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 9:30 am. You can contact the Secretariat via a house phone from the hotel (Ext. 7605), or dial 228-6565 (from the Yokohama City area), or 045-228-6565 from outside the city area or +81 45 228 6565 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 and occasionally immovable **Richard Grenside** (as always under the close supervision of wife Sue). Be advised that if you call him you do so at your own risk. The Co-Director of the NEC Cup this year will be **Akito Omasa**.

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

#### NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 14<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.bridgebase.com)

## NEC Cup 2009: Conditions of Contest

A 12-round Swiss of 14-board matches will qualify the top 8 teams to the Knockout phase; no playbacks.

V.P. Scale	WBF 14-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 16-board segments of the quarter- or semi-finals. 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 the open room, E/W in the 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 2008 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 are permitted in this event.
Length of Matches	2 hours will be allotted for each 14-board segment (or 2 hours and 15 minutes for each 16-board segment of the KOs). In addition, a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per WBF 2008 Conditions of Contest.
Appeals	The WBF Code of Practice will be in effect. The Chief Director will have 12C1c authority. Appeals 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 1<sup>st</sup> in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The team finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> group. The team finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> will then have their choice of the remaining teams.</p> <p>In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1<sup>st</sup> 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 <b>opposite</b> 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 14<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup Guest List

*Konichi wa* to all, and welcome to the 14<sup>th</sup> NEC Bridge Festival, or as it's come to be known in certain sections of Tel Aviv, the Yokohama chapter of B'nai Brith. We have good news and bad news: the good news is that JCBL reports they have no plans to relocate the festival to Israel; the bad news is that Migry and Michael are back again to defend their title. You've been warned.

This year's NEC Cup has an entry of 46 teams. As always, 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 World Champion Japan Senior team and SIX ROSE 2009.

It's become a tradition in the NEC Cup that not just the favorites will still be playing for the championship on Friday, 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 (11 by our count), and especially those players attending the festival for the first time—or at least the first time in quite a while—and it brings joy to our hearts to once again see so many familiar faces from around the bridge world.

As we mentioned earlier, the defenders from Israel—the most successful team in NEC Cup history—are back. This year the anchor pair, **Michael Barel** and **Migry Campanile**, have left the Yadlin brothers at home and are playing with **Amir Levin**, a member of the 2007 Israeli team that lost a close quarter-finals match to the eventual champs, The Netherlands, and newcomer **Nikolay Demirev** from the USA (winner, with Ralph Katz, of the Blue Ribbon Pairs at the NABC in Boston last November). Despite the personnel changes, Israel hopes once again to work their special kind of magic.

The Netherlands is back, including 2007 NEC Cup champions **Ton Bakkeren** and **Huib Bertens** playing with **Louk Verhees** and **Ricco van Prooijen**. This same team surprisingly failed to qualify for the KO phase last year, but this year vow to return to their 2007 form.

Last year's finalists The Latin (**Frankie Frontaura**, **Diego Brenner**, **Federico** and **Gonzalo Goded**) are back and cruising to win one more match in the KOs. Careful, or they just might knock you for a “Loopy Loo”.

This year's team from the land of Oz includes several familiar (and friendly) faces: 2006 quarter-finalists **Ron Klinger**, **Ishmael Del'Monte** and **Robert Fruewirth** (though they were not all on the same team in 2006) are teamed with newcomer **Matt Mullamphy**. G'day mates. (Someone please take the brew from Ish.)

Hackett's back-ett, accompanied by new teammates **Tom Hanlon** (a member of the 2007 NEC Cup Ireland team), **David Bakhshi** and **Artur Malinowski**. Missing—and greatly missed—this year is one of our favorite players of past NEC Bridge Festivals, **John Armstrong**. (For more on John, see p.6.)

When American football icon O.J. Simpson was still living out his halcyon days on the gridiron, fans would roar “The Juice is loose.” This year the NEC Bridge Festival's JUICE features a mix of Canadian and American “juicers” including the peripatetic **Joey Silver**, the encyclopedic **John Carruthers**, the inscrutable **Larry Mori**, and the venerable **Venkatrao Koneru**. It remains to be seen just who will be the squeezer, and who the squeezee. (By the way, the team's name is an acronym for **J**apan, **U**SA, **I**ndia, **C**anada, and **E**ngland, all countries that various team members were either born in or have lived in for major portions of their lives.)

This year's Yeh Bros team includes newcomers **Patrick Huang**, **JY Shih**, **Morris Chang**, **Harry Lin**, and **Chi-Chung Tsai**. Chen Yeh, who intended to be here this year but found at the last minute that he would not be able to attend, is listed as the team NPC. Our congratulations to Juei-Yu Shih and Chen Yeh, who were both members of the Yeh Bros team that won the Transnational Mixed Teams at the 1<sup>st</sup> Mind Sports Games in Beijing last fall. We should note that Patrick Huang was listed as a member of the 2005 NEC Cup team from Chinese Taipei, but our recollection is that he did not actually attend the festival that year (though his name remained on the team roster). Since then Patrick has done a terrific job at the last two World Championships in China (Shanghai 2007 and Beijing 2008) as Chinese language (and occasionally English) Vugraph

commentator extraordinaire—if only our Chinese was better.

A Chinese National Women's team last played in the NEC Cup in 2005, and a team of China Ladies (not the National team) won the event in 2004. **Sun Ming, Wang Hongli** and **Wang Wenfei**, members of the 2000 NEC Cup team, **Yan Ru** and **Dong Yongling**, members of both the 2005 and 2004 (Champion) NEC Cup teams, are joined this year by newcomers **Liu Yiqian, Li Guohua** (NPC) and **Ju Chuancheng** (Coach). Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Wang Wenfei, Liu Yiquan, and Ju Chuancheng (coach) were all members of the China Women's team that finished second (to England) at last fall's 1<sup>st</sup> Mind Sports Games in Beijing. *Ni hao, huan ying.*

We are pleased to have a Chinese men's team back at the NEC again this year. *Huan ying* to **Shi Zhengjun**, a member of last year's NEC Cup team from China, joined by **Lin Rongqiang, Jiang Tong, Li Jie, Hou Xu** and **Liu Jing**. *Hao yun.*

Two Korean teams join us following a two-year absence from the NEC by that country. Back from Korea's 2004 NEC Cup Happy Bridge team are **Sung Kyunghae** and **Hwang Iynryung**, joined by newcomers **Chan Yiu** and **Chang Jungbai**. Our records show that all four members of Korea Challengers are newcomers to the festival. Welcome to **Kim Jinkyung, Choi Yunjung, Song Insook** and **Kim Mihyun**.

Among the top Japanese teams this year are Japan Senior, all four of whose members (**Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura** and **Makoto Hirata**) are fresh from their victory in the 2008 World Senior Teams held at the 1<sup>st</sup> World Mind Sport Games last fall in Beijing; Japan Open, with members **Kazuo Furuta, Chen Dawei, Tadashi Imakura, Tadashi Teramoto, Masaaki Takayama** and **Masayuki Ino** (Ino was also a member of the champion Senior Team in Beijing). The sixth member of the World Champion Seniors, **Hiroya Abe**, is playing for team ABE-chan, on much the same team that qualified eighth from the round robin in last year's NEC Cup. And finally, **Takashi Maeda**, the NPC of the 2008 World Champion Japan Senior Team, is playing on team J&J in this year's NEC Cup.

Good luck to all!

---

---

## 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.

---

---



## Team Rosters: 14<sup>th</sup> NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	Israel:	Migry Zur-Campanile, Michael Barel, Amir Levin, Nikolay Demirev
2	The Latin:	Frankie Frontaura, Diego Brenner, Federico Goded, Gonzalo Goded
3	Oz Players:	Ron Klinger, Ishmael Del'Monte, Robert Fruewirth, Matt Mullamphy
4	Hackett:	Paul Hackett, Tom Hanlon, David Bakhshi, Artur Malinowski
5	JUICE:	Joey Silver, John Carruthers, Larry Mori, Venkatrao Koneru
6	The Netherlands:	Ton Bakkeren, Huub Bertens, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen
7	Yen Bros:	Patrick Huang, JY Shih, Morris Chang, Harry Lin, Chi-Chung Tsai, Chen Yeh (NPC)
8	China LongZhu National Women:	Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Wang Wenfei, Liu Yiqian, Yan Ru, Dong Yongling, Li Guohua (NPC), Ju Chuancheng (Coach)
9	China Evertrust Holding Group:	Lin Rongqiang, Jiang Tong, Shi Zhengjun, Li Jie, Hou Xu, Liu Jing
10	Korea Happy Bridge:	Sung Kyunghae, Chan Yiu, Hwang Inryung, Chang Jungbai
11	Korea Challengers:	Kim Jinkyung, Choi Yunjung, Song Insook, Kim Mihyun
12	Japan Open:	Kazuo Furuta, Chen Dawei, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura, Tadashi Teramoto, Masaaki Takayama
13	Japan Senior:	Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Makoto Hirata
14	Golden beef cutlet:	Ryoga Tanaka, Hiroko Janssen, Sakiko Naito, Kenji Miyakuni, Ayako Amano
15	TAKA:	Kazuhiko Yamada, Takahiko Hirata, Hiroshi Kaku, Makoto Kono, Ari Greenberg, Masaru Yoshida
16	Kitty's:	Yoko Nenohi, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kumiko Matsuo, Makiko Sato, Toshiko Kaho, Kyoko Toyofuku
17	ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Hideyuki Sango, Nobuko Matsubara, Misuzu Ichihashi, Michiko Iwahashi
18	ABE-chan:	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Hiroya Abe, Chieko Yamazaki, Zhao Jinlong
19	MAKITA:	Taeko Kawamura, Sachiko Yamamura, Keiko Matsuzaki, Kimi Makita, Fumiko Kimura, Michiko Ono
20	HANA:	Takeshi Hanayama, Yuki Fukuyoshi, Seiya Shimizu, Yasushi Kobayashi, Yasuhiro Shimizu
21	SARA:	Kumiko Sasahira, Fu Zhong, Liu Zheng, Takeshi Niekawa, Shugo Tanaka, Hiroki Yokoi
22	Fairy Tale:	Kyoko Shimamura, Brian Senior, Ryo Okuno, Akira Ohara, Kazunori Sasaki, Akio Kurokawa
23	Losier:	Michiko Ono, Yayoi Sakamoto, Etsuko Hasegawa, Betty Tajiri, Shimako Yaji, Kyoko Miura
24	J&J:	Natsuko Nishida, Takashi Maeda, Nobuyuki Hayashi, Tadashi Jomura, Hiroyuki Noda
25	sunflower:	Takako Nakatani, Sachiho Ueda, Hiroko Kobayashi, Chizuko Tsukamoto, Yumi Yanagida, Keiko Fuse
26	PS-jack:	Masakatsu Sugino, Akiko Miwa, Masako Otsuka, Teruo Miyazaki, Kunio Kodaira, Akiko Kawabata
27	SKOTII:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Kenichi Asaoka, Takehiko Tada
28	Henmi:	Toru: Henmi, Hideko Takeuchi, Yasuyoshi Toriumi, Aiko Banno, Hideko Kobayashi, Yoko Tokushige
29	LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi, Yukiko Umezu, Etsuko Naito
30	NXST:	Kei Nemoto, Kazuo Saeki, Kazuo Takano, Kazuhisa Kojima, Hiroko Yanagisawa, Kai Hiraki
31	Venus:	Chieko Ichikawa, Kuniko Saito, Junko Den, Yoshiko Murata, Atsuko Kurita
32	ROSEWOOD:	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Hiromu Nishida, Yoshie Nishida
33	HAYATE:	Hiroaki Miura, Tomoyuki Harada, Keisuke Akama, Noriaki Koike
34	Kimura@Yokohama:	Osami Kimura, Kinzaburo Nishino, Koichi Onishi, Mamiko Odaira, Yoko Saito, Setsuko Kimura
35	SIX ROSE 2009:	Natsuko Asaka, Ikuko Arai, Sachiko Ueno, Hideko Shindo, Toshiko Takeuchi, Kiyoko Fushida
36	AQUA:	Shoko Somemiya, Tomoko Sakai, Miyako Miyazaki, Kazuko Okamoto, Yoko Shimominami, Akiko Miyata
37	YWC:	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Misae Kato, Kimiko Kamakari, Chisato Kiriyama, Reiko Hoshika
38	NRT:	Megumi Takasaki, Sei Nagasaka, Hidenori Narita, Yuichi Masamura, Minoru Mizuta, Yumiko Mizuta
39	CHARMANT:	Takako Fujimoto, Ken Sakiyama, Sumiko Sugino, Kazuko Takahashi, Misako Fukazawa, Yumiko Kawakami
40	NANIWADA:	Masaru Naniwada, Hisami Kataoka, Hikoe Enomoto, Hideo Togawa, Masato Miyake, Toshiro Nose
41	KinKi:	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
42	Open SESAME!:	Megumi Takasaka, Ryo Namiki, Kyoko Sengoku, Mariko Matsukawa
43	guriguri:	Ryo Matsubara, Mark LaForge, Midori Sakaguchi, Ayako Matsubara, Atsuyo Miyake, Midori Ito
44	MY-Bridge:	Masafumi Yoshizawa, Noriko Yoshizawa, Yoshitaka Agata, Kuniko Miyauchi, Iwao Oishi, Aiko Nabeshima
45	Dolphin:	Michiko Hatoyama, Katsuro Hatoyama, Makiyo Takikawa, Kiyoko Oki, Kazuko Ogawa, Mariko Sakamoto
46	Japan Youth:	Shunsuke Gotoda, Yoshiro Kido, Takashi Matsuda, Koichi Handa, Kentaro Murai, Tomoyuki Watanuki

1st-round match-ups: 1v34, 2v38, 3v24, 4v27, 5v28, 6v41, 7v44, 8v29, 9v46, 10v45, 11v40, 12v36, 13v35, 14v33, 15v32, 16v43, 17v39, 18v37, 19v25, 20v30, 21v42, 22v31, 23v26

**Today's 1<sup>st</sup> VuGraph Match will feature Japan Seniors (13) vs SIX ROSE 2009 (35)**

## John Armstrong (1952-2008)

*This past year we lost of one of our favorite people: John Armstrong. John was one of the nicest and best-liked of all NEC participants. The following tribute appeared in The Times of London—author unknown.*



John Armstrong

John Armstrong was a mainstay of British bridge for 25 years. Just before his death, he had competed for England in the European Championships in Pau, southwest France, where, although the team achieved little, his partnership with John Holland finished second in the individual rankings.

Armstrong was popular in the bridge world, but he was not a typical player. He did not drink or smoke and he played the game for the pure love of it rather than for pecuniary gain. He also played the piano, went to church (he was a devout Christian and would need to be rested from play on Sunday mornings), orienteered and climbed hills.

Andrew Robson, the Times bridge correspondent, recalled that the day after Britain won the European Championships (by a record margin) in Killarney, County Kerry in 1991, the two of them did not sit back and bask in the reflected glory at their achievement but instead climbed up the long, arduous mountain range of Macgillycuddy's Reeks.

John Armstrong was born in 1952 and brought up in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. He did not come from a bridge-playing family, and indeed learnt from library books, having been inspired by newspaper columns. He went up to Cambridge to read mathematics and there met such bridge luminaries (all destined to become international players) as Richard Fleet, Brian Callaghan and, most significantly, Graham Kirby.

In 1977 Armstrong formed a 20-year partnership with Kirby. They represented Britain in two Bermuda Bowls (world championships), two Olympiads and seven European Championships. The highlights were a silver medal in the 1987 Bermuda Bowl and a gold medal in the 1991 European Championships. In domestic bridge they won six Gold Cups and represented England in 31 Camrose matches (won 28, lost 3). After Kirby retired, Armstrong had success in partnership with Danny Davies, Paul Hackett and John Holland, finishing in the top four of the English trials each year from 2005 until 2008.

Armstrong will be remembered for his buccaneering bidding style—where he usually stayed just the right side of the bold-reckless divide—and his accurate and thoughtful card play. But perhaps most of all, bridge players worldwide will remember him for his trademark loud bellylaugh. This would dissipate any tension, such as when scoring up bad results with disappointing teammates.

Armstrong's outward joviality belied great focus and determination. In the 1991 Bermuda Bowl in Japan, five of the six British players were hopelessly jetlagged and consequently underperformed. But not Armstrong, who had prepared for the trip by going to bed immediately after work (he was an actuary in Liverpool before taking early retirement in 2003). In bed at 6 p.m. and up at 2 a.m. (he had played the piano until dawn) meant he had no jetlag and played fine bridge. Indeed, Japan was always kind to him, as a four-time winner of the NEC Cup in Yokohama, twice with Paul Hackett and twice with Brian Callaghan.

Armstrong never married.

John Armstrong, bridge player, was born on January 23, 1952. He died of a brain hemorrhage on July 3, 2008, aged 56.

*The English Bridge Union described John as "...both a gentle man and a gentleman, very well-liked and respected in the bridge world." We couldn't agree more. John, you will be missed.*

# Convention Regulations for Side Games

*(An explanation for foreign players)*

Unlike the NEC Cup, which is an international event, and the Yokohama Swiss Teams, in which all non-brown-sticker conventions are permitted, the Yokohama IMP Pairs and Asuka Cup are rated as Japanese regional or national events, for which JCBL regulations for domestic events apply strictly. We ask for your compliance with the regulations explained below. If you have any questions about what is allowed, please ask the JCBL staff. Please note that use of unauthorized conventions may be penalized. We thank you for your cooperation.

All side games at the NEC Bridge Festival (the Yokohama IMP Pairs and Asuka Cup) are restricted to "List C" conventions as described below. The use of the Multi-2♦ is strictly prohibited and will be subject to penalty.

## LIST C (Yokohama IMP Pairs/Asuka Cup)

### Opening Bids

- 1♣ or 1♦ may be used as an all-purpose opening bid (artificial or natural) promising a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g.: Precision 1♣ and 1♦; Polish 1♣, etc.)
- 2♣ artificial opening bid indicating one of:
  - a strong hand, balanced or unbalanced
  - a three-suiter with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Roman 3-suiter, etc.)
- 2♦ artificial opening bid showing one of:
  - at least 5-4 distribution in the majors with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Flannery, anti-Flannery etc.)
  - a strong hand, balanced or unbalanced
  - a three-suiter with a minimum of 10 HCP (e.g., Roman 3-suiter, etc.)
- Opening suit bid at the two level or higher indicating the bid suit, another known suit, a minimum of 10 HCP and at least 5-4 distribution in the suits.
- Opening notrump bid at the two level or higher indicating at least 5-4 distribution in the minors, 10 or more HCP.
- Opening 3NT bid indicating:
  - any solid suit or
  - a broken minor suit.
- Opening four-level bid transferring to a known suit (e.g., Namyats, etc.).
- Strong opening at the two level or higher, asking Ace, King, Queen, singleton, void, trump quality.

### Responses and Rebids

- 1♦ as a forcing, artificial response to 1♣.
- 1NT response to a major-suit opening bid, forcing for one round; may not guarantee game invitational or better values.
- Conventional responses which guarantee game forcing or better values. May not be part of a relay system.
- 2♣ or 2♦ response to 3<sup>rd</sup>- or 4<sup>th</sup>-seat major-suit opener asking the quality of the opening bid.
- Single or higher jump shifts (including into notrump) to indicate a raise or to force to game.
- All responses to:
  - artificial strong opening bids with 15 HCP or more.
  - opening bids of 2♣ or higher (weak 2s must guarantee 10 opening points: opening points=HCP + number of cards in longest suit).

- All constructive calls starting with the opening bidder's second call.
- Calls that ask for aces, kings, queens, singletons, voids, trump quality and responses thereto.
- All calls after a natural notrump (including those that have two non-consecutive ranges, neither of which exceeds 3 HCP). No conventional responses are allowed over natural notrump bids with a lower limit of fewer than 10 HCP or with a range of greater than 5 HCP.

### Competitive Bids

- Any conventional balancing calls.
- Conventional doubles and redoubles and responses (including free bids) thereto.
- Notrump overcall for either:
  - two-suited takeout showing at least 5-4 distribution and at least one known suit. (At the 4 level or higher there is no requirement to have a known suit.)
  - three-suited takeout (as with a takeout double, at least 3 cards in each of the 3 suits).
- Jump overcalls into a suit to indicate at least 5-4 distribution in two known suits, and responses thereto.
- Cuebid of an opponent's suit and responses thereto, except that a cuebid that could be weak, directly over an opening bid, must show at least one known suit.
- Comic 1NT overcall.
- Defense to:
  - conventional calls (including takeout doubles).
  - natural notrump opening bids and overcalls.
  - opening bids of 2♣ or higher.
- Nos. 5 through 9 under "Responses and Rebids" above apply to both pairs.
- Transfer overcall to show a specified suit at the four level.

### Carding

- All leads and signaling methods are approved except for: a) odd-even signals, b) encrypted signals, c) dual-message carding strategies, except on each defender's first discard, d) any method when the pair using it are deemed to be playing it in a manner which is not compatible with the maintenance of proper tempo.

## LIST D (NEC Cup/Yokohama Swiss Teams)

Category 3 of WBF Systems Policy applies



# Japan Takes the Gold In World Senior Teams

World Bridge Games, Beijing, China

The following report is in part adapted from articles written by Phillip Alder (segments 1-3) and Brent Manley (segment 4) that appeared in the daily bulletin at the World Mind Sports Games.

The Japanese team of Hiroya Abe, Makoto Hirata, Masayuki Ino, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Kyoko Ohno and Akihiko Yamada entered the final of the World Senior Teams as underdogs against the USA team captained by Reese Milner (Grant Baze, Russ Ekeblad, Matthew Granovetter, Billy Eisenberg, Sam Lev). At the beginning, form meant nothing as Japan jumped out to an early lead.

Bd: 2            ♠ A65  
 Dir: East        ♥ K  
 Vul: N/S        ♦ K532  
                   ♣ K9765

♠ 94  
 ♥ QJ8753  
 ♦ 87  
 ♣ A84

♠ KQJ73  
 ♥ 1064  
 ♦ Q96  
 ♣ J2

♠ 1082  
 ♥ A92  
 ♦ AJ104  
 ♣ Q103

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♦(1)	Pass	3♥(2)	All Pass
(1) Weak two in either major.			
(2) Pass or correct.			

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1NT(1)	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
(1) 11+-14.			

Lev understandably did not balance when 3♥ came back to him. The defense was nearly perfect. Eisenberg led a trump, and Lev shifted to a diamond. N/S took two diamond tricks, then switched to clubs, declarer ducking the first round. Eisenberg then played the ♥A and another heart to stop the club ruff. Declarer took the trick in the dummy and called for the ♠K. Had North ducked this, the contract would have been down three, losing one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs. But North took the first spade, letting West out for down two.

Not that it mattered a single imp. Granovetter could not open a weak two in hearts and Yamada had no worries about opening 1NT with a singleton king. Declarer took the second spade and played a club to South's ten, West taking the ace. After that, North

got everything right, winning 11 tricks and 11imps.

Then, two deals later:

Bd: 4            ♠ Q9853  
 Dir: West        ♥ Q9  
 Vul: Both        ♦ A987  
                   ♣ Q10

♠ 6  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ 52  
 ♣ AK9865432

♠ AK742  
 ♥ KJ87  
 ♦ Q1064  
 ♣ —

♠ J10  
 ♥ A106432  
 ♦ KJ3  
 ♣ J7

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
5♣	All Pass		
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
4♣	All Pass		

Against 5♣, North led the ♦A: four, three, five. Not knowing who had the ♦2 and wondering if declarer had to be put to an immediate heart guess, Lev shifted to the ♥9. Declarer put up dummy's king, and South won with his ace. Now South misguessed, returning a heart, for -600 when trumps split.

Against 4♣, North led a spade and declarer took 11 tricks. Plus 600 and -150 gave Japan 10imps and the lead by 15, but the rest of the session was 54-7 to the USA.

As dealer with only your side vulnerable, you hold:

♠873 ♥AK76 ♦K7 ♣A954

The bidding starts:

West	North	East	South
		You	
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Dbl
Pass	2♠	?	

Do you pass or compete to 3♥? This is a dangerous situation; South should have something like 4=1=4=4 or 4=0=5=4 distribution. The hearts are breaking badly. Ekeblad wisely passed, conceding 140. Ino bid 3♥, which Lev was happy to double for 500.



Later came a bidding exercise that both pairs failed:

Bd: 8            ♠ KQJ1065  
 Dir: West        ♥ J105  
 Vul: None        ♦ K5  
                     ♣ AJ

♠ 872	♠ 43
♥ AKQ873	♥ 942
♦ 842	♦ Q10973
♣ 9	♣ Q85
♠ A9	
♥ 6	
♦ AJ6	
♣ K1076432	

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
2♦(1)	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

(1) Weak two in either major.

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
2♥	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

6♠ is the best contract and easy to make as the cards lie. In 6♣, though, Ohno had to guess the trump suit. Do you know the odds?

A priori, you should play out the ace and king. But if you think West has five hearts and East four, the odds are exactly equal between playing for the drop and taking a second-round finesse through East. But if you place West with six hearts, the percentages now favor finessing through East.

What did Ohno do? She took the ace and king and went down one, losing 11 imps instead of gaining 10.

A few deals later, Lev and Eisenberg outbid their opponents.

Bd: 12            ♠ K982  
 Dir: West        ♥ KJ105  
 Vul: N/S         ♦ K8765  
                     ♣ --

♠ AQ6	♠107543
♥ 7643	♥ A98
♦ J4	♦ 9
♣ J854	♣ AK76
♠ J	
♥ Q2	
♦ AQ1032	
♣ Q10932	

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♠
Dbl	Pass	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

It's funny how one side can open the bidding and not get to game, while the other side balances and bounces right in to game. Obviously, 11 tricks did not tax either declarer and the USA gained 10 imps.

The final big swing of the set came on the last deal, which was another defensive problem.

Bd: 16            ♠ AK87652  
 Dir: West        ♥ KJ  
 Vul: E/W         ♦ J3  
                     ♣ 98

♠ J93	♠ 4
♥ A96542	♥ Q7
♦ K74	♦ 852
♣ 4	♣ AKJ10752
♠ Q10	
♥ 1083	
♦ AQ1096	
♣ Q63	

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
2♦(1)	2♠	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

(1) Weak two in either major.

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Both Easts led the ♣A against 4♠. Each pair used normal signals, so both Easts knew that partner had started with a singleton club. Ekeblad won the ♣K and played another club, letting West ruff away dummy's winner. Now, with the diamond finesse losing the contract had no chance. Ino, on the other hand, shifted at trick two to the ♥Q: three, ace, king. West returned a heart. Declarer drew trumps, crossed to dummy's ♦A, and discarded his second diamond on the ♥10. Lev lost only one heart and two clubs and the USA gained 10 imps to lead 60-28.

For the second session, the Japanese stayed with the same lineup. The United States brought in Grant Baze and Reese Milner for Eisenberg and Lev.

On the third board, Japan gained 14 imps when Milner overruled his partner, the Blackwood bidder, and corrected a laydown slam to one that went down on the opening lead. Baze must take some of the blame because he could have bid the slam in a suit that was agreed earlier in the auction, which was also cold. But they made amends a few deals later:

Bd: 26  
 Dir: East  
 Vul: Both

♠ QJ864  
 ♥ 9862  
 ♦ J9  
 ♣ J9

♠ K  
 ♠ K10  
 ♥ K543  
 ♦ K7  
 ♣ AQ853

♠ A2  
 ♥ AJ7  
 ♦ Q86  
 ♣ 107642

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Baze</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Milner</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2♥
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

At the first table, Abe guessed to lead the ♦J. Milner won his king, played a diamond to dummy's ace, and conceded a diamond to East. Back came a club. Declarer won in dummy and cashed three of his four diamonds. Now came a heart and East was done.

At the other table, Granovetter found the killing heart lead, Ekeblad covering dummy's ten with his jack. Declarer lost one trick in the play hoping for some luck in clubs and went down two. Plus 630 and +200 gave the USA 13 imps.

The next deal was déjà vu.

Bd: 27  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: None

♠ K62  
 ♥ Q7  
 ♦ A7  
 ♣ KQJ1042

♠ J5  
 ♥ A5  
 ♦ KQJ9853  
 ♣ 76  
 ♠ A9873  
 ♥ 83  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ A9853

♠ Q104  
 ♥ KJ109642  
 ♦ 642  
 ♣ --

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Baze</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Milner</i>
1NT	Pass	4♦(♥)	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
1NT	3♦	4♥	All Pass

Baze sat back, hoping to get to defend 3NT, but Ino used a Texas transfer to reach 4♥. Baze led the ♦K and declarer, trying to keep control, ducked. North led another diamond, which his partner ruffed. Milner cashed his ♠A and the ♥A came later.

Ohno led her ♦10. Ekeblad won dummy's ace and played another diamond to North, South discarding the ♠7. North could have shifted to a trump, but led the ♠J, which was also good enough if either South ducked or won and returned a trump. Ohno did the latter, but for some reason North ducked his ♥A, allowing declarer to ruff his diamond loser in dummy and concede only one diamond, one spade, and one heart. Plus 50 and +420, 10 more imps to the USA.

The set ended with the US ahead, 93-57.

For the third session, Eisenberg and Lev came back in for Baze and Milner. Japan retained their same lineup. Japan scored 24 imps from four swings, but gave back 22 imps in two reverses. For example:

Bd: 34  
 Dir: East  
 Vul: N/S

♠ QJ3  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ 754  
 ♣ AQJ932

♠ A109854  
 ♥ Q85  
 ♦ AJ  
 ♣ 87  
 ♠ 62  
 ♥ K1062  
 ♦ K1062  
 ♣ K104  
 ♠ K7  
 ♥ AJ974  
 ♦ Q983  
 ♣ 65

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
2♣(1)	2♠	Dbf(2)	Rdbl
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥
All Pass			
(1) 10-16 points, 6+ ♣ or 5+ ♠ and 4+ ♣.			
(2) Inquiry.			
West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
3♣	3♠	5♣	Dbf
All Pass		Pass	Pass

Against 3♥, Granovetter led a diamond. Ekeblad won his king and shifted to a club. West took two tricks in that suit before returning a diamond. Ohno played a spade to her king, followed by a heart to dummy's queen. East won the king and played back a heart, declarer winning her jack to give this position:

	♠ A10985	
	♥ 8	
	♦ --	
	♣ --	
♠ QJ		♠ 6
♥ --		♥ 106
♦ 5		♦ 106
♣ J32		♣ K
	♠ 7	
	♥ A97	
	♦ Q9	
	♣ --	

Now declarer mistimed the play. She cashed the ♦Q, played a spade to dummy's ace, and ruffed a spade. But this allowed East to discard his last diamond, after which he had to score his ♥10 for down one.

In the diagrammed position, South should have played a spade to dummy's ace and ruffed a spade in her hand. If East discards the ♣K, South cashes her ♦Q, ruffs the diamond, and leads a card for a trump coup. And if East pitches a diamond, declarer ruffs a diamond and leads a winning spade. If East ruffs, South overruffs, draws the last trump, and takes the final trick with his ♦Q. Or, if East discards, so does South and again has a trump coup.

At the other table, when Ino jumped to 5♣, hoping it would be a good sacrifice against a vulnerable spade game, Eisenberg had no choice but to double. The defense was accurate, collecting two spades, one heart and two diamonds for down three. Plus 100 and +500 was worth 12 imps to the Americans.

Here are two bidding gains for Japan.

Bd: 43	♠ K8753	
Dir: South	♥ 2	
Vul: None	♦ K1073	
	♣ QJ5	
♠ J4		♠ AQ96
♥ A865		♥ KJ10
♦ 954		♦ J862
♣ AK92		♣ 107
	♠ 102	
	♥ Q9743	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ 8643	

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
1♦(1)	1♠	2NT	Pass
(1) 10-16 points, 0+ diamonds.			
West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
1♣	1♠	3NT	Pass
All Pass			

Of course, some days 3NT would go down, but this was not one of them and Japan pocketed 7 imps.

Bd: 44	♠ 964	
Dir: West	♥ KQJ1065	
Vul: N/S	♦ J	
	♣ K83	
♠ A52		♠ Q10
♥ A83		♥ 2
♦ AQ1092		♦ 7543
♣ J7		♣ AQ10962
	♠ KJ873	
	♥ 974	
	♦ K86	
	♣ 54	

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
1NT	2♣(1)	2♠(2)	Pass
3♣(3)	All Pass		
(1) Any one-suiter.			
(2) Transfer to clubs.			
(3) Not fond of clubs			
West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Granovetter took 12 tricks, losing only one diamond. Lev sat back and watched his opponents end in 3NT. He happily led the ♥K and continued the suit, Abe winning the third round. Abe ran his ♣J, then played a club to dummy's ace, thinking that if North had his actual hand he would have bid and that South had ducked the ♣K. He recovered by playing a diamond to his queen, cashing the ♦A, and throwing South in with a diamond. Eisenberg shifted to the ♠J, but declarer ran it to dummy's queen to get home. Minus 170 and +400 gave Japan another 6 imps.

The session ended with the United States ahead 124-81; 48 boards to go.

The USA led Japan by 43 imps going into the fourth set of six. By the time 16 boards had been played, the margin had shrunk to 11 imps.

Japan's rally started with the first deal.

Bd: 49      ♠ J6  
 Dir: North    ♥ 109  
 Vul: None    ♦ 6  
               ♣ QJ1095432

♠ A1073	♠ 852
♥ AKQ72	♥ 85
♦ 104	♦ AJ752
♣ A6	♣ K87

♠ KQ94  
 ♥ J643  
 ♦ KQ983  
 ♣ --

West	North	East	South
<i>Milner</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Baze</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
	3♣	Pass	Pass
Dbf	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Ohno started with the ♠K, ducked by Baze. A low spade was continued, and when Baze inserted dummy's ten it lost to the jack. He could still have made the contract from there, but he drifted one off (the play record was incomplete).

The auction at the other table was not recorded, but Ino played 3NT as East. Granovetter led the ♦K, taken by Ino with the ace. He returned a diamond at trick two, won by Granovetter, who then switched to the ♠9: 10, J, 2. Ekeblad played a second round of spades and Granovetter falsecarded with the king. Ino won the ace and promoted dummy's ♠7 into a winner by playing a third round to his eight and Granovetter's queen. Ino played a heart to the ace, cashed the ♠7, then played the ♣A and a club to the king. On the second round of clubs, Granovetter was squeezed in the red suits and Ino had an overtrick; +430 and 11imps to Japan.

The USA got back 6imps two deals later when Ekeblad and Granovetter outbid their opponents.

Bd: 51      ♠ 93  
 Dir: South    ♥ A83  
 Vul: E/W     ♦ J10852  
               ♣ J94

♠ A82	♠ 765
♥ 1075	♥ Q92
♦ 3	♦ K96
♣ Q108632	♣ AK75

♠ KQJ104  
 ♥ KJ64  
 ♦ AQ74  
 ♣ --

West	North	East	South
<i>Milner</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Baze</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
All Pass			2♥
West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Granovetter</i>
Pass	1♦(2)	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣(3)	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	5♦
All Pass			
(1) Strong, artificial			
(2) Negative			
(3) Relay			

When Ohno showed her second suit, Yamada decided that was high enough. Milner led his stiff diamond and Baze elected not to cover the jack. Ohno played the ♠9 at trick two, taken by Milner with the ace. He played a club to Baze's king, ruffed by declarer, who cashed the ♠KJ, pitching a club from dummy. She continued with the ♠Q, pitching another club. Baze ruffed and played the ♣5, which held (declarer discarding a diamond from dummy). He then played a diamond for Milner to ruff. The club exit was ruffed in dummy. Declarer cashed the ♥A and played a diamond to her ace, ruffed by Milner, but she had the ♥KJ left for the last two tricks; +140.

Granovetter and Ekeblad had a more successful auction. Ino started with the ♣A, ruffed in dummy. Ekeblad played a low spade from dummy at trick two, as Abe rose with the ace to tap dummy again with a club. Ekeblad played a heart to the ace and took the diamond finesse. When he cashed the ♦A and Abe discarded, Ekeblad claimed losing only a diamond and a spade. Plus 400 and 6imps to USA.

Japan tacked on 8imps when Ekeblad-Granovetter overbid to 4♥, down two for -200, while Yamada-Ohno stopped in 2♥ and made nine tricks.

Several boards later the USA's Granovetter-Ekeblad cooperated on a nice defense to earn 2imps.

Bd: 56      ♠ J753  
 Dir: West    ♥ 987  
 Vul: None    ♦ AK4  
               ♣ 742

♠ Q109	♠ 86
♥ AQ10	♥ 64
♦ Q763	♦ 1082
♣ J103	♣ AKQ865

♠ AK42  
 ♥ KJ532  
 ♦ J95  
 ♣ 9

<b>West</b> <i>Milner</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Baze</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
Pass	Pass	3♣	Dbl
4♣	4♠	All Pass	
<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Granovetter</i>
1♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Baze cashed the ♠A at trick one and switched to the ♥6. Milner won the ten, cashed the ace, and gave Baze a heart ruff. Milner still had a trump trick coming, so USA scored +100.

At the other table, West played in the notrump game. Ekeblad started with a low spade. Granovetter won the king and switched to a low heart. There would have been no story had Abe inserted the ten, but he played the queen. Up to eight tricks, he inferred correctly that Granovetter had the ♠A, so he led a club to dummy and a spade toward his queen. Granovetter went in with the ace and made the excellent switch to the ♦J, covered by Abe with the queen. Ekeblad won the ♦K and made a great play of a low diamond from the ace, putting Abe to the guess. Abe guessed wrong, inserting dummy's eight, and Granovetter won the ♦9 and returned a diamond to Ekeblad's ace for one down, and a well-earned 4 imps for USA.

On this next board Granovetter fell for a sneaky play by Ino.

Bd: 60	♠ Q86		
Dir: West	♥ J1053		
Vul: N/S	♦ A763		
	♣ 109		
	♠ AJ107	♠ 9	
	♥ Q82	♥ K764	
	♦ K92	♦ 854	
	♣ K73	♣ QJ652	
	♠ K5432		
	♥ A9		
	♦ QJ10		
	♣ A84		

<b>West</b> <i>Milner</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Baze</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl(1)	2♠	3♣	All Pass
(1) Shows three hearts.			
<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Granovetter</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
1NT	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

Milner could not avoid the loss of three diamonds, a heart and a club for one down.

At the other table, Ino played in 3♥, which should have gone three down. Abe didn't like his club holding, so he put the burden of making a three-level contract on his partner. Granovetter led the ♦Q, covered by the king and ace, and two more diamonds left Granovetter on play. He exited with a low spade, taken by declarer with dummy's ace. Rather than playing on his anemic heart holding, Ino tried to score some low trumps. He played the ♠J, covered by the queen and ruffed, then played a club to dummy's king, ruffing another spade when the ♣K held. Ino next played the ♣J. Granovetter examined the card at length, finally ducking. He won the next club with the ace and could only play the ace and another heart for two down. Had he covered the ♣J with the ace it would have been three down, +150. It was only 1 imp, but the way the match was going every one counted.

Japan completed a good set on the next-to-last board with a second double-digit swing.

Bd: 63	♠ 84		
Dir: South	♥ 8765		
Vul: N/S	♦ 652		
	♣ KJ75		
	♠ 653		♠ A
	♥ AJ4		♥ KQ32
	♦ AK103		♦ Q9874
	♣ 1093		♣ AQ6
		♠ KQJ10972	
		♥ 109	
		♦ J	
		♣ 842	

<b>West</b> <i>Milner</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Baze</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
Pass	Pass	Dbl	3♠
4♦	Pass	5♦	Pass
<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Granovetter</i>
Dbl	Pass	3♠	2♠
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Milner had two chances to get to the proper level, the first when Baze balanced with a double, forcing to the four level. Milner's bid of 4♦ did not come close to describing his opening hand. His second chance came when Baze raised him to 5♦ which must have indicated a very strong hand, considering Milner might have been very weak for his 4♦ bid. There was nothing to the play and Milner soon scored up +440.

At the other table Granovetter made it easier for his opponents to exchange information. Abe's double of

2♠ was aggressive, but he did have opening values. Had Granovetter started the bidding one level higher, it would have been a real stretch for Abe to take the same action. In any case, once Abe showed a sign of life there was no stopping Ino, unless he found his side was off two aces. That was +940 and 11 imps to Japan, who finished the fourth segment trailing by only 11 imps, 136-125.

In segment five, Lev-Eisenberg replaced Milner-Baze for USA. The first significant swing came on the fifth board of the set, with the USA leading 138-127.

Bd: 69 ♠ 1076  
 Dlr: North ♥ A9876  
 Vul: N/S ♦ 109  
 ♣ A64

♠ AKJ92  
 ♥ K532  
 ♦ A8  
 ♣ Q2

♠ Q53  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ Q763  
 ♣ KJ973

♠ 84  
 ♥ Q104  
 ♦ KJ542  
 ♣ 1085

<b>West</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Lev</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ohno</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Eisenberg</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

<b>West</b> <i>Granovetter</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ino</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Yamada-Ohno had a natural auction to 4♠. Lev led the ♦10 to the queen, king and ace. Yamada played the ♣Q to the ace and when Lev tried to cash the ♦9 Eisenberg overtook with the jack and continued a third diamond, trying to promote a trump trick for Lev. Yamada ruffed with the king and drew trump ending in dummy, which thanks to the ♦76 was high; +450.

At the other table Ekeblad's 1♠ was artificial, likely showing points in response to Granovetter's strong 1♣. 1NT showed spades, after which 2♥ was a "transfer," setting trumps. Ino led the ♠4 against the spade game, won with dummy's king, and Ekeblad immediately led the ♣Q. Abe won the ace and accurately switched to the ♦10: Q, K, A. Ekeblad played a club to the king and erred by ruffing a club high. He then drew trumps but eventually ran out of them and had to lose three more tricks for down one, -50. That was 11 imps to Japan, now tied with the

USA at 138 all.

When Board 77 was placed on the table Japan led by an imp, 143-142.

Bd: 77 ♠ A43  
 Dlr: North ♥ 86  
 Vul: Both ♦ 53  
 ♣ AQ9843

♠ 972  
 ♥ 542  
 ♦ K42  
 ♣ J1062

♠ K8  
 ♥ AJ1097  
 ♦ AQ1096  
 ♣ 7

♠ QJ1065  
 ♥ KQ3  
 ♦ J87  
 ♣ K5

<b>West</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Lev</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ohno</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
All Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠

<b>West</b> <i>Granovetter</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ino</i>
Pass	1♣	1♥	1♠
All Pass	2♠	3♦	4♠

This deal was good news/bad news for Japan. Lev passed in first seat, after which it was difficult for N/S to reach game. He might have just bid it rather than cue-bid after Eisenberg overcalled, especially given their sound approach to bidding. But when Eisenberg couldn't envision game opposite a passed partner and signed off in 2♠, Lev honored his decision and passed as well. The good news for Japan, whose E/W pair reached game at the other table, was that 4♠ was not an unreasonable contract. The bad news was that the spade finesse lost and there were four inescapable losers. That was 6 imps to the USA, who regained the lead, 148-143.

Never fear. The pendulum swung back toward Japan on the very next board.

Bd: 78 ♠ AK  
 Dlr: East ♥ J75  
 Vul: None ♦ A8753  
 ♣ Q63

♠ 1042  
 ♥ A432  
 ♦ J104  
 ♣ AK5

♠ Q6  
 ♥ 1098  
 ♦ Q96  
 ♣ J10987

♠ J98753  
 ♥ KQ6  
 ♦ K2  
 ♣ 42

West	North	East	South
<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ohno</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
1NT	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Abe</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ino</i>
1♦	1NT	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

With the spades behaving nicely, 4♠ has only three losers. Nevertheless, it is hard to fault Lev for not reaching game, having already promised 14 points for his penalty double of 1NT. Eisenberg may well have intended 3♠ as forcing after having shown a willingness to defend 1NT redoubled. But as we saw on the previous board, conservatism was this pair's standard and it is impossible to zig-zag in synchrony with the vagaries of the great shuffler.

At the other table, Abe promoted his 14 points into a strong notrump overcall, after which Ino lost no time in reaching game. When the ♠Q fell doubleton ten tricks were there for the taking, yielding 6 imps back to Japan as if to compensate them for the 6-imp loss on the previous deal. Japan leading again, 149-148.

Bd: 79	♠ QJ4		
Dlr: South	♥ A542		
Vul: N/S	♦ A64		
	♣ 943		
♠ K985		♠ 763	
♥ Q3		♥ J976	
♦ 32		♦ Q10	
♣ K10862		♣ AQJ5	
	♠ A102		
	♥ K108		
	♦ KJ9875		
	♣ 7		

West	North	East	South
<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ohno</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♣
All Pass			4♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Abe</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ino</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♦
All Pass			3♦

It is hard to envision game looking at the N/S hands, but if one had to bid game it is not clear whether 4♥,

in the four-three fit, or 5♦ offers the better chances. Lev-Eisenberg chose 4♥; East chose to attack with the ♣A, N/S's weak suit as indicated by the auction, and he continued with the ♣Q. Lev ruffed in dummy, came to hand with the ♦A, and took the losing spade finesse. Back came a third club, ruffed in dummy. Lev cashed the ♥K, led a spade to the jack, cashed the ♥A, and eventually lost four tricks; -100.

At the other table Abe-Ino stopped safely in 3♦ and scored up ten tricks for +130. That was 6 more imps to Japan, leading now 155-148.

The final deal of the set also saw the biggest swing.

Bd: 80	♠ J7642		
Dlr: West	♥ K10		
Vul: E/W	♦ A82		
	♣ QJ2		
♠ KQ53		♠ 1098	
♥ 86		♥ Q7532	
♦ Q63		♦ 105	
♣ 8743		♣ K109	
	♠ A		
	♥ AJ94		
	♦ KJ974		
	♣ A65		

West	North	East	South
<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ohno</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♦	All Pass	
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Abe</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ino</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

Looking at just the N/S hands, most of us would opt to settle in 3NT. A look at all four hands reinforces that view as 6♦ needs an awful lot of work. There's a club and two heart losers to worry about; then there's the trump suit to bring in, missing five to the queen. But that didn't stop either of our intrepid N/S pairs.

Both Wests led the ♠Q to declarer's ace. Where Eisenberg declared 6♦, the incomplete play record contains errors. It looks like he played three rounds of hearts, ruffed a heart in dummy, took the club finesse, and eventually lost a club and a diamond.

At the other table Ino played a heart to dummy's king at trick two, took the club finesse, ducked, followed



by a heart to the ace, the ♠A, a heart ruff, a spade ruff, the ♣A, and another heart ruff as West pitched clubs on the third and fourth hearts. The play record ends there, but declarer presumably prevailed from there as follows: spade ruff, trump to dummy, spade ruff, ♦K. Declarer scores one spade, two hearts, two heart ruffs, two clubs, and five trumps in hand.

Did you spot how West can defeat 6♦ on declarer's line? When declarer ruffs his last heart West pitches a low spade instead of a club. Declarer can now ruff out the ♠Q, setting up the ♠J for a club pitch, but when he returns to dummy via the ♦A East can ruff the good ♠J with his ♦10 and now declarer is dead.

So, can 6♦ be made against best defense, double-dummy? Here's how. When declarer returns to hand after ruffing his first heart, he leads the ♦J. Say West ducks (it does him no good to cover). Declarer plays a second diamond to dummy's ace, ruffs another spade, and cashes the ♦K pitching a spade from dummy, arriving at the ending below (East to play):

♠ J ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ J2	♠ --- ♥ Q7 ♦ --- ♣ K10	♠ Q ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ 87
♠ --- ♥ J ♦ --- ♣ A6		

East has no answer. If he pitches a club the ace drops the king and declarer loses just the ♥J. If he pitches a low heart (the ♥Q makes the ♥J declarer's twelfth trick) declarer simply exits with the ♥J, endplaying East for the last two tricks. Nor can East gain by covering the first club honor. Declarer simply plays as indicated earlier to score one spade, two clubs, two hearts, two heart ruffs, and five trumps.

Making 6♦ was worth 14 imps to Japan, who had closed out the fifth segment by winning 26 imps on the final three boards to lead by 21, 169-148.

The sixth and final segment would be a back and forth affair. The same four players returned, but this time switched opponents as Ino-Abe faced Lev-Eisenberg at one table and Yamada-Ohno faced Ekeblad-Granovetter at the other.

Japan increased their lead by 4 imps on the first two boards to lead 173-148. Then came three double-digit swings for the Americans.

Bd: 83	♠ ---	
Dlr: South	♥ AKJ843	
Vul: E/W	♦ J872	
	♣ QJ10	
	♠ AJ107	♠ KQ98
	♥ 105	♥ 976
	♦ 104	♦ K53
	♣ AK875	♣ 963
	♠ 85432	
	♥ Q2	
	♦ AQ96	
	♣ 42	

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
			Pass
1♣	1♥	Dbl	Pass
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
3♠	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
			Pass
1♠	2♥	2♠	All Pass

Eisenberg made a good decision to bid 4♥ over 3♠. Whether he should have made that decision a round earlier we can only guess; perhaps it was West's 3♠ bid that convinced him that Lev had no spades—or wasted spade values. In any case, there was nothing to the play and when Lev played East for diamond length he came home with 11 tricks, +450.

When Granovetter opened a systemic 1♠ on a four-card suit it prevented Yamada from rebidding his hearts at a comfortable level. Perhaps Ohno should have doubled responsively (if that was possible in her system), but that could have worked out badly if North had 1=5=3=4 shape with marginal values, or bid 3♥ over 2♠. To make matters worse, Granovetter took eight tricks in 2♠ for +110. That was 11 imps to the USA, reducing Japan's lead to 15 at 173-159.

Then came...

Bd: 84	♠ K1032	
Dlr: West	♥ K10	
Vul: Both	♦ AQ2	
	♣ K863	
	♠ 97	♠ A65
	♥ 9643	♥ AQJ852
	♦ J96	♦ K7
	♣ AJ102	♣ 97
	♠ QJ84	
	♥ 7	
	♦ 108543	
	♣ Q54	

<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Lev</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	1NT	2♥	All Pass
<b>West</b> <i>Granovetter</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
Pass	1♣	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Maybe West owes East a courtesy raise to 3♥. On another day eight tricks could easily have been the limit of the E/W cards, especially with North's 1NT being of the strong variety. But on this day 10 tricks were easy, and when Granovetter raised hearts to the two level at the other table, game was reached. Plus 620 and -170 swung a useful 10 imps to USA, cutting Japan's lead to a mere 5 imps, at 173-169.

It is said that bad things come in threes, and Japan did not have to long to wait for the third act of this mini tragedy to unfold.

Bd: 85	♠ 7
Dlr: North	♥ 983
Vul: N/S	♦ 864
	♣ QJ9652

♠ J10954  
♥ QJ104  
♦ Q10  
♣ 107

♠ Q862  
♥ K5  
♦ AJ9732  
♣ A

♠ AK3  
♥ A762  
♦ K5  
♣ K843

<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Lev</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Eisenberg</i>
1♠	2♣	3♠	5♣
All Pass			

<b>West</b> <i>Granovetter</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
2♠	Pass	1♠	1NT
All Pass	Pass	4♠	Dbl

On first glance this deal does not appear to have the makings of a double-digit swing, what with both sides only in the partscore range. (E/W can make 3♦ or 3♠; N/S can make 4♣.) 5♣ looks like a big bid and when the defense collected the obvious four tricks, -100 for N/S, Eisenberg must have made a mental note to expect a 6-imp loss.

Ohno must have thought Christmas had come early when E/W bid quickly to 4♠ after her 1NT overcall, and she doubled to emphasize that point. On another day she would have been justified, but today there was a fly in the ointment in the form of declarer's

concealed six-card diamond suit (E/W played a canape system). Ohno cashed her two top spades, then shifted to a club. Ekeblad won, perforce, drew the last trump, and passed the ♦Q to the king. Ohno, not sensing the danger, failed to cash her ♥A for down one and now dummy's hearts disappeared on declarer's diamonds. That was -590 for N/S and 10 imps to USA, back in the lead 179-173.

On the next board USA added another imp, 180-173, but Japan struck right back with a nifty pick up of their own.

Bd: 87	♠ J8543
Dlr: South	♥ Q65
Vul: Both	♦ ---
	♣ AKJ104

♠ 10962  
♥ A3  
♦ AKQ93  
♣ 82

♠ KQ7  
♥ KJ7  
♦ J854  
♣ 976

♠ A  
♥ 109842  
♦ 10762  
♣ Q53

<b>West</b> <i>Abe</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Lev</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ino</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Eisenberg</i>
1♦	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	1♠	1NT	2♥
2NT	All Pass		
<b>West</b> <i>Granovetter</i>	<b>North</b> <i>Yamada</i>	<b>East</b> <i>Ekeblad</i>	<b>South</b> <i>Ohno</i>
1♠	2♣	Dbl	3♣
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Looking at all four hands even 2NT is too high, but when Eisenberg led the ♥9 Ino had eight tricks. He won the ♥Q with the king, led a diamond to dummy, and played a spade to the king and ace. Now the defense could have cashed out for down one, but Eisenberg continued the heart attack and Ino was back in with nine tricks and counting. He ran the rest of his diamonds, getting an inferential count on the hand, and backed his judgment by passing the ♠10 at trick nine for a second (irrelevant!) overtrick; +180.

At the other table Ekeblad-Granovetter overbid to 5♦ when clubs were bid and raised by Abe-Ino. The defense took their two club tricks on the go and eventually came to two spades as well for down two, +200 for N/S. That was 9 imps to Japan, who retook the lead at 182-180.

Two boards later the score stood at 185-184, USA.

Bd: 90  
 Dir: East  
 Vul: Both

♠ 9  
 ♥ 842  
 ♦ J86532  
 ♣ 1094

♠ KJ  
 ♥ 1097  
 ♦ K7  
 ♣ AK8632

♠ AQ10852  
 ♥ K6  
 ♦ AQ104  
 ♣ J

♠ 7643  
 ♥ AQJ53  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ Q75

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
		1♣	1♥
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass

It was hard on his auction for Ino to envision the big double fit, the ♠J serving as a prophylactic against four-one trumps. Of course in a slam declarer must not try for a diamond ruff or the contract could come to an unfortunate and premature ending. When Eisenberg led the ♦9 against 4♠, trying for a ruff, the friendly club split allowed Ino to come home with all thirteen tricks; +710.

At the other table Ekeblad-Granovetter had a nice auction to reach 6♠. When Ohno cashed her ♥A on opening lead there was no mystery left in the play (a diamond goes on a club) and Ekeblad scored up +1430, a 12-imp pick up for the USA, to extend their lead to 197-184.

The penultimate board was placed on the table with the Americans leading 200-190.

Bd: 95  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: N/S

♠ J10864  
 ♥ J943  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ QJ5

♠ 97  
 ♥ AK86  
 ♦ 75  
 ♣ K9732

♠ AQ32  
 ♥ Q105  
 ♦ KQ4  
 ♣ A104

♠ K5  
 ♥ 72  
 ♦ AJ109832  
 ♣ 86

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	3♦
Dbl	All Pass		
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Ino chose to open a top-of-range 1NT in fourth seat. When Eisenberg backed in with 3♦ (this is why it's safer to bid immediately, rather than pass and come in later, after giving the opponents the opportunity to exchange information) Abe judged well to double, and Ino was happy to defend. Abe led the ♥AK and continued with a third heart. Eisenberg ruffed and led a club to the queen and ace. Ino played a second club to Abe's king and Abe found the best continuation of a spade. Ino won the ace and played a second spade, insuring two trump tricks for the defense. Down three, -800 for N/S.

At the other table Ekeblad reached 3NT which was cold on any lead. Ohno chose a reasonable ♦10 lead and Ekeblad was eventually able to set up his clubs to emerge with nine tricks, +400 for E/W. That gave 9imps to Japan, cutting the USA lead to a single imp at 200-199. One board left.

Bd: 96  
 Dir: West  
 Vul: E/W

♠ 92  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ AKJ982  
 ♣ 8732

♠ K7  
 ♥ K10853  
 ♦ 764  
 ♣ Q105

♠ Q1064  
 ♥ AJ976  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ 964

♠ AJ853  
 ♥ Q2  
 ♦ Q53  
 ♣ AKJ

West	North	East	South
<i>Abe</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Eisenberg</i>
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			
West	North	East	South
<i>Granovetter</i>	<i>Yamada</i>	<i>Ekeblad</i>	<i>Ohno</i>
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Both N/Ss played in the less-than-stellar contract of 4♠; both Wests led the ♣5 to declarer's jack. Both declarers then tried a subtle ♥Q, passed around to East's ace, but there the two defenses diverged. Ino led a trump to Eisenberg's ace. He ruffed a heart, led a club to hand, exited with a trump, ruffed the heart

return, and played a third trump, hoping for a three-three split. Ino won, drew the last trump, and cashed two more hearts for down three, -150 for N/S.

At the other table, when Ekeblad won the ♡A he played a second club. Ohno won in hand, ruffed her second heart, ducked a spade, won the club return, then played ace and another spade. The defense could cash one more spade but now declarer was in control. Ohno lost just one heart and three trumps for

down one, -50, which gave 3 imps to Japan and made the final score 202-200, Japan.

Japan's victory was their first World Championship. Congratulations to the runners-up and especially to the winners of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Mind Sports Games Senior Teams: Hiroya Abe, Makoto Hirata, Masayuki Ino, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, and Takashi Maeda (NPC).



Makoto Hirata



Takashi Maeda (npc)



Akihiko Yamada



Yoshiyuki Nakamura



Hiroya Abe



Masayuki Ino



Kyoko Ohno

## The 2008 NEC Cup: The Latin vs Israel

Last year's (2008) NEC Cup top swiss stage qualifier Mahaffey chose Geller as their semifinal opponent while second place The Latin chose Lithuania in the quarterfinals. Third place Not the Empire then chose YOI Returns as their quarterfinal opponent, leaving the fourth place, three-time NEC Cup champs from Israel, to play team Canada.

In the quarterfinals, top seeded Mahaffey trailed Geller by 11 imps at the half but overwhelmed Geller in the second half to move into the semifinals, 113-58. In their quarterfinal match, The Latin moved out to a 46-imp lead over Lithuania in the first half and never looked back, gaining another 21 imps in the second half to advance to the semifinals, 124-57. In the third quarterfinal match Not the Empire led YOI Returns by 2 imps at the half, but lost 8 imps back in the second half as YOI Returns advanced to the semifinals, 99-93. In the last quarter-final match the Israelis led team Canada by 19 imps at the half, then added another 22 imps in the second half to advance to the semifinals, 112-71.

In the first semifinal match, top-seeded Mahaffey trailed The Latin by 12 imps (44-32) at the half, then dropped another 14 imps (47-43) in the second half as The Latin advanced to the final, 91-75. In the other semifinal match, Israel took a 65-23 first-half lead over YOI Returns and added another 2 imps to their lead in the second half to advance to the final, 94-50. So the 2008 NEC Cup final would be The Latin versus Israel

The Latin's Frankie Frontaura and Diego Brenner had previously played in the NEC Cup but this was the first time for Federico and Gonzalo Goded. The Israelis (Israel Yadlin, Doron Yadlin, Michael Barel, Migry Zur-Campanile) were all veterans of past NEC Cups. They won the title in both 2005 and 2006 and finished second in 2004. Barel and Zur-Campanile had also been quarter-finalists in 2007 (though playing with different teammates).

### First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

The Godeds are a father-son pair and the Yadlins brothers. Where appropriate, we will use the players' first names only, as we will with Migry Zur-Campanile (for space purposes).

If the Energizer Bunny were to be arrested, would he be charged with battery?

Bd: 1  
 Dir: North  
 Vul: None

North  
 ♠ Q7  
 ♥ Q732  
 ♦ KQ982  
 ♣ A7

West ♠ A8 ♥ AJ6 ♦ J1064 ♣ Q1054	East ♠ KJ642 ♥ K1094 ♦ --- ♣ J862
South ♠ 10953 ♥ 85 ♦ A753 ♣ K93	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
	1♦	1♠	2♦
	3♦	3♥	Pass
3♠	All Pass		

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	1♦	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

The first deal saw Migry in the Open Room reach 3♠ after Barel's competitive double persuaded her to look for a major-suit fit. 5♣ is the optimal E/W spot, if you find the ♥Q as you figure to. But 3♠ on a diamond lead threatened to get forced.

Best defense of a low diamond lead by South (yeah, right) might establish the force. However, on the lead of the ♦A Migry ruffed, drew two rounds of trumps, then believed North's ♠Q and shifted the attack to clubs. Brenner rose with the king to lead a diamond through. Migry put up the jack and ducked Frontaura's queen. All North could do was return a low diamond; Migry pitched another heart, knocked out the ♣A, ruffed the next diamond, cashed the ♠J and led winners. South had a trump trick but no diamonds left so declarer had +140.

In the Closed Room Doron's 3♦ contract was reached after a five-four Michaels bid from Federico, but the four-zero trump split was just too much for him. The defenders took their four major-suit winners and Doron had to lose a trump since he needed to ruff two hearts in dummy. He actually started trumps by leading the ♦K from hand (perhaps hoping for East to be 5-4-2-2 or to have a bare diamond honor). No luck; down 50 but still 3 imps.

The second deal saw both Souths commit what seems to be a technical error, but one that could not be punished.

Bd: 2  
Dlr: East  
Vul: N/S

North  
♠ A10873  
♥ KQ3  
♦ 6  
♣ 9852

West  
♠ KQJ2  
♥ J95  
♦ A108  
♣ KQJ

East  
♠ 54  
♥ A72  
♦ KJ7532  
♣ 74

South  
♠ 96  
♥ 10864  
♦ Q94  
♣ A1063

Open/ Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Both tables played 3NT on a spade lead from North. West played two rounds of diamonds as North discouraged in clubs, letting South win to shift to a heart. Both Souths played the ♥6, letting West decide whether to play the jack, nine or five. What to do? Playing low would only work if South had committed the technical inaccuracy of shifting to the ♥6 and not the ♥8 from this holding. Playing the jack might easily be right, but the percentage play adopted by both Wests was the nine, covering the case where South has H106x in the suit. Mind you, if the ♥6 was fourth highest the choice between the ♥9 and ♥J was probably not going to matter. No swing, down two in both cases when South got in again with the ♣A to lead hearts again, and declarer did not try to block the suit by ducking on the second round.

With Israel ahead 4-0, Federico found himself in the hot seat on Board 5.

**Did you know:** Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history. Spades: King David; Hearts: Charlemagne; Clubs: Alexander the Great; Diamonds: Julius Caesar.

Bd: 5  
Dlr: North  
Vul: N/S

North  
♠ QJ  
♥ AK873  
♦ K432  
♣ 84

West  
♠ A9874  
♥ ---  
♦ AQJ85  
♣ J96

East  
♠ K532  
♥ 109642  
♦ 6  
♣ K105

South  
♠ 106  
♥ QJ5  
♦ 1097  
♣ AQ732

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠(R)
DbI	2♦	3♥(1)	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	DbI

All Pass  
(1) Mixed Raise

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♥
DbI	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Federico played 4♠ as East on a top heart lead from South. He ruffed and immediately passed the ♣J. Israel won and took the club ruff, then another heart forced declarer to guess diamonds at once. Fortunately for him the auction had made it clear that North had the ♦K and he had enough trumps in hand and in dummy not to need the fall of the ♦109. Barel played the contract from the West seat and also ruffed the top heart lead (this time from North) and also played on clubs. Brenner carelessly gave his partner a ruff with the ♣2 and Frontaura equally carelessly (he'd seen partner produce nine HCP already) returned a low diamond. Not that declarer was getting it wrong; 5 imps to Israel, leading 9-0.

The Latin then got on the scoreboard with a deal that was all about ranges for preemptive actions.

Bd: 6  
Dlr: East  
Vul: E/W

North  
♠ 76  
♥ AK1095  
♦ QJ  
♣ AJ74

West  
♠ K2  
♥ 83  
♦ 87542  
♣ Q1083

East  
♠ A103  
♥ Q642  
♦ K96  
♣ K92

South  
♠ QJ9854  
♥ J7  
♦ A103  
♣ 65

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
		1♣	1♠
2♣	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		1♣	2♠

All Pass

We saw throughout last year's event that the Yadlins (who have a reputation for idiosyncratic bidding) are actually rather disciplined when opening and preempting. Israel had a classical non-vulnerable preempt that Al Roth would have been proud of, but Doron was not going to look for game on a hand where, if he were facing ♠AKxxx, even 2♠ might be in jeopardy. 2♠ made +170 when the ♦K was where it ought to be and the spades behaved. (Note that if West were three-three in the black suits the ♠10 would get promoted on repeated club leads).

In the other room Brenner probably thought he had too much outside spades to preempt. A slower auction saw Frontaura drive to game, and Brenner had no problem making ten tricks; 9-6 Israel.

Bd: 7	North
Dlr: South	♠ KQJ9
Vul: Both	♥ Q104
	♦ 64
	♣ Q1063

West	East
♠ 8532	♠ A107
♥ 85	♥ J763
♦ A92	♦ QJ753
♣ 9854	♣ 7

South
♠ 64
♥ AK92
♦ K108
♣ AKJ2

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

On this next deal both Wests heard South show a strong balanced hand and were on lead to 3NT. Gonzalo led an untrusting club, Barel the more

natural diamond. Israel made eleven tricks when Federico won the ♠A and shifted to a low diamond to let declarer put in the ten. Brenner won the diamond lead and simply assumed that the diamonds were four-four. He knocked out the ♠A without cashing four clubs, and Israel had earned 13 imps, extending their lead to 22-6.

Had declarer cashed four clubs at once East must pitch two spades and a diamond; now the spade play is safe...the defenders will only be able to set you if West led the ♦2 from a five-card suit.

Bd: 8	North
Dlr: West	♠ A73
Vul: None	♥ KJ52
	♦ 532
	♣ K105

West	East
♠ 10854	♠ 96
♥ Q	♥ A1098764
♦ A84	♦ J76
♣ AJ762	♣ 3

South
♠ KQJ2
♥ 3
♦ KQ109
♣ Q984

Open Room

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	2♥	Dbl
All Pass			

On this deal Barel found a light opening bid that kept N/S out of the auction. Migry played 2♥ on a top spade lead. Brenner shifted intelligently to a top diamond, then led a low spade. Frontaura took his eye off the ball and played a third spade. That helped Migry, if she needed it. She ruffed, crossed to the ♣A to run the ♥Q, ducked all around, then ruffed a club to hand, crossed to the ♦A to ruff a club, and exited in diamonds. In the three-card ending she could ensure two trump tricks. There were Portuguese mutterings from the South seat about pearls before swine, but North was not listening; it was, after all, only +110, and as we shall see, North's defense, while not best, was not critical.

There were much higher stakes in the other room. Israel led a top spade, shifted to a top diamond, went back to spades, and Doron as North took the ace



and played a second diamond. That took an entry out of dummy prematurely; necessary, but was it sufficient? Declarer passed the ♠Q, ruffed a spade, and played the third diamond. South won and exited a club; declarer was trump bound in the four-card ending and had to lose two hearts for down one. All declarer had needed to do was to play two rounds of clubs before exiting with the diamond, and the defenders would have had to reduce declarer's trumps for him, to execute the trump coup. The only possible defense to 2♥ is surely impossible to find; Israel either had to lead a diamond or Doron had to overtake the ♠A at trick one to shift to diamonds; that does break up the trump endplay.

Anyway, with Federico swearing to himself in perfect Castilian and Israel leading 27-6, an immediate opportunity presented itself for a swing.

Bd: 9 North  
 Dlr: North ♠ AQ84  
 Vul: E/W ♥ A3  
 ♦ KQ  
 ♣ AJ986

West  
 ♠ J9  
 ♥ 9875  
 ♦ 9852  
 ♣ 1052

East  
 ♠ 32  
 ♥ Q1042  
 ♦ AJ1076  
 ♣ Q3

South  
 ♠ K10765  
 ♥ KJ6  
 ♦ 43  
 ♣ K74

in the other room. And indeed, Migry's vulnerable 1♦ overcall might have given Frontaura a chance to draw the inference that she had the ♣Q. On a trump lead declarer drew trumps, then played on diamonds with Barel giving true (upside-down) count. When North played three rounds of hearts, Migry contributed the ten on the second round and the queen on the third. Would she have overcalled only 1♦ with a six-carder at this vulnerability? The likely answer was yes, since we had already seen her sound preempts, even non-vulnerable. If she had only five diamonds, as the carding suggested, would she not also have the ♣Q, in which case the Chinese Finesse, a term we have to be careful with but in the present case is appropriate, would be the winning play? Run the ♣J, and when it is covered, finesse the ♣10 on the way back. Declarer misguessed what to do but might have been kicking himself in retrospect. Down one and no swing.

Bd: 10 North  
 Dlr: East ♠ Q87  
 Vul: Both ♥ A108  
 ♦ K10985  
 ♣ Q5

West  
 ♠ K1043  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ Q43  
 ♣ K10942

East  
 ♠ J965  
 ♥ Q9643  
 ♦ J7  
 ♣ A8

South  
 ♠ A2  
 ♥ KJ75  
 ♦ A62  
 ♣ J763

Open Room

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥(1)
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♣	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

While Israel was never going to make 6♠, since he had opened 2NT and kept his opponents out of the auction, Frontaura's 1♣ opening was surely an action that deserved a better fate than the initial bid

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	3♣(INV ♦)	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

We saw previously that when things were not going well Frontaura-Brenner would mix up their opening strategy. Perhaps that explains Brenner's decision to open 1♦ here. Facing a limit raise in diamonds we might have expected him to shoot out 3NT; but he settled for 3♦, and Barel led a spade, giving declarer an easy route to at least nine tricks. He rose with ♠Q, then ruffed a spade while drawing trumps, and could

afford to misguess hearts for +110. Doron played 3NT on the normal spade lead. He won the ♠A and set up diamonds, took the ♠Q and now ran three diamonds, watching the defenders' discards. When Federico (East) pitched the four and three of hearts, then a spade, declarer decided he had begun life with five hearts. So he cashed the ♥A and finessed; very well done, but perhaps Federico could have let go a club earlier and *then* hearts to give a less obvious count signal in hearts? Israel now led 37-6.

Bd: 12 North  
 Dir: West ♠ AJ  
 Vul: N/S ♥ J1054  
 ♦ 95  
 ♣ J6543

West  
 ♠ 1087542  
 ♥ 83  
 ♦ A64  
 ♣ AK

East  
 ♠ K93  
 ♥ KQ62  
 ♦ J72  
 ♣ Q108

South  
 ♠ Q6  
 ♥ A97  
 ♦ KQ1083  
 ♣ 972

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♠	All Pass

After a quiet partscore the next deal saw only 6 imps change hands but both tables might have left feeling distinctly unhappy about their result. Both tables played 3♠ on a deal where Migry in one room and Gonzalo in the other could not have been accused of overbidding. Both Norths led a heart and South took the ace; what next? Israel woodenly continued hearts. Gonzalo rattled off the clubs for a discard using the ♠K as an entry and settled for +170; an opportunity missed?

It did not turn out that way. Brenner shifted to the ♦Q at trick two. Barel won, perhaps a mistake whether the lead is from ♦Qx or ♦KQ10, although he was afraid of a heart shift taking the vital entry out of dummy. He unblocked clubs and crossed to the ♥Q to cash the ♣Q and throw a diamond. Now he led the third heart and ruffed it in hand, then played a spade up. Frontaura won the ace, played a diamond to his partner for the diamond overruff with the ♠J, and now

either the fourth round of hearts or clubs would promote the ♠Q. Down one and 6 imps for The Latin, down 37-12.

Next, two quiet deals featured only a question of overtricks and did not alter the score. Then The Latin had another chance, again in a doubled 2♥, and this time it was Gonzalo's chance to punish the Yadlins.

Bd: 15 North  
 Dir: South ♠ 53  
 Vul: N/S ♥ K1062  
 ♦ AQ97  
 ♣ 975

West  
 ♠ K2  
 ♥ AQJ53  
 ♦ J6  
 ♣ QJ42

East  
 ♠ 9764  
 ♥ 74  
 ♦ K854  
 ♣ K63

South  
 ♠ AQJ108  
 ♥ 98  
 ♦ 1032  
 ♣ A108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
2♥	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	Dbl

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♥	Pass	Pass	1♠
All Pass			Dbl

One may not have to double 2♥ in the balancing seat as South but opinions vary. Both Souths thought it mandatory. Frontaura ran from 2♥x (why?) to 2NT; many would play that action as artificial but not this pair. The defenders led a heart and shifted to clubs to establish six tricks before declarer had eight. But in 2♥x a spade to the ace and the ♠10 back to the king saw declarer go after clubs, dislodging South's entry. A third round of spades was ruffed low and overruffed, after quite a bit of thought from North. Doron now exited with a third club. All West had to do now was lead the ♥Q from hand to retain control; a diamond risks letting South in with either the queen or ace for a trump promotion. Instead, Gonzalo led a diamond to the king and was still okay, even though he was tempting fate. But he now played the fourth spade to pitch a diamond. The fifth spade then promoted the ♥10 for down one; 5 imps for Israel, who led 43-12 at the end of the first quarter.

For our armchair analysts, North missed a chance to set 2♥x, not that one can entirely blame him. The ♦Q, the least likely of his thirteen cards to select for his opening lead (or the ♦A followed by the ♦Q), would also have worked to set up a force.

**Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):**

Israel started the second quarter leading by 31 imps, 43-12. Judging by past finals the Israelis have been involved in, it was time for The Latin to start samba-ing or the dance would be over *before* the fat lady had a chance to sing.

Bd: 17 North  
 Dir: North ♠ 763  
 Vul: None ♥ KQ3  
 ♦ KJ62  
 ♣ Q93

West	East
♠ Q4	♠ A85
♥ A84	♥ J10965
♦ Q	♦ A85
♣ J1087642	♣ A5
	South
	♠ KJ1092
	♥ 72
	♦ 109743
	♣ K

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♠	Dbl	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣*	2♠	3♣*	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

Doron's raise to 2♠ seems a bit on the conservative side of the modern style (okay, so "a bit" may be an underbid), but in practice opposite the South hand it was more than prudent since even 2♠ can be beaten by several tricks (though 2♦ has good play). Diego's 3♥ was right on target; when the smoke had cleared the Godeds had scored up +140.

In the Closed Room Barel saw images of roses dancing in his head when his partner opened in his second-best suit. He cue-bid to show a limit raise or better, but when Migry bid game and could not avoid four losers (two trumps, a spade and a club) the images turned to lilies (or maybe guns). Minus 50; 5 imps to The Latin, trailing now 43-17.

Bd: 18 North  
 Dir: East ♠ ---  
 Vul: N/S ♥ AKJ5  
 ♦ Q982  
 ♣ J9853

West	East
♠ AQ93	♠ 108754
♥ 76	♥ Q82
♦ KJ653	♦ A104
♣ 102	♣ KQ
	South
	♠ KJ62
	♥ 10943
	♦ 7
	♣ A764

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Rdbl	2♥
2♠	3♥	3♠	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
			All Pass

Wow. What a difference in style (or hand evaluation; or chutzpah) there was here between the two rooms. Barel's 1♦ opening looks normal, as do Migry's 1♠ and Frontaura's double. In fact, all the remaining calls look eminently reasonable to us. So why was the board passed out in the Closed Room? Maybe *The Shadow* knows, hmm?

4♥ has only three obvious losers (a diamond, a club and a trump), but that does not mean that there are ten tricks. On a trump lead (say) declarer wins and plays ace and a club. East wins and plays a spade (as good as anything), ruffed in dummy, and now declarer can either play a diamond or cash a second trump and run clubs. The defense will eventually come to four tricks as declarer will run out of trumps and have to lose three tricks at the end to go with a trump loser.

In fact, Brenner did receive a trump lead and played the hand as suggested—up to a point. He won, then played ace and a club. Migry won and returned a spade, jack, queen, ruff. But Brenner failed to cash the ♥A and play on clubs. He played a diamond and Migry rose ace to play a second spade, ruffed in dummy. Brenner then ruffed a diamond, led a club to dummy (East pitching a spade), and ruffed a second diamond. But now Migry was in control. She ruffed the fourth club, stranding dummy's last club trick,

and now Brenner had to go down two; -200. 5 imps to Israel, leading 48-17.

Bd: 19            North  
 Dlr: South      ♠ J53  
 Vul: E/W        ♥ Q95  
                     ♦ 5432  
                     ♣ Q95

West ♠ 10 ♥ K6 ♦ AKJ1087 ♣ J1072	East ♠ Q842 ♥ J8743 ♦ Q6 ♣ A3
South ♠ AK976 ♥ A102 ♦ 9 ♣ K864	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
2♦	2♠	Dbl	3♦
Dbl	3♠	3NT	4♣
Dbl	4♠	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♦	Pass	2NT	1♠
3NT	All Pass		Pass

Frontaura must have sipped some sort of magic elixir between boards that instilled in him a strong sense of invincibility—or maybe it was the vulnerability. In any case, he raised spades “freely” with his modest high cards, sterile shape, and mediocre (at best) trumps and now Brenner could not be contained. He made one try over East’s responsive double and, hearing Frontaura take what must have been the weakest action (3♠) over West’s double, bid 4♠ over Migry’s 3NT. Migry doubled, thinking Chanukah 2008 had arrived 11 months early, ending the auction. She must have been savoring the impending massacre but unfortunately Barel’s name seems to have been left off the e-mail list for the message that read, “Alert: defend cautiously.”

Barel led the ♦K and at trick two found the deadly (for the defense) switch to...the ♥K; not exactly striking fear into declarer’s heart. Brenner won the ace, cashed the ♠K (noting the fall of the ten), and placed the ♣K on the table. Migry ducked, won the second club (Brenner playing low from both hands), then played the ♦Q. Brenner ruffed, led the ♥10, going up with the queen when Barel followed low, and called for the ♠J from dummy: queen, ace, ♦8.

He then exited with the ♥2 to Migry’s jack. All roads led to down one now, as Brenner had to come to two trumps in hand plus either the ♣Q or the ♠5 in dummy. In practice, Migry exited with a heart and Brenner ruffed in dummy and played the ♣Q, forcing her to ruff; now he had to score his last two trumps. Down one, -100.

The goddess Bridgida, to ensure that Frontaura’s and Brenner’s transgressions were appropriately dealt with, arranged that any E/W game was doomed to failure. In the Closed Room Israel led the ♠A against Federico’s 3NT contract. When brother Doron discouraged he continued with a low spade to the jack and queen (dummy pitching a club), so now Federico ran dummy’s diamonds, then led the ♣J to the ace. But the Yadlins made no errors in discarding and took the remaining tricks for down one, -100. 5 more imps to Israel, up now 53-17.

Bd: 20            North  
 Dlr: West       ♠ A107  
 Vul: Both       ♥ 954  
                     ♦ KQ10843  
                     ♣ K

West ♠ J32 ♥ AKJ ♦ AJ972 ♣ J9	East ♠ 94 ♥ 1087632 ♦ --- ♣ Q10865
South ♠ KQ865 ♥ Q ♦ 65 ♣ A7432	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦(♥)	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
1NT	2♣	4♥	All Pass

4♥ has four top losers, though not if they don’t take them (at least the spade shaped ones). In the Open Room Frontaura led the ♦K and away went one of dummy’s spades. Now 4♥ was cold; declarer just needed to lead trumps from the top, then play on clubs. But rather than cash a high trump, Barel ruffed a diamond and led a heart up. (We’d tell you why Michael claimed he played the hand this way, but we don’t think you’d believe it.) When the queen appeared, he must have realized that trumps were three-one and that he had lost a tempo by ruffing the

diamond. Now he could not cash the two remaining high trumps and still bring in clubs if they were five-one. So he started clubs immediately, leading the nine. Frontaura won the king perforce and played ace and a spade. Barel ruffed and now knew he was in trouble. If he drew two more trumps and clubs were five-one, the defense could duck the second club and he would have only one more trump in dummy to set up the clubs and then get back to run them. So he played a second club immediately. Brenner won the ace and tapped dummy again, and now the best Barel could do was crossruff the hand, which left him a trick short; -100.

In the Closed Room Israel led a diamond from the South side and once again a spade went away. But Federico finessed, won the trump return, cashed a third trump (Israel errantly pitching a spade), then played three rounds of clubs ending in hand. Now he led a spade up and it didn't matter what Israel did. (In practice he won the ace and played back the queen.) Down one, -50, and 2 imps to The Latin, 53-31.

Bd: 21      North  
 Dlr: North    ♠ 1094  
 Vul: N/S      ♥ Q84  
                   ♦ 873  
                   ♣ 10985

West  
 ♠ K72  
 ♥ AK105  
 ♦ Q2  
 ♣ AKQ6

East  
 ♠ J865  
 ♥ J962  
 ♦ J5  
 ♣ J73

South  
 ♠ AQ3  
 ♥ 73  
 ♦ AK10964  
 ♣ 42

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♠	2♦
Dbl	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl	Pass	1♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

4♥ may seem a bit aggressive, but who was to say Migry couldn't have held the ♠QJ instead of the two red jacks? After all, she bid the suit. Brenner cashed two top diamonds and shifted to a club. Migry won in hand, played a spade to the king, cashed two top

trumps and three top clubs, then conceded two spades and a trump for down two, -100.

In the other room Israel also cashed the two top diamonds but then switched to a trump. Federico finessed, won the trump return, cashed a third trump (Israel errantly pitching a spade), then played three rounds of clubs ending in hand. Now he led a spade up and it didn't matter what Israel did. (In practice he won the ace and played back the queen.) Down one, -50, and 2 imps to The Latin, 53-31.

Bd: 22      North  
 Dlr: East    ♠ K109  
 Vul: E/W    ♥ KQ10853  
                   ♦ 5  
                   ♣ KJ9

West  
 ♠ J83  
 ♥ 96  
 ♦ AJ42  
 ♣ Q654

East  
 ♠ A652  
 ♥ J742  
 ♦ KQ  
 ♣ A102

South  
 ♠ Q74  
 ♥ A  
 ♦ 1098763  
 ♣ 873

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
		1♣	1♦
1NT	2♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♠(♣)	2♥	All Pass	

The Godeds played transfer responses to their 1♣ openings, so Gonzalo's 1♠ response showed clubs (presumably a four-card or longer raise). Federico led the ♦K, then the ♦Q, Doron ruffing. Not one to fiddle around, Doron immediately played the ♠9 to the queen, cashed the ♥A, then led a spade toward his hand and inserted...the ten. As Al Roth used to say, "What's the problem?" Federico won and exited with a spade. Doron cashed his two top hearts and exited with a heart to the jack. Federico cashed the last spade, but Doron pitched the ♣9 and now the defenders had to break clubs. Well played; +110.

The defense started the same way in the Closed Room but at trick three Frontaura led a heart to the ace followed by a spade to the king and ace. He won the spade return with the queen, led a club to the jack and ace, and eventually was down one for -50. That was 4 imps to Israel, leading 57-31.

Bd: 23  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: Both

North  
 ♠ 109654  
 ♥ AQ654  
 ♦ K3  
 ♣ Q

West  
 ♠ KQ2  
 ♥ 108  
 ♦ J108  
 ♣ AJ943

East  
 ♠ J3  
 ♥ K93  
 ♦ Q72  
 ♣ K7652

South  
 ♠ A87  
 ♥ J72  
 ♦ A9654  
 ♣ 108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
1♣	2♦(♥+♠)	3♣	4♣
Dbl	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
1♣	2♣(♥+♠)	3♣	3♥
All Pass			

4♥ had four obvious losers, and with the ♣A led at both tables nothing could go away. 6 more imps to Israel, extending their lead to 63-31.

Bd: 24  
 Dir: West  
 Vul: None

North  
 ♠ A97543  
 ♥ Q1054  
 ♦ Q102  
 ♣ ---

West  
 ♠ 82  
 ♥ 72  
 ♦ KJ843  
 ♣ K954

East  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ J8  
 ♦ A9765  
 ♣ Q10873

South  
 ♠ KQJ10  
 ♥ AK963  
 ♦ ---  
 ♣ AJ62

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♣(1)	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	7♥
All Pass			
(1) ♣ shortness			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	5♦(1)
Pass	5♠(2)	Pass	5NT(3)
Pass	7♥	Pass	7♠
All Pass			
(1) Exclusion RKCB(♠)			
(2) One key card outside ♦			
(3) Trump ask			

With the big double fit, whoever got into the bidding first got to declare a Grand Slam. In the Open Room that was South; in the Closed Room it was Doron the Invincible. Doron's 7♥ must have shown either two of the top three honors (the extra length equaling the queen) or the ace plus extra length; in either case Israel knew what to do. In the Open Room 4♣ was a splinter of some sort but whether it showed a singleton or a void we cannot say. The play was *not* the thing in this case; a push at +1510.

Bd: 25  
 Dir: North  
 Vul: E/W

North  
 ♠ 5  
 ♥ AKQ97  
 ♦ 10962  
 ♣ A63

West  
 ♠ Q87  
 ♥ J1065  
 ♦ KQ43  
 ♣ K4

East  
 ♠ KJ6432  
 ♥ 84  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ J1098

South  
 ♠ A109  
 ♥ 32  
 ♦ J875  
 ♣ Q752

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
2♥	1♥	1♠	1NT
3♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♥	1♥	1♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	4♠	All Pass

In the Open Room Barel-Campanile sniffed at game but wisely stayed out, though not as out as they should have. Brenner led a heart and Frontaura won the queen, then led the king and ace. Migry ruffed with the ♠J as Brenner pitched a diamond. The ♦A was led followed by a club to the king and ace, and the defense now had two hearts, two clubs and two

spades for down two, -200.

In the Closed Room the defense also started with three rounds of hearts. Federico ruffed with the ♠K and guessed clubs, passing the ten. If you bid more you have to play better, and the Godeds certainly did both here. But in the end all roads led to Yokohama as -200 pushed the board. Still 63-31 Israel.

Bd: 26 North  
 Dir: East ♠ QJ9  
 Vul: Both ♥ 42  
 ♦ KJ743  
 ♣ K65

West  
 ♠ K10743  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ 96  
 ♣ J1092

East  
 ♠ A85  
 ♥ AJ8  
 ♦ AQ52  
 ♣ Q83

South  
 ♠ 62  
 ♥ KQ9765  
 ♦ 108  
 ♣ A74

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
Barel	Frontaura	Migry	Brenner
Gonzalo	Doron	Federico	Israel
		1NT	Pass
2♥(♠)	Pass	2♠	All Pass

With the diamond finesse on, there were four losers. Both rooms stopped safely in 2♠ for a push at +140.

Bd: 27 North  
 Dir: South ♠ 943  
 Vul: None ♥ J106  
 ♦ KJ  
 ♣ QJ1097

West  
 ♠ 1075  
 ♥ AK3  
 ♦ A1092  
 ♣ AK3

East  
 ♠ AQ2  
 ♥ 942  
 ♦ Q87654  
 ♣ 2

South  
 ♠ KJ86  
 ♥ Q875  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ 8654

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
Barel	Frontaura	Migry	Brenner
Gonzalo	Doron	Federico	Israel
		Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Again, identical auctions led to identical contracts, though not identical results. Both rooms received the ♣Q lead. In the Open Room Barel played the ♦10 at trick two and caught Frontaura unprepared. When he ducked Barel won the queen and Frontaura then had to watch his ♦K fall under the ace. Barel took eleven tricks for +460. In the Closed Room Gonzalo played ace and a diamond at tricks two and three, then ducked Doron's club continuation. But nothing good happened after that (the play record on BBO was not accurate here; the Yadlins did *not* both pitch away their hearts as it said) and Gonzalo finished with ten tricks. Plus 430 and 1 imp to Israel, now 64-31.

Bd: 28 North  
 Dir: West ♠ QJ102  
 Vul: N/S ♥ K93  
 ♦ A95  
 ♣ 1032

West  
 ♠ AK9875  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ QJ763  
 ♣ Q

East  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ Q1042  
 ♦ K842  
 ♣ AJ94

South  
 ♠ 43  
 ♥ AJ765  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ K8765

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Barel	Frontaura	Migry	Brenner
1♠	Pass	1NT(F)	2♥
2♠	3♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Gonzalo	Doron	Federico	Israel
1♠	Pass	1NT(F)	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♦	All Pass

Against 3♥ Barel led the ♠A and shifted to a diamond to the ace. Brenner led the ♠Q to Barel's ace and a second diamond, ruffed by South. Brenner played a low club to the queen and Barel continued with a third diamond, again ruffed by South. Now another low club allowed Migry to score both her jack and ace, and a fourth club was ruffed by Barel with the ♥8 and overruffed with dummy's nine. Next the ♠J was ruffed and overruffed, and Brenner could now ruff his last club with the ♥K and claim the last two tricks with his trump tenace over East; -100.

At first glance the Closed Room's 5♦ may appear to have good play, but the four-two spades and three-one trumps create problems on a forcing defense. Doron led a heart to the jack and Israel returned a



heart at trick two. Gonzalo ruffed, played ♠A, ruffed a spade, then led a diamond to the ten, queen, and ace. A third heart forced declarer a second time and now he was down to North's trump length. At this point declarer had several play options: Cashing the ♠A loses when spades are four-two and the short hand has two or more trumps; ruffing a spade loses when spades are three-three and trumps are three-one. It is difficult to say precisely which is less likely; Gonzalo ruffed a third spade with the ♦K for down one. The contract can never be made as the cards lie, so this is all academic. Minus 50 was 4 moreimps to Israel, leading now by 37, 68-31.

Bd: 29  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: Both

North  
 ♠ K1096  
 ♥ J72  
 ♦ 10543  
 ♣ K5

West  
 ♠ J87  
 ♥ K543  
 ♦ 86  
 ♣ A1097

East  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ 106  
 ♦ KJ72  
 ♣ Q86432

South  
 ♠ AQ542  
 ♥ AQ98  
 ♦ AQ9  
 ♣ J

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

With the ♣A and both diamond honors inside eleven tricks were routine. A boring push at 650.

Bd: 30  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: None

North  
 ♠ QJ985  
 ♥ KQ98  
 ♦ Q5  
 ♣ 87

West  
 ♠ A103  
 ♥ A1073  
 ♦ K8743  
 ♣ 2

East  
 ♠ 74  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ 96  
 ♣ AKQ106543

South  
 ♠ K62  
 ♥ 6542  
 ♦ AJ102  
 ♣ J9

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		3NT	All Pass

Both E/W pairs played gambling 3NT here and took eleven tricks on the ♦A lead. Israel still up 68-31.

Bd: 31  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: N/S

North  
 ♠ 8642  
 ♥ Q7  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ KQ9854

West  
 ♠ A53  
 ♥ J10  
 ♦ KQ72  
 ♣ AJ103

East  
 ♠ 97  
 ♥ K854  
 ♦ AJ854  
 ♣ 62

South  
 ♠ KQJ10  
 ♥ A9632  
 ♦ 1093  
 ♣ 7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
			1♥
DbI	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	DbI(T/O)	Rdbl	2♠
3♦	3♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	All Pass

Barel led the ♦K against 3♠; Migry overtook (the woman always knows best) and returned a diamond, ruffed in dummy. When a spade to the king and a club to the king were both ducked Brenner ruffed a club and tried a heart to the queen, losing to the king. Back came a trump and Barel played ace and another, leaving Brenner with only the ♥A9 to come. Down two, -200.

In the Closed Room Doron led the ♣8 to the jack, and Gonzalo played the ♥10 to the queen, king, and ace. Israel switched to the ♠K, and continued two more rounds when Gonzalo ducked. Gonzalo then claimed his nine tricks for +150; 2 moreimps to Israel, who led now 70-31.

Bd: 32  
 Dir: West  
 Vul: E/W

North  
 ♠ J96  
 ♥ A8752  
 ♦ Q84  
 ♣ AJ

West  
 ♠ Q103  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ KJ5  
 ♣ KQ8754

East  
 ♠ AK7  
 ♥ 1093  
 ♦ 1097632  
 ♣ 6

South  
 ♠ 8542  
 ♥ KJ64  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ 10932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Brenner</i>
1♣	1♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Federico</i>	<i>Israel</i>
1♣	1♥	2♦(NF)	4♥
All Pass			

Both tables bid quickly to 4♥ but there were three spades and a club to lose and both defenses found them.

The second quarter ended with Israel leading 70-31. The Latin would have to overcome a 39-imp deficit in only 32 boards to contend for the 2008 NEC Cup title.

**Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):**

Israel apparently comfortably in command at 70-31, The Latin would need to make a move soon to start getting some imps on the board. Mind you, 1 imp a deal would do.

Bd: 33  
 Dir: North  
 Vul: None

North  
 ♠ AKQ6  
 ♥ A5  
 ♦ K643  
 ♣ K42

West  
 ♠ 9  
 ♥ K10943  
 ♦ A105  
 ♣ J1097

East  
 ♠ 7542  
 ♥ QJ62  
 ♦ J72  
 ♣ A6

South  
 ♠ J1083  
 ♥ 87  
 ♦ Q98  
 ♣ Q853

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
	1♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Gonzalo's opening 1♦ was passed around to Barel, who looked long and hard at his singleton spade and eventually sold out. The trump lead gave declarer a chance to develop the diamonds for one loser; on repeated heart leads the hand is much less fun. Plus 130 was going to be a very decent position for The Latin, but would the Yadrins be able to exercise similar restraint? No. Doron's 2NT opening bid was defined as 20-21. Israel looked for the major-suit fit and found it, but on a trump lead all declarer had was eight tricks; he guessed clubs, but the four-one spade split was too much to handle. Two down and 5 imps to The Latin, trailing 70-36.

Bd: 34  
 Dir: East  
 Vul: N/S

North  
 ♠ A754  
 ♥ 85  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ Q98432

West  
 ♠ J3  
 ♥ Q10  
 ♦ Q1082  
 ♣ AK1065

East  
 ♠ Q  
 ♥ K7642  
 ♦ AKJ97  
 ♣ J7

South  
 ♠ K109862  
 ♥ AJ93  
 ♦ 543  
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
3♣	3♠	1♥	2♠
Dbl	Pass	5♦	Pass
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♣	3♠	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Pass	5♦	4♠
All Pass			

Gonzalo was in the hot seat and guessed to bid only 3♠. (4♠ even on early trump leads looks quite likely to make.) Migry made a good practical bid to jump to

5♦ over the takeout double. Defending 5♦ as East was a lot easier than as West. Gonzalo won the first spade and played back the club; he had enough of a count on the hand to know that this was likely to be the only shot to set the hand. And so it proved. On an equivalent auction Israel led an intelligent ♠2, allowing the club ruff to come far more quickly. No swing. Well done both N/S pairs.

Bd: 35 North  
 Dir: South ♠ 3  
 Vul: E/W ♥ 653  
 ♦ Q108764  
 ♣ 1076

West  
 ♠ K2  
 ♥ KQ742  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ QJ954

East  
 ♠ Q8754  
 ♥ 1098  
 ♦ A53  
 ♣ A8

South  
 ♠ AJ1096  
 ♥ AJ  
 ♦ J92  
 ♣ K32

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥(1)	Pass	4♥	All Pass
(1) ♥ + ♣ Max			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass

The third deal saw Barel make a Michaels cue-bid that even at unfavorable vulnerability might be the mainstream action. Migry relayed, got a 3♥ response (clubs and a maximum), but they were surely on their way to 4♥ anyway. Alas for Israel, West declaring made the spade ruff far easier to find. Barel did not drop the ♠K at trick one; if he had South would likely have returned the suit (since West was five-five, there could be no slow diamond trick if he had a singleton spade) but you never know. Of course on an initial diamond lead, if 4♥ were declared by South it appears declarer could pitch his losing spade on the diamonds, and perhaps survive thanks to the nice location of the ♥J, once clubs are three-three.

Would Brenner be given this chance? Yes indeed. Israel led a diamond; declarer unblocked diamonds, crossed to the ♣A, and discarded that awkward spade loser. That was necessary, but was it going to be sufficient? On the first trump play Israel rose with

the ace and played ace and another spade. Brenner had no sensible losing options now, but he did not know that. He eventually ruffed with the ♥7, drew trumps, and played a club towards dummy to bring home ten tricks; 70-49 now.

Israel got off the schneid for the set with an overtrick imp. Then came another fine position for The Latin.

Bd: 37 North  
 Dir: North ♠ AK65  
 Vul: N/S ♥ A  
 ♦ KQJ2  
 ♣ KQJ4

West  
 ♠ 94  
 ♥ K876543  
 ♦ ---  
 ♣ 7632

East  
 ♠ J87  
 ♥ 92  
 ♦ A10965  
 ♣ A85

South  
 ♠ Q1032  
 ♥ QJ10  
 ♦ 8743  
 ♣ 109

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	2♣	Pass	2♦
3♥	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Reaching 3NT and avoiding the four-four spade fit hardly seems a big deal, until you note that with five-zero diamonds and the ♣A with the diamond length one can set North's 4♣ contract on ruffs—"can" being the operative word. The Yadlins' table was running a little behind the other room, so it was possible to speculate that one more big swing would get the margin of the match back to single digits. No, the same sequence saw 3NT successfully declared at both tables for +430.

Bd: 38 North  
 Dir: East ♠ Q54  
 Vul: E/W ♥ QJ943  
 ♦ 965  
 ♣ Q4

West  
 ♠ A9  
 ♥ A107  
 ♦ 1073  
 ♣ AJ853

East  
 ♠ K103  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ AK82  
 ♣ 10972

South  
 ♠ J8762  
 ♥ K85  
 ♦ QJ4  
 ♣ K6

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♥	2♥	3♥
5♣	All Pass		

Every deal seemed to offer some potential for swing now. The simple auction to 1NT saw the defenders lead and continue hearts. Barel won the first heart for fear of a spade shift and needed only to avoid losing too many tricks in hearts and clubs. He laid down the ♣A and had eight tricks. It is worth noting that 3NT can make if declarer ducks two hearts, then crosses to dummy to lead a club towards his hand. It is not so hard to see that happening, but Doron introduced a variation into the notrump theme by overcalling 1♥ with that hand of power and quality. Frontaura looked for the club game, expecting to be facing a singleton heart, and now in 5♣ on a heart lead it was hard to see any practical chances. Ruffing a heart in dummy and trying for some unlikely spade-diamond squeeze was all that was available, but it did not materialize.

The Vugraph commentators wrote off declarer's chances a little too soon. After winning the club and cashing the ♥K, Israel for some unknown reason shifted to a spade rather than playing a top diamond. Fortune was with him. Although declarer could have won the spade in dummy to isolate the spade menace, he did not quite have the timing to ruff a heart and run all his trumps, pitching diamonds, for the criss-cross squeeze. Had he ducked the first trick he *would* have had that play available. Instead, Frontera won the ♠A and ruffed a heart, but there was no way home. Back to 77-49 for Israel.

Bd: 39	North
Dir: South	♠ KJ875
Vul: Both	♥ K32
	♦ 1086
	♣ 64

West	East
♠ 9	♠ Q1042
♥ A8	♥ J974
♦ AKQJ75	♦ 9
♣ K1092	♣ AQJ8
South	
♠ A63	
♥ Q1065	
♦ 432	
♣ 753	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

How are you supposed to bid the E/W cards to 6♣? Barel's jump rebid in diamonds was a little ungainly but a pretty fair summary of what the hand is about. Still, it is really an understatement of the hand's trick-taking potential. No doubt the strong clubbers would rub their hands with glee here, but we had none in this match. Frontaura, though, who had not been backward about coming forward this match, found the way. He jump shifted into clubs and Brenner raised happily. Frontaura's 4♦ cue-bid got 4NT from Brenner (constructive for clubs, not Blackwood) and when Frontaura offered a choice of slams, Brenner knew where to play. On a non-heart lead the slam would be almost laydown; on a heart lead it would need three-two clubs or a minor miracle. Doron led a trump, but nothing mattered. 77-61 for Israel.

Bd: 40	North
Dir: West	♠ AK103
Vul: None	♥ AQ93
	♦ Q
	♣ K1074
West	East
♠ Q	♠ J9742
♥ 6	♥ K4
♦ AKJ98654	♦ 1073
♣ J86	♣ 952
South	
♠ 865	
♥ J108752	
♦ 2	
♣ AQ3	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
4♦	Dbl	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
3♠	Dbl	3NT	4♥
All Pass			

More swing chances. When you're trying to protect a lead you don't want to see eight-card suits. Barel's four-level preempt took his side past 3NT, and Migry (who did not know if she could beat a slam) did not want to raise to 5♦ for fear of the penalty, but more specifically for fear of pushing the opponents into a making slam. 4♥ making five meant another chance of a small pick-up for Israel (defending 5♦x) or a big one for The Latin if the Israelis bid the slam on the losing finesse. Frontaura's 3♠ opening (solid minor?) did not do the trick; now the 4♥ bid ended the auction. No swing; Israel by 16.

Bd: 41 North  
 Dlr: North ♠ AK3  
 Vul: E/W ♥ K95  
 ♦ 10932  
 ♣ 962

West  
 ♠ QJ64  
 ♥ A87  
 ♦ AK76  
 ♣ A10

East  
 ♠ 92  
 ♥ QJ64  
 ♦ J4  
 ♣ 87543

South  
 ♠ 10875  
 ♥ 1032  
 ♦ Q85  
 ♣ KQJ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Barel was doubtless not too happy to see the auction die in 1♦ and a doubleton trump hit in dummy, but it was going to be hard to defeat this contract after the lead of a top spade. It was going to be even harder (given the sight of dummy) to find the technically correct shift to a low diamond. Gonzalo played a diamond, but the ten, not the two, to the jack, queen, and king. When North got in with the ♠K to lead another trump, declarer's ♦76 represented the seventh winner: +70. Doron led a top spade, got a discouraging signal, and shifted to a low heart (nice play). Declarer could do little but lead a club to hand and a diamond up. When the ♦J lost to the queen the handwriting was on the wall. Declarer took just six tricks, and Israel's lead was back to 23, at 84-61.

Bd: 42 North  
 Dlr: East ♠ 109843  
 Vul: Both ♥ J2  
 ♦ K1096  
 ♣ A2

West  
 ♠ A5  
 ♥ AQ6  
 ♦ A8732  
 ♣ J75

East  
 ♠ QJ  
 ♥ K5  
 ♦ J54  
 ♣ Q108643

South  
 ♠ K762  
 ♥ 1098743  
 ♦ Q  
 ♣ K9

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

In 3NT on a spade lead both tables were unprepared to look for miracles in diamonds (close but no cigar). They did not cash the ♦A; instead they simply played on clubs and settled for down one when the spades had no blockage. No swing: still 84-61.

Bd: 43 North  
 Dlr: South ♠ AJ85  
 Vul: None ♥ 974  
 ♦ AK43  
 ♣ AK

West  
 ♠ K76  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ J965  
 ♣ 109863

East  
 ♠ 2  
 ♥ AK1062  
 ♦ Q102  
 ♣ QJ72

South  
 ♠ Q10943  
 ♥ QJ83  
 ♦ 87  
 ♣ 54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
			2♦(1)
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
(1) Weak Majors			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

The 2♦ opening to show both majors deserved to score rather more of a goal when it persuaded Migry to lead a trump and not play for heart ruffs. Alas for declarer, the working spade finesse meant that his gain was limited to an overtrick. It is easy to see how it could have been more. 84-62 to Israel.

Bd: 44 North  
 Dir: West ♠ KJ62  
 Vul: N/S ♥ K72  
 ♦ 1097  
 ♣ 974

West  
 ♠ A985  
 ♥ 98  
 ♦ 6532  
 ♣ Q52

East  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ AQ54  
 ♦ AQJ4  
 ♣ AJ103

South  
 ♠ Q1074  
 ♥ J1063  
 ♦ K8  
 ♣ K86

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♣	All Pass
(1) Forces 3♣			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

More swing potential here, as Migry opened 1♣ and opted for the reverse rather than a 2NT rebid. (There is more of a case for opening 1♦ here if that is your plan, but it is horses for courses.) 2NT was a puppet to 3♣, to get out there. 3♣ played easily enough for +110, but 3NT was interesting and had plenty of play. The defenders needed to lead or shift to spades to get their tricks quickly. When Brenner led the ♣10 out of his hand at trick two, it caught Israel unaware. He eventually won and continued hearts; had he ducked he would have had a chance to find out more about the hand. Declarer won the second heart and knocked out the ♦K and had nine winners for 7 imps. Israel led 84-69 now.

It used to be in the United States that every day more money was printed for the game Monopoly than by the U.S. Treasury. Come the expected bailout, we're not so sure.

Bd: 45 North  
 Dir: North ♠ AK4  
 Vul: Both ♥ K52  
 ♦ K10963  
 ♣ Q6

West  
 ♠ 10972  
 ♥ A10963  
 ♦ A7  
 ♣ 105

East  
 ♠ QJ53  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ 52  
 ♣ AJ9872

South  
 ♠ 86  
 ♥ QJ87  
 ♦ QJ84  
 ♣ K43

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Brenner was on lead against 3NT as was Migry after the Stayman auction. Invoking the spirit of Paul Marston (always lead your second longest suit) and knowing he needed swings, Brenner fished out the ♠Q. Bingo! Declarer had two spades and three aces to lose. In the other room, the club lead cost a trick but did not give declarer nine sure winners. If clubs were five-three or if the defender with the long clubs was left with an entry, E/W could still prevail. No luck for Israel though: as the cards lay Gonzalo could not go wrong. He made the right play, we think, of trying to sneak a heart trick through. The defenders won and shifted to spades but it was too late. 84-81 to Israel, now, and the noise you could hear was Migry biting her fingernails.

Bd: 46 North  
 Dir: East ♠ KQ92  
 Vul: None ♥ 105  
 ♦ QJ9  
 ♣ J1063

West  
 ♠ J5  
 ♥ A98762  
 ♦ A52  
 ♣ 98

East  
 ♠ 10643  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ K108743  
 ♣ Q7

South  
 ♠ A87  
 ♥ KJ43  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ AK542

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♥	Dbf	2♦	Dbf
3♦	All Pass		

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	1♣
2♥	Dbf	All Pass	

3♦ was an optimistic contract, but undoubled undertricks were not going to be important. Accordingly, Migry went all out to make her contract on the defense of a club lead and a trump shift. She tried to ruff out hearts, drawing a second trump in the process, and ended up with five trump tricks and the ♥A; down 150.

In the other room Israel was well placed to pass the negative double (an interesting shot, as experience suggests that people don't do this nearly enough). Perhaps he was remembering the good karma he already had from defending this contract. The defenders cashed two clubs, then played three rounds of spades. Frontaura ruffed in and guessed to lead a low heart towards the queen, which seems wrong. Israel won and played a third club. Declarer ruffed and now had to go to the ♦K to lead up to his ♦A to get out for two down. In fact, he played the ace and another diamond and the ♦K was ruffed out, leaving him with a trump and a diamond to lose. Down 500 and it was back to an 11-imp margin.

Bd: 47	North
Dlr: South	♠ AJ543
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ53
	♦ A9
	♣ 97

West	East
♠ 92	♠ Q1076
♥ J96	♥ A7
♦ QJ642	♦ 853
♣ 654	♣ KQJ3
	South
	♠ K8
	♥ 10842
	♦ K107
	♣ A1082

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Both tables played 4♥ and both declarers committed the error of winning the first club, not that it was necessarily going to matter. The point is, though, that it does free up lines of communication for the defense outside the trump suit, which may be critical if you plan to ruff spades before drawing trumps. (Compare Board 38.) Gonzalo actually played on spades without touching trumps. West got two overruffs in, and the club and ♥A meant one down. If declarer had taken one round of trumps early, his ♥K would have lost to the ace, letting him draw a second round of trumps and avoid all danger.

In the other room Doron did lead a heart to the king at trick two, Brenner ducking. This was truly excellent defense. If declarer then followed the normal line of ruffing spades he would run into the buzz-saw of the over-ruffs, illustrating why ducking at trick one is so important. No. Throughout this tournament the Yadrins had demonstrated their ability to do the right thing at the right time (or only to make the wrong play when it did not matter). On this deal Doron's choice of going to the ♠K to lead a second heart would have been fatal if spades had been four-two and East had the ♥AJ. But this time it was the winning line. 12 imps back to Israel, back up 104-81.

Bd: 48	North
Dlr: West	♠ A3
Vul: E/W	♥ 84
	♦ A4
	♣ J1098762

West	East
♠ J108754	♠ 962
♥ Q76	♥ AJ103
♦ J95	♦ KQ82
♣ 4	♣ AQ
	South
	♠ KQ
	♥ K952
	♦ 10763
	♣ K53

Open/Closed Rooms			
West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	



Both Norths balanced daringly over a strong notrump; both Souths thought longingly about trying for 3NT—and rightly so, in a sense. Only a diamond lead sets it. Note: had West balanced with 3♠ South might have tried 3NT en route to 4♣ (but with such bad clubs would North have sat for it?). No swing at +130. It was 104-81 Israel with only 16 deals to go.

**Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):**

The final stanza started with Israel's lead cut to 23, but the momentum firmly in their camp. They had been leading by only 3 imps until in the last three deals they had conjured 20 imps from nowhere

Bd: 49            North  
 Dlr: North     ♠ A953  
 Vul: None      ♥ Q543  
                    ♦ A1032  
                    ♣ A

West  
 ♠ 876  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ KQJ8765  
 ♣ 83

East  
 ♠ KQJ4  
 ♥ A72  
 ♦ 94  
 ♣ KJ75

South  
 ♠ 102  
 ♥ KJ986  
 ♦ ---  
 ♣ Q109642

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
	1♦	Dbl	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	1♦	Dbl.	1♥
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Federico was happy to take a shot at 4♥ once he found the fit and the extra values opposite; ten tricks might be available via a crossruff. But how would the hand play on a trump lead and continuation? That would leave declarer with three aces and only six trump tricks. However, declarer changes tack and unblocks the ♣A and uses a trump entry to run the ♣Q, then the ♣10, and gives up just two clubs.

Barel led a club, Frontaura a top diamond, so both declarers made eleven tricks without breathing hard. But since Doron had taken the low road in the auction and Gonzalo the high road, The Latin had 6 imps and the margin was down to 17 imps at 104-87.

After a dull game with ten top tricks and a finesse for

an eleventh, Israel created a swing when untypically Barel preempted on a deal where his counterpart did not.

Bd: 51            North  
 Dlr: South     ♠ AK2  
 Vul: E/W        ♥ 10643  
                    ♦ J832  
                    ♣ A7

West  
 ♠ QJ9863  
 ♥ J7  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ QJ84

East  
 ♠ 74  
 ♥ A852  
 ♦ AK764  
 ♣ 105

South  
 ♠ 105  
 ♥ KQ9  
 ♦ Q105  
 ♣ K9632

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
2♦(1)	Multi	2♠(2)	All Pass
(1) Weak in ♥ or ♠			
(2) Pass or correct			
Closed Room			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
All Pass			

The Israelis had tended to preempt less than their opponents, so Barel might have opened simply because he expected them to bid in the other room. As it was, the Multi 2♦ bought the hand and let Migry make nine tricks after a slight mis-defense. (After the spade lead North should cash the ♣A to get an encouraging signal, as he did, but then should take the second top spade to ensure the ruff. But the chance of the overruff was very hard to spot.) In the other room Israel's improvised three-card major response looks unnecessary, but it scored a huge goal. Frontaura passed, awaiting a second turn, but never got one. The defenders were also totally unprepared for the possibility of the three-card suit (wouldn't you be too?) and let declarer maneuver two diamond tricks without scoring their own diamond ruff. Whether or not perfect defense might set 1♥, Israel ended up with eight tricks and 6 imps; back in front by 23.

The next two deals were delicate 3NT contracts where the lead and subsequent defense looked critical.

Bd: 52  
 Dir: West  
 Vul: Both

North  
 ♠ Q743  
 ♥ KQ4  
 ♦ 8642  
 ♣ 105

West  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ J6  
 ♦ 109753  
 ♣ A942

East  
 ♠ A85  
 ♥ A10  
 ♦ KQ  
 ♣ KQJ863

South  
 ♠ KJ92  
 ♥ 987532  
 ♦ AJ  
 ♣ 7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

When Israel as South was on lead to 3NT he led a heart, as who would not? He had to find five discards on the clubs and eventually, after the three easy ones, he let go one heart, but then bared his ♠K after a signal from his partner; that was down one. Federico heard Barel respond 1♦, potentially with a three-card suit, and Migry then jumped to 3NT to suggest long clubs. With weak majors Federico rejected the heart lead (understandable) and had he led a spade we would have had some sympathy with him. But his choice of the ♦A looks extremely random, and it did develop a ninth trick for declarer. The margin was 35; 122-87.

Bd: 53  
 Dir: North  
 Vul: N/S

North  
 ♠ J108  
 ♥ AQJ85  
 ♦ 105  
 ♣ 932

West  
 ♠ AK  
 ♥ K104  
 ♦ 972  
 ♣ AKQ104

East  
 ♠ 532  
 ♥ 973  
 ♦ KQ6  
 ♣ J865

South  
 ♠ Q9764  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ AJ843  
 ♣ 7

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

On this deal both declarers in 3NT won the ♥Q lead and knew they needed to steal a ninth trick if the hearts were breaking badly. It is hard to see what to do other than lead a diamond up and hope for a mis-defense; Barel got it (when South ducked) and Frontaura did not. Maybe a Smith Echo in positions like this, to indicate the quality of North's heart suit, is really essential. 132-87; Israel by 45 imps with 12 deals to go.

A dull 3NT followed, in which both declarers took two overtricks on a very favorable lie of the cards. Then came a deal that demonstrates the two different approaches to rebidding balanced hands. Was the swing here luck or judgment?

Bd: 55  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: Both

North  
 ♠ K65  
 ♥ KJ84  
 ♦ 1095  
 ♣ AJ8

West  
 ♠ AJ4  
 ♥ Q1073  
 ♦ J86  
 ♣ KQ10

East  
 ♠ 92  
 ♥ 92  
 ♦ AK432  
 ♣ 9632

South  
 ♠ Q10873  
 ♥ A65  
 ♦ Q7  
 ♣ 754

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass

The Israeli (or, for want of a better word, the Acol) approach tends to be to bid suits up the line in response to 1♣. Opener does not bypass majors and does not guarantee club length if he does bid one. By contrast, the mainstream American, or Walsh, approach is for responder to bid majors in front of

minors with one-bid hands. Accordingly, opener bypasses majors after 1♣-1♦ unless unbalanced. RC is non-committal on the subject, BR is now if not a die-hard Walshite, somewhere closer to the concept of never bidding a major in a 4-3-3-3 pattern and having discretion with a four-four pattern. Thus, when Frontaura rebid 1NT and got to 2♦ it seemed to BR like a far more sensible auction than that of Migry, who had to rebid 2♣ here. Not surprisingly, the four-three fit lost an extra trick. Although the defenders did not tap the long trump hand effectively, eventually South could not be prevented from scoring a diamond ruff to set the game. 2♦ was no bargain either but the fall of the ♦Q allowed Brenner to find his eighth trick. That was 5 imps to The Latin, trailing 92-132.

On the next deal an eleven-trick 4♥ game was just what the Israelis wanted. No swing, and it appeared that the Latin might have to go out and search for some swings. Time was running out but the remaining boards still possessed quite a high “swing-factor.” Paradoxically, the two pairs then produced duplicated auctions on consecutive deals—the first time this has occurred all week.

Bd: 57            North  
 Dir: North      ♠ 873  
 Vul: E/W        ♥ KQ  
                       ♦ 86  
                       ♣ AJ10863

West	East
♠ A94	♠ KJ52
♥ A952	♥ J106
♦ 743	♦ A92
♣ 754	♣ KQ2

South  
 ♠ Q106  
 ♥ 8743  
 ♦ KQJ105  
 ♣ 9

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
	Pass	1♣	2♦
DbI	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Both Souths made weak-jump overcalls because of the position and vulnerability (indeed, that might be the ‘standard’ expert strategy here). Both Wests felt obliged to bid...why? Maybe those who favor taking a conservative view with the West cards are being biased by the result; 2♦ would probably have taken +90, so no real harm was done by bidding. That got East to 2♠. Both defenses scored four red-suit tricks, a club a ruff, and a trump trick. Flat boards were no

good anymore to the trailing team, with the margin still 40 imps.

Bd: 58            North  
 Dir: East        ♠ 1085  
 Vul: Both       ♥ Q432  
                       ♦ Q74  
                       ♣ AJ4

West	East
♠ J7642	♠ A93
♥ A1097	♥ K
♦ 103	♦ 98652
♣ 103	♣ Q875

South  
 ♠ KQ  
 ♥ J865  
 ♦ AKJ  
 ♣ K962

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Yet again sensible and identical auctions to the same (lousy) contract meant that The Latin was unlikely to get much of a swing. Both declarers won an early spade lead and were now in hand, so it was natural to misguess trumps (particularly because the spade suit was clearly five-three with West having length). They lost one trick in each black suit and four trumps. Brenner might have considered doubling 4♥ if his singleton had not been a trump honor. No swing, though down 300 doubtless felt awful to both declarers. Still 40 imps with five deals to go.

Bd: 59            North  
 Dir: South      ♠ QJ86  
 Vul: None       ♥ KQJ9432  
                       ♦ ---  
                       ♣ 102

West	East
♠ 9	♠ 10543
♥ A6	♥ 8
♦ K108	♦ Q753
♣ KQJ9863	♣ A754

South  
 ♠ AK72  
 ♥ 1075  
 ♦ AJ9642  
 ♣ ---

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
2♣	4♥	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♣	2♥	4♣	4♥
5♣	5♥	All Pass	

Here was a moment for inspiration. Whereas Doron took the slow route, discouraged by his small doubleton club, Gonzalo jumped to 4♥ over 2♣ and now Federico closed his eyes and tried 6♥; it might make, after all. And it did. Migry, caught between a rock (*Tzur* in Hebrew) and a hard place, took the path of least resistance in the auction. But note that 7♣ might be a cheap save against game. Elevenimps to The Latin, decreasing the margin to 29 with four deals to go. Plenty of time left...if the boards cooperated.

Bd: 60      North  
 Dir: West    ♠ Q4  
 Vul: N/S     ♥ J1032  
               ♦ J  
               ♣ KQJ1087

West	East
♠ J862	♠ AK10
♥ 754	♥ ---
♦ K654	♦ A1098732
♣ 42	♣ 953

South  
 ♠ 9753  
 ♥ AKQ986  
 ♦ Q  
 ♣ A6

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	4♣(fit)	4♦	4♥
5♦	Dbl	Pass	5♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	3♦(SPL)	Dbl	4♥
All Pass			

As BR frequently complains to his wife, "Just when I think we are going to make ends meet, you keep moving the ends." The key here was Migry's decision

(nobody puts baby in a corner) to bid 4♦ rather than double some artificial diamond bid. That got Barel to save in 5♦—some save! Federico wisely bid on to 5♥, but the defenders took their three tricks and Israel had widened the margin back to 41. They'd be safe unless too many slam hands came along...

Bd: 61      North  
 Dir: North    ♠ AKJ7  
 Vul: Both     ♥ Q94  
                  ♦ J43  
                  ♣ 432

West	East
♠ 2	♠ 108643
♥ AKJ106	♥ ---
♦ AK8	♦ Q9
♣ AKJ10	♣ Q98765

South  
 ♠ Q95  
 ♥ 87532  
 ♦ 107652  
 ♣ ---

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♠(SPL)	Pass	4NT(1)	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

(1) More encouraging than 5♣

Briggida, goddess of bridge, likes a good viewgraph show, and just when it looked safe to go back into the water she produced a delicate slam on limited high cards. The two auctions saw E/W find their club fit after which it was easy for West to drive to slam without much encouragement. No swing; still 41. It had to be safe now!? Not necessarily...

Did you know that Coca-Cola was originally green, and that it is impossible to lick your elbow?
---

Bd: 62  
 Dir: East  
 Vul: None

North  
 ♠ AK105  
 ♥ 974  
 ♦ AJ85  
 ♣ K4

West  
 ♠ J8  
 ♥ Q62  
 ♦ 74  
 ♣ 876532

East  
 ♠ 93  
 ♥ J853  
 ♦ Q1063  
 ♣ J109

South  
 ♠ Q7642  
 ♥ AK10  
 ♦ K92  
 ♣ AQ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦(!)
Pass	3♦	Pass	2NT(GF)
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	5♦	Pass	4NT
All Pass		Pass	7♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	2NT(♠)	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT(KC)	Pass	4♦
Pass	5NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	6♦
All Pass		Pass	7♠

Both tables lost focus on the fact that possession of all the aces and kings does not mean you can make a Grand Slam. One of the problems with continuation after the Key Card responses is that, whereas Doron knew his side had all the key cards, he did not want to give up on a Grand Slam but did not want to suggest one unless his partner had further extras. The problem was that the club duplication never came to light.

After Federico's opening bid it was very hard for his partnership to approach this deal scientifically; given the need to play for swings it is hard to criticize his actions.

Migry made sure of her diamond trick by splitting her queen-ten when a diamond was led towards the South hand, and thus only set 7♠ one trick. Surely her teammates would understand. 39 was the margin with two deals to go.

Bd: 63  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: N/S

North  
 ♠ J8  
 ♥ 53  
 ♦ J1096  
 ♣ AKQJ4

West  
 ♠ Q9632  
 ♥ 74  
 ♦ 832  
 ♣ 932

East  
 ♠ AK75  
 ♥ KQ98  
 ♦ AK54  
 ♣ 8

South  
 ♠ 104  
 ♥ AJ1062  
 ♦ Q7  
 ♣ 10765

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥
Pass	2♣	Dbl.	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
Pass	1♣	Dbl	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

We mentioned earlier that balancing your opponents into game or slam is about as irritating an experience as one can have at the bridge table. The Godeds would no doubt agree, although one can entirely understand why Federico reopened here. Frontaura's brave balance had Brenner looking for slam, more due to the euphoria of not having to defend 2♣ than to having any realistic expectation of actually being able to make twelve tricks. Both tables took ten tricks painlessly enough. 144-105 still.

Bd: 64  
 Dir: West  
 Vul: E/W

North  
 ♠ J1094  
 ♥ J1095  
 ♦ QJ87  
 ♣ 7

West  
 ♠ K3  
 ♥ AK42  
 ♦ 43  
 ♣ AKQJ10

East  
 ♠ AQ75  
 ♥ Q8  
 ♦ 10952  
 ♣ 952

South  
 ♠ 862  
 ♥ 763  
 ♦ AK6  
 ♣ 8643

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Barel</i>	<i>Gonzalo</i>	<i>Migry</i>	<i>Federico</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣(F)	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Frontaura</i>	<i>Doron</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Israel</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣(F)	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	All Pass

Both tables got to 5♣ on controlled auctions; since 3NT might go down against a five-two diamond break this was indeed sensible. Well bid, and a fitting end to a match where, apart from a stretch of ten deals where the Latin had a purple patch and scored 50 imps, Israel demonstrated yet again why they are

such a formidable team in this event. They held their opponents to about one-and-a-half imps per board, always a sign of good bridge, in the semi- and quarterfinals losing only 120 imps in 80 deals.



## A Little Technique

by Barry Rigal

A good friend of mine tells me that playing bridge is all about drawing trumps, taking finesses and cashing winners. Yes, but once in a while some excellent technique in a grand slam wouldn't hurt, as on this deal (rotated).

Dir: North ♠ K43  
 Vul: N/S ♥ A94  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ AQJ1083

♠ Q85	♠ 1096
♥ J105	♥ Q763
♦ Q1087	♦ J653
♣ 762	♣ 94

♠ AJ72  
 ♥ K82  
 ♦ AK94  
 ♣ K5

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	7NT
All Pass			

On the lead of the ♥J, do you fancy declarer or the defense? At the table, declarer won the ♥K and ran the clubs. With one club to go, this was the position:

♠ K43	
♥ A9	
♦ 8	
♣ 2	
♠ Q85	♠ 109
♥ 10	♥ Q7
♦ Q108	♦ J65
♣ ---	♣ ---
♠ AJ7	
♥ 8	
♦ AK9	
♣ ---	

Declarer cashed dummy's last club, pitching a heart as East discarded another spade and West a heart. Now declarer missed the winning play—cash the ♥A to pitch a spade from hand. West must unguard the diamonds to keep the spades, and the ♠AK finishes East—he is squeezed in the red suits.

There is, however, a winning defense. On the run of the clubs, East pitches all his diamonds leaving West to guard the suit; West then discards hearts, leaving East in charge of that suit.

In the six-card ending, West keeps queen third of spades and diamonds, East all his spades and the heart guard. The best declarer can do is to cash the ♥A and pitch a spade, but West also pitches a spade and there is no pressure.

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

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tuesday (Feb. 10)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (1)	F201/F202
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (2)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	(14 boards/match)
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (3)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (4)	
Wednesday (Feb. 11)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (5)	F201/F202
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (6)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (7)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (8)	
Thursday (Feb. 12)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (9)	F201/F202
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (10)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (11)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (12)	
Friday (Feb. 13)	10:00-12:15	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (1)	E204
	12:35-14:50	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (2)	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	(16-board segments)
	16:00-18:15	NEC Cup Semi-Final (1)	
	18:35-20:50	NEC Cup Semi-Final (2)	
Saturday (Feb. 14)	10:00-17:00	Open IMP Pairs	F203-206
	10:00-12:15	NEC Cup Final (1)	E204
	12:35-14:50	NEC Cup Final (2)	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	(16-board segments)
	16:00-18:15	NEC Cup Final (3)	
Sunday (Feb. 15)	18:35-20:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama SRR & Swiss Teams	F203-206
	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	F203-206
	18:30-20:30	Closing Ceremony	F201-204

Qualifying Swiss: 12 rounds of 14-board matches

Quarter- & Semi-Finals: two 16-board segments

Final: four 16-board segments

