



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 1

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

Welcome to the 17th NEC Cup Bridge Festival

This year's NEC Cup once again sports an impressive international field, including many of the world's top players. Stage One features a 12-round, three-day Swiss Teams qualifier with 14-board matches, imps converted to Victory Points using the 14-Board WBF scale. As in previous years, eight teams will qualify for the final KO phase. The 46-team field has been divided into two halves, with each of the top 23 teams paired at random against one of the remaining 23 teams (see p.5). Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals. The quarter- and semi-finals will consist of 32-board matches, while the final will be contested over 64 boards (with the two losing semi-finalists tying for 3rd/4th). On Friday, February 10th, the Yokohama IMP Pairs will be held followed on Saturday, February 11th, by the Yokohama Swiss Teams (A, B & C) and on Sunday, February 12th, by the Asuka Cup (Open Pairs). (Note the Convention Regulations for pair games on page 6.)

The Daily Bulletin Office/Secretariat and the Chief Director

As always, we need your help to keep everyone informed of the happenings at this tournament. Please report anything amusing, challenging, or skillful that happens in your matches (bridge or otherwise) to the **Daily Bulletin Office, a.k.a. The Secretariat** (Conference Center, Room 414). If we're not in, leave a note on one of our computers (they're the two computers on the table in the rear of the room). The **Secretariat** opens each day at 9:30 am. You can contact the Secretariat via a house phone from the hotel (Ext. 5733), or dial 228-6393 (from the Yokohama City area), 045-228-6393 (from outside the city area), or +81 45 228-6393 (from overseas). The editors may also be contacted via e-mail at rcolker@gmail.com or barryrigal@mindspring.com. If you're trying to reach someone you can't find here at the festival, you may leave a message with us and we'll do our best to get it to them. The **Chief Tournament Director** at the **NEC Bridge Festival** is once again the witty, urbane and occasionally immovable **Richard Grenside**, as always under the close supervision of wife Sue. Be advised that you call him at your own risk. The Co-Director of the NEC Cup is **Akito Omasa**.

PCs with Internet access are available for player use in the Secretariat (Room 414), along the wall to the left as you enter.

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 17th NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/home/English/nec/tabid/662/Default.aspx>

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

NEC Cup 2012: Conditions of Contest

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

V.P. Scale: WBF 14-board scale (a copy can be found in the score book provided in your NEC Bridge Festival bag).

Seating Rights: Blind seating 10 minutes before the start of match.

KO-Phase Seating: The winner of a coin toss has the choice of seating in either of the two 16-board segments of the quarter- or semi-finals. In the four 16-board segments of the final, the choices will alternate over segments.

Swiss Pairings: First-round Swiss matches were made by randomly pairing each team in the top half with a team from the bottom half.

Home and Visiting: 1st numbered team sits N/S in the open room, E/W in the closed room.

Tie-Breaks: At the end of the Swiss, ties will be broken by IMP quotient. If more than two teams are involved, WBF 2008 Conditions of Contest procedures will apply.

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

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

Length of Matches: 2 hours will be allotted for each 14-board segment (or 2 hours and 15 minutes for each 16-board segment of the KOs). In addition, a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per WBF 2008 Conditions of Contest.

Appeals: The WBF Code of Practice will be in effect. The Chief Director will have 12C1c authority. Appeals found to be without merit may incur a penalty of up to 3 VPs.

Match Scoring: Bridgmate scoring terminals will be used. Match results should be verified against the official result sheet (posted at the end of each match); score corrections and notifications of appeals will be permitted up until the start of the next session.

KO Draw: The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4th-8th group. The team finishing 3rd will then have their choice of the remaining teams. In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1st in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.

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

Smoking: Once play in a qualifying-round match or a KO-round session starts, smoking is prohibited at ALL times (including when a player leaves the playing room to go to the bathroom), until the player completes the play of all boards in the match or session. (For those wishing to smoke at other times, smoking rooms are located on the 3rd and 5th floors of the Conference Center.) Automatic penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director as follows: Qualifying Swiss — 1 VP for the 1st offense, 3 VPs for all subsequent offenses; KO — 3imps for the 1st offense, 10imps for all subsequent offenses.

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

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

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

The 17th NEC Cup Guest List

Konichi wa, and welcome to the 17th NEC Bridge Festival. As always, every session of the NEC Cup will be on Bridge Base Online, the world's leading Online Bridge site (hi Fred, Sheri, Uday, world), with live broadcasts starting with our Round One match: NEDUK vs Indonesia Ladies. As is the history of this event, not just the favorites will be playing for the championship come Saturday. So if you start off poorly, keep your chin up, play with heart, and fight until the man from down under (his name is Richard) says you can no longer play. As always, we're thrilled to see the many foreign teams here (14 this year, including a record-tying five teams from China), and we offer a special welcome to those attending the festival for the first time as well as to those who are back for the first time in a while. As always, it brings joy to our hearts to once again see so many friendly and familiar faces from around the bridge world. We're all family here.

The defenders (**David Bakhshi, David Gold, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen**) are back from last year. If it were possible to add a more distinguished title to their Palmares than 2011 NEC Champion, Ricco and Louk have done so — as winners of the Bermuda Bowl in Veldhoven last October.

The Anglo-Irish Hackett team (**Paul and Justin Hackett, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann**) is also back to try to do just a little better than last year when they lost narrowly in the semi-finals to the eventual winners. Papa Bear is extending his record attendance at NEC events and trying to add more miles to his frequent flier category. What comes after platinum? Justin will be wearing his Manchester United costume and resolutely ignoring the success of Manchester City. Hanlon and McGann will undoubtedly be out to sample the local Guinness and we are told the local Yokohama Brewery may prove an adequate replacement.

The Bulgarian All Stars (**Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev, Hristo Hristov**), twice NEC Cup bridesmaids, never brides, are another team who have vowed to keep coming back till they win the big one. This year they face the competition of another all-Bulgarian, all-internationalist squad, all first-time NEC Cup attendees, team Stamatov (**Julian Stefanov, Vladimir Minov, Jerry Stamatov, Diyan Danailov**). If these two teams meet we will light the blue touch-paper and caution you to stand well back.

Another pair of welcome return guests, **Ron Klinger** and **Matt Mullamphy**, have brought two members of the 2011 ANC Open Teams champions, **Bill Jacobs** and NEC newcomer **Ben Thompson**, to help them through the knockout phase this year. Welcome, gentlemen.

Also from Oz, **Sartaj Hans** and **Tony Nunn** return accompanied by New Zealanders **Martin Reid**, who last played here in 1996 (just couldn't stay away, eh?), and NEC newcomer **Peter Newell**. The Kiwi pair narrowly missed qualifying for the quarter-finals in Veldhoven.

Also back in the same line-up are England Ladies (**Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown, Susan Stockdale**), who followed their near-miss for the knock-out phase here last year with the ultimate near-miss in Veldhoven. There they led their semi-final match against the Indonesian ladies quite comfortably but fell at the final hurdle, then narrowly lost the playoff for the bronze. Let's hope their luck has changed.

We are delighted that the Syabas Indonesia Ladies (**Lusje Olha Bojoh, Julita Grace Tueje, Kristina Wahyu Murniati, Suci Amita Dewi**) were able to overcome their travel problems and are here this year. A most pleasant surprise on the international scene of 2011, they are here to show that they can succeed in both the open and women's game.

Chen Yeh is back with his Yeh Brothers team of NEC Cup veterans (**Chen Yeh, JuiYiu Shih, ChiMou Lin, Herstein Liu, Patrick Huang, Grace Lin**). Chen won the first gold medal by an Asian team in world play (the 2008 Transnational Mixed Teams) when his match finished 15 minutes before the Japanese Seniors. And of course any team with Patrick Huang on it will always prove a potential thorn in the side of their opponents.

China Women I (**Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Gu Ling, Lu Yan**) is comprised of four members of China's 2011 Venice Cup team, who lost on the final deal of the quarterfinals to eventual champion France. As they are past winners of this event, no one should take them lightly. Just in case you doubt them, they were also part of the Beijing Hua Yuan team that won the International tournament last year.

Chinese Women II (**Wang Wenfei, Wang Ping, Wang Liping, Wu Shaohong**) includes three NEC Cup newcomers along with veteran Wang Wenfei, here in a new partnership. One editor asked whether Wang Liping was the player who invented “Liping” Michaels but he has been sent for cultural re-education. Welcome.

Two crack Chinese Open teams are comprised entirely of NEC Cup veterans. Geely Auto (**Gui Shengyue, Zhang Banxiang, Yang Lixin, Dai Jianming, Zhuang Zejun**) is an amalgam of members of several past NEC Cup teams. (We are loath to mention Dai Jianming by name since that same editor — obviously incorrigible — told us to “Never say Dai.”) Last year’s quarter-finalist Beijing Trinergy (**Lu Dong, Ju Chuancheng, Shi Zhengjun, Li Rui, Wang Yanhong, Shi Miao**) returns pretty much intact (except for Shi Miao, who is making his first NEC Cup appearance here) and ready to upgrade their performance.

And finally on the International front we are delighted to once again see two teams from Korea. Korea-Alpha (**Yu Ina, Park Jungyoon, Kim Yoonkyung, Park Myungkee**) includes NEC newcomer Yu Ina, replacing Sung Kyunghae from last year’s Korea team. But don’t cry for Sung (or Argentina — darn that editor), who is back anchoring his own team, Korea-Hammer (**Sung Kyunghae, Hwang lynryung, Chung Isub, Cho Taeho**), which includes NEC veteran Hwang lynryung and newcomers Chung Isub and Cho Taeho.

The top Japanese teams feature many familiar names. Those who have done well here in recent years include: **Shugo Tanaka** and (the inimitable) **Fu Zhong**, from the 2010 and 2009 NEC quarter-finalist SARA teams; **Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Nakamura** and **Makoto Hirata** from the 2009 NEC quarter-finalist Japan Senior team; and **Kazuo Furuta, Chen Dawei, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura** and **Masaaki Takayama** from the 2009 NEC runner-up Japan Open team (who lost to the China LongZhu Women).

So welcome to the 2012 NEC Bridge Festival. May all your bids be inspired. May all your plays be double-dummy, and may your fiercest competitors finish one place below you in the standings. Good luck, everyone.

NEC Bridge Festival Smoking Policy

NEC Cup:

See the Smoking section of the CoC (page 2).

Other events:

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

Smoking areas:

Smoking is only permitted in the smoking rooms located on the 3rd and 5th floors of the Conference Center.

Penalties:

Penalties for violations will be assessed by the Director.



Team Rosters: 17th NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	NEDUK:	David Bakhshi, David Gold, Louk Verhees, Ricco van Prooijen
2	Hackett:	Paul Hackett, Justin Hackett, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann
3	Bulgarian All Stars:	Valio Kovachev, Vladi Isporski, Manol Iliev, Hristo Hristov
4	Stamatov:	Julian Stefanov, Vladimir Minov, Jerry Stamatov, Diyan Danailov
5	Oz Players:	Ron Klinger, Matt Mullamphy, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson
6	Down Under:	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Martin Reid, Peter Newell
7	England Ladies:	Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Fiona Brown, Susan Stockdale
8	Syabas Indonesia Ladies:	Lusje Olha Bojoh, Julita Grace Tueje, Kristina Wahyu Murniati, Suci Amita Dewi
9	Yeh Bros:	Chen Yeh, JuiYiu Shih, ChiMou Lin, Herstein Liu, Patrick Huang, Grace Lin
10	China Women 1:	Sun Ming, Wang Hongli, Gu Ling, Lu Yan
11	China Women 2:	Wang Wenfei, Wang Ping, Wang Liping, Wu Shaohong
12	China Geely Auto:	Gui Shengyue, Zhang Banxiang, Yang Lixin, Dai Jianming, Zhuang Zejun
13	Beijing Trinergy:	Lu Dong, Ju Chuancheng, Shi Zhengjun, Li Rui, Wang Yanhong, Shi Miao
14	Korea-Alpha:	Yu Ina, Park Jungyoon, Kim Yoonkyung, Park Myungkee
15	Korea-Hammer:	Sung Kyunghae, Hwang Iynryung, Chung Isub, Cho Taeo
16	ONI-TAKA:	Masayuki Ino, Takahiko Hirata, Masaaki Takayama, Kazuhiko Yamada, Takeshi Niekawa, Tadashi Teramoto
17	TAJIMA:	Kazuo Furuta, Mitsue Tajima, Chen Dawei, Robert Parasian Tobing, Taufik Gautama Asbi
18	JAPAN Senior:	Kyoko Ohno, Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Akihiko Yamada, Makoto Hirata
19	ESPERANZA:	Haruko Koshi, Hideyuki Sango, Nobuko Matsubara, Misuzu Ichihashi, Fumiko Kimura, Terumi Kubo
20	YOKOI:	Hiroki Yokoi, Fumi Tanaka, Shugo Tanaka, Hideki Takano, Minoru Mizuta, Yumiko Mizuta
21	ashley6:	Michiko Ono, Yoko Oosako, Yayoi Sakamoto, Michiko Iwahashi, Sumie Nakagawa, Sachiko Yamamura
22	Pretty Cats:	Yoko Nenohi, Kyoko Toyofuku, Yoshiko Sakaguchi, Kumiko Matsuo, Toshiko Kaho, Makiko Sato
23	PYON:	Yuki Fukuyoshi, Takeshi Hanayama, Yoshiko Endo, Katsumi Takahashi, Masaru Yoshida
24	Jiuzhaigou:	Shunsuke Morimura, Tadashi Imakura, Zhao Jinlong, Jiang Yi
25	Abe Chan:	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Hiroya Abe, Chieko Yamazaki, Nobuko Tanai
26	Fairy Tale:	Kazunori Sasaki, Ryo Okuno, Akira Ohara, Zhang Shudi, Fu Zhong, Makoto Kono
27	TANAKA:	Ryoga Tanaka, Sakiko Naito, Yukiko Tokunaga, Kenji Miyakuni
28	KATSUMATA:	Atsuko Katsumata, Yasuyo Iida, Misae Kato, Kimiko Kamakari, Harue Iemori, Takako Nakatani
29	Kachofugetsu:	Akiko Miwa, Kunio Kodaira, Teruo Miyazaki, Makoto Nomura, Masako Otsuka, Takako Fujimoto
30	Setugekka:	Akiko Miyata, Junko Tsubaki, Kazuko Okamoto, Miyako Miyazaki, Kazuko Kawashima, Aiko Mizuuchi
31	Blue Hawaii:	Chieko Ichikawa, Kuniko Saito, Atsuko Kurita, Junko Den, Yoshiko Murata, Kei Nemoto
32	LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Junko Nishimura, Michiko Shida, Kotomi Asakoshi, Yoko Komuro, Shimako Yaji
33	Aka Maru:	Keisuke Akama, Yoko Maruyama, Hiroko Ota, Ayako Miyakuni
34	NANIWADA:	Masaru Naniwada, Hideo Togawa, Hisami Kataoka, Toshiro Nose, Hikoe Enomoto
35	Oriental Angels:	Hiroko Tanaka, Masakatsu Sugino, Ryoichi Yasuhara, Sumiko Sugino, Kazuko Takahashi
36	Goisagi:	Akiko Kawabata, Misako Fukazawa, Hideko Kobayashi, Soyoko Yamamoto, Noriko Akira, Yumiko Kawakami
37	Iza Yokohama III:	Osami Kimura, Takahiro Kamiyo, Yoshiaki Aida, Setsuko Kimura, Chisato Kiriya, Yoko Shimominami
38	Papa & the Rabbits:	Tadashi Jomura, Takashi Maeda, Nobuyuki Hayashi, Hiroaki Iwata, Koji Ito
39	SAKURAI:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Kenichi Asaoka, Motoharu Ushio
40	Friends:	Yoko Saito, Mamiko Odaira, Koichi Onishi, Taiko Bando, Keiko Yoshino, Hisayo Goto
41	Yukihinata:	Yukiko Hoshi, Etsuko Naito, Yukiko Umezu, Megumi Takasaka, Hiroko Yanagisawa, Yuko Kimura
42	Con Brio:	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Masayuki Ohashi, Makoto Wakabayashi
43	StrawberryFields:	Shintaro Sentsui, Hiroko Sentsui, Kenichi Ito, Yumi Yanagida
44	KANDM:	Michiko Hatoyama, Katsuro Hatoyama, Miyoko Yonezawa, Mariko Sakamoto, Kiyoko Oki, Makiyo Takikawa
45	SHIROGANE:	Motomi Shirogane, Satoki Takizawa, Toshiro Yamaguchi, Yasuko Sugiyama, Etsuko Takano
46	JAPAN Youth:	Takashi Sugimoto, Kazuki Iizuka, Kosuke Ito, Kengo Nakasuka, Hisaki Takeda, Sosuke Yagi

1st-round match-ups: 1 vs 33; 2 vs 44; 3 vs 34; 4 vs 27; 5 vs 28; 6 vs 25; 7 vs 30; 8 vs 38; 9 vs 31; 10 vs 40; 11 vs 46; 12 vs 43; 13 vs 32; 14 vs 42; 15 vs 24; 16 vs 36; 17 vs 26; 18 vs 37; 19 vs 41; 20 vs 29; 21 vs 35; 22 vs 45; 23 vs 39

**Today's 1st VuGraph Matches will feature NEDUK (1) vs Aka Maru (33)
and Indonesian Ladies (8) vs Papa & the Rabbits (38)**

Convention Regulations for Side (Pair) Games

(An explanation for foreign players)

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

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

LIST C (Yokohama IMP Pairs/Asuka Cup)

Opening Bids

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

Responses and Rebids

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

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

Competitive Bids

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

Carding

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

LIST D (NEC Cup/Yokohama Swiss Teams)

Category 3 of WBF Systems Policy applies

The 7th Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Congress FUKUOKA, JAPAN, 2012



August 25th - September 2nd, 2012



APBF Team Championships (Open / Women / Senior / Youth)
APBF Open Pairs

The Japan Contract Bridge League would like to welcome our bridge friends from all over the world to participate in the 7th APBF Congress, now an OPEN event similar to the European Open Championships, which will be held in Fukuoka, Japan, from August 25th to September 2nd, 2012.

Fukuoka, a historical city located in the Kyushu island, has developed as the Asian Gateway, connected with direct flights from/to various Asian cities and with ferries from/to Busan, Korea. The venue of the 2012 Congress will be the Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk, the hotel well known as the largest convention and resort hotel in West Japan. We believe that all our friend players, coaches, and officials would love the relaxing atmosphere of the venue and the warmest welcome from the people of Fukuoka.

We look forward to seeing you all and share wonderful moments of bridge and friendship at the 2012 APBF Congress!

Japan Contract Bridge League
2012 APBF Congress Organizing Committee

Venue : Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk

The Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk is located in the city of Fukuoka, on Hakata bay, just 20 minutes drive from Fukuoka International Airport or downtown Fukuoka.

"2012 APBF" website
<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/apbf2012/>



Accommodation ... Reserve at **SPECIAL ROOM RATES** via 2012 APBF website !

- ◆ **Hilton Fukuoka Sea Hawk** - *Stay at the APBF venue!* <http://www.fukuokaseahawk.hilton.com/>
- ◆ **Hyatt Residential Suites Fukuoka** - *With kitchen and laundry/dryer machine!* <http://www.hyatt-rsf.co.jp/>

* All Youth team players participating in the APBF Championships, will be subsidized 2,000 yen per player per night (excluding NPC/coach) by the JCBL.

CONTACT: Japan Contract Bridge League, 2012 APBF Congress Organizing Committee
Phone: 81-3-3357-3741 Fax: 81-3-3357-7444 E-mail: apbf2012@jcbl.or.jp

Provisional Program

*The precise time schedule will be determined based on the final number of participating teams in each series.

APBF Congress Championships			Side-Games	
DATE	TIME	EVENT	TIME	EVENT
8/24 (Fri)	19:00-20:00	APBF Delegates' Meeting (1)		
8/25 (Sat)	10:00-11:00	Captains' Meeting		
	11:00-12:00	APBF Delegates' Meeting (2)		
	12:30-14:00	Opening Ceremony & Welcome Reception		
	14:30-22:00	APBF Open Pairs (Q1/Q2)		
8/26 (Sun)	10:00-17:30	APBF Open Pairs (F1/F2)		
	10:00-17:30	Open Pairs (Consolation)		
8/27 (Mon)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Qualifying (RR)		To be announced
8/28 (Tue)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Qualifying (RR)		To be announced
8/29 (Wed)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Qualifying (RR)		To be announced
8/30 (Thu)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Qualifying (RR)	10:00-17:30	Open Teams (Q1/Q2)
			10:00-17:30	△1000MP Teams (Q1/Q2)
8/31 (Fri)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Qualifying (RR)	10:00-17:30	Open Teams (F1/F2)
			10:00-17:30	△1000MP Teams (F1/F2)
			10:00-17:30	Stratified Pairs
9/ 1 (Sat)	10:00-19:50	APBF Teams Semi-Finals (KO)	10:00-17:30	Fukuoka Mayor's Cup (Q1/Q2) [Open Teams]
9/ 2 (Sun)	10:00-17:30	APBF Teams Final (KO)	10:00-17:30	Fukuoka Mayor's Cup (F1/F2) [Open Teams]
	18:30-21:30	Victory Banquet & Awards Ceremony	10:00-17:30	TV Nishinippon Cup [Open Pairs]



The 2011 NEC Cup: NEDUK vs Heng Sha Ke Ji

Last year's top qualifier Oz Two chose sixth-place Heng Sha Ke Ji as their quarter-final opponent, while NEDUK, who qualified second, chose eighth-place Taipei Weide as their opponent. Third-place Hackett chose fourth-place Beijing Trinergy, which left the fifth-place Bulgarian All Stars to play the seventh-place China Women in their quarter-final match.

As if the old adage "Be careful what you wish for..." was out to prove something, Heng Sha Ke Ji soundly routed top seeded Oz Two, 97-58. The other three higher-qualifying teams all advanced to the semi-finals, though two of them barely held on to 30-plus imp halftime leads (NEDUK edged out Taipei Weide, 85-83, while the Bulgarian All Stars held off China Women, 80-76). Only Hackett managed a convincing win over Beijing Trinergy, 87-51.

In one semi-final Heng Sha Ke Ji found themselves trailing the Bulgarian All Stars by 3 at the half, but took the second half by 11 to advance to the finals, 67-59. In the other semi-final, Hackett took a 15-imp lead over NEDUK at the half, but couldn't hold on as NEDUK won the second half by 34 to advance to the final 82-63.

The 2011 NEC Cup final featured a Netherlands-UK foursome (one pair from each "country") and a sextet from China. All four NEDUK players were veterans of the NEC (with only Louk Verhees-Ricco van Prooijen having made it as far as the semi-finals before), while only three of the six Chinese players (Wang Kui, Liu Haitao, Li Xiaoyi) had NEC Cup experience.

First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

Bd: 1	North
Dlr: North	♠ 106542
Vul: None	♥ QJ
	♦ J42
	♣ 754
West	East
♠ AJ8	♠ ---
♥ 987532	♥ 1064
♦ Q6	♦ AK10987
♣ 109	♣ AKJ2
South	
♠ KQ973	
♥ AK	
♦ 53	
♣ Q863	

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. The Chinese had begun several previous matches poorly and this time was no exception. 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.

In the room where a heart was led (South leading the ♥K, North following with the queen) followed by a trump shift Gold decided that since the defense 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), drew trumps and gave up a heart.

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

Bd: 2	North	
Dlr: East	♠ J7	
Vul: N/S	♥ 10632	
	♦ 1082	
	♣ 10985	
West	East	
♠ 62	♠ A109854	
♥ A985	♥ ---	
♦ Q954	♦ K763	
♣ AK6	♣ 742	
South		
♠ KQ3		
♥ KQJ74		
♦ AJ		
♣ QJ3		

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 the 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 came down to just two diamonds and now could never get the lead. Had he kept three diamonds declarer could have taken the first diamond and returned the suit and East would have had to give up a diamond in the ending. In a way this was 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 (giving a very clear suit-preference signal for diamonds). Declarer now ran the hearts but missed the ending, giving up a diamond prematurely to East who cashed out for down one. Now 16-0 NEDUK.

Bd: 3 North
 Dlr: South ♠ K
 Vul: E/W ♥ A10932
 ♦ 10952
 ♣ A103

West ♠ J3 ♥ Q87 ♦ Q4 ♣ KJ8652	East ♠ A109 ♥ KJ6 ♦ K73 ♣ Q974
-------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

South
 ♠ Q876542
 ♥ 54
 ♦ AJ86
 ♣ ---

Open Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Bakhshi *Li* *Gold* *Liu*
 1NT Pass 2♣ Dbl
 Pass Pass 2♠ Pass
 3NT Pass 4♠ All Pass

Closed Room
West **North** **East** **South**
Peng *v Prooijen* *Wang* *Verhees*
 1NT Pass 2♣ Pass
 2♥ Pass 2♠ All Pass

All Pass

While the Dutch pair had displayed some aggressive preempting over the course of the event, here the Editors charitably preferred to pretend that Verhees had simply pulled the wrong bid out of his box (but in our hearts we knew better). 4♠ was not without play. Witness that 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, Liu scored up +170.

On Peng's low-club lead against 4♠ Verhees won in dummy and immediately took a diamond finesse, which looked 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 won the ♦Q and returned the suit, which let Wang get in with the ♠A to play a third diamond, for the ruff, with a trump trick still to come. Down one, now 16-6.

Bd: 4 North
 Dlr: West ♠ K6
 Vul: Both ♥ 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

East might force to game facing a strong notrump but both Easts invited showing an unbalanced hand. Bakhshi, whose range went 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 (though uninteresting) spot, declarer coming to eight tricks when the defenders got clubs going in time. But 4♠ on a heart lead and continuation was not without play. 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. Gold pitched a diamond, won the ♣Q, and tried to get to hand to draw the last trump. But South ruffed the diamond for down two. 16-13, 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 the hand we doubt anyone could get there intelligently after South bids spades twice.

When Liu led a top spade against 4♥ Gold ducked. Now South could take 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
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ ---
 ♥ Q
 ♦ AJ10964
 ♣ KQ10432

West
 ♠ AQ6
 ♥ 8653
 ♦ Q8732
 ♣ 8

East
 ♠ K94
 ♥ AJ97
 ♦ K5
 ♣ 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

Both Norths bided their time en route to an Unusual 3NT, but both ended up putting their cards down as dummy in 3♠. One club, one heart, one club ruff, three trumps and a slow heart trick all added up to a pair of down 150s for no swing.

Bd: 7
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 632
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 32
 ♣ A86532

West
 ♠ AJ95
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 1098765
 ♣ QJ

East
 ♠ Q10
 ♥ J1065
 ♦ AQJ4
 ♣ 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			

In the Closed room 26imps depended on whether East played South (who was known to have almost solid hearts with the ♠K) for a side ace or for 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. While the ♦K is much more likely for North (South might have a strong club with that card), 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. West could now double responsively, then correct a quasi-

natural 2NT to 3♦, which produced +130 and 14imps. That made it 32-13, NEDUK.

Bd: 8
 Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ A54
 ♥ 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 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 allowing declarer to claim +170.

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

Bd: 9
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 52
 ♥ 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>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

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

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) 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 for down two. ("Wassamarra, you don't trust me?!")

In the other room E/W reached 3NT on a surprisingly unopposed 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 appeared he was playing North to have led a heart from a 3-3-3-4 pattern, but South's duck of the ♠A implied that North must have held the ♣AK originally, or he would have risen and cashed out. Would one really lead a low heart with that hand? 37-13 now.

Bd: 10
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ K983
 ♥ 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	1NT
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	2NT	Pass	2♥
All Pass		Pass	4♥

Both tables reached 4♥. Van Prooijen 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 a club and let declarer get a ruff and discard for his tenth trick. Of course all this required 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 and just played on diamonds, albeit that line would have failed while the actual line worked. Anyway, who can argue with success (except the Editors)?

Liu played 4♥ on a top club lead 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 was not so obvious. Still 37-13, NEDUK.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One said to the other, "You stay here, I'll go on a head."

Bd: 11	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

Dbl(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 it was very hard for South to come back into the auction. True, North might have doubled but this was 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. Still, that was worth 3 imps for NEDUK when the diamond partscore at the other table 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
♠ QJ8764
♥ 3
♦ Q
♣ KQ1092

East
♠ 32
♥ 965
♦ 1087542
♣ 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, the bare ♥Q was a key-card that North was lucky to buy. 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). That made it 53-13, NEDUK.

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

West
 ♠ 106
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ Q2
 ♣ A76432

East
 ♠ AK9842
 ♥ J
 ♦ A10853
 ♣ K

South
 ♠ QJ7
 ♥ A853
 ♦ KJ7
 ♣ QJ10

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
2NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	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♠. On a top club lead declarer drove out the ♥A, won the trump shift, and played 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; +630 for no swing.

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

West
 ♠ 8754
 ♥ QJ7
 ♦ A854
 ♣ J3

East
 ♠ 93
 ♥ A84
 ♦ 7632
 ♣ A984

South
 ♠ AKQJ
 ♥ 10953
 ♦ Q109
 ♣ K10

Open Room

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

All Pass

Closed Room

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

Another quirk of the system ranges here 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 one can see, not only is game no thing of beauty it also goes down if West leads one of his four-card suits. The Editors were strongly torn on this one. RC believed that a spade lead is normal and that a heart lead is too active. BR believed a heart is automatic, especially at teams, as an active defense is expected to be necessary at least half the time and weak four-card suits are for the birds. West was in BR'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 Editors would have done that with passivity 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 and was back to nine tricks.

Six imps to NEDUK, leading 59-13.

Bd: 15
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ AQJ83
 ♥ 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>
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>
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.) Finally some good luck for Hang Sha Ke Ji.

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. 6 imps to Hang Sha Ke Ji, to make the score 59-19.

Bd: 16
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 82
 ♥ 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, settling 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 seemed a "Law" violation. Peng won the opening heart lead and returned the suit, as Verhees gave suit-preference for a club shift. Now down one was the best declarer could do. No swing.

The first quarter came to a close with NEDUK, ahead by 40 imps (59-19), having probably played the best bridge of the tournament, at least as seen on VuGraph.

Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):

Forty-imp leads, while clearly very 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
 Dlr: 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 wasn't 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 won the ace (Gold unblocking the queen) and returned the suit to Gold's king as Liu followed 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 Wang led the ♣10 from his hand and when Verhees played low he 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 working out that his partner was more likely to hold the ♠A than the ♥A, 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
 Dlr: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ KQ7543
 ♥ 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>
			Pass
1♦	2♠	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

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

Different players favor different strategies when they 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. Bakhshi's approach (the one BR espouses) appeared to be to go for the gusto, and he did so with both hands. Unfortunately for him, this time his partner did not contribute a wealth of defense to the cause. Worse still, dummy tabled 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 to take further action. Had East doubled it seems that 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, who trailed now by a more respectable 59-32. Not exactly close...but better.

Bd: 20 North
 Dlr: 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. Turning his attention to clubs, he cashed the ace and ducked the next round to the ten. Liu switched to the ♠Q, got encouragement from Li, and continued with ♠A and a 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 clubs split claimed the rest for +150.

In the Closed Room, playing in the double-jeopardy stage, the defense started the same way. South led the ♥3 and declarer, knowing his ♥A was the only entry to the club suit, inexplicably 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 put 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 8imps back to NEDUK, up 67-32.

Bd: 21 North
 Dlr: 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>
All Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

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

Bd: 22 North
 Dlr: 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>
1♠	2♣	2♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♠	1NT(1)	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	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 have chosen a different characterization if it hadn't worked out). Li attacked with the ♦Q and Liu ducked dummy's king while signaling encouragement. Bakhshi led a trump toward his hand and when Liu followed casually with the four played the ace — not his best move as the defense now took 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 ace and a heart and claimed ten tricks when the suit split nicely; +130, but 2imps to China, inching closer at 67-38.

Bd: 23 North
 Dlr: 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>
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
All Pass			3♣(1)

(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, ruffed back in when Wang played ace and another diamond, 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. 7 more imps to fuel China's comeback, now down 22 at 67-45.

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

Bd: 24 North
 Dlr: 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 have been key to the defense if partner led 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 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 ♥K followed by the ♥J 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 cashed the ♦A and exited with the ♦6, forcing Peng to lead hearts in the three-card ending; +430. Another 11 imps to China, whose comeback gained avalanche-like momentum as they closed to within 11 imps at 67-56.

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. With nothing more to go on Li led the ♣A, then shifted to a trump as dummy's ♠8 held. 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 could 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 wondered why he didn't consider doubling when 2♥ came back to him. (He could easily handle any action partner might have taken 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 to the eight. Wang ruffed, drew declarer's remaining trumps and claimed down two having only good diamonds left; +100 for E/W. That was 3 imps back to NEDUK, leading now 70-56.

Bd: 26
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ K95
 ♥ 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 were available.

Bd: 27
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ A10942
 ♥ 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>
Pass	4♣(2)	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	4♥	All Pass	4♦

(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♦	Pass
3♦	3♠	Pass	Dbf
Pass	5♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			6♥

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.

Slam looks to be 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
 Dir: 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)	Dbf
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 (forcing, we suspect, 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 was our best guess). Gold was no doubt turned off upon hearing that partner's shortness was opposite the only real pride he had in his hand and signed off in 4♠. It was difficult for us to imagine Bakhshi ever having 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 to the queen, king and 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 and Verhees led his stiff diamond — the shortest road to try for a set — to dummy's ace. There was 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 that day 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 11imps to China, closer now at 81-67.

Bd: 29 North
 Dlr: North ♠ A953
 Vul: Both ♥ 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 ace and a low diamond before releasing the ♥K. As expected, Li exited with the ♥J and 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. 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>
		Pass	Pass
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>
		Pass	Pass
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, then a low spade to his nine, Verhees ducking, followed by a diamond to the queen and king. Now the defense cleared 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 now 83-68.

Bd: 31	North		
Dlr: South	♠ K1097		
Vul: N/S	♥ 43		
	♦ Q6		
	♣ AQ843		
West		East	
♠ AQ864		♠ J	
♥ Q		♥ J9652	
♦ K842		♦ J1093	
♣ K106		♣ 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 Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	

2NT

(A power failure on VuGraph resulted in the loss of the auction and play in 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, allowing another singleton honor to score for the defense (a single-deal 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 put off 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.

What we did find out about the auction and play in the Closed Room is that Verhees declared 2NT from the South seat and scored up eight tricks for +120. That was 9 usefulimps to NEDUK, whose lead was back up to 24 at 92-68.

Last board of the second quarter.

Bd: 32	North		
Dlr: West	♠ K852		
Vul: E/W	♥ 852		
	♦ AKJ6		
	♣ 82		
West		East	
♠ A76		♠ J943	
♥ 9		♥ KQJ106	
♦ 10932		♦ 84	
♣ AQ943		♣ 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	1♦	1♥	Dbl
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>v Prooijen Wang</i>	<i>Verhees</i>	
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

You've no doubt heard 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 that just showed values and did not promise 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, switched to diamonds, running four tricks in that suit, then played 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 and another 3imps for China, reducing their deficit to 21 at 92-71 at the half.

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

Somehow NEDUK gained an imp during the break at the half (perhaps a mis-scored board) and entered the third quarter with a 22-imp lead, 93-71.

Bd: 33
Dlr: 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
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
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 when the defenders attacked spades.

Bd: 34
Dlr: 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
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
		1♦	1NT

2♠ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
		1NT	Pass

2♠ Pass Dbl

Pass 3♥ All Pass

While 2♠ would have had five top losers on a heart lead from North, Li led the ♣Q (not unreasonable) and declarer was playing for overtricks. A trump went to North, who shifted to hearts. Verhees wisely rose with the ace, played a second trump, and the defense cashed out before the rats got at their tricks.

In the other room 3♥ (systemically South could not double 1NT with the hand he held but he backed in over 2♠) needed a minor miracle in one of the red suits if the defense was 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
Dlr: 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
Verhees	Li	v Prooijen	Liu
			1♣(STR)

Pass 1NT Pass 2♥

Pass 3♥ Pass 4♣

Pass 4♥ Pass 4♠

Pass 5♥ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Peng	Gold	Wang	Bakhshi
			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 might be it. With no majors you'd prefer partner to bid notrump first. Li did not see it that way and that got his side to the five level when Liu felt compelled to make two slam tries — and who could argue with that view when a bare eight count, ♠KQ and ♦Kx, with no club wastage makes slam excellent? In the Closed Room N/S were never in any danger of going overboard in hearts. After the 2♥ raise East got a spade bid in and declarer had 11 tricks and no more. After a diamond lead declarer could draw 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 a 4♥ opening should be alerted as a transfer of 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, 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. Declarer won in dummy and guessed trumps, leading the ♠10 and having it covered, then gave up

a heart. East ruffed the next club and got out with a diamond, more in hope than with any expectation. His pessimism was justified when 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 the question of whether to raise spades or repeat hearts with the North hand. Both Editors raise frequently with three trumps and so concur with the bid Gold chose. Whether our second choice would have been to rebid 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.

It's not clear whether a diamond lead would have troubled Bakhshi in 2♠, but a top club 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 wait 'till another day.

A backward poet writes inverse.

Bd: 38
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK765
 ♦ K1096
 ♣ A862

North
 ♠ K952
 ♥ J9
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ KJ109

South
 ♠ AQJ1074
 ♥ Q
 ♦ Q72
 ♣ 743

East
 ♠ 863
 ♥ 108432
 ♦ 853
 ♣ Q5

Open Room

West **North** **East** **South**
Verhees *Li* *v Prooijen* *Liu*

Dbf 4♠
 Dbf All Pass

Closed Room

West **North** **East** **South**
Peng *Gold* *Wang* *Bakhshi*

Dbf 4♠ Pass Pass
 Dbf Pass 5♥ Pass
 Pass Dbf All Pass

The Chinese won the auction at both tables, finding that relative rarity, a 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 had been reversed, and if so, how?). Declarer ruffed the second heart, drew trumps, then took a club finesse and eventually a diamond finesse for +590; 9imps to China, making the score 105-80.

Bd: 39
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

West
 ♠ AKJ6
 ♥ A2
 ♦ KQJ6
 ♣ 985

North
 ♠ 7542
 ♥ J1043
 ♦ A532
 ♣ A

South
 ♠ Q108
 ♥ 98
 ♦ 9874
 ♣ K642

East
 ♠ 93
 ♥ KQ765
 ♦ 10
 ♣ QJ1073

Open Room

West **North** **East** **South**
Verhees *Li* *v Prooijen* *Liu*

1♣(STR) Pass 2NT Pass
 3♣ Pass 3♦ Pass
 3NT All Pass

Closed Room

West **North** **East** **South**
Peng *Gold* *Wang* *Bakhshi*

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.

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**
Verhees *Li* *v Prooijen* *Liu*

1♦ Dbf Pass 1NT
 Pass 2♥ Pass 2♠
 Pass 3NT All Pass

Closed Room

West **North** **East** **South**
Peng *Gold* *Wang* *Bakhshi*

1♦ 1♥ Pass 2♦
 Pass 3♣ Pass 4♥
 All Pass

South's bidding from the Open Room looks strange. Why not bid spades initially, even though West might have had a canapé with spades? 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 at 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 back to NEDUK, ahead 106-80.

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: so similar, yet so different. If one trusts one's opponents, a trump lead is called for against 6♠. But no one ever got rich trusting his enemy. Bakhshi led a top heart and declarer gave it the old college try. Ruff, diamond to the king, club to the king as South ducked (necessary but not overly demanding, in context), ♦A pitching a club, club. Bakhshi won and returned the necessary trump to stop the cross-ruff. Now declarer needed both spades and clubs to split to come home. He ruffed the thirteenth club good but when trumps didn't behave he finished down two, -200. Still, given the result from the other room (+680; South in the Open Room did not duck his ♣A and the play was very easy thereafter) noimps were at stake for the extra undertrick.

We should note that while playing on cross-ruff lines looks better single-dummy (you only need to be able to ruff the third diamond low), it also fails.

13 imps to NEDUK, ahead now 119-80.

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		
(1) 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; no swing.

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
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	2♠
Dbl(T/O)	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
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
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Liu</i>
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
<i>Peng</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Wang</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

The armchair analysts on BBO rationalized ace and another trump from East to set this slam but we're always reluctant to lead trumps against slams unless we 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 is with West, as indeed was the case. No swing; 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♥ on a spade lead but in one case declarer was West, in the other 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 ending. 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, cashed the ♦K, then crossed to a trump in dummy (as North pitched a spade) to ruff a diamond high. Then he played ace and ruffed a club, then ruffed another diamond high to produce this 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 line 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 ♠K10. 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 was 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 a 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. 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 to NEDUK, up 140-82.

Bd: 48
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ 97642
 ♥ 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, passed the ♥Q successfully, then ran the ♥J to the king. In desperation South played ♠A, then ♠J, and now declarer had to win and play on diamonds without much grounds for optimism. But 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 moreimps saw NEDUK in the lead by 60, and that was enough for the Hang Sha Ke Ji team, who had played throughout as four and were 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.



NEC Cup Winners

17th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tuesday (Feb. 7)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (1)	416, 417, 418, 419 (14 boards/match)
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (2)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (3)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (4)	
Wednesday (Feb. 8)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (5)	416, 417, 418, 419
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (6)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (7)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (8)	
Thursday (Feb. 9)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (9)	416, 417, 418, 419
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (10)	
	14:20-15:30	Lunch Break	
	15:30-17:30	NEC Cup Swiss (11)	
	17:50-19:50	NEC Cup Swiss (12)	
Friday (Feb. 10)	10:00-12:15	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (1)	416, 417
	12:35-14:50	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (2)	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	(16-board segments)
	16:00-18:15	NEC Cup Semi-Final (1)	416, 417
	18:35-20:50	NEC Cup Semi-Final (2)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama IMP Pairs	501
Saturday (Feb. 11)	10:00-12:15	NEC Cup Final (1)	416, 417
	12:35-14:50	NEC Cup Final (2)	
	14:50-16:00	Lunch Break	(16-board segments)
	16:00-18:15	NEC Cup Final (3)	
	18:35-20:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama Swiss Teams	501, 502
Sunday (Feb. 12)	10:00-17:00	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	501, 502
	18:00-20:00	Closing Ceremony	503

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

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

NEC Cup Final: four 16-board segments

