



Canadian Has Top Record at Nationals

BY CHARLTON WALLACE

Eric Murray of Toronto is considered by many experts to be the top bridge player of North America. He proved this estimate of his ability by capturing two out of the first three titles he was eligible to win and finishing third in the next event at the national championships of the American Contract Bridge League, concluded last week at Miami Beach.

Murray won the mixed pairs with Mrs. Agnes Gordon of Buffalo, N. Y., and the men's pairs with Sammy Kehela of Toronto. He finished third in the team championship with Kehela, Percival E. Sheardown and C. Bruce Elliott, all from his home town. Veteran Sheardown was considered the top Canadian player from 1933 to 1958 even as Howard Schenken of New York was considered the top U. S. player during the same quarter of a century.

Age is somewhat of a handicap during two arduous daily sessions at a national championship. Both Sheardown and Schenken are their usual whiz selves during the first session, but both admit that they do not play in top-notch form during the second session.

Eric Murray is a great credit to bridge. He is a gentleman but is also colorful in a big, bearish way as was P. Hal Sims. Murray is most gracious at the bridge table when either winning or losing a deal. His booming baritone is a welcome addition to the barbershop quartets that hold forth in rooms and bistros after the evening session.

Playing North and South respectively, Kehela and Murray made a big score on a deal in the national men's pair championship. They landed in a game contract on a seven-card trump suit, usually not advisable, and then proceeded to fulfill game with an overtrick by refusing to be forced into a ruff.

East was the dealer and both sides were vulnerable.

NORTH			
S	A	Q	10
H	9	3	
D	A	J	7 6
C	A	J	6 2
WEST		EAST	
S	9 6 3 2	S	5 4
H	K 10 5 4	H	A Q J 7
			6 2
D	K 4	D	3
C	Q 9 3	C	K 10 7 5
SOUTH			
S	K	J	8 7
H	8		
D	Q	10 9 8 5 2	
C	8	4	

THE BIDDING—At the Kehela-Murray table, the opponents were playing shutout two-bids; so East opened with two hearts, passed by South and West. North doubled for a take-out and also to show a powerhouse, because a double of a two-bid requires more power than a double of a one-bid, for partner is forced to respond at one level higher. North's double denied four spades, but indicated probably three spades.

South threw the bidding ball back to North by calling three hearts, a game-forcing bid. West doubled, and North and East passed. South called three spades, which North raised to four spades, the contract.

At many tables, East opened at three hearts on the six losers and 6-4-2-1 distribution. This is a more accurate shut-out than two hearts. South passed, and West raised to four hearts because his four hearts weakened the East-West defense. This bidding made it difficult for North-South.

In most instances, North doubled, and South either passed or went to five diamonds. Although the minor suit game fulfilled and would have represented a negligible swing at rubber bridge, the difference between 600 and 620 points at duplicate often means the difference between a good and a bad score.

THE PLAY: Against Murray's imaginative contract of four spades, the defense led two rounds of hearts. Declarer refused to trump the second heart in South and discarded a club. West led a club to trick three, and North jumped in with the ace. The diamond finesse worked, and trumps broke 4-2; so declarer made five-odd at spades for 650.

The defense dropped a trick by failing to lead another round of hearts. This would have forced Murray to trump in dummy. After cashing North's spade ace, South overtakes the spade queen with the king and plays the jack of spades. Trumps don't break; so declarer goes after diamonds. West can trump diamonds with his last spade any time he desires, but declarer still has a spade for a re-entry.



CHARLTON WALLACE

Canadian Wins Two Titles at Nationals

BY CHARLTON WALLACE

An outstanding performance has been turned in by Eric Murray of Toronto in the current national championships of the American Contract Bridge League at Miami Beach. He squeaked through to capture the life master's men's pair title with Sammy Kehela, also of Toronto, from veterans Harry Fishbein, New York, and Charles J. Soloman, Philadelphia, the score being 1160½ match points to 1158.

No other pair was close, however, when Murray won the mixed pair championship with Mrs. Agnes Gordon of Buffalo. They scored 921 against 845 by the runners-up Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Brier of Miami. The Murray-Gordon pair scored an unprecedented 78 per cent game in the final session. A 60 per cent game will win most championships.

ERIC MURRAY is one of the most colorful and popular players on the national tourney circuit. Last year at the nationals in Lexington, Ky., he was most outspoken against some of the bidding tactics that were used. So were many other top experts. Sonny Moyse, editor of the Bridge World, was so incensed at some bids that he asked me to do a series on unfair bidding at the nationals. This series was to be similar to one I did in the 1930s for the Bridge World. I had neither the time nor the crusading spirit for a new series.

MURRAY BEEFED so much last year, that the ACBL appointed him co-chairman of the protest committee at the fall nationals.

Hermine Baron, Los Angeles, and Ann Burnstein, Las Vegas, also ran away with the women's pair

title, scoring 1200½ match points against 1112½ for runners-up Carrie Arnold and Mrs. Thomas Gray of Ft. Lauderdale.

Greater Cincinnatians are winning plenty of top scores, if not titles, at the Miami Beach nationals. Among the section leaders have been Mr. and Mrs. Al H. Mueller, Carl B. Rubin, Jerry Doernberg, Raymond Zoller Jr., Mrs. F. C. Wright, Mrs. George Toler, Robert G. Sharp, Mrs. Harrison S. Mulford Jr. and Norman D. Coombs Jr.

A major complaint at duplicate is that players who state their use of tricky conventions do not always adhere to them. For example, with the ASTRO convention an overcall of one no-trump with two diamonds indicates four or more spades and one other suit. This is what happened at one table during the masters pair at Lexington:

North opened at one no-trump, and the ASTRO East bid two diamonds. South had S—K 10 9 6 3; H—A 6 2; D—A 7; C—10 4 3. At other tables, South jumped to three spades in response to one-no-trump, and North called four spades, a contract that wrapped up. But where East showed at least four spades with the ASTRO overcall of two diamonds, South jumped to three no-trump, which was set. It turned out that East had only three spades.

Edgar Kaplan and Alfred Sheinwold devised the Kaplan-Sheinwold system of bidding. One feature is that an opening bid in a major suit shows a least five cards in that suit. Mr. and Mrs. Kaplan led the mixed pair field going into the final session at Miami Beach. Sitting West, Mrs. Kaplan violated that feature on one deal.

East-West were vulnerable with West the dealer.

NORTH			
S—J			
H—Q J 5			
D—A K 7 6 3			
C—Q J 8 5			
WEST		EAST	
S—A 9 5 3		S—Q 10 8 7	
		6	
H—10 8 7 2		H—9 6 4 3	
D—5 2		D—9 8 4	
C—A K 3		C—7	
SOUTH			
S—K 4 2			
H—A K			
D—Q J 10			
C—10 9 6 4 2			

THE BIDDING — West opened with one spade! North doubled, and East bid three spades, a weakness call and a shut-out. Instead of going to three no-trump for a makable contract, South bid four clubs, which North raised to five clubs. West doubled and cashed her three quick tricks for a high score.

The ACBL sent along the deal with this comment on the Kaplan-Sheinwold system: "Fortunately it is a flexible system which occasionally permits a player to mix a club in with spades, resulting in this case in pushing N-S into an impossible game."



CHARLTON WALLACE

The Bridge Deck

By FLORENCE OSBORN

Eric R. Murray, Toronto, Ont., barrister who was a member of the six-man bridge team to represent North America in the World Match, is a dynamic young genius who at the card table gives the impression of a Canadian Mountie. With coolly reserved Charles Coon, of Cambridge, Mass., as his partner, the pair is hard to beat.

A trial lawyer educated at McMaster University in Hamilton and a tennis champion, Murray is the kind of card player who must be allowed to "take charge." Harvard graduate Coon, quiet, canny and calm, proved he was the perfect partner for Murray when the pair won a smashing victory last Nov. in Houston against fifteen top-ranking pairs in the continent who tried for a place on the North American team.

Murray, 33, learned to play bridge from his parents, who played socially. He won the Canadian Men's Pairs in 1949; a few years later with John Scanlon he won the U.S. Non Master Pairs; then the National Men's Teams and Pairs in 1955-56. Murray started a tournament at the Tennis Club in Hamilton, Ont., to stimulate bridge interest in Canada. His favorite mixed-pair partner is Mrs. Agnes Gordon, of Buffalo, whom he considers the best of women players. Living in Canada, it's safe for him to say that.

In addition to Old-Fashioned Acol, which Murray and Coon play (the "Old-Fashioned" is to distinguish it from the new-fashioned version played by members of the French international team), the pair uses the Drury convention, originated by Douglas Drury, a fellow Canadian and former partner of Murray.

The Drury convention is a bidding device which enables a player to find out whether a third-hand or four-hand opening bid is sound. Suppose the bidding has gone:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣			

Two clubs asks about the quality of North's opening bid. If North has a sub-standard hand, he bids two diamonds; otherwise, he makes some other bid to describe his hand.

Table presence accounted for Coon and Murray's success on today's slam which they defeated, taken from the Houston trials. Against a tough pair of Eastern experts, former members of the U.S. international team, they weathered out declarer's slow and deliberate play, revealing nothing. Declarer, misled because of a double by Murray and because they played their cards straight, refusing to falsecard, went

down. This gave all the points to the defenders, as every other North-South pair scored either a game or a slam.

A low heart was opened, Murray's queen was taken by South's ace and a low heart was ruffed on the board. A low spade went to the queen, a spade continuation drew East's ace and a spade return cleared trumps. Now declarer took the king of clubs, ace of clubs and played the club jack. Murray followed low and declarer went into a long huddle to consider his next play.

South reviewed the bidding, tried to gain a count and, being an expert, considered the worst possibility. East could have four clubs with the queen, in which case, if he used his last spade to ruff this trick, even if he found the diamond queen he would have to lose a heart to West or a club to East for down one.

While South pondered, neither defender displayed any telltale, anxious gesture. Murray's big blue eyes bored into the perplexed declarer while a faint smile flickered about Coon's mouth. The expert chose to play for the worst break instead of the best, discarded a diamond on the club jack. Coon took the trick with the club queen. The result was down one on a cold small slam.

Today's Hand

WEST DEALER

North-South Vulnerable

N			
♠	J 6 4 2		
♥	5		
♦	A 10 4		
♣	A J 10 7 6		
W		E	
Coon		Murray	
♠	10 9	♠	A 7 3
♥	J 8 7 6 4	♥	Q 9 3
♦	Q 5 2	♦	9 8 7 3
♣	Q 9 8	♣	5 4 2
S			
♠	K Q 8 5		
♥	A K 10 2		
♦	K J 6		
♣	K 3		

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5 ♥	Double	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: 6 ♥.

Word Answered

Today's word—WIMPLED

Weld, wield, wild, wide, wile, wiped, idle, impel, meld, mawl, mild, mile, mildew, piled, pied, plied, lewd, limped, lied, lime, demi, dimple, dime.

Answer to Twizzler

The dower presented a \$5,000 bill and got 4 ones, 8 twos, 40 fives, 400 tens, and 39 twenties.