



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 1

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Welcome to the 21st NEC Cup Bridge Festival

Well, it's been two, count them, two years since the last NEC Bridge Festival and in early February last year some of us began experiencing what may best be described as "NEC withdrawal symptoms." But with just a bit of professional assistance we pulled through and now...we're ba-a-ack. This year's NEC Bridge Festival features a strong and impressive international field including many of the world's top players. Stage One, as always, will be a 12-round, three-day Swiss Teams qualifier with 14-board matches, imps converted to Victory Points using the WBF 14-Board scale (posted outside the playing area and on page 3 here). For Match One, the top 25 teams from the 53-team field have been paired at random against teams 26-50; teams 51-53 will play a three-way. Subsequent pairings will be based on current VP totals with the bottom three teams playing a three-way. The top eight teams at the end of the third day's play will qualify for the KO phase. The quarter- and semi-finals will consist of 32-board matches, while the final will be contested over 64 boards. (**Note:** The NEC Cup Conditions of Contest contain a few minor additions/changes this year, so check out pages 2-3 carefully.) On Friday, February 10, the Yokohama IMP Pairs will be held followed on Saturday, February 11, by the Yokohama Swiss Teams (A, B & C) and on Sunday, February 12, the Yokohama Open Pairs. (Note the Convention Regulations for pair games in your player bag and here on page 8.) Once again the results of all current matches in the NEC Cup will be uploaded to the JCBL web site on a real-time basis (see page 6). As last year, our convention center *Zashiki-warashi* will be on the job overseeing the web updating.

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 411). If we're not in, leave a note in front of either of our computers (they're the two PCs on the right end of the table at the rear). The **Secretariat** opens each day 30 minutes before starting time. You can phone the Secretariat at 228-6411 via house phone from the hotel or from the Yokohama City area, at 045-228-6411 from outside Yokohama, or at +81 45 228-6411 from overseas. The editors may be contacted via e-mail (rcolker@gmail.com; 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** this year, following Richard Grenside's retirement, is one of the best (and nicest) directors in bridge, the ACBL's stalwart **Matt Smith**. The Co-Director of the NEC Cup is Tadayoshi Nakatani.

PCs with Internet access are available for player use inside the Secretariat (Room 411), along the wall to the right.

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Follow the action at the 21st NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/home/English/nec/21st/tabid/1429/Default.aspx>

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

NEC Cup 2017: Conditions of Contest

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

V.P. Scale for Qualifying: WBF 14-board scale (20 point scale, given to two decimal places).

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

Tie-Breaks: At the end of the Swiss, ties will be broken by IMP quotient. If the IMP quotients are the same the head-to-head match (if any) will be used. If there is still a tie a coin toss will be used. If more than two teams are involved, the latest version of WBF Conditions of Contest procedures will apply. In the Knockout Phase, the team with the greater total of IMPs (including fractional IMPs due to penalties or score adjustments) is the winner of the match. In the event of an exact tie the team with the higher position in the Swiss is the winner of the match.

KO-Phase Seating: The team with the higher position from the Swiss has the choice of seating in either of the two 16-board segments of the quarter-finals and semi-finals. If they do not declare their choice before the match starts they will be deemed to have used their rights in the first segment. In the four 16-board segments of the final, the team with the higher position from the Swiss can choose the seating in either the first and fourth segments or the second and third. If they do not declare their choice before the match starts they will be deemed to have chosen the former.

Swiss Pairings: First-round Swiss matches will be 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.

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 the latest version of WBF 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. Appeals will be permitted until the start of the next session except that they will only be permitted for 30 min after the last session of the Swiss or the last session of a KO match.

Match Scoring: Bridgemate scoring terminals will be used. Match results should be verified against the official result sheet (posted at the end of each match). Score corrections should be made before the start of the next session, but they will be accepted after the start of the next session if still timely (i.e., until the draw for the KO for corrections to results in the Swiss, until the start of the next KO round for corrections to the Quarter-final or Semi-final results, or until the award of prize money for the KO final), and if there is no reasonable doubt.

KO Draw: The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 5th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 5th-8th group. The same process is repeated for the team finishing 3rd and the team finishing 4th will play against the team not chosen by any of the other three 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 and the upload of the results of all matches in progress on the web.

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 offence, 3 VPs for all subsequent offences; KO: 3imps for the 1st offence, 10imps for all subsequent offences;

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 fact of the delayed call.

Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices: Mobile phones and other electronic devices capable of receiving/ transmitting information to/from the playing area (e.g., personal computers, tablets, etc.) 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. In KO rounds, mobile phones and other electronic devices in the playing area are prohibited during game time. Players with mobile phones or other electronic devices should surrender their devices to the staff at the service desk and receive a numbered tag for collecting their mobile phones and other devices after the session. 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.

Official Language: English

Other: Any matter not covered here will be decided according to the JCBL Conditions of Contest. If not covered by the JCBL Conditions of Contest it will be decided according to the WBF Conditions of Contest. If not covered by either, the decision of the JCBL Tournament Operations Department will be final.

WBF VP scale (14 boards)

IMPs	VPs - Won	VPs - Lost	IMPs	VPs - Won	VPs - Lost
0	10.00	10.00	29	16.88	3.12
1	10.33	9.67	30	17.04	2.96
2	10.66	9.34	31	17.19	2.81
3	10.97	9.03	32	17.34	2.66
4	11.28	8.72	33	17.49	2.51
5	11.58	8.42	34	17.63	2.37
6	11.87	8.13	35	17.77	2.23
7	12.16	7.84	36	17.91	2.09
8	12.44	7.56	37	18.04	1.96
9	12.71	7.29	38	18.17	1.83
10	12.97	7.03	39	18.29	1.71
11	13.23	6.77	40	18.41	1.59
12	13.48	6.52	41	18.53	1.47
13	13.72	6.28	42	18.65	1.35
14	13.96	6.04	43	18.76	1.24
15	14.19	5.81	44	18.87	1.13
16	14.42	5.58	45	18.98	1.02
17	14.64	5.36	46	19.08	0.92
18	14.85	5.15	47	19.18	0.82
19	15.06	4.94	48	19.28	0.72
20	15.26	4.74	49	19.38	0.62
21	15.46	4.54	50	19.47	0.53
22	15.66	4.34	51	19.56	0.44
23	15.85	4.15	52	19.65	0.35
24	16.03	3.97	53	19.74	0.26
25	16.21	3.79	54	19.83	0.17
26	16.38	3.62	55	19.91	0.09
27	16.55	3.45	56	19.99	0.01
28	16.72	3.28	57	20.00	0.00

The 21st NEC Cup Guest List

Konichi wa and welcome to the 21st NEC Bridge Festival. As always, two featured matches from every session of the NEC Cup will be broadcast on Bridge Base Online, the world's leading Online Bridge site (hi Fred, Sheri, Uday, and all), with live broadcasts starting with the Round One matches Senior 2017 (33) vs KOREA Joy (18) and SARA (34) vs Midori (49). All match results will be updated on the JCBL web site on a real-time basis. As in the past, we're confident that not just the favorites will be playing for the championship come Friday so if you start off poorly, keep your chin up, play with heart, and fight until you're taken to the Matt (hee, hee). As always, we're thrilled to see the many foreign teams here and extend our special welcome to those attending the festival for the first time as well as to those back for the first time in a while. As always, it brings joy to our hearts to see so many friendly and familiar faces from around the bridge world. We're all family here.

The defenders (from 2015) are Team Hackett (**Paul Hackett, Jason Hackett, Brian Senior, Alex Hydes**), though only Jason and Brian were members of that team. Paul and Jason have been regular attendees of the NEC Bridge Festival, Paul since its inception, and both Brian and Alex are many-time NEC veterans. Jason was part of the English team that reached the semi-finals of the 2015 World Championships in Chennai, India, and Brian Senior played for the English Seniors in the last European Championships. Alex Hydes represented England as a junior, has won the Crockfords Cup two years running and represented England in the Mixed Teams at the World Championships in Wroclaw last year. This year Paul is sporting a new look — a sling for a broken arm — but he's assured us that his defensive signals have been adjusted accordingly. Hail Britannia!

The SWAT Squad (**Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland**) are also no strangers to the NEC. Sartaj and Tony have been regulars at the NEC (winning in 2012; semi- or quarter-finalists on several other occasions) and this year Sartaj comes to us a newly minted father — in the standard accompanying state of sleep deprivation. Sabine Auken and Roy Welland were the gold co-medalists in the 2016 World Open Pairs at Wroclaw and in recent years have put up an enviable record in events around the world. Is there something Special to their Weapons And Tactics? We'll all find out by Saturday evening.

Team England/USA (**Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Karen McCallum, Cenk Tuncok**) are all first time NEC attendees. Sally, a long time member of Womens and Open teams for the UK, is a multiple world champion. She and husband Barry (who has returned to bridge after a 20-year break as a barrister) have registered notable successes in all of the UK domestic events. Globe trotters Karen and Cenk also feature a multiple World Champion female and a player with much domestic success. Is this what they're calling bilateral trade?

This year features the long overdue return of Team Israel (**Michael Barel, Yaniv Zack, Ilan Bareket, Assaf Lengy**), which notched up an impressive series of NEC Cup titles (2005, 2006 and 2008) with Michael as a member. His now-regular partner Yaniv was a member of the "in-between" 2007 NEC quarter-finalist Israeli team while Ilan and Assaf, members of Israel's national team, are both first-time NEC participants. Shalom.

Team New Zealand (**Martin Reid, Peter Newell, Michael Cornell, Ashley Bach**) features another pair of co-champions in the Wroclaw World Pairs (Cornell and Bach). While this is Cornell's first NEC Cup, Bach is a two-time NEC veteran (2010 and 2014) and Newell-Reid won the NEC Cup in 2012 and were semifinalists in 2014.

Team Australia (**Siegfried Konig, Jimmi Wallis, Michael Whibley, Justin Howard**) is the latest in a long line of perennial NEC Cup teams from down under. Whibley and Howard were members of a number of those teams and have been in contention for the major Australian titles over the last decade. Ziggy and James, first-time NEC attendees, have built up a formidable reputation as tough opponents in domestic events.

Team England/Norway (**David Bakhshi, Espen Erichsen, Terje Aa, Allan Livgard**) is the latest in a long line of England-slash hybrid NEC teams that included David as a member. He and partner Espen, who played here in 2001 and has been a regular on the rubber and tournament scene in London for two decades, are the "UK" half of the team. Terje Aa, a member of the England/Norway NEC semifinalist team in 2002, was a member of the Norwegian "Viking Club" teams that shone at the world level in the 1990s. His partner Allan is a first-time NEC Cup attendee. Skoal!

China Open (**Chen Yunlong, Yang Lixin, Dai Jianming, Zhang Bangxiang, Zhao Jie, Li Jianwei**) is largely composed of members of the Chinese national team who have gotten tantalizingly close to winning world championships over the last two decades. Chen Yunlong and Li Jianwei are playing in the NEC Cup for the

first time but Zhang Bangxiang, Yang Lixin and Dai Jianming played here in 2011 and/or 2012 (the latter also in 1998) and Zhao Jie was a member of the NEC China Open team in 2004 and played on mostly Japanese NEC teams in 2005 and 2008. Never say Dai!

The China Ladies (**Wang Wenfei, Shen Qi, Lu Yan, Liu Yan, Huang Yan, Wang Nan**) were semi-finalists in last year's Venice Cup in Wroclaw, Poland. This is Liu Yan's and Wang Nan's first NEC Cup but the other members are all veterans here, including Wang Wenfei whose China Women's team won the NEC Cup in 2009. Chauvinists may underestimate this team, but they do so at their own peril.

The six other Chinese teams (complete with Japanese "ringers") here this year are: Wuhan Dongfang Bridge Club (**Lian Ruoyang, Gui Shengyue, You Jianyong, Gao Fei, Yang Cai**), Shanghai Financial Bridge Club (**Shan Baisong, Shen Yuxiong, Shao Zijian, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta, Hiroki Yoko**), Beijing Trinergy (**Lu Dong, Wang Yanhong, Sun Shaolin, Kang Meng, Xin Guofang, Li Rui**), China Happy (**Xue Xiaoli, Wang Fei, Zhang Jun, Zhu Minrong, Zhao Yonghui, Liu Haitao**), China Dalian Aoxin (**Huo Shiyu, Chen Jun, Li Xiaoyi, Hu Linlin**) and China Relaxation (**Zhao Hailong, Liu Xiaoping, Jin Ke, Zhu Ping, Sheng Ming, Fu Zhong**). For many of these players this is their first NEC Cup but more than a dozen are NEC Cup veterans including past NEC Cup champions Wang Yanhong (China Ladies, 2004) and Chen Dawei (JAPAN-PABF OPEN, 1999).

Korea has nine teams in this year's NEC Cup: KOREA YOYO5 (**Whayoung Kim, Youngmee Kim, Namyeon Kim, Ingu Hwang, Sunguk Kang**), KOREA Gladiator (**Min Soenyong, Sohn Jackie, Lee Hansang, Ahn Jaiyong**), KOREA Joy (**Choi An hee, Lee Eun ja, Chang Eun kyung, Hong Pil hae, Kim Sun young**), KOREA OK (**Chung Ilsub, Sung Kunghae, Jang Jungbae, Choi Jungjin**), KOREA KLS (**Kim Yoonkyung, Park Jungyoon, Park Mungkee, Hwang Inyung**), KOREA Challenge (**Kim Younhee, Koh Inkyung, Kim Kyungmi, Yea Eunjoo**), KOREA Bridge View (**Lee Myeongjin, Lee Sooik, Yang Sunjoo, Han Kwoon, Roh Seujin**), KOREA Hanmaum (**Lee Soony, Kwon sungwon, Han Okhee, Lee ChoonHee**) and Kosing (Korea/Singapore) (**Poon Hua, Loo Choon Chou, Kwon Haeryung, Yang Jiahong**). Members include both first-timers and NEC veterans. Several Korean teams have done well here in the past. Hwanyong-hamnida.

Two additional teams come to us this year from Chinese Taipei under the auspices of NEC Cup veteran Yeh Chen (Yeh Brothers). They are YBT (**Yeh Chen, Zhang Yalan, Shih Jueiyu, Wang Ping, Ehud Friedlander, Inon Liran**) and YBS (**Patrik Huang, Jonky Chung, Chih Mou Lin, Bao Shan Kuang, Jen Lee Chi, Kuo Paw Cheng**). These teams feature some top world players including Ehud Friedlander and Inon Liran, 2014 World Open Pairs champions in Sanya, China.

Several Japanese teams this year feature players who have won or placed highly in previous NEC events and include many players who are frequent international competitors. Judging from past performances, at least one of these "home" teams rates to still be standing for the KO phase of the even on Friday. But which?

So welcome to the 2017 NEC Bridge Festival. May all of your bids be inspired. May all of your plays be double-dummy, and may your fiercest competitors finish one place below you in the standings. Good luck to all.

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.

Alerts Behind Screens

When Alerting behind screens it is expected, given the language differences here, that players **write down** both the question and the answer. Players failing to do so may well jeopardize their rights when it comes to a Director's ruling or to any appeal that may follow.

Team Rosters: 21st NEC Cup

#	Team Name	Members
1	Hackett:	Paul Hackett, Jason Hackett, Brian Senior, Alex Hydes
2	SWAT Squad:	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland
3	England/USA:	Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Karen McCallum, Cenk Tuncok
4	Israel:	Michael Barel, Yaniv Zack, Ilan Bareket, Assaf Lengy
5	New Zealand:	Martin Reid, Peter Newell, Michael Cornell, Ashley Bach
6	Australia:	Siegfried Konig, Jimmi Wallis, Michael Whibley, Justin Howard
7	England/Norway:	David Bakhshi, Espen Erichsen, Terje Aa, Allan Livgard
8	China Open:	Chen Yunlong, Yang Lixin, Dai Jianming, Zhang Bangxiang, Zhao Jie, Li Jianwei
9	China Ladies:	Wang Wenfei, Shen Qi, Lu Yan, Liu Yan, Huang Yan, Wang Nan
10	Wuhan Dongfang Bridge Club:	Lian Ruoyang, Gui Shengyue, You Jianyong, Gao Fei, Yang Cai
11	Shanghai Financial Bridge Club:	Shan Baisong, Shen Yuxiong, Shao Zijian, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta, Hiroki Yokoi
12	Beijing Trinergy:	Lu Dong, Wang Yanhong, Sun Shaolin, Kang Meng, Xin Guofang, Li Rui
13	China Happy:	Xue Xiaoli, Wang Fei, Zhang Jun, Zhu Minrong, Zhao Yonghui, Liu Haitao
14	China Dalian Aoxin:	Huo Shiyu, Chen Jun, Li Xiaoyi, Hu Linlin
15	China Relaxation:	Zhao Hailong, Liu Xiaoping, Jin Ke, Zhu Ping, Sheng Ming, Fu Zhong
16	KOREA YOYO5:	Whayoung Kim, Youngmee Kim, Namyoon Kim, Ingu Hwang, Sungsook Kang
17	KOREA Gladiator:	Min Soenyoun, Sohn Jackie, Lee Hansang, Ahn Jaiyong
18	KOREA Joy:	Choi An hee, Lee Eun ja, Chang Eun kyung, Hong Pil hae, Kim Sun young
19	KOREA OK:	Chung Ilsob, Sung Kunghae, Jang Jungbae, Choi Jungjin
20	KOREA KLS:	Kim Yoonkyung, Park Jungyoon, Park Mungkee, Hwang lynrung
21	KOREA Challenge:	Kim Younhee, Koh Inkyung, Kim Kyungmi, Yea Eunjoo
22	KOREA Bridge View:	Lee Myeongjin, Lee Sooik, Yang Sunjoo, Han Kwoon, Roh Seunjin
23	KOREA Hanmaum:	Lee Soony, Kwon sungwon, Han Okhee, Lee ChoonHee
24	Kosing (Korea/Singapore):	Poon Hua, Loo Choon Chou, Kwon Haeryung, Yang Jiahong
25	YBT:	Yeh Chen, Zhang Yalan, Shih Jueiyu, Wang Ping, Ehud Friedlander, Inon Liran
26	YBS:	Patrik Huang, Jonky Chung, Chih Mou Lin, Bao Shan Kuang, Jen Lee Chi, Kuo Paw Cheng
27	Rimi:	Rimi Kawashima, Simon Chan, Jackson Lai, LH Chin
28	Zhiyijia:	Deng Zhuodi, Liu Jing, Liu Yinghao, Yin Jiashen, Hu Junjie, Chen Yichao
29	Soaring Shou:	Tian Wei, Li Zhenhe, Shi Bin, Dong Chunhui
30	POSEIDON:	Katsumi Takahashi, Hiroya Abe, Hidenori Narita, Lee Bokhee
31	BACH:	Yoko Okubo, Masaharu Takatori, Kimiyo Nakamoto, Reiko Hoshika, Peer Bach, Setsuko Lichtnecker
32	Key Bridge:	Cho Jung soon, Hong Jin hee, Oh Man jin, Miyako Nakadoi, Mitsuko Sugino, Sae Ohashi
33	Senior 2017:	Kazuhiko Yamada, Akihiko Yamada, Kyoko Ohno, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura
34	SARA:	Tadashi Teramoto, Kumiko Sasahira, Hideki Takano, Takeshi Niekawa, Shugo Tanaka, Masaaki Takayama
35	TBA:	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Terumi Kubo, Hiroaki Miura
36	Katsumata:	Atsuko Katsumata, Kimiko Kamakari, Yasuyo Iida, Yoko Nenohi, Takako Nakatani, Yumi Yanagida
37	MASA:	Makiko Sato, Masayuki Hayasaka, Toshiko Kaho, Mariko Ueda
38	Fukuyoshi:	Yuki Fukuyoshi, Kyoko Sengoku, Daisuke Sugimoto, Megumi Takasaki, Hiroko Yanagisawa
39	Tropezienne:	Junko Takeda, Kazuko Kawashima, Masako Azuma, Keiko Ishihara
40	Kimura@Yokohama:	Osami Kimura, Yasuyoshi Toriumi, Aiko Banno, Harue Iemori, Setsuko Kimura, Chisato Kiriya
41	kaTsube:	Kenji Miyakuni, Ayako Miyakuni, Toshihiro Katsube, Masako Katsube
42	NANIWADA:	Toshiro Nose, Masaru Naniwada, Hideo Togawa, Hisami Kataoka, Junzo Kobayashi
43	HIRATA:	Yasuhiro Shimizu, Makoto Hirata, Tadashi Yoshida, Takashi Maeda, Hiroyuki Noda
44	Morimura:	Yoshiyuki Nakamura, Keisuke Akama, Shunsuke Morimura, Masayuki Ohashi
45	LAS FLORES:	Teruko Nishimura, Takanori Katayama, Sanekata Sonoike, Kotomi Asakoshi, Junko Nishimura, Yuki Harada
46	Sakurai:	Tsuneo Sakurai, Atsushi Kikuchi, Takehiko Tada, Kikuo Ito, Haruyoshi Sato
47	HOSHI:	Masako Sakurai, Yukiko Hoshi, Junko Tsubaki, Megumi Takasaka, Xi Yuheng
48	River Side:	Yumiko Kawakami, Masakatsu Sugino, Hiroko Tanaka, Ryoichi Yasuhara, Noriko Yagi, Toshiharu Hirose
49	Midori:	Midori Ito, Ayako Shimazaki, Kazuko Tachibana, Emi Sakata
50	Air-TRFC:	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Mark LaForge, Toby Curtis, Ayako Matsubara, Chen Yuechen
51	KinKi:	Sonoko Namba, Chizuko Sugiura, Mamiko Odaira, Toru Tamura, Mimako Ishizuka, Kazuko Okamoto
52	Japan Youth:	Tadahiro Kikuchi, Koki Kobayashi, Hitoshi Tanabe, Eishi Imakiire, Ryoichi Yamada, Naoto Katagiri
53	skylark:	Naoto Matsumoto, Sumiko Sugino, Kazuo Takano, Kazuko Takahashi

1st-round match-ups: 1 v 40; 2 v 46; 3 v 50; 4 v 38; 5 v 43; 6 v 16; 7 v 41; 8 v 48; 9 v 42; 10 v 20; 11 v 19; 12 v 37; 13 v 32; 14 v 27; 15 v 47; 24 v 31; 25 v 22; 26 v 21; 28 v 39; 29 v 23; 30 v 44; 33 v 18; 34 v 49; 35 v 45; 36 v 17; 51 v 52 v 53

**Today's 1st VuGraph Matches will feature Senior 2017 (33) vs KOREA Joy (18)
and SARA (34) vs Midori (49)**

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 Yokohama Open Pairs 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 Yokohama Open Pairs) 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/Yokohama Open Pairs)

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 2015 NEC Cup: Hackett vs England/Netherlands

2015's top round-robin qualifier Hackett chose fourth-place qualifier SARA as their quarter-final opponent. Second-place Singapore chose to play fifth-place England Hinden, third-place SANDEN chose eighth-place England/Netherlands, leaving sixth-place Sweden to play seventh-place Russia in the quarter-finals.

Hackett took a 41-14 first-half lead over SARA and never looked back adding another 50 imps in the second half to take the first semi-final slot 94-17. Singapore led England Hinden 38-30 at the half, but lost the second half 24-35 to yield the second semi-final slot to Hinden in a 65-62 nail-biter. SANDEN was never in their match as England/Netherlands took a 51-16 first-half lead and backed it up with a 38-29 second half to take the third semi-final slot 89-45. Finally, Sweden led Russia 35-24 at the half but returned the favor and then some, losing the second half 34-50 as Russia took the fourth and final semi-final slot.

The semi-finals featured Hackett vs England Hinden and Russia vs England/Netherlands. Hackett made short work of Hinden by winning the first half 78-5. When Hinden retired, Hackett advanced to the final well-rested. Russia built a seemingly commanding 46-8 first-half lead over England/Netherlands, only to fall victim to fickle Dame Fortune in the second half as England/Netherlands won the second half 59-8 to capture the last spot, 67-54, in the NEC Cup final.

The 2015 NEC Cup final pitted top-seed Hackett (Jason Hackett, Brian Senior, John Holland, Gunnar Hallberg) against bottom-seed England/Netherlands (David Bakhshi, David Gold, Ricco va Prooijen, Louk Verhees). But make no mistake, this was no David (pun intended) vs Goliath match-up. Both teams featured past NEC Cup champions. This sized up to be a four-on-four fight to the finish.

First Quarter (Boards 1-16):

Bd: 1 North
 Dir: North ♠ J108432
 Vul: None ♥ 4
 ♦ A953
 ♣ 95

West ♠ K7 ♥ 109 ♦ Q10742 ♣ Q764	East ♠ A96 ♥ AKJ65 ♦ J ♣ AJ102
---	--

South
 ♠ Q5
 ♥ Q8732
 ♦ K86
 ♣ K83

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
	2♠	DbI	Pass
2NT(wk)	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
	2♠	DbI	3♠
Pass	Pass	4♥	All Pass

4♥ was not without play (but 3NT could have been beaten on spade leads). Senior won the spade lead, played to ruff a spade in dummy, advanced the ♥10, ducked, and then continued with a club to the ace followed by the ♥K (had both opponents followed to this he would have claimed). As it was, he set up the clubs but the defenders played on spades and diamonds to obtain trump control so declarer could never score his long clubs. That was down one, 5 imps to Eng/Neth when Gold, in 4♣, won the spade lead, lost an early club finesse and then drew trumps to give up a club and a trick in each red suit for +130.

Bd: 2	North	
Dir: East	♠ K62	
Vul: N/S	♥ J73	
	♦ KQJ8	
	♣ QJ6	
	West	East
	♠ A	♠ Q10985
	♥ 982	♥ AK5
	♦ 43	♦ A9752
	♣ AK95432	♣ ---
	South	
	♠ J743	
	♥ Q1064	
	♦ 106	
	♣ 1087	

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠(♦)	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass

3NT had plenty of suits that could be established in the fulness of time — but no entries to them. Seven top winners obstinately remained all that could be taken. Meanwhile, against 5♣ van Prooijen led a top

diamond. Hackett ducked and was now in with a chance against 3-3 diamonds and 3-3 clubs. He won the heart shift and played ace and another diamond. Verhees carefully ruffed in with the ♣10 and now declarer could do no better than discard his heart loser and concede a trump for down one and a modest, if Pyrrhic, victory.

Bd: 3 North
 Dir: South ♠ 976
 Vul: E/W ♡ Q654
 ♢ 1075
 ♣ K87

West
 ♠ 8543
 ♡ KJ92
 ♢ 8
 ♣ QJ42

East
 ♠ KQ2
 ♡ A3
 ♢ KQJ932
 ♣ A10

South
 ♠ AJ10
 ♡ 1087
 ♢ A64
 ♣ 9653

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

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

Hackett and Senior had been there before so van Prooijen's *jeux d'esprit* did not discombobulate them unduly. Van Prooijen decided if they were good enough to bid they were good enough to lead. Hackett won the low heart lead cheaply in hand and played a spade to dummy, more hurt than surprised when it lost. He won the heart return and cleared diamonds, emerging with ten tricks.

In the other room Holland also led hearts. His choice of the ten went to the jack, queen from North (who was playing South to have led the ♥10 from something like ♥A107; quite a compliment) and ace and now declarer emerged with 11 tricks when the diamonds behaved. That made it 6-2 to Eng/Neth.

Next came a real swing.

Bd: 4 North
 Dir: West ♠ 87
 Vul: Both ♡ AJ74
 ♢ 87432
 ♣ 109

West
 ♠ QJ92
 ♡ 85
 ♢ AK1095
 ♣ J6

East
 ♠ A10
 ♡ Q9632
 ♢ QJ6
 ♣ K83

South
 ♠ K6543
 ♡ K10
 ♢ ---
 ♣ AQ7542

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	2♠
Pass	3♣	3♦	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	2NT
Pass	3♣	Dbl	Pass
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Where David Gold held the East cards his combination of doubling then bidding 3♦ showed better than an invitation in that suit. Bakhshi wasn't interested in bidding on but he found that 3♦ was too challenging to make against the lie of the black suits and the 5-0 trump break. There were two hearts, two clubs and an inevitable spade to lose.

Meanwhile, against 3NT Verhees led a low club and the jack scored as van Prooijen gave count. Senior led a low spade to the ten and if Verhees had ducked he would surely have defeated the game (as the cards lie) since declarer had no legitimate route to a ninth winner without giving up a spade, which would have let North pitch a discouraging diamond or an encouraging heart. Verhees took the ♠K and (as the Bulletin Editor defending single-dummy did) exited with a spade, which would only be wrong if East had all the soft red-suit honors and no ♥A. But Senior, with precisely that hand, now had nine winners and took no time at all to cash them; 12 imps to Hackett, up 14-6.

You know that LITTLE THING inside your head that keeps you from saying things that you shouldn't? Yeah, well we don't have one of those.

Bd: 5
 Dlr: North
 Vul: N/S

West
 ♠ 863
 ♥ K974
 ♦ KQ986
 ♣ J

North
 ♠ 10
 ♥ AJ862
 ♦ 743
 ♣ 8754

East
 ♠ QJ4
 ♥ Q105
 ♦ J10
 ♣ AK932

South
 ♠ AK9752
 ♥ 3
 ♦ A52
 ♣ Q106

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
Pass	2♠	1NT	2♦ (♥ or ♠)
3♦	All Pass	Pass	Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	1♠
Dbf	Pass	1NT	2♠
All Pass			

It's rare to encounter a lack of competitive methods by a pair playing at this high a level, but Bakhshi's decision to compete to 3♦ as opposed to making a takeout double or a two-suited action does look surprising. Yes, North had shown a heart fit, but what of it? As it turned out, no great harm was done, in a sense, when no one could double 3♦. The defenders cross-ruffed merrily (spade to the king for a heart shift) to take the first six tricks with the ♦A still to come; +150 to Hackett.

In the other room Verhees would have to emerge with eight tricks in 2♠ to hold the loss to an imp. Senior won the unreadable ♣J as declarer followed with the six and had to decide what to do next. The diamond switch Senior chose seems perfectly reasonable single-dummy. Of course had he cashed the second top club and found everyone following, he would have known what to do. After the diamond switch declarer could win and split out the trumps; +110, and a single imp to Hackett, leading 15-6.

The next deal produced no swing. Then...

Bd: 7
 Dlr: South
 Vul: Both

West
 ♠ AK10
 ♥ J96
 ♦ 5
 ♣ AQJ852

North
 ♠ 653
 ♥ A8
 ♦ AKQ1082
 ♣ 74

East
 ♠ J9742
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ J43
 ♣ 63

South
 ♠ Q8
 ♥ 75432
 ♦ 976
 ♣ K109

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
1♣	1♦	1♥(♠)	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3NT	All Pass

(1) Clubs with spade fit...or natural?

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♣	1♦	1♠	Pass
3♣	3♦	All Pass	

Jason Hackett passed 3♦, expecting to buy relatively short clubs, and could not envisage game as being practical facing a hand that could not act over 3♦. Had he bid 3♠ Senior might have raised to game and with the club finesse working, even repeated diamond leads would not break the contract against 3-2 spades; indeed, declarer might even survive a bad trump break. Van Prooijen took his seven red-suit winners and went home, -200 looking like a reasonable position. However, the accident from the Open Room cost blood. 3NT down three meant a loss of 11 imps instead of a gain of 9 imps, and Hackett now led 26-6.

On the next deal two good players did something we would never consider, leaving us to ponder whether it was us or them who were out of line. You hold: ♠Q43 ♥K64 ♦A54 ♣K1043 and are on lead against 2♠ after a strong notrump and transfer auction. Partner is a passed hand who failed to double 2♥ — no real surprise there. Over to you.

We'd guess you all voted for a club, then a red suit and finally a trump. Both defenders opted for the ♠3, and this is what they found:

Bd: 8
 Dlr: West
 Vul: None

West
 ♠ K72
 ♥ Q1083
 ♦ 83
 ♣ J652

North
 ♠ A5
 ♥ AJ72
 ♦ K972
 ♣ A97

East
 ♠ Q43
 ♥ K64
 ♦ A54
 ♣ K1043

South
 ♠ J10986
 ♥ 95
 ♦ QJ106
 ♣ Q8

The trump lead conceded 140, as would a club. A heart lead probably concedes 110, but a low diamond gives declarer losing options. Oh well.

Bd: 9
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ AQJ98
 ♥ KQ74
 ♦ 85
 ♣ J6

West
 ♠ 72
 ♥ 1093
 ♦ K4
 ♣ K108542

East
 ♠ K6
 ♥ AJ85
 ♦ A1096
 ♣ AQ3

South
 ♠ 10543
 ♥ 62
 ♦ QJ732
 ♣ 97

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
	1♠	Dbl	3♣
4♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

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

Both E/Ws scored up a game, but in very different ways, and for the third time this set Eng/Neth took an action that swung double-digit imps in the wrong direction. In the Open Room Bakhshi took a sporting bid at the four-level and Gold had thoughts of slam, which came to nothing.

In the other room van Prooijen's canape opening was about to work in a very strange way. E/W were surely about to play 3♣ until Verhees came to the rescue by competing to 3♠, letting Senior take a two-way shot in the passout seat. Hackett had the perfect hand with which to sit for 3NT, and after a spade lead had ten winners and an imp for his pains.

Bd: 10
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ A103
 ♥ 9
 ♦ AQ10865
 ♣ AQ9

West
 ♠ Q
 ♥ AJ1086
 ♦ J73
 ♣ J1064

East
 ♠ K87642
 ♥ Q43
 ♦ 94
 ♣ K3

South
 ♠ J95
 ♥ K752
 ♦ K2
 ♣ 8752

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	Dbl
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
		2♠	Pass
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

After what some might regard as an unsophisticated leap to 3NT Hallberg received the unwelcome heart lead. He flew king, meeting his fate (-100) at once. Had he ducked, a club might well have come back and had he finessed he might have gone two down.

In the other room van Prooijen opted for the low road when he balanced with 3♦ over 2♠. The risks there are clear, but he hoped his partner would bid hearts or be able to raise diamonds if game was good, and his action worked perfectly. To cap it all Senior found the reasonable ♣K lead and van Prooijen emerged with an overtrick; 6 imps, making the score 27-12.

Bd: 11
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ K932
 ♥ A109
 ♦ KJ54
 ♣ 52

West
 ♠ Q7654
 ♥ K6
 ♦ A8
 ♣ Q1093

East
 ♠ J
 ♥ QJ542
 ♦ Q10732
 ♣ 86

South
 ♠ A108
 ♥ 873
 ♦ 96
 ♣ AKJ74

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
			1♣
1♠	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
			1♦
1♠	1NT	All Pass	

Both Norths made the excellent decision not to invite game, a somewhat easier decision for van Prooijen who rated to be facing a balanced 11-13 whereas Holland had more hands in an intermediate range where game might be more playable.

The play was identical for nine tricks. East led hearts and the defenders played three rounds of the suit as West pitched a spade. Declarer played a spade to the jack and ace, then the ♠10, West covering to block the suit. North finessed unsuccessfully in clubs and the defense played ace and another diamond. South won the ♦K and now Hallberg cashed his spade winner and tried to run clubs, while van Prooijen unblocked spades, then end-played West at trick 12 with a club to give him a stepping-stone to the ♠9 for an overtrick. It was 27-13 now for Hackett.

Bd: 12
Dir: West
Vul: N/S

<p>West ♠ K765 ♥ Q842 ♦ J73 ♣ Q2</p>	<p>North ♠ 8 ♥ KJ9765 ♦ A854 ♣ K3</p>	<p>East ♠ AJ10432 ♥ A10 ♦ 10 ♣ AJ84</p>	<p>South ♠ Q9 ♥ 3 ♦ KQ962 ♣ 109765</p>
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Open Room

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
Pass	2♦(1)	2♠	4♦
4♠	Dbl	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

(1) 5+♥, 4+♦ 10-15

Both N/S pairs put themselves in jeopardy but Hallberg's improvisation went unpunished whereas Senior was prepared to defend at the five level. Against 4♠ the defenders took a trick in each red suit; +450 to E/W. Van Prooijen played 5♦ after doubling 4♠ to suggest extra shape and a willingness to sacrifice and now Senior had a shot at a bonanza. After the ace and another spade lead declarer ruffed and advanced the ♥J. Senior won his ace and could not read what was going on, other than that declarer had six hearts. He played ace and another club and declarer won, drew two rounds of trumps, then led a third club as Hackett ruffed in with the ♦J for down 500. 2 imps to Hackett, up 29-13.

After a quiet 3NT push both pairs had the opportunity to put some delicate modern science into play.

Bd: 14
Dir: East
Vul: None

<p>West ♠ 76 ♥ 10973 ♦ K852 ♣ KJ10</p>	<p>North ♠ AK1054 ♥ 6 ♦ A93 ♣ 7532</p>	<p>East ♠ J8 ♥ AKQJ42 ♦ Q107 ♣ Q6</p>	<p>South ♠ Q932 ♥ 85 ♦ J64 ♣ A984</p>
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Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bakhshi</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>
2♦(♥)	2♠	1♥	Pass
All Pass		3♥	3♠

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
3♣(♥)	Dbl (t/o ♥)	1♥	Pass
Pass	4♠	3♥	3♠
		All Pass	

Both tables showed a heart-raise, Hackett's a Lawful Bergen raise, Bakhshi's a constructive two-level raise. While that got both Easts to 3♥, Hallberg got his spades in cheaply while van Prooijen thought he owed his partner another bid at his second turn. Inquiring minds might wonder why. Be that as it may, this didn't have to be a tragedy if the defenders had been able to avoid endplaying themselves.

It wasn't so easy, though. After Hackett led a top heart against 4♠ Senior overtook to play the ♣Q, ducked. Verhees won the next club, ruffed out hearts, drew trumps, then played ace and another club. Hackett then carefully gave a ruff and discard, necessary to save partner from himself if declarer had ♦Q107, though that defense might not look so bright if declarer had started life with the ♦QJ4 and could discard from dummy and ruff in hand. As it was, though, the game was one down either way.

Hallberg played 3♠ from the North seat on repeated heart leads. He ruffed, stripped trumps, and ducked a club to West who won the club return and played a third club, reaching the same ending. Bakhshi exited with the ♦K, hoping for a declarer error rather than play his partner for the ♦Q109. Hallberg guessed well, won the ♦A and led a diamond to the jack for +140 and 5 imps. It was 34-13 now.

Hackett added another 2 imps when Gold played to defeat a notrump part-score and cost himself a couple of overtrick imps. Then both pairs led fourth highest against a strong notrump, passed out, letting

through the ninth trick. It was 36-13 at the end of the first quarter and Eng/Neth were quietly confident: they had their opponents exactly where they wanted them. Hackett took theimps and was content to let their opponents try to come back.

Second Quarter (Boards 17-32):

On Board 17, with Hackett leading 36-13, both E/W pairs came up a trick short in 4♥ when the defense managed to obtain a diamond ruff to go with their three high-card winners. Then...

Bd: 18	North		
Dlr: East	♠ KQ86		
Vul: N/S	♥ 102		
	♦ A754		
	♣ K62		
		West	East
		♠ 10974	♠ J5
		♥ KJ74	♥ A63
		♦ KJ8	♦ 109632
		♣ 85	♣ Q73
			South
			♠ A32
			♥ Q985
			♦ Q
			♣ AJ1094

Open/Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Both N/S pairs reached 4♠ in the 4-3 fit when 3NT was cold (nine tricks were available via a club finesse through East; the defense could not take more than three hearts off the top). In 4♠ declarer had three unavoidable losers (two hearts and a trump) but no clear road to ten winners (unless the defense led trumps, in which case 4♠ was cold with careful play). For example, after a diamond lead (the lead Gold received in the Closed Room) declarer could not rise ace and draw trumps without exposing himself to several diamond losers in addition to his heart losers. Indeed, that is the line Gold followed, taking the club finesse early, then taking the top three trumps hoping to find the suit 3-3. When that did not happen the defense ruffed the third club and Gold lost three diamonds, two hearts and a trump; -300.

Initially it appeared as if declarer might somehow be able to duck a trump early to maintain control, hoping to take three spades, five clubs, one diamond and a diamond ruff while preventing West from retaining a trump to kill dummy's clubs. However, there was no obvious way to accomplish this and Deep Finesse confirmed that approach could not succeed. Another possible line was to attack hearts early by passing

the ♥10, hoping to find the jack onside and take one or two heart tricks to go with five clubs, one diamond and three trumps. This was Senior's approach in the Open Room after a club lead to the jack, but it also failed. He did, however, manage to negotiate a diamond ruff in dummy to take eight tricks rather than the seven in the Closed Room to finish down two, -200, for a 3-imp gain. Hackett now led 39-13.

Bd: 19	North		
Dlr: South	♠ J9		
Vul: E/W	♥ K7		
	♦ A652		
	♣ Q10942		
		West	East
		♠ 8642	♠ AK1053
		♥ 1054	♥ QJ32
		♦ Q1084	♦ J
		♣ 53	♣ KJ6
			South
			♠ Q7
			♥ A986
			♦ K973
			♣ A87

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♦
2♠	3♣	3♥	Pass
3♠	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			1NT
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

The success of the Dutch pair's 3♠ in the Open Room depended on whether the defense could negotiate any heart ruffs for North. Hackett led the ♦7 to the ace and Senior failed to find the magic ♥K switch, instead trying the ♣10. Van Prooijen inserted the jack, forcing the ace, and Hackett now had the defense's last chance for glory, but only if he could work out to underlead in hearts. When instead he returned a club to the king, declarer cashed the ♠AK, solving the trump (and potential promotion) situation, and now just lost the two top hearts; +140.

In the Closed Room Holland-Hallberg found their spade fit but were outbid in diamonds when Bakhshi doubled 2♠ for the minors. 3♦ turned out to be a fine place to play, as long as N/S were not up to finding both heart ruffs against 2♠. 3♦ finished down one, -50, when the defense collected the obvious five tricks (two spades, two trumps and a club). That was 3imps back to Eng/Neth, evening out the session score but still trailing in the match 39-16.

Bd: 20
 Dlr: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ AJ9
 ♥ K9
 ♦ AKJ32
 ♣ Q74

West
 ♠ KQ3
 ♥ A32
 ♦ 754
 ♣ AK102

East
 ♠ 10652
 ♥ QJ1054
 ♦ 108
 ♣ 96

South
 ♠ 874
 ♥ 876
 ♦ Q96
 ♣ J853

Open Room

West <i>Verhees</i>	North <i>Senior</i>	East <i>v Prooijen</i>	South <i>Hackett</i>
			1♦
2♠	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Closed Room

West <i>Hallberg</i>	North <i>Gold</i>	East <i>Holland</i>	South <i>Bakhshi</i>
			1♦
2♠	3♣(♦)	DbI	4♦
Pass	5♦	DbI	All Pass

Open/Closed Rooms

West <i>Verhees</i>	North <i>Senior</i>	East <i>v Prooijen</i>	South <i>Hackett</i>
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	DbI	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

Both E/W's did well to locate the optimal 2♥ contract, then sell out to 3♦. In the Closed Room van Prooijen led a club on the go, got his ruff, and in due course the defense collected their two major-suit tricks for +100. In the Open Room Holland led the ♥Q to the ace and now Hallberg failed to cash the ♣K as a trial balloon and instead returned a low heart. Gold won, quickly drew trumps ending in dummy, then played a club toward his hand. Hallberg rose with the king and switched to the ♠K. Gold ducked and Hallberg persisted with the ♠Q, which did not exactly strike terror in the heart of declarer. Now Gold could claim 9 tricks for +110; 5 imps for Eng/Neth, reducing the margin to 18 at 39-21.

On Board 21 N/S were cold for 11 tricks in spades (+650) but both tables sold out to 5♦x and collected 300 for a push. On Board 22 both N/S pairs bid to 2♥ on a combined 22 hcp but game was cold when the missing ♥AQ both turned up onside. Senior took his 10 tricks but Gold managed to take 11 and add another imp to Eng/Neth's total, now trailing 39-22.

Bd: 23
 Dlr: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ KQ42
 ♥ A105
 ♦ Q1074
 ♣ 106

West
 ♠ AJ8763
 ♥ 9732
 ♦ J3
 ♣ 9

East
 ♠ 95
 ♥ KJ84
 ♦ 82
 ♣ AJ854

South
 ♠ 10
 ♥ Q6
 ♦ AK965
 ♣ KQ732

Bd: 26
 Dlr: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ KJ9
 ♥ AJ6
 ♦ A108
 ♣ AQ76

West
 ♠ Q765
 ♥ KQ853
 ♦ 963
 ♣ 4

East
 ♠ 842
 ♥ 974
 ♦ 52
 ♣ J10953

South
 ♠ A103
 ♥ 102
 ♦ KQJ74
 ♣ K82

In the Open Room Senior-Hackett judged well to settle for game. The defense was not unfriendly. Van Prooijen led the ♠9 to the ace and a heart came back, ducked to the king, followed by a second heart. With nine tricks guaranteed Senior called for the ♣K and emerged with ten tricks for a healthy +630.

In the Closed Room Gold showed his diamond support immediately, hoping to bid notrump later. When Holland doubled the club bid Bakhshi had hopes for bigger and better things, not envisioning the major wastage in both black suits. And by the time the auction reached the five level it was too late to retreat to notrump. 5♦ looked to be a doomed contract and Hallberg got off to a good lead with the ♣9. Holland won the ace but at trick two inexplicably switched to...the ♥K. Gold blinked, then quickly won the ace, drew trumps, knocked out the ♠A and claimed 11 tricks for +750. 3 imps to Eng/Neth instead of 13 the other way, leaving Eng/Neth just 14 imps behind at 39-25.

On next two boards both sides bid to good games but in each case Hackett picked up an overtrick imp to increase their lead slightly to 41-25. Then came...

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
		Pass	1♣(2+)
1♥	2♥(♣)	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		Pass	1♣(2+)
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♦
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

In the Open Room Senior-Hackett were not really on solid ground here but several aspects of the auction deserve mentioning. First, Senior had no good way of doing anything better than showing club support with his 2♥ cue-bid, even though Hackett could have held a balanced minimum with a doubleton club. Second, once Senior cue-bid 3♦ Hackett should have known that diamonds had to play as well or better than clubs (unless Senior hand a *lot* of good clubs, in which case he might have bid differently, such as bid a forcing 4♣ over 3♣). Third, Senior might have bid a pick-a-slam 5NT over Hackett's 4♠ cue-bid. And finally, Hackett should have converted 6♣ to 6♦ since opposite the ♦A — even if it was short — diamonds had to be a suitable trump suit. Of course the errors made by N/S here did not have to be punished as severely as they were, but in bridge, as in life, no good deed goes unpunished and usually no ill-deed does either. When the smoke cleared 6♣ was down two, -200.

In the other room Gold-Bakhshi had what appeared to be a relay-type auction to the good 6NT contract (at least here trumps could not be 5-1) with 11 top tricks and plenty of chances for a twelfth (3-3 clubs; ♥KQ onside; two-way finesse for the ♠Q). Hallberg tabled the ♥K and Bakhshi claimed immediately; +1440. That was 17 hugeimps to Eng/Neth, who took the lead at 42-41.

On Board 27 both N/S pairs played spade partials and lost the obvious four tricks for a push at +140. Then...

We're not really LAZY — we just really enjoy doing nothing.

Bd: 28
Dir: West
Vul: N/S

North
♠ A3
♥ A1043
♦ 983
♣ AQ109

West	East
♠ K10	♠ J952
♥ KJ765	♥ Q82
♦ J754	♦ A1062
♣ 65	♣ 43

South
♠ Q8764
♥ 9
♦ KQ
♣ KJ872

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
Pass	1♣(2+)	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣(1)
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Checkback (for 3-card ♠ support)

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

The club suit got lost in the Open Room's checkback auction so when Hackett did not find secondary spade support he simply invited with 2♠ and Senior carried on with his super-max. Once again the pair did not have to pay so severely for not investigating other strains (Hackett did not need to be balanced and Senior did not really have "the goods" as far as stoppers in the red suits were concerned, though he was certainly balanced, which is not to be taken as a clinical diagnosis). Perhaps a 3♣ bid by someone would have saved the day, but this was not that day and the contract was tenuous at best. Van Prooijen led the ♦2, Verhees contributing the four, and Senior cashed three rounds of clubs before playing ace and a spade up. When the queen lost to the king he knew this was not going to be his day. The defense now cashed their three diamonds and two spades for down two, -200.

In the Closed Room the 1NT opening allowed South to show his two suits efficiently and now the pair cue-bid to 5♣, which was cold. The hand virtually played itself once Bakhshi guessed to duck the second spade; +600 and 13 moreimps to Eng/Neth, who now led by 14 at 55-41.

Bd: 29 North
 Dir: North ♠ AK9
 Vul: Both ♥ 752
 ♦ 64
 ♣ AK873

West
 ♠ 864
 ♥ 104
 ♦ AK852
 ♣ QJ2

East
 ♠ Q52
 ♥ AKJ8
 ♦ QJ
 ♣ 9654

South
 ♠ J1073
 ♥ Q963
 ♦ 10973
 ♣ 10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
	1♣	Dbl	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1NT	All Pass	

The auction in the Open Room seems a bit pushy (but what auction isn't when you seat four experts around a bridge table?) and both editors would have opted to bid 2♦ rather than 2NT at our first turn. Still, 3NT did not have to be as poor a spot as it was what with the blockage in the suit declarer would have to rely on for most of his tricks. Senior led the ♣A which set up a couple of club tricks for declarer and a side entry to the diamonds — though the defense could still control whether it could be used before or after the diamond suit could be unblocked. That particular issue was resolved *post haste* as Senior continued with the king and a third club, returning the diamonds to limbo. Verhees led a diamond to the queen and overtook the jack, hoping to find the suit 3-3. When Senior showed out (dummy pitching a spade) Verhees' last hope was for a misdefense. He led the ♥10, hoping Senior held the queen and would duck. Alas, Hackett won the ♥Q, cashed the ♦10, and led a spade to Senior, the defense taking three spades, two clubs, one heart and one diamond for down two, -200.

In the Closed Room Gold's 1NT ended the auction. Holland led the ♥A, then switched to the ♣6. Gold took the jack with the ace, then led a heart to the queen and a heart back. Holland won, cashed his fourth heart, then switched to the ♦Q and continued with the jack when the queen held. Hallberg overtook the second diamond, cashed a third, then got out with a spade to the ace for Gold to cash the king. With three cards remaining, the ♣K87, Gold exited with the ♣8. Holland, holding ♣954 opposite his

partner's ♣Q2, won the nine and now declarer had the last two tricks (if he ducks Hallberg can win the queen and return a club for the defense to take another trick). Down one, -100, and 7 imps back to Hackett, who trailed by just 7 at 55-48.

The final three boards were all pushes. The session ended with Eng/Neth coming back strong from being down by 23, to being up by 14, to being up by 7 at the half...and the second half figured to be equally exciting.

Third Quarter (Boards 33-48):

In the third set Eng/Neth would have to deal with the problem of being in the lead...not always easy.

Bd: 33 North
 Dir: North ♠ KJ85
 Vul: None ♥ K964
 ♦ A96
 ♣ K7

West
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ J1032
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ AJ104

East
 ♠ A109
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ K872
 ♣ Q853

South
 ♠ 7643
 ♥ A75
 ♦ J103
 ♣ 962

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1NT	All Pass	

Against 1NT the defenders led and continued clubs. Declarer, David Gold, won in hand, ducked a spade, and Hackett overtook his partner's ten to play the ♥J (a low heart might have worked better here) letting Gold win in dummy to lead a spade to the king and ace. Gold was up to six tricks while the defense had three clubs and two spades. Had the defenders cashed their clubs they would have squeezed Gold, but when Brian Senior played a second heart it set up the ♥9 for the seventh winner; +90.

The bad news in the Open Room was that N/S's quick and dirty four-card major style got them to the wrong spot! the good news was that their opponents didn't know it and balanced themselves into 3♣. The defense led and continued trumps, letting Ricco van

Prooijen build a spade winner to pitch a slow diamond loser letting him out for down one (he lost two hearts and one trick in each of the other suits). Not bad, though of course 2♥ would have been extremely unsuccessful. One imp nonetheless for Eng/Neth, up 56-48.

Bd: 34
 Dir: East
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ K9
 ♥ K9
 ♦ AQJ432
 ♣ J87

West
 ♠ 10763
 ♥ A76
 ♦ 10985
 ♣ 53

East
 ♠ AQJ
 ♥ J2
 ♦ K6
 ♣ AQ10964

South
 ♠ 8542
 ♥ Q108543
 ♦ 7
 ♣ K2

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦	2♦	3♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♦	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

For Hackett, John Holland led his diamond against 3♣ and the defense took their ruff, then shifted to hearts. Van Prooijen made the normal play of rising with the ace and taking the club finesse. Had he instead taken the spade finesse he would have made nine tricks. As it was, he lost two clubs, the ♠K, and one heart, ending up down two; but he would have lostimps anyway since 3♦ was no fun at all on repeated club leads. Declarer took the diamond finesse, more in hope than expectation, and lost two clubs, two diamonds, two spades and a heart for down three. Hackett was back in front 57-56.

Bd: 35
 Dir: South
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ A862
 ♥ K1098
 ♦ 54
 ♣ K42

West
 ♠ KQ7
 ♥ A2
 ♦ 732
 ♣ QJ876

East
 ♠ J10953
 ♥ QJ64
 ♦ K
 ♣ 953

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ 753
 ♦ AQJ10986
 ♣ A10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
All Pass			

While 3NT was quite playable (and laydown) as the cards lay and 5♦ a decent and equally playable spot, the same could not be said for 4♥. Van Prooijen led a top spade against 4♥ and Hallberg won, finessed in diamonds, then led a heart to his ten and East's jack. When a spade came back, Hallberg ruffed and led a second heart. Louk Verhees won his ace, cashed a spade and shifted to clubs. Declarer still had a trump and a spade to lose for down two; 6 somewhat surprisingimps to Eng/Neth who had wisely stayed low in the Closed Room.

Bd: 36
 Dir: West
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AK432
 ♦ J109
 ♣ AQ762

West
 ♠ 63
 ♥ QJ98
 ♦ K863
 ♣ K53

East
 ♠ Q8742
 ♥ 107
 ♦ A72
 ♣ 1098

South
 ♠ AKJ1095
 ♥ 65
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ J4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT(1)
Pass	2♣(2)	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

(1) Spades
 (2) Extras or ♥+♣

The excellent trump spots allowed 4♠ to survive the bad break here. The defenders could take their two

diamond tricks early, as Verhees and Hackett did, but when the club finesse succeeded there was no way for the defense to promote a trump and declarer had ten winners.

Had the defense led a top heart, declarer could have played to establish a diamond. East does best to win the ace and play back a heart but declarer simply ruffs the third heart as East pitches a diamond) and reduces his trumps by finessing in clubs and singling in small trumps by ruffing more hearts, coming to six spades, two clubs and two hearts. If East does not rise with the $\heartsuit A$ at trick two declarer can arrange to set up and cash his diamond winner before East has time to get a discard. No swing; still 57-56 for Hackett

Bd: 37
Dlr: North
Vul: N/S

North	South
\spadesuit Q87	\spadesuit 963
\heartsuit K8732	\heartsuit QJ6
\diamond 107	\diamond J43
\clubsuit KQ8	\clubsuit A1054

West	East
\spadesuit A102	\spadesuit KJ54
\heartsuit A104	\heartsuit 95
\diamond AK62	\diamond Q985
\clubsuit 762	\clubsuit J93

Open Room
West Verhees North Hallberg East v Prooijen South Holland
Pass Pass Pass Pass
1NT All Pass

Closed Room
West Hackett North Gold East Senior South Bakhshi
Pass Pass Pass Pass
1NT All Pass

Both tables played 1NT on a heart lead. Verhees ran diamonds and worked out from the discards to play spades for four tricks when North discarded one early. Hackett settled for seven tricks by playing spades from the top where South had discarded a spade on the fourth round of diamonds. Those 2 imps put Eng/Neth back up by an imp at 58-57.

Bd: 38
Dlr: East
Vul: E/W

North	South
\spadesuit J104	\spadesuit A6
\heartsuit J84	\heartsuit A10953
\diamond 10842	\diamond KJ93
\clubsuit 952	\clubsuit A4

West	East
\spadesuit KQ872	\spadesuit 953
\heartsuit ---	\heartsuit KQ762
\diamond Q76	\diamond A5
\clubsuit KJ1076	\clubsuit Q83

Open Room
West Verhees North Hallberg East v Prooijen South Holland
Pass Pass 1 \heartsuit
2 \heartsuit (\spadesuit + \clubsuit) Pass 2 \spadesuit Dbl
Pass 3 \heartsuit Dbl All Pass

Closed Room
West Hackett North Gold East Senior South Bakhshi
Pass Pass 1 \heartsuit
1 \spadesuit Pass 2 \heartsuit Pass
4 \spadesuit Pass

Holland played an inelegant 3 \heartsuit x on a top spade lead. He won, returned the suit, and now West shifted to a diamond to the $\diamond A$ for a diamond return. Holland finessed, lost the diamond ruff, won the club return, exited in clubs and ruffed the third club. Now he led the $\heartsuit 3$ to the eight and queen, the defenders' sixth trick, and East (down to a spade and the $\heartsuit K76$) had to lead a spade. This allowed South to pitch his $\diamond K$, ruff in dummy, then lead the $\heartsuit J$ for the trump coup. Alternatively, East could have led a trump and conceded at once. Nicely done by declarer.

4 \spadesuit was not laydown by any means but was probably where you want to play, since it needed little more than the $\spadesuit A$ being where you'd expect it to be. It was easy enough to make, declarer losing a trick each in spades, clubs and diamonds. So Hackett had 8 imps to lead 65-58.

Bd: 39
Dlr: South
Vul: Both

North
\spadesuit K92
\heartsuit AK9
\diamond 10832
\clubsuit J32

West	East
\spadesuit AJ1064	\spadesuit 853
\heartsuit 74	\heartsuit J8632
\diamond AKQJ	\diamond 95
\clubsuit 108	\clubsuit AQ4

South
\spadesuit Q7
\heartsuit Q105
\diamond 764
\clubsuit K9765

Open Room
West Verhees North Hallberg East v Prooijen South Holland
Pass Pass Pass Pass
1 \clubsuit (16+) Pass 1 \diamond Pass
1 \spadesuit Pass 2 \diamond (\heartsuit) Pass
2 \heartsuit Pass 2 \spadesuit All Pass

Closed Room
West Hackett North Gold East Senior South Bakhshi
Pass Pass Pass Pass
1 \spadesuit Pass 2 \spadesuit Pass
4 \spadesuit All Pass

Senior was at the very low end of his constructive spade raise, since the partnership was using forcing notrump over 1♠ to deal with the minimum raises. Again, game was by no means absurd and probably only just outside the imp odds. But with the club finesse wrong the real question was whether declarer could scramble nine tricks. When the cards cooperated Hackett held the loss to 6 imps but still led 65-64.

Bd: 40 North
 Dir: West ♠ 102
 Vul: None ♥ 765
 ♦ J8762
 ♣ J109

West
 ♠ A963
 ♥ AQJ3
 ♦ K4
 ♣ 875

East
 ♠ J4
 ♥ 82
 ♦ AQ1095
 ♣ 6432

South
 ♠ KQ875
 ♥ K1094
 ♦ 3
 ♣ AKQ

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
1NT	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1♣	Pass	1♦	Dbl
Pass	1♥	2♣	3♥
All Pass			

While Holland kept his side low (no one was going to double him) Jason Hackett might have contemplated tickling 3♥. He knew where the ♥K was going to be and North rated to have a virtual Yarborough.

2♠ was not much fun to play, declarer scoring three club tricks and a ruff early, but East overtook his partner's ♦K to play hearts through, then overruffed the ♠10 on the fourth heart to collect the second undertrick. It was a bit more fun than 3♥, though. The defenders led clubs and Gold played top spades from dummy, eventually maneuvering three clubs and two trumps in dummy plus a spade, all of which added up to -150; 2 imps to Hackett, to lead 67-64.

After a flat partscore Brian Senior was about to meet his worst nightmare.

Bd: 42 North
 Dir: East ♠ KJ95
 Vul: Both ♥ 972
 ♦ J63
 ♣ AK6

West
 ♠ Q743
 ♥ KJ53
 ♦ A7
 ♣ Q94

East
 ♠ 862
 ♥ Q64
 ♦ Q842
 ♣ 732

South
 ♠ A10
 ♥ A108
 ♦ K1095
 ♣ J1085

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		Pass	1♦
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		Pass	1♣
Dbl	Rdbl	1♦	Dbl
All Pass			

Holland played the unappetising 3NT sensibly, winning the second heart to pass the ♦J. When the finesse for the ♦Q succeeded he needed only the spade finesse to scramble nine tricks. Easy game, but the favorable lie of the cards meant that 1♦ was in serious danger of going for 1100.

Bakhshi started off with a low diamond to the jack and queen. Senior tried hearts and the defense took the second one as Gold signaled for spades, not clubs. Bakhshi must have thought East had a top club and played the ♠A and ♠10. Gold overtook and cashed ♠K to let Bakhshi pitch his heart. Now came a heart ruff and the ♣J through. Senior ducked and Bakhshi played another club as Senior falsecarded to leave North in doubt as to the full shape. In the end Gold seems to have played Bakhshi for a 2-3-3-5 pattern when he didn't cash the third club but led his losing spade, to let Senior pitch his losing club and escape for 500. So much for disasters. 3 imps to Hackett, ahead 70-64.

Hackett gained an imp from a Bakhshi safety-play. Then both tables played 2NT with 14 facing 9. When dummy came down both declarers knew they would make fewer than seven tricks if 1053 facing AQ876 did not play for four tricks while if it did they had missed game. This time they had missed game.

Bd: 45
 Dlr: North
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 1098542
 ♥ ---
 ♦ AQJ943
 ♣ A

West
 ♠ AJ3
 ♥ AJ7632
 ♦ 65
 ♣ 95

East
 ♠ KQ76
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ 10
 ♣ K10642

South
 ♠ ---
 ♥ 9854
 ♦ K872
 ♣ QJ873

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
	1♦	Dbl	3♦
4♥	5♦	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣(♦)	Pass	2♦
2♥	5♦	All Pass	

When van Prooijen doubled 5♦ he was doubtless thinking "They cannot make 11 tricks here" and he was right...up to a point. With diamonds and spades splitting 13 tricks were straightforward and Hallberg had added another victim to an already long list. In the other room Senior never bid with the best hand at the table and was right; 11 imps to Hackett, 82-70.

After a quiet 3NT making 430 for each E/W pair, a somewhat random swing came along to differentiate the seniors from the juniors-at-heart.

Bd: 47
 Dlr: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ 5
 ♥ 10863
 ♦ A654
 ♣ 9872

West
 ♠ 109643
 ♥ J95
 ♦ Q87
 ♣ KJ

East
 ♠ A8
 ♥ KQ4
 ♦ K92
 ♣ AQ1063

South
 ♠ KQJ72
 ♥ A72
 ♦ J103
 ♣ 54

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣(16+)	1♠
Dbl	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			1♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Holland's initial pass had the rather random effect of right-siding van Prooijen's game. After a top spade lead nine tricks were by no means cold but declarer was far closer than he might have been. He won, led a heart to the jack and a heart back to the king as Hallberg echoed to show an even number and Holland ducked twice. Yes, the winning defense is to win and play a third heart; but since South was a passed hand and the tempo of the earlier play had made it clear who had the ♥A, van Prooijen unblocked clubs and led a diamond toward his king with the hearts still blocked. When the ♦K scored declarer claimed nine tricks for a 10-imp pick-up since Gold's spade lead against North's 3NT in the other room had immediately set up the fifth winner for the defense. It was 82-80 now, Hackett had time for just one more swiny deal before the last break.

Bd: 48
 Dlr: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ AQ763
 ♥ A9632
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ 10

West
 ♠ K4
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ 105
 ♣ AJ87432

East
 ♠ J1052
 ♥ 10
 ♦ Q8643
 ♣ Q96

South
 ♠ 98
 ♥ KJ874
 ♦ A972
 ♣ K5

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
2♣(1)	3♣(♠+♥)	Pass	4♥
All Pass			
(1) ♣/♠+♣			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1♣	2♦(♠+♥)	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Neither South had the wherewithal to show a sound raise to 4♥, and even if they had it wasn't clear how N/S would advance. Slam after all was on a finesse, even if one that figures to be right. With both tables exercising the same judgment, Hackett took a 2-imp lead into the final 16 boards, reasonably confident that the opponents would not be conceding .

Fourth Quarter (Boards 49-64):

In the fourth quarter the players switched back to the line-up for the second set, Eng/Neth no doubt hoping for a similar result.

Bd: 49
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ K1092
♥ J98
♦ 8
♣ J10965

West
♠ AJ8
♥ 632
♦ Q7
♣ Q7432

East
♠ Q4
♥ K5
♦ K1096543
♣ AK

South
♠ 7653
♥ AQ1074
♦ AJ2
♣ 8

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hackett	Gold	Senior	Bakhshi
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
3♥	2♥	3♦	Pass
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Verhees	Hallberg	v Prooijen	Holland
1♠(m's)	Pass	1♦	1♥
2♥	2♥	3♦	All Pass

In the Closed Room Verhees made a minor-oriented takeout denying four spades (the Dutch system uses canape in the majors with a 1♦ opening covering all balanced hands outside the notrump range). As a result, Verhees felt no need to explore for game at his second turn, having already shown values.

By contrast, Hackett had a huge hand for his original pass and drove Senior to game when he found a heart stopper opposite. Bakhshi found the textbook lead of the ♥A just in case he needed to drop or pin an honor. This time it wasn't necessary to defeat the game but credit where it is due; 85-82, Eng/Neth.

Though we had not seen much consistency between the two teams when it came to overcalls, Deal 50 put the teams into somewhat different positions.

Bd: 50
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ 10
♥ 764
♦ K965
♣ AKQJ8

West
♠ 984
♥ AK952
♦ J10
♣ 1095

East
♠ AQJ7
♥ 108
♦ AQ843
♣ 72

South
♠ K6532
♥ QJ3
♦ 72
♣ 643

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hackett	Gold	Senior	Bakhshi
1♥	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♦	All Pass	1♠	Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Verhees	Hallberg	v Prooijen	Holland
1NT	2♣	1♠	Pass
All Pass	2♦(Can.)	3♣	3♣

Gold heard a real diamond suit to his left and passed to await developments rather than act directly over 1♥, then judged not to compete to the three level when the opponents stopped in his long suit. This was very well reasoned and had the positive effect of giving declarer no hint of the opposing shapes. Bakhshi continued the good work on defense by leading clubs and Senior ruffed the third round to lead the ♥10 from hand. Bakhshi ducked smoothly; Senior won and finessed in spades. Next Bakhshi returned a top heart. Senior won and innocently led a second spade, letting Gold ruff in and play a third heart to force Senior again. Senior chose to ruff with the queen, an error in practice if not in theory, and now could do nothing but lead a third spade for Gold to ruff. When Gold led a fourth club Senior ruffed low in hand but now was unable to overruff in dummy or the ♦9 would become the setting trick. When he discarded from dummy Gold's ♦K became the sixth defensive trick.

Going down in 2♦ turned out not to be too expensive. 3♣ on a trump lead saw Hallberg draw trumps and lead a heart towards dummy's sequence. With both heart honors offside he could score only dummy's ♠K for -300. Those 8imps made it 93-82.

Bd: 51
Dir: South
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 542
♥ AQ75
♦ K4
♣ KJ94

West
♠ 8
♥ 9632
♦ Q1092
♣ AQ105

East
♠ QJ1096
♥ J4
♦ A8753
♣ 8

South
♠ AK73
♥ K108
♦ J6
♣ 7632

Open Room
 West North East South
Hackett Gold Senior Bakhshi
 1NT
 Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦
 Pass 2NT(F) Pass 3♣
 Pass 3♠ Dbl 3NT
 All Pass
 Closed Room
 West North East South
Verhees Hallberg v Prooijen Holland
 Pass 1♥ 1♠ Dbl
 Pass 2♣ Pass 3♥
 All Pass

A straightforward Stayman auction would surely have induced Hackett to lead a diamond, after which 3NT would have gotten very ugly indeed. After a spade lead Bakhshi played a club to the nine (good), crossed to hand with the ♥K to lead a club to the ten and jack, then played the ♥A (better). He next used the ♥10 as an additional entry to hand to lead a third club up. When Hackett won his ace and led a low diamond it was the moment of truth. If Bakhshi had guessed right he would have landed one of the more improbable games we have seen at this event. But he misguessed and the defenders cashed out the diamonds for down one.

Of course whatever one thinks of the 3NT contract it was no less elegant a spot than 3♥. Hallberg won the spade lead, cashed two hearts from hand, then led the ♣9. Charmed, Verhees won and played a third trump, then got in with the fourth trump to play diamonds. That left declarer, after he had guessed the diamonds, with just one club trick, one diamond, two spades and three hearts for down two and 2imps to Eng/Neth, making it 95-82.

On Board 52 the E/W Hackett pair (hands below) earned an imp by playing 4♠ on the 6-1 fit, making ten tricks, while the somewhat more comfortable 3NT produced only nine tricks. Spades were 3-3 offside and both the heart and club finesses were wrong.

West	East
♠ 5	♠ AQ9872
♥ AQ86	♥ J
♦ QJ7	♦ AK96
♣ QJ532	♣ A8

That made it 93-83 for Eng/Neth.

So when is this "old enough to know better" supposed to kick in?
--

Bd: 53 North
 Dir: North ♠ Q10
 Vul: N/S ♥ J9754
 ♦ K987
 ♣ AK

West	East
♠ KJ963	♠ A42
♥ A8	♥ K3
♦ A2	♦ 6543
♣ J1095	♣ 8742

South
 ♠ 875
 ♥ Q1062
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ Q63

Open Room
 West North East South
Hackett Gold Senior Bakhshi
 1♥ Pass 3♥(mixed)
 All Pass
 Closed Room
 West North East South
Verhees Hallberg v Prooijen Holland
 1♥ Pass 2♥
 2♠ All Pass

You can judge for yourself how *The Law* applies to this deal. With two nine-card fits a total trick-count of 17 isn't so surprising, not that you'd want to have to make 3♠. But should Hallberg have competed to 3♥ here? Perhaps, in the context of a four-card major system, but as everyone knows those methods are not designed for partscore accuracy.

2♠ handled easily, declarer guessing trumps easily being only at the two level, but 3♥ was a different kettle of fish. (Do you agree with Hackett's decision not to compete to 3♥?) With no entry to dummy, it looks as if the defenders cannot fail to cash out. However, Senior led the ♣7 (systemically 3rd/lowest) and continued a second club when he got in with the ♥K. When declarer next led a diamond up Hackett believed his partner and led a third club, allowing Gold to discard a spade loser and bring home +140. The lead was up to 102-83.

Bd: 54 North
 Dir: East ♠ AKQ
 Vul: E/W ♥ KQ10
 ♦ 642
 ♣ Q1043

West	East
♠ 87654	♠ 32
♥ 76	♥ AJ432
♦ 987	♦ K10
♣ K72	♣ AJ98

South
 ♠ J109
 ♥ 985
 ♦ AQJ53
 ♣ 65

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		2♥(♥+♣)	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The limited two-suited opening backfired here when Hallberg had a far easier balance than in the Open Room. In 3NT Hallberg won the heart lead cheaply and set up diamonds for +430 when the defenders failed to cash out after he established his second heart trick. That was worth 8 imps against 2♣ down one (the defenders led spades, cashed out their five plain winners and eventually took a trump trick). It was 102-91 now.

Bd: 55 North
 Dlr: South ♠ AK10853
 Vul: Both ♥ ---
 ♦ J7
 ♣ K8543

West	East
♠ 76	♠ 94
♥ A8	♥ Q7652
♦ 432	♦ AKQ86
♣ J109762	♣ A

South
 ♠ QJ2
 ♥ KJ10943
 ♦ 1095
 ♣ Q

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			2♥
Pass	2♠	3♦	3♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
			2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Against 4♠ van Prooijen cashed two diamonds and switched to trumps. Hallberg led the ♥K, covered and ruffed, then played a club up for van Prooijen to win his ace and play a second trump. Declarer passed the ♥J to East and claimed down one. In the other room Gold played 3♠ on a slightly more informative auction. After three rounds of diamonds Gold ruffed and led a low club. Senior won and played a trump.

Declarer won the trump in hand and could only go down if one of two very unlikely things happened: hearts 7-0 (unless this was the case declarer could ruff a club, ruff a heart low, ruff a club, ruff a heart, then draw trumps) or clubs 6-1 (declarer had a cross-ruff as long as the ♣K lived). While both of these conditions are quite improbable, the first line is much better — and would have worked — whereas when the ♣K was ruffed by East nine tricks had turned into eight. Still, no swing; Hackett trailing by 9 imps.

Bd: 56 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 53
 Vul: None ♥ A9
 ♦ KJ86
 ♣ AQ762

West	East
♠ KQ10864	♠ 97
♥ 64	♥ QJ3
♦ 10752	♦ Q94
♣ J	♣ 98543

South
 ♠ AJ2
 ♥ K108752
 ♦ A3
 ♣ K10

Would you like to play the N/S cards in 6♥ after a weak 2♠ bid by West? Slam is not terrible, but after a top spade lead you would need to win, cash the top hearts, then play on clubs to find a 3-3 break or something very unlikely, as happened here. Both tables stopped in 3NT and took 11 tricks. No swing.

Hackett earned 2 imps on the next deal.

Bd: 57 North
 Dlr: North ♠ K92
 Vul: E/W ♥ A85
 ♦ K10873
 ♣ 95

West	East
♠ Q86	♠ AJ103
♥ 93	♥ K2
♦ A5	♦ J96
♣ KQ10842	♣ AJ76

South
 ♠ 754
 ♥ QJ10764
 ♦ Q42
 ♣ 3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1NT	Db1	3♥
Db1	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
(1) Puppet Stayman			

Van Prooijen declared 3NT on a heart lead. He won in hand and crossed to the ♣K to lead the ♠Q. Hallberg, who had been around the block enough times to recognize this sort of position, ducked smoothly, and declarer cashed out for nine tricks.

In the other room Hackett won the ♥K at trick one, ran his clubs, and finessed in spades, playing Gold to have something remotely close to his bidding (always dangerous at this vulnerability but correct this time).

Bd: 58	North
Dlr: East	♠ K73
Vul: Both	♥ Q3
	♦ J854
	♣ 10975

West	East
♠ 652	♠ QJ104
♥ 65	♥ A10
♦ 62	♦ AKQ1073
♣ AKQ862	♣ 4

South
♠ A98
♥ KJ98742
♦ 9
♣ J3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		1♦	1♥
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		1♣(16+)	3♥
Dbl	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♦	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

In 3NT Senior won the heart lead and failed to cash one top diamond, which we assume meant he was as tired as he claimed he was to us in the bulletin office. He tested clubs, then played diamonds from the top, as we all might. When nothing broke, he had seven tricks, no more, no less.

Still, that rated to gain a huge swing for his side given the ludicrous result at the other table, where the strong club ran into suitable preemption and E/W misjudged the deal about as badly as possible without running into a penalty double. After a club lead declarer pitched his heart loser, led a trump to the queen, ducked, then set about diamonds. South ruffed in, cashed the ♠A and played hearts, leaving declarer a diamond and a spade still to lose. Down 300 and only 3 imps to Hackett, trailing now 96-102.

As if we hadn't see enough preemption...

Bd: 59	North
Dlr: South	♠ ---
Vul: None	♥ A5
	♦ AQ7
	♣ AJ1098432

West	East
♠ A10985	♠ 72
♥ KQ64	♥ J1073
♦ 103	♦ K862
♣ 76	♣ KQ5

South
♠ KQJ643
♥ 982
♦ J954
♣ ---

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			3♠
Pass	5♣	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
			3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

As Holland discovered, when you have worked hard to earn a reputation as a solid citizen, you may fool the opponents but you may also find partner unable to take a joke. Holland won the heart lead, cashed the ♣A to pitch a heart, then ruffed a club to hand to take a diamond finesse. His diamonds now acted as substitute trumps and he ended up losing a trick in each red suit and three trumps.

This was a flat board when Gold lost two clubs and a trick in each red suit in 5♣; no swing, yet again. We wonder, what would East have led had North bid 3NT instead? Surely not a club.

Finally, somebody started doubling, and not a moment too soon.

Bd: 60
 Dir: West
 Vul: N/S

North	♠ KQJ875
	♥ 1085
	♦ J10
	♣ Q10

West
 ♠ ---
 ♥ AJ42
 ♦ 6543
 ♣ A9873

East
 ♠ A94
 ♥ K63
 ♦ A8
 ♣ KJ542

South
 ♠ 10632
 ♥ Q97
 ♦ KQ972
 ♣ 6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
Pass	2♠	2NT	4♠
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
Pass	2♠	Dbl	4♠
4NT	Pass	5♣	All Pass

It is unclear how E/W could have found their way to slam in the Closed Room and the Open Room was never reaching one after Senior's entirely reasonable 2NT bid suggested spade values to Hackett. Mind you, +800 was an entirely acceptable alternative from West's perspective. Neither player in the Closed Room could commit beyond the five level and since 6♣ was rather worse than a finesse, that was entirely fine, in the abstract. Still, Hackett had 9imps from the 800 by which 4♠x failed (club lead, heart shift) against the 420 from 5♣. It was 105-102 now.

Bd: 61
 Dir: North
 Vul: Both

North	♠ 65
	♥ KJ8
	♦ A62
	♣ AJ1074

West
 ♠ A982
 ♥ 10
 ♦ KJ107
 ♣ K952

East
 ♠ 107
 ♥ A752
 ♦ Q983
 ♣ Q83

South
 ♠ KQJ43
 ♥ Q9643
 ♦ 54
 ♣ 6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
	1♣	Pass	2♦(♠+♥)
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

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

We think Bakhshi showed a mild invitation facing a typical weak notrump. Gold had aces and prime trumps, which looked good enough to accept. 4♥ looked perfectly playable on a diamond lead. Gold won, led a spade to the king and ace, and the defenders cashed a diamond before shifting to clubs (a diamond continuation seems indicated but maybe West thought East might have forgotten his leads again and led fourth-highest from five). Declarer won his ♣A, tested trumps, and East won the second heart to play a third, leaving dummy with a spade loser. Down one, gaining 5imps against the +110 from the other room where repeated diamond leads cut declarer off from his fifth spade but still left him with eight winners. Eng/Neth trailed by 110-102.

Bd: 62
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North	♠ K83
	♥ 7643
	♦ 8532
	♣ J9

West	East
♠ A4	♠ Q652
♥ Q8	♥ AK95
♦ A97	♦ K10
♣ A108762	♣ K53

South
 ♠ J1097
 ♥ J102
 ♦ QJ64
 ♣ Q4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♠(♣)	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
		1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

We lacked the detailed system files to know if Verhees was specifically making a club slam try (we think so) or if 3♣ somehow rejected a club effort. Facing a 14-16 notrump West couldn't drive past

3NT but East did have pretty good trumps, controls, and a potential ruffing value in a jackless minimum.

Hackett unearthed the club fit, went past 3NT, found a cue-bid and tried for slam denying a heart control. Senior promised a heart control and simultaneously denied a spade card by passing 4♠x, and Hackett had heard enough, assuming that the spade loser might go on hearts or diamonds. A man can dream, can't he? Well, with trumps 2-2 he was right in his prediction and we can forgive him for missing the grand. It was 120-102 now with just two boards left.

We were writing the headlines, the silversmith was designing the medals, but The Alliance was not yet ready to hear the fat lady sing.

Bd: 63 North
 Dir: South ♠ K108
 Vul: N/S ♥ KQ1075
 ♦ K9
 ♣ KQ8

West
 ♠ A643
 ♥ J43
 ♦ J1063
 ♣ 62

East
 ♠ Q5
 ♥ A962
 ♦ A842
 ♣ J75

South
 ♠ J972
 ♥ 8
 ♦ Q75
 ♣ A10943

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
			Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣(1)
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠(2)
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT

All Pass

- (1) Puppet to 2♦, description to come
- (2) Invitation in spades

Closed Room

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

Real men apparently neither eat quiche nor pass notrump openers with seven-counts. Holland tried to invite showing four spades but it appears Hallberg expected five, given his raise. Against 3♠ E/W led and continued clubs at every turn after declarer finessed a spade into East. They took two trumps, two diamonds, a heart and a ruff for down 200.

3NT received a diamond lead from Senior (can you blame him?). Gold won in hand, advanced the ♥K, ducked, led a diamond to the queen, then a spade. Hackett flew with the ace and cashed out diamonds, remaining on lead to play a heart through. Gold finessed the ten and claimed nine tricks a moment later. Voilà!

It was 115-120, Hackett. The fat lady had sat down, the silversmiths were searching for another piece of plate, the senior editor had his finger jammed on the Delete key and the crowd was going wild.

Bd: 64 North
 Dir: West ♠ AKQJ
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q97532
 ♦ 53
 ♣ 7

West
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 8
 ♦ AQJ109742
 ♣ A105

East
 ♠ 96432
 ♥ A64
 ♦ ---
 ♣ Q9832

South
 ♠ 1075
 ♥ KJ10
 ♦ K86
 ♣ KJ64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♦
3♦	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Hallberg</i>	<i>v Prooijen</i>	<i>Holland</i>
5♦	All Pass		

5♦ was never going to make, but after a spade lead and club shift declarer was home free with ten tricks. So the fate of 4♥ would determine first place and all the glory that entailed. Senior led a club, Gold called for the jack, Hackett won the ace, then paused for reflection. The defense wasn't hard looking at all four hands, but surprisingly Hackett could not do that. If he exited with a spade declarer would simply draw trumps and use the ♣K to pitch a diamond loser. Hackett worked that out, cashed the ♦A, then thoughtfully played the ♦2 to make sure Senior didn't play a spade and give up the setting trick. Even a player as tired as Brian wasn't going to lose the trump ace. Down one and 4 imps made it 124-115 for, Hackett, and a first win for two of the team members (Senior was a winner from a decade ago; Jason won with Papa in 1998 and 2000).



2015 NEC Cup Champions: Hackett

21st NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tuesday (Feb. 7)	10:00-12:00	NEC Cup Swiss (1)	414, 415, 416, 417
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (2)	418, 419
	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)	414, 415, 416, 417
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (6)	418, 419
	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)	414, 415, 416, 417
	12:20-14:20	NEC Cup Swiss (10)	418, 419
	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)	09:00-11:15	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (1)	414, 415
	11:35-13:50	NEC Cup Quarter-Final (2)	
	13:50-15:00	Lunch Break	
	15:00-17:15	NEC Cup Semi-Final (1)	414, 415
	17:35-19:50	NEC Cup Semi-Final (2)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama IMP Pairs	503
Saturday (Feb. 11)	09:00-11:15	NEC Cup Final (1)	414, 415
	11:35-13:50	NEC Cup Final (2)	
	13:50-15:00	Lunch Break	
	15:00-17:15	NEC Cup Final (3)	
	17:35-19:50	NEC Cup Final (4)	
	10:00-17:00	Yokohama Swiss Teams	501, 502
Sunday (Feb. 12)	10:00-17:30	Yokohama 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



Real-Time NEC Cup Match Updates on the Web

Wondering how your favorite team is doing RIGHT NOW? Surf to the JCBL home page
<http://www.jcbl.or.jp/home/English/nec/21st/tabid/1429/Default.aspx>
 and click on the latest Results link.