



NEC Bridge Festival

Sunday, February 16, 2014
Bulletin Number 6

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

Russia is the 2014 NEC Cup Champion

The Russians came close to winning the NEC on several times before they started adding Dutchmen to their team. Now, for the second consecutive year, they have won the NEC Cup in a blowout. Last year they posted one of the most comprehensive victories ever in the NEC when after 48 boards their opponents withdrew trailing 153-53. This year the match again lasted only 48 boards, with the score even more lopsided at 170-53. To quote last year's bulletin, "If they can maintain this sort of form, we expect to see them going on to even greater things at the world level, and very soon." We guess we'll second that observation. Only Israel has won the NEC Cup more than twice (2005, 2006 and 2008). Russia now has the chance to exceed this record if they can win three times in a row. Congratulations to both teams, Russia (Andrey Gromov, Evgeny Gladyshev, Alexander Dubinin, Mikhail Krasnoselskii, Sebastiaan Drijver, Sjoert Brink) and England Hinden (Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Alex Hydes, Mike Bell) for an exciting and successful NEC Cup.



2013 NEC Cup Champions: Russia

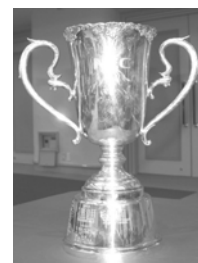


2013 NEC Cup Runners Up: England Hinden



NEC Cup Final: Quarter-by-Quarter Results

Team	C/O	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
England Hinden	.5	23	22	8	W/D	53
Russia		92	40	38		170



The results of the Saturday Pair Games and Yokohama Swiss are on pages 3-4

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

Beginners Cup (-20 / -5 / Debutante) — 13 pairs



Beginners Cup (-20): 1st



Beginners Cup (-5): 1st



Debutante Cup: 1st

Rank (-20)	(-5)	Debutante	Names	Score
1			Yachiyo Nakazawa – Isao Masuyama	259
2			Kazuhiko Osada – Mayumi Nanashima	256
3	1		Toshiji Hiruma – Hiromitsu Ishizumi	113
4			Kimio Nagasaki – Chiseko Morishima	106
5	2		Motoko Hirata – Kunio Hirata	-2
		1	Sawako Honma – Syouko Kumaki	-244

Team Rosters: 19th NEC Cup Final

#	Team Name	Members
2	England Hinden:	Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Alex Hydes, Mike Bell
4	Russia:	Andrey Gromov, Evgeny Gladyshev, Alexander Dubinin, Mikhail Krasnoselskii, Sebastiaan Drijver, Sjoert Brink

Narita Bus Schedule	
From the Intercontinental (120 minutes) ¥3,500	From the YCAT (100 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

Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Standings



Yokohama Swiss teams: Winners



Yokohama Swiss teams: Runners Up

Rank	Score	Team	Team Members
1	106.46	India	Sridharan Padmanabhan, Jyotindra Madhukar Shah, Sundarram Srinivasan, Gopal Venkatesh
2	104.23	Shanghai Fin	Xi Yuheng, Shan Baisong, Liu Ning, Kazuo Furuta, Chen Dawei
3	101.52	Lorentz	Stephen Burgess, Gabi Lorentz, Ashley Bach, Pablo Lambardi
4	101.11	Down Under	Sartaj Hans, Peter Gill, Martin Reid, Peter Newell
5	99.68	Australia	Justin Howard, Peter Hollands, Michael Whibley, Liam Milne
6	98.27	Kitty's	Makiko Sato, Kyoko Toyofuku, Yoshiko Sakaguchi, Toshiko Kaho
7	96.52	England/Den	Paul Hackett, David Bakhshi, Lars Blakset, Thomas Larsen
8	96.10	China Women 2	Zhang Yu, Wu Shaohong, Gan Lin, Huang Yan
9	94.77	MIURA	Hiroaki Miura, Keiko Furuya, Takako Fujimoto, Katsumi Takahashi
10	94.31	NAITO	Ryoga Tanaka, Sakiko Naito, Ayako Miyakuni, Kenji Miyakuni
11	92.60	Beijing Trinergy	Lu Dong, Li Xiaoyi, Kang Meng, Sun Shaolin, Wang Yanhong, Fu Zhong
12	92.53	England Black	Andrew Black, William Whittaker, Gunnar Hallberg, Derek Patterson
13	91.32	Yeh Bros Mixed	Yeh Chen, Zhang Ya-Lan, Shih Jue-Yu, Wang Ping, Sun Ming, Patrick Huang
14	91.08	Bulgaria	Valio Kovachev, Vladislav Isporski, Manol Iliev, Hristo Hristov
15	89.37	FUKUYOSHI	Yuki Fukuyoshi, Takeshi Hanayama, Keisuke Akama, Yasuhiro Shimizu
16	89.16	IMAX	Shunsuke Morimura, Hiroya Abe, Tadashi Imakura, Masayuki Ohashi
17	88.08	VAMOS	Itsuko Sawada, Noriko Yagi, Seiko Hachisu, Junko Takahashi
18	84.86	China Women 1	Wang Hongli, Lu Yan, Wang Wenfei, Ran Jingrong
19	84.62	SARA	Tadashi Teramoto, Kumiko Sasahira, Masaaki Takayama, Takeshi Niekawa, Shugo Tanaka, Ari Greenberg
20	81.88	Yamada	Kyoko Ohno, Akihiko Yamada, Masayuki Ino, Makoto Hirata, Kazuhiko Yamada, Takahiko Hirata
21	80.76	Youth	Kazuyuki Tsuruoka, Sho Akahoshi, Yuki Harada, Takanori Katayama, Takayuki Hino, Hirokana Yuge
22	80.56	TAKASAKI	Megumi Takasaki, Midori Sakamoto, Masayasu Oga, Makoto Kono
23	80.47	India2	Noriko Domichi, Noriko Watanabe, Subhash Chandra Gupta, Rajeshwar Tewari
24	77.01	KAWABATA	Akiko Kawabata, Kenichi Asaoka, Misako Fukazawa, Yasuaki Ii
25	76.41	Hammer	Chung Ilsub, Hwang Inryung, Yang Sungae, Sung Kyunghae
26	75.59	Circle The World	Kyoko Shimamura, Russell H Samuel, Jens Rasmussen, Dick Shek
27	75.50	NABESHIMA	Susumu Nabeshima, Iwao Oishi, Yoko Nakamura, Aiko Nabeshima
28	75.16	KOSAKA	Yasuko Kosaka, Hideto Yamaguchi, Ying Xiaoying, Xi Mang
29	74.19	YOKOI	Hiroki Yokoi, Fumi Tanaka, Masayuki Hayasaka, Katsuhiko Ueki
30	73.30	STEAST	Tadashi Yoshida, LEE Bokhee, KIM Yoonkyung, Park Jungyoon
31	73.23	TAKEMURA	Mitsutaka Takemura, Tsutomu Nakamura, Koichiro Kurata, Yumiko Yamamoto
32	69.83	TSUBAKI	Junko Tsubaki, Akiko Miyata, Kazuko Okamoto, Takako Nakatani
33	69.82	SUMITA	Takashi Sumita, Yoko Fukuyama, Mark LaForge, Sue Grenside, Sue Picus
34	69.21	Edelweiss	Haruko Koshi, Yayoi Sakamoto, Terumi Kubo, Yoko Oosako
35	66.58	KinKi	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka
36	66.15	Shirogumi	Robert Geller, Setsuko Oghara, Motomi Shirogane, Kikuyo Yamamura
37	61.22	Ganso Handai	Koji Hashimoto, Masako Hashimoto, Shinichi Kobayashi, Toshiro Aizawa
38	60.25	ENJOYBRIDGE	Masaru Naniwada, Mitsuyo Naniwada, Ryo Matsubara, Ayako Matsubara
39	58.32	SAKABE	Fumiko Sakabe, Kazuko Nakagawa, Takeo Takatori, Taro Shibuya
40	54.47	YMK	Michiko Ono, Yasuko Gondo, Yoko Nishi, Keiko Kimura
41	52.65	Fujiazami	Yoko Kato, Shizuyo Nakagawa, Mari Sou, Chikayo Miyako
42	48.68	Harmony	Natsuko Nishida, Kim Sun Young, Bae In Soon, Choi An Hee, Choi Eun Woo
43	42.17	Dangoon	Cho Eunjoo, Hwang Mansuk, Im Hyun, Kwon Soja

NEC Semi-finals (2nd half): Down Under vs England Hinden

by Barry Rigal



Hinden



Hans



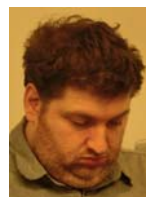
Gill



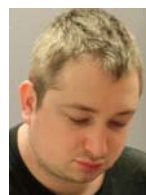
Osborne



Reid



Hydes



Bell



Newell

Both matches were desperately close at the half: Hinden led by 8imps, Beijing Trinergy by 1 imp.

Bd: 17
Dlr: North
Vul: None

North
♠ AKQJ3
♥ AJ653
♦ 72
♣ 6

West
♠ 9765
♥ Q1092
♦ 9654
♣ 3

East
♠ 42
♥ K4
♦ KQ83
♣ AK987

South
♠ 108
♥ 87
♦ AJ10
♣ QJ10542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
	1♣(STR)	1♦(1)	2♣
2♥	Pass	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

(1) Two suits of the same rank

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1♠	2♣	Pass
Pass	Dbf	All Pass	

I'm surprised Hans did not double 3♦ here: declarer will surely be going at least a couple down (and as the cards lie, maybe more). Defending 4♠ Osborne led a top diamond and Gill ducked. Osborne cashed a top club, then played a second diamond rather than a spade, perhaps trying to dislodge a dummy

entry. Declarer finessed in diamonds, then in hearts, and now Osborne shifted to trumps. Declarer had three red winners and a heart ruff plus five trumps, but that was it. In the other room 2♣x on a top spade lead was no fun at all. N/S kept leading winning spades, and over-ruffing declarer, who eventually found a way to take three clubs and one trick in each red suit for down 500. Hinden had 11imps and led by 9.

By contrast, Drijver-Brink ran from 2♣x to 2♦x when Drijver rebid 2♦ after the double of 2♣ by North (well judged) and on a spade lead got out for down one for 1 imp when 2♠ scored +140 in the Closed Room.

Bd: 18
Dlr: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ 83
♥ Q85
♦ KJ83
♣ Q1087

West	East
♠ KJ97	♠ AQ62
♥ A7	♥ KJ642
♦ AQ654	♦ 2
♣ A4	♣ KJ2

South
♠ 1054
♥ 1093
♦ 1097
♣ 9653

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
		1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT(1)	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		
(1) Non-serious			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		1♣(14+)	Pass
1♥(♠)	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥(♦+♠)	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣(1)	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦(2)	Pass	4♥	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Reid showed his 4=2=5=2 pattern at his third turn, then seven controls, and Newell settled for the small slam. In the other room it was Hinden as West who knew she was not facing any real extras and who put on the brakes early. 7♠ is certainly playable but the weak trump spots make you dependent on some moderately favorable lies of the cards. With spades and hearts behaving there were no losing lines in 6♠. But what about 7♠? Brink and Drijver got there on a trump lead and now Brink was faced with an interesting choice of lines. Determining that the trump lead made that suit a heavy favorite to be breaking, he ruffed three diamonds in dummy, using his two aces followed by a club ruff as hand entries. Then he drew trumps and cashed his ♦Q for the 13th trick. The Russian lead was up to 11 imps.

Everyone bid to a normal 4♥ game needing to find a favorable position in either spades or hearts, and everyone duly made ten or 11 tricks. Then Hydes and Bell picked up a couple of imps for playing the best partscore on the most favorable lead. Time for something a little more glamorous — or not.

Bd: 21	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AQ95		
Vul: N/S	♥ KJ		
	♦ Q852		
	♣ 1092		
		East	
West		♠ 8	
♠ KJ2		♥ 8652	
♥ A1097		♦ KJ6	
♦ A1097		♣ AJ863	
♣ Q7			
	South		
	♠ 107643		
	♥ Q43		
	♦ 43		
	♣ K54		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2♠	4♥	All Pass

Hinden's pass over 1♠ surprises me a little. In the context of the loose diamond played in both rooms, this looks like the best moment to get into your opponents' auction safely. At your next turn the risk goes up dramatically since both opponents will be limited and can double you more freely. Whatever the rights and wrongs here, Hinden stayed out altogether and led the ♣Q against 2♠. Declarer won in hand and led a spade to the queen, as who would not? That was down one, but an almost irrelevant result compared to that in 4♥, reached after a somewhat (okay, somewhat more than "somewhat") frisky leap to game by East in the Closed Room. Don't we all have Lebensohl or the like agreements here to invite game? 4♥ was certainly no better than the club finesse and declarer knew his fate at trick 2 after a spade lead and club shift. Hinden had 4 imps to lead by 23 imps.

In our other match Beijing made 1NT in one room when Gromov passed the North hand (!) and his teammates beat 4♥ in the other room when Brink deemed the West hand worthy of a 1NT overcall in sandwich seat. I'm sure the advocates of Banzai points are nodding their head approvingly. 4 imps to Russia, to reduce the margin to 6 imps.

Hinden then added 3 imps by playing a vastly superior major-suit game, then posted something far weightier here.

Bd: 23	North		
Dlr: South	♠ KJ9843		
Vul: Both	♥ 6		
	♦ 976		
	♣ KQ6		
		West	East
		♠ 75	♠ Q10
		♥ 72	♥ AQ10543
		♦ 5432	♦ A
		♣ A7532	♣ 10984
		South	
		♠ A62	
		♥ KJ98	
		♦ KQJ108	
		♣ J	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♠	2♥	Dbl(3♠)
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			1♦
Pass	2♠(Inv.)	3♥	Dbl
All Pass			

Against 4♠ the defenders have three aces and a diamond ruff before they start. However, one can hardly blame Osborne for leading clubs to try to set up a slow winner there at once. The defenders took the ♣A, ♥A, ♦A and played a second heart. Gill won, then cashed the ♠A and finessed in spades, which looks like the indicated play to me. Peter Newell had not enjoyed his previous doubled contract and this was no fun either. After a top diamond lead there might have been a trump reduction play if he had left hearts alone altogether. But it was very tempting to cash the ♥A and go after that suit, then clubs. When there was no joy in Muddville Newell had struck out to the tune of -800 and Hinden had 14 imps to lead by 40 imps.

Both defenses in Beijing Trinergy-Russia started with the ♦A and scored the ruff to set the contract by force and leave declarer no regrets.

Bd: 24 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 1076
 Vul: None ♥ KJ10962
 ♦ 82
 ♣ 74

West
 ♠ AQ98
 ♥ Q84
 ♦ J4
 ♣ J1095

East
 ♠ K54
 ♥ A53
 ♦ AQ10653
 ♣ 2

South
 ♠ J32
 ♥ 7
 ♦ K97
 ♣ AKQ863

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Although Down Under gained 6 imps here they were undoubtedly treading on very dangerous ground. Reid stretched his weak notrump and Newell drove to game, leaving Hydes to lead a heart (as might we all) and set up that suit for declarer. After the diamond finesse lost, South played clubs from the top and declarer claimed nine tricks. In the other room Hinden went quietly again, selling out to 3♥, against which E/W took their club ruffs to go with their three spades and two trumps. Down three, but the Hinden lead was down to 34 imps.

In Russia-Beijing both tables got to 3NT and on a heart lead Brink wrapped up his +400 in no time at all. Meanwhile, Dubinin doubled 3NT as South and whether that called for a club lead or a short-suit lead Gromov, as North, was up to the task, leading a club for +300. Of course a spade lead by North would not have done the job, so all credit to N/S for having the right understandings in place. (According to Dubinin the double was "just bridge.") That was 12 imps in, instead of 4 away, and Russia led by 21 imps now.

Bd: 25 North
 Dlr: North ♠ J6
 Vul: E/W ♥ 2
 ♦ K10876
 ♣ KJ864

West
 ♠ 10975
 ♥ A85
 ♦ Q943
 ♣ 75

East
 ♠ AKQ2
 ♥ Q43
 ♦ J5
 ♣ AQ93

South
 ♠ 843
 ♥ KJ10976
 ♦ A2
 ♣ 102

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
	1♦	Dbf	1♥
1♠	2♣	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	3♥
3♠	All Pass	Dbf	Pass

Hinden's 1♠ bid would surely be a unanimous choice here, which argues that since game is nothing special, maybe the East hand is worth nothing more than a strong invitation. Hinden played 4♠ on a heart lead and when she put up the queen, the hand was over. South covered with the king and declarer could scramble two club ruffs in her hand while drawing trumps, but had to lose four red tricks at the end. Instead, try winning the first heart in hand while preserving the queen. Then club finesse, ♣A, club ruff, ♠K, club ruff and the two master trumps. This is the ending:

North	
♠ ---	
♥ ---	
♦ K1087	
♣ K	
West	East
♠ ---	♠ 2
♥ 85	♥ Q4
♦ Q94	♦ J5
♣ ---	♣ ---
South	
♠ ---	
♥ KJ10	
♦ A2	
♣ ---	

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		1♣(14+)	1♦
Pass	3♦	Dbl	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

The key now is whether to play North to have opened a seven-count or to play for South to have responded 1♥ (not 2♥) with a four-count. Assuming South would always preempt here with that hand (but then again he might well have doubled the final contract with his actual hand) you can succeed now by leading the low diamond from dummy. If South ducks he will inevitably be endplayed on the second diamond. If he rises with the ace declarer builds a trick from dummy's heart or her own diamonds. 3♠ made +140 in the Closed Room (notice how awkward E/W were finding it to identify ranges when the strong club starts at 14) so the lead was down to 28imps.

When Reid heard his partner double for takeout a lesser man might have introduced his six-card suit. But minors are for children, so a round later he found himself with the dubious pleasure of declaring his four-three fit at the four level against the five-one break. Still, nobody doubled, and after three rounds of diamonds declarer could score one ruff in hand at once and one later. He scrambled a sort of crossruff to end with eight tricks, and was doubtless happy to leave with -200.

Both N/S pairs in our other match bought the hand in 3♣ after North opened 2NT, and the non-aggression pact in place meant that nobody doubled. (Shouldn't East's second double after having first doubled 2NT be penalty? After all, he has so many cue-bids available.) 2 undertrick imps for Russia; ahead by 24.

In the other room the heavy 1♥ opening took N/S out of trouble, and had Osborne simply passed out 3NT he would have collected his plus score. Still, with a shrewd suspicion that the opponents were short of values for their bidding thus far (where *did* that 3NT bid come from?) he doubled, and Hans decided discretion was the better part of valor. In 4♦ Gill ruffed a club in hand to establish that suit, then led hearts toward dummy and claimed +130. Easy game, bridge, but 2 imps to Hinden.

Bd: 26	North
Dlr: East	♠ Q7642
Vul: Both	♥ 1085
	♦ AQ97
	♣ 3
West	East
♠ 983	♠ AKJ5
♥ 74	♥ AQ932
♦ 63	♦ 108
♣ 1087642	♣ AK
South	
♠ 10	
♥ KJ6	
♦ KJ542	
♣ QJ95	

Russia bought the hand in 1♥ when Li did not balance, and in 3♦ when Gromov-Dubin in elected not to investigate game too fully as N/S. Surprising, that.

Bd: 27	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q97
Vul: None	♥ A4
	♦ AKQ6
	♣ QJ106
West	East
♠ K654	♠ 1082
♥ 105	♥ 96
♦ J108754	♦ 3
♣ 7	♣ AK85432
South	
♠ AJ3	
♥ KQJ8732	
♦ 92	
♣ 9	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
		1♥	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Dbl	4♦
All Pass			

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
			1♥
Pass	2♣	3♣	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			4♥

All Pass

I'm not sure I can find it in my heart to argue with the Closed Room auction here. Yes slam is excellent, even after a club lead, though without any opposition bidding one might have to guess how to play the hand on a club lead to the ace and a spade shift. I'm sure you would get it right at the table.

Hans, whose 4NT bid looks a trifle sporting, received repeated club leads (one high, one low) and ruffed high, then drew trumps and passed the ♣Q for his 12th trick. The lead was down to 19imps with plenty of time to go.

In our second match, though, the death-knell for Beijing Trinergy rang when Wang reached slam on an auction where his opponents had stayed silent throughout. He received a club lead to the ace and a low club back, and ruffed low. What is the Chinese for "Bozhe moi"? That made an 11-imp swing to Russia instead of the other way and instead of a 17 imp lead, the margin had ballooned to 39imps.

Over the next three deals Down Under chipped away just a little more at the lead. They bid the best game here:

♠ A10	♠ KJ972
♥ A86	♥ K102
♦ KQJ9	♦ A
♣ A1096	♣ Q432

When they played 3NT, not 5♣, for a few overtricks and had now cut the lead to 16imps. But there were just two deals to go and some action was needed.



"Watch it, buddy, I know karate!"

Bd: 31 North
 Dir: South ♠ A97642
 Vul: N/S ♥ J84
 ♦ 1084
 ♣ A

West	East
♠ 10	♠ KQJ85
♥ AKQ72	♥ 9653
♦ J6	♦ 95
♣ KQ1063	♣ J7

South
 ♠ 3
 ♥ 10
 ♦ AKQ732
 ♣ 98542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Hans</i>
			1♦
1♥	1♠	3♥	4♣
4♥	5♦	All Pass	

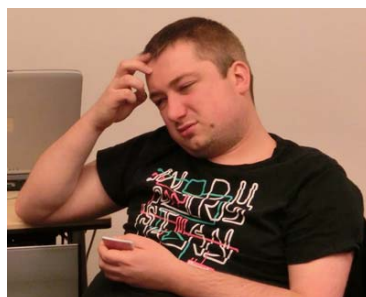
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Reid</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			3♦
3♥	5♦	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

With both spades and clubs failing to behave, the two-two trump break was not close to being enough for Hans to come to 11 tricks. The defenders led a top heart, shifted to trumps, and declarer emerged with nine tricks by ruffing a club in dummy but could do no better than that. In the other room N/S timed the auction well to persuade their opponents to save, and the defenders led the ♣A and cashed their four top winners while taking a club ruff for 500. The 12imps here made the match safe for Hinden.

In our second semi-final, 3 undertrickimps to Russia (from 5♦-1 and 4♦x-1, which was cutting it a little fine by Brink-Drijver) made the final score 97-53. Russia had held Beijing Trinergy to 5imps in the second half.

One final partscore swing to Hinden left them the winners by 97-64. After a bad start to the first set they had comprehensively outscored their opponents 96-35 over the last 26 deals of the match.



"I wonder...is that a transfer?"

NEC Final (1st Quarter): England Hinden vs Russia

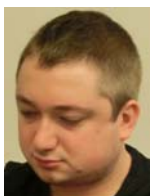
by Barry Rigal



Gladysh



Hydes



Bell



Kras'skii



Hinden



Drijver



Brink



Osborne

Bd: 1
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ AQJ6
♥ 108
♦ Q73
♣ Q954

West
♠ K104
♥ K965
♦ AK10
♣ 1086

East
♠ 952
♥ QJ
♦ 98642
♣ K32

South
♠ 873
♥ A7432
♦ J5
♣ AJ7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♦(♥)
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	All Pass	

After Hydes' weak notrump the defense to 2♥ saw a diamond lead and spade shift. When the finesse held Hydes ducked a trump and the defenders continued trumps. Declarer lost the five red winners and did not need the club finesse when everything broke for him. 1♠ was a slightly more comfortable spot. The defenders led a diamond to the king and a low heart back. Declarer won, played a second diamond, and avoided any trump promotions by discarding a club when West played a third heart. He lost two hearts and two diamonds and Russia had first blood at 1-0.

There was no swing on the second deal, after an

adjusted score arising out of misinformation. Then the fun started.

Bd: 3
Dir: South
Vul: E/W

North
♠ Q842
♥ 6
♦ AK
♣ AKJ1042

West
♠ 73
♥ AJ4
♦ QJ732
♣ 973

East
♠ 1095
♥ KQ75
♦ 1084
♣ Q85

South
♠ AKJ6
♥ 109832
♦ 965
♣ 6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♦(♥)
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♣(2+)	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♠(1)
Pass	4♣(2)	Pass	4♦(3)
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

- (1) In conjunction with the 1♦ bid, 4-4+ majors, INV
- (2) Do you like your hand; specifically your trumps
- (3) Yes, and KJ10x or better in spades

You might care to speculate on how many expert pairs would get this deal right. Yes, a strong club auction might do the trick but what impressed me was that we've already seen three deals this week where this partnership had an unusual gadget in a slam-going auction to find out what they needed to know. Drijver had a serious 3NT and a 4♦ slam-try available if he needed them, both of which would have focused on other problems on the deal. They do not play cue-bidding at all in these auctions, which is to me both interesting and unusual. Against the slam the defenders cashed a top heart and shifted to diamonds. Declarer cashed the ♣A, ruffed a club, took the ♠AK, ruffed a heart to hand and a club to dummy, came back to hand with a top diamond and drew trump and claimed. Very nicely done.

The auction in the other room was all about getting to game, and so Russia had 11 imps to lead 12-0.

Bd: 4 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 10943
 Vul: Both ♥ Q
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ A109873

West	East
♠ 8	♠ QJ
♥ KJ87432	♥ 96
♦ 10976	♦ 8432
♣ 5	♣ KQ642

South
 ♠ AK7652
 ♥ A105
 ♦ AJ5
 ♣ J

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
3♥	Pass	4♣	4♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣(1)	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Dbl	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♥(2)
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

- (1) Slam try
- (2) Last Train

Another tailor-made opportunity for Brink-Drijver to show their mettle. Brink heard his partner cooperate for slam, and when the club response was doubled that made his hand even better. He found a diamond card, then focused on a heart control. (I'm not sure what he would have done had all he needed been

third-round heart control, but North didn't care.) When trumps were two-one South could claim 13 tricks and a 17 imp pick-up when Krasnoselski's 4♣ lead-directing response completely stymied N/S. It was 29-0 now for Russia.

After both tables played 3NT, down on a four-zero break offside, Hinden got on the board.

Bd: 6 North
 Dlr: East ♠ K652
 Vul: E/W ♥ KJ1073
 ♦ K10
 ♣ Q5

West	East
♠ AQJ9	♠ 7
♥ 82	♥ A654
♦ 942	♦ A875
♣ A1082	♣ KJ96

South
 ♠ 10843
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ QJ63
 ♣ 743

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♠	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♥	Dbl	2♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
1♥(♠)	Dbl	1♣	Pass
3♣	All Pass	Pass	Pass

The finals of a major championship may rarely have featured such a ridiculous disparity between the valuation of a hand as the two Wests displayed here. Admittedly Gladys expected to be facing more shape than he was, but after the drive to game wasn't 3♣ enough at the next turn? Krasnoselski obviously expected at least one more ace to come down in dummy. The good news was that bidding slam and not being doubled when partscore is the limit may not be a tragedy. The bad news was that the imps for three down vulnerable add up pretty fast. Against 3♣ Brink led a trump and declarer ended up taking four red suit winners and five trump tricks. In slam on a heart lead declarer scrambled his way glumly to nine tricks as well, but it was 29-9 now for Russia.

Bd: 7
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 65
 ♥ J1042
 ♦ 10764
 ♣ AQ2

West
 ♠ KQ43
 ♥ A65
 ♦ AKJ83
 ♣ 10

East
 ♠ AJ97
 ♥ K
 ♦ Q952
 ♣ K843

South
 ♠ 1082
 ♥ Q9873
 ♦ ---
 ♣ J9765

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♣(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣(2)	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT(3)	Pass	6♠	All Pass

- (1) Bal/18+
- (2) Relay 18+
- (3) ♠Q+ ♦K

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	1NT(!!)
4♣	4♥	Pass	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All Pass			

This was a somewhat unlucky board for Hinden, though in hindsight, I suppose, Osborne might have been able to find a way to 6♦. In the Open Room West set up a game-force and showed four spades facing his partner's known four-card suit. An exchange of cue-bids saw the slam reached from the safer hand. Bell led a trump and when both hands followed to the second trump declarer claimed.

In the other room Brink not only came in vulnerable to show his two-suiter of power and quality, he doubled the final slam and hit his partner's ace to get the ruff. Some nice creativity there, though I suppose if the slam had been doubled and redoubled and cold for an overtrick we would have been a trifle less sympathetic. It was 46-9 now.

Bd: 8
 Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ K1043
 ♥ 1032
 ♦ A98
 ♣ KQ7

West
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ J974
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ J943

East
 ♠ J62
 ♥ KQ8
 ♦ K654
 ♣ A106

South
 ♠ A875
 ♥ A65
 ♦ 732
 ♣ 852

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	1♦(1)	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

(1) Diamonds or a balanced 11-13

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Hydes found the obvious rebid with his balanced hand and was rewarded when, in an effort to be equally creative, Krasnoselski hit his partner's suit by leading the ♠J. Hydes knew what to do now and when he set up his club winner he had seven tricks off the top.

Osborne led a top heart against 1NT and Drijver won in dummy to lead a club to the king, then a spade to dummy for a club to the queen. Osborne won and set up the diamonds for his side, leaving declarer with just five tricks. The 6 imps made it 46-15 now.

Bd: 9
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ Q6
 ♥ 986
 ♦ Q643
 ♣ A965

West
 ♠ 7
 ♥ KQJ75
 ♦ 9
 ♣ KJ10873

East
 ♠ K109842
 ♥ A43
 ♦ 852
 ♣ 2

South
 ♠ AJ53
 ♥ 102
 ♦ AKJ107
 ♣ Q4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		Pass	1NT
2♥(1)	Pass	Pass	Dbf
3♣	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	Pass	2♠	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

One can hardly blame Hydes for leading trumps against 3♥, after which declarer won in dummy and led a club to the jack and shortly after that entered +170 on his scorecard. Note that an initial diamond lead might well have worked much better, with a defense straight out of Reese's "Expert Game." If declarer ruffs and crosses to dummy to lead a trump to his jack, North should duck. The easiest way to make the game is to ruff a club now, but declarer might continue with the ♣K, which would be ducked around. When the queen appears declarer must now lead another club and discard a spade from dummy rather than ruffing. If declarer and the defense do all of that someone would win an award.

In the other room you can choose your adjective for Osborne's 2♠ opening in second seat vulnerable. I'll offer "sporting" though you might well select something more pejorative. His opponents riposted by waltzing into 3NT and now the spade opening lead is truly questionable; put me down for a low heart though this problem is susceptible of an "anything else in your hand" answer both in theory and practice. Drijver had nine tricks now and Russia had 11 imps to lead 57-15...with more to come.

Bd: 10
 Dlr: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ A9543
 ♥ K102
 ♦ K95
 ♣ A3

West
 ♠ 1062
 ♥ Q975
 ♦ Q108
 ♣ J84

East
 ♠ J7
 ♥ AJ3
 ♦ 742
 ♣ K9762

South
 ♠ KQ8
 ♥ 864
 ♦ AJ63
 ♣ Q105

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The editors are for once united in their opinion that if push came to shove (and the editors *are* pushy) they would rather drive to three notrump than insist on playing the spade game with a five-three fit, but that the first preference would be to offer a choice of games, as was done in the Closed Room. Of course we both come from a school where judgment overrides system and we can raise spades with three trumps — *quelle horreur!*

Thus, we both buy wholeheartedly into Brink's approach to the North cards and would not touch Hydes' approach with the proverbial barge-pole. The fact that 3NT on a low heart lead was a far superior spot, especially when Brink made the correct play at trick one of ducking in dummy, does not surprise us. Osborne won the jack, returned ace and another heart, and declarer had nine tricks at once. In the other room the fate of 4♠ hinged on the guess to trick one when East led a club. Declarer put in dummy's ten and was effectively doomed now. He took an early diamond finesse, and when Gladys won his ♦Q he shifted to a low heart, forcing Hydes to rise with the king for a swift two down. Unlucky, but not that unlucky. It was 70-15 now.

Bd: 11
 Dlr: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 42
 ♥ KQJ5
 ♦ 10
 ♣ Q97432

West
 ♠ A1095
 ♥ 104
 ♦ KQ9642
 ♣ 5

East
 ♠ K86
 ♥ A97632
 ♦ 87
 ♣ KJ

South
 ♠ QJ73
 ♥ 8
 ♦ AJ53
 ♣ A1086

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
			1♣
1♦	Dbl(♥)	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♦	3♣	All Pass	

The somewhat random nature of which minor South opened made a big difference, though Osborne's silence at all three of his turns — arguably with the best hand at the table — is somewhat surprising. He should surely have tried 3♦ over 3♣. In the other room it was far harder for N/S to get to precisely 3♣ (though using Lebensohl over 2♦ might allow you to do so). After all, who plays 2NT natural these days other than the Senior Editor? (*Au naturel*, perhaps, but never natural. —S.E.) Both partscores made nine tricks. In 2♦ West guessed clubs and kept North off lead so that the heart loser went away. Russia led 76-15 now.

After a low-level partscore for E/W, Russia set out to expand its lead.

Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ ---
Vul: Both	♥ 10753
	♦ K109
	♣ AKJ983

West	East
♠ KQ87432	♠ J96
♥ A8	♥ K964
♦ Q3	♦ A62
♣ Q4	♣ 1072

South
♠ A105
♥ QJ2
♦ J8754
♣ 65

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			1♠(♦)
2♠	3♣	Pass	Pass
4♠	4NT	Pass	5♦
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
			1NT
2♠	4♣	4♠	All Pass

Osborne did well to compete to 4♠, since it is far from clear that Hinden would have found another call at the four level had he passed. Of course you could argue that since 4♠ had no sensible play, even when facing that monster as West, then his action was unjustified. But since Drijver led a top club and shifted to a diamond, that line of argument might be difficult to support. Plus 620 was a great result but it was not enough. Hydes took something of a flier to bid on to 5♦ and Bell in 5♦ ruffed the spade opening lead to play on hearts. The defenders took their ruff and played a second spade, and now Bell won and led out three clubs, letting East ruff in with the ♦Q and that was -800. 81-15 now for Russia.

Bd: 14	North
Dlr: East	♠ 54
Vul: None	♥ K10976
	♦ Q10876
	♣ 4

West	East
♠ AK3	♠ J10982
♥ A4	♥ Q8
♦ K9	♦ 52
♣ AKJ1082	♣ 7653

South
♠ Q76
♥ J532
♦ AJ43
♣ Q9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			Pass
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♣
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
			Pass
6♠	All Pass	2♠	

Hydes led a heart against 3NT and declarer claimed 11 tricks, which could have been 13. Meanwhile, in 6♠ declarer needed to find the doubleton ♠Q; we have all been in worse, but it wasn't his day. 11 more imps made it 92-15 to Russia.

Bd: 15	North
Dlr: South	♠ 108753
Vul: N/S	♥ A985
	♦ KJ83
	♣ ---

West	East
♠ 9	♠ AQJ62
♥ Q10743	♥ K62
♦ AQ642	♦ 10
♣ J6	♣ A1075

South
♠ K4
♥ J
♦ 975
♣ KQ98432

Open Room
 West North East South
Gladysh Hydes Kras'skii Bell
 3♣
 Pass Pass 3♠ Pass
 4♥ All Pass
 Closed Room
 West North East South
Hinden Drijver Osborne Brink
 3♣
 All Pass

Against 4♥ Hydes led a low spade — a good start. Declarer, with a slow club loser, finessed and Bell took his king and exited in spades. Declarer pitched

his club, then cross-ruffed spades and diamonds, Bell taking the opportunity to ruff in and help promote a trump for his partner. Eventually declarer had to lead a club and concede the ruff to the ♥4, with two natural trump losers to follow. Down one cost 8imps, since 3♣ on a spade lead lost both the pointed aces and five trump tricks sooner or later.

The final score became 92-23 when the N/S pairs at both tables brought home 12 tricks in 4♠ off the red aces. Hinden had come back already in this tournament, but they would surely have their work cut out for them if they were to prevent Russia retaining their title.

NEC Final (2nd Quarter): England Hinden vs Russia

by Rich Colker



Trailing by 69imps (92-23) after just 16 boards requires some serious work, the kind that resides just beyond the road sign up ahead reading: The Twilight Zone. Don't believe us? Just ask Alex Hydes...

Bd: 17
 Dir: North
 Vul: None

North
♠ KJ74
♥ 94
♦ J105432
♣ 2

West
♠ A103
♥ 75
♦ 96
♣ AKJ974

East
♠ Q965
♥ AQ63
♦ 87
♣ Q65

South
♠ 82
♥ KJ1082
♦ AKQ
♣ 1083

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1♠	Pass	2♥
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♥
2♣	Dbl	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Not that E/W can make anything special here (3♣ seems to be the limit), but wouldn't you like to go plus as N/S playing in diamonds? Oh well, one can't expect the precision of a scalpel when one operates with a hacksaw. Hydes' psychic 1♠, combined with Bell's 2♥ response, blew E/W completely out of the auction when Krasnoselski lacked sufficient strength or shape to come in as a first actor at the three level and the opponents had stopped in Gladysh's best suit. Krasnoselski led the ♣A and shifted immediately

to a trump. Gladysch won the ace and continued the suit. Bell ducked this around to the nine, crossed back to hand with a diamond, cashed the ♠K, unblocked the top diamonds (Gladysch pitching a spade), then played a spade and guessed well to rise with the king when Krasnoselski followed low. Now a diamond allowed Bell to pitch a club loser as Gladysch ruffed with the ♥Q. Bell still had two more black-suit tricks to lose but scored up a nice +110.

In the Closed Room Hinden got to make the overcall that Krasnoselski in the Open Room would have liked to have made and then pushed for the game based on his sixth club (which some might argue he showed when he bid 2♣ on the previous round). In any case, Dubinin led the ♦K, got an encouraging deuce from his partner, and continued with the other two top diamonds, Gromov signaling for a spade switch with the ♦J on the third round. Dubinin obeyed and now all Osborne could do, with the 1♥ opening on his left (and thus, given the limited nature of South's opening bid, the ♠K clearly in North), was to cash out for down one, -50. That was 2 imps for Hinden (trailing 92-25, now) and a clear vindication for Hydes' psychic (just ask him).

Bd: 18 North
 Dir: East ♠ J10985
 Vul: N/S ♥ A
 ♦ K3
 ♣ Q5432

West
 ♠ AQ64
 ♥ Q9853
 ♦ 5
 ♣ A107

East
 ♠ K73
 ♥ K1076
 ♦ AQ84
 ♣ 98

South
 ♠ 2
 ♥ J42
 ♦ J109762
 ♣ KJ6

Open Room

West <i>Kras'skii</i>	North <i>Hydes</i>	East <i>Gladysch</i>	South <i>Bell</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Hinden</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Osborne</i>	South <i>Dubinin</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Both West's reached the good 4♥ contract and got the ♠J for the opening lead. In the Open Room Krasnoselski won the king in dummy and led a heart

to the queen and ace, which should have resulted in his making ten tricks. But when Hydes got out with the ♠8 Bell inexplicably ruffed with a natural trump trick and now dummy's club loser went away on the fourth spade; +450. In the Closed Room Hinden won the opening lead in hand, led a heart toward dummy, and when the ace showed up she too scored up +450 for a push. Still 92-25.

Bd: 19 North
 Dir: South ♠ AQJ6
 Vul: E/W ♥ K9
 ♦ A106
 ♣ 10642

West
 ♠ 92
 ♥ 732
 ♦ QJ432
 ♣ J98

East
 ♠ K10754
 ♥ J1086
 ♦ K8
 ♣ AK

South
 ♠ 83
 ♥ AQ54
 ♦ 975
 ♣ Q753

Open Room

West <i>Kras'skii</i>	North <i>Hydes</i>	East <i>Gladysch</i>	South <i>Bell</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	Dbl
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West <i>Hinden</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Osborne</i>	South <i>Dubinin</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
All Pass			

Playing 1NT from the North seat in the Open Room Hydes received a low spade lead. He won the queen, played a club to the king, won the heart return in hand, played another club to the ace, ducked the ♦K switch and won the diamond continuation, cashed two clubs, then threw Gladysch in with the fourth heart to lead a spade at trick 12 for a cool +150.

Playing 1NT from the South seat in the Closed Room Dubinin received a low diamond lead, ducked to the king, followed by the ♥J switch. He won in dummy and led a club. Osborne won the king, cashed the ace, then got out with a diamond. Dubinin ducked, won the diamond continuation (Osborne pitching a spade), crossed to the ♣Q, took a losing spade finesse, and claimed eight tricks for +120. Another imp to Hinden, who trailed now 92-26. At this rate watching our hair grow (or as the Junior Editor who has precious little hair to watch obstinately has it,

watching paint dry) would be about equally exciting.

Bd: 20 North
 Dir: West ♠ K75
 Vul: Both ♥ 7
 ♦ AQ842
 ♣ Q1075

West
 ♠ 10963
 ♥ A1065
 ♦ K10
 ♣ 843

East
 ♠ A84
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ 53
 ♣ AKJ96

South
 ♠ QJ2
 ♥ J9843
 ♦ J976
 ♣ 2

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	1♦	Dbl	3♦
Dbl	All Pass		

Krasnoselski's 2♠ contract in the Open Room could not be described as a thing of beauty, except, perhaps by contrast with the contract in the Closed Room. (But more about that later.) Hydes led his stiff heart. Krasnoselski won the ten, ducked a spade to the jack and lost a heart ruff. He won the club return and cashed the ♠A, the ♥K, the ♣K (Bell pitching a heart) and exited with a club. Hydes won the ten and played the ♣Q. Krasnoselski ruffed, cashed the ♥A which Bell ruffed, and lost two diamonds in the end for down one, -100.

Edgar Kaplan believed strongly that takeout doubles were meant to be taken out, and were certain he'd agree that responsive doubles fall into that same category. Enter Graham Osborne, passer *extraordinaire*. Well, he did have a bit extra (or a bit more than a bit) for his previous bidding, but to channel what Edgar Kaplan might have said, "Trumps supercede high-cards in trump contracts." We'd take you through the play but then we'd have to relive the whole grizzly experience. Suffice it to say that with only three top losers, a nine-card trump fit with the adverse trumps split two-two, there was no defense and Gromov soon scored up +670. That was 11 imps back to Russia, ahead now 103-26.

And the beat goes on.

Bd: 21 North
 Dir: North ♠ QJ
 Vul: N/S ♥ J8
 ♦ AJ842
 ♣ AQ98

West
 ♠ A108765
 ♥ A65
 ♦ K10
 ♣ 65

East
 ♠ 43
 ♥ K973
 ♦ Q96
 ♣ K1074

South
 ♠ K92
 ♥ Q1042
 ♦ 753
 ♣ J32

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladys</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♦(1)	Pass	2♠(2)	All Pass

(1) Major one-suiter

(2) P/C

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
1♠	1♦	Pass	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Dbl
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass
All Pass			2♦

In the Open Room Krasnoselski lost the obvious four tricks in 2♠ for +140. In the Closed Room the play in 2♦ was a bit more challenging for Gromov. Osborne led a trump to the king and ace. Gromov led the ♠J to the ace, won the club switch with the ace, cashed the ♠Q, then got out with a low diamond. Hinden won the ten and played a second club, the nine losing to the king, and now the crossroads had been reached. The defense had to cash their two heart tricks before declarer reached dummy with the ♣J and pitched a heart on the ♠K. Alas, Osborne fell from grace once more and exited with a club, allowing Gromov to come home with +90. 6 more imps to Russia, whose lead had grown to 83 at 109-26.



Affairs of State...

Bd: 22
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ AK
 ♥ Q7542
 ♦ KJ83
 ♣ 73

West
 ♠ 10765
 ♥ 103
 ♦ 954
 ♣ AK92

East
 ♠ Q932
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ AQ6
 ♣ J1085

South
 ♠ J84
 ♥ K986
 ♦ 1072
 ♣ Q64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		1NT	Pass
Pass	2♥(1)	Pass	3♥
Dbl	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	4♥
Dbl	All Pass		

(1) 5+♥, 6-11 HCP (not 3♠+5♥)

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinina</i>
		1♣(2+)	Pass
1♥(♠)	Dbl	2♠	All Pass

It is difficult to know exactly who can make what on this deal, even looking at all four hands, so everyone is due some slack here. In the Open Room Bell knew Hydes had at most two spades and 11 hcp, so E/W had to have at least eight spades and 23 hcp between them, hence the 3♥ bid to try to preempt E/W from discovering their fit (and level). Well, not only did it not work but it backfired when Hydes, unaware that Bell was as weak as he was for 3♥, "protected" with a double of 3♠ (cold as the cards lie) and now Bell was forced to take the hit in 4♥x. Oh well, some days you eat The Bear and some days The Bear eats you (pun intended). Bell lost the mandatory five tricks and finished two down, -300.

In the Closed Room the auction was much shorter — and far less revealing. The Russians could not uncover their nine-card heart fit (indeed, they could not even be sure of an eight-card fit) and so sold out to 2♠. The defense managed to hold Osborne to eight tricks by attacking diamonds early and then scoring the ♠J by leading the case diamond. But +110 was worth 5imps, increasing Russia's lead to 88 at 114-26.

Board 23 saw both N/S pairs conduct an uninterrupted auction to 3♦, making five with the help

of two finesses and a normal trump break. No swing.

Bd: 24
 Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ AK4
 ♥ A
 ♦ AK10842
 ♣ Q54

West
 ♠ J10963
 ♥ J72
 ♦ 53
 ♣ KJ6

East
 ♠ 52
 ♥ K108543
 ♦ J97
 ♣ 107

South
 ♠ Q87
 ♥ Q96
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ A9832

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	2♣	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinina</i>
2♠	Dbl	3♠	Pass
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Gladysh must be wondering what he did to deserve such treatment. After all, he simply bid his six-card suit at the two level to mess with the opponents' 2♣ auction and BAM! ZONK! KA-POW! Holy buzz saw, Batman. The defense started out well when Bell led the ♦Q, then switched to a trump to stop declarer from ruffing diamonds in dummy. But when Hydes did not have a trump to return he led a low diamond to Bell's "presumed" jack (he did lead the queen, didn't he?) but it was Gladysh's ♦J that won trick 3. Hydes won Gladysh's spade exit with the king, cashed the ♠A, and got out with a low club, which only served to remove any guesswork from that suit and now Gladysh quickly claimed seven tricks for -100. Whew!

A thing of beauty is a joy forever, but with beauty residing in the eye of the beholder we now know who *not* to ask to judge our beauty pageants. (Hint: His initials are M.K.) Anyhow, things did not turn out all that poorly for him when Gromov-Dubinina could not find a way to punish 3♠ (a minimum of 800 would be our guess as to the damage) and settled for 3NT, taking 11 tricks without really breaking much of a sweat. But that was 8 moreimps to The Bear, whose lead was now 96 at 122-26.

Bd: 25
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ Q
 ♥ K742
 ♦ J10964
 ♣ K86

West
 ♠ K873
 ♥ A8
 ♦ Q875
 ♣ 432

East
 ♠ AJ64
 ♥ Q653
 ♦ K
 ♣ Q1075

South
 ♠ 10952
 ♥ J109
 ♦ A32
 ♣ AJ9

Open Room

West <i>Kras'skii</i>	North <i>Hydes</i>	East <i>Gladysh</i>	South <i>Bell</i>
1♠	Pass	1♣(2+)	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2NT(T/O)
3♠	3♦	Pass	3♥
	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Hinden</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Osborne</i>	South <i>Dubin'in</i>
	All Pass		

Just a slight difference in hand evaluation here. Each side can make a partscore, but when Krasnoselski-Gladysh reached the three level they were headed for a minus. The defense could perhaps have done a bit better than they did: ♦J to the ace; spade to the queen and ace; heart to the ace; heart back ducked to the nine; heart to the king (club from dummy); ♥4 to the queen (Bell pitching a diamond, dummy a club); ♣10 to the ace; club from Bell, and now Gladysh ruffed the club, pitched a club on the ♦Q, and came to eight tricks for down one, -100. But that was 3 imps to Hinden when the deal was passed out in the other room; 122-29, now.

Bd: 26
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ Q98
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ K64
 ♣ A8542

West
 ♠ K104
 ♥ J96
 ♦ Q1072
 ♣ J93

East
 ♠ J32
 ♥ A7543
 ♦ AJ9
 ♣ Q10

South
 ♠ A765
 ♥ 1082
 ♦ 853
 ♣ K76

Open Room

West <i>Kras'skii</i>	North <i>Hydes</i>	East <i>Gladysh</i>	South <i>Bell</i>
		1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣(2+)	Pass
2♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Hinden</i>	North <i>Gromov</i>	East <i>Osborne</i>	South <i>Dubin'in</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠(1)	1NT	All Pass	
(1) Denies four or more spades			

The Russians bought the hand in both rooms and had a good shot at a double partscore swing. In the Open Room 2♥ had only five losers, provided declarer played trumps to best advantage. Gladysh did, and that was +110 for Russia.

In the Closed Room Gromov bid an aggressive sandwich 1NT and came up smelling like roses. Osborne led a heart to the eight, nine and king and Gromov played a club to the king and a club back, ducking. Osborne won the queen, perforce, and now led a second low heart (playing Hinden to have started specifically with king-nine doubleton, else the ace was the right play). Perhaps Osborne was right in theory since with three hearts Hinden would normally just raise to 2♥ (we can only assume she used the sequence she did planning to show a "bad" 2♥ raise by converting a 1NT rebid to 2♥), but in practice this cost the contract as Gromov won the ♥K and cashed out for +90. That was 5 more coals to Newcastle...errr, imps to Russia, ahead now 127-29.

Three flat boards followed when on Board 27 both E/W pairs played in 2♥ and made four, on Board 28 Krasnoselski played 3♣ for +130 in the Open Room while Hinden played 2♥ for +140 in the Closed Room, and on Board 29 both N/S pairs played in 3NT going down one.

Bd: 30
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 10943
 ♥ K1092
 ♦ Q1097
 ♣ J

West
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ A87
 ♦ J52
 ♣ AK762

East
 ♠ A8752
 ♥ QJ5
 ♦ K
 ♣ 10953

South
 ♠ J6
 ♥ 643
 ♦ A8643
 ♣ Q84

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥(♠)	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

3NT in the Open Room received the ♠9 lead. Bell took dummy's king with the ace, returned the ♠4, and the defense ran the suit (dummy pitching one spade, a heart and a club as declarer pitched two hearts) before Bell got out with a heart. Krasnoselski won the ace, cashed the ♣A noting the fall of the jack, but he unblocked the ♣10, thus committing to playing for the suit to split two-two. (He did not have to do this. He could follow with a low club, retaining his options, and if he chose to finesse cross to the ♠A, finesse the club and, if covered, clear the clubs and use the second spade to return to his hand. If he decided not to finesse in clubs he could cash the other top club and if they split cross to the ♣10 and again use the spade entry to his hand to run the suit. If he got the play right he would have escaped for down one.) But when clubs proved to be three-one he cashed the ♠KQ, then got out with a club, and the defense claimed the rest for down four, -200.

In the Closed Room Gromov led the ♥2. Hinden called queen from dummy and when that held played a club to the ace (the eight appearing from South) and ducked a club rather than overtake her spade winner or use up her remaining heart winner to play clubs to best advantage. Unlucky! Dubinin won, cashed the ♠A and continued the suit for down two, -100, and 3 imps back to Hinden, trailing 127-32.

Bd: 31	North
Dlr: South	♠ 64
Vul: N/S	♥ 76
	♦ QJ96
	♣ AKJ75

West	East
♠ KJ97	♠ A853
♥ 105	♥ KQ93
♦ 1085	♦ AK74
♣ 10943	♣ 2

South
♠ Q102
♥ AJ842
♦ 32
♣ Q86

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Dbl	1♦(♥)
Pass	1♥	Dbl	Rdbl
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♣
2♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Dbl	1♥
1♠	2♣	3♠	All Pass

Against Krasnoselski's 2♠ Hydes led the ♥7. Bell ducked the king from dummy while encouraging and Krasnoselski played a club. Hydes took the ten with the jack and switched to...a spade to the queen and king. Now Krasnoselski played the ♥10 and let it ride. Bell won the jack and returned a low heart but Krasnoselski could ruff with the ♠7 as Hydes pitched. Now came a club ruff, a heart ruff, the ♠J, a diamond to the ace, the ♠A, and a claim of +140.

Against Hinden's 3♠ in the Closed Room Gromov led the ♣A and switched to a heart. Hinden ducked this to Dubinin's jack and he continued with ace and a third heart. Hinden pitched a diamond as Gromov ruffed and now the defense had book. Gromov tried the ♠Q to the ace and Hinden played a spade to the jack, ruffed a club, cashed the ♥K pitching a diamond, cashed the ♠K pitching a club, ruffed a diamond as Dubinin pitched his last club, and when Hinden tried to ruff her last club Dubinin over-ruffed for down one, -50. 5 imps back to Russia, now leading by 100 at 132-32.

Last bored...er, board, of the set.

Bd: 32	North
Dlr: West	♠ Q8754
Vul: E/W	♥ J8743
	♦ 6
	♣ 75

West	East
♠ K96	♠ A32
♥ 92	♥ AK
♦ 1095	♦ AK842
♣ AKJ43	♣ 986

South
♠ J10
♥ Q1065
♦ QJ73
♣ Q102

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kras'skii</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gladysh</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	4NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠(GF)	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

With the club finesse working and the suit splitting well even should declarer eschew the finesse, it is hard to see where either contract would be in trouble. Then again, maybe we should get our glasses checked. In the Open Room Hydes led the ♥3 to the king and Krasnoselski played a club to the ace and carelessly passed the ♦10, losing to the jack. Back came a heart to the ace and the contract was still safe as long as he took the club finesse. So, Krasnoselski played a club to...the king and now he was down two, -200, when the diamonds failed to split. Now maybe, given the state of the match, he played along that line hoping to duplicate the anti-percentage line he thought would be taken (again,

given the state of the match) at the other table. Or maybe he had a club mixed in with his spades. Inquiring minds want to know – but we're not that curious.

In the Closed Room Hinden got a spade lead. She rose ace, cashed the ♣AK, and when both opponents followed conceded a club and claimed ten tricks. Plus 630 was 13 imps for Hinden, who had suffered a terrible set following a worse-than-terrible set but had finished on a brief high note. The score stood at 132-45 and as we saw it Hinden had one more set to try get back into the match to make the fourth quarter worth playing.

NEC Final (3rd Quarter): England Hinden vs Russia

by Barry Rigal



Dubinin



Hydes



Gromov



Hinden



Drijver



Osborne



Bell



Brink

Down a bunch, Hinden needed to make a charge quickly to get back into the match. While "We'll get them in singles" might work in cricket (and thanks for the quote, Rich) the Hinden team would need more than the occasional boundary.

Bd: 33
 Dir: North
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ Q85
 ♥ AK65
 ♦ 96
 ♣ Q763

West
 ♠ K7
 ♥ QJ10942
 ♦ J10854
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ A64
 ♥ ---
 ♦ Q72
 ♣ AKJ9542

South
 ♠ J10932
 ♥ 873
 ♦ AK3
 ♣ 108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1NT	Dbl	2♠

4♥ All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dbl	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	All Pass

Hinden reached the better four-level contract and though neither contract came home, they picked up two undertrick imps for so doing to make it 132-47. Both defenders took their trump trick(s) together with the diamond ruff. This hand just seems rather too hard to stop in a makeable contract, though I suppose passing 3♣ is conceivable on the Closed Room auction.

Both N/S pairs then handled an ill-fitting combined

29-count to play 3NT, and the E/W pairs then did the same on a hand where Hydes and Bell had put themselves in jeopardy of a four-figure penalty with some insouciant preempting.

Bd: 36
 Dlr: West
 Vul: Both

North	♠ K3
	♥ AQ93
	♦ AJ2
	♣ AK84

West	East
♠ Q76	♠ A92
♥ 1082	♥ K754
♦ Q87	♦ 10953
♣ QJ63	♣ 72

South
♠ J10854
♥ J6
♦ K64
♣ 1095

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Both declarers won the diamond lead and advanced the ♠K. Both defenders ducked. Then they led a heart to the jack and a heart to the nine. Well done. That set up the ninth trick as the cards lay, and left the clubs as a possible source of overtricks on a really good day. No swing, but nicely played.

Bd: 37
 Dlr: North
 Vul: N/S

North	♠ A10652
	♥ 6
	♦ AKJ7
	♣ KQ6

West	East
♠ QJ3	♠ 987
♥ 74	♥ KQJ852
♦ Q10954	♦ 6
♣ J54	♣ 987

South
♠ K4
♥ A1093
♦ 832
♣ A1032

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	2♥	DbI

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	1♠	3♥	3NT
Pass	4NT	All Pass	

After a heart lead to the jack, ducked, Osborne shifted to the ♠7 to the jack and ace. Brink cashed dummy's top diamonds and crossed to hand in spades to lead a diamond up. Hinden won and returned the suit, leaving it up to declarer to bring in the clubs to make his game. In order for the finesse in clubs to be right East would have had to shift to a low spade at trick two from ♠87. Brink took time out for 5 minutes or so before getting it right. If East had shifted to the ♠9 at trick two Brink might still be thinking.

In the other room Bell found a decent swing position when he doubled 2♥. The defenders actually can get +800 if they can take the spade ruff early, then cash their minor-suit winners before leading a fourth spade to promote the trump. They did not manage that so Russia had 4 imps.

Bd: 38
 Dlr: East
 Vul: E/W

North	♠ ---
	♥ Q97
	♦ KQ108753
	♣ 985

West	East
♠ QJ732	♠ A10954
♥ J86	♥ AK10
♦ 94	♦ A
♣ J107	♣ AQ32

South
♠ K86
♥ 5432
♦ J62
♣ K64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
		1♣(STR)	Pass
1♦	4♦	DbI	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT(F)	3♦	DbI	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Both tables coped well in practice, if not in theory, with the problems of this set. It would have been easy to imagine both Easts moving beyond 4♠, especially when they found real spade support opposite. Slam here looks to depend on one of two black-suit finesses, but with no entry to the West hand you need the ♠K to fall or the club finesse. But that's with the odds in abstract; it's probably no better than a 50% chance after the auctions.

On the next deal both Souths opened 2♠ in first seat with both vulnerable, holding ♠AKQJ4 and a 5332 pattern. Neither of them was struck by lightning. Both played 3♠, which was a respectable contract and cold on the lie of the cards. Seven deals down and not the shadow of a real swing yet.

Bd: 40 North
 Dir: West ♠ KQ10942
 Vul: None ♥ 95
 ♦ Q
 ♣ QJ75

West
 ♠ AJ7
 ♥ AJ1072
 ♦ J109
 ♣ A8

East
 ♠ 53
 ♥ K3
 ♦ AK64
 ♣ K10963

South
 ♠ 86
 ♥ Q864
 ♦ 87532
 ♣ 42

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♥	3♠	Dbl	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
1NT	3♠	4♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

If spades had been seven-one 6♣ might well have come home (switch the ♠8 and ♣Q for example). However, as the cards lay the spade lead put paid to declarer's chances in slam. Drijver split his club honors on the second round. Declarer played a third club and North cashed out. With 3NT cold, and making 11 tricks today, Russia had 11 imps. They led 149-47.

Bd: 41 North
 Dir: North ♠ AQ94
 Vul: E/W ♥ KJ1054
 ♦ 104
 ♣ J8

West
 ♠ J752
 ♥ 98
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ AK1075

East
 ♠ K3
 ♥ 7632
 ♦ AK975
 ♣ Q3

South
 ♠ 1086
 ♥ AQ
 ♦ J832
 ♣ 9642

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Both tables responded 1♠ with the South cards — color me dazed and confused. Hinden sold out to 2♠, Dubinin competed to 3♣ in balancing seat. The defense against 3♣ could not prevent him from scoring eight minor-suit tricks and a spade. By contrast, 2♠ looked less comfortable. However, when Hinden led her top club and shifted to the ♦Q Osborne wanted to get a trump promotion and maybe should have overtaken, cashed his second diamond then played a club for his partner to overtake and lead a third club. He chose to overtake the diamond and play the ♣Q without cashing the second diamond, and now the trump promotion was harder to get. Hinden did not realize her partner had two spades, so she played him for the ♦J, overtook the second club, returned a diamond, and now declarer could not be forced. He was able to take two spade finesses and collect +110. That made it 156-148.

Both tables then bid unopposed to a heart game with ten top tricks. Six deals to go and Hinden still had one solitary pair of undertrick imps to their credit.

Bd: 43
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ J92
 ♥ KJ10874
 ♦ 5
 ♣ AQJ

West
 ♠ 864
 ♥ AQ632
 ♦ 10742
 ♣ 5

East
 ♠ Q3
 ♥ 5
 ♦ AQ93
 ♣ K98643

South
 ♠ AK1075
 ♥ 9
 ♦ KJ86
 ♣ 1072

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	4♠	All Pass	2♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
Pass	2♦(♥)	3♣	1♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	Pass

Against Bell's 4♠ contract the club lead rang no danger signals. Declarer finessed, lost the red-suit aces, then a club ruff, and declarer had the rest when trumps behaved. Brink knew not to take the club finesse. He tried the two top trumps (good) and a heart up. West won and shifted to a high diamond spot for East to give her the ruff. Down one at both tables; no swing. Still 156-47.

After a dull 3NT landed Russia another imp, they had another opportunity to take full advantage of an error by the Hinden team.

Bd: 45
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ J1098764
 ♥ 87
 ♦ K5
 ♣ 84

West
 ♠ A3
 ♥ KQ92
 ♦ AJ3
 ♣ J652

East
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AJ53
 ♦ 764
 ♣ Q10973

South
 ♠ KQ5
 ♥ 1064
 ♦ Q10982
 ♣ AK

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
Pass	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥
Dbf	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	3♥	3♠
4♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
All Pass	Pass	Pass	Dbf

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
4♥	3♠	Dbf	Pass
	All Pass		

Bell started with a top club and shifted to a top spade. Perhaps he should have worked out that, even given the match score, when vulnerable Hydes might have just this sort of hand. It is easy to be wise after the event, but declarer could now simply draw trumps and claim.

Cui culpa in the other room? Drijver led the top of his doubleton club — the best practical start for the defense. Brink won and seeing the singleton spade in dummy shifted to a diamond. He selected the ♦8 and now declarer could have flown with the ace, drawn trump, then knocked out the club with the diamonds blocked. But how was she to know what was going on? She put in the ♦J. North won and... reverted to clubs, maybe worried that his partner had not given him the club ruff because he needed to establish a diamond trick first. Declarer could now draw trump and claim as soon as she obtained the lead, the losing diamond going on the clubs.

Afterwards Brink explained that his ♦8 was 2nd/4th best (the ten would promise one higher so he would shift to the ♦9 from a ♦109 suit). But he said that his mistake was to win the ♣K, not the ♣A. Had he done so his partner would have known there was no future in clubs. He did not play back the ♦10 because he could see that if his partner had the ♦K then declarer might well work out to block the suit.

Still, 5 imps to Russia, leading 161-47.



"Ooh!...a kitty."

Bd: 46
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ KQ76
 ♥ 842
 ♦ K63
 ♣ Q62

West
 ♠ 9532
 ♥ AK10765
 ♦ A10
 ♣ 7

East
 ♠ 84
 ♥ 93
 ♦ J9542
 ♣ KJ104

South
 ♠ AJ10
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ Q87
 ♣ A9853

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>

Dbl(1)	Rdbl	Pass	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass

Dbl All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>

2♥	Dbl	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

This was very nicely judged by Drijver-Brink in the Open Room, albeit the four-one trump break doomed the partscore. The defense led and continued hearts and South could do his best by ruffing and passing the ♣8. When he won the next spade he tried the ♣Q — and found the good and bad news. He could not avoid losing control, and thus a trick to East's fourth club, meaning down two. But in the other room Dubinin adroitly doubled the opponents in what he knew was a four-three fit. Bell ruffed the third heart and tried a low club to the queen, losing a total of two clubs and a ruff, plus three tricks in the red suits, for down 500 and 9 imps more to Russia.

Bd: 47
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ J
 ♦ K84
 ♣ AQ98765

West
 ♠ A64
 ♥ 96532
 ♦ J5
 ♣ K43

East
 ♠ J1087
 ♥ K104
 ♦ 1032
 ♣ J102

South
 ♠ 9532
 ♥ AQ87
 ♦ AQ976
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>

Pass	2♦(F)	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♦

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>

Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

At both tables South showed diamonds but Drijver relayed for shape while Hydes followed a relatively natural sequence after raising diamonds. Against 5♦ a trump lead might have been very awkward. Dubinin led a heart and declarer drove out the ♠A, then ruffed a spade and a heart in dummy while ruffing two clubs in hand. When all of that passed off peacefully enough he had four plain winners and five trump tricks in hand and two ruffs in dummy.

Drijver received the ♠J lead and won in hand to take the heart finesse. When that won he had nine top tricks so long as diamonds behaved. Just in case, he tried for more by playing a second spade and could afford the club finesse when West won her ♠A and shifted to a low club. When the ♣Q held Drijver invested his overtrick back by taking the safety play in diamonds, leading a diamond to the ♦6 for +600, and no swing.

Finally Hinden scored a swing in the set; they had been waiting since the first deal.

Bd: 48
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ A62
 ♥ J543
 ♦ Q92
 ♣ K63

West
 ♠ QJ1094
 ♥ K10
 ♦ AK
 ♣ AQ102

East
 ♠ 53
 ♥ A987
 ♦ J87543
 ♣ 8

South
 ♠ K87
 ♥ Q62
 ♦ 106
 ♣ J9754

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Dubinin</i>	<i>Hydes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Bell</i>
1♣(STR)	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hinden</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Brink</i>
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Against 3NT Hydes led a low heart to the queen and king. The ♦AK failed to produce the ♦Q so Dubinin went after spades. Bell won the first spade and played a club through, to the queen and king. Back came a low heart to the ten, but now when Dubinin played a second top spade Hydes could win and cash his diamond queen, then exit in spades for his partner to win trick 13 with the ♣J. In the Closed Room Brink led a heart as South, so Osborne simply went after spades and took eight tricks without pain. 6 imps to Hinden but at 170-53 it was time for all of us to pack up and go home.

19th NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sunday (Feb. 16)	10:00-17:30	Asuka Cup (Open Pairs)	501, 502
	18:00-20:00	Closing Ceremony	503

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Dutch players Frank van Wezel and Hans van de Konijnenberg both collect books, magazines and Daily Bulletins about bridge. They especially enjoy reading Daily Bulletins from the pre-internet era because these bulletins are a treasure trove of wonderful photographs, marvelous sketches, splendid deals, and tremendous stories and anecdotes.

Frank and Hans decided that this material should be at the disposal of all bridge players. At the same time, they want to save the history of bridge from oblivion. Therefore they launched the free website above. On this site you can find thousands of scanned bulletins, both from the digital era and before. They posted WBF, EBL and ACBL championship bulletins, as well as many from miscellaneous tournaments around the world.

And, if you happen to have bulletins that they are missing, please contact them. Contact details can be found on the website.