



NEC Bridge Festival

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Bulletin Number 6

Editors: Rich Colker, Barry Rigal

Hackett Repeats as NEC Cup Champion

Team Hackett (Paul Hackett, Jason Hackett, Brian Senior, Alex Hydes), led by captain and progenitor Paul “Papa” Hackett—aka “The One-Armed Bandit”—came back from a disaster of a Day Two performance in the qualifying swiss to survive to the KOs with barely more than a single VP to spare. In the quarter-finals they narrowly defeated the top qualifiers, China Dalian Aoxin, by 5imps, then sailed into the finals over a game New Zealand team. And now they stand (at least the Hackett part of the team) as the NEC Cup Champions for the second consecutive time. Those who have followed these bulletins this week will recognize just what a harrowing journey this has been for them (surviving tribulation not always of the opponents’ making). The runners-up, England/USA (Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Karen McCallum, Cenk Tuncok), came through the swiss consistently ranked in the top eight. Their most serious threat came in the quarter-finals playing against Wuhan Dongfang BC, where they led by 5 at the half and won by just 13. They picked off a good Ziyijia team in the semi-finals but in the final the little engine that could...couldn’t. Hackett broke the match wide open in the second quarter, pulled further ahead in the third, and never looked back, sailing to victory by a comfortable margin. Our congratulations and thanks to the winners, the runners-up, and all the 2017 NEC Cup competitors.



2017 NEC Cup Champions: Hackett



2017 NEC Cup Runners-up: England/USA

NEC Cup Final: Quarter-by-Quarter Results

Team	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
England/USA	48	26	8	28	110
Hackett	37	62	31	43	173



The results of the Saturday Pair Games and Yokohama Swiss are on page 3

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

Beginners Cup (-20 / -5)



Beginners Cup (-20): 1st



Beginners Cup (-5): 1st

Beginners Cup (<20 MP) 7 pairs

Rank	Name1	Name2	Score
1	Yuso Hirashita	Kazuo Genchi	146
2	Nobuo Oyadomari	Izumi Hirasawa	140
3	Takako Ito	Yoshiko Yamasaki	135
4	Mitsue Hiratsuka	Keiko Watanabe	102
5	Junko Haga	Takehiko Haga	79

Beginners Cup (<5 MP) 14 pairs

Rank	Name1	Name2	Score
1	Kyoko Adachi	Noriko Sakata	453
2	Naoto Aizawa	Satoru Yokoi	425
3	Akiko Morii	Teiko Yasui	151
4	Hiroko Sekiya	Atsuko Usagawa	101
5	Fusako Sugiyama	Mitsuko Sato	65
6	Mizuyo Yoshii	Naoko Yamauchi	9

Yokohama Swiss Teams: Final Standings



Yokohama Swiss teams: 1st



Yokohama Swiss teams: 2nd



Yokohama Swiss teams: 3rd

Rank	Score	Team	Team Members
1	108.88	Soaring Shou	Tian Wei, Li Zhenhe, Shi Bin, Dong Chunhui
2-3	108.28	YBT	Yeh Chen, Zhang Yalan, Shih Jueiyu, Wang Ping, Ehud Friedlander, Inon Liran
2-3	108.28	Senior 2017	Kazuhiko Yamada, Akihiko Yamada, Kyoko Ohno, Masayuki Ino, Tadashi Imakura
4	107.85	Wuhan Dongfang BC	Lian Ruoyang, Gui Shengyue, You Jianyong, Gao Fei, Yang Cai
5	102.91	China Open	Chen Yunlong, Yang Lixin, Dai Jianming, Zhang Bangxiang, Zhao Jie, Li Jianwei
6	100.33	New Zealand	Martin Reid, Peter Newell, Michael Cornell, Ashley Bach
7	98.16	Hiroshi Kaku	Hiroshi Kaku, Mitsue Tajima, Masaaki Takayama, Makoto Kono
8	97.27	Shanghai Financial BC	Shan Baisong, Xi Yuheng, Shao Zijian, Chen Dawei, Kazuo Furuta, Hiroki Yokoi
9	95.28	China Ladies	Wang Wenfei, Shen Qi, Lu Yan, Liu Yan, Huang Yan, Wang Nan
10	95.08	Beijing Trinergy	Lu Dong, Wang Yanhong, Sun Shaolin, Kang Meng, Xin Guofang, Li Rui
11	94.07	IL PONTE	Hiroko Ota, Kikuo Tatai, Katsuhiko Ueki, Soichi Arakawa
12	92.65	Robert Geller	Robert Geller, Setsuko Ogihara, Terumi Kubo, Takehiko Nagahama
13	92.60	SWAT Squad	Sartaj Hans, Tony Nunn, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland
14	92.54	Israel	Michael Bareil, Yaniv Zack, Ilan Bareket, Assaf Lengy
15	92.38	England/Norway	David Bakhshi, Espen Erichsen, Terje Aa, Allan Livgard
16	90.40	China Relaxation	Zhao Hailong, Liu Xiaoping, Jin Ke, Zhu Ping
17	90.12	SARA	Tadashi Teramoto, Kumiko Sasahira, Takeshi Niekawa, Shugo Tanaka, Hiroaki Miura
18	89.90	NAITO	Ryoga Tanaka, Sakiko Naito, Motomi Shirogane, Toshihiro Ogata
19	89.73	Air-TRFC	Yoko Fukuyama, Takashi Sumita, Mark LaForge, Toby Curtis, Chen Yuechen
20	89.14	Keisuke Akama	Keisuke Akama, Yukiko Umezumi, Kimi Makita, Keiko Matsuzaki

Team Rosters: 21st NEC Cup (Final)

#	Team Name	Members
1	England/USA:	Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Karen McCallum, Cenk Tuncok
2	Hackett:	Paul Hackett, Jason Hackett, Brian Senior, Alex Hydes

NEC Final (1st quarter): England/USA vs Hackett

by Barry Rigal



Paul



McCallum



Tuncok



Senior



Brock



Jason



Hydes



Myers

Our expectations before the final started were for a high scoring match. The four-card majors and weak notrump in one room for England/USA and the strong club plus aggressive opening style in the other would contrast with the Paul-Senior old fashioned four-card major and strong notrump and the five-card majors plus strong notrump of Jason-Hydes. (We shall be referring to the Hacketts by their first names, as above, to distinguish them.)

Bd: 1 North
 Dlr: North ♠ K9
 Vul: None ♥ AQ6
 ♦ Q642
 ♣ 5432

West
 ♠ AQ5
 ♥ K92
 ♦ AK1085
 ♣ KQ

East
 ♠ 432
 ♥ 10753
 ♦ 93
 ♣ AJ87

South
 ♠ J10876
 ♥ J84
 ♦ J7
 ♣ 1096

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	1NT(11-13)	Pass	2♠
Dbl	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

First blood (in the auction at any rate) went to England/USA when Paul was forced to guess if his

partner had a Yarborough or values when the ultra-weak notrump forced him to put up or shut up. He went high, and to make matters worse wrong-sided notrump so the spade lead came through the ace-queen.

But appearances are deceptive, aren't they? Tuncok's ♠J lead cleared up the position in that suit. Senior rose with the ace, played diamonds from the top, and when McCallum cashed the ♠K and exited in clubs declarer had ten tricks.

In the other room Jason led clubs and continued the suit when in with the ♦Q. Declarer ran the clubs, took the spade finesse to try for an overtrick, and Jason won and exited in spades to collect two hearts at the end; 1-0, Hackett.

Bd: 2 North
 Dlr: East ♠ 9754
 Vul: N/S ♥ 1064
 ♦ 10
 ♣ AJ1065

West
 ♠ J8
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ AKQ853
 ♣ 932

East
 ♠ AK3
 ♥ K853
 ♦ J42
 ♣ Q87

South
 ♠ Q1062
 ♥ AJ92
 ♦ 976
 ♣ K4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Myers received a low spade lead, put up the jack, and claimed nine tricks when it held. Senior, whose northern roots have ingrained within him a philosophy of "A penny saved is a penny earned" cashed out the six rounds of diamonds and when both opponents discarded spades, he could cash the spades and exit with the ♥K. With nine tricks in the bag South had to give up a club or a heart in the ending, for the overtrick, whatever he did; 2-0, Hackett.

Bd: 3	North
Dir: South	♠ KJ8
Vul: E/W	♥ 95
	♦ 654
	♣ J9752

West
♠ Q95
♥ 1072
♦ J872
♣ A63

East
♠ 63
♥ AKQ86
♦ AK
♣ Q1084

South
♠ A10742
♥ J43
♦ Q1093
♣ K

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		
(1) lebensohl			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Again the active preempting style got in first, and again their opponents had enough to be able to overcome it. Senior heard Paul show a weak hand, over which his 3♥ bid showed real extras. I'm not sure if Hackett contemplated looking for notrump, but he settled for the simple raise and left Senior in the driver's seat. Senior won the trump lead, ducked a spade, won the trump, ducked a second spade, then won the diamond shift and drew the last trump and a

fourth round for luck. When McCallum erred, pitching two clubs, Senior could play the club suit for no loser and had an unexpected overtrick.

In the other room Myers received a diamond lead and drew three rounds of trumps, then went after clubs. He made ten tricks but lost an imp for the third consecutive deal.

It is relatively unusual that down-grading a hand out of a strong notrump can lead to your reaching a game not reached in the other room, but there has to be a first time for everything.

Bd: 4	North	
Dir: West	♠ A53	
Vul: Both	♥ Q43	
	♦ QJ83	
	♣ KQJ	

West	East
♠ 764	♠ KQ10982
♥ 952	♥ K8
♦ K9765	♦ A104
♣ 76	♣ A5

South
♠ J
♥ AJ1076
♦ 2
♣ 1098432

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	1NT(14-16)	2♦(♥/♠)	2♥
Pass	Pass	2♠	3♣
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♦	1♠	Dbl
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	3♠	5♣
All Pass			

The auction in the Open Room is reasonable enough. I'm not sure how to evaluate the South hand here, but what Tuncok did was at least reasonable, even if he might have considered bidding 4♣ at his second or third turn. The Bulletin Editors have become experts at Monday morning quarter-backing, but we do realize that this could easily turn a plus into a minus, snide asides apart, about there being bonuses for vulnerable games.

Curiously, in the other room it was Jason who pushed the boat out after (or perhaps because of) his initially pessimistic evaluation of the North hand (with which one of the editors is perfectly happy, while the other wouldn't consider downgrading

“Because I play them so well”).

Joking aside, on the Kaplan Rubens evaluator this hand comes in at under 13 points so Jason has support from the real experts. But what mattered was his decision to bid 3♣ over 2♣. Whether this was because he expected to be facing short spades and all his cards to be working, or because he expected slightly more opposite, Hydes needed no further encouragement to drive to game. In a relatively unfamiliar partnership you have to expect there to be grey areas. On this occasion it led to game on a finesse, 4♥ being more exposed to a force or side-suit ruffs but probably no worse a spot. With the ♥K where it was expected to be, 5♣ came home with no problems and those 10 imps meant Hackett led 13-0.

Bd: 5
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ KQJ62
 ♥ 10
 ♦ 754
 ♣ K984

West
 ♠ 84
 ♥ AJ9832
 ♦ 8
 ♣ QJ32

East
 ♠ 10973
 ♥ KQ7
 ♦ 1093
 ♣ 1076

South
 ♠ A5
 ♥ 654
 ♦ AKQJ62
 ♣ A5

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥(♠)	Pass	1♠(1)
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2NT(2)	Pass	3♣(1)
Pass	3♦(3)	Pass	3♥(1)
Dbl	3♠(4)	Pass	6♦

All Pass

(1) Shape and range relays

(2) Short hearts

(3) 5-1-3-4

(4) 2 controls

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♣
3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

Tuncok-McCallum play Symmetric Relay here, methods passed down from New Zealand via Australia to Alan Truscott and thence to many experts in the US. (Also it is the same basis as the

methods played by world champion Dutch players de Wijs-Muller. Their Tarzan system comes on a lineage that directly involves one of the Bulletin editors—but that is a long story and our margin is already full of KR evaluation calculations.)

After McCallum’s disciplined pass (not two words we ever thought we would put in the same sentence) Tuncok found his partner’s shape and range and the double of 3♥ let McCallum show her precise controls. South knew what to do. (Neither North nor East saw the double of 3♥ so McCallum actually showed three controls but that was an impossible response from Tuncok’s perspective unless partner had the ♥A and only one black king when there still might not be 13 tricks available).

A nice auction from the Open Room but the Closed Room had to use judgment instead, and after the 2♣ opener ran into competition Jason got to show his two-suiter, then sensibly judged his heart control was enough to bid slam. Though there might perhaps a case for 5NT at the final turn, an earlier slam disaster persuaded him that there was merit in simplicity. No swing; still 13-0 for Hackett.

Bd: 6
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ A10532
 ♥ 109764
 ♦ J2
 ♣ 4

West
 ♠ J9
 ♥ A52
 ♦ A63
 ♣ KJ652

East
 ♠ 64
 ♥ K83
 ♦ K10974
 ♣ 973

South
 ♠ KQ87
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ Q85
 ♣ AQ108

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		Pass	1♣(16+)
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥(♠)	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

This was definitely a missed opportunity for the Hackett team. Jason had intended to sign off at the

two level if no fit came to light, but when he found a 5-4 fit he gambled that he might as well be in game as partscore since everything would hinge on the location of the honors opposite. Right he was, since West had no attractive lead and a club seemed least dangerous. The fact that she was completely wrong doesn't make her choice a mistake.

Paul was in a similar position but here Senior maybe should have doubled 3♦, since it could hardly be wrong to tell partner not to lead clubs, the only likely alternative. Once he did not do so, Paul's choice was even more clearly indicated as a club. Both declarers pitched a diamond on the clubs at once, then could draw trumps and give up two hearts.

Bd: 7 North
 Dir: South ♠ 972
 Vul: Both ♥ K2
 ♦ K10964
 ♣ AQ3

West
 ♠ J4
 ♥ QJ108
 ♦ 75
 ♣ KJ1072

East
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ A7653
 ♦ AQ2
 ♣ 954

South
 ♠ A108653
 ♥ 94
 ♦ J83
 ♣ 86

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT(1)	All Pass

(1) Five hearts

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠
3♣(♥+♣)	Pass	4♥	All Pass

My comments on the previous board notwithstanding, it turned out that introducing K109xx isn't always a good idea. Here in the Open Room, after the fit-jump, South was never going to lead clubs, and what could be more attractive than a diamond here? Myers won cheaply in hand and ruffed a diamond to dummy to take the trump finesse. He drew trumps, then gave up two clubs for his contract.

This was almost certainly going to be a game swing to England/USA, whatever Senior-Paul did, since if West was declarer a spade lead and club shift would

have set the game, while Tuncok as South would surely have led clubs rather than diamonds if he were on lead. But when the partnership did not agree on whether 3NT showed five hearts, they ended in a silly spot, losing five spades and two clubs after the spade lead. Those 14imps made it 14-13 for England/USA.

Bd: 8 North
 Dir: West ♠ J10752
 Vul: None ♥ K873
 ♦ 7
 ♣ A87

West
 ♠ AQ983
 ♥ AQ5
 ♦ ---
 ♣ Q10932

East
 ♠ K6
 ♥ 1096
 ♦ KQJ43
 ♣ KJ5

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ J42
 ♦ A1098652
 ♣ 64

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Although it should not be too difficult for a combined 27-count with no real major-suit fit to play 3NT, I think Myers-Brock do deserve some credit for managing it so comfortably. Brock's 3♣ bid showed extras and Myers cannot have been comfortable to bid 3♥ without half a stopper (some might have preferred 3♠ I suppose, which might have led to a contract of 4♠). Anyway, 3NT by West was comfortable enough on a heart lead. Brock took the jack with her queen, drove out the ♣A, won the club return, and ran black-suit winners to force a lead away from the ♥K in the two-card ending.

Paul's 2♠ response endplayed Senior into a 3♣ bid that took his partner past 3NT at once. The question of whether to move on over 4♠ is truly a tricky one. Even if partner does not have a heart control would he have bid so differently with, e.g., ♠Kx ♥xx ♦Qxxxx ♣AKJx? I don't think so. Both editors truly sympathize with the 5♥ bid found by West, but that

simply turned a playable game into a poor slam. If the ♠K were onside 6♣ would surely have chances. As it was, the heart lead let the defenders win the ♠K at trick one, then find the spade ruff for down two. Those 11imps made it 25-13 for England/USA.

Bd: 9
Dlr: North
Vul: E/W

North
♠ 1098
♥ A8653
♦ 72
♣ KJ9

West
♠ AQ53
♥ Q4
♦ K864
♣ A63

East
♠ KJ76
♥ K
♦ AJ10953
♣ 42

South
♠ 42
♥ J10972
♦ Q
♣ Q10875

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	2♥	3♦	5♥
6♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	1♦	2♥
Dbf	4♥	Pass	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

Hydes justified the judgment of all four players at his table by leading a club, holding Myers to 11 tricks. Yes, if Myers had been able to get spades into play his side might have reached 6♠—a contract that cannot be defeated—but playing a natural system he had no real reason to bid 4♠ over 4♥. He was expecting his partner to double 4♥ and let him show his hand-type more accurately.

In the other room 27imps swung on opening lead, and Tuncok had no reason to assume his opponents needed to build a discard from the suit his side had at least ten cards in. After the heart lead, Senior had 12 tricks and Hackett were back in front, by 26-25.

Bd: 10
Dlr: East
Vul: Both

North
♠ Q1075
♥ A732
♦ Q2
♣ A75

West
♠ J8
♥ 86
♦ AK1073
♣ 10986

East
♠ A943
♥ KQ10
♦ J9854
♣ 3

South
♠ K62
♥ J954
♦ 6
♣ KQJ42

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		Pass	1♦(1+)
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		Pass	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♦	Dbf
Pass	3♦	5♦	Pass
Pass	Dbf	All Pass	

(1) GF or a weak 2♦ bid

In the Open Room the jump to 3♥ suggested a shapely hand but also an opening bid in high cards. Well, one out of two isn't bad. The defense to 4♥ saw Senior lead a low diamond and Paul shift to the ♠J. Senior took the ace, played back the suit, declarer ducked a trump, and Senior gave his partner the ruff with the short trumps for down two.

That looked like a decent position, given that 5♦ had no chance on an early spade play, but which defender was supposed to make that play? Hydes led a top club and now maybe Jason could have overtaken and shifted to a spade (but that would not be a bright idea if declarer has the high spades and partner the ♠K). Jason followed with the smallest club and perhaps South now knew a second round wasn't standing up (North might have overtaken with a doubleton ace). But what if declarer has ♠AQ and partner a soft heart honor? Now a spade play might give up a vulnerable undertrick or the contract, for no reason. Hydes played a second club and declarer ruffed and used trump entries to build a heart discard for the slow spade loser; +750, and 11imps back to England/USA, leading 36-26.

Bd: 11
Dlr: South
Vul: None

North
♠ A106
♥ A73
♦ K32
♣ KQ98

West
♠ K74
♥ KJ94
♦ 1076
♣ A104

East
♠ QJ
♥ Q652
♦ AJ854
♣ 52

South
♠ 98532
♥ 108
♦ Q9
♣ J763

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
			Pass
1♥	1NT	Dbl	Rdbl(1)
Pass	2♣	2♥	All Pass

(1) transfer to 2♣; one-suiter

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥(♠)
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

This board marked a first (I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest it might be one of a very few such deals) opened by the Hackett team and not opened in the other room. It worked very well, too. Maybe that is the secret to bridge, get in there fastest with the leastest.

Hackett's 1♥ opener bought the hand for his side in 2♥. He won the top club lead to drive out the ♠A. The defenders cashed their black winners and cut loose with ace and another trump. Hackett drew trump and passed the ♦6, claiming nine tricks when it lost to the nine. While he might have considered alternative diamond plays had he been in 3♥, this was simplest and as likely as anything to be right. Was there any reason for Tuncok to consider competing here? The opponents don't always have eight trumps on this auction, partner doesn't always supply three spades.

Meanwhile, 2♠ proved equally simple to make; declarer lost two trumps and one trick in each side suit. 6 imps for Hackett, down 32-36.

Bd: 12	North
Dlr: West	♠ KQ6
Vul: N/S	♥ QJ76
	♦ K7
	♣ 10653

West	East
♠ 843	♠ 2
♥ 104	♥ A982
♦ 982	♦ AQJ654
♣ AQJ42	♣ 98

South
♠ AJ10975
♥ K53
♦ 103
♣ K7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♦	Dbl	3♦	3♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♦	Dbl	4♦	All Pass

The E/W pairs here may have been the only two in the entire event ready and willing to raise diamonds with the West cards. (To be fair, the "short-clubbers" whose 1♦ is unbalanced might also.) Each East could then up the ante again, Myers going all the way to four, Senior preferring the three-level boost.

In the Closed Room Hydes must have been tempted to take the bait and bid on to 4♠, but cooler heads prevailed and he led a trump against 4♦. Declarer won, took a series of minor-suit finesses, and emerged with +170. Another missed slam on the minority of high-cards.

In the other room the defense cashed diamonds, then clubs, against 4♠ and still had the ♥A to come for down one; 2 imps to England/USA, up 34-26.

Bd: 13	North
Dlr: North	♠ ---
Vul: Both	♥ A65
	♦ AK974
	♣ K8543

West	East
♠ 2	♠ KJ97
♥ KJ72	♥ Q10843
♦ Q108632	♦ J5
♣ 96	♣ AJ

South
♠ AQ1086543
♥ 9
♦ ---
♣ Q1072

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	1♦	1♥	4♠
All Pass			

South's 4♠ bid looks normal enough but when dummy comes down you might wish you had taken a more delicate approach. That said, your action might stampede an impressionable West into doing something foolish, and if you can play clubs for one loser you only need spades not to be very unkind to you. Alas for both Souths, today was precisely that day. After a heart lead declarer pitched two clubs on the diamonds, then ruffed a heart to hand to try ace and another spade, followed by some muffled oaths as the bad break came to light. No swing, still 38-32 for England/USA..

Bd: 14
 Dir: East
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ A5
 ♥ J43
 ♦ J2
 ♣ AJ9632

West
 ♠ Q102
 ♥ 652
 ♦ A6
 ♣ K10875

East
 ♠ K83
 ♥ AKQ97
 ♦ Q74
 ♣ Q4

South
 ♠ J9764
 ♥ 108
 ♦ K109853
 ♣ ---

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i> 1NT	South <i>Tuncok</i> 2♣(1)
Dbl	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i> 1♥	South <i>Hydes</i> 2♥(♠+m)
3♥	All Pass		

Hydes led a diamond against 3♥, Tuncok a spade. Which East's chances in 3♥ would you prefer? Myers won the diamond lead cheaply in hand, unblocked diamonds, and led a club towards his hand (perhaps expecting it to be trumps, not clubs, that would be breaking badly). Hydes ruffed, gave his partner a diamond ruff (Myers carelessly ruffing with the ♥2 and being overruffed with the ♥3) and now Jason cashed the ♠A to see a discouraging signal from his partner. He played ace and another club and now Myers had to negotiate the ♥J10. His choice of ruffing with the ♥9 seems wrong—was South really going to stay silent at his second turn with 6-6? Hydes overruffed with the ♥10 for down one.

Against Senior the defenders led two rounds of spades. Declarer won the second spade in hand, drew trumps, and advanced the ♣Q. McCallum took this and exited with the ♦J, leaving declarer with two diamond losers at the end. Still, that was +140 for Senior, trailing now by a single imp at 38-37.

Bd: 15
 Dir: South
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ A75
 ♥ K1065
 ♦ Q86
 ♣ J53

West
 ♠ J43
 ♥ A972
 ♦ A1042
 ♣ 94

East
 ♠ K109
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ K9753
 ♣ A108

South
 ♠ Q862
 ♥ J43
 ♦ J
 ♣ KQ762

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i>	South <i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣(1)	Pass	2♦	All Pass
(1) Puppet to 2♦, to play or invite game			
Closed Room			
West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i>	South <i>Hydes</i>
Pass	Pass	1NT	All Pass

In the Open Room it was hard to balance against 2♦. Senior misguessed trumps at trick three when he ducked the top club opening lead and Tuncok shifted to the ♦J, but he still had +90 in the bank.

Meanwhile, against 1NT, Myers won the first club, guessed diamonds, but elected to run the suit and lead spades from hand rather than block the diamonds by winning the fourth in hand and risking the contract against an unfavorable lie of the other suits. No swing, still England/USA by 1 imp.

Bd: 16
 Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K642
 ♥ 10
 ♦ 9853
 ♣ 10632

West
 ♠ A1093
 ♥ Q8632
 ♦ A4
 ♣ K5

East
 ♠ J87
 ♥ J9
 ♦ KQJ106
 ♣ AJ9

South
 ♠ Q5
 ♥ AK754
 ♦ 72
 ♣ Q874

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i>	South <i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
1NT	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i>	South <i>Hydes</i>
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Paul Hackett is here playing bridge in a sling (some undiscussed "dog injury" led to a broken wrist). On this occasion his cards were in his rack but the ♠A refused to put in an appearance, hence the somewhat unorthodox auction. The heart lead and club shift let him take nine tricks, but that lost 10 imps to the normal game from the other room. It was 48-37 to England/USA at the end of the first set.

NEC Final (2nd quarter): England/USA vs Hackett

by Rich Colker



Paul



McCallum



Tuncok



Senior



Brock



Jason



Hydes



Myers

England/USA began the second quarter leading Hackett by 9 imps. The action started early.

Bd: 17
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ K10982
♥ J74
♦ K
♣ J1083

West
♠ 765
♥ Q10986
♦ 9832
♣ 5

East
♠ QJ43
♥ 32
♦ 76
♣ K9642

South
♠ A
♥ AK5
♦ AQJ1054
♣ AQ7

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	6NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

In the Open Room the N/S auction may have revealed little about the N/S hands, except perhaps that McCallum only held only five spades (unless 3♠ showed a control there). Papa led the ♥10 against Tuncok's 6NT, ducked to the ace. Tuncok unblocked the ♠A, tabled the ♣Q, and when Senior produced the king claimed 12 tricks; +990. The play on a diamond lead would definitely have been more interesting.

In the Closed Room the auction appears largely natural (at least after the artificial 2♣ opening and 2♦ waiting response) and Myers led a heart. Jason won the ace, unblocked the ♠A, crossed to his ♦K, pitched dummy's heart loser on the ♠K, led a club to the ace, and claimed 12 tricks; +920. That was 2 more imps to England/USA, leading now 50-37.

Bd: 18
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ J63
♥ A64
♦ A873
♣ AJ6

West
♠ K1072
♥ KJ
♦ Q952
♣ 1087

East
♠ A98
♥ 10983
♦ K10
♣ KQ43

South
♠ Q54
♥ Q752
♦ J64
♣ 952

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		1NT	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

Senior's redouble in the Open Room appears to be support. Paul's final pass (as opposed to a double) appears to indicate he trusted McCallum more than Senior. Surprising, though he has been playing with Brian for long enough that he should probably have a good feel for this by now.

Senior got off to the ♠10 lead (if they're good enough to bid...) and McCallum judged to cover with the queen (the sight of all 52 cards gives us license to affirm that ducking would have worked a bit better) and take the king with the ace. Next she led the ♦8 to the ten, ducked (covering might have worked better), and Senior now continued with the ♦K, ducked again. Now Senior played a low heart to Papa's jack, who then led the ♦Q to drive out the ace. McCallum exited with a heart to Senior who cashed his tricks there and was "sort of" endplayed. He chose to cash the ♠A (the ♣K, likely ducked around, followed by a low spade to the king might have worked better) and exit with a second spade to Papa's king. Now the ♦9 and a future club trick brought the defense's booty to nine tricks; +300.

In the Closed Room Myer's 1NT met with far less acceptance than McCallum's 1NT in the other room, but we cannot say that N/S's attitude here was wholly justified. Hydes led the ♥2 to the jack, Jason ducking to facilitate the entry situation in case Hydes had led from queen-nine-fourth. Myers came off dummy with a club to the queen, then exited with a heart to the king and ace. Jason returned a heart to complete his trick-one plan but when declarer's nine was taken by Hydes's queen he knew the plan had not quite born fruit. Next Hydes got out with the ♣9 as Jason won the ace (establishing declarer's king and fourth club) and exited with the ♣J. In with the ♣K, Myers had a bunch of winners to cash but first tabled the ♦K. When Jason ducked this, declarer cashed the ♥10 and ♣4 (on which Hydes pitched a spade) and exited with a diamond to endplay Jason, who was down to ♠J63 (opposite Hydes's ♠Q5 and ♦J). Jason slyly exited with the ♠J, which Myers allowed to ride around to dummy's king, and now when Jason followed low to the next spade from dummy Myers, playing Jason for an original holding that included the ♠QJ for his double, inserted the ♠9. Hydes was able to win the ♠Q and cash his ♦J to hold the blood-let on the hand; +180. That was 3 imps to Hackett (when it might have been 3 imps the other way), who trailed now 50-40. Nice damage control.

Bd: 19	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 42		
Vul: E/W	♥ AJ		
	♦ AJ974		
	♣ AQ104		
		East	
West		♠ A987	
♠ KJ653		♥ 102	
♥ KQ9864		♦ 85	
♦ K10		♣ K9753	
♣ ---			
	South		
	♠ Q10		
	♥ 753		
	♦ Q632		
	♣ J862		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
			Pass
1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♥	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			Pass
1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♥	2NT	Dbl	3♦
Pass	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Dbl	All Pass

Would someone check whether the two rooms were playing the same hands here. E/W were cold for 4♠ but inexplicably no one at either table bid the suit. Fascinating, captain. (And no, neither bulletin editor has pointy ears.) In the Open Room Senior competed to 3♥ (four was makeable with the ♥J being doubleton) and bought it there. McCallum, with a tough choice of leads, opted for the ♥A followed by the jack. Papa won, drew the last trump, cashed the ♠K, then led a spade to the nine. In with the ♠Q Tuncok accurately switched to a diamond as the defense took their two tricks and Papa claimed +140.

In the Closed Room, in the "phantom" replay, the Jason-Hydes connection bid to 5♦ and got doubled for their efforts. (In their defense, their opponents had bid to the makeable 4♥, though it's a long way from "makeable" to "making.") Brock led the ♥K to the ace and with no really good options, Hydes elected to play ace and a diamond. Brock won, cashed the ♠K, led a spade to Myers's ace, and won the heart return for down three, -500. That was 8 imps back to England/USA to up their lead to 58-40.

Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 2		
Vul: Both	♥ KQ9643		
	♦ A1072		
	♣ Q10		
		East	
West		♠ AKJ	
♠ Q7654		♥ A7	
♥ 1082		♦ QJ954	
♦ K3		♣ A64	
♣ 853			
	South		
	♠ 10983		
	♥ J5		
	♦ 86		
	♣ KJ972		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	1♥	DbI	1NT(♣)
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♥	DbI	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Both E/W pairs bid briskly to 4♠ and it remained only for them to try to make it. In the Open Room, where Tuncok had shown clubs, McCallum could get off to the good ♣Q lead. When this was ducked, Tuncok overtook with the king and switched to the ♥J, won by dummy's ace. Next Papa cashed one trump, then led a low diamond to the king and ace. McCallum switched to the ♥KQ, tapping dummy to promote a trump trick as Tuncok pitched his remaining diamond. Papa cashed dummy's remaining trump, getting the bad news, and tried to run the diamonds for club pitches. However, Tuncok ruffed in on the second round, led the ♣J to dummy's ace, and ruffed the next top diamond as Papa threw a club loser and conceded down two, -200.

In the Closed Room, unaided by a club bid from Hydes, Jason led the ♥K to the ace and Brock came back with a diamond to the king and ace. Now Jason's ♥Q smothered Hydes's jack and established declarer's ten. So when a third heart was led Brock could simply discard a club from dummy and Hydes could ruff, but at the cost of a potentially promotable trump trick. Hydes got out with a club to dummy's ace but at this point declarer was able to draw his remaining trumps, and pitch her club loser on the diamonds for a nice 13-imp pickup. England/USA by 31 at 71-40.

Bd: 21	North
Dlr: North	♠ K8
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ105
	♦ 86
	♣ 98762

West	East
♠ Q65	♠ J109432
♥ J83	♥ 76
♦ KJ43	♦ 107
♣ KQ10	♣ A54
South	
♠ A7	
♥ A942	
♦ AQ952	
♣ J3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	2♠	DbI
3♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	Pass	2♦(♥/♠)	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

In the Open Room McCallum-Tuncok went quietly—perhaps too quietly, and the Brits bought it for 3♠. Tuncok underled his ♥A to the ten and McCallum continued with the queen and a third heart as Senior ruffed in, led a spade to the queen and king, and claimed down one, -50.

In the Closed Room Hydes's 2NT bid worked better than Tuncok's double and allowed the "other" Brits to find their heart fit and bid game therein. Brock led a trump to dummy's king and Hydes led a club to the jack and queen. Brock, seeing that the clubs were splitting favorably, tried a diamond hoping that partner could at least contribute the queen. But Hydes produced the queen, exited with a club to Myers, won the diamond return, drew trump, ruffed out the clubs, and claimed 11 tricks. That was +650, for an impressive 12 imps, and cut the lead to 71-52.

Bd: 22	North
Dlr: East	♠ Q109853
Vul: E/W	♥ 3
	♦ AK95
	♣ K7

West	East
♠ AJ	♠ 76
♥ KJ95	♥ 1086
♦ 104	♦ Q87632
♣ Q10962	♣ 85

South
♠ K42
♥ AQ742
♦ J
♣ AJ43

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣(R)	Pass	2♥(♣/3-suiter)
Pass	2♠(R)	Pass	3♠(3=5=1=4)
Pass	4♦(end)	Pass	4NT(Max+5ctrl)
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Both N/S pairs bid inexorably to 6♠, the auction in the Closed Room being natural, the one in the Open Room not so much. There was a problem with explanations in the Open Room so that the actual play at the table was cancelled and a result of 6♠ down one, -50, was assigned by the Director. For the record, the slam is cold on a diamond lead, cannot be made on two rounds of trump, and on the likely club lead, the line followed in our other room, is as good (but unsuccessful) as any. Double-dummy fiends may be able to identify a winning line. Take your time, though.

In the Closed Room Myers led a club to dummy's ace and Jason set about ruffing diamonds by leading to the and ruffing the second round. Next came the ♥A and a heart ruff followed by a second diamond ruff. But when Brock overruffed with the jack and cashed the ♠A the contract was down one for a push at -50. Still 71-52 for the hybrids.

Bd: 23	North
Dlr: South	♠ AJ87532
Vul: Both	♥ 4
	♦ 1073
	♣ A7

West	East
♠ KQ109	♠ 6
♥ J62	♥ AK9875
♦ K865	♦ 9
♣ J4	♣ KQ863

South
♠ 4
♥ Q103
♦ AQJ42
♣ 10952

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			Pass
Pass	3♠	4♥	All Pass

In the Open Room the defense against 4♥ began with a spade to the ace, a switch to the ♣A (Tuncok following with the ♣2) and a second club to the jack. Senior quickly cashed his ♥AK, ruffed a club to dummy, and discarded his losing diamond on the ♠Q

for a score of +620 that probably felt as satisfying for him as it felt terrible for the opponents.

In the Closed Room the spade lead went to the ace and the ♠2 came back. Myers pitched his diamond as Hydes ruffed, but now a club to the ace and another spade through promoted a second trump trick for Hydes. Down one, -100, represented 12imps to Hackett, drawing ever closer at 71-64.

Bd: 24	North
Dlr: West	♠ AQ54
Vul: None	♥ 104
	♦ 9754
	♣ J74

West	East
♠ 98763	♠ J2
♥ A965	♥ J8732
♦ AQ3	♦ KJ10
♣ 3	♣ Q62

South
♠ K10
♥ KQ
♦ 862
♣ AK10985

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣(Str)
1♠(1)	Pass	2♦(P/C)	3NT
All Pass			
(1) ♠+♥/♦+♣			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣	Pass	2♥	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♥	All Pass

The strong club auction in the Open Room encountered a modicum of interference but the friendly diamond split meant that 3NT could (as opposed to "would") always be made. Papa led the ♠9 to the jack and king and Tuncok cashed the ♣AK (from both the lead and the auction Papa was marked with the majors, which makes this play rather suspect) and conceded a club to the queen. Senior accurately switched to the ♦K followed by the ♦J and Papa cashed out for down one, -50.

In the Closed Room Brock-Myers bought the hand in 3♥ and on the ♥K lead Myers claimed nine tricks for +140 and a 3-imp pickup. Hybrids, 74-64.

Our people skills are just fine...it's our tolerance to idiots that needs work.

Bd: 25
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

West
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ Q1063
 ♦ AJ95
 ♣ Q62

North
 ♠ 1053
 ♥ 872
 ♦ 83
 ♣ AJ1095

East
 ♠ KJ986
 ♥ AJ4
 ♦ K764
 ♣ 3

South
 ♠ A74
 ♥ K95
 ♦ Q102
 ♣ K874

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i>	South <i>Tuncok</i>
	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i>	South <i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

In the Open Room Senior received a heart lead against his 3♦. He won the jack, played a spade to the queen, a spade back to the king and ace, ruffed the second club, cashed the top two trumps and ran spades claiming 10 tricks; +130.

In the Closed Room the stakes were just a bit higher. Jason led the ♣J against 3NT and Hydes fell from grace when he ducked. (If declarer has, presumably, the ♣AQ, ♦AJ and either major-suit queen the contract rates to be cold. The best hope must be to play for the actual holding.) Brock won, led a heart to the jack and king, got a club return and the defense cashed out for down two, -200, and 8 indelicate imps to Hackett, down just a deuce now at 74-72.

Bd: 26
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

West
 ♠ AJ105
 ♥ AQ42
 ♦ 872
 ♣ 65

North
 ♠ Q
 ♥ KJ9753
 ♦ KQ96
 ♣ J4

East
 ♠ 97
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 543
 ♣ KQ108732

South
 ♠ K86432
 ♥ 106
 ♦ AJ10
 ♣ A9

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i>	South <i>Tuncok</i>
		3♣	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i>	South <i>Hydes</i>
		3♣	3♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

In the Open Room Tuncok ducked the opening club lead and was rewarded with a heart to the ace and a heart back, ruffed. He won the diamond shift cheaply in hand, led a spade to the ace, won the diamond return, then cashed the ♠K, got the bad news, and conceded down two, -200.

In the Closed Room once again the stakes were a bit higher. Jason won the ♣K lead with the ace, called for the ♥10, and let it ride when Brock followed low. Now he called for the ♠2 and again Brock followed low, allowing Jason to sneak through the ♠Q. Next came the ♦Q to the ace, a heart to the ace, and a second club to the queen. But Jason ruffed the club return and claimed 10 tricks for +620. A very useful 13 imps gave Hackett the lead, 85-74.

Bd: 27
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

West
 ♠ K765
 ♥ A87
 ♦ Q106
 ♣ 753

North
 ♠ 104
 ♥ 102
 ♦ 54
 ♣ AKJ9864

East
 ♠ QJ932
 ♥ QJ4
 ♦ KJ97
 ♣ Q

South
 ♠ A8
 ♥ K9653
 ♦ A832
 ♣ 102

Open Room

West <i>Paul</i>	North <i>McCallum</i>	East <i>Senior</i>	South <i>Tuncok</i>
			1♥
Pass	2♦(1)	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣(2)	All Pass	

(1) Shows an unspecified invitational hand
 (2) Clubs, invitational

Closed Room

West <i>Brock</i>	North <i>Jason</i>	East <i>Myers</i>	South <i>Hydes</i>
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

In the Open Room McCallum's 2♦ showed an invitational hand in an unspecified suit and Tuncok's 2♥ rejected a heart invite if that was her intent. Both rooms settled in 3♣ and lost the obvious four tricks for a push at +110. Still 85-74.

Bd: 28
Dir: West
Vul: N/S

North
♠ 9
♥ Q653
♦ AQ1092
♣ Q95

West
♠ A864
♥ 842
♦ K74
♣ 874

East
♠ K107
♥ J1097
♦ J65
♣ AK6

South
♠ QJ532
♥ AK
♦ 83
♣ J1032

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
1NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	All Pass		

In the Open Room McCallum led the ♦9 (fourth best?) and Papa declined to play the jack, winning the king in hand and playing a heart to South's king. Moments later Papa conceded down one, -50.

In the Closed Room the low club lead went to the queen and king and Myers tabled the ♥10 to the king. Back came the ♣J to the ace and Myers exited with a third club. Hydes now cashed the ♥A and led a diamond to the queen. Jason cashed the ♦A, on which Myers unblocked dummy's king, and led a third diamond. Myers won the jack and led a spade to the ace and a spade back toward his hand. Jason ruffed this and cashed the ♥Q for down two, -100. That was 2 imps to Hackett, who extended their lead to 87-74.

Bd: 29
Dir: North
Vul: Both

North
♠ AK5
♥ 643
♦ K3
♣ QJ1097

West
♠ 10972
♥ 9752
♦ J97
♣ 84

East
♠ J863
♥ KQ10
♦ AQ1082
♣ K

South
♠ Q4
♥ AJ8
♦ 654
♣ A6532

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	1NT	Dbl	Rdbl
Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>

(auction and play unavailable)

Against McCallum's 3NT Senior led ace and a diamond to McCallum's king. When the ♣K showed up at trick two McCallum quickly claimed 10 tricks, +630. We could find no record of either the auction or the play in the Closed Room. What we do know is that Jason also declared 3NT and also made ten tricks for a push. Still 87-74 Hackett.

Bd: 30

Dir: East
Vul: None

North
♠ 3
♥ A10862
♦ K9852
♣ KJ

West
♠ J107
♥ Q9
♦ J76
♣ Q10983

East
♠ KQ65
♥ 743
♦ 43
♣ A742

South
♠ A9842
♥ KJ5
♦ AQ10
♣ 65

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣(♦)	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Both Souths received a club lead to the jack and ace, won the return, and guessed to play West for the ♥Q to score 12 tricks for a pair of 480s. No swing, still 87-74 Hackett.

Bd: 31 North
 Dir: South ♠ KQ108
 Vul: N/S ♥ AKQ10642
 ♦ 105
 ♣ ---

West
 ♠ A9632
 ♥ 87
 ♦ KJ32
 ♣ 82

East
 ♠ J7
 ♥ J93
 ♦ AQ9874
 ♣ KJ

South
 ♠ 54
 ♥ 5
 ♦ 6
 ♣ AQ10976543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
			5♣

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			4♣

Pass 4♥ All Pass

In the Open Room Tuncok's 5♣ opening did not work out well for the Hybrids. McCallum passed (no matter, the five level was already too high) and declarer lost the obvious three tricks; -100.

In the Closed Room Hydes's more conservative 4♣ opening left just enough room for Jason to try 4♥. Myers's ♠J lead to Brock's ace was just the help Jason needed to claim ten tricks; +620. That contract would not have fared well if Brock had ducked at trick one. (Indeed, any lead except a club or the ♠7 leaves 4♥ unmakeable.) Whatever non-trump declarer leads at trick two allows the defense to play a trump and now dummy is dead and declarer must lose two diamonds and two spades. Ah, well. *C'est la vie!* That was another useful 12 imps to Hackett, who pulled further into the lead at 99-74.

Last board in the half.

Bd: 32 North
 Dir: West ♠ 42
 Vul: E/W ♥ J62
 ♦ AKQ3
 ♣ A1072

West
 ♠ J765
 ♥ 9
 ♦ 10765
 ♣ J853

East
 ♠ A10
 ♥ A108754
 ♦ J84
 ♣ 94

South
 ♠ KQ983
 ♥ KQ3
 ♦ 92
 ♣ KQ6

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	1♦	2♥	Dbf
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♣	1♥	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

We'd like to say the set ended with a bang but in full honesty we must disclose that the first half ended in a whimper. Both N/S pairs played 3NT and both took 11 tricks (after cashing winners the East hand is known to have 11 cards outside of clubs, so the third-round club finesse is marked) for a push. The session ended with Hackett winning it 62-26, 99-74 total. The teams retired to the locker room for halftime but would return (in a page) for the second half. Watch that space!



"Don't go away mad...Just go away!"



"It's new. It's called an air violin."

NEC Final (3rd quarter): England/USA vs Hackett

by Barry Rigal



Paul



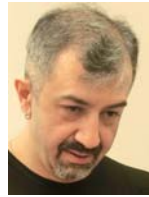
Brock



Myers



Senior



Tuncok



Jason



Hydes



McCallum

Bd: 33
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ 532
♥ AJ95
♦ 4
♣ KQJ97

West
♠ AQJ107
♥ K64
♦ Q62
♣ 62

East
♠ K98
♥ Q7
♦ A109853
♣ A5

South
♠ 64
♥ 10832
♦ KJ7
♣ 10843

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
	1♣	1♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	1♣	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

We saw Hackett roar into a 25-imp lead after two quarters having come back (with the help of a score adjustment) from down 35 in the middle of quarter two. The momentum in the match appeared to have shifted, and the first deal of quarter three did nothing to change the spectators' minds.

In the Open Room Paul could produce a forcing 2♠ bid and Senior raised to game. Easy-peasy. The defenders led clubs and declarer won and arranged his heart ruff for the tenth trick...not so fast. What if North shifts to a diamond after winning the ♥A? Declarer must go up with the ace or suffer a ruff, and

now he cannot both take a ruff and lead diamonds from dummy at the critical moment. The only way to make the hand is to draw trumps ending in dummy and lead diamonds toward your hand, by no means the obvious play since the chosen line was proof against most diamond breaks. Brock won the ♥A at trick two, cashed the ♣Q, and shifted to...a trump. Declarer took the heart ruff, drew trumps, led a diamond to dummy, and claimed when the second diamond produced the king from South.

In 3NT, reached after Tuncok (who could bid 1♠ non-forcing, or 2♠ as a game force) found what he thought was the only way for him to get his diamond support and spade suit across. But this sequence was construed by McCallum as bidding stoppers for notrump. Maybe she should raise spades anyway. The club lead set the game immediately, as all McCallum could do was run spades, then try for miracles in diamonds. She led a diamond to the ace and conceded the rest; 11imps to Hackett.

Bd: 34
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ AJ84
♥ Q63
♦ J92
♣ 732

West
♠ 6
♥ A105
♦ K7643
♣ KQJ4

East
♠ 10732
♥ 9842
♦ 105
♣ A109

South
♠ KQ95
♥ KJ7
♦ AQ8
♣ 865

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♦	1♠	Pass	1NT

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tuncok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		Pass	1NT
2NT	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl	Pass	3♣	All Pass

Myers found an interesting choice of rebid when instead of raising spades he decided to protect his diamond tenace. He was wrong in a sense, since spades plays for eight tricks and notrump made only seven, but he wasn't going to be complaining since E/W might have bid on over a spade raise. Compare what happened in the other room where Tuncok wandered into his opponents' auction at the three level and came out smelling of roses. McCallum played 3♣ on repeated spade leads. She discarded hearts from dummy at tricks two and three, ruffed the fourth spade in dummy, then crossed to a club to play diamonds up. The defenders could win and tap dummy, but McCallum could ruff out the diamonds (unblocking the ♣A), use her small trump to cross to dummy to draw the remaining trumps, and score up her contract. That was 5 imps to make it 79-110.

Bd: 35 North
 Dlr: South ♠ AQ109632
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q63
 ♦ K2
 ♣ K

West	East
♠ 7	♠ K84
♥ KJ982	♥ A104
♦ AQ764	♦ J83
♣ 85	♣ J1072

South
 ♠ J5
 ♥ 75
 ♦ 1095
 ♣ AQ9643

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
			3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tuncok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			3♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Both Easts led a diamond against the aggressively bid game. Paul won his ace and shifted to the ♥8, 3, 4, 5. Paul now shifted back to diamonds and was lucky the clubs could not take care of the heart losers. But might Senior have overtaken the heart to make sure nothing bad could happen? Maybe he knew from his club holding that this is unlikely; I'm not so sure. In the other room Tuncok continued diamonds, and again that just looks wrong: give declarer a 7-2-2-2 missing the ♠Q and ♥A and the heart loser goes away. Both E/W pairs collected 50, and we moved on.

Bd: 36 North
 Dlr: West ♠ 54
 Vul: Both ♥ J3
 ♦ Q982
 ♣ A9832

West	East
♠ Q3	♠ 97
♥ 765	♥ AK10842
♦ A107543	♦ 6
♣ J4	♣ K765

South
 ♠ AKJ10862
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ KJ
 ♣ Q10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
2♦	Pass	2♥	2♠

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Tuncok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
2♦	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♥	Pass	Pass	3♠

All Pass

A moral victory for England/USA, where the two Wests were given the same opportunity to compete and push their opponents around. One took it, one did not. Paul was sub-minimum for his opener with a wasted ♠Q. He sold out to 2♠, while Tuncok had plenty to spare for his opener and joined in the fun, pushing Hydes to 3♠. Both defenders cashed their hearts and took a ruff. Both Wests gave a ruff with a large diamond (Tuncok the seven, Paul the five). Both Easts played a trump, and both Souths claimed. Against 3♠ one can certainly make the case for playing a club: it might cost an undertrick but it also gives declarer a legitimate guess for the contract. Defending 2♠ one needs partner to have the spade ace or king to play the club through in time.

Bd: 37 North
 Dir: North ♠ J109852
 Vul: N/S ♥ A6
 ♦ Q52
 ♣ 86

West
 ♠ 7643
 ♥ K10843
 ♦ 8
 ♣ KJ4

East
 ♠ AK
 ♥ QJ5
 ♦ A1097
 ♣ 10753

South
 ♠ Q
 ♥ 972
 ♦ KJ643
 ♣ AQ92

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
	2♦	Dbl	Rdbl.
2♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	1♦(1+)	Pass
1♥	1♠	Dbl(Supp)	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

For what was not the first and surely would not be the last time this match, England/USA's preempting style got them in faster than the Hackett player in the same position. Would that lead to them stealing the contract? Quite the reverse this time, when Jason's delayed spade bid saw his partner compete for the partscore, leading to a 6-1 spade fit. The defenders led and continued hearts. Declarer took the ace and played trumps, letting McCallum in to shift to clubs. Hackett finessed, and now was the moment for Tuncok to collect his ruff (how else could he beat the hand?). He chose to switch back to hearts; declarer ruffed and played a trump to McCallum. Could declarer really have followed this line with a 6-2-2-3 shape? Wouldn't he have played diamonds before trumps? It turned out that it didn't matter which hand declarer had. A club play would lock declarer in dummy so he could only exit either by playing a diamond, finally allowing the ruff, or with a club when he would force himself. After drawing trump the defenders would win the ♦A and have a club to cash. No. McCallum cashed the ♦A first and only then played a club, and now declarer had the tempo to draw trumps after ruffing a club to hand to make his partscore.

Paul's 2♥ contract was somewhat at risk of black-suit ruffs; the defenders could take either spade or club ruffs, but not both. Maybe not. After a spade lead,

Paul played a club to his hand and a trump up. Brock won her ace, took a club ruff, then gave her partner a spade ruff, but when a club came back declarer ruffed in hand and then cross-ruffed the rest for +140 and 6 moreimps. Hackett led now, 116-79.

Bd: 38 North
 Dir: East ♠ Q87
 Vul: E/W ♥ AJ1083
 ♦ 1087
 ♣ Q3

West
 ♠ 5
 ♥ K2
 ♦ QJ93
 ♣ A87654

East
 ♠ KJ632
 ♥ Q9764
 ♦ A
 ♣ 102

South
 ♠ A1094
 ♥ 5
 ♦ K6542
 ♣ KJ9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	1♠	Pass
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

Senior led a heart (which feels right on an auction of this sort) to the king and ace, covered the ♠Q, and when declarer played another spade won, returned a low heart, and was extremely disappointed if not necessarily surprised with developments (like Eeyore, Brian feels that bad news is always just around the corner). Declarer now had two hearts and three spades, so went after clubs, and eventually Senior was forced to win the ♦A and concede a heart to declarer for -120.

That seemed a healthy enough result for N/S but of course McCallum opened the East cards, and that got Tuncok to an ugly 3♣ contract. Jason's diamond lead didn't seem especially effective. Declarer won in dummy to lead a heart to the king and ace, guessed spades right on the low spade back, then took Hydes' ♣J shift with the ace, ruffed a diamond, and cashed the ♠K to discard a diamond. Everything was going swimmingly, but when declarer tried to cash a heart South could ruff in, take the ♦K, and give his partner a ruff. The defenders had one trick in each plain suit and three trumps for down 200; 2imps to Hackett.

Bd: 39
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ AQ76
 ♥ 105
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ Q1095

West
 ♠ KJ54
 ♥ KQJ764
 ♦ 10
 ♣ 42

East
 ♠ 832
 ♥ A93
 ♦ 87
 ♣ KJ876

South
 ♠ 109
 ♥ 82
 ♦ AKJ9432
 ♣ A3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
1♥	Dbl	2♥	1♦
3♥	4♦	All Pass	3♦

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
1♥	Dbl	2♥	1♦
Pass	4♦	All Pass	3♥

Both tables went a little beyond their comfort level in playing 4♦, Hydes having gone there voluntarily, Myers and Brock having been pushed there. Digressing for a moment, in a strong notrump base, using good/bad 2NT by opener at his second turn allows him to distinguish real invitations from purely competitive hands. So South can bid 3♦ here, but would go through 2NT were the ♦2 in spades.

Against 4♦ the defenders probably do best to go passive after two rounds of hearts. Tuncok shifted to clubs, declarer set up a club for his tenth trick, Paul underled his spades. Declarer let it run, drew trumps, then played on spades for an overtrick.

Bd: 40
 Dir: West
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ 10975
 ♥ 97
 ♦ 76
 ♣ AQ862

West
 ♠ 2
 ♥ AJ6532
 ♦ J82
 ♣ J104

East
 ♠ KQJ6
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ K53
 ♣ K53

South
 ♠ A843
 ♥ 84
 ♦ AQ1094
 ♣ 97

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
3♥	All Pass		

We have already remarked at possibly unnecessary length on how the differences in team bidding philosophies has thrown up remarkably large numbers of variations in final contracts, though which team has bid more and which less seems almost random. Take this deal, where Tuncok bid more but finished lower.

McCallum doubtless put down the dummy expecting her partner to go down in 3♥. Three rounds of diamonds and two aces later, she was not disappointed. But switch her partner's spade and diamond length and game is just fine.

Paul Hackett opened 2♥, and when asked for a feature couldn't quite identify one, but he felt he had enough in hand at this vulnerability to take a shot at game. Here Brock led a spade to the ace. When Myers shifted to the ♣9, covered all around, Brock could see she needed her partner to have the ♦A to have any chance to set the game. Did he have a club ruff coming or the ♦Q? She guessed right to set the game two tricks, for 2 imps, instead of letting it through. For her play to be wrong Paul would need to be 1-6-2-4 with the ♦Q; by no means impossible.

Bd: 41
 Dir: North
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ K73
 ♥ QJ109
 ♦ J975
 ♣ Q7

West
 ♠ 10965
 ♥ K7
 ♦ AQ42
 ♣ 1092

East
 ♠ AQJ8
 ♥ A42
 ♦ K10
 ♣ A854

South
 ♠ 42
 ♥ 8653
 ♦ 863
 ♣ KJ63

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
2♣(1)	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass	2NT	Pass

(1) limit in spades or GF

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	Pass	1♣	1NT(1)
2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(3)	Pass
3♥(4)	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣(5)	Pass	4♠	All Pass

- (1) ♣+♥ or ♦+♠
- (2) 8+ balanced
- (3) Ranges for shape and controls
- (4) 4-2-4-3
- (5) 3 controls

Both tables coped well enough with this hand and stayed sensibly low. Hydes led a club, Myers a heart, the defenders eventually collected two club tricks, and we moved on to the next exhibit.

Bd: 42	North
Dlr: East	♠ 86
Vul: Both	♥ 6
	♦ AK974233
	♣ K982

West
♠ 10932
♥ KQ82
♦ Q865
♣ 10

East
♠ A75
♥ 10754
♦ J103
♣ J63

South
♠ KQJ4
♥ AJ93
♦ ---
♣ AQ754

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	1♥
All Pass		Pass	6♣

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	4♥
All Pass		Pass	6♣

Both tables coped well with this deal. The spade lead from Paul speeded things up—not that they needed to be speeded up here, the play having finished at this table *seven* boards in front of the other room. Hydes received a club lead from Tencok. He gave the matter quite a bit of thought before winning the king, leading a spade to hand and playing the ♥A and ruffing a heart, then crossing to hand in trumps to ruff a second heart. Then he could throw a heart and spade on the diamonds, ruff a diamond to hand, draw the trump, and give up a spade. Nicely done

and no swing. It remained 118-82 for Hackett.

Bd: 43	North
Dlr: South	♠ Q1094
Vul: None	♥ 86432
	♦ 86
	♣ 75

West
♠ A75
♥ AJ5
♦ AKJ10
♣ KJ4

East
♠ KJ2
♥ Q107
♦ 972
♣ AQ109

South
♠ 863
♥ K9
♦ Q543
♣ 8632

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
1♣(16+)	Pass	2♦(1)	Pass
2♥(2)	Pass	3♣(3)	Pass
3♦(2)	Pass	3♥(4)	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

- (1) 8+ balanced
- (2) Relay
- (3) 4333 with a minor
- (4) Clubs

Tuncok's sequence was, I believe, a slam try since when he asked for more information over McCallum's second bid he had the options of signing off or inviting slam. McCallum had an ace more than she had promised but only three controls. Slam is almost exactly 50%: in the absence of a favorable lead you need two out of the three finesses. At the other table Senior didn't even look facing 19-21.

On we go to perhaps the most critical deal of the match so far regarding both imps and momentum.

Bd: 44	North
Dlr: West	♠ 76
Vul: N/S	♥ KQ8
	♦ 102
	♣ AKJ1096

West
♠ KJ1052
♥ 9742
♦ J5
♣ Q2

East
♠ Q9843
♥ 653
♦ KQ97
♣ 8

South
♠ A
♥ AJ10
♦ A8643
♣ 7543

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
2♠	3♣	4♠	6♣
6♠	Pass	Pass	Dbf

All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
2♠	3♣	3♦	4♠(1)
Pass	5♦	5♠	Pass
Pass	7♣	7♠	Dbf

All Pass

(1) Either a splinter...or KCB(?)

In the Open Room Paul took a somewhat undisciplined save in front of his partner, but since he was right, one can hardly argue too much with his choice. Here the grand slam really wasn't in the picture but Brock passed it around to her partner to make the final decision. If all that was critical was her heart honors (give partner long hearts not diamonds) that was too bad. Since Myers did not even know that 6♣ was making he had no problem doubling 6♠, and that was a relatively painless 1100.

In the Closed Room Jason was not sure if 4♠ was keycard or a splinter. He chose to respond to keycard, and when his partner passed 5♠ around to him he formed an impression that dummy would have long hearts, so his heart honors were golden. Over 7♣ McCallum, who might have had the same mental impression of dummy, could not take the heat and saved. Here, though, she might have considered that her partner had not bid 5♦ over 4♠ so if he were short in diamonds and clubs, he must have heart length and if he wasn't short in diamonds, wouldn't he save himself? Regardless, the result was 1400 when even though Hydes tried to give his partner diamond ruffs, the defense still had time to cash out. Those 7 imps (instead of 17 the other way) made it 125-82.

Bd: 45 North
 Dir: North ♠ J94
 Vul: Both ♥ 9
 ♦ AKQJ832
 ♣ 76

West	East
♠ A1073	♠ KQ86
♥ Q532	♥ A106
♦ 96	♦ 1054
♣ Q42	♣ A85

South
 ♠ 52
 ♥ KJ874
 ♦ 7
 ♣ KJ1093

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
	1♦	Dbf.	1♥
Dbf	2♦	Pass	Pass
2♠	3♦	All Pass	

Brock's solid-minor opening didn't thrill Myers, and the sight of dummy didn't thrill Brock. Senior led a top spade, shifted to a trump, Brock ran a few rounds of that suit, then led a heart up. Senior took his ace, cashed out the spades and led a fourth spade. When Brock ruffed and played a club towards the king-jack Senior ducked, and Brock finessed for down 300. Whether you consider that nicely done or not might depend on what you thought the other table would be doing.

Here, after the same first two tricks, Jason played a heart. Again East won her ♥A, cashed out spades, then took the ♣A before the rats could get at it. Declarer was surely going to get clubs right, here, so this was the best E/W could do. But still, 5 imps to Hackett, leading 130-82 now.

Bd: 46 North
 Dir: East ♠ K652
 Vul: None ♥ 4
 ♦ J865
 ♣ 10432

West	East
♠ Q843	♠ J9
♥ Q9873	♥ KJ1052
♦ A4	♦ KQ3
♣ Q8	♣ AJ5

South
 ♠ A107
 ♥ A6
 ♦ 10972
 ♣ K976

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
		1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
		1♣(16+)	Pass
1♥(♠)	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦(♥)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Senior reached 4♥ from the strong hand and claimed ten tricks on a diamond lead. Tencok played it from the weaker hand after showing both majors and a canape at his second turn. McCallum set hearts but denied any extras, and Tencok signed off. On a club lead he had just enough time to win and cash diamonds to pitch his club loser before conceding the major- suit losers. No swing; still 130-82 for Hackett.

Bd: 47 North
 Dir: South ♠ 875
 Vul: N/S ♥ 92
 ♦ AK62
 ♣ AKQ7

West
 ♠ A6432
 ♥ Q643
 ♦ 4
 ♣ 1094

East
 ♠ QJ9
 ♥ K
 ♦ QJ753
 ♣ J832

South
 ♠ K10
 ♥ AJ10875
 ♦ 1098
 ♣ 65

Open and Closed Rooms

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
			2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Finally a preempt that yielded the same developments at both tables. Both Wests led their singleton against 4♥, East following with an unreadable five. Both declarers played trumps, each West winning the second heart as East now discarded the ♦3, making it clear they did not have the ♠K or they would have thrown a high diamond. or a club for suit-preference, or an encouraging spade. Both Wests thoughtfully played a club and each declarer could cash two clubs, ruff a club high, draw trumps, go to the remaining diamond honor, and take the discard before playing on spades for the possible overtrick. No swing.

Bd: 48 North
 Dir: West ♠ Q87
 Vul: E/W ♥ K83
 ♦ J973
 ♣ AK7

West
 ♠ K1043
 ♥ Q1096
 ♦ A2
 ♣ 1098

East
 ♠ A962
 ♥ A7542
 ♦ 84
 ♣ 32

South
 ♠ J5
 ♥ J
 ♦ KQ1065
 ♣ QJ654

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Paul</i>	<i>Brock</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Myers</i>
	1NT	Pass	2NT(♦)
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Turcok</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Hydes</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

Both tables reached diamonds after North showed a weak notrump. Myers transferred to diamonds, planning to pass a 3♣ rejection. Hydes simply raised and repeated the suit. Both defenses led clubs, won the ♦A and cashed out the major-suit winners before they could be discarded. A flat board at 110.

Hackett won the set 31-8 to lead 130-82. While things were not hopeless for England/USA, they were in a stretch of 28 deals where they had been outscored 90-11.

Sometimes I sit quietly and wonder why I'm not in a mental asylum...then I take a look around and realize, maybe I already am.



"How many fingers am I holding up?"



"Wait. Is this that new Lotto thing?"

NEC Final (4th quarter): England/USA vs Hackett

by Barry Rigal



Hydes



McCallum



Tuncok



Jason



Brock



Paul



Senior



Myers

Bd: 49
Dir: North
Vul: None

North
♠ K1082
♥ J94
♦ 107
♣ A765

West
♠ J4
♥ A1085
♦ A6532
♣ K8

East
♠ A3
♥ K32
♦ Q984
♣ J943

South
♠ Q9765
♥ Q76
♦ KJ
♣ Q102

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Dbl	3♠	Dbl	Pass
4♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2NT	Dbl	3♠
All Pass			

In the Open Room Hydes wasn't prepared to let himself be stolen from, even up 48 imps. Over his partner's redouble he bid 4♦ and was doubtless delighted and relieved to hear the auction end there. The only issue in 4♦ looks to be how many tricks it will go down. Hydes was made of sterner stuff. He won the spade lead, returned the suit, and McCallum was allowed to win her king. Going for the gusto, she underled her ♣A to Hydes' king. Back came a second club and McCallum won her ace and played a third club. Hydes ruffed that, played ace and another diamond, and when South won this all

declarer needed was a well-placed ♥9 to bring home his partscore. Alas for him, when South exited with ♥Q the defenders had to take one more trick.

When Senior bought the hand in 3♠ it also seemed to be just a question of the number of undertricks. Alas for her, Brock put the ♣K on the table at trick one and now declarer could play clubs for no loser. Senior won the ♣A, played a spade, won by Myers, for a second club play. Senior finessed, drew trump and played a heart to the queen and ace. Eventually he had to negotiate diamonds, but the opening lead made it clear what to do there, and he racked up an impressive +140.

Bd: 50
Dir: East
Vul: N/S

North
♠ 10
♥ KQ108762
♦ 62
♣ 542

West
♠ Q85432
♥ A54
♦ KJ9
♣ 3

East
♠ AKJ
♥ J93
♦ 43
♣ AKQ107

South
♠ 976
♥ ---
♦ AQ10875
♣ J986

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
		2♦(1)	Pass
2♠(2)	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦(3)	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	All Pass

- (1) 18-19 balanced
- (2) Spades...or not
- (3) Hearts...or not

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
		1♣	1♦
1♠	2♥	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♠	Dbl
All Pass			

Myers showed extras and started a cue-bidding auction, accepting Brock's second try when the red-suit controls came to life. With the ♦A where it ought to be, slam needs nothing more than running the clubs for four tricks and no 4-0 trumps...until Senior could make a Lightner double to get the heart ruff at trick one. Unlucky, especially in light of the tangled auction from the other table, where Hydes had been distracted by a conversation with a staff member into thinking his partner had opened a weak-two, not a strong balanced hand. His 2♠ was actually a puppet to 2NT, his 3♦ a transfer. Thereafter the auction saw Hydes angling to get his partner to bid spades or notrump. Eventually he succeeded. Those 11 imps made the lead 62.

Bd: 51	North
Dlr: South	♠ J982
Vul: E/W	♥ 97
	♦ J842
	♣ 963

West
♠ KQ53
♥ 842
♦ A953
♣ KJ

East
♠ A107
♥ K1053
♦ 7
♣ 108752

South
♠ 64
♥ AQJ6
♦ KQ106
♣ AQ4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass			
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
			1♥
Dbl	Pass	2♣	2♦
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

Hackett might have envisaged his partner as short in spades (he had to have two at least) but no doubt expected 2-5-4-2 shape. 3♦ wasn't a thing of beauty, but here again Brock put her fingers unerringly on

the ♣K—this time with plenty of excuse. Senior, trying to hide his smile, won, led out the ♦K, ducked, then advanced a low trump. Brock won (an error) and played a second club to Senior, who could not do much but exit with the ♥J. Myers won and cashed a club on which Brock discarded a heart. Myers returned a heart and now declarer ruffed a heart and drew trumps for eight tricks.

This was still worth 2 imps when the club suit caused England/USA problems in the other room. Hydes led a top spade against 1NT, a low spade to the ten, and Jason shifted to a low club. Had declarer ducked he might have been in decent shape (Hydes wins and probably leads a spade for a second club through, but even if declarer misguesses he has at least six tricks). Tuncok put in the queen, though, then won the next club. The defenders now could take four clubs, three spades and their ♦A for two down.

Bd: 52	North
Dlr: West	♠ 942
Vul: Both	♥ K
	♦ 10964
	♣ QJ873

West
♠ AQ6
♥ AQJ83
♦ K853
♣ 6

East
♠ J85
♥ 1096
♦ J72
♣ 9542

South
♠ K1073
♥ 7542
♦ AQ
♣ AK10

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass

Both tables declared hearts, on two rounds of clubs, ruffed by declarer. Brock ruffed low, Hydes ruffed with the ♥J. Where Brock was declarer she led a low diamond to the jack and queen, and Senior won to play a third club. Brock ruffed again and played a low diamond to get the good news. She then finessed on the heart return and was forced again. She ended up with two spades and four hearts in hand and a diamond ruff in dummy for down one.

Hydes led the ♠Q from hand at trick three and was also forced again at trick four. He cashed his spades and led a diamond up. Tuncok hopped with the ace to play a heart and when declarer finessed, a fourth club meant South could pitch the ♦Q as Hydes ruffed. From here on in it looks like two down but the players agreed eight tricks and who are we to argue? No swing; still a 64-imp lead for Hackett.

Bd: 53
 Dir: North
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ Q943
 ♥ 1097542
 ♦ KQ3
 ♣ ---

West
 ♠ J752
 ♥ K8
 ♦ A84
 ♣ AQ102

East
 ♠ K1086
 ♥ AJ
 ♦ 1052
 ♣ 9654

South
 ♠ A
 ♥ Q63
 ♦ J976
 ♣ KJ873

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♥	2♠	All Pass

Stop the presses! Someone passed holding a six-card suit! Extra, extra, read all about the incredible passing North! Hmm, maybe that wasn't so exciting after all. Both Easts played 2♠ on a heart lead and led a spade to the ten and ace. Senior shifted to a low diamond to the queen and Paul returned a heart. Myers won in hand and ran the ♣9. Had Senior covered this the hand might have been more challenging but he played low and Myers let it run. From here on in the defenders had three trump tricks and two diamonds, but that was it.

In the other room a heart came back at trick three and Jason won to play a club to the ten. McCallum ruffed, played the ♦K, ducked, then the ♦Q, won by the ace. A spade to the king brought the bad news, and declarer gave up a diamond to Tuncok who played the ♣J, covered with the queen, and ducked by McCallum. But she was thrown in with a trump at the next trick to give a ruff sluff and now the club loser went away. Eight tricks made, again, and still 146-82 for Hackett.

Bd: 54
 Dir: East
 Vul: E/W

North
 ♠ QJ84
 ♥ A6
 ♦ 65
 ♣ AJ1074

West
 ♠ 752
 ♥ K85
 ♦ Q832
 ♣ 852

East
 ♠ AK106
 ♥ 10
 ♦ AK974
 ♣ K63

South
 ♠ 93
 ♥ QJ97432
 ♦ J10
 ♣ Q9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
		1♦	3♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
4♦	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
		1♦	3♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Tuncok's ♥Q lead looks normal enough, but Jason knew to duck. On the trump shift he won dummy's queen to lead a spade to the ten. Once that held he could draw trump, ruff out the spades and hearts, and cross to dummy's ♦8 to pitch a club on the ♥K. 11 tricks made and very nice too...but not enough.

In the other room Brock's gutsy 3NT bid got her to 3NT. Paul somewhat trustingly led ace and another heart (a club lead would have required declarer to take two spade finesses to make the game). Brock ducked the second heart and eventually led to the ♣K for her ninth trick. 10 imps to England/USA made it 146-92.

Bd: 55
 Dir: South
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ 873
 ♥ Q102
 ♦ KQ109
 ♣ 752

West
 ♠ AQ962
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 752
 ♣ J1043

East
 ♠ 1054
 ♥ AJ6
 ♦ A864
 ♣ A96

South
 ♠ KJ
 ♥ K98753
 ♦ J3
 ♣ KQ8

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
1♠	2♥	3♥	1♥
3♠	All Pass		Dbl

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
1♠	2♥	3♥	1♥
3♠	All Pass		Pass

This was a good-news/bad-news/good-news hand. The spade honors were onside making it easy to come to nine tricks. But now there was a risk that E/W had missed game. Good news, both clubs were wrong so nine tricks were the limit. McCallum led the ♦K (did Tuncok's double suggest a non-heart lead?), Hackett led a low heart. Both tables played on trumps then clubs and emerged with nine tricks with no real problem. No swing.

Bd: 56	North
Dlr: West	♠ AKJ
Vul: None	♥ QJ5
	♦ A4
	♣ 106532

West	East
♠ 32	♠ 9754
♥ K	♥ 976432
♦ KQJ10975	♦ 6
♣ AK7	♣ 98
South	
♠ Q1086	
♥ A108	
♦ 832	
♣ QJ4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
1♦	Dbl	1♥	1♠
3♦	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
1♦	Dbl	2♥(Weak)	2♠
4♦	All Pass		

Myers certainly had the "weak" part of his bid. That persuaded Brock to up the ante to 4♦ and no one felt they had anything more to say. Hackett played three rounds of spades so Brock could ruff a club in dummy and get out for down one.

That undertrick was in a sense irrelevant if 4♠ made.

But the normal diamond lead left declarer far too much to do. He won the ♦A and advanced the ♣Q to Hydes, who cashed the ♦K as East pitched his second club. Hydes played a third diamond. Declarer ruffed high and tried to draw trumps by overtaking the ♠Q and cashing the ♠10. Tuncok advanced the ♣J, ruffed by Jason, who shifted to a low heart, run to Hydes' king. There was still the club loser at the end of the day, for two down. That was 4 moreimps to Hackett, leading 150-92.

Bd: 57	North
Dlr: North	♠ 8732
Vul: E/W	♥ J32
	♦ 76
	♣ KJ108

West	East
♠ KJ	♠ Q5
♥ A8765	♥ Q109
♦ K1052	♦ QJ943
♣ 53	♣ A76

South
♠ A10964
♥ K4
♦ A8
♣ Q942

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Rdbl
4♥	4♠	Dbl	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2♠	Pass	Pass
All Pass	Pass	3♦	3♠

The auction from the Closed Room looks normal enough. After a diamond lead to the jack and ace Senior played two rounds of spades. Now Brock cashed the ♦K (the ♦10 might have given partner more options). In any event, maybe West could lead a low diamond, letting East work out the count of the hand. At this point ace and another club will beat the hand if partner has the ♥A, but a heart would be necessary when declarer has ♥Kxx and ♣Qxx. This isn't as easy a problem as it might appear.

And that was confirmed after a club lead in the Closed Room, when Jason won and shifted to the ♦Q. Declarer won to play ace and another spade. Now had West underled in diamonds to East, a second club might have been a possible sequence leading to two down. But Hydes cashed his diamond and heart losers for just one down.

Bd: 58
 Dir: East
 Vul: Both

North
 ♠ Q9642
 ♥ KJ6
 ♦ Q10
 ♣ J95

West
 ♠ 103
 ♥ A92
 ♦ A85
 ♣ K8762

East
 ♠ K85
 ♥ Q54
 ♦ J932
 ♣ Q103

South
 ♠ AJ7
 ♥ 10873
 ♦ K764
 ♣ A4

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦
All Pass		Pass	1NT

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	1NT
All Pass		Pass	2♠

Senior's (lead-directing?) 1♥ opening bid was of course systemically obligated. Details of the system available from Hackett & Hackett. As you can see, the bid worked like a charm, getting N/S to their eight-card fit. The defenders led a diamond to the ace and continued the suit. When declarer led a spade to the jack and cashed the trump ace that meant he had eight tricks off the top.

By contrast, Hydes' club lead against 1NT put it under pressure at once. Declarer led a heart to the jack and now had seven top losers: four clubs, a diamond and two hearts. Another 5 imps to Hackett, and the lead had risen to 69 imps.

Bd: 59
 Dir: South
 Vul: None

North
 ♠ Q932
 ♥ J93
 ♦ KQ962
 ♣ 10

West
 ♠ 64
 ♥ 1074
 ♦ A43
 ♣ 97532

East
 ♠ J107
 ♥ K865
 ♦ J8
 ♣ QJ64

South
 ♠ AK85
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ 1075
 ♣ AK8

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Hydes</i>	<i>McCallum</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Tuncok</i>
Pass	1♥(♠)	Pass	1♠(1)
Pass	2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(1)
Pass	3♦(3)	Pass	3♥(1)
Pass	3♠(4)	Pass	4♠
(1) Relay		(3) 4-3-5-1	
(2) 4♠, 5+♦		(4) 0-2 controls	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Brock</i>	<i>Paul</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Pass	3♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♥	All Pass	3NT(1)
(1) five hearts			

If you had to guess which table would forget their methods, you'd assume the strong clubbers would be guilty. Actually, Senior thought at his second turn he had opened 1NT and 3♣ was a shape relay, to which 3NT was the appropriate response. When he discovered his mistake he could see no way out but to put the dummy down.

Believe it or not, 4♥ is cold on any defense. At the table, on Myers's spade lead, Paul won the ace, led a diamond to the king, crossed to a second spade, and led a diamond up again. Now the defenders cross-ruffed spades and diamonds, played a club, and declarer's remaining trumps were compromised. Instead, win the spade and lead a diamond to the king, a heart to the queen and second diamond. West can see that giving his partner a ruff is hopeless, so he shifts to a club to the ten and king. Declarer leads a third diamond. East ruffs and plays back a club and now declarer must duck a heart and the defense is helpless.

The key to declarer's play, even on a club lead, is to set up diamonds and give away the ruff, then ruff a club in hand and duck a heart to your jack.

4♠ in the other room did not offer such excitement in the play. Hydes underled the ♦A at trick one and declarer drew trumps, then misguessed diamonds. But England/USA still had 11 imps; 161-103, now.

Bd: 60
 Dir: West
 Vul: N/S

North
 ♠ Q73
 ♥ AJ9843
 ♦ K9
 ♣ KJ

West
 ♠ A64
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ A743
 ♣ 10954

East
 ♠ J108
 ♥ 6
 ♦ Q10652
 ♣ AQ87

South
 ♠ K952
 ♥ K1072
 ♦ J8
 ♣ 632

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

(1) constructive heart raise

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2NT	3♥	All Pass	

The way the cards lie in hearts, the play is relatively simple. With both club honors wrong and the ♦A right, the only way to make more than eight tricks is to have a friendly East on opening lead. Jason led the ♠J and conceded 140, where it didn't matter. Where it did matter Myers led...a diamond. Brock shifted to clubs, Myers won and went back to diamonds. Declarer could not force the opposition to open up spades since they had a club exit, and 3♥ duly wandered one down in the fulness of time; 6 moreimps to England/USA, trailing 161-109 with four deals to go.

Any hopes of a miracle comeback were squashed on this next deal (a dull 3NT with an overtrick to England/USA). But the boards were still exciting—or could be made so.

Bd: 62	North
Dir: East	♠ A9864
Vul: None	♥ J542
	♦ 7
	♣ J107

West
♠ 1075
♥ KQ7
♦ J10852
♣ 93

East
♠ 32
♥ A106
♦ 94
♣ AKQ642

South
♠ KQJ
♥ 983
♦ AKQ63
♣ 85

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
Pass	1♠	2♣	1♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♠
Dbl	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
Pass	1♠	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

Against 3♠ Myers led two top clubs then shifted to hearts for a swift down one. Jason was angling for more, leading three rounds of clubs. McCallum ruffed high in dummy and cashed two spades, then three diamonds to pitch two of her hearts. That got her to nine tricks and just a loss of 2imps. Should Jason have worked out that a heart play was safe? That double had to be based on *something*.

Throughout this event the four-card majors have been working better than any jaundiced spectator might have expected. Credit the following swing entirely to them.

Bd: 63	North
Dir: South	♠ AK842
Vul: N/S	♥ 10965
	♦ 7
	♣ Q104

West	East
♠ 6	♠ Q105
♥ 842	♥ Q7
♦ K1062	♦ AQJ94
♣ AJ865	♣ 732

South
♠ J973
♥ AKJ3
♦ 853
♣ K9

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Hydes	McCallum	Jason	Tuncok
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Brock	Paul	Myers	Senior
Pass	2NT(1)	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
(1) Limit+			

Against 2♠ the defenders collected a trump and two aces. But 4♥ by South on a spade lead was a trifle awkward. Senior went up with the ace, led a heart to hand and ducked a diamond. When Myers as East won he chose to exit with the ♥Q. Now Senior could draw trumps and give up a spade, for ten tricks—and 10imps—to make the margin 63.

Both tables correctly settled in 3NT for a flat 430, and Hackett had won 173-110. After 20 deals they had been down 73-40, so they had finished in style.

A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.

21st NEC Bridge Festival Daily Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sunday (Feb. 12)	10:00-17:30	Yokohama Open Pairs	501, 502
	18:00-20:00	Closing Ceremony	503

Narita Bus Schedule

From the Intercontinental
(120 minutes)
¥3,500

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

From the YCAT
(100 min)
¥3,500

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