

Record of the Bermuda Bowl

By ALAN TRUSCOTT

EARLIER this summer, the great Blue Team of Italy won its eighth consecutive Bermuda Bowl title in world championship competition. The annual record of this event will be available later this week from the American Contract Bridge League, 33 West 60th Street, New York 10023, for \$2.50 postpaid. Its 224 pages include a full history of previous championships.

The Blue Team had declared that this would be its last world championship, but this threatened retirement may not take place. Benito Garozzo and Giorgio Belladonna are eager to go on playing. Walter Avarelli, who played particularly well with Belladonna this year, has declined the promotion that would take him from Rome to the relative isolation of Sardinia. The other three players, Pietro Forquet, Massimo D'Alelio and Camillo Pabis-Ticci, may also continue. However, Carlo Alberto Perroux, the team's nonplaying captain, has announced his retirement.

Significant Factors

The world championship book includes a complete record of the Italy-North America clash and many hands from other matches. The reader is left to form his own conclusions about the reasons for the American defeat, but some of the significant factors can be deduced. The Italians were slightly superior in bidding, both in judgment and system, and they had a slight edge in luck.

The Italians have always had a talent for producing their best game when it mattered most, reserving their lapses for weak opponents. Pabis-Ticci committed a most expensive misjudgment in the play of the following slam deal quoted in the book, but

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A Q 9 4		♠ 10 8 7 6	
♥ 8 6 4		♥ Q 10 9 7	
♦ K 8 7		♦ Q 10 9 5 4	
♣ J 8 6		♣ —	
WEST		SOUTH (D)	
♠ J 5 2		♠ K 3	
♥ A J 5 2		♥ K 3	
♦ 6		♦ A J 3 2	
♣ 9 7 5 4 2		♣ A K Q 10 3	

it was not against the Americans.

Pabis-Ticci and D'Alelio, sitting South and North, bid themselves to six no-trump using their Little Roman System. This was an ambitious contract, and the Dutch team with the same cards was content to rest in three no-trump.

West led a club, and South cashed all his club tricks. This was somewhat embarrassing for East, who would have done best to discard all his hearts and one diamond. East saw the necessity of retaining all his spades, but he unwisely retained the heart queen. His discards, in order, were the heart ten, the seven, the nine and two low diamonds. Two hearts were discarded from dummy.

At this stage, a diamond finesse would have given South 12 tricks, but it was not easy to judge that East was guarding the diamonds. South crossed to the diamond king in dummy and led a heart. East, of necessity, played his singleton queen, and South had a second chance. A duck at this point would have enabled the declarer to make the last seven tricks with three spade tricks and four diamonds.

But South put on the heart king, and West made four heart tricks for a three-trick set. It is difficult to blame

South for his play. It was only bad discarding by East that gave him any chance, and one should usually assume that the opponents are not on your side. But a possible clue lay in East's high-low signal in hearts: an expert would not be likely to advertise the position of the heart ace if he held that card.

The Italians lost 990 points, or 14 international match points, on the deal. If Pabis-Ticci had guessed the winning play, his team would have gained 13 points.

The American players were sometimes disinclined to bid enough at high levels when both sides had discovered a good suit fit. This was the case on the following deal against Thailand, but the result was a lucky profit.

East and West were Eric Murray and Sam Kehela of Toronto, who were voted the best non-Italian pair in the championship. In this case, they should have continued to five spades over five diamonds, going down only one trick, but it is not clear who was to blame.

Kehela led the spade queen,

NORTH		EAST	
♠ K J		♠ A 8 7 6 4 2	
♥ 8 7 5 4		♥ K Q 9	
♦ 9 7 3		♦ A 6 4	
♣ A J 5 4		♣ 7	
WEST (D)		SOUTH	
♠ Q 10 9 5 3		♠ —	
♥ 10 3		♥ A J 6 2	
♦ 8		♦ K Q J 10 5 2	
♣ Q 8 6 3 2		♣ K 10 9	

Both sides were vulnerable. When the Americans held the East-West cards, the bidding was:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	3 ♦
3 ♠	4 ♣	4 ♠	5 ♣
Pass	5 ♦	Dbl.	Pass
Pass	Pass		

to give himself the chance of retaining the lead if his partner held both ace and king. South covered with the king in dummy and ruffed East's ace. He led the diamond ten, which East allowed to win, and continued with the diamond queen.

Triumph Scored

East won and shifted to the heart queen. This mild false-card scored a great triumph because South took it at its face value. He won with the ace, led to the diamond nine in dummy and finessed the club nine.

South therefore lost a club, a heart and a diamond for down one. He should have reasoned that East's strong bidding and final double were unlikely to be based on two aces and two unguarded queens. If he had played East for the heart king, he would have made the contract easily.

When the hand was replayed, the Thailand East-West made the same mistake of doubling five diamonds. Robert Hamman of Los Angeles was the declarer, and he made no mistake in the play, making 11 tricks for a score of 750 and a gain of 14 international match points for North America.

Blue Team's heyday was in 1966

St. Vincent, Italy, hosted the 1966 World Teams Championship. It was the heyday of the legendary Blue Team and the native sons won big. The real battle was between Italy (Giorgio Belladonna-Walter Avarelli, Pietro Forquet-Benito Garozzo, Camillo Pabis Ticci-Massimo D'Alerio) and North America (Bob Hamman-Lew Mathe, Ira Rubin-Phil Feldesman, Sami Kehela-Eric Murray) The press voted Canadians Kehela-Murray the best non-Italian pair in the field.

The match featured a series of North American gambits that prompted the Blues to consider revising some of their methods.

Neither side vulnerable

West deals

North
 ♠ A42
 ♥ K98
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ KJ1075

West
 ♠ J10
 ♥ AQ54
 ♦ A82
 ♣ 9842

East
 ♠ 973
 ♥ 7632
 ♦ KJ75
 ♣ 63

South
 ♠ KQ865
 ♥ J10
 ♦ 10643
 ♣ AQ

W	N	E	S
LM	GB	BH	FA
1♥	Dble	1♠	INT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	End	

Rubin-Feldesman bid the North/South cards unobstructed to 4♠; plus 450. Hamman's psychic bid of 1♠ over North's double hit a seam in the Italian methods. Belladonna favoured an esoteric idea known as "exclusion" advances to takeout doubles. With third hand silent, a new suit bid by advancer

The Bridge Beat

ERIC KOKISH AND
 BEVERLY KRAFT

showed shortage in that suit; if third hand volunteered a suit bid, a double would show shortage. Not that this explains Avarelli's INT or his pass of 2NT. Italy lost 7 IMPs. The other Italians tried unsuccessfully to convince Belladonna to drop the exclusion idea. "If Walter had bid spades at his second turn we would have reached game," roared Giorgio.

Later, at the same vulnerability, Murray tried 1♥ in third seat with:

♠93 ♥Q876542 ♦96 ♣106, catching Avarelli with:

♠AK7 ♥AJ ♦KQ107 ♣AKQ8.

Avarelli jumped to 3NT, and Belladonna, holding:

♠QJ42 ♥K1093 ♦A ♣7532, passed. It was embarrassing for the Italians to play in game with 36 combined points and a sound play for a grand slam, but they were fortunate that Hamman-Mathe stopped in 6NT; the cost was only 13 IMPs. Avarelli was too strong for an Italian-style takeout double and a 2♥ "cue-bid" would have been natural and forcing! Poor Avarelli was stuck with 3NT, which might have been either a balanced high-card hand or a hand with a long strong suit and some stoppers.

The Blue Team could not ignore the problem, and adjustments were made. Italy, irritated but not fatally wounded, would win the next three World Championships before bowing to their traditional rivals in 1970.

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Today's deal is from our archives. The declarer was Toronto's Sami Kehela, who in partnership with Eric Murray, spearheaded the North American team to the silver medal in the 1966 World Championship in St. Vincent, Italy. If you'd like to try to match Sami's play, please cover the East-West hands before continuing. West leads the ♣8, playing standard fourth-best leads.

East-West vulnerable

West deals

North
♠ 1095
♥ KQ1093
♦ 72
♣ J104

West	East
♠ 83	♠ QJ762
♥ J842	♥ 765
♦ K4	♦ 10965
♣ AQ983	♣ 7

South
♠ AK4
♥ A
♦ AQJ83
♣ K652

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
End			

Opening Lead: ♣8

Declarer won the ♣J in dummy and followed with the five from hand, preserving his deuce. As the hearts were hopelessly blocked, he continued with a diamond to the queen, hoping to develop that suit.

West won the ♦K, and continued with the ♣A. That was certainly helpful (a red suit would have been much better for the defence), but it was not immediately conclusive. Declarer followed to this trick with the ♣6, again preserving the lowly deuce. West persevered with clubs, leading the queen to pin dummy's 10 and drive out the king. On the second club, East threw the ♥5, and on the third he released the ♠7. How do you like your chances now?

If you said, "not much," who would blame you? Undaunted, declarer won the ♣K, hopefully tried the ace-jack of diamonds, and got the bad news about the four-two break (West discarding a heart). He needed some luck now, and he got it by cashing the ♥A and the ace-king of spades before exiting with the ... ♣2.

West could not get out of his

own way; he had to win this club trick and could take another, but then he had to lead a heart. Declarer took two spades, two diamonds, two clubs, and three hearts (of which two could be considered well and truly resurrected from the dead).

Had declarer not retained the ♣2, West could have underplayed the five or six of clubs with the three in the endgame. That would have given declarer a third club trick, but he would then have had to concede a diamond and three spades to East for one down.

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