



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 1

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Welcome to the 15th NEC Cup Bridge Festival

This year's NEC Cup sports one of the strongest international fields we've ever seen in this event (and one of us has been around since the second NEC Cup in 1997), including many of the world's top players. Stage One features a 12-round, three-day Swiss Teams qualifier with 14-board matches, imps converted to Victory Points using the 14-Board WBF scale. As in previous years, eight teams will qualify for the final KO phase. The 48-team field has been divided into two halves, with each of the top 24 teams paired at random against one of the remaining 24 teams (see p.5). Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter- and semi-finals will consist of 32-board matches, while the final will be contested over 64 boards (with the two losing semi-finalists tying for 3rd/4th). On Friday, February 12th, the Yokohama IMP Pairs will be held, followed on Saturday, February 13th, by the Yokohama Swiss Teams and on Sunday, February 14th, by the Asuka Cup (Open Pairs). (Note the Convention Regulations for pair games on page 6.)

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. Help us by reporting 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 at the far right on the tables positioned 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. 7705), or dial 228-6666 (from the Yokohama City area), 045-228-6666 (from outside the city area), or +81 45 228-6666 (from overseas). The editors may also be contacted via e-mail at rcolker@gmail.com or barryrigal@mindspring.com. If you're trying to reach someone you can't find here at the festival, you may leave a message with us and we'll do our best to get it to them. The **Chief Tournament Director** at 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 you call him at your own risk. The Co-Director of the NEC Cup is **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 15th 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

NEC Cup 2010: 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: 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.

In the Knockout Phase, the team with the higher position from the Swiss will be assumed to have a ½-IMP carryover.

Systems: No HUM or Brown Sticker methods are permitted in this event. However, pairs may prepare written defenses against a two-level opening bid in a minor that shows a weak two-bid in either major, with or without the option of strong hand types. These defenses are deemed to be part of the opponents' convention cards.

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: The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4th-8th group. The team finishing 3rd will then have their choice of the remaining teams.

In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1st in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.

Security: No player may leave the Annex Hall during play without permission, due to security concerns arising from the Bridge Base Online Broadcast.

Smoking: Once play in a qualifying-round match or a KO-round session starts, smoking is prohibited at ALL times (including when a player leaves the playing room to go to the bathroom), until the player completes the play of all boards in the match or session. Penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director.

Screen Hesitations: When a delay in the return of the tray is suspected, a player on the opposite side of the screen must be the first to call attention to it (by summoning the Director). In case of dispute the call from the wrong side will be ignored, but in situations where the wrong side calls or a late call is made and there is no dispute the Director may accept the faulty call.

Electronic Equipment: Any and all electronic equipment capable of receiving or transmitting information to/from outside the playing room (e.g., cell phones, personal computers) must be turned off at all times from the beginning of a match/session until the player has completed all boards in the match/session and left the playing area. The Director may authorize exceptions in emergency situations. Violations will be penalized by the Director.

Photography/BBO Vugraph: By entering the event, players agree to authorize still and/or video photography by the JCBL and also to appear on BBO VuGraph whenever requested by the Director.

The 15th NEC Cup Guest List

Konichi wa to all, and welcome to the 15th NEC Bridge Festival. 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: JAPAN WOMEN versus My Bridge. If this year's event follows the form of previous years, not just the favorites will still be playing for the championship come Saturday. So don't despair if you start off poorly. Keep your chin up, play with heart, and fight until they tell you you can't play any longer. As always, we're thrilled to see the many foreign teams here (15 by our count), and especially those players who are attending the festival for the first time—or at least the first time in a while. It brings joy to our hearts to once again see so many familiar faces from around the bridge world.

The defenders, the China Women, are back with four of the players from last year's team (**Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Wang Wenfei, and Liu Yiqian**) who, it just so happens, are also members of the reigning 2009 Venice Cup champions. Congratulations! Rounding out the China Women's NEC Cup team are newcomers **Feng Xuefeng** and **Gan Ling**. *Ni hao, huan ying.*

Maria Teresa Lavazza of Italy has returned to the NEC after a four-year absence with a formidable team of World and International champions. With her are **Norberto Bocchi, Agustin Madala, Giorgio Duboin, Antonio Sementa, Guido Ferraro** and coach **Massimo Ortensi**. Sementa-Duboin (along with npc Lavazza and coach Ortensi) were members of Italy's 2007 Bermuda Bowl champion team and runners-up last year in São Paulo. Bocchi is also a past World Team champion (2005) and Madala, at age 14 (in 2001), was the youngest ever to win a Zonal championship and (later that year) to play in the Bermuda Bowl (for Argentina).

Pierre Zimmerman is here with his own formidable collection of multi-national champions. According to our records, Pierre is attending the festival for the first time this year, as are teammates **Fulvio Fantoni, Claudio Nunes** and **Franck Multon**. The other two members of his crew, **Cezary Balicki** and **Adam Zmudzinski**, are no strangers to the NEC, having last appeared here in 2007 when they finished second in the NEC Cup. Fantoni-Nunes were on the Italian team that finished second in last year's Bermuda Bowl in Sao Paulo, while the other four players were busy winning their own world title in the Transnational Open Teams there.

The Netherlands, NEC Cup champions in 2007, are back but with a different team than the 2007 championship edition. **Louk Verhees** and **Ricco van Prooijen** are members of the Dutch national team and were NEC Cup semi-finalists last year. Joining them are successful ex-juniors and newcomers to the NEC **Bob Drijver** and **Merijn Groenenboom**. Welcome gentlemen.

This year's team from Down Under (Oz Players) includes the familiar (and friendly) faces of 2009 semi-finalists **Ron Klinger, Ishmael Del'Monte** and **Matt Mullamphy**, this year joined by newcomer **Ashley Bach**. Congratulations to Ron Klinger, whose *Right Through the Pack Again* won the 2009 IBPA Book of the Year award. G'day mates.

The acronymic CANUKUSA team features **John Carruthers** (last here in 2009—those who can, do; those who can't, write) from CANada and **Howard Weinstein** (last here in 1998—just couldn't stay away Howard?) from the USA. They are joined by teammates **David Bakhshi** (2009 Gold Cup champion, last here in 2009) and **David Gold** (2008 World Open Teams Silver Medalist; newcomer to the NEC), both from the UK. Welcome.

2008 finalists The Latin (**Frankie Frontaura, Federico** and **Gonzalo Goded**) are back, this time playing with newcomer **Carlos Pellegrini** (substituting for the missing Diego Brenner). We've been told that chants of "one more match" have been heard coming from their rooms late at night. We'll see.

The Bulgarian All Stars comprise a list of household names, including **Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev** and **Stefan Stefanov**. Welcome, gentlemen.

From England (where else?) come the England Ladies. We welcome newcomers **Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown** and **Susan Stockdale**. Dhondy and Senior won the World Women's Teams in Beijing in 2008; Brown and Stockdale are highly regarded juniors. Good luck ladies. You'll need it if you hope to replace the China Women as darlings of the NEC.

From England also comes team Kendrick (**David Kendrick, Jonathan Cooke** and **Martin Garvey**, all first time NEC Cup'ers, and **Brian Senior**, back from last year). Cooke and Garvey are fresh from their win in last year's Camrose Trophy. This makes the fourth team in this year's event that includes at least one English member. Where's the Hackett clan when you need them?

The Land of Oz is represented by a second team who disavow being "second" in any way to the Oz Players. The NEC welcomes Oz Two, with newcomers **Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn** and **Paul Gosney**, joined by **Peter Gill**, making a return appearance from his 2008 duty here. An unnamed source tells us that Peter Gill has a reputation as the "fastest mouth in the West." (And we don't mean just Western Australia.) It's a long way to come to prove yourselves against your fellow Aussies, but we'll enjoy the showdown...when it comes.

Not to be confused with North Sweden (or East Sweden, or even West Sweden for that matter), team South Sweden is actually a mixture comprised of one pair from South Africa (newcomer **Alon Apteker** and returnee **Craig Gower**, here back in 2003, who have enjoyed a fair amount of success around the bridge world recently but are still looking for their first big win) and a second pair from Sweden (**Frederic Wrang** and **Johan Sylvan**; the former, our spies tell us, a hugely successful poker player). They've come to emboss their own imprimatur on the NEC Cup. This will be Frederic Wrang's first NEC Cup, but Johan Sylvan has played here several times, though not since 2003. The time may be yours, gentlemen.

The Chinese men have not fared as well at this festival as their distaff counterparts, but China Evertrust is back looking to even the score. The NEC welcomes back intact the 2009 team of **Lin Rongqiang, Jiang Tong, Shi Zhengjun, Li Jie, Hou Xu** and **Liu Jing**. Li and Liu each had a hand in last year's NEC that made the IBPA's short list for best played hand of the year. Scared? You should be. *Hao yun*.

Korea CACTI is back. This year's team includes three players (**Sung Kyunghae, Park Jungyoon** and **Yang Sungae**) who were members of one or more of the CACTI teams that competed here from 2005 to 2007. They are joined this year by newcomer **Hwang Iynryung**. Welcome, and good luck.

The team from Hong Kong includes three players from the Hong Kong teams that competed here in 2003 (**Jun Cheng, CC Wong** and **Irene Ho**). They are joined this year by newcomer **Fu Cheung**. Welcome.

Among the top Japanese teams in this year's NEC Cup are: JAPAN OPEN w/o T (**Kazuo Furuta, Masayuki Ino, Hiroshi Kaku, Makoto Kono** and **Hiroki Yokoi**), JAPAN WOMEN (**Ayako Miyakuni, Yuki Fukuyoshi, Hiroko Kobayashi, Chizuko Tsukamoto, Hisako Kondo** and **Masako Katsube**) and YAMADA (four of whose members, **Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura** and **Makoto Hirata**, were on the World Senior Teams champion team two years ago in Beijing; **Kazuhiko Yamada** and **Takahiko Hirata** are the other two members of this year's NEC Cup team). Another member of the 2008 World Champion Seniors team, **Hiroya Abe**, is on team TSUNAMI (**Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Chieko Yamazaki, Tadashi Imakura** and **Shunsuke Morimura**) in this year's event and **Takashi Maeda**, the NPC of the 2008 World Champion Seniors team, is on team GIBS (**Yasuhiro Shimizu, Nobuyuki Hayashi, Hiroyuki Noda, Takeshi Hanayama** and **Katsumi Takahashi**) in this year's event. (Foreign players might also take note: team SARA did quite well last year—and beware the Chinese ringer.)

NEC Bridge Festival Smoking Policy

NEC Cup:

Once play in a qualifying-round match or a KO-round session starts, smoking is prohibited at all times (including when a player leaves the playing room to go to the bathroom), until the player completes the play of all boards in the round or session..

Other events:

Once a session has started, and until the player has finished all boards in the session, smoking is prohibited at ALL times other than a single designated smoking break, which may be announced at the option of the Director.

Smoking area:

Smoking is only permitted outside the building.

Penalties:

Penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director.

Team Rosters: 15th NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	China Women:	Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Wang Wenfei, Liu Yiqian, Feng Xuefeng, Gan Ling; Wang Jianxin (NPC), Ju Chuancheng (Coach)
2	Lavazza:	Maria Teresa Lavazza, Norberto Bocchi, Agustín Madala, Giorgio Duboin, Antonio Sementa, Guido Ferraro; Massimo Ortensi (Coach)
3	Zimmermann:	Pierre Zimmermann, Fulvio Fantoni, Claudio Nunes, Cezary Balicki, Adam Zmudzinski, Franck Multon
4	The Netherlands:	Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen, Bob Drijver, Merijn Groenenboom
5	Oz Players:	Ron Klinger, Ishmael Del'Monte, Ashley Bach, Matt Mullanphy
6	CANUKUSA:	John Carruthers, David Bakhshi, David Gold, Howard Weinstein
7	The Latin:	Frankie Frontaura, Carlos Pellegrini, Federico Goded, Gonzalo Goded
8	Bulgarian All Stars:	Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev, Stefan Stefanov
9	England Ladies:	Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown, Susan Stockdale
10	Kendrick:	David Kendrick, Brian Senior, Jonathan Cooke, Martin Garvey
11	Oz Two:	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Peter Gill, Paul Gosney
12	South Sweden:	Alon Apteker, Craig Gower, Frederic Wrang, Johan Sylvan
13	China Evertrust:	Lin Rongqiang, Jiang Tong, Shi Zhengjun, Li Jie, Hou Xu, Liu Jing
14	Korea CACTI:	Sung Kyunghae, Hwang Iynryung, Park Jungyoon, Yang Sungae
15	Hong Kong:	Jun Cheng, CC Wong, Irene Ho, Fu Cheung
16	JAPAN OPEN w/o T:	Kazuo Furuta, Masayuki Ino, Hiroshi Kaku, Makoto Kono, Hiroki Yokoi
17	JAPAN WOMEN:	Ayako Miyakuni, Yuki Fukuyoshi, Hiroko Kobayashi, Chizuko Tsukamoto, Hisako Kondo, Masako Katsube
18	YAMADA:	Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Makoto Hirata, Kazuhiko Yamada, Takahiko Hirata
19	TSUNAMI:	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Hiroya Abe, Chieko Yamazaki, Tadashi Imakura, Shunsuke Morimura
20	SARA:	Tadashi Teramoto, Fu Zhong, Kumiko Sasahira, Minoru Mizuta, Yasushi Kobayashi, Shugo Tanaka
21	ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Hideyuki Sango, Nobuko Matsubara, Misuzu Ichihashi, Michiko Iwahashi
22	Kitty's:	Yoko Nenohi, Hiroko Sekiyama, Kyoko Toyofuku, Kumiko Matsuo, Toshiko Kaho, Makiko Sato
23	Beauty:	Kyoko Shimamura, Phoebe Lin, Nie Weiping, Sei Nagasaka, Yuichi Masamura
24	GIBS:	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Takashi Maeda, Nobuyuki Hayashi, Hiroyuki Noda, Takeshi Hanayama, Katsumi Takahashi
25	TANAKA:	Ryoga Tanaka, Sakiko Naito, Yukiko Tokunaga, Kenji Miyakuni, Keisuke Akama
26	CAMPANULA:	Hiroko Ota, Michiko Ono, Yayoi Sakamoto, Shimako Yaji, Haruyo Iiyama, Sumie Nakagawa
27	MAKITA:	Taeko Kawamura, Sachiko Yamamura, Keiko Matsuzaki, Kimi Makita, Michiko Ono, Toyoko Saito
28	Venus:	Chieko Ichikawa, Kuniko Saito, Yoshiko Murata, Atsuko Kurita, Junko Den
29	Rosewood:	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Hiromu Nishida, Yoshie Nishida
30	KAWABATA:	Akiko Kawabata, Misako Fukazawa, Teruo Miyazaki, Kunio Kodaira, Makoto Nomura, Akiko Miwa
31	TAKEUCHI:	Hideko Takeuchi, Hideko Kobayashi, Tomiko Nakai, Yoko Tokushige
32	NXST:	Kei Nemoto, Kazuo Saeki, Yoshinori Kurachi, Kazuhisa Kojima, Kazuo Takano, Yumiko Oda
33	Iza Yokohama:	Osami Kimura, Yasuyoshi Toriumi, Chisato Kiriya, Miho Sekizawa, Megumi Takasaki, Hidenori Narita
34	LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi, Ryo Matsubara, Mark LaForge
35	AQUA:	Shoko Somemiya, Tomoko Sakai, Akiko Miyata, Miyako Miyazaki, Kazuko Okamoto
36	SAKURAI:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Kenichi Asaoka, Motoharu Ushio
37	KATSUMATA:	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Kimiko Kamakari, Misae Kato, Noriko Takami, Reiko Hoshika
38	Yukinata:	Yukiko Umezu, Megumi Takasaka, Yukiko Hoshi, Etsuko Naito
39	WHITE DREAMS:	Yumi Yanagida, Kenichi Ito, Shintaro Sentsui, Hiroko Sentsui
40	Attack No. 1:	Sumiko Sugino, Kazuko Takahashi, Yumiko Kawakami, Masayuki Hayasaka, Hideto Yamaguchi
41	NANIWADA:	Masaru Naniwada, Hisami Kataoka, Toshiro Nose, Hikoe Enomoto, Hideo Togawa, Mitsuyo Naniwada
42	Friends:	Yoko Saito, Mamiko Odaira, Kinzaburo Nishino, Koichi Onishi, Yumiko Kichise, Keiko Yoshino
43	KinKi:	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
44	WORLD YOUTH:	Hiroaki Miura, Noriaki Koike, Michal Kopecky, Milan Macura, Shunsuke Gotoda
45	MY-Bridge:	Masafumi Yoshizawa, Yoshitaka Agata, Iwao Oishi, Masahide Yamashita, Noriko Yoshizawa, Aiko Nabeshima
46	Dolphin:	Michiko Hatoyama, Makiyo Takikawa, Miyoko Yonezawa, Mariko Sakamoto, Kiyoko Oki, Kazuko Harumi
47	Guriguri:	Ayako Matsubara, Midori Sakaguchi, Midori Ito, Takayo Otsuka
48	JAPAN YOUTH:	Kentaro Murai, Daisuke Sugimoto, Masashi Wakai, Tomoyuki Watanuki, Takayuki Kitamura

1st-round match-ups: 1v28, 2v29, 3v37, 4v42, 5v35, 6v43, 7v48, 8v36, 9v32, 10v39, 11v38, 12v34, 13v46, 14v47, 15v30, 16v44, 17v45, 18v33, 19v26, 20v40, 21v41, 22v27, 23v31, 24v25

Today's 1st VuGraph Match will feature JAPAN WOMEN (17) vs My Bridge (45)

Convention Regulations for Side (Pair) 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 3rd- or 4th-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

The 2009 NEC Cup: China LongZhu Women vs Japan

The top qualifier from the swiss in the 2009 NEC Cup, The Netherlands, chose SARA, who tied with Japan Seniors for the final two spots in the KOs, as their quarterfinal opponent. Second place Oz Players chose Japan Seniors as their quarterfinal opponent. Third place China LongZhu Women chose JUICE as their opponent, which left fourth place Japan Open to play fifth place China Evertrust Holding.

The quarterfinals held true to form as each of the top four seeds emerged victorious. Top seeded The Netherlands took a 20-imp lead over SARA at the half and hung on by their chinny-chin-chins to squeak through by 4 imps, 99-95. Oz Players got off to a 27-imp lead over Japan Seniors and gave back only 10 imps in the second half to advance to the semifinals, 74-57. China LongZhu Women led JUICE by 7 imps at the half, then played them dead even in the second half to advance to the semifinals, 43-36. In the last quarterfinal match Japan Open led China Evertrust Holding by 9 imps at the half, then blew the match wide open winning the second half by 33 imps to advance to the semifinals, 123-81.

In the first semifinal match, The Netherlands trailed Japan Open by 28 imps (8-36) at the half, then failed in their comeback attempt when they won the second half by only 7 imps (30-23), Japan Open advancing to the final, 59-38. In the second semifinal match, Oz Players trailed China Women by 18 imps (29-47) at the half, then lost the second half 29-44 as China Women advanced to the final, 91-58.

So 2009's NEC Cup final pitted Japan Open against China LongZhu Women, each team boasting members who had won the event within the past 10 years. Yan Ru and Dong Yongling were on the China Women team that won the event in 2004, while Chen Dawei, Masayuki Ino and Tadashi Imakura were on the Japan-PABF Open team that won in 1999.

First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ J954		
Vul: None	♥ AQ10		
	♦ J2		
	♣ A632		
West		East	
♠ AK10		♠ 87	
♥ K82		♥ 974	
♦ AKQ7		♦ 1093	
♣ KJ5		♣ Q9874	
	South		
	♠ Q632		
	♥ J653		
	♦ 8654		
	♣ 10		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♦*	Pass	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Dbl	2♠	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Whenever you pick up a 23-count in fourth chair these days you expect both opponents to have bid by the time it is your turn. Both Wests had to face some competition and both drove to 3NT at almost their earliest opportunity. On a spade lead they won and tested clubs, North holding up till the third round as Hongli pitched diamonds, Imakura spades. Both Norths shifted to the ♥A and ♥Q, Dong taking the second and Chen the third. Both uttered a small prayer, tested diamonds, and when the jack appeared claimed the balance; China led 1-0.

Throughout the event Furuta-Chen defied gravity with the lightness of their opening bids. The next deal confirmed that unless somebody tied sandbags to Furuta he was going to float away.

Bd: 2	North		
Dlr: East	♠ KJ92		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q962		
	♦ Q8		
	♣ AJ5		
West		East	
♠ 8		♠ Q1064	
♥ AKJ754		♥ 3	
♦ A		♦ KJ754	
♣ Q10976		♣ K82	
	South		
	♠ A753		
	♥ 108		
	♦ 109632		
	♣ 43		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	All Pass		

2♣ handled nicely for +150. Even playing a standard system, East might have passed 2♣ non-vulnerable at teams. Furuta got the auction he deserved after intrepidly opening his powerhouse. Not that 3NT was without play. On the lead of the ♥10 declarer won in dummy, ran the ♣10, then played on clubs till Sun took the third. Back came a low spade and the defenders went back to hearts, locking declarer in dummy to concede two hearts, two spades and a club. Operation successful; China led 6-0.

Incidentally, did you ever see a person open a hand that his counterpart did not deem worthy of a rebid in an unopposed auction?

Bd: 3 North
 Dlr: South ♠ AKJ542
 Vul: E/W ♥ A97
 ♦ Q2
 ♣ 93

West
 ♠ 98763
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 8753
 ♣ 764

East
 ♠ Q
 ♥ 10862
 ♦ AKJ6
 ♣ AQ85

South
 ♠ 10
 ♥ KQJ53
 ♦ 1094
 ♣ KJ102

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Sun</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Hongli</i>
Pass	1♠	Dbl	2♦(♥)
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Dong</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Yan</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♠	Dbl	Rdbl
2♦	2♠	3♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The Chinese again took the low road here, with 2♥ in the Open Room being a very comfortable spot. In 4♥ declarer had nine top winners and chances in both minors and spades for a tenth. On any lead but a trump declarer seemed able to ruff a diamond and a club in dummy, but on a trump lead declarer might well have to guess spades. Even a trump shift after a minor-suit lead might do. Yan cashed her winners at the table after Dong's club lead, and then played a trump. Too late. Imakura led winning spades, overruffed East, ruffed a diamond, finessed a club, ruffed a second club, then claimed 420. 7-6, Japan.

Larry Cohen would love the next deal; we're sure it either fits the LOTT precisely or he would be able to adjust it to fit. (Just kidding, Larry.)

Bd: 4 North
 Dlr: West ♠ AQ743
 Vul: Both ♥ 2
 ♦ KJ5
 ♣ KJ73

West
 ♠ KJ2
 ♥ AQJ76
 ♦ 762
 ♣ 102

East
 ♠ 105
 ♥ K95
 ♦ 10943
 ♣ AQ98

South
 ♠ 986
 ♥ 10843
 ♦ AQ8
 ♣ 654

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Sun</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Hongli</i>
1♥	1♠	2♠	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Dong</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Yan</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
3♥	3♠	All Pass	

Sun overcalled 1♠ and saw no reason to act at her second turn; there was no guarantee either of fit or high cards opposite. She led a trump, for want of anything better to do, and declarer was in with a chance. Should he have played for the double club finesse or the ♠Q onside? To our mind the club play was better (no double of 2♠) but we can see all four hands. When Sun impassively ducked the ♣10 declarer changed tack by playing the ♣Q from dummy and taking a spade finesse. Down one.

Meanwhile, it is far from clear to sell out to 3♥ if you hear partner raise. One editor feels strongly that North is worth a game-try over the 2♠ raise (far less clear if 2NT by South was a constructive spade raise,



Ru Yan



Yongling Dong

but even if that were so it would normally show *four* trumps and there are some three-card raises that make game good). Ino passed 2♠ but competed to 3♠, a perfectly respectable contract till both club honors turned up offside and the ♠10 was with East and not South. Does this hand fit the Law of Total Tricks? Those black nines make it hard to judge; 5imps to China, leading 11-7

Bd: 5
Dir: North
Vul: N/S

North
♠ A5
♥ QJ1076
♦ KQ10
♣ AQ8

West
♠ 76
♥ AK3
♦ J9853
♣ 1032

East
♠ Q943
♥ 42
♦ A6
♣ J9764

South
♠ KJ1082
♥ 985
♦ 742
♣ K5

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Sun</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Hongli</i>
	1♣*	1♥(1)	Dbl
2♣	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Black suits or red suits

Closed Room

West <i>Dong</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Yan</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

It is not clear where you want to be here. 4♥ might need help in diamonds or spades if the defenders play to stop a ruff in South. 3NT on a club lead came down to the spade position.

The defenders threatened their ruff by leading the ace and a second diamond. Declarer countered by cashing three clubs and pitching the diamond from dummy. Easy enough to do but at 11:15 AM there is always a risk of not being awake enough to protect against the unexpected.

In 3NT on repeated club leads Sun knocked out the ♥AK, then ran the suit. East was squeezed down to the ♦A, one club and three spades. Sun could have risked the contract by playing for two overtricks (given the +620 from the other room she would have lost an imp if she was wrong and gain an imp if she was right) but naturally she settled for her contract by knocking out the ♦A and claiming nine tricks.

Bd: 6
Dir: East
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 1064
♥ Q932
♦ K
♣ Q8743

West
♠ AK73
♥ 105
♦ 9752
♣ J109

East
♠ QJ95
♥ A7
♦ Q1064
♣ AK5

South
♠ 82
♥ KJ864
♦ AJ83
♣ 62

Open/Closed Rooms

West <i>Chen</i> <i>Dong</i>	North <i>Sun</i> <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Furuta</i> <i>Yan</i> 1NT	South <i>Hongli</i> <i>Imakura</i> Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Would you or wouldn't you? Vulnerable at teams one editor insists on driving to game facing a spade fit if the notrump is in the 15-17 range, but inviting game in any other circumstance. Conversely, facing a 14-16 notrump he would invite game. The other editor would pass a 14-16 notrump and simply invite if a spade fit was found, thinking it is closer to passing 1NT than bidding. Who's right? Only the Shadow knows. Game here was poor because of the matching doubletons but still it was only the bad diamond break that doomed it. Both tables went down a trick; no swing, still 11-8 China.

Next both tables bid a mundane game that was little better than a finesse, and wrapped up 10 tricks when it worked, to leave the score unchanged. Then came an opportunity for judgment—and both teams failed the test.

Bd: 8
Dir: West
Vul: None

North
♠ Q1097
♥ 9
♦ A42
♣ AQJ65

West
♠ A43
♥ 82
♦ KQ953
♣ K72

East
♠ J52
♥ AK763
♦ 6
♣ 10843

South
♠ K86
♥ QJ1054
♦ J1087
♣ 9

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♦	2♣	Dbl	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass

Furuta seemed to take a decidedly anti-percentage view when he bid, while the fact that the 1♦ opening was Precision made it slightly more attractive to bid for Yan—but only slightly. If partner is short in clubs he will reopen; if he is long in clubs do you really want to get involved? Both tables voted for action and maneuvered themselves into a five-two fit splitting badly. Each declarer managed one diamond trick, one spade trick, and two heart tricks after a club lead and spade shift. Matching –200s; not such a great score, since 2♣ looks hopeless after a heart lead and diamond shift.

Bd: 9	North
Dlr: North	♠ 52
Vul: E/W	♥ 76532
	♦ J104
	♣ 943

West	East
♠ 10763	♠ AKJ84
♥ K8	♥ ---
♦ Q862	♦ K753
♣ K62	♣ AQ105
	South
	♠ Q9
	♥ AQJ1094
	♦ A9
	♣ J87

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♠	2♥
3♥	4♥	5♥	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		1♣*	Dbl(♥)
Rdbl(1)	3♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

(1) Balanced positive

Bridgida, Goddess of Fate, randomly assignsimps, while our job is to keep on her right side. But after yet another very light limit raise from Chen-Furuta, Kazuo Furuta basically drove to slam after consulting partner and being told not to do so. Had Hongli led anything but the ♦A we would have been able to console her for her bad luck. As it was, after the ♦A lead declarer still had to guess trumps so in that

sense he deserved his good fortune. The inference that South might have led a passive trump even with a singleton (why should the opponents be off a trump honor?) was not lost on him.

The controlled auction from the other table merely resulted in a 13-imp loss, but nobody did anything wrong. 21-11 for Japan Open now.

Bd: 10	North	
Dlr: East	♠ K2	
Vul: Both	♥ AQ102	
	♦ J8532	
	♣ 92	
	West	East
	♠ Q1086	♠ AJ9
	♥ 97654	♥ J
	♦ A	♦ KQ64
	♣ J75	♣ AKQ84
	South	
	♠ 7543	
	♥ K83	
	♦ 1097	
	♣ 1063	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦(♥)	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		1♣*	Pass
1♦*	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	3NT	All Pass
(1) INV both majors			

Both tables led the ♦10. Both declarers elected to play for overtricks. Yan passed the ♠10 early on. Furuta advanced an early ♠Q. When the ♠Q was covered Furuta did not have to risk the contract, whereas Yan was jeopardizing 3NT by finessing. Both ran their 12 winners. Sun kept the ♦J for trick 13 and Ino did not; 21-12 now for Japan.



Kazuo Furuta

Bd: 11 North
 Dir: South ♠ K5
 Vul: None ♥ Q965
 ♦ 74
 ♣ Q10963

West
 ♠ J1097
 ♥ 74
 ♦ AKJ6
 ♣ AK7

East
 ♠ AQ62
 ♥ 82
 ♦ 109532
 ♣ 82

South
 ♠ 843
 ♥ AKJ103
 ♦ Q8
 ♣ J54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>

Dbf 3♥ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>

Dbf 2♦(♥) Pass

3♠ All Pass

The East hand is very close to a 4♠ bid over 3♠; it all depends on how classical your takeout doubles are as to whether you believe you have extras for your 2♠ bid. If you were told partner had a balanced 16-count you still would not know what to do. But there again if partner had wasted heart cards he might not invite. And with 2/3 hearts we suppose there are some hands where he might have bid 1NT on the first round with a hand in the appropriate range. The editors are just about united in their decision to invite as West and accept as East. If we both agree it must be wrong. Since Sun had achieved a first in the match of silencing her opponents when they each had marginal actions, 3♥ down three earned China 2 imps. 21-14 now for Japan.

After what seemed like a fairly accurate match thus far, both tables departed from double-dummy—to a surprising degree.



Hongli Wang

Bd: 12 North
 Dir: West ♠ 32
 Vul: N/S ♥ ---
 ♦ KQ987
 ♣ AQJ853

West
 ♠ K1084
 ♥ AKJ10876
 ♦ A2
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ A975
 ♥ 32
 ♦ J64
 ♣ 9742

South
 ♠ QJ6
 ♥ Q954
 ♦ 1053
 ♣ K106

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>

1♥ 2NT Pass 3♣

4♥ 5♣ Pass Pass

5♥ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>

1♣* 1♠(1) Dbf Pass

2♥ All Pass(!!)

(1) Majors/Minors

At table one it was the Energizer Bunny (just keeps going and going...) versus "6-5 come alive." Hongli doubled 5♥, no doubt with hopes of a bigger payday. The top diamond lead did not hurt; declarer lost her diamond and heart early and her spade trick late. Should East have acted over 5♣? Doubling with nothing in the minors seems extreme, but maybe the 5♥ bid is too much. Then again, if East's assets were the ♠QJ instead of the ♠A, 5♣ would have been cold.

In the other room the Good Fairy of Yokohama came down and sprinkled fairy dust to send all the players to sleep at their second turn. North's pass of 2♥ looks bizarre, and we guess East's pass of 2♥ was anti-systemic. (If West had thought partner was allowed to pass would she have bid 2♥ rather than 4♥?) If we were West we'd settle for collecting 7 imps in exchange for missing game. 21-21 now, and it seems an appropriate moment to mention that China Longzhu had a ½ imp carryover for their higher finish in the qualifying stage (to avoid the necessity of overtime).

Next, the match rapidly untied itself.

Bd: 13
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ A7
 ♥ Q107
 ♦ AKQJ3
 ♣ AJ2

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AJ943
 ♦ 1074
 ♣ K10753

East
 ♠ J105432
 ♥ K8652
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 4

South
 ♠ KQ986
 ♥ ---
 ♦ 9852
 ♣ Q986

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♣*	1♠(1)	Dbl
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	2NT	Pass	3♥
Dbl	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
Pass	6NT	Dbl	All Pass

4♥x in the Open Room had play, but after a club to the jack and two rounds of diamonds declarer could do little more than crossruff spades and clubs. The fall of the ♣A in three produced an ending where declarer could claim if trumps split. So he cashed the ♥K and when the bad split came to light he went to the ♥A and ran the clubs, losing a trump and a diamond at the end. Down one was a potentially terrible result for N/S given that 6♦ would make (7♦ by South); it did not work out that way.

The Closed Room auction above features some poor judgment by both North and South (the 4♣ bid may keep N/S out of diamonds where they belong). But if South were going to drive to slam, a 5NT bid (pick a slam) might have gotten them to diamonds. North did well to convert the double of 6♠ (and yes, we do have some sympathy with East whatever the final result) to 6NT. East led the ♥2 (fourth best leads) as dummy pitched a diamond. West shifted to a diamond and declarer cashed five diamonds and two spades. East pitched the ♠4, ♥5, ♥6 and then the ♠5. Maybe this left West with a mistaken impression about her partner's heart length. When declarer cashed the spade winner East played the ♠10, not the jack. Yan had thus missed many opportunities to signal loudly for hearts.

At this point Dong tanked for upwards of five minutes. The commentators could see that declarer could not have had ♠Ax ♥KQ10x ♦AKQJx ♣Ax; that would have been too many HCP. So partner had to have a heart guard left and a club discard was indicated. But Dong did not see it that way and pitched a club, allowing declarer to finesse and run the club suit. 16imps and a lead by that number instead of 12imps the other way.

The blame was thus equally divided between the players. we're not inclined to intrude on private grief and come down one way or the other, but faulting East's double will be easy for those who don't like to double one slam when they cannot beat any other in their own hand.

Bd: 14
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 97
 ♥ K9
 ♦ 4
 ♣ KQJ107643

West	East
♠ KQJ82	♠ 654
♥ 1073	♥ QJ42
♦ AQJ95	♦ K872
♣ ---	♣ A5

South
 ♠ A103
 ♥ A865
 ♦ 1063
 ♣ 982

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	4♣	Dbl	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	2♣	Dbl	3♣
3♦	4♣	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♣	Dbl	All Pass

5♣ went down after diamond leads and continuations (yes, spades would have made the defenders' lives easier) when E/W kept their heart guards. 4♥, a bizarre choice by Chen, did have some play. On a top club lead Chen ruffed in hand and led a low trump up. Sun won the ♥K and naturally shifted to a diamond. Declarer won and drew trumps, but had only five diamonds, a club and three trumps; South had a long club left so declarer could not develop a spade winner. Had declarer tried to steal a spade trick earlier, after the second round of trumps, by

going to dummy in diamonds and leading a low spade, it might have given South a sterner test.

Bd: 15 North
 Dir: South ♠ 65
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1065
 ♦ A1043
 ♣ QJ87

West
 ♠ J103
 ♥ AK82
 ♦ Q85
 ♣ 652

East
 ♠ KQ97
 ♥ J43
 ♦ J72
 ♣ K109

South
 ♠ A842
 ♥ Q97
 ♦ K96
 ♣ A43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣ (R)	Pass	2♠(1)	All Pass

(1) Minimum, 4 spades

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

After the ♠J lead and a spade continuation Imakura took the second round and cleared clubs. He pitched two hearts from dummy, persuading Yan to shift to the ♥J. Dong took the ♥AK and declarer claimed seven tricks. It is hard to see the defense doing better with the diamonds lying as they do, though passive defense after winning the ♣K on the second round, cashing the spades, and exiting in clubs might just do it.

In the other room in 2♠ Furuta won the heart lead cheaply in hand and played trumps. Hongli ducked twice, won the third, and played on hearts again. Declarer could not draw the last trump and cash the heart; he ended up with three spades, three hearts, and a club but could not maneuver a diamond or the fourth heart. 1 imp to Japan, up 38-25.



Dawei Chen

Bd: 16 North
 Dir: West ♠ 8753
 Vul: E/W ♥ J84

♦ K84
 ♣ Q62

West
 ♠ AKQJ94
 ♥ Q753
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ 1062
 ♥ 109
 ♦ J1097
 ♣ AJ109

South
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK62
 ♦ 652
 ♣ K87543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	3♣
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dong</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Yan</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♣*	Pass	1♦	2♣
2♠	3♣	3NT	4♣
4♠	All Pass		

Both Wests judged to get to 4♠ by a long and winding road. Chen received a trump lead, which looks best but warned him of the breaks. He ducked a heart; Sun won and returned a heart. Hongli was forced to win the next heart and she shifted to a diamond, queen, king. Declarer claimed now with six spades, three diamonds and a trump.

Dong won the club lead in dummy, pitching a heart, played a heart to South's king and won the diamond return with the ace, which looks strange. She drew one trump, but was unable to claim when the suit was four-zero. Instead, she gave up a heart and was relieved to find there was no diamond ruff against her. No swing, 38-25 at the break.

Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):

The second quarter saw both teams change one of their pairs. Ino-Imakura remained N/S in the Closed Room while Takayama-Teramoto replaced Furuta-Chen for Japan Open. Sun-Hongli remained N/S in the Open Room while Liu-Wenfei replaced Yan-Dong for China Women. Japan Open began the quarter with a 13-imp lead, 38-25.

Bd: 17
 Dir: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ AKJ85
 ♥ Q102
 ♦ J974
 ♣ K

West
 ♠ Q92
 ♥ J953
 ♦ K3
 ♣ AJ109

East
 ♠ 3
 ♥ AK64
 ♦ Q62
 ♣ 87652

South
 ♠ 10764
 ♥ 87
 ♦ A1085
 ♣ Q43

Both N/S pairs played a spade partial here. There were four tricks for the taking on defense (one club, two hearts, and one diamond) but in the Closed Room, after the ♥A held trick 1, Teramoto switched to the ♣8. Takayama, who failed to appreciate that his partner had led high from five, ducked, letting one of the defense's tricks escape. Serious partnerships should work out in advance what to lead in cases such as this. Some pairs lead attitude and some count, but the key is for both players to be on the same wavelength. Oh well, it was only an imp—one miserable overtrick—since N/S were not in game. Surely no one ever won (or lost) a championship by a single imp!? Japan still leading, 38-26.

Bd: 18
 Dir: East
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 5
 ♥ AJ10
 ♦ QJ9876
 ♣ K64

West
 ♠ A102
 ♥ 9
 ♦ K103
 ♣ AQ10873

East
 ♠ KJ764
 ♥ K5432
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 52

South
 ♠ Q983
 ♥ Q876
 ♦ A42
 ♣ J9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	Dbl	2♦
2NT	3♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	Pass
2♣	2♦	Dbl	3♦
3NT	All Pass		

In the Open Room Teramoto made a negative

double to show both majors. Most top pairs play that this double shows specifically four-four, but that is obviously not the case here since Teramoto was five-five. It would seem that if one is going to use the E/W pair's treatment East should have been willing to pull 2NT to 3♥ (pass-or-correct), after which the good 3♣ contract can be reached instead of defending the opponents' cold 3♦. Teramoto led a club to the jack and ace and Takayama switched to the ♥9. Sun, who may not have appreciated the fact that East could hold five of the suit, ducked and Teramoto won the king and returned the ♥5 (suit preference for spades). Takayama ruffed, cashed the ♠A, and continued with the deuce planning to put Teramoto in with the king for a second heart ruff. But perhaps he also did not appreciate how many spades his partner might hold, for then he would surely have underled the ♠A the first time. Sun ruffed the second spade, then led a diamond to the ace and a second diamond before claiming eight tricks. Down one, and a sloppy 100 for the Japanese.

In the other room the Precision 2♣ opening accelerated the auction and Liu-Wenfei quickly found themselves in 3NT, a contract that had little play on a diamond lead and that was as close to guaranteed on their auction as one can get. Sure enough, Ino was up to the task and led the ♦Q, ducked to the king. Liu cashed the ♠A and followed it with the ten, planning to finesse if North followed. When North tabled the ♣4, for some reason Liu did not go up with the ♠K and play a club, hoping to make her contract if the KJ were doubleton onside. (The risk of taking the ♠K and going after clubs is that one might trade -150 for -250 or -300; the upside, of course, is that one might trade -100 for +400.) Instead, Liu played for down two (or worse if diamonds weren't five-four) and ducked the ♠10 to the queen. The defense now cashed the rest of their diamonds and the ♥A for down three. Another sloppy plus score for Japan, this time +150; 6 imps to Japan, now leading 44-26.

Bd: 19
 Dir: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K764
 ♥ J63
 ♦ QJ9
 ♣ 1053

West
 ♠ 102
 ♥ K952
 ♦ A43
 ♣ Q862

East
 ♠ QJ95
 ♥ A874
 ♦ K1076
 ♣ 9

South
 ♠ A83
 ♥ Q10
 ♦ 852
 ♣ AKJ74

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Takayama	Sun	Teramoto	Hongli
			1NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Liu	Ino	Wenfei	Imakura
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT

All Pass

Against Hongli's 1NT Takayama led the ♣2 to the jack. Hongli played back a low club to the queen (East pitching a heart) and now Takayama tried the ♠10, which Hongli allowed to hold. She won the spade continuation in hand and led the ♥Q. Teramoto won the ace and played back the ♠9 to the king. Hongli now overtook the ♣10 and cashed the rest of the suit, but when she exited with the ♥10 the defense claimed for down one, -100.

In the Closed Room Liu led the ♠10, attacking dummy's bid suit rather than leading from king-fourth in an unbid suit (hearts). And she was right since after a heart lead and continuation declarer can take the losing club finesse and claim seven tricks (four clubs, two spades and a heart). Imakura won the ♠K in dummy, played a low club to the jack and queen, ducked the spade continuation, won the third spade and placed the ♥10 on the table. With seven defensive tricks now available between them, both women ducked and Imakura had his seventh trick. Plus 90 and 4 more imps to Japan Open, up now by 21 at 48-26.

Bd: 20	North
Dlr: West	♠ J63
Vul: Both	♥ K84
	♦ A
	♣ J87653
West	East
♠ Q102	♠ K8
♥ 96	♥ QJ10532
♦ KQ952	♦ 843
♣ AK9	♣ 42
	South
	♠ A9754
	♥ A7
	♦ J1076
	♣ Q10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Takayama	Sun	Teramoto	Hongli
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Liu	Ino	Wenfei	Imakura
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

In the Open Room, when Teramoto competed to the three level in his six-card heart suit in a highly competitive auction, Takayama punished him for his audacity by raising to game, despite holding dubious values (the ♠Q) in the suit bid and raised by the opponents. The contract was down off the top and Teramoto must have felt at least partially to blame for the poor result, but he could have had a lot more in the way of values (e.g., ♠xx ♥QJ10xxx ♦Ax ♣QJx) and there would still have been four top losers. Perhaps the use of a conventional 2NT over 2♠ here (saying: "I want to compete in some suit and I have at least constructive/invitational values"; a direct suit bid says "I want to play here; proceed at your own risk.") would have solved this problem. After all, how often is it that you want to bid an invitational 2NT when the opponents have bid and raised a suit? The defense led clubs, eventually taking their four top tricks (and giving up on a diamond ruff) for +100 N/S.

Against Liu's 2♥ Ino led the ♦A and switched to a club to the queen and ace. Imakura won the first heart with the ace and played back a diamond for Ino to ruff, after which they collected two more tricks to hold declarer to two, +110. 5 imps to China Women, the lead cut now to 17 at 48-31.

The next three boards were pushes, including nice auctions by both N/Ss to reach 7♦ on the deal below.



Tadashi Teramoto



Masaaki Takayama

Bd: 22
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ AK85
 ♥ KQ54
 ♦ A965
 ♣ 3

West
 ♠ 72
 ♥ J98
 ♦ 1084
 ♣ J9654

East
 ♠ J109643
 ♥ 763
 ♦ J7
 ♣ Q7

South
 ♠ Q
 ♥ A102
 ♦ KQ32
 ♣ AK1082

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	2NT*	Pass	1♣*
Pass	3NT*	Pass	3♦*
Pass	4♦*	Pass	4♣*
Pass	5♥*	Pass	4NT*
Pass	7♦	All Pass	5NT*

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♣
Pass	3♦(FG)	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♥	Pass	5♦
Pass	7♦	All Pass	6♣

We don't know the exact meanings of all the bids in Sun-Hongli's Precision auction, but that won't stop us from guessing. 2NT likely showed North's strength and/or pattern (a three-suiter) and by the time the auction reached the four level diamonds had been agreed as trumps. 4NT was probably ace-asking (Keycard?) and Sun showed two key cards without the ♦Q. 5NT said we've got all the key cards and the ♦Q and said she was looking for seven. Sun's next bid said "You've found it, babe."

The natural auction in the Closed Room is a bit easier to interpret. The first four bids were natural while the next three were cue-bids. 4NT was ace-asking (everyone knows it's illegal to bid a slam without using some form of Blackwood) and 4♦ showed zero or three key cards. 5♥ asked about the ♦Q and 6♣ showed that card and the ♣K.

Well done by all.

Bd: 24
 Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 107
 ♥ KJ953
 ♦ A32
 ♣ J54

West
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ K10965
 ♣ K963

East
 ♠ AQ63
 ♥ A8
 ♦ Q74
 ♣ AQ82

South
 ♠ 98542
 ♥ 10762
 ♦ J8
 ♣ 107

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
1♦	1♥	Dbl	3♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Takayama received a heart lead from Sun after Hongli's preemptive raise and ducked it to his queen. He drew trumps in three rounds, ending in hand, and noted South's discard (the ♥6) on the third round. He then unblocked spades, crossed to the ♥A, pitched two diamonds on the ♠AQ, and the time had come to take a position in diamonds knowing that Sun had the length there, having already shown up with two spades, three clubs, and five hearts by inference. So he led a diamond to the king and ace and when a low diamond was led back he finessed; -50.

Again we do not know the meanings of many of E/W's bids here but Wenfei's 2♠ bid must have been some sort of game force asking about distribution. Our best guess is that 2NT showed either four-plus clubs or both minors and 3♦ asked about major-suit length or strength. 3NT either showed no four-card major, a second diamond suit, or a minimum. In any case, 4♣ probably set clubs as trump and 4♠ was a control bid, after which Wenfei placed the contract. Wenfei won the spade lead with the king and drew trump in three rounds ending in dummy. With nothing to go on but the fact that North had three clubs to

South's two, she led a diamond to the queen and a diamond back; +920 when the jack appeared. That was 14 very useful imps to the Women, who had closed to within 3 imps of Japan Open at 48-45.

Bd: 25 North
 Dir: North ♠ 62
 Vul: E/W ♥ J2
 ♦ K10975
 ♣ Q1054

West
 ♠ AQJ98
 ♥ Q1053
 ♦ Q642
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ 4
 ♥ AK97
 ♦ 8
 ♣ AK98732

South
 ♠ K10753
 ♥ 864
 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ J6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dbl	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

The Japanese men continued their aggressiveness in the bidding and drove to the precarious slam. 3♠ was a splinter inferentially agreeing hearts, and 5♦ asked about the ♥Q. 6♥ showed the queen but denied a side king. Sun got off to the unfortunate lead of Hongli's bid suit, spades, and Hongli could not work out not to give up the king at trick 1. Declarer won the ace, advanced the ♠J in case Sun had led a singleton, and pitched dummy's diamond when she followed. Then came a trump to the ace, a club ruff, a heart to the queen and a third heart to the king. When everyone followed to the ♣A Takayama could claim, losing just one club when they split four-two and not three-three. Plus 1430.

Liu-Wenfei's system (Precision) should have made bidding the slam easier, but it appears to have had just the opposite effect. After the natural 2♣ opening Wenfei showed extras (in the context of a non-1♣ opening) and secondary hearts in response to Liu's 2♦ asking bid. Liu simply raised to game, unable to

appreciate the value of her club void (it would not have been so valuable if Wenfei's clubs had been headed by, say, the king-jack instead of the ace-king), and Wenfei, with her extreme distribution and excellent controls, acquiesced. Just as well (as we'll see shortly). Imakura led a low spade and declarer inserted the jack, which held. Next she cashed the ♠A, pitching her diamond, and for some reason ruffed a spade, perhaps looking to crossruff. Then came the ♣AK (diamonds from dummy) and a third club, South pitching a diamond, followed by a diamond ruff and a second club ruff as South pitched the ♦A. Dummy's last diamond was ruffed with the ♥K, South pitching a spade, and yet another club was ruffed with the ♥Q. A spade ruff with the ace was declarer's final trick when North's ♥J prevented declarer from scoring the ten *en passant*. Plus 650, but 13 imps to Japan Open, extending their lead to 16 at 61-45.

The two tables played identical contracts on each of the next three boards, with the only swing being an overtrick imp to the Women. When Board 29 was placed on the tray the score stood at 61-46.

Bd: 29 North
 Dir: North ♠ A65
 Vul: Both ♥ Q765
 ♦ 1087
 ♣ Q62

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AJ932
 ♦ AQJ6
 ♣ AK74

East
 ♠ KJ432
 ♥ K108
 ♦ K93
 ♣ J5

South
 ♠ Q10987
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 542
 ♣ 10983

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♦(2)	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

(1) Drury
 (2) Not minimum (natural-ish)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Teramoto's 2♠ must have really turned Takayama off since he quickly signed off in game with his huge three-suiter. He won the opening ♦7 lead in hand with the queen and played a low heart, inserting...the eight from dummy. With two low clubs that could usefully be ruffed in dummy it seems odd not to use dummy's low trumps for the purpose of ruffing. But hey, too many overtricks just make your bidding look bad. Next he cashed the ♥K, getting the bad news, then played the ♥10 to the ace followed by a low club toward dummy's Jx. At that point the defense conceded 11 tricks, +650 for E/W.

Liu also received the ♦7 lead against her slam and left the lead in dummy when the nine held. Next she cashed the ♣AK, ruffed a club in dummy, ruffed a spade back to hand, ruffed her last club and cashed the ♥K. She returned to her hand with a diamond and played the ♥A, getting the bad news, then played on diamonds conceding down one; -100. That was 13 imps to Japan Open, leading now by 29 at 74-46.

The slam can be made in any of several ways, all involving setting up a possible endplay against North in the end game. Declarer's line was fine up to the point where she ruffed a spade back to hand after ruffing her first club in dummy. She should then have cashed two more diamonds ending, say, in hand (ending in dummy works, too; the key is cashing the third diamond *before* she plays her last club so that North can't pitch a diamond), to reach:

♠ --- ♥ AJ93 ♦ Q ♣ 7	♠ A6 ♥ Q765 ♦ --- ♣ ---	♠ KJ43 ♥ K8 ♦ --- ♣ ---
	♠ Q1098 ♥ 4 ♦ --- ♣ 10	



Ming Sun

Now declarer plays her last club (the last diamond works too) and North is fixed. He cannot usefully ruff, so he pitches his low spade. Declarer ruffs in dummy and can cash the ♥K, ruff a spade, and exit with the last diamond. North must ruff and is now endplayed to lead from his ♥Qx into declarer's ♥AJ. Several variations are possible, all involving an equivalent of the threatened endplay position here.

Bd: 30 Dir: East Vul: None	North ♠ 102 ♥ QJ9 ♦ AK97 ♣ J1043	East ♠ KQ83 ♥ K84 ♦ QJ53 ♣ 65
	West ♠ J75 ♥ 106532 ♦ 1042 ♣ 97	
	South ♠ A964 ♥ A7 ♦ 86 ♣ AKQ82	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Takayama</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♣
Pass	3♣(1)	Pass	2♣
Pass	3NT(2)	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♣
		Pass	6♣
All Pass			
(1) 11-13, 4♣+4 other			
(2) ♣+♦			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	2NT
		All Pass	

Takayama led a low heart against Hongli's 6♣ and Teramoto allowed dummy's queen to hold. A spade was led to the ace followed by a second spade out. Takayama won the jack and got out with a diamond to the ace. Hongli now came to hand with a trump, ruffed a spade high in dummy, played another club to hand, and could ruff her last spade with dummy's remaining trump. Plus 920.

Ino-Imakura in the Closed Room never even sniffed at slam. Liu led a heart to the queen, which held, and Imakura cashed his clubs, Liu pitching three hearts and Wenfei two spades and a diamond. Imakura now played a low spade toward dummy, Liu rising with the jack and crashing Wenfei's queen. Wenfei

played a low heart to Imakura's ace but the spade position allowed declarer to take the rest. Plus 490, and 10 imps back to the Women; 74-56.

Bd: 31 North
 Dir: South ♠ AKJ9
 Vul: N/S ♥ 9765
 ♦ A862
 ♣ 8

West East
 ♠ Q107 ♠ 8654
 ♥ J42 ♥ KQ83
 ♦ QJ1053 ♦ 974
 ♣ J3 ♣ Q10

South
 ♠ 32
 ♥ A10
 ♦ K
 ♣ AK976542

Open Room
West North East South
Takayama Sun Teramoto Hongli
 1♣
 Pass 2NT Pass 3NT
 All Pass
 Closed Room
West North East South
Liu Ino Wenfei Imakura
 1♣
 Pass 1♥ Pass 5♣
 Pass 6♣ All Pass

Crime and punishment. Hongli never bid her eight-card suit naturally (1♣ was Precision) but partner had a singleton so no harm, right? Wrong. The suit split two-two and 7♣ was cold. But even had trumps been three-one dummy had enough to cover all the side losers, so 6♣ still rolled. 3NT!? Bah, humbug.

Teramoto led the ♣Q (someone had to have them; why not partner?) and when the top clubs brought rain Sun claimed all the tricks for a measly 720.

Ino-Imakura's auction was (relatively) short and sweet to 6♣. Liu led a spade and again declarer had no trouble taking all the tricks; +1390. 12 imps back to Japan Open, leading by 30 at 86-56.

The last deal was a boring 3NT on which the Women managed to score an overtrick imp. The second quarter ended with Japan Open leading the China LongZhu National Women by 29, 86-57.

Thirty-two boards left to determine the 2009 NEC Cup champions.

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

Bd: 33 North
 Dir: North ♠ A4
 Vul: None ♥ 932
 ♦ J873
 ♣ 9872

West East
 ♠ 10863 ♠ KQJ752
 ♥ K8654 ♥ AQ
 ♦ Q ♦ 64
 ♣ 653 ♣ KQ10

South
 ♠ 9
 ♥ J107
 ♦ AK10952
 ♣ AJ4

Open Room
West North East South
Chen Sun Furuta Hongli
 1♠ 2♦
 2♠ 3♦ 4♠ All Pass
 Closed Room
West North East South
Wenfei Teramoto Liu Takayama
 Pass 1♣ 2♦
 Dbl 3♣ 3♠ Pass
 4♠ All Pass

It is hard to blame either North for taking it slowly with a defensive trick and no shape; 5♦ is only cheap because the club honors lie well. Both tables wrapped up 420; neither set of defenders indulged in the fantasy of underleading a diamond at trick 1 for the club shift (probably the product of a disordered imagination, not a play that would have succeeded in doing anything but entertain the kibitzers).

Chen and Furuta were in such an aggressive mode throughout last year's event that the following deal is hard to explain.

Bd: 34 North
 Dir: East ♠ 952
 Vul: N/S ♥ 975
 ♦ J85
 ♣ J1094

West East
 ♠ QJ763 ♠ ---
 ♥ A32 ♥ QJ864
 ♦ 742 ♦ K96
 ♣ Q7 ♣ AK863

South
 ♠ AK1084
 ♥ K10
 ♦ AQ103
 ♣ 52

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♥	Dbl
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
		1♥	1♠
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Chen's actions suggest he was trapping or simply missaw his hand (he had an artificial way to show a constructive heart raise). When he passed 2♠ was he really expecting the auction to end there? In 3♥ Furuta ruffed the spade lead and crossed to the ♣Q to pass the ♠Q and pitch a diamond. Hongli won and played back a spade, letting declarer pitch a second diamond. Furuta cashed a second club and exited with the ♦K. Hongli won and played another top spade, ruffed by Furuta. A club was ruffed with the ♥10, the last spade was pitched from dummy, and Furuta ruffed a second diamond in his hand. At that point declarer had scored six tricks. He led a fourth club, overruffing South's ♥K with the ace and had the ♥QJ in hand for nine winners.

Would Liu find a way to make 10 tricks in 4♥? What appears to be Mrs Guggenheim's line works fine: ruff the spade lead and finesse in trumps. Pass the ♠Q to pitch a diamond. Eventually draw a second trump and pitch your diamond on the ♠J, ruff out the clubs and claim four hearts, five clubs and a spade.

Liu started well enough by duplicating the play from the other room up to trick 4. But now she needed to come to hand and take a heart finesse. When she played ace and another heart (a line that in essence needed the heart finesse right or a diamond through would force her) she ran out of trumps. A fourth spade reduced her to one spare trump. She needed clubs three-three now and the cards did not forgive. 5imps to Japan instead of 7imps the other way; 91-57 for Japan.

Bd: 35	North
Dlr: South	♠ J1042
Vul: E/W	♥ J105
	♦ A54
	♣ A65

West
♠ K
♥ AK8763
♦ 102
♣ Q1072

East
♠ Q865
♥ Q42
♦ K98
♣ J43

South
♠ A973
♥ 9
♦ QJ763
♣ K98

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Dbl
3♥	3♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
			Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Dbl
Rdbl	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	3♠	All Pass	

Both Norths competed intrepidly to 3♠ and were right to do so since there seems to be no sensible way to beat 3♥. Against Teramoto's 3♠ Liu led a heart and Wenfei won and shifted top a club. Teramoto won in hand, passed the ♠J, won the club return, then led a diamond to his ace and a spade to the nine. The four-one break left him with a fifth top loser (even had he put in the ♠7 he would have had no re-entry to hand). Sun began trumps by leading low from her hand to the nine and stood no chance now either. No swing and still 91-57.

Bd: 36	North
Dlr: West	♠ AK3
Vul: Both	♥ AJ96
	♦ 53
	♣ Q542

West
♠ 10865
♥ K543
♦ KJ64
♣ 7

East
♠ QJ2
♥ Q2
♦ AQ82
♣ K1063

South
♠ 974
♥ 1087
♦ 1097
♣ AJ98

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Both tables played 1NT. With no miracle in clubs (well, not the miracle you are going to play for) the only problem on the deal is to take three heart tricks. That requires not blocking the hearts artificially by leading the ten from hand and following with the six; which would then force you to win the second heart

in the North, not the South, hand. Sad to say, both editors observed a cow fly by during this deal. BJR thinks Jersey, RC thinks Holstein. Sun did block the hearts in unrecommended fashion and was punished when the lie of the cards cost her 5 imps. 96-57 now.

Bd: 37
Dlr: North
Vul: N/S

North
♠ 1042
♥ K8765
♦ 5
♣ 8743

West
♠ 76
♥ J42
♦ Q10863
♣ Q65

East
♠ J9853
♥ A10
♦ AK92
♣ J10

South
♠ AKQ
♥ Q93
♦ J74
♣ AK92

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠	1NT
3♦	2♦	Dbl	2♥
All Pass	Pass	Pass	3♥

Both Souths chose to overcall 1NT and we're not sure why, though nothing bad happened as a result. Nine tricks are likely to be the limit in hearts if played by South, as on a spade lead you cannot cross to dummy to play hearts to best advantage. Wenfei led a trump against 3♥ and that let through the overtrick. In the other room the spade lead saw declarer advance the ♥Q from hand at trick 2, which also got the job done for 140. An imp to Japan, up 97-57.

Bd: 38
Dlr: East
Vul: E/W

North
♠ A85
♥ J7
♦ K9742
♣ Q43

West
♠ KJ109
♥ Q2
♦ Q865
♣ 985

East
♠ Q64
♥ 953
♦ A103
♣ J1062

South
♠ 732
♥ AK10864
♦ J
♣ AK7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	1NT(F)	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	3♥

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
Pass	1♠(1)	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	3♥

The opening lead determined the number of chances South got to go plus. Hongli received a club lead and elected to win in hand, cash one top heart (picking up a stiff ♥Q on both sides but not the ♥9 to her left), then lead a diamond to dummy's king when West played low. One chance down. Back came a club. She won in dummy and finessed in trumps; the best line. but all she earned for that was -50.

In the other room Wenfei's incisive spade lead meant declarer could not exploit the diamonds. She had to win the second round and take an immediate trump finesse by running the ♥J. Down one and no swing.

Bd: 39
Dlr: South
Vul: Both

North
♠ 6
♥ Q10
♦ AKJ
♣ AK109543

West
♠ 432
♥ 965
♦ Q108765
♣ 6

East
♠ AKJ10987
♥ 872
♦ 2
♣ Q7

South
♠ Q5
♥ AKJ43
♦ 943
♣ J82

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	2♣	3♠	Pass
4♠	6♣	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
Pass	1♣	3♠	Pass
Pass	6♣	All Pass	Dbl

Teramoto did well here to earn a flat board, whereas Sun had both an opening bid and a spade raise by

the opponents to comfort her in her decision to bid slam as a solo venture. We think Teramoto gets a lot of credit here—and all for no imps.

Bd: 40 North
 Dlr: West ♠ QJ6
 Vul: None ♥ Q954
 ♦ AJ103
 ♣ 75

West
 ♠ K85
 ♥ AKJ32
 ♦ Q92
 ♣ A9

East
 ♠ 1094
 ♥ 1086
 ♦ 654
 ♣ QJ108

South
 ♠ A732
 ♥ 7
 ♦ K87
 ♣ K6432

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♥	All Pass
(1)16+ or ♥+♣			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
1♣*	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

Furuta's response might have got him way too high were it not for the Gazilli gadget that let him show 0-7 at his second turn. Even 2♥ was uncomfortable, of course. On the ♠Q lead to the ace Chen unblocked the ♠K to get an entry to dummy. After three rounds of diamonds the defenders took their second spade and got out with a third. Chen finessed in clubs (good) then in hearts (rats!). Down one and 4 imps to China when Wenfei's decision to conceal her hearts got her that suit led a trick 1. In dummy with the ♥8 she played a club to her hand, drove out the ♥Q, and collected a spade winner for her seventh trick when North shifted to that suit. Yes, had the defenders worked out not to lead spades they might have taken four diamonds and a trick in each suit. Easier said than done. 98-61 for Japan Open.



Wenfei Wang

Bd: 41 North
 Dlr: North ♠ A2
 Vul: E/W ♥ AK653
 ♦ Q63
 ♣ A65

West
 ♠ QJ653
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ J5
 ♣ 10842

East
 ♠ 84
 ♥ J102
 ♦ 10982
 ♣ KQJ9

South
 ♠ K1097
 ♥ 987
 ♦ AK74
 ♣ 73

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♣*	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

A wheel came off the Closed Room auction; 3♥ was intended as forcing but not so interpreted. (North assures us that it is in the system file as a signoff.) Fortunately it was only a non-vulnerable game. The Chinese had a strong club auction and were never going to miss game, or indeed get too high. Just the 6 imps, but it was somewhat closer at 98-67 now.

A quiet game followed with no excitement at either table but the match was about to heat up.

Bd: 43 North
 Dlr: South ♠ 982
 Vul: None ♥ A7
 ♦ K109754
 ♣ 96

West
 ♠ Q73
 ♥ J83
 ♦ AJ63
 ♣ 432

East
 ♠ AKJ1054
 ♥ Q104
 ♦ ---
 ♣ AQJ7

South
 ♠ 6
 ♥ K9652
 ♦ Q82
 ♣ K1085

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Chen	Sun	Furuta	Hongli
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wenfei	Teramoto	Liu	Takayama
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣(1)	Pass	4♦(SPL)	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

In the Open Room Hongli (you can't fool me; I'm too ignorant) led a mundane fourth best. It has worked for most of us for most of our lives and this deal was no exception. Partner congratulated her for her enterprise by winning the ♠A and returning the suit. One ruff and the ♣K later the Chinese were inscribing +50 neatly on their scorecards.

Takayama was from the school of "A little learning is a dangerous thing." His choice of the ♦Q as an opening salvo was not calculated to paralyze declarer. That was 10 imps to China Longzhu and the match was closer at 98-77.

Seat belts were being fastened, breath was being drawn in, nails were being bitten...and that was only the commentators.

Bd: 44	North
Dlr: West	♠ A92
Vul: N/S	♥ Q976
	♦ 4
	♣ AKJ32

West	East
♠ KQJ863	♠ 104
♥ 853	♥ 10
♦ AKJ10	♦ Q9532
♣ ---	♣ Q9875
	South
	♠ 75
	♥ AKJ42
	♦ 876
	♣ 1064

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Chen	Sun	Furuta	Hongli
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♥
2♠	4♦	4♠	5♣
5♠	6♥	Pass	Pass
6♠	Dbl	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Wenfei	Teramoto	Liu	Takayama
1♣*	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♥
2♠	4♥	Pass	Pass
4♠	Dbl	All Pass	

The strong club silenced Teramoto initially; indeed, if East had responded to 1♠ N/S would have been out of the auction for good. But as it was, Takayama balanced with 2♥ and Teramoto drove to 4♥, letting Wenfei take a somewhat unilateral sacrifice on an auction where it could not have sounded to N/S like the contract could have a prayer. North led a top club and did not like what he saw. Declarer ruffed and played a heart. Now, when South won to lead a spade to Wenfei's eight, North needed to cover with the nine. Declarer would win in dummy and ruff a club, then ruff a heart, and would then have to come to hand with a diamond to draw trumps. North could win the ♠A and lead a heart to collect a diamond ruff for down one. But North played ace and another trump and declarer claimed ten tricks.

Remarkably, setting the contract one would not have made that much of a difference. The auction in the Closed Room saw Hongli bid hearts, then raise clubs, and from both West's and North's perspective that suggested there were going to be a lot of tricks available in the rounded suits. When Chen saved in 6♠ (Furuta might have doubled 6♥ to stop this) Sun doubled and led a diamond. The defenders won the first heart, took their diamond ruff, and played two rounds of trumps at their next turn. That was 500 and 14 imps. The match margin was now 7 imps at 98-91. Could there be more swings around the corner? You'd better watch out, you'd better take care.

Bd: 45	North
Dlr: North	♠ 4
Vul: Both	♥ AK875
	♦ AKJ9865
	♣ ---

West	East
♠ Q107	♠ K9652
♥ J9	♥ Q1042
♦ Q103	♦ 7
♣ AQJ75	♣ 986

South
♠ AJ83
♥ 63
♦ 42
♣ K10432

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♣	1♠(1)	2♣
2♠	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦

All Pass

(1) Majors or Minors

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

So far the Japanese feather-weight interventions over a strong club had been leading a charmed life. Eventually it caught up with them in an unexpected way. It was not that anything terrible would have happened to E/W in a spade contract. But at her final turn, Sun knew her partner had at two diamonds at most and that the hearts were not splitting. She still did remarkably well to pass 5♦. Both tables played to ruff hearts in dummy and lost a diamond and a heart. But China had 12 imps and the lead after scoring 46 imps in six deals without response.

The Japanese stopped the bleeding on the next deal with a quiet notrump partscore, 16 HCP facing 7 HCP, making 150 in each room. But there was more to come.

Bd: 47
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ J865
 ♥ 973
 ♦ A863
 ♣ J10

West	East
♠ A32	♠ Q9
♥ J85	♥ Q106
♦ 1074	♦ KJ952
♣ Q432	♣ A75

South
 ♠ K1074
 ♥ AK42
 ♦ Q
 ♣ K986

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Teramoto</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Takayama</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♦(SPL)
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

It pains us to see an action like opening a 14-16 notrump with the South cards gain imps, but 2♥ handled surprisingly well on a club lead. Hongli won the second club and advanced the ♣9, ruffing in dummy when West played low impassively. Now a spade to the nine, ten, and ace and a diamond back saw Hongli take a second spade, then the two top trumps, leaving the ♥Q and ♥J out. Next she ran spades, letting the defenders take their two trumps separately.

In 3♠ on a heart lead Teramoto won in dummy and crossed to the ♦A to misguess clubs. The defenders cleared hearts, declarer cleared clubs, and Liu cashed the heart winner and played a third club. Declarer ruffed his winner to get to hand to lead a spade to the ten and ace, but the fourth round of clubs re-promoted the ♠Q for down one.

The set concluded with a flat partscore deal. China had scored 51 imps without reply, and led 108-98.



Tadashi Imakura



Masayuki Ino

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

Bd: 49
 Dir: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 7
 ♥ AQ10765
 ♦ AQ7
 ♣ K62

West	East
♠ AK4	♠ Q1063
♥ 9	♥ 432
♦ K108652	♦ J943
♣ 973	♣ J5

South
 ♠ J9852
 ♥ KJ8
 ♦ ---
 ♣ AQ1084

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♦	2♥	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♦(1)
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

(1) 2 key cards plus a diamond void

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

We like Imakura's decision to respond 2♣, setting up a game force by bidding where he lived. Both auctions went very smoothly to the best spot. Both tables conceded a spade; Liu led the suit, Sun won the trump lead and ducked a spade; no swing, still 108-98 to China.

Bd: 50	North
Dir: East	♠ KQ8632
Vul: N/S	♥ K53
	♦ AK
	♣ 87

West
♠ 74
♥ 10962
♦ 843
♣ K1052

East
♠ AJ10
♥ Q7
♦ QJ102
♣ QJ93

South
♠ 95
♥ AJ84
♦ 9765
♣ A64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♠	1♣	Pass
1♦(♥)	2♠	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	1♥	1♦	Pass
1♥	1♠	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Both Wests were unprepared to go gently into that good night; they responded to the opening bid and now it was going to be nearly impossible for N/S to get to the playable game, which makes as the cards

lie when the heart finesse succeeds. No swing, but well done by both Wests.

Bd: 51	North
Dir: South	♠ QJ43
Vul: E/W	♥ J2
	♦ QJ8
	♣ KJ84

West	East
♠ A	♠ K10952
♥ 9864	♥ Q7
♦ K5432	♦ A10976
♣ 762	♣ A
South	
♠ 876	
♥ AK1053	
♦ ---	
♣ Q10953	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♠	2♦	1♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	Dbl(support)
2♠	Dbl	5♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	All Pass	Pass
Pass	Dbl		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	3♣(P/C)	Dbl	2♥(♥+m)
Pass	Pass	5♦	Pass
4♦	Pass		All Pass

Well bid by both E/W pairs. Operation successful, but undertaker required. Sun's double increased the Chinese lead to 111-98.

Bd: 52	North
Dir: West	♠ KQ1064
Vul: Both	♥ K2
	♦ Q95
	♣ J52

West	East
♠ 53	♠ AJ8
♥ J10854	♥ Q73
♦ J742	♦ A86
♣ 73	♣ AK98

South
♠ 972
♥ A96
♦ K103
♣ Q1064

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	1♠	1NT	Dbl
2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥	2♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass
2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥	All Pass

Another deal on which China did well early in the auction to get in fast (Furuta-Chen non-vulnerable were the most aggressive of the pairs on either team but the other Japanese were closer to standard). The ladies bought the hand in both rooms and stole an overtrick when South pitched a club prematurely, setting up a spade and a club discard for West's diamonds. 2♠ only failed because the club ruff was not with the trump trick. 112-98 now.

The bad luck continued for both E/W pairs, but perhaps they could be consoled by the fact that in the other room the cards were lying equally badly.

Bd: 53	North
Dlr: North	♠ 107
Vul: N/S	♥ K987
	♦ 10753
	♣ QJ6

West
♠ 852
♥ J4
♦ Q98
♣ AK1075

East
♠ AKQ
♥ A2
♦ AK6
♣ 98432

South
♠ J9643
♥ Q10653
♦ J42
♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT(♣)	Pass	4♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	2NT	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Beautifully bid, though both Easts as dummy went down. Fifty points to the bad guys. Still 112-98.

The next deal was flat (Ino doing his best to create a problem for his side with a lead directing double in a strong club auction that might have produced redoubled overtricks had his partner not been equipped with a rescue suit).

Then...

Bd: 55	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q82
Vul: Both	♥ AK5
	♦ AQ63
	♣ 654

West
♠ A103
♥ QJ843
♦ J42
♣ 87

East
♠ J965
♥ 976
♦ 1075
♣ AK9

South
♠ K74
♥ 102
♦ K98
♣ QJ1032

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
	Pass	2♦	Pass
	All Pass		2NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
	All Pass		3NT

For what it is worth, we think South should drive to game, not invite, and Furuta's opening heart lead was a very anti-percentage action. But it is hard to argue with the response that 2NT would have been the limit of the hand on a spade lead so that both South and East guessed the hand perfectly. Color us unconvinced (and prepared to argue the case).

In the other room it was a lot easier to argue with Wenfei's decision to put up the ♠A at trick 1; declarer now had nine tricks when West continued spades. 12 deservedimps to Japan; 110-112 China, and almost half-way through the final set.

Bd: 56	North
Dlr: West	♠ Q987543
Vul: None	♥ J2
	♦ Q7
	♣ K3

West
♠ J6
♥ Q653
♦ AK10842
♣ 6

East
♠ K
♥ A974
♦ J65
♣ J10742

South
♠ A102
♥ K108
♦ 93
♣ AQ985

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
1♦	2♠	Pass	3♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
1♦*	3♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

The more aggressive preempt brought home the bacon. In 4♠ on Liu's low club lead declarer had 11 tricks despite misguessing the hearts at the end, though game was no better than finding the ♠K singleton—really, even on a club lead, and it might have been a lot worse. 7 imps to Japan, up 117-112.

Bd: 57	North
Dlr: North	♠ 10832
Vul: E/W	♥ K94
	♦ 9642
	♣ A3

West
♠ K765
♥ J10872
♦ J
♣ Q62

East
♠ J4
♥ Q5
♦ AK1075
♣ K984

South
♠ AQ9
♥ A63
♦ Q83
♣ J1075

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♦	Dbl
Rdbl(♥)	1♠	2♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	All Pass

Both tables reached 2♣ here, Imakura finding the idiosyncratic lead of the ♠A when a low club looks a more textbook approach. Imakura continued the spade attack, leading the ♠Q next, and Liu took the king to advance a low heart to Imakura's ace. A third spade was ruffed in hand and now it looks plausible for Liu to cash the diamonds, pitching the spade from dummy to avoid a trump promotion. She did not do that, perhaps because the fourth spade would let South pitch an equally awkward heart if North had the thirteenth spade. Instead she led a second heart to Ino and now the fourth spade was ruffed and overruffed, giving the defense four tricks in the bag.

A trump play now would have doomed the contract but Imakura played a low diamond. The ♦J held, so Liu led a club to the king and a club back, ducking in dummy. The ace fell, and Ino had only red-suit cards to lead, so declarer had the rest.

In the other room the low trump lead to the ace for a trump back left Furuta no choice but to pass the ♦J. When it lost, the defense had three major-suit tricks and three minor-suit winners. 5 imps to China; the match was level.

Bd: 58	North
Dlr: East	♠ J
Vul: Both	♥ 652
	♦ QJ83
	♣ AJ984

West
♠ Q1075
♥ J107
♦ 10654
♣ K7

East
♠ K43
♥ A43
♦ A972
♣ 1052

South
♠ A9862
♥ KQ98
♦ K
♣ Q63

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♦	Dbl
1♥(♠)	2♣	Dbl(supp)	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	3♣

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

We're not sure what to make of Hongli's 3♣ bid. It seems to us that there was a fair chance her partner was 1=3=5=4 on this auction. But perhaps with that North would have doubled 2♦ (indeed, with her actual hand that would have been our choice). Regardless, 3♣ played just fine and came to an impressive +150. But defending 2♦ on the admittedly inspired lead of the ♦K would have been even better.

In the other room Ino had a nightmare call at his second turn and guessed to pass. 2♥ on the initial low trump lead, ducked to declarer's nine, allowed declarer to advance the ♦K, ducked all around. Now declarer crossruffed and established a trick in both minors in the process. By the time he had finished he had ten tricks in the bag. Just an imp, but it gave Japan the lead back at 118-117.

Bd: 59 North
 Dir: South ♠ AK108
 Vul: None ♥ J76
 ♦ Q73
 ♣ 987

West
 ♠ 97632
 ♥ 4
 ♦ K10654
 ♣ 52

East
 ♠ 5
 ♥ K983
 ♦ J8
 ♣ AKQJ63

South
 ♠ QJ4
 ♥ AQ1052
 ♦ A92
 ♣ 104

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Sun</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Hongli</i>
Pass	2♥	3♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Wenfei</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Liu</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
Pass	3♣(1)	3NT	4♥

All Pass

(1) Balanced limit raise in hearts

The sane auction in the Open Room saw N/S sell out to 3♣. Sun might have doubled this (we would have). The defenders did well by leading spades and shifting to trumps. Declarer guessed diamonds of course once North showed up with the top spades, but that was still two down.

The pressure seemed to be getting to the players, if the Closed Room auction is anything to go by, as everybody competed for the privilege of going down. 4♥ looks hopeless, but Wenfei, perhaps misreading her partner's hand type, led a low diamond. Declarer played low from dummy, a move that is hard to understand (though it *could* be right). After trumps split four-one there were four tricks for the defense and China was back in front with 4 imps, 121-118.

An overtrick imp to China in 3NT made the lead 4 imps, 122-118. Time for some more serious action.



Yiqian Liu

Bd: 61 North
 Dir: North ♠ 42
 Vul: Both ♥ AK1073
 ♦ 4
 ♣ AK732

West
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ J954
 ♦ AK2
 ♣ 10865

East
 ♠ AQ109865
 ♥ Q6
 ♦ J
 ♣ QJ4

South
 ♠ 73
 ♥ 82
 ♦ Q10987653
 ♣ 9

Open Room

West <i>Chen</i>	North <i>Sun</i>	East <i>Furuta</i>	South <i>Hongli</i>
1NT	2♥	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Wenfei</i>	North <i>Ino</i>	East <i>Liu</i>	South <i>Imakura</i>
1NT	1♥	1♠	Pass
	2♣	3NT	All Pass

Liu followed Hamman's rule: with soft cards in hearts and clubs notrump would be fine. And who leads diamonds on this bidding? A low club lead let Wenfei take the first ten tricks. With the defenders having four tricks against spades in aces and kings, not to mention a club ruff, that looked good when Furuta declared 4♠. Hongli led a club. Sun cashed the two top clubs (the king and ace, in that order) on which South threw a low heart. Then, instead of taking a top heart, she played her highest club. Hongli ruffed and must have lost her own spot card since she shifted to diamonds. So both hearts went away. No swing, but much wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Three deals to go; all to play for; China by 4.

Bd: 62 North
 Dir: East ♠ A753
 Vul: None ♥ 10943
 ♦ J106
 ♣ 82

West
 ♠ QJ62
 ♥ KQ8
 ♦ AQ42
 ♣ Q10

East
 ♠ K984
 ♥ 765
 ♦ 5
 ♣ AK975

South
 ♠ 10
 ♥ AJ2
 ♦ K9873
 ♣ J643

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
		1♣	1♦

3NT All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

We're not sure why Chen gave up on slam after the diamond overcall pinpointed that the finesse would work. Of course as usual the non-vulnerable Furuta had less than an invitation facing his opening bid and 3NT was not a great spot on a diamond lead. Chen was forced to duck the first two rounds of the suit to cut communications and emerged with ten tricks when he knocked out the ♠A and South unwisely ducked the ♥A, hoping her partner had the ♣Q. That led to her being triple-squeezed for 430. But that was still good enough for a 1-imp pickup when the defense led and continued hearts against Wenfei's 3NT. North shifted to a club after winning the ♠A and declarer claimed the rest. The margin was 5 imps now.

Bd: 63	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q94
Vul: N/S	♥ A85
	♦ 654
	♣ 6532

West	East
♠ A102	♠ 653
♥ K943	♥ J102
♦ J9	♦ KQ7
♣ AJ108	♣ KQ97
South	
♠ KJ87	
♥ Q76	
♦ A10832	
♣ 4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
			1♦*

Dbl Pass 1NT All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

The defenders led and continued diamonds against

1NT. Declarer finessed in hearts and had ten top tricks with hearts breaking, but only claimed nine of them. How would 3NT play? If it had made, we might have had to investigate that claim and check what really happened.

Against 3NT Ino led an unimaginative ♣5. Declarer won in dummy, dropping the ♣8 from hand, and took a heart finesse. North ducked but took the second heart...and time stood still. If declarer has four club tricks and the ♥K then that is eight of her 14-16 HCP. She has another 6-8 points, partner has 7-9 points in all. What is the least partner needs to set the hand?

It is hard to be objective but it seems (knowing the hand) that the odds favor playing partner for spade length and either two of the top four spade cards and the ♦A, or both the ♠A and ♠K. If you shift to a diamond and partner does have the ♦AJxx that won't necessarily be enough, unless he has the ♠A as well. Otherwise, declarer might come to nine tricks via a spade, three hearts, four clubs and a diamond. For a diamond to be right partner needs two out of two diamond honors *and* either the ♠A or a misguess from declarer, or perhaps the ♦AJ10 and the ♠A/♥K. A spade needs good spades and either the ♦A or ♥K.

One of the editors, who didn't know the whole deal, couldn't make up his mind and finally said whatever North did was okay by him. Let's leave it at that. Ino played a diamond and declarer claimed ten tricks a moment later. 7 imps to China instead of five the other way; the lead was up to 12 imps.

Bd: 64	North
Dlr: West	♠ A4
Vul: E/W	♥ KQ32
	♦ 65
	♣ 109763

West	East
♠ J10753	♠ KQ86
♥ 864	♥ AJ107
♦ 102	♦ J9
♣ AKQ	♣ 854
South	
♠ 92	
♥ 95	
♦ AKQ8743	
♣ J2	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Chen</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Furuta</i>	<i>Hongli</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	4♦
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Wenfei</i>	<i>Ino</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Imakura</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	4♦
Dbl	Pass	4♠	All Pass

The last deal of the match was probably not going to overturn the Chinese lead—just as well given the torment that Liu was subject to. Having opened a four-card major for perhaps the first time in the event, she then had to decide if she was supposed to bid 4♠, which might easily be doubled and set 800, or pass out 4♦ and concede 510 or the like. Eventually she bid 4♠. There was no double, and

thus no trouble; the defenders missed their heart ruff and collected only 100. Since Chen had judged excellently not to act (he could not stand a 4♥ response to the negative double) Japan had a final 4 imps to reduce the margin to 130-122. It may not have been the best played final we've seen, but it was surely one of the most exciting.



2009 NEC Cup Champions



2009 NEC Cup Runners Up

15th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tuesday (Feb. 9)	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. 10)	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. 11)	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. 12)	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. 13)	10:00-12:15	Yokohama IMP Pairs	F203/F204
	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. 14)	18:35-20:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama Swiss Teams	F203-206
	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	F203-206
	18:30-20:30	Closing Ceremony	F201-202

NEC Cup Qualifying Swiss: 12 rounds of 14-board matches

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

Final: four 16-board segments

