

NEC Bridge Festival

Sunday, February 13, 2011
Bulletin Number 6

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

NEDUK is the 2011 NEC Cup Champion

The team comprised of a Dutch and English pair, NEDUK (David Bakhshi, David Gold, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen) played solid, pressure bridge and defeated a stalwart team from China, Heng Sha Ke Ji (Wang Kui, Liu Haitao, Li Xiaoyi, Zhao Yonghui, Liu Huazong, Peng Jianfeng) in the NEC Cup final to win the 2011 NEC Cup. NEDUK took a first-quarter 40-imp lead but the feisty team from China fought back valiantly in the second quarter, at one point coming to within 11imps of their Dutch-English opponents. But the NEDUK team recovered, to win the second quarter by 18 and won the third quarter to pull out to a 60-imp lead after three quarters. The Chinese team, who had played four-handed throughout, finally succumbed to fatigue and made the difficult decision to withdraw at the three-quarter mark. Congratulations to the winner and runners up.



NEC Cup Winners



NEC Cup Runners Up

NEC Cup Final: Quarter-by-Quarter Results

Team	C/O	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
NEDUK	.5	59	34	49		142
Heng Sha Ke Ji		19	52	11	w/d	82



For the results of the Saturday Pair Games and Yokohama Swiss see pages 3-5

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 Asuka Cup is rated as a Japanese national event, 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.

The Asuka Cup is 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 (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

Debutante Cup — 20 pairs

Rank	Member1	Member2
1	Terumitsu Ejiri	Shigeo Arita
2	Mieko Miyoshi	Yoko ito
3	Hiroki Tsuboi	Koji Yoshida



Winners: DebutanteCup

Beginners Cup (under 5 MP) — 20 pairs

Rank	Member1	Member2
1-2	Kimiko Hase	Nobue Takeuchi
1-2	Naomi Urabe	Mieko Tao
3	Eiji Takamatsu	Teruo Maruyama



Beginners Cup (5): Hase – Takeuchi



Beginners Cup (5): Urabe – Tao

Beginners Cup (under 20 MP) — 18 pairs

Rank	Member1	Member2
1	Aiko Hata	Hiroko Koike
2	Haruki Yamamoto	Mifue Yamamoto
3	Kyoko Miyauchi	Yoshiko Kawamura



Beginners Cup (20)

16th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sunday (Feb. 13)	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	501, 502
	18:00-20:00*	Closing Ceremony	503

* Note: new time

Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Standings (Flight A)

Rank	VP Total	Team Members
1	153	Xu Qun, Zhang Yu, Nie Weiping, Wang Xiaojing, Dai Jianming, Zhuang Zejun
2	145	Tadashi Teramoto, Fu Zhong, Shugo Tanaka, Takeshi Niekawa
3	138	Lu Dong, Ju Chuancheng, Shi Zhengjun, Wang Yanhong, Li Rui
4	136	Mitsue Tajima, Kazuo Furuta, Chen Dawei, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura
5-6	134	Patrick Huang, Jonky Chung, Herstein Liu, Sidney Yang, Grace Lin, Sophia Kuo
5-6	134	John Carruthers, Subhash Gupta, PO Sundelin, BG Olofsson
7	129	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Teruo Miyazaki, Kunio Kodaira
8	128	Ryoga Tanaka, Sadako Nakajima, Yukiko Hoshi, Tomoyuki Harada
9	125	Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Gu Ling, Sun Yanhui, Feng Xuefeng, Lu Yan
10	121	Ron Klinger, Matt Mullamphy, Matt Mullamphy, Michael Whibley
11-13	118	Kazuhiko Yamada, Akihiko Yamada, Kyoko Ohno, Takahiko Hirata, Katsumi Takahashi, Masaaki Takayama
11-13	118	Federico Goded, Gonzalo Goded, Miguel Goncalves, Jordi Sabate
11-13	118	Kyoko Sengoku, Hiroko Janssen, Toshihiro Ogata, Shunsuke Gotoda, Takashi Matsuda
14	116	Tsuneo Sakurai, Takahiro Kamiyo, Seijiro Yajima, Kenichi Asaoka
15-16	115	Henky Lasut, Eddy Manoppo, Denny Sacul, Donald Tuerah, Munawar Sawirudin, Bambang Hartono
15-16	115	Kyoko Shimamura, Brian Senior, Ryo Okuno, Akira Ohara
17	114	Hemant K. Jalan, Ashish Malhotra, Keyzad Anklesaria, Anal Shah, Sunit Chokshi, K.R. Venkataraman
18-19	112	Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev, Hristo Hristov
18-19	112	Shunsuke Morimura, Hiroya Abe, Zhao Jinlong, Liu Zheng
20	111	Haruyo Iiyama, Sumie Nakagawa, Shunichi Haga, Osamu Iiyama
21	110	Paul Hackett, Justin Hackett, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann
22	105	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Paul Gosney, Nabil Edgton
23	83	Keiko Matsuzaki, Kimi Makita, Etsuko Naito, Yukiko Umezu
24	82	Yumiko Oda, Kazuo Saeki, Masakazu Hirota, Shuko Umeda



Winners: Yokohama SRR & Swiss Flight A

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 16th 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

Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Standings (Flight B)

Rank	VP Total	Team Members
1	160	Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown, Susan Stockdale
2	151	Kikuo Tatai, Kenji Miyakuni, Sakiko Naito, Toru Henmi
3	141	Akiko Yanagisawa, Makoto Kono, Toshiko Kaho, Masayuki Hayasaka
4	139	Yuki Fukuyoshi, Takeshi Hanayama, Chieko Yamazaki, Jiang Yi
5	128	Nobuko Matsubara, Sachiko Yamamura, Michiko Iwahashi, Hideyuki Sango
6-7	126	Ayako Miyakuni, Hiroko Ota, Megumi Takasaki, Masako Katsube
6-7	126	Masako Otsuka, Naoko Hishikawa, Yukiko Akayama, Kosuke Ito
8	124	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Kimiko Kamakari, Misae Kato
9-10	120	Masayuki Ohashi, Hiroshi Shinjo, Sumiko Suzuki, Yasuko Masuda
9-10	120	Shintaro Sentsui, Hiroko Sentsui, Kenichi Ito, Kensuke Komori
11	112	Junko Yamashiro, Yoko Shimominami, Kazuko Okamoto, Miyako Miyazaki
12	110	Haruko Koshi, Yoko Oosako, Misuzu Ichihashi, Terumi Kubo
13-14	108	Michiko Ono, Toyoko Saito, Fumiko Kimura, Minako Takahashi
13-14	108	Motoaki Shiga, Hiroyuki Taguchi, Minoru Mizuta, Yumiko Mizuta
15-16	107	Chieko Ichikawa, Keiko Oshio, Yoshiko Murata, Atsuko Kurita
15-16	107	Mariko Matsukawa, Sachiho Ueda, Yoko Maruyama, Keisuke Akama
17	100	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Hiromu Nishida, Yoshie Nishida
18	96	Kazuko Kawashima, Yoko Tokushige, Yoshiko Fukuda, Aiko Mizuuchi
19	82	Toshiaki Nakatani, Mitsuko Sawada, Yoshiko Shiota, Mio Manki

Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Standings (Flight C)

Rank	VP Total	Team Members
1	138	Akiko Kawabata, Misako Fukazawa, Soyoko Yamamoto, Yasuyoshi Toriumi
2-4	137	Hidenori Narita, Makoto Hirata, Yasuhiro Shimizu, Makiko Sato, Takashi Maeda
2-4	137	Junko Takeda, Asako Asakawa, Fumi Tanaka, Yoko Mitsunashi
2-4	137	Hiroaki Miura, Hiroki Yokoi, Noriaki Koike, Yoshiro Kido, Tomoyuki Watanuki
5	128	Kazuko Takahashi, Mayumi Katagiri, Sumiko Sugino, Takako Fujimoto
6	127	Fumiko Sakabe, Kazuko Nakagawa, Takeo Takatori, Sachiko Kato
7	126	Kyoko Suzuki, Setsu Kimoto, Setsuko Matsuzawa, Makoto Wakabayashi
8	124	Park Jungyeon, Sung Kyunghae, Kim Yoonkyung, Park Myungkee
9	123	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi
10	122	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
11	118	Shizuyo Nakagawa, Hisayasu Naito, Yoko Kato, Chikayo Miyako
12	114	Masafumi Yoshizawa, Kuniko Miyauchi, Yoshitaka Agata, Noriko Yoshizawa
13	112	Masako Kurita, Yoko Ota, Mikiko Ito, Noriko Tanaka
14	111	Yoko Yoshimoto, Yumiyo Hari, Shigekeo Ezo, Noriko Miyoshi
15	109	Wakana Kawate, Yasuko Sawama, Machiko Ohashi, Keiko Sugita
16	104	Junko Tsubaki, Keiko Enomoto, Takako Nakatani, Yasuko Kosaka
17	99	Sayuri Ichinose, Kazuhisa Kojima, Teruko Yoshida, Yumiko Nagato
18	94	Masaru Naniwada, Ryo Matsubara, Ayako Matsubara, Mitsuyo Naniwada

Team Rosters: 16th NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	Oz Two:	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Paul Gosney, Nabil Edgton
2	NEDUK:	David Bakhshi, David Gold, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen
3	Hackett:	Paul Hackett, Justin Hackett, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann
4	Beijing Trinergy:	Lu Dong, Ju Chuancheng, Shi Zhengjun, Wang Yanhong, Li Rui
5	Bulgarian All Stars:	Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev, Hristo Hristov
6	Heng Sha Ke Ji:	Wang Kui, Liu Haitao, Li Xiaoyi, Zhao Yonghui, Liu Huazong, Peng Jianfeng
7	China Women:	Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Gu Ling, Sun Yanhui, Feng Xuefeng, Lu Yan, Fan Guansheng (NPC)
8	Taipei Weide:	Patrick Huang, Jonky Chung, Herstein Liu, Sidney Yang, Grace Lin, Sophia Kuo



The 7th Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Congress FUKUOKA 2012

August 25th - September 2nd, 2012



Japan Contract Bridge League would like to welcome all member countries of Zones 4, 6 and 7 to participate in the 7th APBF Congress to be held in Fukuoka, Japan, in August, 2012.

Fukuoka, the historical city located on the Kyushu island, has developed as the gateway city to western Japan from its Asian neighboring countries. We are pleased to inform all our Bridge friends that we are able to offer a wonderful venue for the Congress - the Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk, and the warmest welcome by the people of Fukuoka, headed by Mayor - Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida. We sincerely hope that all players, coaches, other officials, and supporters will come and enjoy this beautiful city of Fukuoka.

Let us get together and share wonderful moments of Bridge and friendship, in Fukuoka!

Japan Contract Bridge League
2012 APBF Congress Organizing Committee

➤ Venue : Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk

Address: 2-2-3 Jigyohama, Chuo-ku,
Fukuoka City 810-8650, Japan
TEL 81-92-844-8111 FAX 81-92-844-7887
<http://www.fukuokaseahawk.hilton.com>



➤ Event Schedule

- | | |
|--|---|
| ◆ Opening Ceremony/ APBF Official Meetings | August 25, 2012 |
| ◆ APBF Championships
Open, Women, Senior, Youth Teams
Open Pairs | August 27- September 2, 2012
September 1-2, 2012 |
| ◆ JCBL Events (* details to be announced in 2011)
Open Teams, Open Pairs and more | August 25-September 2, 2012 |
| ◆ Closing Ceremony | September 2, 2012 |

Accommodations (next page)

➤ Accommodation

Three Hotels are of our recommendation for participants' convenience
The one, of course our host Hotel – the Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk – and
two other hotels, both only 7 minutes walking from the APBF venue.

- ◆ **Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk** - *Stay at the APBF venue!*
<http://www.fukuokaseahawk.hilton.com/>

The Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk hotel is situated on a prime waterfront location, adjacent to Fukuoka Yahoo! JAPAN Dome, Hawks Town Shopping mall and Zepp Fukuoka concert hall. Their first class high-rise hotel in Fukuoka provides splendid views overlooking Hakata Bay and the City of Fukuoka.



- 1,052 air conditioned rooms with varying room configurations (4 persons-room available)
- Coffee / Tea making facilities in room
- Satellite Television / Pay-Per-View
- Fitness room and Pool
- Free Broadband in all rooms and conference areas

*Special Room rates for APBF participants: TBA in 2011



- ◆ **Hyatt Residential Suites Fukuoka** - *With kitchen and laundry/dryer machine!*
<http://www.hyatt-rsf.co.jp/>

- Air conditioned rooms with varying room configurations (6 persons-room available)
- Each room is equipped with a washing and dryer, microwave oven and a mini kitchen.
- Fitness room and Pool
- Free internet service in all rooms
- Self service system (No room service)
- No foreign currency exchange service.
- No Hyatt Gold Passport acceptance
- Room charge: approx.US\$100* (as of 2010)



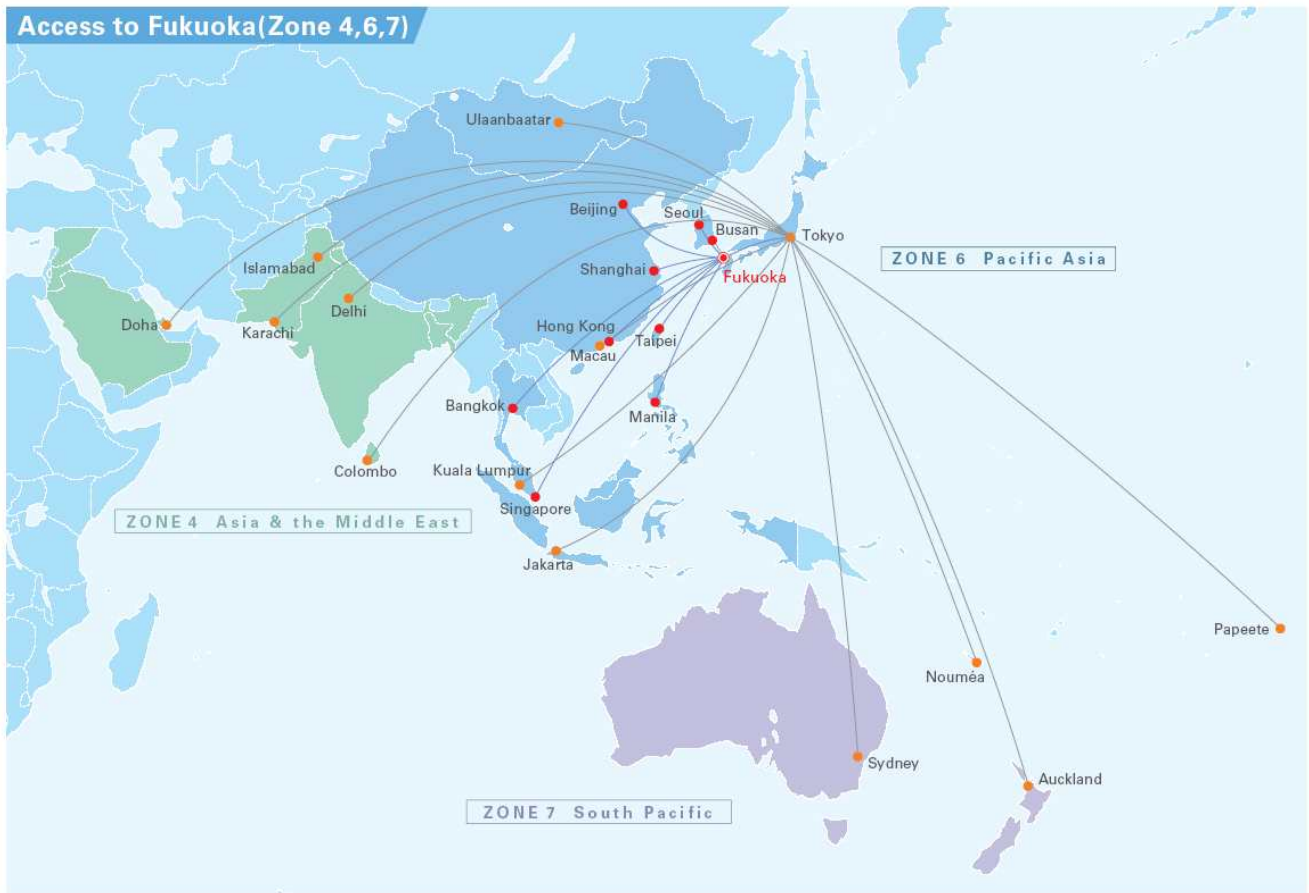
- ◆ **Hotel Twins Momochi** - *Practical type Hotel*
<http://www.twinsmomochi.jp/> *Sorry, No English site available.

- Air conditioned rooms with varying room configurations (4 persons-room available)
- Free internet service in all rooms, etc.
- Paylaundry/dryer machine corner on the ground floor
- Room charge: approx.US\$63* (as of 2010)



CONTACT: Japan Contract Bridge League
Phone: 81-3-3357-3741 Fax: 81-3-3357-7444 E-mail: APBF2012@jcbl.or.jp

Access to Fukuoka (next page)



Narita Bus Schedule

From the Intercontinental
(120 minutes)
¥3,500

From the YCAT
(90 min)
¥3,500

06:40
07:40
08:40
11:40
12:40
14:10

Every 15-20 minutes from
05:15 to 19:30

NEC Semi-finals (2nd half): Bulgarian All Stars vs Heng Sha Ke Ji

by Barry Rigal

In the first half of this match the Bulgarians had given up two large late swings, but still led by 3 imps.

Bd: 17
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ AKJ4
♥ AQ52
♦ 8642
♣ A

West
♠ 1032
♥ KJ97
♦ Q73
♣ 954

East
♠ Q765
♥ 864
♦ K9
♣ J1062

South
♠ 98
♥ 103
♦ AJ105
♣ KQ873

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1♣ (STR)	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	2♣(1)	Pass	3♦ (2)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1)18-20 balanced

(2) Minors

Both tables played 3NT, and on a spade lead Isporski won cheaply and took a diamond finesse. When the ♥J came back he finessed, unblocked clubs, finessed in diamonds again, and ran his minor-suit winners for the black-suit squeeze. In the other room Li got a spade return at trick three and played to squeeze West in hearts and clubs by cashing his spade winner early. That held him to 11 tricks and made the lead 30-27.

Both tables played 3NT in the other match, the Hacketts after a four-bid auction, van Prooijen-Verhees after an 11-bid auction. Both made 460; still 41-26 for Hackett.

Bd: 18
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ AQ104
♥ A97
♦ J7
♣ K432

West
♠ K63
♥ K108543
♦ K62
♣ Q

East
♠ J952
♥ J62
♦ 9853
♣ 87

South
♠ 87
♥ Q
♦ AQ104
♣ AJ10965

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		Pass	2♣
2♥	Dbl	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		Pass	1♣
2♥	Dbl	3♥	Dbl
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Very nicely done by both pairs. Each South got a low heart lead and preferred to run this to his queen (maybe on the theory that misguessing and going down would not be so painful by comparison to the pain that West would feel if the only way you could make your slam was his defensive error at trick one), then drew trumps, playing East, if anyone, for the length and eventually taking the diamond finesse for an elegant push. Still 31-27, All Stars.

The Dutch reached slam after opening the South hand 1♦ (the sequence was 1♦-(2♥)-Dbl-3♣; 3♥-4♥; 4♠-5♣; 6♣). Very nicely done. The Hacketts missed the slam when Justin suggested six clubs and four diamonds and a minimum and Papa offered 3NT as a resting place. That made the match score 41-38.

Bd: 19 North
 Dir: South ♠ J1042
 Vul: E/W ♥ K2
 ♦ AKJ963
 ♣ 8

West
 ♠ K53
 ♥ Q10963
 ♦ 1085
 ♣ K3

East
 ♠ A87
 ♥ J8
 ♦ 742
 ♣ AJ976

South
 ♠ Q96
 ♥ A754
 ♦ Q
 ♣ Q10542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	All Pass	

Personal experience suggests that converting 2♦ to 2♠ has been nothing short of disastrous on auctions like this, and with the singleton being the ♦Q, South took a big position. Of course with spades splitting 3-3 nothing too bad rated to happen. On the lead of the ♥J Li unblocked diamonds and played the ♠Q. He won the heart return and ran diamonds till West ruffed in. Then Iliev played king and another club and declarer ruffed to lead another diamond, letting West ruff in again. However, from here on declarer lost just the ♠A. Plus 110 meant a pick-up of an imp for the All Stars since diamonds handled straightforwardly for +130.

The Hacketts played 2♦ for +130, van Prooijen and Verhees bid 1♠-2♠; 4♠ (yes, those are the cards they were looking at). On the lead of the ♥J declarer's biggest weapon was his concealed suit and the knowledge that nobody knew he had only four spades. He won the ♥A, led the ♠Q to West's king, won the heart return in hand, and unblocked diamonds to play a second trump. With spades 3-3 he was home free. Well bid...or something. It was 45-41 now for NEDUK.

Bd: 20 North
 Dir: West ♠ ---
 Vul: Both ♥ J105
 ♦ A87642
 ♣ AQ108

West
 ♠ AQJ74
 ♥ 8
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ J632

East
 ♠ K86
 ♥ K7432
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K754

South
 ♠ 109532
 ♥ AQ96
 ♦ K93
 ♣ 9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♠	2♦	3♦	4♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♠	2♦	4♠	DbI
All Pass			

4♠ looks a little high but one would not necessarily expect the contract to be a blood-bath. However, Isporski led a top diamond and shifted to hearts. Peng ruffed, dislodged the ♣A, ruffed another heart, led a club to the ♣K, and when this was ruffed he had seven trump tricks and no more.

5♦ handled easily enough for Li. He took early heart finesses and ended up with 11 tricks; the same loss of 5 imps that he would have suffered had he made the overtrick. It was 37-27 now, All Stars.

McGann also played 4♠ here and was doubled of course. He ruffed the second heart and sneaked the ♦10 past van Prooijen. Now he had a diamond trick and a ruff and was up to eight tricks, for -500. Since 5♦ had been doubled for 750 in the other room, Hackett had 6 imps and the lead back at 47-45.

Bd: 21 North
 Dir: North ♠ J5
 Vul: N/S ♥ AKJ1076
 ♦ 642
 ♣ Q6

West
 ♠ KQ873
 ♥ 3
 ♦ J107
 ♣ J972

East
 ♠ 10642
 ♥ Q942
 ♦ K8
 ♣ A84

South
 ♠ A9
 ♥ 85
 ♦ AQ953
 ♣ K1053

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♣ (R)
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT(R)
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥ (R)
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦(1)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) End signal

Both tables reached 4♥ on a spade lead but Isporski ducked the first spade trick, hoping for a useful switch. As Victor Silverstone pointed out on BBO, normally if declarer ducks in such positions, you want to continue the suit; if that weren't the right defense you might not have been on lead.

As it was, when Peng shifted to a club declarer had a home for his third-round diamond loser and the play became very simple. Declarer actually played hearts from the top but fell back on the diamond finesse in due course.

In the other room the defense also led spades. Declarer took the ace and led a club to the queen and ace. The defenders cashed a spade and led a heart at the position below:

	♠ ---	
	♥ AKJ1076	
	♦ 642	
	♣ 6	
♠ K87		♠ 106
♥ 3		♥ Q942
♦ J107		♦ K8
♣ J97		♣ 84
	♠ ---	
	♥ 85	
	♦ AQ953	
	♣ K105	

When declarer finesses in hearts, as he did, and East wins the trick, he can shift to a club. But best play is to rise with the king, draw trumps, and run a few more hearts. You come down to two diamonds and two clubs on the board and West must concede. A perfect trump squeeze.

Of course declarer has to find that play. He actually finessed in clubs and the ending was broken up. Does that mean declarer must succeed in the

diagramed ending against best play? No. There is a beautiful resource, believe it or not, to set the game. East must duck the first trump, a play we'd all find, given time. Yeah, right. That was 12 imps to the All Stars, leading 49-27.

This was a lucky board for both N/S pairs in our second match. When Justin was South he rebid 2NT and Paul raised him to 3NT. David Bakhshi led a small spade...oops. Now all Justin needed was one of the red suits to behave. Van Prooijen played 4♥ on a spade lead. He won, took a heart finesse, and Hanlon won and underled his ♣A, after which the defense was dead. To be fair the winning options are not so easy to spot. Playing West for ♦J10x is not so attractive, is it? 47-46 now for Hackett.

To get back into the match Hang Sha Ke Ji really needed a little luck, and on the next deal they saw their chance.

Bd: 22	North	
Dir: East	♠ Q9532	
Vul: E/W	♥ KJ82	
	♦ KQ10	
	♣ 9	
	West	East
	♠ ---	♠ KJ1076
	♥ A10974	♥ Q53
	♦ J94	♦ 762
	♣ QJ1084	♣ A6
	South	
	♠ A84	
	♥ 6	
	♦ A853	
	♣ K7532	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		Pass	1♦
1♥	1♠	Dbl	Rdbl(1)
2♣	3♠	Dbl	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

(1) Support

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		Pass	1♦
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Dbl	All Pass

This was definitely a hand to try to stay out of trouble on and neither Bulgarian pair managed it. You could certainly question quite a few of the actions chosen here, but Wang got it right when he stayed silent for one round and reaped the rewards a round later.

Isporski timed the play in 4♠x well in an attempt to salvage something from the wreckage. He got a heart lead and club shift and cashed off all the plain suit cards to reduce East to his five trumps. There was no way to prevent him from scoring three of them but -300 was not going to be a tragedy had West in the other room passed out his partner's penalty double. When he ran, his opponents started lowering the boom, and 4♥x lost three diamonds, a club and two trumps – and it might have been worse. 15imps to Hang Sha Ke Ji, trailing 49-42.

In our second match both Norths raised a support double to game and both Easts upped the ante and collected 300. No swing.

Bd: 23 North
 Dir: South ♠ A954
 Vul: Both ♥ Q106
 ♦ AQ9
 ♣ J83

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK943
 ♦ 8763
 ♣ A962

East
 ♠ 762
 ♥ J752
 ♦ 52
 ♣ KQ75

South
 ♠ KQJ1083
 ♥ 8
 ♦ KJ104
 ♣ 104

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			1♠
2♥	3♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
			3♠
Dbl	4♠	All Pass	

Had East in the Open Room been a passed hand he might have found a 4♣ bid, but after the previous deal he was probably gun-shy. As you can see, 5♥ is a 200 save but one can hardly blame E/W for declining to investigate it. It was even harder in the other room where East had no knowledge of a five-card suit opposite.

The defenders failed to cash out their winners in the appropriate order in the Open Room. One more imp to Hang Sha Ke Ji, down 43-49 now.

There was a curious symmetry to the two auctions in our other encounter. Verhees opened 3♠ to duplicate

the sequence from the Closed Room. Bakhshi overcalled 1♠ with 2♥ and Gold took a fit non-jump bid of 4♣ straight from the book of Robson-Segal (remember Bakhshi and Robson are work partners and were Bridge partners) facilitating finding the excellent save. 9imps put NEDUK up 55-47.

Bd: 24 North
 Dir: West ♠ A2
 Vul: None ♥ Q96
 ♦ K1063
 ♣ A963

West
 ♠ Q63
 ♥ A84
 ♦ QJ2
 ♣ Q1054

East
 ♠ K109854
 ♥ KJ32
 ♦ A
 ♣ J8

South
 ♠ J7
 ♥ 1075
 ♦ 98754
 ♣ K72

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1NT	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	1♦	1♠	3♦
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

It is hard to argue with success. The 13-15 notrump made it hard for E/W to both announce their fit and to explore for the right game. Since Hristov finessed in spades to lose to the jack, perhaps it was just as well he was not in game. The trump finesse was quite an option after the preemptive raise in the other room as well. Credit to Wang, who won the diamond lead and led a trump to the ace, then went up with the king on the spade return. I guess he "owned" Isporski, on this deal at least. One heart-guess later it was all over and we had a new leader: Hang Sha Ke Ji by 50-49.

The other match saw both Wests open their hand of power and quality and East basically drive to game. An unlikely overtrick imp to Hackett made it 48-55.



Bd: 25 North
 Dlr: North ♠ J3
 Vul: E/W ♥ K964
 ♦ K6432
 ♣ AQ

West
 ♠ KQ976
 ♥ Q8732
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ 9

East
 ♠ 542
 ♥ A5
 ♦ 5
 ♣ KJ87632

South
 ♠ A108
 ♥ J10
 ♦ Q10987
 ♣ 1054

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♣(Maj)	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
2♥	Pass	3♣	3♦
All Pass			

There were a lot of desperate actions here. The 1♠ response is not so strange but not everyone would find it. The 2♥ bid looks peculiar; surely a delayed entry gets the hand over better. And doesn't 3♣ show a club lead-director with a heart fit? No matter. 3♦ handled just beautifully for +130 on the lead of the ♥A.

Meanwhile, 2♠ was rather challenging. Hristov won the diamond lead to play a club, ruffed the next diamond and ducked a heart. He won the heart return, led a trump to dummy, and ruffed a heart. The defenders could overruff and take the ♠A and a heart, but that was still eight tricks for declarer. The 6 imps made it 55-50, All Stars.

NEDUK bought the hand in both rooms after each North found his systemic opening of 1♥, the two final contracts being 4♠ on the E/W cards and 3♦ on the N/S cards, both down 100; 55-53, NEDUK.



"If his head starts spinning I'm outta here!"

Bd: 26 North
 Dlr: East ♠ J
 Vul: Both ♥ A94
 ♦ K97
 ♣ K98643

West
 ♠ 542
 ♥ 5
 ♦ 10852
 ♣ AQJ102

East
 ♠ A1063
 ♥ KQJ63
 ♦ J63
 ♣ 5

South
 ♠ KQ987
 ♥ 10872
 ♦ AQ4
 ♣ 7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		1♥	1♠
2♣ (NF)	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
		1♥	1♠
Dbl	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Isporski did well to pass throughout here and defend 1NT, but on a top spade lead Kovachev had reduced the defenders' options in that suit. Declarer had two hearts and two aces and eventually N/S had to set up one hand or the other for him. They took three diamonds, one heart and three spades for down one.

That was fine by comparison with the other room, where Iliev's uncouth, non-forcing 2♣ bid got its just desserts. (Well, maybe had South re-opened with a double that would have really taught him a sharp lesson.) Not that 2♣ was much fun, even undoubled. The defenders led a spade, took the ♥A, shifted to diamonds and cashed two rounds of the suit, then cashed two more spades. Now, confused by North's discards (the ♥9 then a diamond), South played a heart, letting West out for down three rather than four. Still, 5 imps to Hang Sha Ke Ji and a tied match with six deals to go.

In our second match it was Paul Hackett who got to play 2♣ with the North cards, and he didn't enjoy it much either. After (1♥)-1♠-(Dbl) he came in with 2♣ and the defenders took three major-suit winners and four clubs. Van Prooijen passed in a cognate position and Hanlon rebid 2♥, not 1NT. The defenders led a spade. Hanlon won and took a club finesse; not unreasonable, but not a great move today. The defenders got all their diamonds and spade ruffs and club over-ruffs and declarer took four tricks. 12 imps to NEDUK, leading 67-53.

Bd: 27 North
 Dlr: South ♠ K1097
 Vul: None ♥ 4
 ♦ A962
 ♣ Q1073

West
 ♠ Q42
 ♥ 1092
 ♦ K874
 ♣ J86

East
 ♠ J5
 ♥ 876
 ♦ J1053
 ♣ AK95

South
 ♠ A863
 ♥ AKQJ53
 ♦ Q
 ♣ 42

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	3♦(1)	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

(1) Three-suiter short in hearts, 8-12

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

In 3NT the defenders led a passive heart but shifted to a low diamond when East was in with ♠J. Now declarer had ten tricks and no chance of any more. By contrast, in 4♥ Kovachev ducked when West led a low club. East could not resist playing the ♣K and shifting to the ♦J. When in with the ♣A he tried to cash his diamond and that was 1 imp to the All Stars, back up by that number, 56-55. NEDUK picked up the same overtrick to make their lead 15 imps.

Time for something a little more substantial.

Bd: 28 North
 Dlr: West ♠ AQ654
 Vul: N/S ♥ 9765
 ♦ K
 ♣ KJ10

West
 ♠ 103
 ♥ K2
 ♦ 8652
 ♣ 87652

East
 ♠ KJ98
 ♥ J1043
 ♦ AJ943
 ♣ ---

South
 ♠ 72
 ♥ AQ8
 ♦ Q107
 ♣ AQ943

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣ (Rel)
Pass	3♦(1)	Dbl.	4♦(2)
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

(1) 5-4 majors short diamonds

(2) End signal; puppet to 4♥

The major weakness of relay systems in uncontested auctions is not being able to locate high cards and stoppers. The natural auction from the Open Room allowed North to suggest his partial stopper in diamonds. Well bid. However, Iliev found the lead of the ♠10, which was a great start. Had East shifted to a heart and the defenders gone back to spades, declarer would probably have been down before he started. But Hristov cashed the ♦A and continued the suit and that was nine easy tricks for Liu.

5♣ was not without play. But with both major-suit finesses losing, even after the defenders led and continued diamonds there was no way to avoid losing a trick in each major, sooner or later. Unlucky, in a sense, but the methods were surely partly to blame. The 12 imps made it 67-56, Hang Sha Ke Ji.

The systemic opening with the North cards for van Prooijen is 1♥. When Hanlon overcalled 1♠ Verhees doubled and van Prooijen passed. Hanlon ran to 2♦, Verhees cue-bid, and van Prooijen bid 3NT. On a low diamond lead declarer was only searching for overtricks. By contrast, the Hacketts conducted an unopposed auction in which Paul showed his pattern and Justin, hoping the ♦K was in one of the majors, cue bid and used Keycard to reach 6♣. We've probably all made worse slams but not that often, and not today. Down 300 and 14 imps for NEDUK, leading 82-53 with four deals to go.



"I told you, we have to finish 9th!"

Bd: 29
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ Q8762
 ♥ J8
 ♦ 92
 ♣ K876

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ K1062
 ♦ KQJ5
 ♣ QJ1052

East
 ♠ 104
 ♥ Q97543
 ♦ 743
 ♣ A9

South
 ♠ AKJ953
 ♥ A
 ♦ A1086
 ♣ 43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
3♠	1♦	1♥	1♠
5♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
All Pass	Pass	Pass	5♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
Dbl	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣
	5♠		

In the Open Room the strong club let E/W in cheaply and they climbed to 5♥, forcing Liu to save in 5♠. With the club finesse working, 11 tricks would have been very straightforward in hearts.

Meanwhile, in the Closed Room Kovachev would have bought the hand in 4♠ but he went chasing after rainbows and propelled himself to the five level. Both contracts depended on a club finesse that South would have expected to succeed. Not tonight, Josephine.

In our other match, at both tables E/W came into the auction but neither E/W came that close to saving; +620 for each N/S pair was a very healthy result. Still 82-53 for NEDUK.

Bd: 30
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ QJ3
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ K987642
 ♣ K

West
 ♠ AK105
 ♥ 6543
 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ A8

East
 ♠ 9842
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ Q10952

South
 ♠ 76
 ♥ K10872
 ♦ 5
 ♣ J7643

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♠	2♥
Closed Room			All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣(STR)	2♦	All Pass	Pass

2♠ on a diamond lead was an ill-favored spot when declarer guessed to finesse. The defenders took two ruffs with the doubleton trump, reducing declarer's chances to picking up a singleton club honor with North. Cometh the hour, cometh the singleton ♣K. A sparkling +110.

2♦ was not without play but the defenders meanly led and continued clubs. Now the shortage of entries to dummy leaves you without much chance both to bring in the diamonds and set up a spade trick. Isporski went to the ♥K to play a spade but ended up down 50. 2imps to Hang Sha Ke Ji, 67-58 now.

In the NEDUK-Hackett match both Wests opened 1NT here, and in one room Paul Hackett could get to 2♦ while in the other room van Prooijen passed and let his partner balance with 2♥. 2♦ came home with eight tricks after a friendly defense, while 2♥ on a top spade lead and trump shift did well to escape for down one. 82-57 now.

Bd: 31
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ AK4
 ♥ 1054
 ♦ 10862
 ♣ 974

West
 ♠ 76
 ♥ KQ98
 ♦ KJ5
 ♣ AK86

East
 ♠ QJ1053
 ♥ J73
 ♦ A43
 ♣ 52

South
 ♠ 982
 ♥ A62
 ♦ Q97
 ♣ QJ103

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass

On a diamond lead against 3NT declarer will play on spades but if the defenders duck he will need to guess hearts. Not so tough today, but there is scope for error. At both tables the defenders did lead a diamond and duck the spade. Declarer then crossed to hand with a heart to play a spade up. When the defenses shifted to clubs declarer guessed hearts for 400. No swing, 67-58.

McGann collected 400 in much the same way as above, but Gold did not bid again after transferring. He passed 2♠, letting Bakhshi collect 170 to lose 6 imps. 82-63 now for NEDUK.

Would the last deal offer any chance of a swing? That largely depends on your style.

Bd: 32 North
 Dir: West ♠ 72
 Vul: E/W ♥ J76
 ♦ AQ54
 ♣ A943

West
 ♠ AKJ105
 ♥ A43
 ♦ 862
 ♣ 106

East
 ♠ 983
 ♥ Q108
 ♦ K73
 ♣ K752

South
 ♠ Q64
 ♥ K952
 ♦ J109
 ♣ QJ8

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Iliev</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Hristov</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Isporski</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Kovachev</i>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♥

At one table in each match 2♠ was passed out, while at the other table North balanced and put his partner in 3♥. A side desperate for swings might double, and then try to collect 500. That was what would have been necessary for the All Stars to tie the match (and win by virtue of finishing higher in the group). But it was the Bulgarians who went on over 2♠, playing 3♥ down 100 while collecting 140 in 2♠. The final match margin was 8, 67-59.

NEDUK had dominated the second half of their match to win 82-63. It would be NEDUK versus Heng Sha Ke Ji in Saturday's 64-board final.



"Should I ruff it or just stall?"

Head Shots



"Simon says, 'Put your hand on your head.'"



"Hurry, game time is 10:00."



"How did we go minus 2470?"



"What I wouldn't do for a beer about now."

NEC Final (1st quarter): NEDUK vs Heng Sha Ke Ji

by Barry Rigal

Bd: 1
 Dlr: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 106542
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ J42
 ♣ 754

West
 ♠ AJ8
 ♥ 987532
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ 109

South
 ♠ KQ973
 ♥ AK
 ♦ 53
 ♣ Q863

East
 ♠ ---
 ♥ 1064
 ♦ AK10987
 ♣ AKJ2

Bd: 2
 Dlr: East
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ J7
 ♥ 10632
 ♦ 1082
 ♣ 10985

West
 ♠ 62
 ♥ A985
 ♦ Q954
 ♣ AK6

South
 ♠ KQ3
 ♥ KQJ74
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ QJ3

East
 ♠ A109854
 ♥ ---
 ♦ K763
 ♣ 742

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	Pass	1♦	1♠
Dbl	3♠	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dbl	3♠	4♦	4♠
Dbl	Pass	5♦	All Pass

The first set started with a bang. We've seen the Chinese begin poorly on several occasions (spotting both Oz Two and the All Stars a game swing on the first deal) and they made no exception the third time out. Both tables reached 5♦ after similar auctions on a top spade lead in one room and a top heart and trump shift in the other. Whose chances, in abstract, do you fancy more?

In one room, where the heart was led (South leading the ♥K, North following with the queen) followed by a trump shift, Gold decided that if the defenders didn't cash out the suit must be splitting. He ruffed a club in dummy and would have discarded his ♣J had it not been high. Then he drew trumps and gave up a heart.

In the other room, after a top spade, lead it must surely be right to cross-ruff, given your great trump spots. However, declarer chose to win in dummy, pitching a heart, and take a club finesse and NEDUK had the first 10 imps.

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		2♦	Dbl
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

Both tables got to 2NT. Verhees won the first spade and knocked out the ♥A. When a spade came back East needed to win and shift to diamonds. Instead he ducked the second spade and it appeared that now defenders needed the Deschappelles Coup to set 2NT. East pitches his clubs to let West win the first club and shift to the ♦Q, forcing an entry to East whatever declarer does. In fact, West came down to the right six cards but East discarded down to two diamonds and now could never get the lead. If he keeps three diamonds, then declarer takes the first diamond and returns the suit and East must give up a diamond in the ending. In a way this is the reverse of a squeeze — call it a "decompression."

In the Closed Room Gold won the second spade and also did not find the diamond shift; he played a third spade (and in the process giving very clear suit preference for diamonds). Declarer now ran the hearts but missed the ending, giving up a diamond prematurely to East who cashed out for down one. 16-0 now for NEDUK.



Bd: 3
 Dir: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K
 ♥ A10932
 ♦ 10952
 ♣ A103

West
 ♠ J3
 ♥ Q87
 ♦ Q4
 ♣ KJ8652

East
 ♠ A109
 ♥ KJ6
 ♦ K73
 ♣ Q974

South
 ♠ Q876542
 ♥ 54
 ♦ AJ86
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			3♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			4♠

All Pass

We've seen some aggressive preempting by N/S in the Closed Room over the course of the week. Here the Editors are charitably going to pretend that Verhees simply pulled the wrong bid out of his box (but in our hearts we know better). 4♠ was not without play. Witness what happened in the Open Room where West led his ♦Q and East won the ♠A and did not try to give his partner a diamond ruff — and who can blame him? That produced 170 for Liu.

On Peng's low-club lead against 4♠ Verhees won in dummy and immediately took a diamond finesse, which looks right given the shortage of entries to dummy. All he needed was the trump break plus a diamond honor onside and no ruff from the short side. He got the first two — and two out of three ain't bad, as we know from Meatloaf. But Peng could win the ♦Q and return the suit and that let Wang get in with the ♠A to play a third diamond, for the ruff, with a trump trick still to come. Down one, making the score 16-6.



"Tickle, tickle, tickle."

Bd: 4
 Dir: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ K6
 ♥ A94
 ♦ 109542
 ♣ 954

West
 ♠ Q7
 ♥ K862
 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ AQ82

East
 ♠ J10953
 ♥ J5
 ♦ AJ873
 ♣ 7

South
 ♠ A842
 ♥ Q1073
 ♦ ---
 ♣ KJ1063

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass

The East hand might be treated as game-force facing a strong notrump but both Easts invited showing an unbalanced hand. Bakhshi, whose range goes up to a bad 17 HCP, drove to 3NT, but Gold overruled him. Peng looked at his soft cards and doubleton spade and let his partner play in 2♠.

2♠ was a respectable (but fundamentally uninteresting) spot, coming to eight tricks when the defenders got clubs going in time. 4♠ on a heart lead and continuation was not without play, in theory. Gold won the ♥K, played the ♠Q to the king, ruffed the next heart, and played another spade. South won the third spade to play a fourth heart and Gold pitched a diamond, won the ♣Q, and tried to get to hand to draw the last trump. But South could ruff the diamond for down two. It was 16-13 now for NEDUK.

Bd: 5
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 43
 ♥ 87632
 ♦ K8432
 ♣ 7

West
 ♠ A96
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ J1065
 ♣ KJ93

East
 ♠ J10
 ♥ AQ1095
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ Q1062

South
 ♠ KQ8752
 ♥ 4
 ♦ A9
 ♣ A854

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Pass	2♣	2♠
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Pass	2♣	2♠
4♥	All Pass		

Bakhshi tried an exploration en route to 4♥ but the ♠9 was too tough a card to get across to his partner. Though 3NT is where you'd want to play, I doubt anyone could get there intelligently after South bids spades twice.

When Liu led a top spade against 4♥ Gold ducked. Now South took both club ruffs, but for some unknown reason a top diamond got away from the defenders. In the other room the defenders were also given the second chance to take ruffs, and did not need any more prompting to collect 150 for a 2 imp gain to NEDUK, up 18-13.

Bd: 6	North
Dlr: East	♠ ---
Vul: E/W	♥ Q
	♦ AJ10964
	♣ KQ10432

West	East
♠ AQ6	♠ K94
♥ 8653	♥ AJ97
♦ Q8732	♦ K5
♣ 8	♣ AJ65

South
♠ J1087532
♥ K1042
♦ ---
♣ 97

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		1NT	3♠

All Pass

We've all had partners like South on this deal, haven't we? Both Norths bided their time en route to an SOS Unusual 3NT, but both had the joy of putting down their dummy in 3♠. By the way, anyone who starts by putting down the singleton heart — to build up South's hopes of adequate trump support — should report to the office of the Marquis de Sade, in

room 421. One club, one heart, one club ruff, three trumps and a slow heart trick all added up to down 150; no swing.

Bd: 7	North
Dlr: South	♠ 632
Vul: Both	♥ 42
	♦ 32
	♣ A86532

West	East
♠ AJ95	♠ Q10
♥ 8	♥ J1065
♦ 1098765	♦ AQJ4
♣ QJ	♣ K107

South
♠ K874
♥ AKQ973
♦ K
♣ 94

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			1♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	2♥
Dbl	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			1♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	2♥
3♦	Pass	3NT	Dbl
All Pass			
All Pass			

In the Closed room a passel ofimps (26 to be precise) depended on whether East would play South (known to have almost solid hearts with the ♠K) for a side ace or the singleton ♦K. After winning the fourth heart Wang took a spade finesse, led the ♠10 to the jack, and passed the ♦10. Verhees cashed out his hearts for +800 instead of -950. Of such things are championships made. While the ♦K is much more likely for South in that he might have a strong club without that card, a hand with 4-6 in the majors is not easy to describe in competition, so it's possible that Verhees might have chosen this route with a 16-count.

In the Open Room South bid and rebid hearts (how *vieux jeu*). West could now double responsively, then correct a quasi-natural 2NT to 3♦, which produced +130 and 14imps. That made it 32-13

Bd: 8 North
 Dlr: West ♠ A54
 Vul: None ♥ 964
 ♦ KQJ92
 ♣ A10

West
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ AJ1085
 ♦ 8543
 ♣ Q3

East
 ♠ K9873
 ♥ K73
 ♦ A
 ♣ K976

South
 ♠ J106
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ 1076
 ♣ J8542

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	1NT	2♠(♠+m)	All Pass

Both tables led hearts, but Gold won the queen in dummy and led a spade to the king and a spade back. The defenders shifted to ace and another club to allow declarer to claim +170.

In the other room the low heart lead saw declarer win in hand and lead a spade to the queen and ace. Back came a diamond. Declarer tried to ruff a club himself, and now he ended up losing two clubs and three trumps for +110. 2 more imps to NEDUK, up 34-13.

Bd: 9 North
 Dlr: North ♠ 52
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q1043
 ♦ 842
 ♣ AK83

West
 ♠ KQJ
 ♥ A86
 ♦ AK1073
 ♣ Q10

East
 ♠ 10876
 ♥ K972
 ♦ QJ9
 ♣ 65

South
 ♠ A943
 ♥ J5
 ♦ 65
 ♣ J9742

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass	3♠	Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Dbf	Pass	Pass	1♠
2NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
	Pass	3NT	All Pass

As Dan Patrick would have said: You cannot stop the Dutchmen, you can only hope to contain them. Verhees treated his hand of power and quality as well-worth an opening bid (lead directional; you know the story by now) and his opponents regarded it with just the right amount of contempt as they breezed into 3NT. Van Prooijen did not double, nor did he lead a top club. He began obediently with a spade, and Verhees shifted to clubs. Down two, and Verhees was asking "Wassamarra, you don't trust me?"

In the other room an unopposed (surprise) sequence led to 3NT on a Stayman sequence. The defenders led a heart to the jack, and Bakhshi ducked smoothly, then put up the ♣Q on the return of the ♣4. Li won and got out with the ♥10; Bakhshi won in hand, led a diamond to dummy, sneaked a spade past South, ran the diamonds, and had to decide whether to go for nine tricks via the heart finesse or settle for making or down one by playing hearts from the top. He got it wrong, gaining 3 imps but having missed a real opportunity. It appears he was playing North to have led a heart from a 3-3-3-4 pattern, but South's duck of the ♠A implies North must have held the ♣AK originally, or he would have risen and cashed out. Would you really lead a low heart with that hand? 37-13 now.

Bd: 10 North
 Dlr: East ♠ K983
 Vul: Both ♥ K1096
 ♦ K103
 ♣ Q5

West
 ♠ A107
 ♥ J
 ♦ 976
 ♣ 1098642

East
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ 7542
 ♦ AJ52
 ♣ K73

South
 ♠ J654
 ♥ AQ83
 ♦ Q84
 ♣ AJ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	2♦ (Stay)	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Both tables reached 4♥. Van Prooijen from the North seat received a heart lead and took an early club finesse on which West's ♣10 suggested the original 6-3 split. Then he took the spade finesse, drew a second trump, and exited in spades. He won the trump return, played off his ♣A, and exited in spades again, leaving West on play in this five-card ending.

	♠ 9	
	♥ 10	
	♦ K103	
	♣ ---	
♠ ---		♠ ---
♥ ---		♥ 7
♦ 976		♦ AJ5
♣ 98		♣ K
	♠ J	
	♥ A	
	♦ Q84	
	♣ ---	

West could lead a diamond and give up his side's second trick in that suit thanks to declarer's ♦8, or he could lead a club and let declarer get a ruff and discard for his tenth trick. Of course all this requires the clubs to be 6-3 and the ♦A to be with the short clubs as well (otherwise the defenders can get a force going). Maybe declarer should not have gone for the endplay at all and just played on diamonds, albeit that line fails while this line works. Anyway, who could argue with success except the Editors?

Liu played 4♥ from the South seat on the lead of a top club and transposed into the same position to flatten the board. He had even more reason to go wrong since there was absolutely no indication that clubs were 6-3. Perhaps the likely successful defense of the ruff and discard in this ending is not so obvious to declarer at first glance. 37-13 for NEDUK still.



Bd: 11

"Levitation, it's not just a dream."

North	
Dir: South	♠ K106
Vul: None	♥ 2
	♦ Q8763
	♣ 8742
West	
	♠ J953
	♥ J1074
	♦ ---
	♣ QJ965

East	
	♠ A842
	♥ K98
	♦ K952
	♣ K3

South	
	♠ Q7
	♥ AQ653
	♦ AJ104
	♣ A10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			1♣(STR)
			All Pass

DbI(MAJs)1♦ (5-7) 2♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			1♣(STR)
Pass	1♦ (WK)	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣(1)	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	All Pass	
All Pass			

When Bakhshi stole the heart suit from his opponents it was very hard for South to come back into the auction. True, North might have doubled, but this is far from clear on what was almost certainly a partscore hand where South had heart length.

Liu led the ♠Q to the ace, ducked a club, and won the next club. When he led the ♦A Gold discarded from dummy, so Liu played a spade to his partner, who cashed the last trump winner and put a heart through for down one. That was still worth 3 imps for NEDUK when in the other room the diamond partscore brought home +150 on what was a friendly lie of the cards for South. 40-13 now.

Bd: 12	North
Dir: West	♠ AK
Vul: N/S	♥ AKJ108742
	♦ 96
	♣ 7

West		East	
	♠ QJ8764		♠ 32
	♥ 3		♥ 965
	♦ Q		♦ 1087542
	♣ KQ1092		♣ J6

South	
	♠ 1095
	♥ Q
	♦ AKJ3
	♣ A8543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♠
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	5NT
Pass	7♥	All Pass	

An excellently bid hand by N/S in the Closed Room saw a well-deserved 13 imps flow to NEDUK. Yes, one could argue that the bare ♥Q was a key-card that North was lucky to buy; one can't deny that. But how else can N/S have a sensible exchange of information? The auction started well enough in the other room, but maybe South could never raise 6♥ to seven despite his key-cards since his partner might well be playing him for a lot more heart support (he shouldn't be, but that's another issue). 53-13 now for NEDUK.

Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ 53
Vul: Both	♥ 97642
	♦ 964
	♣ 985

West	East
♠ 106	♠ AK9842
♥ KQ10	♥ J
♦ Q2	♦ A10853
♣ A76432	♣ K

South
♠ QJ7
♥ A853
♦ KJ7
♣ QJ10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	2♣ (R)	Pass
		4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1NT	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
		3NT	All Pass

Neither game contract was entirely assured, and if South had been able to get out of his own way he would have been in decent shape against 4♠. But on a top club lead declarer could drive the ♥A, win the

trump shift, and play two more rounds of trumps, forcing South to open up diamonds or give dummy three discards.

3NT on a heart lead and club shift essentially transposed into the same line, for +630 and no swing.

Bd: 14	North
Dlr: East	♠ 1062
Vul: None	♥ K62
	♦ KJ
	♣ Q7652

West	East
♠ 8754	♠ 93
♥ QJ7	♥ A84
♦ A854	♦ 7632
♣ J3	♣ A984

South
♠ AKQJ
♥ 10953
♦ Q109
♣ K10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
All Pass		Pass	1NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT
		All Pass	

Another quirk of the system ranges meant that van Prooijen drove to game facing a 15-17 notrump while Li had no game interest facing a 13-15 no-trump. As you can see, game is not only no thing of beauty it is also scheduled to go down when West leads from one of his four-card suits. The Editors are strongly torn on this one. SenEd believes that a spade is normal and that a heart lead is too active. JunEd believes a heart is automatic, especially at teams, when we expect an active defense is necessary at least half the time and weak four-card suits are for the birds. West was in JunEd's camp, almost always a really terrible place to be when on opening lead, and tracked the ♥Q, turning five-plus defensive tricks into four.

Against 1NT Bakhshi led a spade, (both of the Editors would do that because passivity is more likely to be right when partner can't act) but when he won the ♣A he decided that now was the time to go active. He shifted to hearts now and was back to nine tricks.

Still, NEDUK had 6imps and led 59-13.

Bd: 15 North
 Dlr: South ♠ AQJ83
 Vul: N/S ♥ 32
 ♦ AKJ
 ♣ KJ8

West
 ♠ K7
 ♥ AKQ7
 ♦ 986
 ♣ 6532

East
 ♠ 1042
 ♥ J105
 ♦ Q10532
 ♣ AQ

South
 ♠ 965
 ♥ 9864
 ♦ 74
 ♣ 10974

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			Pass
1♣	Dbl	1♠(1)	Pass
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

(1) No major
 Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			Pass
1♦(PRE)	Dbl	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠	3♦	All Pass

The nebulous diamond finally scored a somewhat fortuitous goal when East had five-card support for his partner. (Had the minors been switched the imps might have gone the other way.) But let's face it, Hang Sha Ke Ji were due some good luck.

On a heart lead the defense to 2♠ would have had five tricks (club, club, heart, club ruff) but the trump lead picked up the ♠K and let declarer waltz to +140. Meanwhile, 3♦ came home with nine tricks leaving the Editors to pipe-dream about 3♦ played by East on a spade lead. Those not interested in such diversions please move right along; we'll be back to reality in a second.

Say partner leads a third highest spade against 3♦ and you win the trick cheaply. How should you defend on the actual hand, and how about if you had three small hearts and ♣KJ doubleton? The answer is that with the doubleton club holding you do best to play the ♦J at trick two, whereas on the actual hand you simply play three rounds of spades and a fourth spade when in with the ♦K, which would promote a trump if South's doubleton diamond included the ten.

OK, we're done. 6 imps to Hang Sha Ke Ji made the score 59-19.

Bd: 16 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 82
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q43
 ♦ A85
 ♣ J8762

West
 ♠ KQ1095
 ♥ A8
 ♦ K743
 ♣ A10

East
 ♠ J73
 ♥ J105
 ♦ 62
 ♣ K9543

South
 ♠ A64
 ♥ K9762
 ♦ QJ109
 ♣ Q

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣ (R)	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦(WK)	1♥
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
3♠	All Pass		
All Pass			

Against Bakhshi's 3♠ Li led a club to the queen and ace. Bakhshi returned the suit and ran the ♣10 as South ruffed in and played a low heart. Locked out of dummy, Bakhshi did not try to get to the board to play diamonds up. He settled for down one by leading diamonds out of his hand.

In the other room Verhees' 3♥ bid (based on the expectation of a doubleton spade opposite plus a naturally optimistic temperament) pushed Peng into a 3♠ bid that looks to be a "Law" violation. Here the heart opening lead let declarer win and return the suit. Verhees could give suit-preference for a club shift, and now down one was the best declarer could do. No swing; 59-19 at set end, and NEDUK had probably played the best bridge of the tournament, at least as seen on VuGraph.



"Going down sucks!"

NEC Final (2nd quarter): NEDUK vs Heng Sha Ke Ji

by Rich Colker

Going into the second set NEDUK had a comfortable 40-imp lead. But leads of that magnitude, while clearly useful, have been known to evaporate in less time than it takes your coffee to get cold.

Bd: 17
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ J1087
♥ 82
♦ Q43
♣ Q873

West
♠ AKQ5
♥ QJ10753
♦ K7
♣ 4

East
♠ 32
♥ AK6
♦ A85
♣ AKJ65

South
♠ 964
♥ 94
♦ J10962
♣ 1092

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♣(1)	Pass	4♦(2)	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5NT	Pass	7♥	Pass
7NT	All Pass		

(1) Hearts (with slam interest?)

(2) Interest

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♦(♥)	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
7NT	All Pass		

The two rooms conducted similar auctions to reach the laydown 7NT. Both Souths led a diamond honor and both declarers immediately tabled their hand. A push at 1520.

Bd: 18
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ KJ10
♥ Q10532
♦ A4
♣ KJ3

West
♠ Q954
♥ KJ
♦ J97
♣ Q952

East
♠ 83
♥ A9764
♦ KQ3
♣ A108

South
♠ A762
♥ 8
♦ 108652
♣ 764

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass

It's not clear which contract, 1NT or 2♥, one would choose to play looking only at the E/W hands. But the sight of all fifty-two cards creates a very different impression. Still, the prospect of extra trump tricks by ruffing spades in hand tends to swing the pendulum back towards center. In the Open Room Liu led the ♦2 against 2♥, Li winning the ace (Gold unblocking the queen) and returned the suit to Gold's king, Liu following with a suit-preference ♦10. Next Gold tried the heart finesse, losing to the queen. Li obediently switched to the ♠10 to the ace and after Liu gave him his diamond ruff he exited with a low trump to the king, revealing the heart position in the process. Gold called for the ♣Q from dummy, covered and won in hand. Next Gold led the ♣10 to the jack. Li cashed the ♠K and at trick ten got out with a club, leaving declarer no way to retain the lead in dummy to avoid losing another trump trick. Down two, -100.

In the Closed Room Verhees also got off to a low diamond lead against 1NT. Van Prooijen won the ace, Wang unblocking the king, and returned the suit to dummy's jack. Wang called for a club and followed with the ace when van Prooijen played low (not one of the higher-percentage lines for this holding). Next he led the ♣10 from hand and when Verhees played low went up with dummy's queen, catering to ♣Jx or ♣Jxx precisely with North, neither of which was the case. Van Prooijen won the ♣K and could now work out that his partner was more likely to hold the ♠A than the ♥A. He duly shifted to the ♠J. Verhees won the ace and returned the suit to van Prooijen's ten. From there all roads led to only six tricks for the defense, and declarer emerged with a nifty +90 and 5imps for China, down now 59-24.



Bd: 19 North
 Dir: South ♠ KQ7543
 Vul: E/W ♥ 84
 ♦ 96
 ♣ K42

West
 ♠ AJ86
 ♥ 92
 ♦ KQ875
 ♣ A8

East
 ♠ 9
 ♥ KJ106
 ♦ J32
 ♣ QJ1075

South
 ♠ 102
 ♥ AQ753
 ♦ A104
 ♣ 963

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♦	2♠	Dbl	Pass
			All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♦	2♠	All Pass	Pass

Different players will recommend different strategies when you have a moderate lead early in a match. One theory is to press your advantage: it's too early to rest on your laurels, so keep doing what got you there. Another theory is to go slightly conservative: you don't want to take overly aggressive or low-probability actions that will risk giving the opponents hope by letting them back into the match. We think we know Bakhshi's approach (the one the Junior Editor espouses) since, when presented with a chance to go for the gusto, he seized the opportunity with both hands. Unfortunately for him, this time his partner did not hold what one would describe as a wealth defense. Worse still, dummy tabled with an absolute mountain (the sight must have nauseated Bakhshi) with every honor positioned well for the bad guys. Gold led the ♣Q to the ace, and Bakhshi returned the suit to Li's king. A successful heart finesse was followed by a spade to the queen, then a heart to the ace and the ♠10 to the ace. Defensive prospects were now officially grim. Bakhshi got out with the ♠8 to the king, but declarer claimed three of the remaining six tricks to go with the five he had already scored, for an inspiring +470.

Wang was a bit more circumspect in the Closed Room and passed van Prooijen's 2♠ overcall around to Peng, who declined taking any further action. Note that had East doubled in this room, West (who had not yet really shown diamonds) would have removed to 3♦ and would have come close to making it.

On a similar defense, declarer took the same eight tricks for +110, and a very handy 8-imp pick-up for China, trailing now by a more respectable 59-32. Not exactly close...but better.

Bd: 20 North
 Dir: West ♠ K94
 Vul: Both ♥ 107
 ♦ Q9852
 ♣ J84

West
 ♠ 8532
 ♥ KJ92
 ♦ K107
 ♣ A6

East
 ♠ J106
 ♥ A65
 ♦ 43
 ♣ K9532

South
 ♠ AQ7
 ♥ Q843
 ♦ AJ6
 ♣ Q107

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♣	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♦	Pass	1NT	Dbl
			All Pass

Liu led the ♥3 against the Open Room's 1NT. Gold needed to protect his only outside entry to his clubs and so called for the jack from dummy, which held. Then he turned his attention to the clubs, playing the ace and ducking the next round to the ten. Liu switched to the ♠Q, got encouragement from Li, and continued with the ace and a third spade to the king, establishing dummy's eight. Li switched to a diamond and Liu inserted the jack as dummy's king won. The stage was now set for declarer to take the rest of the tricks, and Gold was just the prime-time player to do it. He cashed the ♠8, pitching his losing diamond, crossed to the ♥A, noting the fall of the ten from Li, and when the clubs split claimed the rest of the tricks for +150.

The defense in the Closed Room, who were playing in the double jeopardy stage, started the same way as in the Open Room. South led the ♥3 and declarer, knowing his ♥A was the only entry to the club suit, inexplicably (lazily?) ducked in dummy, allowing van Prooijen's seven to force his ace prematurely. Next he tried a heart to the nine, not thinking van Prooijen would have played the seven from that holding. But Van Prooijen won his ten and switched to the ♦2, Verhees putting in the jack to deter declarer from ducking and cutting the defenders' communications.

Wang won the king, cashed the ♣AK, and repeated the heart finesse successfully. That brought his trick total to six, for down one, -200, and 8 imps back to NEDUK, up 67-32.

Bd: 21 North
 Dir: North ♠ AJ10432
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1042
 ♦ J5
 ♣ 87

West
 ♠ 7
 ♥ AKJ53
 ♦ K972
 ♣ 1064

East
 ♠ 985
 ♥ Q987
 ♦ A43
 ♣ KQ5

South
 ♠ KQ6
 ♥ 6
 ♦ Q1086
 ♣ AJ932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♥
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	2♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Li-Liu did well in the Open Room to stay out of an ill-fated 4♠ contract and collect what they had coming against 4♥. Li started accurately with the ♣8 and Liu ducked when the king was played from dummy while signaling encouragement. Bakhshi drew trumps and exited with a spade from dummy, Li overtaking Liu's king to continue clubs. Liu cashed his two tricks in that suit, got out with the ♠Q, and Bakhshi conceded a diamond trick for down one, -50.

Van Prooijen could (should?) have been a bit better for his vulnerable 2♠ bid, but they require you to bid with the hand you were dealt. Verhees raised him to game, no doubt fully expecting a make, but this was not the session the gods were smiling on the Dutch, and the contract failed by one when the obvious four tricks were lost. Minus 50, and 4 imps to China, now trailing 67-36.



"We meet back here to compare."

Bd: 22 North
 Dir: East ♠ 3
 Vul: E/W ♥ AQ83
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ AJ10986

West
 ♠ A9865
 ♥ KJ10
 ♦ 10643
 ♣ Q

East
 ♠ J72
 ♥ 942
 ♦ KJ95
 ♣ K74

South
 ♠ KQ104
 ♥ 765
 ♦ A82
 ♣ 532

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	1NT(1)	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

(1) Four hearts + an unspecified minor

Once again Li-Liu showed admirable restraint to sell out to 2♠ at the given vulnerability (we'd call it something else if it didn't work). Li attacked with the ♦Q and Liu ducked dummy's king signaling while encouragement. Bakhshi led a trump toward his hand and when Liu followed casually with the four played the ace — not his best move. The defense was now set to take seven tricks (three spades, two hearts and one in each minor) for down two, -200.

One can hardly fault van Prooijen for showing his minor in the Closed Room auction whereas Li in the Open Room had already bid his suit once and so was more willing to sell out to 2♠. Wang led the ♠2 against 3♣, Peng winning the king with the ace and shifting to the ♥J. Van Prooijen covered successfully with the queen, cashed the ♣A, and led the ♣8 which held. Now he simply played ♥A, heart, and claimed ten tricks when the suit split nicely; +130, but 2 imps to China, inching closer at 67-38.



Yo-yo's ma?

Bd: 23 North
 Dir: South ♠ 43
 Vul: Both ♥ KJ75
 ♦ J8532
 ♣ 72

West
 ♠ J10865
 ♥ A94
 ♦ K94
 ♣ J8

East
 ♠ A2
 ♥ Q1062
 ♦ AQ107
 ♣ 1063

South
 ♠ KQ97
 ♥ 83
 ♦ 6
 ♣ AKQ954

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			2♣(1)

All Pass

(1) Precision

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♣(1)

All Pass

(1) Strong canapé (but weaker than 1♣)

In the Open Room Gold won Bakhshi's ♠J opening lead with the ace and continued the suit to Liu's king. Liu got out with a diamond, ducked to Gold's seven, and Gold continued the suit as Liu ruffed, cashed one high trump, and ruffed the ♠9 with dummy's ♣7. Gold overruffed and might have gone passive, exiting with a trump or a diamond. Instead he led a heart, exploding the suit and allowing declarer to score his eight tricks without further jeopardy; +90.

Peng was warned off the spade lead by Verhees' canapé sequence and instead tracked the ♣J. Verhees won, misguessed the hearts, losing to Wang's queen, and ruffed back in when Wang played ace and another diamond. He drew trump and exited with a second heart. Peng flew ace, then exited with the ♦K as Verhees ruffed and put the ♠K on the table. Wang won and played the ♦Q; Verhees ruffed with his last trump, cashed the ♠Q, and conceded the last two tricks for down two, -200, and 7 moreimps to fuel China's comeback, now 67-45.

The following feature is rated G for gruesome. It is not recommended for children of any age.

Bd: 24 North
 Dir: West ♠ AK
 Vul: None ♥ KJ5
 ♦ A10652
 ♣ 875

West
 ♠ 62
 ♥ Q64
 ♦ KJ974
 ♣ Q93

East
 ♠ J753
 ♥ 9832
 ♦ 8
 ♣ J1042

South
 ♠ Q10984
 ♥ A107
 ♦ Q3
 ♣ AK6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦(1)
Dbl	Rdbl	All Pass	

(1) Forcing Stayman

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥(♠)
Pass	2♠	Pass	4NT

All Pass

Bakhshi chose the wrong time to double Forcing Stayman, especially holding two queens on the side, either of which could be the key to the defense if partner leads the suit of his own accord. Everyone was happy now — except for East and West when the cube was turned.

Bakhshi led the ♣3, as good a lead as he could have hoped for. Liu won, unblocked the ♠AK, then played a low diamond to the queen and king. Bakhshi got out with the ♣Q to the king, and Liu pitched dummy's club when Bakhshi ruffed the ♠Q with the ♦7. Bakhshi exited with the ♦4, but Liu was up to the task and put in dummy's five, holding the trick. A heart to the ace was followed by a club ruff in dummy, then the king followed by the jack of hearts insured the last two tricks with the ♦A10 over Bakhshi's ♦J9 for +960, a number one doesn't see very often.

Against 4NT in the Closed Room Wang led the ♣2, ducked to Peng's queen, and a club was returned to dummy's king. Van Prooijen unblocked the ♠AK, then tried a diamond to the queen. Peng won and played a third round of clubs. When Peng showed out van Prooijen switched back to diamonds, successfully finessing Peng for the jack. Now van Prooijen played the ♦A and exited with the ♦6, forcing Peng to lead hearts in the three-card ending; +430. That was another 11imps to China, whose

comeback was gaining avalanche-like momentum since they had closed to within 11imps at 67-56.

Is your coffee cold yet?

Bd: 25 North
 Dlr: North ♠ A1053
 Vul: E/W ♥ J53
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ AQ98

West
 ♠ KQJ74
 ♥ A7
 ♦ 92
 ♣ K543

East
 ♠ 98
 ♥ K962
 ♦ AK8764
 ♣ J

South
 ♠ 62
 ♥ Q1084
 ♦ J103
 ♣ 10762

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1NT	Dbl(1)	2♣
Dbl(2)	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

- (1) Four-card major + a longer minor
 (2) Pass if this is your minor, correct otherwise

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
1♠	Dbl(1)	Pass	2♥

All Pass

- (1) Three-card heart support

In the Open Room Liu's 2♣ bid (clearly running from 1NTx) may or may not have promised another suit, but with nothing more to go on Li led the ♣A, then shifted to a trump, dummy's ♠8 holding. Bakhshi continued trumps as Li took the ace and switched back to the ♣Q. Bakhshi won the king, drew the last two trumps, ruffed the diamonds good, and claimed eleven tricks, +200. Nicely done. (By the way, both 4♠ and 3NT can each be beaten in several ways.)

Van Prooijen's 1♦ opening (could be as few as two if balanced) stole Wang's thunder, but with such a fine hand we wonder why he didn't consider doubling when 2♥ came back to him. (He can easily handle any action partner takes over that.) Peng got off to the ♠K opening lead. Verhees won the ace and played the ♦Q to the king. Wang returned a spade to Peng's jack and he switched to the ace and a second trump, Wang putting in the nine and losing to the ten. Verhees continued the diamond attack, Wang winning and returning the suit. Verhees won, took the

club finesse, ruffed a spade, then played a club and inserted the eight. Wang ruffed, drew declarer's remaining trumps, and claimed down two with only good diamonds left; +100 for E/W. That was 3imps back to NEDUK, leading 70-56.

Bd: 26 North
 Dlr: East ♠ K95
 Vul: Both ♥ J9
 ♦ K543
 ♣ 9874

West
 ♠ A632
 ♥ 853
 ♦ 1072
 ♣ KJ5

East
 ♠ QJ104
 ♥ 102
 ♦ AJ96
 ♣ AQ6

South
 ♠ 87
 ♥ AKQ764
 ♦ Q8
 ♣ 1032

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		1NT	All Pass

Both Souths stayed out of the auction, deciding that with the opponents vulnerable they might try for undertricks if E/W decided to stay where they were. They ran their hearts against 1NT, then switched to a spade to score the setting trick; a push at +100. Had South bid, the opponents would doubtless have found spades, where nine tricks might be obtained.

Bd: 27 North
 Dlr: South ♠ A10942
 Vul: None ♥ QJ6
 ♦ ---
 ♣ AKQJ6

West
 ♠ QJ5
 ♥ 52
 ♦ KJ92
 ♣ 9754

East
 ♠ K3
 ♥ A10
 ♦ A10754
 ♣ 10832

South
 ♠ 876
 ♥ K98743
 ♦ Q863
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
			2♦(1)
Pass	4♣(2)	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) Multi

(2) Asking for the suit below opener's major

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	1♣	1♦	Dbl
3♦	3♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

In both rooms the North declarer won the opening club lead, drew trumps, and claimed twelve tricks when clubs were 4-4. 11 imps to NEDUK, increasing their lead to 25 at 81-56.

It looks as if slam is very delicate on a diamond lead. In fact, we're sure you'd be struggling if either clubs or hearts did not break. There again, North was unlucky to find that club void opposite.

Bd: 28
 Dlr: West
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ J93
 ♥ J8
 ♦ J10852
 ♣ K83

West
 ♠ AK1086
 ♥ A63
 ♦ AK64
 ♣ 9

East
 ♠ Q754
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ Q93
 ♣ AQ75

South
 ♠ 2
 ♥ K109752
 ♦ 7
 ♣ J10642

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♠	Pass	3♥(1)	Dbl
4♣	Pass	4♠	All Pass

(1) BAL forcing raise

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♣(1)	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

(1) Precision

In the Open Room Gold made an artificial spade raise (we suspect it was forcing, looking at his hand, but it's close) and Bakhshi responded with some sort of slam try (we're not sure what, but shortness-showing is our best guess at the moment). Gold would be understandably turned off when hearing that partner's shortness was opposite the only real pride he had in his hand and sign off in 4♠, but it is

difficult for us to imagine how Bakhshi could ever have been persuaded not to bid slam — unless, of course, Gold's 3♥ bid was less than game forcing. So Li, aided by his partner's double, led the ♥J, queen, king, ace. Bakhshi drew trumps, played two rounds of diamonds, getting the bad news, and tried the club finesse. When that worked he could pitch one of his red-suit losers on the ♣A, ruff one in dummy, and come to twelve tricks; +480.

In the Closed Room Peng-Wang had a Precision auction to 6♠ from the East seat. Verhees led his stiff diamond — the shortest road to try for a set — to dummy's ace. There is scant reason not to test trumps immediately, but at trick two Wang called for a low heart. Had North had the ♥K, as Wang hoped, he would have given his partner a diamond ruff. But today the gods were smiling benevolently down upon the earth, and the ♥Q lost to South's king, not North's. Peng won the heart return, drew trumps, ruffed his third heart, cashed his three top diamonds, and fell back on the club finesse with the show-up squeeze increasing his chances in the ending from a straight finesse to 50.5%. That was +980, and another 11 imps to China, closer now at 81-67.

Thank you, *Ch'eng-Huang*. (A Chinese god who rules over protection and justice.)

Bd: 29
 Dlr: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ A953
 ♥ QJ1096
 ♦ K84
 ♣ K

West
 ♠ 86
 ♥ A3
 ♦ AJ97
 ♣ AJ743

East
 ♠ J72
 ♥ K54
 ♦ Q106
 ♣ Q862

South
 ♠ KQ104
 ♥ 872
 ♦ 532
 ♣ 1095

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1♥	Pass	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	1♠	Pass	2♠
3♣	All Pass		

In the Open Room Li had no way to show both majors at his first turn, and when Liu passed, he was

out of the auction for the duration. Li led the ♠Q to declarer's ace, and when the ♣A brought rain at trick two, all that was left was to cash out. Along the way, Li pitched three spades, and since he was marked with both a top spade and the ♦K from the bidding, Bakhshi played the ♦A and led a low one before releasing the ♥K. As expected, Li exited with the ♥J and now Bakhshi had two more diamond tricks to cash to finish with ten tricks; +180.

Playing the Dutch version of canapé van Prooijen opened his four-card spade suit, prepared to make a weak canapé rebid in hearts. But when Verhees raised spades, N/S had gone as far as either of them dared. Peng clearly saved some imps by balancing (why not 2NT for the minors?) and landed in his best spot. There wasn't much to the play. Peng won the heart lead in hand, banged down the ♣A, and quickly claimed ten tricks; +130. But that was 2 imps back to NEDUK, leading now by 16 at 83-67.

Bd: 30 North
 Dlr: East ♠ K7
 Vul: None ♥ QJ8
 ♦ 1093
 ♣ KQ1093

West
 ♠ 109
 ♥ AK103
 ♦ A8762
 ♣ A7

East
 ♠ AQ854
 ♥ 74
 ♦ QJ
 ♣ J852

South
 ♠ J632
 ♥ 9652
 ♦ K54
 ♣ 64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥(♠)	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Both tables ended in 3NT and both Norths led a club honor to declarer's ace. In the Open Room Bakhshi played a diamond to the queen and king and the defense cleared the clubs. When Bakhshi ran the diamonds Li defended accurately by pitching both of his spades and keeping a high club and the ♥QJx while Liu kept the ♠Jxx. Bakhshi finished with ten

tricks for +430.

In the Closed Room Peng won the club lead and played the ♠10, covered by the king and ace, a low spade to his nine, Verhees ducking, and a diamond to the queen and king. Now the defense cleared the clubs, but Peng had eleven tricks in the form of three spades, two hearts, four diamonds and two clubs; +460. 1 imp back to China, trailing 83-68.

Bd: 31 North
 Dlr: South ♠ K1097
 Vul: N/S ♥ 43
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ AQ843

West
 ♠ AQ864
 ♥ Q
 ♦ K842
 ♣ K106

East
 ♠ J
 ♥ J9652
 ♦ J1093
 ♣ J75

South
 ♠ 532
 ♥ AK1087
 ♦ A75
 ♣ 92

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♠	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>

2NT

(There was a power failure so no auction or play was available from the Closed Room)

In the Open Room Gold led the ♦J against Li's 3NT, ducked to the king. Bakhshi returned a diamond to the queen and Li continued with a heart to the ten. Bakhshi won his queen, perforce, and cleared the diamonds. Now, after a club to the queen and a heart to the ace, getting the bad news there, Li was grasping at straws. He stranded his ♥K in dummy and led a low spade to the ten when Bakhshi followed low — and another singleton honor scored for the defense (a tournament record, if not a zonal one). Gold exited with his fourth diamond to Bakhshi's eight, and Bakhshi cashed the ♠A before exiting with the ♣K. Li could have cashed his ♠K now, but he was apparently so discombobulated by the previous sequence of plays that instead he exited with his remaining club. Gold won the jack and was forced to relinquish a trick to dummy's ♥K, but won the final trick with his remaining heart; -300 for N/S.

The auction and play in the Closed Room are shrouded in frazzled ethernet wires and smoking junction boxes. What we do know is that Verhees declared 2NT from the South seat and scored up eight tricks for +120. That was 9 useful imps to NEDUK, whose lead was back up to 24 at 92-68.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	DbI
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Last board of the second quarter.

Bd: 32 North
 Dir: West ♠ K852
 Vul: E/W ♥ 852
 ♦ AKJ6
 ♣ 82

West
 ♠ A76
 ♥ 9
 ♦ 10932
 ♣ AQ943

East
 ♠ J943
 ♥ KQJ106
 ♦ 84
 ♣ J6

South
 ♠ Q10
 ♥ A743
 ♦ Q75
 ♣ K1075

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Did you hear the one about the player who told his friend "We passed out Board 32."? "Really," the friend replied. "How did the auction go?" In the Open Room Li opened a light Precision 1♦ and Liu made what sounds like a negative double just showing values and not promising any particular shape (even in the other major). Perhaps this was to try to get notrump played from Li's side, which has a lot to be said for it. But Li bid the expected 1♠ and now Liu put a halt to the proceedings with 1NT. Bakhshi, looking at what figured to be most of his side's high cards, led his own suit and Gold's jack drove out declarer's king. Still, as long as Gold could be kept off lead Liu still had a second club stopper. Liu played the ♠Q, which held, and switched to diamonds, running four tricks in that suit, then playing ace and out a heart hoping Gold held the ♠A and would be endplayed to concede a trick to dummy's ♠K in the ending. Instead Gold cashed his remaining heart, exited with a club, and Bakhshi claimed. Still, that was +90 for China and another 3 imps, reducing their deficit to 21, 92-71, at the half.

Five things you may not know about Heng Sha Ke Ji

- ✓ The team name is just that: Heng Sha is a proper name. Ke Ji means signs, or signage. It is a company that does business with NEC. Heng Sha is an island off the coast of Shanghai.
- ✓ The team consisted of four players only, although there were six names on the roster.
- ✓ Wang Kui put the team together. He is a business associate of the NEC corporation. Wang was a junior contemporary of Fu Zhong who gave up the game for a decade. He has played in the event before, at the invitation of NEC.
- ✓ Peng Jianfeng and Wang Kui are not a regular partnership. Peng comes from the South of China.
- ✓ Li Xiaoyi and Liu Huazong are also a first-time partnership here. They will be teammates for Beijing Province in the forthcoming National Championships.

NEC Final (3rd quarter): NEDUK vs Heng Sha Ke Ji

by Barry Rigal

The third set saw NEDUK entering with 22 of their 40-imp lead from the first set still intact.

Bd: 33
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ 1073
♥ K7
♦ 87653
♣ A98

West
♠ Q964
♥ Q843
♦ 42
♣ 754

East
♠ A52
♥ J96
♦ QJ
♣ QJ632

South
♠ KJ8
♥ A1052
♦ AK109
♣ K10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The first deal featured a rarity in this match: a strong club where neither Verhees nor van Prooijen could find a way into the auction. Without looking at the hands you'd expect them both to be 4-3-3-3, but each of them had significant extra shape, albeit no major suit to bid. In both rooms 3NT made 430 in comfort when the defenders attacked spades, and we moved on smartly.

Bd: 34
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ K74
♥ 109654
♦ 643
♣ Q7

West
♠ QJ6532
♥ Q8
♦ Q7
♣ J86

East
♠ 109
♥ A32
♦ J52
♣ AK1054

South
♠ A8
♥ KJ7
♦ AK1098
♣ 932

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
2♠	All Pass	1♦	1NT

2♠ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
2♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	Dbl
Pass		All Pass	

While 2♠ would have had five top losers on a heart lead from North, Li selected the ♣Q as his opening shot (far from unreasonable) and now declarer was trying for overtricks. He passed a trump to North, who shifted to hearts. Declarer wisely rose with the ♥A, played a second trump, and the defense cashed out before the rats got at their tricks.

In the other room 3♥ (reached after South could not double 1NT but could double 2♠) needed a minor miracle in one of the red suits if the defense were going to force dummy to ruff a spade. In fact, the defenders cashed two clubs and played spades. Gold won in hand, finessed in hearts, and conceded down one when the diamonds also failed to cooperate. No swing; still 93-71 for NEDUK.

Bd: 35
Dir: South
Vul: E/W

North
♠ K4
♥ 765
♦ Q984
♣ QJ108

West
♠ J95
♥ J102
♦ K652
♣ 942

East
♠ Q10762
♥ 9
♦ 103
♣ AK653

South
♠ A83
♥ AKQ843
♦ AJ7
♣ 7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♣(STR)
Pass	3♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♥	All Pass	4♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			1♥
Pass	2♥	2♠	4♥
All Pass			

If ever there was an eight count to treat as a negative response to a strong club, this North hand would be it. With no majors, let partner get the notrump, etc., in first. Li did not see it that way and that took his side to the five level when Liu felt compelled to make two slam tries; and who could argue with that view since a bare eight count with no club wastage would make the slam excellent (♠KQ and ♦Kx). N/S were never in any danger of going overboard in hearts in the Closed Room. After the 2♥ raise East got a spade bid in and declarer had 11 tricks with no real prospect of more. After a diamond lead declarer could draw all the trumps and establish dummy's diamonds as a home for the long spade. No swing, again.

Bd: 36	North
Dir: West	♠ 10842
Vul: Both	♥ 8
	♦ KQ52
	♣ Q764

West	East
♠ ---	♠ KJ73
♥ AQJ10762	♥ 53
♦ 76	♦ J10843
♣ J1092	♣ A5
	South
	♠ AQ965
	♥ K94
	♦ A9
	♣ K83

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
4♥	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

Some people believe one should open 4♥ and alert it as a transfer for the opponents to 4♠. Both Wests, nevertheless, tried 4♥ to see where it would get them. In the Open Room Liu took the path of least resistance. On Li's top diamond lead he ducked, won the ♣K at trick two, and cashed the ♦A, then exited with a club. Declarer was allowed to ruff the ♣J in dummy (Li covered, which would have been fatal had his partner not had the ♥K) and declarer got his ruff

and established his club, but had to lose a trump trick for down one.

Not enough. In the Closed Room West could hardly avoid leading the ♣J at trick one against 4♠x. Wang took the ♣A (probably not best) and returned the suit, but declarer won in dummy and guessed trumps, leading the ♠10 and having it covered. Then he gave up a heart. East ruffed the next club and got out with a diamond, more in hope than expectation. His pessimism was justified. Declarer claimed +790 on the marked trump finesse. 12 imps to NEDUK, leading now by 105-71.

Bd: 37	North
Dir: North	♠ AKJ
Vul: N/S	♥ Q108642
	♦ A108
	♣ 4

West	East
♠ 43	♠ 9652
♥ KJ53	♥ 9
♦ KJ6	♦ Q975
♣ AK98	♣ 10762
	South
	♠ Q1087
	♥ A7
	♦ 432
	♣ QJ53

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

There is no "right" answer to whether to raise spades or repeat hearts with the North hand. Both Editors, coming from a school that raises frequently with three trumps, go along with the bid found by Gold. Whether our second choice would be to bid 2♥ or 2♦ is less clear. As it happened, the play in 2♥ was extremely straightforward. Li ducked the diamond lead, won the second, then played on trumps (a heart to the ace, then run the seven) followed by spades. West could ruff in and cash the minor-suit winners for -110.

I'm not sure if a diamond lead would have troubled Bakhshi in 2♠, but a top club lead let him come to eight tricks via a club, a ruff, two red aces and four trumps. No swing, and the dispute will have to be postponed 'till another day.

Bd: 38
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K952
 ♥ J9
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ KJ109

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK765
 ♦ K1096
 ♣ A862

East
 ♠ 863
 ♥ 108432
 ♦ 853
 ♣ Q5

South
 ♠ AQJ1074
 ♥ Q
 ♦ Q72
 ♣ 743

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		Pass	1♠
Dbl	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		Pass	2♠
Dbl	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

The Chinese won the auction at both tables, finding that relative rarity, the sacrifice at unfavorable vulnerability. In 5♥x E/W lost only the ♣K and two diamonds, the entries not permitting declarer to tackle diamonds before clubs. That was -200.

But 4♠x was a cakewalk for South. The defenders led and continued hearts (would East have been able to persuade West to play diamonds if the two minor-suit queens were reversed? If so, how?). Declarer ruffed the second heart, drew trumps, then took a club finesse and eventually a diamond finesse for +590; 9 imps to make the score 105-80.

Bd: 39
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 7542
 ♥ J1043
 ♦ A532
 ♣ A

West
 ♠ AKJ6
 ♥ A2
 ♦ KQJ6
 ♣ 985

East
 ♠ 93
 ♥ KQ765
 ♦ 10
 ♣ QJ1073

South
 ♠ Q108
 ♥ 98
 ♦ 9874
 ♣ K642

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(STR)	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Both E/Ws competently reached the non-testing notrump game and wrapped up the predictable ten tricks. Let's move on in search of something more challenging.

Bd: 40

Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ J65
 ♥ AQJ84
 ♦ A
 ♣ A943

West
 ♠ K97
 ♥ K73
 ♦ KQ53
 ♣ Q72

East
 ♠ 432
 ♥ 106
 ♦ J982
 ♣ 10865

South
 ♠ AQ108
 ♥ 952
 ♦ 10764
 ♣ KJ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1♦	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

South's bidding from the Open Room looks strange. What was wrong with bidding spades initially, even though West might have had a canapé with spades? You can't avoid going out in the rain just because you might get struck by lightning. And when partner showed a powerhouse with hearts why pass 3NT? Not to worry. Verhees refused to believe that his side might have the diamond suit to run and declarer

eventually took his 11 top tricks, even though diamonds were led to trick one. That was still worth an imp when Gold played 4♥ from the North seat and arranged a club ruff in dummy, then took all the finesses at the appropriate moment to come home with 12 tricks. 1 imp; 106-80, NEDUK.

Bd: 41 North
 Dir: North ♠ 8
 Vul: E/W ♥ 10742
 ♦ QJ863
 ♣ J105

West
 ♠ AQ65
 ♥ ---
 ♦ A10954
 ♣ K976

East
 ♠ KJ1092
 ♥ 9853
 ♦ K
 ♣ Q82

South
 ♠ 743
 ♥ AKQJ6
 ♦ 72
 ♣ A43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Dbl	3♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♥
Dbl	5♥	5♠	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

The symmetry of the two auctions is rather elegant, don't you think? So similar and yet so different. If one trusts one's opponents, a trump lead is called for against 6♠. But no one ever got rich by trusting his enemy. Bakhshi led a top heart and declarer gave it the old college try. He ruffed, unblocked diamonds, led a club to the king as South ducked (necessary but not overly demanding, in context) then pitched a club on the ♦A and ducked a club. It looks better to try to play a cross-ruff here (you only need to be able to ruff the third diamond low, but that doesn't work).

Bakhshi won his ♣A, returned the necessary trump to stop the cross-ruff, and now declarer needed both spades and diamonds to split to come home. While it was still possible to get out for down one, declarer mistimed the ending for -200. Still, given the result from the other room of +680, no imps were at stake. NEDUK picked up 13 imps and led 119-80. (For what it's worth, South in the Closed Room did not duck his ♣A and the play was very easy thereafter.)

Bd: 42 North
 Dir: East ♠ Q865
 Vul: Both ♥ AJ6
 ♦ 92
 ♣ KJ94

West
 ♠ AJ73
 ♥ K954
 ♦ K1086
 ♣ 7

East
 ♠ K104
 ♥ Q107
 ♦ A5
 ♣ AQ632

South
 ♠ 92
 ♥ 832
 ♦ QJ743
 ♣ 1085

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣(R)	Pass	3♦(1)	Pass
3♥(R)	Pass	3♠(♣)	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(!) A five-card minor

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Bakhshi led a top diamond against 3NT, Liu led a small diamond. It turned out that a lot of tricks were available after the high diamond lead, and partner's ♦9 was worth at least a trick on the low diamond lead. But maybe if you need to set the game the top diamond is more flexible. Regardless, both declarers had chances for making a lot of tricks and settled for nine. Let's leave it at that and focus on something more substantial.

Bd: 43 North
 Dir: South ♠ 3
 Vul: None ♥ KJ53
 ♦ 98765
 ♣ 1097

West
 ♠ 72
 ♥ Q10942
 ♦ Q102
 ♣ Q83

East
 ♠ K1065
 ♥ A7
 ♦ AKJ3
 ♣ J62

South
 ♠ AQJ984
 ♥ 86
 ♦ 4
 ♣ AK54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠
Dbl(T/O)	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
Pass	Pass	Dbl	2♠
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

It is tough (maybe almost impossible) for E/W to go plus here. When the auction got back to East he had the choice of overcalling 1NT, a bid for which he was overqualified in the balancing seat, or doubling without the other major. Both routes led to 3NT, which was certainly better than trying to set 2♠x. With declarer never going to get hearts right, the only question was undertricks after South led or shifted to the ♠Q. The defenders were quickly in position to cash six tricks, but both Gold and Bakhshi played safe (being in the middle of an impressively good set, after all) and cashed out for down one when Gold did not take his ♥K before putting his partner in with a club and Bakhshi set up the ♠10 for East's eight winner. That made it 119-82.

Bd: 44	North
Dlr: West	♠ 82
Vul: N/S	♥ K8543
	♦ 96
	♣ 9642

West	East
♠ Q74	♠ 1053
♥ QJ107	♥ A92
♦ 752	♦ AKQ10
♣ Q105	♣ K73

South
♠ AKJ96
♥ 6
♦ J843
♣ AJ8

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠(♠ + m)
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
Pass	Pass	1♣(STR)	1♠
Dbl	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

In 2NT on repeated spade leads it looks right to play

on hearts and hope. You end up with three tricks in each red suit and one in each black suit. That was what happened to Wang, more or less, but his +120 only held the loss on the deal to 5 imps. You could say that Liu was lucky that trumps were not 4-2 or he might have been doubled for 1100. But that overcall is one we'd all make, isn't it?

Against 2♠ the defenders led and continued hearts. Declarer ruffed and led a low diamond from his hand to East, whose trump shift went to the jack and queen and a second trump. Down 300 without the option, and a running score of 124-82.

Bd: 45	North
Dlr: North	♠ AK4
Vul: Both	♥ KQJ73
	♦ ---
	♣ AK873

West	East
♠ 1065	♠ Q8732
♥ 954	♥ A8
♦ J93	♦ Q862
♣ Q952	♣ J10

South
♠ J9
♥ 1062
♦ AK10754
♣ 64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
Pass	1♣(STR)	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Our armchair analysts on BBO could justify ace and another trump from East to set this slam. Myself, I'm always reluctant to lead trumps against a slam unless I know it's a cross-ruff. Neither East found the lead and the play for both declarers was easy enough. Just pitch a spade on the diamond and ruff out the clubs, hoping if they are 4-2 and East is the one with shortness that either the trump eight or the nine would be with West, as indeed was the case. No swing, and still 124-82.

Bd: 46
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ KQ1095
 ♥ 3
 ♦ Q10975
 ♣ 102

West
 ♠ 643
 ♥ QJ874
 ♦ AJ86
 ♣ 7

East
 ♠ AJ72
 ♥ AK102
 ♦ K
 ♣ A986

South
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 965
 ♦ 432
 ♣ KQJ543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
3♦(♥)	3♠	1♣	3♣
4♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
2♥	2♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Both tables reached 6♥ here on a spade lead, but in one case with West declarer, in the other case with East. Peng won the spade lead, cashed the ♦K, and drew three rounds of trumps, then led a spade up. Gold hopped up with the queen and returned the suit to ensure he would not be subject to any pressure in the endgame. Down one; once declarer cashed the ♥AK he could no longer make the hand.

Van Prooijen showed how to do it. He won the spade lead in hand, played one top trump from hand, led the ♦K, then crossed to a trump in dummy as North pitched a spade to ruff a diamond high. Now he played ♣A and ruffed a club, then ruffed another diamond high. This was the ending:

	♠ K109	
	♥ ---	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ ---	
♠ 64		♠ J72
♥ Q8		♥ ---
♦ A		♦ ---
♣ ---		♣ 98
	♠ ---	
	♥ 9	
	♦ ---	
	♣ KQJ5	

When declarer ruffed a club in dummy, North had to either let go of a spade (in which case declarer would draw trump and play on spades) or follow his actual choice of pitching a diamond. Now van Prooijen drew the last trump, cashed the ♦A and led a spade towards his jack at trick 12 with North down to ♠Q10. Very nicely done. 14 imps for a 138-82 lead.

Bd: 47
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ A54
 ♥ 754
 ♦ K10643
 ♣ 82

West
 ♠ KJ2
 ♥ J83
 ♦ 72
 ♣ AKQ43

East
 ♠ 87
 ♥ AQ6
 ♦ AQJ985
 ♣ 106

South
 ♠ Q10963
 ♥ K1092
 ♦ ---
 ♣ J975

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1NT	Pass	3♣(♦)	Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦(STAY)	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

After Verhees' 1NT opening (yes it is a stretch but in the context of a strong club where your other choice is to bid 1♦, what do you prefer?) van Prooijen got his crisp values across very nicely. Li found the killing heart lead, and Liu won to shift to an intermediate spade. Verhees guessed to put in the jack, losing to the ace, won the next spade, and played a diamond to the jack to find the good and bad news. When diamonds failed to behave he had no option but to rely on clubs. He cashed out all his hearts and clubs. North pitched a diamond and took the last two tricks with a diamond and a spade. That looked promising for Hang Sha Ke Ji, but in 3NT Gold led a spade to the queen and king. Declarer took the diamond finesse, which held as South discarded the ♥2, and advanced the ♣6. Bakhshi ducked, and declarer might have let it run, but instead he went up with the ace. He repeated the diamond finesse, then cashed all his minor-suit winners and took the heart finesse for his contract. The defenders had one heart, one club, one diamond and two spades for one down, and in fact when South led the ♠10 Peng had to put

up the jack to try to make his contract. There was now a re-entry to the South hand for all the winning spades, and 3NT went down two. 2 implausibleimps for NEDUK, up 140-82.

Bd: 48 North
 Dir: West ♠ 97642
 Vul: E/W ♥ 1043
 ♦ 653
 ♣ Q3

West
 ♠ 853
 ♥ QJ92
 ♦ AQ1098
 ♣ K

East
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ A87
 ♦ 742
 ♣ A10642

South
 ♠ AJ10
 ♥ K65
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ J9875

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
1♥	Pass	2♣(R)	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥(R)	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦(R)	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Against van Prooijen's 3NT contract, reached on a blind auction, Liu led a club. Van Prooijen won the king and passed the ♥Q successfully, then ran the ♥J to the king. In desperation South played the ♠A, then the ♠J, and now declarer had to win and play on diamonds without much grounds for optimism. The ♦KJ doubleton onside was just what the doctor ordered, and that was +660.

Since Wang had received a spade lead from Bakhshi and had tested diamonds at once, he was happy to settle for the nine tricks he had on top without risking any heart plays. 2 more imps made the total lead for NEDUK 60, and that was enough for the Hang Sha Ke Ji team, who had played throughout as four and were now very tired.

The NEDUK team, in the first and third session, had played, if not faultlessly, at least both efficiently and effectively. Both pairs exhibited a brand of attacking bridge that made it hard for their opponents, and each pair gave a very impressive account of themselves.

