



— Citizen photo

Dave Stothart, left, of Ottawa and partner Mike Siegrist

Bridge team overtrumped

By Louise Crosby
Citizen staff writer

It was the last quarter of a grueling, nine-hour bridge match and four of the country's best players were hunched over a table, the strain of the past five days showing in their faces.

Only the whir of the fan and the sound of cards slapping on the table broke the stillness in the third-floor meeting room of the Town House Motor Hotel.

The stakes were high. For the Cinderella Ottawa team, in the Canadian national team competition for the first time ever, it was a last chance for the championship.

And for last year's winners, made up of players from Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, it meant another opportunity to represent the country at the world competition in France in 1982.

Two hours later, the Ottawa players—Dave Willis, John Valliant, Dave Stothart, Mark Siegrist and Richard and Denis Lesage—admitted defeat. They trailed their opponents by 63 points.

"We're disappointed, naturally," said Stothart, a federal public servant. "We gave it quite a run but it wasn't to be."

Captain of the winning team, Allan Graves, was jubilant. "It feels fine," he said, "marvellous."

Graves said two players in particular—Sammy Kehela and Eric Murray of Toronto—"were magnificent."

Kehela, 46, a professional bridge player, and Murray, a lawyer, have been bridge partners for 22 years and have represented Canada six times in international competition.

Once considered the best players in the world, they are the only pair to play in every bridge Olympiad since its inception in 1960.

Wednesday's final match, involving 72 deals, was the culmination of months of bridge which began last September when 6,000 players from across Canada took part in local club competitions. Winning teams went on to regional and provincial finals, and after the equivalent of 13 solid days of playing, 14 teams qualified for the national championships.

He's a designated declarer

By Ted Horning

Can you imagine bridge being similar to baseball? I know that is silly but if I were the coach of a bridge team and knew there was a difficult hand to play, I would bring in my designated declarer — Toronto's Sammy Kehela.

In fact, he was the declarer of Today's hand from the finals of the Canadian National Team championships. The contract was in the right hands.

Both vulnerable

East deals

NORTH

(Eric Murray)

♠ 97

♥ AQ42

♦ QJ1072

♣ K4

WEST

♠ QJ3

♥ KJ

♦ 8543

♣ 10632

EAST

♠ A2

♥ 1098653

♦ K96

♣ A8

SOUTH (Sammy)

♠ K108654

♥ 7

♦ A

♣ QJ975

The bidding:

E	S	W	N
1♥	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Opening lead: King of hearts

There appear to be four inescapable losers — two in spades and two in clubs. However, Sammy proved that the hand was cold by one of

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the most unusual play positions possible — an optional end-play with the defence having the choice of which defender is end-played.

The opening heart lead was taken with the ace and a spade led from the table at trick two. As it happens East ducked and Sammy won the trick with the king.

He next cashed the ace of diamonds and followed this with a second round of spades. East was in with the ace and returned a second heart.

Sammy discarded a club on this play and the queen of diamonds was led from the table. East covered this but Sammy trumped out the king and exited with a third round of spades.

West was now in and was end-played. If he led a diamond, Sammy's clubs would be discarded on the high diamonds. If West played a club, that would hold the club suit to only one loser.

Sammy also had the play calculated if East had gone up with the ace of spades and returned a second trump. He would win the king of spades, cash the ace of diamonds and play the queen of clubs.

The best defence would be to win the queen with the ace and return a second club. This would be taken in the dummy and again, the queen of diamonds would be led to ruff out the king.

After that, declarer simply plays a third round of spades and West is on lead. A club lead would go directly into declarer's tenace while a red suit lead would provide an entry to the good heart and diamonds in the dummy.

As I said, as coach I would call in my designated declarer.