

The French Connection

by Judith and Nicholas Gartaganis

We served as non-playing captain and coach of the Canada Open Team in Lille, France. The 14th World Bridge Games began August 9th, as part of the World Mind Games, which also included chess, go, draughts (aka checkers), and xiangqi (Chinese chess). The games (formerly called the World Team Olympiad) were staged at the Lille Grand Palais.

In the Open event, Team Canada, comprised of Les Amoils, Vincent Demuy, Daniel Korbel, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Daniel Miles and Darren Wolpert, fought their way into the round of 16 where they faced Monaco, the pre-tournament favourite. Going into the last segment of the 96-board match, Canada led by 18 IMPs, but did not hold on to advance.

Prior to our arrival in Lille we made tentative arrangements to play in the Transnational Mixed Teams (TMT), subject to the success of the Canada Open Team. By the time Canada ended its run against Monaco both of us felt emotionally and physically drained. We had spent many hours preparing briefing material for the team before the event and on-site. The loss to Monaco was just as disappointing for us as it was for the players. Our TMT team-mates (Darren Wolpert, Hazel Wolpert, Daniel Korbel and Linda Wynston) were still keen to play in this World Championship event so we entered the TMT, proudly designating ourselves "Canada".

The format was a three-day Swiss with five rounds of 10 boards per day, using the WBF 30 Victory Point scale. The top eight teams would enter the knockout (KO) stage. Our first match was against a Swiss team over whom we prevailed by 17 IMPs (20-10 VPs) and our second match generated a similar win against a Scottish team which included Liz McGowan, a World Bridge Federation (WBF) Grand Master. Those wins moved us into 9th place. However, we stumbled in our 3rd match against an Italian team and dropped to 18th.


Our 4th match was our best yet, as we blitzed a Norwegian team; that meant we faced a high-ranking French team in the last match of the day. Even if one were not a scoreboard watcher, it was possible to gauge one's relative position by the assigned table number. The top team played at Table 1 and so forth. Our match against the French team was at Table 2 (it turned out that our blitz in round four had vaulted us into 4th place). We managed an 18-12 victory and surprisingly moved into 2nd spot. The scores were bunched - 2nd place was a mere 9 VPs ahead of the team in 17th position.

Lille - Day 2 (Hearts Are Forever)

After confirming that no scoring errors had been reported, we took a picture of the scoreboard to prove to our friends that, indeed we had been competitive for at least one day. Bushels of IMPs traded hands in the first two matches, but the end result was a small win (17-13) and a small loss (14-16). We had dropped to 9th and had to play Reese Milner's team, then holding down 10th position. Milner had some high-powered talent on his squad and bruised us with a 20-10 win. The loss dropped us to 12th and we all felt somewhat demoralized. The next opponent was from India and included Subhash Gupta, who had lived in Alberta for a number of years and was a previous Canadian National Team champion.

It was one of those magical rounds where everything we did turned out well. Our 25-3 win moved us back into a qualifying spot (tied for 6th through 8th). Our final match of the day was against SAIC Red, whose front four had frequently represented their country in world competition. The match was fairly close until the penultimate board:

Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable

<p>♠ 742 ♥ 82 ♦ A75 ♣ J9852</p>		<p>♠ -- ♥ Q943 ♦ J1032 ♣ A10643</p>	<p>♠ J86 ♥ KJ1065 ♦ 864 ♣ Q7</p>
---	---	---	--

	NicholasG		JudithG
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	Pass	2♥*
Double	3♥*	4♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

* Hope partner (and team-mates) have a sense of humour if we get doubled for -1400

After a heart lead declarer had two inescapable losers. Since our partners played in 4♠ making 11 tricks, we won 13 IMPs and the match by 23-7. At the end of day two, our total was 185 VPs, which left us tied for 1st place with Milner and 12 VPs ahead of 9th. The team had been playing well and with good luck. We had a reasonable, though somewhat unexpected, chance to qualify for the KOs.

Lille - Day 3 (From France With Love)

Losing participants from the round of eight in the Open, Women's and Senior's events were allowed to enter the last day of the TMT. They were given a "carryover" of 170 VPs (placing those teams in 12th place) and would be matched up against the leaders. Four teams entered under these rules.


Our first match was against a drop-in team (Djarum1) consisting of Indonesian players. Both of our pairs had a dream set. We got off to a good start when the opponents doubled us in 5♣ (our 5-3 fit where we had three inescapable losers), chasing us into 5♦x (our 5-2 fit). Judith timed the hand perfectly and a small misstep by one of the opponents allowed her to rack up +550 for a 12-IMP gain. We outscored the opponents by 76 IMPs which translated in a 25-0 VP win. The second match was against a French team. It finished as a 19-11 win for us with few IMPs being exchanged.

At this juncture our team stood alone in 1st place, 23 VPs ahead of the team in 9th. We began to contemplate the possibility of not just qualifying, but finishing high enough to have some choice of opponents in the KOs. The WBF rules specified that 1st place could choose its quarter-final opponent

from among the 5th to 8th place finishers; 2nd place could choose from among the remaining 5th to 8th place finishers and so forth.

By virtue of our round robin success to this point, we "earned" the right to play Zia's team which, having dropped in at the start of the day, had posted a big win to jump into 3rd. Zia Mahmood and Ralph Katz were playing with two members of the Swedish Women's team. The first board was a push at +140 for making 3♠. On the second board, a preempt by Zia propelled Judith/Nicholas into 3NT.

Dealer: East N/S Vulnerable Lead: ♣5

♠ Q98 ♥ K73 ♦ Q987 ♣ KQJ		♠ -- ♥ Q985 ♦ J102 ♣ A108752	♠ AJ76543 ♥ 42 ♦ K ♣ 964
♠ K102 ♥ AJ106 ♦ A6543 ♣ 3			

	NicholasG		JudithG
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	Pass	1♦ ¹
3♠	3NT	All Pass	

¹ Could be short


Nicholas won the opening club lead and decided to play one round of diamonds before reverting to spades (hoping to make two clubs, two spades, one diamond and four hearts). When the ♦K fell he decided to clear diamonds. East won (partner having thrown an encouraging spade) and continued with another low club. Declarer cashed a round of diamonds (on which East threw the ♣2 and West another spade). Decision time: if East had Qxx(x) of hearts, it was simply a matter of playing a low heart to the Jack and claiming. However, it was no certainty that the ♥Q was with East. Finally Nicholas decided to exit his last club. Once East had taken her tricks she was forced to lead hearts. +600 was a push when at the other table declarer guessed how to play hearts.

On the third board Judith brought home a 3NT contract that was defeated in the other room. Then Judith held: ♠KQ853 ♥Q1095 ♦K1052 ♣--. Zia (her LHO) opened 1♦. The auction proceeded as follows:

<u>LHO</u>	<u>RHO</u>
1♦	1♠
2♦	2♥
3♥	4♠

On their side of the screen, Zia passed before Judith could double, but that didn't stop her. She applied the red card, he shrugged and she led the $\heartsuit 10$. Pity poor declarer who played the $\heartsuit A$ and ran the $\heartsuit Q$ pitching a heart, a play which maximized the tricks for the defense. +800 combined with +600 (Hazel/Darren played in 3NT and with careful play scored nine tricks) put another 16 IMPs on our side of the scorecard. The four hands were:

Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable

<p>\spadesuit 64 \heartsuit 74 \diamondsuit 76 \clubsuit KJ107653</p>	<p>\spadesuit -- \heartsuit J832 \diamondsuit AQJ983 \clubsuit Q84</p>		<p>\spadesuit AJ10972 \heartsuit AK6 \diamondsuit 4 \clubsuit A92</p>
	<p>\spadesuit KQ853 \heartsuit Q1095 \diamondsuit K1052 \clubsuit --</p>		

On Board 5 Judith found the only lead to beat an aggressive game bid by Zia's side. With five boards remaining most of the kibitzers abandoned our table. We won the match by 25 IMPs, giving us a 22-8 win and seriously jeopardizing Zia's prospects for making the KOs.

Still sitting in 1st place, our fourth match of the day was against Rossard (in 3rd place), an American-French-Polish combination. Our main gain was an aggressive vulnerable game bid and made by Hazel/Darren while Linda/Daniel outmuscled their opponents and scored a small minus. This win clinched a playoff berth for us. We were now in the position of trying to retain 1st place and maximizing our control over whom we played the next day.

The last round featured the following matchups:

Canada (1 st - 268)	vs	Ventin (3 rd - 246)	
Milner (2 nd - 258)	vs	Birman (6 th /7 th - 239)	
Rossard (4 th - 243)	vs	Zia (8 th /9 th - 238)	
Yeh Bros (5 th - 240)	vs	Latvia (6 th /7 th - 239)	
Djarum2 (8 th /9 th - 238)	vs	SAIC Red (10 th /11 th - 236)	

The teams in 3rd through 8th were in a mad scramble to retain their playoff berths. There were 20 teams within 16 VPs of the last qualifying spot. We had a small loss in our last match (14-16) despite the following swing in our favour:

Nicholas declared 4 \spadesuit x on this auction:

NicholasG		JudithG	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1♠	Double	2♠ ¹
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

¹ Weak raise

Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable Lead: ♥A (from East)

♠ AK10976
♥ J
♦ 96
♣ K876



♠ 852
♥ 653
♦ 84
♣ AJ932

West encouraged on the ♥A lead and East continued a second heart. Declarer ruffed and cashed the ♠A (♠J from East, ♠3 from West). It is clear that 4♥ makes if either clubs or spades are 3-1 (or 4-0 in the case of clubs). East had paused for a long time before passing 4♠ so declarer felt confident that the spades were 3-1. The only question was whether or not it was worth risking an additional down trick by trying to make the contract. He finally decided to travel to dummy by playing to the ♣J. It was good news/bad news when East contributed the ♣Q. Was it an honest card (singleton) or an attempt to shut out dummy's club suit. Nicholas decided to back his judgement. He won the ♣A and took the spade finesse. That led to 11 tricks (he was able to pitch one losing diamond on the long club) for +690. This combined with +620 by Linda/Daniel gave us 16 IMPs. The four hands were:

Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable

♠ AK10976
♥ J
♦ 96
♣ K876

♠ Q43
♥ K874
♦ AKJ7
♣ 105



♠ J
♥ AQ1092
♦ Q10532
♣ Q4

♠ 852
♥ 653
♦ 84
♣ AJ932

The rest of the match was not as successful. However, we retained 1st place because Milner could only muster a tie against Birman. There were a number of surprises including the Sprung team which leapt (or should we say, "had sprung") from 17th into a tie for 6th place by blitzing Croatia in its last match. Amazingly this was the first time in three days that the Sprung team had been in a qualifying position - talk about good timing. The final leader board looked as follows:

1	Canada	282
2	Milner	273
3	Ventin	262
4	Rossard	258
5	SAIC Red	257
6	Yeh Bros	256
	Shapour	256
	Sprung	256
9	Birman	254
	Djarum1	254
11	Monafriends	253
	Zia	253
	Austria	253
	Latvia	253
15	Ajdiament	249
16	Djarum2	247
17	Beijing Trinergy	246
18	Barrett	245

Both Djarum1 and Zia suffered big losses to Canada and just barely failed to qualify. By virtue of our 1st place finish we could choose our quarter-final opponent from among SAIC Red, Yeh Bros, Shapour and Sprung. We opted to play Shapour, a French team. Milner picked Sprung and Ventin chose Yeh Bros, leaving SAIC Red to face Rossard.

Quarter-Finals (Close Encounters of the French Kind)

The quarter-finals started the following day and were an easy schedule by Canadian standards - just three segments of 16 boards each. Our opponents were an unknown quantity of "locals".


In the first segment we won 11 IMPs on Board 17 (1st hand of the set) when, against 4♠, the opponents failed to find a ruff negotiated by Linda/Daniel. We lost 9 IMPs when Judith took a 4♠ non-vulnerable sacrifice against a vulnerable 4♥ game. The contract was defeated two tricks for -300. At the other table Linda mistimed the play of a side suit (AQ107 opposite 86432) and went off one for -100, turning an 8-IMP gain into a 9-IMP loss. The segment finished 22-14 in favour of Canada. It was still early in the match, but the team felt that we had made a good choice of opponent.

The second segment started with an 11-IMP gain when Judith/Nicholas played in 3NT with a 4-4 fit in spades, dodging the four inescapable losers in 4♠. On Board 2 we entered another 13 IMPs into the plus column when Hazel/Darren punished the opponents for an injudicious overcall and collected +800. Board 4 saw Hazel, with some assistance from the opponents, scoop a 4♠ contract. When her counterpart failed in 5♣, it was another 12 IMPs for Canada. The match was threatening to become a runaway. However, Shapour gained back 10 IMPs for playing in an iron-clad 3NT when Hazel/Darren

were in 4♠ down one. IMPs were traded back and forth over the last 11 boards. The segment finished 52-18 in favour of Canada which now led by 42 IMPs.


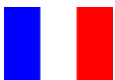
The first eight boards of the last segment added a net of 3 IMPs to Canada's lead. Board 25 (9th of the segment) was the final curtain call for Shapour.



Board 25 Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable



♠ Q43 ♥ AJ83 ♦ KJ43 ♣ J5		♠ 6 ♥ 74 ♦ AQ862 ♣ A8763	♠ 10752 ♥ KQ1092 ♦ 105 ♣ Q4
♠ AKJ98 ♥ 65 ♦ 97 ♣ K1092			



	NicholasG	JudithG	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1NT ¹	2NT ²	Double
3♣	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			
¹ 11-13			
² Minors			

After the lead of the ♣5, the carnage amounted to 800 and another 13 IMPs for Canada extending its lead to 58 IMPs. The match finished with Canada winning 119-44. We were in semi-finals! The quarter-final results for all the matches were:

Team		Segment						
		c/o	1	Total	2	Total	3	Total
	Canada	0	22	22	52	74	45	119
	Shapour	0	14	14	18	32	12	44

Team		c/o	Segment					
			1	Total	2	Total	3	Total
	Rossard	0	23	23	29	52	33	85
	SAIC Red	0	32	32	34	66	44	110

Team		c/o	Segment					
			1	Total	2	Total	3	Total
	Ventin	0	15	15	14	29	14	43
	Yeh Bros	0	26	26	53	79	68	147

Team		c/o	Segment					
			1	Total	2	Total	3	Total
	Milner	0	36	36	28	64	30	94
	Sprung	0	37	37	30	67	15	82


The bracket sheet had been established according to the quarter-final matchups, 1st versus 4th and 2nd versus 3rd. That meant we would oppose SAIC Red while Milner faced Yeh Bros.

Semi-Finals (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon)

The rules of the competition stipulated that, at any of the KO stages, if all teams playing one another had previously met in the round robin, there would be a carryover. Consequently, having met SAIC Red in Round 10 and since Yeh Bros and Milner had played in Round 14, we started the 48-board semi-finals with a carryover of 12 IMPs (one half of the winning margin to a maximum of 12).

SAIC Red was bound to be a tough opponent despite Canada's round robin win. As in the match against Shapour, Canada struck on the first board with a 12-IMP gain.

Board 1 Dealer: North None Vulnerable

♠ -- ♥ AQJ85 ♦ 986 ♣ J10973		♠ A8643 ♥ 97642 ♦ Q ♣ Q8	♠ K109 ♥ K3 ♦ K75 ♣ AK652
♠ QJ752 ♥ 10 ♦ AJ10432 ♣ 4			

	NicholasG		JudithG
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1NT ¹	2♦ ²
3♥	4♠	Double	All Pass

¹ 15-17

² Spades + another suit


		LindaW	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1NT ¹	2♠
3♥	4♠	Double	All Pass

Against Nicholas, East laid down the ♥K, cashed the ♣A and then continued hearts. Declarer ruffed in dummy and played a small spade to his Ace. He continued with the ♦Q, running it when East contributed the ♦5. Next he played a small spade towards the ♠Q East won the ♠K and played the ♣K, ruffed in dummy. Nicholas cashed the ♦A, ruffed a diamond and led to dummy's ♠Q, drawing the last trump in the process. +590.

Wenfei Wang, playing 4♠x from the other side after essentially the same beginning (♣J lead, followed by two rounds of hearts), led the ♠J (instead of small) at trick three. She misanalyzed the subsequent sequence of plays and didn't rise with the ♠A when Daniel showed out. As a result she couldn't both establish diamonds and draw the outstanding trumps.

Canada scored 4 IMPs on Board 2 when Daniel brought home a 1NT contract that failed by a trick at the other table. On the next seven boards SAIC Red shut out Canada with a 14-0 run that included 8 IMPs for staying low in a NT partscore. Then on Board 10:

Board 10 Dealer: East All Vulnerable Lead: ♦10

♠ A864 ♥ K52 ♦ AKQ7 ♣ AJ		♠ J10975 ♥ 1093 ♦ 10 ♣ Q865
♠ -- ♥ AJ8 ♦ J865432 ♣ K93		♠ KQ32 ♥ Q764 ♦ 9 ♣ 10742

West	North	East	South
--	--	Pass	Pass
3♦	3NT	All Pass	

Both Daniel and Jianming Dai fearlessly preempted 3♦ vulnerable in third seat, leading to the same contract and lead. Nicholas played a spade to the ♠K and discovered the 5-0 break. He now played on hearts and was able to set up the thirteenth heart for his ninth trick. Zejun Zhuang decided to cash a second diamond before playing spades. Presumably he wanted to extract any remaining diamond exit cards from East; however, given the vulnerability and lack of honour cards it seems impossible that West could have only six diamonds for his preempt. With West having two heart entries, that allowed the defence to get the diamonds going before declarer could arrange for 9 tricks -- 12 IMPs to Canada.

SAIC Red recovered 6 IMPs for bidding a cold non-vulnerable game. Then, with everyone vulnerable, Daniel held: ♠K1096 ♥KJ1064 ♦A5 ♣K3 and heard the following auction

DanielK	LindaW
West	South
--	Double
4♥	4♠
5♥	Double
?	


¹ Hearts and a minor

Daniel did what any red-blooded Canadian would do -- he put out the blue card (xx). His opponents squirmed for a bit, but decided to sit it out. Linda's hand was a major disappointment (♠3 ♥Q87532 ♦10 ♣QJ854) so Daniel had to concede -400 for his efforts. At the other table the auction was considerably different:

West	NicholasG	East	JudithG
West	North	East	South
--	1♠	Pass	2♠
3♥	4♠	5♥	Double
All Pass			

The four hands were:

Board 13 Dealer: North All Vulnerable


<p>♠ AQ842 ♥ -- ♦ Q9632 ♣ A62</p>		<p>♠ 3 ♥ Q87532 ♦ 10 ♣ QJ854</p>	<p>♠ J75 ♥ A9 ♦ KJ874 ♣ 1097</p>
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That was a 5-IMP pick-up for SAIC Red.

On the penultimate board Canada gained 5 IMPs for defeating a partscore that was one level too high. The segment finished 33-29 in favour of Canada. Including the carryover, Canada led by 16 IMPs. We would have been in big trouble had it been Board-A-Match (the opponents had outscored us eight boards to our four), but, as it was, we were well aware that we had just begun a close contest.

In Segment 2, Board 17 (the first one of the set) had the potential for a big swing.

Board 17 Dealer: North None Vulnerable

<p>♠ K864 ♥ Q1064 ♦ 9874 ♣ 2</p>		<p>♠ A5 ♥ 875 ♦ A32 ♣ KQ1065</p>	<p>♠ Q9732 ♥ AKJ93 ♦ 6 ♣ J3</p>
--	---	--	---

	NicholasG	JudithG	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1♣	2♣ ¹
2♥	4♠	Double	All Pass

¹ Majors

DarrenW		HazelW	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1♣	2♣ ¹
3♦	4♥	5♦	Pass
Pass	5♥	All Pass	

¹ Majors

East/West can make 6♣ or 6♦, but sold out to 4♠x at one table and 5♥ undoubled at the other. Nicholas had an opportunity to make the contract, but, when West's ♠10 came up on the first round of trumps, he applied the rule of restricted choice on the next round. With spades breaking 2-2 instead of 3-1, he was -100. 5♥ was down off the top but SAIC Red won 2 IMPs when they might have lost 12.

The second segment followed the pattern of the first. SAIC Red nibbled away at our lead, outscoring Canada six boards to three. But we recorded the biggest gain (12 IMPs) when Hazel/Darren played in 3NT making while their counterparts landed in an inferior 5♣. That contract, though makeable, was tricky and the defense was letter-perfect, leading to one down.

Judith/Nicholas uncharacteristically missed a cold non-vulnerable game (lose 6) and botched the defense to a partscore collecting 100 instead of 300 (lose 5).

The segment finished 23-18 in favour of SAIC Red. Canada's lead was down to 11 IMPs with 16 boards remaining.

In the final segment Canada had seating rights (the opponents had to submit their line-up first and then Canada could decide how to position its pairs). Although SAIC Red had three pairs, their NPC had been playing only the top two, one of which played a strong club system (Precision). For the first two segments Judith/Nicholas (also playing Precision) had played in the same direction as their Precision counterparts. For the final segment, Canada decided to change things up and sent Judith/Nicholas in against the SAIC Red Precision pair. This would seem to be a controversial choice by the leading team (and one that several outsiders cautioned against), but our gut feeling was that a switch would be beneficial.

On Board 1, the first board of the last segment, SAIC Red scored an overtrick IMP in 3NT.

Then came this wild board, loaded with excitement. RHO opened a strong 1♣ and, at favourable vulnerability, Nicholas held ♠AQJ9642 ♥-- ♦105432 ♣10. The Achilles heel of most strong club systems is coping with high-level preempts after the wide-range artificial club opening. Nicholas chose to preempt only 3♠ for several reasons:

- it looked like suits were not breaking normally
- bidding 4♠ might propel the opponents into a slam they would not usually bid
- the ♠A represented a reasonable prospect for a defensive trick
- if partner had a spade fit, she would act given the favourable vulnerability

The auction proceeded thusly:

NicholasG		JudithG	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	Pass	1♣ ¹
3♠	4♥	Pass	5♥
Pass	5NT	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

¹ Strong, forcing, artificial

North's 5NT showed possession of the ♠K and South carried on to the small slam. After an initial spade lead, declarer ended up two down. The four hands were:

Board 2 Dealer: East N/S Vulnerable


	♠ K8		
	♥ 1098632		
	♦ KQ98		
	♣ 8		
♠ AQJ9642		♠ 105	
♥ --		♥ QJ54	
♦ 105432		♦ 76	
♣ 10		♣ J9654	
	♠ 73		
	♥ AK7		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ AKQ732		

At the other table, Hazel started with 2♣ strong. West preempted to 4♠ and when N/S were about to settle in 6♥, he unilaterally "saved" in 6♣. Hazel/Darren extracted the maximum possible when, after the club lead, declarer lazily ruffed the next round of the suit with the ♠6. Darren was able to overruff cheaply. Each time Hazel was put on lead with a diamond, she led back trumps, Darren scoring his ♠K when declarer ducked the first time. That prevented any diamond ruffs in dummy and the defense collected one club, four diamonds and two spades for +1400. Canada picked up a massive 17 IMPs. It is noteworthy that in the other semi-final match this board was a push when both Wests competed to 5♠ and went four down doubled for -800. In the Open, Women's and Seniors' Finals and Playoffs, all but one of 12 N/S pairs went minus on the board when left to struggle in their own high-level contract. The other, too, collected 800 for 5♠x.

On the next two boards, Canada picked up 3 IMPs when Hazel/Darren defeated a vulnerable game two tricks and a further 5 IMPs when Judith/Nicholas played in 2♥ making four on a hand that was passed out at the other table. Canada had outscored SAIC Red 26-2 on the first eight boards and were threatening to close out the match, leading by 35.

But SAIC Red showed that it still had some fight.

Board 9 Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable

	♠ KJ53		
	♥ A964		
	♦ 83		
	♣ 1032		
♠ AQ10982 ♥ -- ♦ J975 ♣ A64		♠ 6 ♥ KQJ1053 ♦ AK1064 ♣ 8	
	♠ 74		
	♥ 872		
	♦ Q2		
	♣ KQJ975		

NicholasG	JudithG		
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1♥	3♣
3♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

	DarrenW		HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	Pass	1♥	3♣
3♠	5♣	5♦	Pass
6♦	Double	All Pass	

Judith/Nicholas landed in the worst spot after Judith failed to mention her second suit (both 4♥ and 5♦ are much better contracts).


4♠ is a more interesting play problem if South has three spades and one diamond. Declarer wins the club lead and ruffs a club. He then leads the ♥K pitching his last club (second-hand South is compelled to give true count in this situation). North wins and switches to diamonds. Now declarer pitches two diamonds on the ♥Q and ♥J and leads the ♥10. If South ruffs, West overruffs and leads ♠A and ♠Q (South has no more spades and therefore cannot ruff the second round of diamonds). If South pitches West discards his last diamond and leads a diamond from the board. There is no possibility for the defense to score enough tricks to defeat the contract.

On the actual layout, Nicholas had no trouble holding his losers to three, two trumps plus the ♥A.

Darren's enterprising 5♣ bid propelled his opponents into a slam that he doubled. Wenfei Wang won the ♠7 lead and played the ♠Q pitching a heart from hand. When this held she cashed two diamonds and, seeing the ♦Q come down, she was able to claim 12 tricks. +1540 put 14 IMPs on SAIC Red's side of the card, narrowing Canada's lead to 21 with seven boards remaining.

Board 10 was another distributional minefield:

Board 10 Dealer: East All Vulnerable

♠ -- ♥ 853 ♦ 1098732 ♣ A1064		♠ 754 ♥ 104 ♦ AJ4 ♣ QJ873	♠ Q106 ♥ KQ9 ♦ KQ65 ♣ K92
		♠ AKJ9832 ♥ AJ762 ♦ -- ♣ 5	

At our table Judith (East) started with a catchall 1♦ (potentially a void) and Wenfei Wang leapt to 4♠, ending the auction. At the other table:

	DarrenW		HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	1NT ¹	4♠
5♦	5♠	Double	All Pass

¹ 15-17

Darren made a great bid of 5♠ despite good prospects for two trump tricks. The lead was the ♦10 and Hazel pitched her club loser. She then proceeded to wrap up 12 tricks for +1050 and 9 IMPs back to Canada.

Hazel/Darren put the match out of reach when they bid to 6♠ with ♠AKQ106 ♥6 ♦Q763 ♣863 opposite ♠J953 ♥A1074 ♦-- ♣AKJ92, a slam missed at the other table.

Canada had outscored SAIC Red 47-17 in the third segment to move on to the finals. The closing tally, 110-69, appears far more comfortable than it actually was.

In the other semi-final Milner entered the final segment leading by 9 IMPs and held off the Yeh Bros to win 77-66. It would be an 80-board match between Canada and Milner for the gold medal.

Finals (Casino Royale)


Milner (Reese Milner, Gabriella Olivieri, Jacek Pszczola, Meike Wortel, Hemant Lall, Petra Hamman) began the match with a 5.33 IMP carryover from the round robin (since Canada had finished higher than Milner in the round robin, they were entitled to only one-third of the IMP spread). The fractional bit guaranteed that overtime play would be unnecessary.

Throughout the match, both teams demonstrated a ready willingness to make high-stake bets in order to secure a victory. This time, Milner jump started on the first board, adding 11 IMPs to its lead when 3NT was declared from opposite sides and the lead determined the outcome.

Those IMPs came right back when Linda/Daniel arrived in a superior 3NT contract while Hamman/Lall played 5♣ down one. On Board 19 (third board of the segment) Milner bought the contract at both tables, scoring 2 IMPs for their efforts.

Board 20 saw aggressive bidding by Lall to reach a vulnerable game. Now he had to make it. At the other table, Linda/Daniel had rested in 3♠, just making.

Board 20 Dealer: West All Vulnerable

	♠ 105		
	♥ A96		
	♦ AQ98		
	♣ AJ105		
♠ AK632		♠ QJ4	
♥ K1072		♥ QJ4	
♦ --		♦ J1063	
♣ KQ42		♣ 763	
	♠ 987		
	♥ 853		
	♦ K7542		
	♣ 98		

Lall	NicholasG	Hamman	JudithG
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♠	Double	2♥ ¹	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

¹ Raise to 2♠

Nicholas led a trump. Lall won in dummy to play a club to his ♣K. Had Nicholas ducked, the defense could prevail. Declarer has to take care of his fourth club somehow. If he plays a heart to dummy's ♥Q for another club play, South can discard a heart on the third round of clubs and score a heart ruff for one down. If declarer exits a low club, South can win and play hearts herself, setting up the ruff when North gets in on the third round of clubs.

In practice, Nicholas won the ♣A and continued spades. Lall won in hand and played ♣Q and another club to North's ♣10 (South pitching an encouraging diamond). Nicholas led the ♦8, hoping to get his partner in for a third round of trumps, but it was not to be. Declarer ruffed, ruffed his losing club with dummy's ♠J and played a heart to his ♥10. There was no way to defeat the contract at that point, and Milner chalked up another gain of 10 to lead by 17.3 IMPs.

The next board was a push. Then Nicholas held ♠AQ875 ♥107 ♦Q2 ♣J654. LHO opened 1♥, partner overcalled 1♠ and RHO leaped to 6♥. At favourable vulnerability he chose to bid 6♠ which was doubled to end the auction. Incredibly the contract failed by only one trick. Partner's hand was ♠KJ6432 ♥6 ♦K108743 ♣--. The opponents can make 13 tricks in hearts on any lead. This turned out to be a push as well. In the playoff match for the bronze medal there was also a push, but in 7♠x. Just for fun, we checked the results from the other 12 times this board was played, in the Open, Women's and Seniors' Final and Bronze Medal matches. Sweden (+20 IMPs) and France (+18 IMPs) were the big winners. In the Women's matches, the final between England and Russia pushed at 6♠x, while the


Polish women won 5 IMPs for pushing their French opponents to 7♠x. The Open bronze medal match (Ireland vs Monaco) was a push at 7♠x. In the Final between Sweden and Poland, the Swedish N/S had only to save at the 6 level, losing 100. It mattered little, as their partners bought the hand for 7♥x and a huge +2470. For the seniors, the two finalists (USA and Hungary) pushed the board at 7♠x. There was another "wow" result in the bronze medal match between France and Sweden, however. The Swedish N/S bought the hand for 6♠x, again losing just 100. Their partners however, having shown first round spade control in their auction to 7♥, were not about to settle for a small plus defending 7♠. 7NT, they bid defiantly, which brought a happy double. The lead was the ♠A and -1700 when the dust settled was worth 18 IMPs for France.

On Board 23 Hamman/Lall overstretched and went two down in a vulnerable game. Linda/Daniel played a quiet partscore for +140 and 8 IMPs to Canada. Then on two consecutive hands Hamman/Lall put up a soft defense, beating a game contract only one trick and allowing a partscore to make. Canada gained 8 IMPs. Milner's lead was down to 1.3 IMPs.


On Board 28, E/W were cold for game on a mere 17 HCP. Judith/Nicholas decided to teach Hamman/Lall a sharp lesson with a power double and were -690 for their efforts. Fortunately Linda/Daniel also bid the game (and made the same 11 tricks) holding the loss to 6 IMPs.

On Board 29, Nicholas bought the contract with his 11-13 1NT opening. Although the opponents had 24 HCP, they neither bid nor maximized their tricks on defense, allowing declarer to escape for down one. At the other table, Linda/Daniel arrived in the heart game on the following layout:

Board 29 Dealer: North All Vulnerable

♠ KQ73 ♥ AJ6 ♦ 1054 ♣ J108		♠ 106 ♥ 742 ♦ Q82 ♣ AK943
♠ AJ5 ♥ Q10985 ♦ AKJ3 ♣ 6		♠ 9842 ♥ K3 ♦ 976 ♣ Q752

North (Pszczola) led the ♠K. In theory, on that lead, the limit of the hand for E/W is nine tricks, but Daniel managed to take ten. He won the ♠A, crossed to dummy with a club and led a trump to the ♥10 and ♥J. Not seeing any rush to cash his spade winner, Pszczola exited a diamond. Declarer won the ♦Q, shed a spade on the other top club and played two more rounds of diamonds. This was the situation when he led his last diamond.


<p>♠ Q73 ♥ A6 ♦ -- ♣ J</p>		<p>♠ 10 ♥ 74 ♦ -- ♣ 943</p>
<p>♠ J ♥ Q985 ♦ J ♣ --</p>		<p>♠ 984 ♥ K ♦ -- ♣ Q7</p>

Daniel discarded dummy's last spade on ♦J. No matter which defender trumped, there would be only one more trick to lose, as declarer could ruff his last spade in dummy. If North ruffed low, the top trumps would collide; if South ruffed with the ♥K, only the ♥A would score. Making 4♥ gave Canada 11 IMPs and the lead.

Over the last three boards, Milner finished strongly, securing an extra undertrick defending 3♥ and then generating a double partscore swing. They retook the lead with their well-earned 7 IMP pick-up. The segment had finished 38-36 in favour of Canada and Milner's lead stood at 3.3 IMPs.

Board 1 of Segment 2 started with 5 IMPs going to Milner when Judith/Nicholas bid a game contract on an unlikely finesse that, indeed, failed to materialize. Most of those IMPs came back on Board 2:

Board 2 Dealer: East N/S Vulnerable

<p>♠ 543 ♥ KJ975 ♦ AQ63 ♣ J</p>		<p>♠ A107 ♥ 10864 ♦ KJ87 ♣ AQ</p>
<p>♠ QJ98 ♥ AQ2 ♦ 10942 ♣ 65</p>		<p>♠ K62 ♥ 3 ♦ 5 ♣ K10987432</p>

NicholasG	Milner	JudithG	Olivieri
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	1♦ ¹	3♣
Double	Pass	3♥	All Pass

¹ Could be short

Pszczola	DanielK	Wortel	LindaW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	1♦	3♣
Double	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Against 3♥ Olivieri led the ♥3. Judith played low and managed to scramble for seven tricks, -100.


Against 3NT Linda also led the ♥3! Wortel stuck in the ♥Q, won by Daniel with the ♥K. He returned the ♣J. When Wortel played the ♣Q, Linda won and cleared clubs. Wortel now played a heart to dummy's ♥A and advanced ♦10. Daniel hopped up with the ♦A and exited a spade. Wortel had no choice but to finesse and Linda was now able to run her club suit. Five down for +250 and 4 IMPs to Canada.

Another 7 IMPs went Canada's way when both Canadian pairs made partscores.

Then ... on Board 4 Wortel/Pszczola bid an aggressive game that needed trumps 2-2, a spade lead to provide declarer with a quick entry to dummy as soon as needed, plus the ♦A onside. All of the above transpired and Milner scored plus +620 versus +140 by Judith/Nicholas to haul in 10 IMPs.

Board 5 was a 4-IMP pickup for Canada when Judith/Nicholas played in 2♦, making +110 when their counterparts stretched to a makeable 3NT which, thankfully, drifted down one. Then another big swing:

Board 7 Dealer: South All Vulnerable

♠ J9532		
♥ J		
♦ QJ986		
♣ 85		
♠ K7		♠ 864
♥ Q8743		♥ 10965
♦ A5		♦ K103
♣ J762		♣ K93
♠ AQ10		
♥ AK2		
♦ 742		
♣ AQ104		

Pszczola	DanielK	Wortel	LindaW
NicholasG	Milner	JudithG	Olivieri
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	--	1♣
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			


Both Easts led hearts. The hand hinged on holding the pointed suit losers to three. Milner found the successful line by playing Ace and Queen of spades, thus winning 12 IMPs for his team. Daniel opted

to start on diamonds, willing to concede a diamond ruff if the defense could negotiate it. If that happened, he had the spade finesse to fall back on. Alas, nothing good transpired and he was one down.

Thus far, Milner had outscored Canada 27-15 and had upped their lead to 15.3 IMPs.

On Board 8 Linda/Daniel played a sedate 1NT, making eight tricks. In the other room Olivieri/Milner had Judith/Nicholas on the ropes, but failed to capitalize.

Board 8 Dealer: West None Vulnerable

<p>♠ AJ98 ♥ J2 ♦ AQ43 ♣ A32</p>		<p>♠ K1032 ♥ 543 ♦ K762 ♣ J9</p>	
<p>♠ Q65 ♥ AK97 ♦ 95 ♣ Q1054</p>			
		<p>♠ 74 ♥ Q1086 ♦ J108 ♣ K876</p>	

NicholasG	Milner	JudithG	Olivieri
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1NT ¹	Double	Redouble ²	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

¹ 11-13


² ♣ + a major OR ♦ + ♠

When Milner doubled 1NT, Judith/Nicholas were in trouble. However neither defender was able to make a penalty double of 2♣, and perhaps it was just as well. Milner started with the ♥J won with declarer's Ace. Nicholas led the ♣5 to dummy's ♣J and Olivieri's ♣K. She returned a heart which declarer won with the ♥K. Declarer now led a diamond to the ♦K and a low diamond, won by Olivieri's ♦10. When Olivieri cashed the ♥Q, Milner pitched the ♦Q. Olivier continued with the ♠4, declarer playing the ♠2 Milner won the ♠A, cashed the ♣A and returned a club. Declarer discarded the last diamond from dummy as he won the ♣Q. He cashed the ♠Q and in the two-card ending the dummy had ♠K10 sitting over Milner's ♠J9. Two spades making combined with +120 in the other room meant 6 IMPs for Canada.

Milner slammed Canada for another 10 IMPs when Judith/Nicholas had a systemic miscue and played a game contract in a partscore. Milner's lead had increased to 19.3 IMPs, but the rest of the segment was all Canada. Canada started their run on Board 11, gaining 2 IMPs for making +110 in 2♦ while giving up only -50 in 3♠. Board 12 was a routine partscore push.

Board 13 was the first of Canada's three major swings late in the segment:

Board 13 Dealer: North All Vulnerable


♠ QJ10		
♥ KQ2		
♦ KJ106		
♣ AK8		
♠ 65432		♠ K987
♥ J5		♥ 10973
♦ Q95432		♦ A
♣ --		♣ 6432
		♠ A
	♥ A864	
	♦ 87	
	♣ QJ10975	

After both Norths opened 1♦, the auctions diverged. Olivieri/Milner reached 5♣ and took 11 tricks on the diamond misguess. Linda/Daniel reached slam, but 6NT rather than 6♣! When East was unable to find the spade lead, Daniel finessed for the ♦Q and breathed a sigh of relief. +1440 put 13 IMPs on Canada's scorecard.

On Board 14 both East-West pairs played in an unmakeable 3NT. The opposition have six easy tricks on lead, but one of those tricks went missing when Judith/Nicholas declared -- 2 IMPs to Canada.

Board 15 demonstrated the value of aggressive bidding.


Board 15 Dealer: South N/S Vulnerable

♠ K1083		
♥ 4		
♦ AJ9632		
♣ J6		
♠ AQJ9742		♠ 65
♥ K532		♥ QJ87
♦ 8		♦ Q
♣ 3		♣ AQ10852
		♠ --
	♥ A1096	
	♦ K10754	
	♣ K974	

At one table Judith/Nicholas were allowed to play in 2♠, comfortably making nine tricks. At the other table Linda/Daniel entered the auction, reaching their cold 5♦ contract. Wortel/Pszczola had little choice but to save in 5♠, where they were doubled and gave up -500. This translated into 12 IMPs for Canada, now in the lead by 9.7 IMPs.

The last board of the segment showcased aggressive bidding yet again and well-timed declarer play by Judith.

Board 16 Dealer: South N/S Vulnerable

	♠ 43		
	♥ AQJ32		
	♦ Q9764		
	♣ Q		
♠ AQJ9 ♥ 108 ♦ 10853 ♣ K98		♠ K1076 ♥ K94 ♦ J ♣ A7642	
	♠ 852		
	♥ 765		
	♦ AK2		
	♣ J1053		

NicholasG	Milner	JudithG	Olivieri
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Double	Pass	4♠	All Pass

In the closed room, Wortel/Pszczola played in 2♠, making nine tricks. At this table the stakes were considerably higher. Olivieri started proceedings with the ♦A and switched to hearts. Milner won the ♥A and returned a low diamond, ruffed by declarer. Judith played a club to the ♣K and a low club on which Milner discarded a heart. Declarer won the ♣A and played a third round. Olivieri switched to spades after winning the ♣10. At this point Judith was in control, able to score 10 tricks on the ensuing high crossruff. +620 put another 10 IMPs on Canada's side of the scorecard. Canada had outscored Milner 39-0 on the last six boards and led 122-104.3.

In the third segment Canada notched 4 IMPs on Board 17 (first board of the segment) when Wortel/Pszczola were forced to the three level by Hazel/Darren in a partscore battle. Judith/Nicholas were allowed to play 2♠ just making. Two of those IMPs went back when Judith/Nicholas ended up in 3NT, down two off the top while Wortel/Pszczola were in 4♦ down one. Then Lall engineered a 12-IMP pickup for Milner.

Board 19 Dealer: South E/W Vulnerable

♠ KQ106
♥ QJ7
♦ 1084
♣ J96

♠ J87
♥ 10
♦ AKQ9763
♣ K10



♠ 953
♥ AK9654
♦ --
♣ A753

♠ A42
♥ 832
♦ J52
♣ Q842

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♦ ¹	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♦	All Pass		

¹ Could be short

Lall's 1♠ overcall steered Judith/Nicholas to the doomed 5♦ contract. At the other table Wortel/Pszczola arrived in 3NT, making nine tricks. Another 5 IMPs went to Milner when Hazel/Darren let 2♥ slip through. Canada's lead had been whittled down to 2.7 IMPs. On Board 23 Canada bought the contract at both tables.

Board 23 Dealer: South All Vulnerable

♠ QJ10862
♥ K64
♦ Q
♣ K65

♠ 7
♥ AJ83
♦ A62
♣ J10932



♠ AK9
♥ 10975
♦ J543
♣ A7


♠ 543
♥ Q2
♦ K10987
♣ Q84

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Double	Redouble!	4♥	All Pass

In the Closed Room Darren played in 3♠, one off. In the Open Room, Judith blew aside Lall's psychic redouble and jumped to game. Hamman led a spade, which Judith won to lead the ♥9 to Lall's ♥K. Lall returned the ♦Q. Declarer won the ♦A, led a club to her ♣A, cashed the ♠A pitching a diamond from dummy and exited a club. Lall won the ♣K and played a high spade, ruffed in the dummy. Judith ruffed a club and led a trump up. When Hamman's ♥Q popped, it was a simple matter to draw the last trump and claim 10 tricks for +620 for a much-needed 11 IMPs to Canada.

On Board 24 Milner gained 5 IMPs when Hamman/Lall had a lucky accident and stayed out of game. Over the next seven boards Milner outscored Canada 2-1. Canada's lead was down to 7.7 IMPs. On the last board of the segment a systemic 1NT bid by Judith/Nicholas and two incredible penalty passes by Lall set the stage for what looked like a major gain for Milner.

Board 32 Dealer: West E/W Vulnerable

		♠ 10853
		♥ J87
		♦ Q1053
		♣ 43
♠ KJ9		♠ 642
♥ 109432		♥ K65
♦ A4		♦ J82
♣ AJ8		♣ 10752
		♠ AQ7
	♥ AQ	
	♦ K976	
	♣ KQ96	

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1NT ¹	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass!	Redouble ²	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass!!	Pass	

¹ 11-13


² Two suits, not ♥ + ♠

Only Lall can explain his passes, but he was right in both cases. It looked like Judith/Nicholas were in deep trouble. Lall started with the ♣4 to the ♣Q and declarer's ♣A. Nicholas ran the ♥9 to Hamman's ♥Q. Hamman cashed the ♠A, and seeing Lall's encouraging ♠8, she cashed the ♥A and continued with a low spade. Declarer was still in damage-control mode, but felt fairly confident that Hamman's sequence of plays was inconsistent with holding only the ♠A. Therefore, he stuck in the ♠J on the low spade continuation. When that held, declarer continued with the ♣8 to dummy's ♣10 and Hamman's ♣K (much to declarer's surprise). Hamman returned her last spade to declarer's ♠K. At that point, since

declarer's $\heartsuit A$ was still intact, the contract could no longer be defeated. When declarer cashed the $\clubsuit J$ and played a heart to the $\heartsuit K$, Hamman chose to ruff and suddenly $2\clubsuit x$ had made for +180! If she had declined to ruff, declarer would have exited a club (pitching his losing diamond) and Hamman, with only diamonds left, would have to yield the rest of the tricks. Meanwhile, Hazel/Darren had played a quiet spade partial for +140. That was 8 IMPs for Canada when it could easily have been 12 IMPs to Milner. The day finished with Canada leading Milner 122-104.3. The next day two 16-board segments would conclude the final.

Segment 4 started well for Canada.

Board 1 Dealer: North None Vulnerable

\spadesuit 10 \heartsuit KQ84 \diamondsuit AK5 \clubsuit Q10643		\spadesuit AK94 \heartsuit 965 \diamondsuit 1087 \clubsuit J95	\spadesuit J86532 \heartsuit 32 \diamondsuit J43 \clubsuit 82
--	---	---	--


NicholasG	Pszczola	JudithG	Wortel
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1 \clubsuit	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	1 \spadesuit	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Milner	DarrenW	Olivieri	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1 \clubsuit	Pass	2 \spadesuit
Double	Pass	2NT	Pass
3 \diamondsuit	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Against 3NT Pszczola led the $\clubsuit 4$. Declarer won with dummy's $\clubsuit J$ and ran the $\diamondsuit 7$ to North's King. North switched to the $\heartsuit K$ and that was it for the defense. At the other table Hazel was on lead and started with the $\clubsuit 8$. Olivieri won with dummy's Ace and cashed the $\spadesuit Q$ and the $\spadesuit K$ (North pitching a heart on the second spade). Declarer decided to develop hearts and played the $\heartsuit 5$ to dummy's ten and North's Queen. North returned a club, declarer's $\clubsuit J$ winning. Olivieri continued hearts. Darren won the $\heartsuit K$ and cleared clubs. The defense had set up its tricks before declarer could scramble nine tricks. Had Olivieri decided to develop diamonds, she would have succeeded. Assuming North wins the first diamond and exits the $\clubsuit Q$ (to deny an easy entry to the East hand) declarer would have no choice but to play a third round of clubs (to get to her hand), cash the $\spadesuit A$ and then play a second diamond. North could take two diamond tricks and two club tricks, but would then have to concede the rest of the tricks.

The next four boards saw Canada pick up 2 IMPs for an extra undertrick in 3NT plus 1 IMP for an overtrick. Board 6 could have been a large pickup for Milner, but ended up generating IMPs for Canada.

Board 6 Dealer: East E/W Vulnerable

<p>♠ AKJ7632 ♥ Q10 ♦ KQ2 ♣ 8</p>		<p>♠ 985 ♥ AJ98752 ♦ 5 ♣ 95</p>	<p>♠ 4 ♥ K3 ♦ A73 ♣ AQJ6432</p>
<p>♠ Q10 ♥ 64 ♦ J109864 ♣ K107</p>			

NicholasG	Pszczola	JudithG	Wortel
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	2♥	Pass
3♣	4♠	All Pass	

Milner	DarrenW	Olivieri	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	Pass	Pass
1♣	4♠	5♥	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

At unfavourable vulnerability Judith opened 2♥ in first seat. Pszczola's jump to 4♠ bought the contract. Judith led the ♥A and continued with a suit-preference ♥9. Nicholas won the second heart and played ♦A and ♦3. As a result Judith collected two ruffs and the contract was defeated three tricks for +150. The auction at the other table was unusual to say the least. After not opening in first seat Olivieri decided to bid 5♥ over Darren's 4♠ bid. Had Milner raised to 6♥ rather than bidding 6♣ there was no defense to beat the slam. Instead, 6♣ drifted off two for -200 and 8 IMPs to Canada. The lead was now 38.3 IMPs in favour of Canada. Alas this turned out to be the high point of the match for Canada. The rest of the segment was all Milner.

Milner recovered the 8 IMPs on the very next board.

Board 7 Dealer: South All Vulnerable

♠ A72
♥ A8732
♦ J43
♣ 107

♠ J
♥ 1094
♦ AKQ92
♣ AKQ8



♠ 10854
♥ J
♦ 10876
♣ 9643

♠ KQ963
♥ KQ65
♦ 5
♣ J52

NicholasG	Pszczola	JudithG	Wortel
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	--	1♠
Double	2♥ ¹	Pass	2♠
Double	Redouble	2NT ²	Pass
3♦	3♥	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

¹ Spade raise


² Two places to play

Milner	DarrenW	Olivieri	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	--	1♠
Double	2♥ ¹	Pass	2♠
3♠	Pass	4♣	All Pass

¹ Spade raise

In the Open Room Nicholas knew that Judith had no points plus there was some risk that the opponents fit well in both majors. Bidding 4♦ (or 4♣) might push the opponents into a making game so he passed 3♠. In the Closed Room, Milner's 3♠ bid had everyone guessing. The end result was a double partscore swing giving 8 IMPs to Milner. After winning an overtrick IMP, Milner picked up another major gain.

Board 9 Dealer: North E/W Vulnerable

♠ A62 ♥ KQ104 ♦ Q76 ♣ Q73		♠ 10985 ♥ 985 ♦ KJ32 ♣ 82	♠ KQ43 ♥ A762 ♦ A104 ♣ 106
♠ J7 ♥ J3 ♦ 985 ♣ AKJ954			


NicholasG	Pszczola	JudithG	Wortel
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1♦	Pass	3♣ ¹
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

¹ Natural and invitational

Milner	DarrenW	Olivieri	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	1♦	--	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

In the Closed Room West was on lead against 3NT. He started with the ♥K which Hazel ducked. That allowed Milner to switch to diamonds. When he won the ♣Q, the defense had six tricks. In the Open Room Judith led the ♠10. Nicholas erred by winning the ♠A and switching to the ♥K, ducked by Pszczola, Judith following with the ♥9. Had Nicholas switched to diamonds he too would have defeated the contract, but he continued with the ♥Q. Pszczola won the ♥A and finessed in clubs, eventually making nine tricks when his ♥7 grew up as a fourth round stopper. +100 and +400 amounted to 11 IMPs for Milner. The next four boards saw Milner add another 2 IMPs to its total. Then ...

Board 14 Dealer: East None Vulnerable

♠ 642 ♥ Q10843 ♦ Q108 ♣ J8		♠ A987 ♥ J97 ♦ K6 ♣ K742	♠ KJ5 ♥ 6 ♦ AJ9743 ♣ 653
		♠ Q103 ♥ AK52 ♦ 52 ♣ AQ109	


NicholasG	Pszczola	JudithG	Wortel
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
Milner	DarrenW	Olivieri	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	2♦	Double
3♦	4♠	All Pass	

In the Closed Room, Olivieri's weak 2♦ opening drove Hazel/Darren to 4♠. Although the ♦A lead gave declarer a chance to make the contract, he naturally took a double spade finesse through West and ended up down one. In the Open Room, Judith had a chance to put in a lead-directing 2♦ over the Stayman bid. On the actual auction, she was reduced to hope. In practice, Nicholas led a disastrous ♠6 and the defense was finished. Wortel wrapped up 10 tricks for +430 and 10 IMPs. The segment finished up with an overtrick IMP for Milner, who had made an incredible 33-0 run over the final ten boards of the segment.

At the end of four segments Canada led by 143-137.3 with 16 boards left to play.

Board 17, the first board of segment 6, was a potential slam hand that merely required declarer to bring the trump suit of 108653 opposite AQJ94 for no losers. The King was offside (singleton, of course), but neither team ventured slam - 1 IMP to Milner when one of the Canadian defenders ducked an Ace. Board 18 had the makings of a significant gain for Milner.


Board 18 Dealer: East N/S Vulnerable

♠ 1086		
♥ Q9652		
♦ 84		
♣ A104		
♠ KJ53		♠ AQ92
♥ 1083		♥ KJ4
♦ 92		♦ AQ73
♣ K862		♣ QJ
♠ 74		
♥ A7		
♦ KJ1065		
♣ 9753		

Wortel/Pszczola had a standard auction to reach 4♠ from the West side. Pszczola played low from dummy on the ♥5 lead and was never in difficulty after that start. Judith/Nicholas, playing a strong club system, declared 4♣ from the East side. Hamman led the ♣5 and Lall inserted the ♣10, won by Judith's ♣J. Declarer played a low spade to dummy's ♠J and the ♥3 to the ♥J and Hamman's ♥A. Now Hamman, under the impression that the defenders' diamond tricks might disappear (remember, she didn't know that North had the ♣A), switched to a low diamond. No swing.

Board 19 was a routine 4♠ game, bid and made by both teams. Board 20 resulted in a small swing to Canada.

Board 20 Dealer: West All Vulnerable

♠ Q97		
♥ Q10943		
♦ 105		
♣ 976		
♠ J8543		♠ 2
♥ A87		♥ KJ5
♦ 87		♦ AK432
♣ J103		♣ KQ42
♠ AK106		
♥ 62		
♦ QJ96		
♣ A85		

In the Closed Room Wortel/Pszczola played in a comfortable 2♣ partscore making 10 tricks for +130. There was more excitement in the Open Room

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	Pass	2♦ ¹	2NT
Pass	3♦ ²	Double	Pass
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

¹ 11-16 with at least 5-4 or 4-5 in ♣ + ♦

² Transfer to hearts

Hamman/Lall escaped the double, but still gave up -300 when 3♥ failed by three tricks -- 5 IMPs to Canada. The running score was Canada 148, Milner 138.3.

On the next board both Norths opened a vulnerable 2♠. Partner held ♠KQJ4 ♥AK103 ♦AK87 ♣5. Hazel bid 4NT and signed off in 6♠. Hamman bid 4♣ (Key Card Blackwood) which was doubled. Over partner's 4♥ response, Hamman thought a long time and decided correctly to sign off in 6♠ -- no swing. Partner held ♠A98753 ♥62 ♦-- ♣QJ1074. Board 22 was an overtrick IMP to Canada.

Then a major swing. Judith and Wortel held ♠Q10 ♥1074 ♦J108764 ♣94 and heard an identical auction. After two passes RHO opened a strong 1NT. LHO used Stayman to which RHO responded 2♦. LHO jumped to 3NT, ending the auction. Wortel chose to lead the ♦J while Judith led the ♥10. Unfortunately for Canada, a diamond lead gave declarer no chance for his contract (declarer held ♦AQ opposite dummy's ♦Kx) while a heart lead provided the timing to establish nine tricks (declarer could cover in dummy and, in due course, set up clubs and a second heart trick before the defense could get diamonds going) -- 12 IMPs to Milner now leading 150.3-148.

Canada closed the gap on Board 24

Board 24 Dealer: West None Vulnerable

♠ K10		
♥ A7		
♦ AKQ7		
♣ Q10753		
♠ J7		♠ Q98432
♥ KJ106		♥ Q
♦ J65		♦ 9842
♣ AK98		♣ J6
♠ A65		
♥ 985432		
♦ 103		
♣ 42		

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1NT ¹	Double	Pass ²	2♥
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

¹ 11-13

² Asks partner to redouble -- usually a single-suited runout sequence

Pszczola	DarrenW	Wortel	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♣	1NT	2♠	2NT ¹
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
All Pass			


¹ Lebensohl (relay to 3♣)

Against Hazel's 3♥ contract the defense took two clubs and three trump tricks for +50.

Against 2NT Judith led a fourth best spade and Lall ducked Nicholas' ♠J. He won the spade continuation and played a low club out of hand to the ♣6, ♣2 and ♣9. Nicholas exited the ♣8 to Lall's ♣10 and Judith's ♣J. The ♦9 was covered by the ♦10 and ♦J to Lall's ♦Q. Lall tried clubs, but Nicholas cashed the ♣A and ♣K and exited a diamond. Eventually Judith/Nicholas collected seven tricks for +100 and 2 IMPs to Canada giving it the lead 151-150.3. Canada scored an overtrick IMP on Board 25.

On Board 26 Milner played in 4♥ (5-3 fit) while Canada played in 4♠ (4-4 fit). Both contracts made, although it might have been otherwise if East/West had the ♠10.

Board 26 Dealer: East All Vulnerable

		♠ AK87	
		♥ J52	
		♦ A532	
		♣ QJ	
♠ QJ		♠ 653	
♥ A983		♥ 10	
♦ 96		♦ KQJ1084	
♣ 108753		♣ A96	
		♠ 10942	
		♥ KQ764	
		♦ 7	
		♣ K42	

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	1♦ ¹	1♥
1NT	Double	2♦	Pass
Pass	4♥	All Pass	


¹ Could be short

Pszczola	DarrenW	Wortel	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	2♦	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Wortel led the ♥10 against 4♠, which Pszczola ducked to Darren's ♥J. Darren cashed two spades and played on hearts -- making 10 tricks. Against 4♥ Nicholas led the ♦9; however, the miraculous spade position compensated for the 4-1 heart break -- making 10 tricks for a push.

Milner retook the lead on Board 27.

Board 27 Dealer: South None Vulnerable

♠ KQJ9852 ♥ J3 ♦ -- ♣ K1042		♠ 76 ♥ Q104 ♦ AKQ87 ♣ AQ9	♠ 10 ♥ 752 ♦ J1096 ♣ J8763
♠ A43 ♥ AK986 ♦ 5432 ♣ 5			

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	--	1♥
Pass	1♠	2♦	Double ¹
4♦	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

¹ Three spades

Pszczola	DarrenW	Wortel	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	--	--	1♥
Pass	1♠	Double	Redouble ¹
2♣	4♦ ²	Double	4♠
All Pass			

¹ Three spades


² Splinter

In the Open Room, Lall drove the hand to slam. He ruffed the ♦A lead (preserving the ♠2 just in case) and led the ♥3 to dummy's ♥A. He continued with a club to his ♣K, won by Judith's ♣A. Judith exited a trump to declarer's ♠K. Now he led the ♥J, which Judith quite naturally covered and dummy's ♥K won. Lall cashed the ♠A and led the ♥9 from dummy. After long consideration he ruffed, bringing down Judith's ♥10. It would have been a great play had Judith, without apparent thought, put the ♥10 under the ♥J. We'll never know what might have happened. The way the play actually went, Lall was able to claim 12 tricks. This was 11 IMPs for Milner when it might have been 11 IMPs to Canada.

Milner had taken a 9.3 IMP lead and never relinquished it.

Milner picked up 2 IMPs when a diamond partial was played from opposite sides.

Board 28 Dealer: South N/S Vulnerable

<p>♠ Q1092 ♥ 432 ♦ A9 ♣ A985</p>		<p>♠ J43 ♥ Q987 ♦ 87642 ♣ J</p>
<p>♠ AK6 ♥ 105 ♦ QJ53 ♣ K1063</p>		<p>♠ 875 ♥ AKJ6 ♦ K10 ♣ Q742</p>

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1NT ¹	Pass	Pass	Double
Redouble ²	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

¹ 11-13

² Maximum

Pszczola	DarrenW	Wortel	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1♦	Pass	3♦ ¹	All Pass


¹ Weak

Against Pszczola's 3♦ Darren led the ♠10 so declarer escaped for one down (-50).

At the other table Lall made a takeout double of 2♦, in balancing seat. Amazingly, Hamman chose to defend when North-South can make partscores in clubs, either major or no trump. She led the ♥A and switched to a spade. Eventually the defenders took their six tricks for +100 and 2 IMPs to Milner now leading 163.3 - 152.

But Canada kept fighting:

Board 29 Dealer: North All Vulnerable

♠ 8743 ♥ AQJ10763 ♦ Q ♣ 4		♠ KQ965 ♥ 84 ♦ 632 ♣ 962	♠ AJ ♥ K9 ♦ A10987 ♣ K1075
♠ 102 ♥ 52 ♦ KJ54 ♣ AQJ83			

NicholasG	Lall	JudithG	Hamman
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	4♥	All Pass	

Pszczola	DarrenW	Wortel	HazelW
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
--	3♥	3NT	All Pass

In the Open Room Lall's 4♥ opening stole the contract. A double by Judith would have been for takeout so she was constrained to pass. The lead was the ♦A, followed by Ace and Jack of spades. Nicholas overtook with the ♠Q and continued the ♠K. Judith ruffed and exited a diamond. Lall won in dummy and did well to drop the ♥K for -100. At the other table Wortel bid 3NT over Darren's 3♥. After the ♥5 lead, Darren carefully kept communications open by playing the ♥10. Wortel had no choice but to win the ♥K and cash out for down two and -200. That was 7 IMPs to Canada, narrowing the gap to 4.3.

On Board 30 Wortel/Pszczola bid a non-vulnerable heart game that needed the trumps 2-2 with the Ace onside. Everything was rosy so they scored +420 and 6 IMPs for Milner when Judith/Nicholas played in a heart partscore. Time was running out for Canada.

Board 31 was an unwelcome flat board which was a push when both N/S pairs posted 3♦, off one. Milner led 169.3-159 with one board remaining.

Board 32 was a pushy vulnerable 3NT bid and made by Wortel/Pszczola. Only an unlikely heart lead will defeat the contract. Judith/Nicholas were only in 1NT when Nicholas, sensing that his team needed some IMPs from somewhere, went for a negative swing by passing when his partner showed 14-16.

Another 10 IMPs for Milner made the final score 179.3-159.

Canada had to settle for the silver medal. Most bridge players set a minimum goal when they enter a major event. What often happens is that those goal posts move as a tournament progresses, so as success follows success, the goal eventually becomes winning the event. Bronze medalists (and gold

medalists, of course) are happy because both finish on a successful note to earn their medals. Not so for silver medalists who, having suffered a loss, can usually imagine changing the outcome by doing a few things differently. We are proud to have won a silver medal for Canada and delighted to have had such good team-mates, but the “what ifs” often haunt our dreams.