

bridge *Canada*



CANADIAN SENIOR TEAM CHAMPIONS,
5TH-8TH AT THE 2024 WORLD BRIDGE GAMES.

L to R: Jim McAvoy (NPC), Piotr Klimowicz, Mike Hargreaves, Gord McOrmond,
John Carruthers, Dan Jacob and Robert Lebi.



2024 WORLD SENIOR
PAIR CHAMPIONS

Dan Jacob and Piotr Klimowicz.

THE CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION

The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is to promote bridge within Canada and protect and advance the national interests of Canadian bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for international bridge competition.

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MEMBERSHIP

Bridge Canada is available to members only.

If you know of anyone who wishes to become a member of the Canadian Bridge Federation please share with them these options:

1. Be sure to include CBF dues with your ACBL dues.
2. Visit cbf.ca and click **Join The CBF**.
3. Email info@cbf.ca for more information.

NOTE: Starting Jan 2021, membership dues for players 25 years of age and under are \$10 per year. When joining or renewing on the CBF website, use promo code JUNIOR to access the discount.

Stay **CONNECTED**

EMAIL: catherine@cbf.ca (Catherine Kinsella)

PHONE: 1 416 903 4009

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

The Goods



Open Letter to the Canadian Bridge Federation and its members

Michael Roche, a recent inductee to the Canadian Bridge Hall of Fame, writes an open letter, which is included directly after my editorial message. I encourage you to read it, and think about what you can do to help support Canadian Bridge.

The CBF is not a rich organization. It survives on a shoestring budget with one part time Executive Assistant and a relative few number of volunteers. We **do not** have the resources to fully fund our international teams to compete representing us. We need more support.

It is clear that some are not fully aware of this dynamic, being critical of the CBF Board for not better financially supporting these teams. This is not possible under the current circumstances.

I ask all CBF members to consider if they can, either personally or through corporate donations, support the CBF so we can have effective programming and support for our international representatives.

Finally, and maybe my most important suggestion, is that if you are of the opinion that the CBF can do better, great!! The key is to channel your ideas and input them in a constructive and value-added way. Remember the CBF is **you**! Also please remember, that we need to **respect and support** the CBF volunteers, because without them, we **would not** exist!!

Regular Communication Update with Members

The CBF has also decided to try and enhance two-way communication between the volunteer Board and CBF members. Starting this December, you will receive an email with information, of which the Board feels that you should know. These updates are planned to be semi-annual, December and June. And of course your

feedback is important, and is welcome anytime! The best way to express your views and ideas, is via the CBF Coordinator, Catherine Kinsella. Her contact info is **catherine@cbf.ca** or by phone, 416 903-4009.

2025 Canadian Bridge Championships (CBCs)

A reminder that the 2025 Canadian Bridge Championship events will take place, online, in the January-February, 25 timeline. Exact dates for the various championships, and registration deadlines, can be found on the CBF home page.

The winners are eligible to play in the Knockout/playoff portion being held April 14-20, 2025, in conjunction with the Toronto Regional.

World Championships - We did it!!

Congrats go out to Dan Jacob and Piotr Klimowicz who won the Senior Pairs at the World Bridge Games held this past October!! Way to make Canadian bridge players proud!

Dan and Piotr, along with teammates Mike Hargreaves, Gord McOrmond, Robert Lebi, John Carruthers, and non-playing captain Jim McAvoy were the only Canadian team to qualify for the knockout stage. They did this in the Senior Teams event. They won their round of 16 match, and lost to a very good Indian team, who ended up losing to the USA in the finals!! Way to go!!

Finally, a shout out to all the CBF members who represented Canada at the Worlds. I am sure it will be a memory you will always treasure.

Neil Kinselman
Bridge Canada Managing Editor





CBF MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

DECEMBER 2024

We are listening!!



Recently there has been some questions and comments from members that indicate a lack of awareness on the current state of Canadian Bridge and the Canadian Bridge Federation. We believe that communication with our members is absolutely vital, and has been the number one challenge for CBF Boards over the last 15 years.

In response, this is the first of a series of regular member updates. The goal of these updates to ensure there is timely and open communication between the volunteers on the CBF Board and the CBF membership it serves.

These updates will be sent directly to all members, as well as posted on the CBF Website. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Upcoming and ongoing events for CBF members.
- Recent events and outcomes.
- Membership milestones.
- Canadian Junior Program.
- International update.
- State of the financial health of the CBF.
- Critical goals of the CBF.
- Trends that affect Canadian Bridge, and the challenges they present.
- What you can do to support Canadian Bridge.

The last point we feel is especially critical. The CBF Board is only comprised of 6 volunteers, who have full time lives outside of CBF administration. All Canadian bridge players need to step up when they can, to ensure the continuity of a Canadian Bridge identity.

What about the CBF Executive Assistant?

Yes we have a salaried, part time Executive Assistant. But despite her high level of competency, she is only one person. There are many details, daily transactions and responsibilities entailed in the support of a diverse organization such as the CBF. Suffice to say she is fully

utilized! Please consider stepping up when asked, or maybe just because you want to help!

What is the CBF Mission?

The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is: **To promote bridge within Canada and to protect and advance the national interests of Canadian bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for international bridge competition.**

Why is the CBF Mission statement important?

It is critical. It is the foundation for how the CBF makes decisions on what programs and services to offer, and how to allocate the available financial and human resources.

December 24 Update

• Recent events and outcomes.

- There has been a 50% increase in participation of the Rookie /Master Game. This has been a great effort by clubs to bring new players to the game of bridge.
- The Canada Wide Online team league continues to be a big hit with players. The CBF is now looking to add B and C divisions.
- Established Regionals are still struggling. Average attendance is still in the range of 60 - 65% of pre-covid attendance. The idea that the CBF can create a "pop-up" regional that is financially successful in today's environment is near impossible.

The CBF has done it's best to adapt to the current environment and create a hybrid event that is both financially profitable while maintaining the integrity of the **Canadian Championships.**

• **Canadian Junior Program**

- This year we sent an under 26 team to play in the World Junior Transnationals held in Wroclaw, Poland. The team earned valuable experience playing internationally.
- In 2025 we will be sending two teams to play in the World Junior Championships. We will be holding the junior team trials Dec. 28-30. The trials will be played online on RealBridge. There is a \$10 registration fee that covers three days of bridge play. For more information, please go to our homepage at www.cbf.ca.

• **Critical goals of the CBF.**

- Increasing membership (currently only 25% of Canadian Bridge players who belong to the ACBL are also CBF members).
- Increase awareness and participation in National Canadian Bridge events, from club level to Canadian Championships. All level of play is available for members.
- "The CBF needs the club support. Please help your local club to understand that offering CBF games to their players is beneficial to all. More points for the players and the extra sanction fees goes to the CBF, not the ACBL. The ACBL does not fund the CBF – so please be aware of CBF events."

• **Financial update.**

- The CBCs held in Niagara Falls in 2023 lost money. There were several factors at play, including low than expected attendance, and higher cost for Directors.
- It is why the CBF cannot afford to have a regional alongside the CNTCs, and why the decision was made to hold the CBCs concurrently with a Canadian Regional (Penticton in 2024 and Toronto in 2025).

• **International update.**

- Congrats go out to Dan Jacob and Piotr Klimowicz who won the Senior Pairs at the World Bridge Games held this past October!! Way to make Canadian bridge players proud!

Dan and Piotr, along with teammates Mike Hargreaves, Gord McOrmond, Robert Lebi, John Carruthers, and non-playing captain Jim McAvoy, were the only Canadian team to qualify for the major team knockout stage. They did this in the Senior Teams event. They won their round of 16 match, and lost in the quarterfinals to a very good Indian team, who ended up losing to the USA in the finals!! Way to go Canada!!

Finally, a shout out to all the CBF members who represented Canada at the Worlds. I am sure it will be a memory you will always treasure.

- Canada sent four teams to the World Bridge Games. The cost to the CBF in financially supporting these players and non-playing captains is high. Entry fees and uniforms alone are \$27,000. Then you have travel subsidies. These subsidies are financed by certain events, primarily the entry fees and profit from the CBCs. With little profit from these events, (see above). Subsidies for attendees will be small unless a new source of funding is found.

• **Other new communication initiatives.**

In Summary

Moving forward, we want all members to understand what the Board is doing and why.

Our underlying goal is to engage all Canadian bridge players and have them participate in Canadian events. Please let us know your thoughts!! We welcome all constructive viewpoints, suggestions and comments.

The CBF Board





CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Zone I & CBF President**

Kathie Macnab
5 Wren St.
Halifax, NS B3M 2R1
902-443-4676
zone1@cbf.ca

**Zone IV**

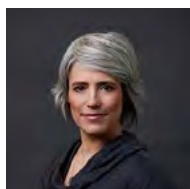
Freddie Myktyshyn
zone4@cbf.ca

**Zone II**

Howard Huynh
19 Rue de L'Acropole
Apartment #1
Gatineau, QC J9J 0L9
zone2@cbf.ca

**Zone V**

Terry Du
zone5@cbf.ca

**Zone III**

Marcia Andreychuk
zone3@cbf.ca

**Zone VI & CBF Vice-president**

Shelley Burns
1695 Orkney Place
North Vancouver, BC V7H 2Z1
604-988-0990
zone6@cbf.ca

SUPPORT TEAM

**MANAGING EDITOR**

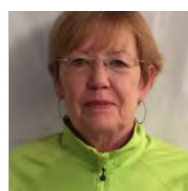
Neil Kimelman
editor@cbf.ca

**CBF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

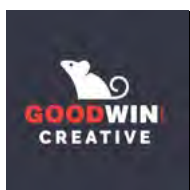
Catherine Kinsella
99 Ellis Avenue, Nobleton, Ontario L0G 1N0
catherine@cbf.ca

**FRENCH EDITOR**

Francine Cimon
wirek@videotron.ca

**ACCOUNTING & FINANCE MANAGER**

Cathy Walsh
cp.walsh@sasktel.net

**PRODUCTION TEAM**

Goodwin Creative
admin@goodwincreative.ca

**RECORDER**

Tony Reus
recorder@cbf.ca

**WEB ADMINISTRATION**

Louise Mascolo
webmaster@cbf.ca

**CBF CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

Gim Ong
32 Sandusky Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5W4
204-775-5114
charity@cbf.ca

OPEN LETTER TO THE CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION



The history of organized bridge in Canada is linked inextricably with the evolution of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL).

Eastern-Central and Western Canada followed different paths. The former was always aligned with the ACBL, even before that organization became predominant in North America. Western Canada, on the other hand, was originally a part of the Pacific Bridge League which amalgamated with the ACBL in 1956.

At the 1965 Nationals (now called North American Bridge Championships) in Chicago, a group of Canadian organizers and enthusiasts, led by Eric Murray, made the historic decision to create the CBF. This would be a voluntary association of Canadian ACBL units where each member unit would decide the level of its financial contribution. Besides Murray, the Chicago group included: Henry Smilie (Vancouver); Doug Cannell (Winnipeg); Chuck Jane (Woodstock); Bill Robinson (Toronto); Al Lando (Toronto); Doug Drew (Toronto); Aaron Goodman (Montreal); and Don Dobson (Halifax). Together, these individuals represented more than 80% of Canadian ACBL members.

Special shout-out to Doug Drew (now of Victoria) who plays frequently at the Monterey Bridge Club. Many people probably aren't aware that Doug was formerly President of the CBF, President of the ACBL, and is a member of the Canadian Bridge Federation's Hall of Fame.

The founders presented a plan for the formation and structure of the CBF, to be approved by unit officials. The latter would provide further direction on policies governing selection of our international teams through national trials, and funding of selected players. The CBF has grown and changed since those early years. The CBF now represents all Canadian players, not just champions vying for international competition, and offers programs that have broader appeal such as fledgling national championships, rookie-master games, and a magazine tailored to a wider readership. Furthermore, in 1990 the CBF became a membership organization in addition to being a federation

of Canadian ACBL units. The current Canadian membership in the ACBL is roughly 16,000. But the sad fact is that only 4,000 of those players support the CBF. Current membership dues are \$25 annually.

The CBF currently wears many hats, but their initial specific goal was to oversee International representation for the Canadian Bridge teams. This they have done since 1967.

FUNDING

Every country in the World charges modest mandatory annual membership dues and funds their International teams through those dues. Except for Canada and the USA.....

The ACBL requires bridge players to join their organization, but their goal is to run local tournaments and record master-points. There is no proviso for supporting their International teams.

In fact a few years ago the ACBL created the USBF which is now charged with that task. There was no thought of the implications to other ACBL-member countries – Canada Mexico and Bermuda. The USBF is fortunate. They have several well-heeled sponsors who provided the necessary seed money to start their organization and continue their selection process.

Canada and its International Fund is in dire straits. The inability to attract corporate sponsorship or healthy donations imperils Canada's future on the international scene.

Due to declining membership and also Covid, the CBF monetary reserves are at an all-time low.

I strongly urge each and every Canadian member of the ACBL to become a member of the CBF to help ensure that our game thrives at the International level.

Thank you
Michael Roche





ARGY-BARGY* IN ARGENTINA

John Carruthers, Kingsville, Ontario, Canada

**A Lively Discussion*

Editor's note: The Canadian CSTC champions finished 5-8 at the World Bridge Games - A fantastic achievement! The team consisted of Dan Jacob, Pete Klimowicz, Mike Hargreaves, Gord McOrmond, John Carruthers and Robert Lebi (NPC Jim McAvoy). Here is an article from John about their success.

It's always a treat to play against Poland, whatever the occasion and event – talented players who make it interesting and fun at the table. In this case, for us, it was the 2024 World Senior Teams in Buenos Aires, Argentina. When we met in Match 14 of the Round Robin in B. A., Poland was in 12th place and Canada in 18th, just 3 VPs out of a qualifying spot in the top 16. We needed some good results to make the knockout phase. My partner Robert Lebi and I faced Michał Kwiecień and Włodzimierz Starkowski while, at the other table, Victor Markowicz and Krzysztof Moszczyński played against our teammates, Dan Jacob and Piotr Klimowicz. So, you see, we had a secret weapon on our team, our own Pole! You won't be surprised to learn that slams played a big part in the outcome of the match.

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

♠ AKQ108
♥ AJ6
♦ 1097
♣ K4

♠ J96
♥ Q42
♦ K642
♣ 1083

♠ 74
♥ 1093
♦ QJ85
♣ 9765

♠ 532
♥ K875
♦ A3
♣ AQJ2

West	North	East	South
Markowicz	Jacob	Moszczyński	Klimowicz
-	1♠	Pass	2♣ ¹
Pass	2♦ ²	Pass	4♠ ³
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 2+ clubs, game-forcing

2. Not 6 spades, not 4 hearts, not 4 clubs with shortage or extras

3. Weakest rebid

With such poor trumps, South was not inclined to go more slowly and, with three diamond losers, North was worried that the five level was not entirely safe. South might have gone more slowly and North might have chanced the five level. Klimowicz believes that he ought to have bid two notrump at his second turn, then four spades at his third, over the probable three-notrump bid. That would have shown three poor trumps, but a good hand otherwise and would have induced Jacob to bid Key-Card Blackwood.

Jacob won the heart-nine lead with the ace over East's queen, drew trumps, discarded his diamond losers on the clubs and claimed 13 tricks: plus 510.

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
—	1♣ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦ ³
Pass	2♠ ⁴	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT ⁵	Pass	4♣ ⁶
Pass	4♥ ⁶	Pass	5♦ ⁶
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

1. Polish Club
2. 4+ hearts, 8+ HCP
3. Artificial game-force
4. 5+ spades, 17+ HCPs.
5. No shortage.
6. Control bid.

The Polish Club was much more effective in uncovering the combined values. The fit turned out to be perfect on North-South's 31 HCP.

Starkowski won the eight-of-diamonds lead with the ace, drew trumps and cashed the ace and king of hearts. When the queen did not fall, he discarded two red-suit losers on the clubs and conceded another for plus 980 and a 10-IMP gain.

The only gain we had in those 12 boards was 10-IMP win when Lebi and I bid to a good vulnerable game on a five-two heart fit, missed by Markowicz-Moszczyński, when three notrump would have failed. The score was 41-10 to Poland, our worst defeat of the tournament.

After that match, we went on a roll, winning six of our last nine matches decisively, losing two narrowly and

drawing one. Poland was just as good, winning seven of their last nine, but losing two by substantial margins. We both moved up six places in the standings, to sixth and twelfth respectively.

The draw for the Knockout Phase was interesting: the first eight seeds were dictated by the final Round-Robin standings. Then the top four teams picked their opponents from amongst the bottom eight. After those four matches had been set, the fifth seed was designated to play against the lowest-ranked remaining team, then the sixth against the second-lowest, and so on, to complete the bracket.

As fate would have it, Poland drew Canada for the Round of 16. We knew we were in for a tough battle; we hoped Poland was as well! Luckily for us, there was no carry-over from the Round-Robin match. The Round-of-16 encounters consisted of four 15-board segments. Following are the big-swing deals.

First Quarter

The match started the same way as our Round-Robin match had gone, very poorly for Canada.

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ 64	
♥ AJ108	
♦ J96	
♣ KJ65	
♠ Q107	♠ AK3
♥ 75	♥ Q
♦ AKQ1032	♦ 875
♣ 103	♣ Q98742
	♠ J9852
	♥ K96432
	♦ 4
	♣ A

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
1♦ ¹	Pass	1NT	2♦ ²
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 4+ diamonds unless 4=4=3=2
2. Majors

Upon reflection, I don't like my timid bidding here, even though vulnerable. I did not think the hand was worth double (extras, takeout) or three diamonds (also a good hand). However, I ought to have bid two notrump (Good/Bad) showing a hand that wants to compete in clubs, diamonds or both, but does not have the values for double or three diamonds. Had I done so, Lebi might have bid four notrump, leading to the profitable sacrifice, as at the other table.

West	North	East	South
Bizoń	Jacob	Blat	Klimowicz
1♦ ¹	Pass	1NT	2♦ ²
Double	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. 5+ diamonds unless 4-4-4-1
2. Majors

Bizoń showed no such reticence: his double resulted in Blat's decision to save (which might even have been a make on a good day). There was nothing to the play at either table. The defence had three tricks against either contract: plus 620 for Poland; plus 200 for Canada: 9 IMPs to Poland.

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

♠ 5	
♥ 1086	
♦ 9632	
♣ K10654	
♠ Q9432	♠ -
♥ QJ52	♥ AK93
♦ J5	♦ AKQ874
♣ Q3	♣ A87
♠ AKJ10876	
♥ 74	
♦ 10	
♣ J94	

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
—	Pass	2♣ ¹	4♠
Double ²	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Strong, artificial, forcing
2. 100% penalty

My partner showed great faith in passing my penalty double with his three-loser hand and no spades. The problem was, we were cold for six hearts (seven hearts can make on a spade lead with the three-two trump break, and six diamonds can make double-dummy, even on a trump lead).

Was I supposed to pass (forcing)? Was Lebi supposed to pull to four notrump or five diamonds? In a perfect world, Lebi would have pulled to four notrump, whereupon I'd have bid five clubs, thinking minors in his hand and, when he pulled to five diamonds, I'd have bid six hearts. (In my dreams!) That was too tough an assignment.

We followed up our poor auction with our worst defence of the tournament. I led the heart queen: six, three, seven; heart two: eight, king, four. East tried the ace and king of diamonds – almost perfect so far, although ace and a low one would have been better since I was pretty much marked with the diamond jack after not having led or shifted to the suit. Declarer ruffed the second diamond, tried a high spade to see the lay of the land, and then led the jack of clubs: queen, king, ace. East continued with the four (!) of diamonds. When Kwiecień discarded, I was restricted to two trump tricks, beating the contract only three tricks for plus 500.

But wait! Echoing 1990 in Geneva (Canada vs. Germany in the semi-final of the Rosenblum), we scored that result as only 300! Canadians – morons when keeping score; but, thank God, this time, it did not cost us the match).

West	North	East	South
Bizoń	Jacob	Blat	Klimowicz
—	Pass	1♦ ¹	1♠
Double	Pass	3♠	4♠
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 11-22 HCP, 5+ diamonds unbalanced or 4441 with a black singleton or 11-14 HCP, 4 diamonds and 5 clubs.

Blat perhaps had a better chance than Lebi to bid to the heart slam after the first-round negative double, but the spectre of a diamond slam going down was lurking.

Bizoń-Blat showed the way on defence. The first five tricks were the same as at our table. Then East continued with the queen of diamonds instead of the four. Declarer ruffed and West discarded his second club. After that, however declarer played, he could make only six trump tricks for minus 800 and 11 IMPs to Poland instead of the 7 it should have been.

Shifting to diamonds after two rounds of hearts was essential for the defence to get four off: it left West with two exit cards with which to tap declarer after he won his two trump tricks.

Board 10. Dealer East. Both Vul.

♠ 92	
♥ J10432	
♦ Q942	
♣ Q5	
♠ K106543	♠ AQ7
♥ 9	♥ AK
♦ 1076	♦ AJ853
♣ AK6	♣ 1098
♠ J8	
♥ Q8765	
♦ K	
♣ J7432	

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
—	—	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

My auction was rather conservative: at my second turn. I might have bid three diamonds, Checkback Stayman, to discover three-card spade support opposite, or three spades, a natural slam try. Then, four clubs-four diamonds-four hearts would likely have led to the good slam. I was concerned about the lack of quality of my suit.

In four spades, I lost two tricks for plus 650, justifying, I thought, my bidding.

West	North	East	South
Bizoń	Jacob	Blat	Klimowicz
—	—	1♣ ¹	Pass
1♠ ²	Pass	2♦ ³	Pass
4♥ ⁴	Pass	4NT ⁵	Pass
5♥ ⁶	Pass	7♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Polish Club
2. 4+ spades, 8+ HCP
3. Artificial game-force, 18+ HCP, spade support
4. Splinter
5. Key-card ask
6. 2 key cards, no spade queen

There seems to have been a difference of opinion about how good a hand four hearts promised. Perhaps Blat, with a minimum in terms of high-card points and duplication in hearts, should have reined in. On the other hand, he held those lovely trumps and all those controls.

Bizoń won the heart lead, discarded a club on the other top heart, cashed the spade ace and the two top clubs, crossed to the queen of spades, ruffed a club and ran the diamond ten end playing East. Just one down, but 12 IMPs to Canada. The declarer play was much better than the bidding. Had the ten of diamonds been covered, he'd have won with the ace, returned to hand with a trump and led another diamond toward the jack-eight, hoping to be able to make a correct guess.

The alternative line of play for 12 tricks is to lead a diamond to the jack and king, then try to drop the queen under the ace and, when that fails, discard a diamond on the heart and, if diamonds had been three-two, ruff the diamonds good. When the diamonds prove to be four-one, try the double club finesse. The defence can reduce those options by leading hearts twice, forcing an early discard. This line fails while Bizoń's succeeds.

Board 12. Dealer West. NS Vul.

♠ A763		♠ KJ104	
♥ QJ1092		♥ A864	
♦ A105		♦ J973	
♣ 6		♣ A	
♠ 2		♠	
♥ K73		♥	
♦ 842		♦	
♣ J98743		♣	
♠ Q985			
♥ 5			
♦ KQ6			
♣ KQ1085			

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
—	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT ¹
Pass	3♥ ²	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Relay; asking
2. 4-card spade support, singleton club

Lebi made a terrific speculative double here, realizing his opponents were over-reaching. I led a diamond, which Kwiecień won with the ace to lead a club. Lebi won with his ace and continued diamonds. Declarer won in hand and tried to cash a high club, intending to take as many winners as he could before leading trumps, but East ruffed and led a third diamond. Declarer won that and led a heart. I won with my king and led a club for East to over-ruff the dummy. Lebi still had a trump trick to come for plus 500 to us.

West	North	East	South
Bizoń	Jacob	Blat	Klimowicz
—	1♥	1♠	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Jacob-Klimowicz did really well here to get to three notrump on their combined 23 HCP and with a four-four spade fit. Blat's overcall certainly helped.

The seven-of-clubs lead made it easy for declarer to make nine tricks before the defence could establish five; the good hearts were the key factor: club to the ace, diamond to the king, heart to the king, diamond to the ace, heart to the ace; nine tricks. Plus 600 meant a 15-IMP gain to Canada. Only the impossible-to-find diamond lead would have beaten three notrump.

The first stanza ended 43-26 for Canada. When we began the second set, we were surprised to learn that the score was actually 46-26, courtesy of a slow-play penalty against Blat-Bizoń. Unbeknownst to us, that almost made up for the (so far) undiscovered mis-scored board.

Second Quarter

Board 16. Dealer West. EW Vul.

♠ AKQ42		♠ AKQ42	
♥ AJ2		♥ AJ2	
♦ 9		♦ 9	
♣ AQ74		♣ AQ74	
♠ 853		♠ J96	
♥ Q863		♥ K102	
♦ 764		♦ J1082	
♣ KJ6		♣ 1098	
♠ 107			
♥ 974			
♦ AKQ53			
♣ 532			

West	North	East	South
Carruthers	Starkowski	Lebi	Kwiecień
—	1♣ ¹	Pass	1NT ²
Pass	2♦ ³	Pass	3♦ ⁴
Pass	3♠ ⁵	Pass	4♦ ⁶
Pass	6♠ ⁷	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. Polish Club
2. 7-11 balanced
3. Strong version, game-forcing relay
4. 5-card diamond suit, maximum
5. 5+ spades
6. Diamond control-bid in support of spades
7. Crazy! 😊 (According to Kwiecień)

Down 20 IMPs, Poland started the second set with a bang! Ten-of-clubs lead to the king and ace, club queen, club. When they proved to be three-three, Starkowski drew trumps and claimed, discarding his losing hearts on the diamonds. Plus 980. I mentally reduced our lead to 9 IMPs.

On the actual club lead, slam depended on both three-three clubs and three-three spades, not quite a 13% chance. On a diamond lead, it would have been 3%, dependent also on four-three diamonds and the club finesse: diamond, diamond, diamond, club to the queen, trumps, club ace, club. Back home we call these "Canadian slams".

West	North	East	South
Bizoń	Hargreaves Blat		McOrmond
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Hargreaves-McOrmond got nowhere near bidding slam, with good reason. Plus 480 and the expected 11-IMP loss. Despite this result, Canada won the set 28-21 to lead 74-47.

Third Quarter

Board 43. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ Q52	
♥ K85	
♦ KJ8	
♣ AJ104	
♠ K1096	♠ AJ8
♥ 9642	♥ Q3
♦ Q	♦ 109754
♣ K765	♣ Q98
♠ 743	
♥ AJ107	
♦ A632	
♣ 32	

Of the 64 times this board was played in the Round of 16 matches across all four events, only eight pairs reached three notrump and seven of those declarers made it.

West	North	East	South
Hargreaves	Starkowski	McOrmond	Kwiecień
—	1NT ¹	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT

1. 15-17

Taking the vulnerability and his aces and good heart suit into account, Kwiecień sensibly upgraded his hand to one worth bidding game. Starkowski had already upgraded his own, below-average, 14-count to one worth a one-notrump opener. His result on this board will not cause him to agree with my assessment rather than his own!

The Kaplan-Rubens Hand Evaluator says the North hand is worth just 13.10 HCP while the South hand is worth 10.50 HCP, agreeing with Kwiecień, but disagreeing with Starkowski.

Declarer won the nine-of-diamonds lead with the king over West's queen, cashed the heart king and led another heart, being charmed to see the appearance of her lady. A club to the jack left East on play, not having the ability to take four spade tricks. East exited with a



heart and declarer took a second club finesse for his ninth trick. A wonderful plus 600 for Poland.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Bizoń	Jacob	Blat	Klimowicz
—	1NT ¹	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. 14+-17

At the second table, Jacob also upgraded, but Klimowicz declined to do so, resulting in the 'missed' game. After the five-of-diamonds lead, Jacob won with his king and cashed the jack, hoping to find them more favourably distributed. Discovering the five-one split, he led a heart to the ace and, wishing that the heart nine would soon put in an appearance, ran the jack to East's queen. Blat knocked out the diamond ace and declarer took his heart winners. Hoping for a fortunate black-suit layout and with only seven tricks now, Jacob led a club to the jack. East won and cashed two diamonds, allowing West to discard clubs and the defence then took three spade tricks at the end, beating the contract two tricks for plus 200, 13 IMPs to Poland.

The reason Jacob played two notrump the way he did (the anti-percentage play for the heart queen) was because he knew that the opponents would be in three notrump and they'd play for the queen with West (to be able to pick up four to the queen-nine). If the queen were with West, and Jacob played it to be, he'd probably lose 10 IMPs; if it were offside he might gain 3 IMPs. If the queen were with East and he played for it to be, he'd win 8 IMPs instead of 3 – a good gamble.

That was the only double-digit swing of the set, resulting in a 21-18 win for Poland, but Canada still led 92-68.

Fourth Quarter

Board 46. Dealer West. EW Vul.

♠ 85	
♥ 109852	
♦ K10	
♣ K986	
♠ AKQ3	♠ J9742
♥ AKQ64	♥ J7
♦ A6	♦ Q954
♣ Q3	♣ J2
♠ 106	
♥ 3	
♦ J8732	
♣ A10754	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Hargreaves	Blat	McOrmond	Bizoń
2♣	Pass	2♥ ¹	2NT ²
Double	3♣	Pass	Pass
3♥	4♣	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. No ace or king
2. Minors

It took the dreadful five-one trump break to beat four hearts. Nevertheless, it seems that either East or West might have taken different actions to reach the ever-so-slightly superior four-spade game, but they were hampered by Blat-Bizoń's intervention. An interesting treatment is for West, at his second turn, to bid three clubs for the majors with better hearts and three diamonds for the majors with better spades. Also, West might have doubled again or bid four clubs at his third turn and East might have bid spades at some point. Plus 100 for Poland.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Starkowski	Jacob	Kwiecień	Klimowicz
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♦ ²	Pass
2♦ ³	Pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass
2NT ⁵	Pass	3♥ ⁶	Pass
3♠ ⁷	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Polish Club
2. Usually (a.) 0-7 HCP, but sometimes (b.) 7-11 with both minors or (c.) 17+ balanced with no major
3. Artificial game-force
4. 4-7 HCP
5. Balanced
6. Transfer
7. Promises a spade fit

With no interference to contend with, Starkowski-Kwiecień breezed into four spades unmolested for plus 680 on the ten-of-hearts lead: 13 IMPs to Poland.

The following deal was remarkable in that it was only in our match of the 32 in play across all four events that slam was bid and made at both tables.

Board 55. Dealer North EW Vul.

♠ J94	
♥ J4	
♦ Q86543	
♣ 84	
♠ AK765	♠ 1032
♥ KQ7	♥ A963
♦ A	♦ K109
♣ AK72	♣ 965
♠ Q8	
♥ 10852	
♦ J72	
♣ QJ103	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Hargreaves	Blat	McOrmond	Bizoń
—	2♦ ¹	Pass	3♣ ²
Double	3♦ ³	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
5NT ⁴	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Weak 2-bid: 0-10 HCP, 5+ diamonds
2. Puppet to 3♦ (a raise to 3♦ would have been invitational)
3. Forced
4. Pick a slam

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Starkowski	Jacob	Kwiecień	Klimowicz
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²	Pass
2♦ ³	Pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT ⁵	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Polish Club
2. 4+ hearts, 8+ HCP
3. Relay, game-forcing
4. Only 4 hearts, minimum (7-9 HCP)
5. Nothing further to say

Slam is not particularly good: it needs spades three-two or perhaps a singleton jack or queen with South, plus four heart tricks or a squeeze. At first, we thought that, because of the need to use the ace of hearts as an entry to cash the king of diamonds, a club lead (and continuation when winning the defence's trump trick) would beat the slam. More on this later.

Both Norths led a diamond, Blat the five, fourth-highest and Jacob the six, third-highest from an even number, so the Rule of 11 and the Rule of 12, respectively, applied). Thus, both Souths could tell that declarer had only one card higher than the card led, which had to be the ace, so they could avoid squandering their diamond jack. The declarers did indeed win with their ace and played three rounds of trumps immediately, to rectify the count. Upon regaining the lead, they cashed the trumps, tested the hearts and cashed the king of diamonds. Both Souths found themselves under pressure and had to discard two clubs to guard the hearts. So, both declarers made the seven of clubs as their twelfth trick. It was a fine performance all around for a noble push.

On a club lead, double-dummy, declarer wins with the club ace and cashes the ace and king of spades, the ace of diamonds, the king of clubs and the king-queen of hearts. Then he gives North his trump trick. North, stripped of all suits but diamonds, leads one: three, king, two, club discard. Declarer ruffs dummy's third diamond and plays his last trump, squeezing South in hearts and clubs. Declarer effectively uses North to give him the extra entry to the dummy to execute the squeeze on South.

The remaining 13 boards were as flat as could be, with just single overtricks or undertricks available to one side or the other – the quarter finished 18-5 for Poland, making the final score Canada 97 – Poland 86. It was one of the best wins ever for a Canadian Senior team.



‘Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time.’

George Bernard Shaw



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THE 2024 CANADIAN OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP

By Brad Bart

The CBF asked me to write an article about this year's CNTC. Not to spoil the ending, but ... We won!

We'll get to some hands in a minute, but first let me brag about my teammates. This was the second win for my star partner Jeff Blond from Montreal, the first for the young, underrated Daniel Lyder from Victoria, and the fourth for curmudgeon and newly minted CBF hall of famer Michael Roche, also from Victoria. For those of you who enjoy useless statistics, Michael is the first hall of famer to be inducted the same year they won the CNTC. (He is still smiling.) And myself? I am from Vancouver, and this is my second CNTC win.

Everyone played well, except on that one hand that they bribed me not to mention. And it sure feels good to play well. Our next stop is the World Bridge Games in Buenos Aires in October, along with augmented pair Mark Caplan and Fred Gitelman, expat Torontonians who were on Team Canada last year, and nonplaying captain Bob Todd from Winnipeg. Go Canada!

And now back to the beginning. How does board one sound? None vul teams, you pick up ♠Q98 ♥AQ10643 ♦103 ♣92. It seems within range for a weak two, but your range may vary. Partner quickly puts you in game and they lead the seven of diamonds. (Hands rotated for convenience).

♠ 103
♥ K985
♦ AQJ4
♣ A106

♠ Q98
♥ AQ10643
♦ 103
♣ 92

Opening lead: ♦7.

How would you play 4♥?

While you think about that, let me tell you a bit about the format. The CNTC is arguably the best — and toughest! — event on the Canadian bridge calendar. Though it could be viewed as a vehicle to select Canada's world open team, the event attracts many bridge enthusiasts who thrive on competition. There are no weak teams: every one of them would absolutely crush their local club game. In the CNTC, nothing comes for free.

The CNTC continues to follow the now popular "Soloway teams" format: a round-robin stage followed by a knockout stage. But new this year, the round-robin would be contested online over a 3-day weekend in February (oddly the Super bowl weekend, to the chagrin of many) and the knockout would be held face-to-face alongside the Penticton regional in June.

The format switch to online has left a vomitsweet taste for many, reminiscent of the cheating allegations

that soured the Covid years. Although it was not our preferred format, it is undeniable that computerized bridge brings some advantages. One, it prevents common irregularities like insufficient bids, leads out of turn and revokes. Two, there's a record of every auction and every card played. And three (or maybe this should be Two-B) you can cross compare results at other tables to compute your Butler score. We also liked that we could play four handed without the usual stamina issue a 7-day in-person bridge marathon can bring.

Back to board 1. Did you finesse the diamond? If so, they would win the king on your right, give partner a ruff, and quickly scoop up the top two spades for down one. OK, not really. But that's the risk you are running. At IMPs, the strategy is to make your contract, despite the lure of overtricks, and you will almost certainly find your way to 10 tricks if you win the ♦A at trick one, draw the trumps and then set up your diamonds for a club discard. This "safety play" would have cost you an overtrick IMP, as West led a diamond from an original holding of ♦K97.

Reviewing the board on RealBridge, 4 of 12 pairs led a diamond, and all declarers played safe for 10 tricks and +420. The other 8 declarers received a club lead, which is more pressure — with the ♣A dislodged, they now needed a winning diamond finesse to make 4♥. When that worked, most declarers repeated the finesse to ditch their club and score an overtrick for +450 and a gain of 1 IMP. The tougher lead produces a worse result? Bridge is a paradoxical game sometimes.

Here's another fun one from the round robin. The opponents are vul, and you hold ♠AKQJ832 ♥KJ853 ♦4 ♣-. You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣. No need to panic yet, just rebid 2♥. Partner raises to 3♥! Now what?

With hearts agreed, you just need ♥AQ ♦A to count 13 tricks. Maybe cue bidding will get you there, but Exclusion is the right tool. There's a nervous moment when partner thinks about your 5♣ ask ...they did bid clubs themselves after all! But eventually 5NT (2 with the queen) comes back, and your 7♥ contract is the happy ending you hoped for. Partner held ♠4 ♥AQ102 ♦A87 ♣KJ1076.

RealBridge says Jeff and I were only one of three pairs to reach the grand slam for an 11 IMP pickup — both Alex Hong - Lu Gan, and Jianfeng Luo - Shigang Liang duplicated our auction. Four enterprising Wests overcalled 2♦, which made North's bidding awkward. They all chose a negative double (would you have?) to

give South a problem where none of 2♥, 3♥ nor 4♥ was quite enough. A tough hand!

The Playoffs in Penticton

Only 8 teams would advance to the quarter finals. At the conclusion of 3 days of play, the qualifiers were many of the usual suspects:

1. Liang	177.51
2. Findlay	169.98
3. Zhou	161.01
4. Bart	157.80
5. Zheng	148.69
6. L'Écuyer	144.31
7. Jacob	141.54
8. Kuz	141.07

To build a bracket, the top team chooses their opponent from teams 5-8. Then second and third choose from whomever is left. And fourth plays L'Écuyer.

With 24 total CNTC wins among its members, many of them recent, there's a reason nobody picks L'Écuyer. (The Jacob team also has an impressive 18 total wins.) Even though we finished higher in the round-robin, we were the underdogs on paper. And here's how it went. We won our first set 54-14, and held the lead throughout to win 157-110. One contributing factor was that Jeff and I bid 4/4 of our slams, leading to two big pickups. Here's one of them:

North (Bart)

♠ AK109
♥ 63
♦ KJ8
♣ AJ109

South (Blond)

♠ 76
♥ AKJ872
♦ 2
♣ KQ85

The pairs at both tables were playing a weak notrump, so the bidding started:

North South

1♣ 1♥
1NT¹ 2♦²
2♠

- 15-17.
- GF artificial.

It was at this point the auctions diverged. At the other table, South chose 3♥ to show the 6th heart and North retreated to 3NT. A diamond was led to the queen and king, and North cashed their 9 tricks, for +400.

At our table, Jeff supported clubs, and I cooperated with a cuebid. The auction continued:

North South

1♣ 1♥

1NT¹ 2♦²

2♠ 3♣

3♦³ 3♥³

3♠³ 4♦⁴

4NT⁵ 6♣

Pass

1. 15-17.

2. GF artificial.

3. Cuebid.

4. Key card for clubs.

5. Two key cards without the ♣Q.

The hearts were established via a ruff, so that was +920, and a win of 11 IMPs.

Here's another interesting problem from the set. Both vul, I dealt and opened 2NT (20-21) with ♠KQ3 ♥KQ5 ♦A109 ♣AK74. Jeff bid 3♠, our minor suit slam try gadget, to relay me to 3NT, and then he bid 4♦, which showed both minors with longer (or equal) diamonds. Now what? On the one hand, I was top of range with 4-card club support. On the other hand, I was a sterile 4-3-3-3 with likely wasted values in the majors. I erred on the side of aggression, and chose 4♥, key card for clubs. Jeff bid 4♠ (1 key card), and I bid 6♣.

♠ 8

♥ A8

♦ K7642

♣ Q10532

♠ A9642

♥ 1062

♦ Q85

♣ J9

♠ J1075

♥ J9743

♦ J3

♣ 86

♠ KQ3

♥ KQ5

♦ A109

♣ AK74

— 2 spades, 3 hearts, 2 diamonds and 5 clubs. Curious that if West doesn't lead the ace of spades, the trick will vanish via a heart discard!

In the other quarter finals Liang edged Kuz 137-133, but the others were not nearly as close: Findlay fell to Zheng 111-161; and Zhou bested Jacob 161-108.

Liang, the highest surviving team was permitted to pick their opponent. And they picked us. It never feels good to be chosen, but they did blitz us in the round-robin. In their shoes, I would have picked us too. The match was close through 3 segments, the lead changing hands each comparison. We went into the final segment with a 4 IMP deficit to face the steady pair of Edward Xu and Yan Wang. We won the set 59-22 for a 33 IMP victory. A large contributor was a system victory for Lyder-Roche.

♠ K63

♥ KJ753

♦ KJ73

♣ 5

♠ Q84

♥ 6

♦ 1062

♣ K98643

♠ 107

♥ A42

♦ 985

♣ AQJ72

♠ AJ952

♥ Q1098

♦ AQ4

♣ 10

Blond

Pass

Pass 2♦¹

Pass 4♥

Bart

1♠

2♥

All Pass

1. Exactly 3 spades, limit raise.

After two sound passes, I opened 1♠ and made a natural game try. That meant a change of plans for Jeff, but we still landed in 4 of a major. The opening lead was a club. When East tried a second club, the spade loser vanished. +650. At the other table:

Roche

Lyder

West North East South

Pass

1♦¹

1♠

2♥²

Dble

5♣

5♥

All Pass

1. Precision, one plus diamond.

2. Clubs.

It looks like there's a spade loser and a diamond loser, but ...Our West led the ace of spades! I quickly claimed

The 11-card club sacrifice was going to show a 3-IMP profit, but even better is when they take the push and go down. Since there was no reason to take the backward finesse in spades, that was +100 and good for 13 IMPs.

Our last board of the match was an opening lead problem. Take the reins, would you?

You are West and hold ♠K765 ♥AQ6 ♦743 ♣732. You hear this auction:

North	East	South	West
			Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT ¹	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
1. Forcing.			

What's your opening lead?

The opponents have an 8-card spade fit, and you likely have the only stopper for your side. Any suit could work, of course, but a heart requires the least material from partner: either the ♥K or ♥J will do.

♠ 109832	
♥ K9	
♦ AQ52	
♣ AJ	
♠ K765	♠ 4
♥ AQ6	♥ J10875
♦ 743	♦ KJ9
♣ 732	♣ 10854
♠ AQJ	
♥ 432	
♦ 1086	
♣ KQ96	

On the ♥A, Jeff made the heads up play of the ♥J. The ♥Q continuation led to one down. 3NT could be made on any other lead.

The Final

The final would be against the Zheng team, who defeated Zhou 117-97 after a +30 IMP third quarter opened up their match. It was a well-played final where the IMP differential was always "close", i.e. within +/- 30, until the final segment. We prevailed 269-206. I'll share

two hands from the final before I call it a day. Jeff faced a difficult play problem on this deal. See if you can do as well as he did.

N/S vul:

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass

♠ 5
♥ A84
♦ AQJ103
♣ A754

♠ AJ107432
♥ K103
♦ 2
♣ Q6

Opening lead: ♣K.

You win the ♣A (good play) and play a trump to the ♠J and ♠Q. A heart runs to East's ♥J and your ♥K, and when you try the ♠A, you discover West has three trump tricks (East pitching a club). You set your sights on diamonds for your tenth trick. Who do you think has the ♦K?

Jeff took an inference from the opening lead. The ♣K would have been an odd choice holding three trump tricks unless a diamond lead looked even worse. So at trick 5 he played a diamond to the ♦Q. West's hand was ♠KQ96 ♥976 ♦K9764 ♣K. That was +420 and a win of 11 IMPs when game failed at the other table.

Last was our most spectacular result as a team.

Both vul, your partner puts you in 5♦ after the opponents had bid and raised spades.

Blond		Bart	
West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♠	Pass
3♠ ¹	Dbl	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

1. Mixed raise.

♠ -
♥ AK1084
♦ AK83
♣ A1032

♠ A1052
♥ J9
♦ 10965
♣ 985

How would you play on the lead of the ♣K?

With a likely diamond to lose and the ♣A dislodged, declarer played for hearts 3-3 and diamonds 3-2. The plan was to ruff out the hearts, draw trumps, pitch two clubs on the long hearts, and then ruff a club. This didn't work out when the layout proved to be:

♠ -	
♥ AK1084	
♦ AK83	
♣ A1032	
♠ 9873	♠ KQJ64
♥ Q653	♥ 72
♦ Q72	♦ J4
♣ KJ	♣ Q754
♠ A1052	
♥ J9	
♦ 10965	
♣ 985	

I ruffed the 3rd round of hearts with the ♦J, cashed the ♣Q and gave Jeff a club ruff for one down and +100. It was a spectacular lead by Jeff.

Meanwhile at other table:

	Lyder		Roche
West	North	East	South
	1♣ ¹	1♠	Dbl ²
3♠	5NT	Pass	6♦

All Pass

1. 16+, artificial.
2. 5-7 HCPs.

Perhaps 5NT was on the aggressive side, but Daniel was unlucky that 80% of South's high cards were in the enemy suit. Roche received a spade lead. He won the ♠A (pitching a club), and ran the ♥J. When that held,

he ran the ♥9. He took the top two trumps and ran his winners. That was +1370 and a 16 IMP gain. Whew!

I look forward to sharing more exhilarating stories from Argentina. Chau!

QUIZ

IBPA DECLARER PLAY PROBLEM #27

ANSWER ON PAGE 38

Contract: 7♠. Lead: ♦K, Plan the play.

♠ AJ96	
♥ A10742	
♦ 3	
♣ AKQ	
♠ 7432	♠ 5
♥ 863	♥ KJ95
♦ KQ1096	♦ 8542
♣ 5	♣ 7642
♠ KQ108	
♥ Q	
♦ AJ7	
♣ J10987	



Psychiatrist: What seems to be the problem?

Patient: I am a serious bridge player, and I fell in love attending my last tournament.

Psychiatrist: Sounds pretty healthy to me.

Patient: You don't understand – I fell in love with the Queen of Hearts!!



He Didn't Read my Books!

By Neil Kimelman



One of the challenges I faced when writing my three books is finding examples to illustrate a certain bidding principle. Yes, you can use made up hands, but I have always thought having a real deal adds so much more to the learning. I wish I would have had the following real deal to illustrate an important bidding principle.

Reading my March 2024 ACBL Bulletin, I came across the article covering the Reisinger final at the Atlanta NABC. This bidding situation arose:

As West, you hold: ♠32 ♥AQ2 ♦AKQ2 ♣J752.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass

?

What do you bid as West? Here is what Mark Horton, the article's author, wrote:

'It is easy to predict the first two bids. East opens 1♠ and West responds 2♣ (South passes)...'

My bridge author mode is jolted awake by this statement. What??!!

Why did I react this way?

Here is a hand where you know you want to play at least game, and slam in a lively possibility opposite many opening bids, you want to ensure that you make bids that helps the partnership towards that goal. 2♣ does

not do that. Not even close!! Why would you like to get partner to value ♣Qxx and think that ♣- or ♣x is a bad holding??!!

The best response is 2♦. Bidding where you have values and looking for the best contract. Bidding 2♣ will get you to the wrong contract on many, many hands. Here are some example East hands, with the likely impact of responding in one minor or the other:

1. ♠AKQxxx ♥Jx ♦x ♣Axxx. Here a 2♣ bid will get you to a club game or slam. Even a club game is precarious. All 6♠ needs is a 3-2 spade break.

2. ♠AKxxx ♥AJxx ♦Jxx ♣x. Here you may get to 3NT, down on a club lead.

For the record, this was the full deal:

♠ J874	
♥ J63	
♦ 73	
♣ AK103	
♠ 32	♠ AQ10965
♥ AQ2	♥ K97
♦ AKQ2	♦ J1098
♣ J752	♣ -
♠ K	
♥ 10854	
♦ 654	
♣ Q9865	

Some pairs played in 5♦ and 3NT, not the optimum contracts. Responding 2♦ simplifies the bidding, makes it easy getting to a small slam in either spades or diamonds.

Here is one of the examples I did use in my bidding judgement series, which exemplifies this principle in another way. I have also used in a stand-alone article entitled, 'Setting Partner up for Failure'.

Here is a hand that came up at a local club game which I found very instructive: Matchpoints, with only E-W vulnerable, you hold as South ♠ J8763 ♥ AKQ9 ♦ 753 ♣ 2. The bidding starts:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	?

Again an automatic bid of 1♠ for 99% of players. However 1NT may be right and describes the key aspect

of your hand: 8 – 12 HCPs and hearts stopped. 1NT was definitely right on this deal!

♠ 10542	
♥ 4	
♦ Q9842	
♣ KQJ	
♠ K	♠ AQ9
♥ 10765	♥ J832
♦ AJ10	♦ K6
♣ A7643	♣ 10985
♠ J8763	
♥ AKQ9	
♦ 753	
♣ 2	

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	3♠	All pass	

-150 instead of + 200.

Had you bid 1NT the bidding will likely continue:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	1NT
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠ (or 3♦)
3♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl

All pass



'We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.'

George Bernard Shaw



THE IBPA FILES

The International Bridge Press Association (IBPA) is a world-wide bridge organization of more than 300 members in all corners of the world. Its main objective is to assist bridge journalists in their bridge related professional activities. The IBPA publishes a monthly online Bulletin, which consists of interesting deals involving some of the best players of the world, competing in key international tournaments.



2022 DECLARER PLAY OF THE YEAR - RUNE ANDERSSSEN

Journalist: Nils Kvangraven



2022 IBPA AWARDS

For most of the last decade, the awards ceremony for the best deals of the year has been sponsored by the Hainan Bridge Federation. The impact of COVID was to postpone the ceremony for three years, but plans were in place to hold the awards ceremony for the 2022 prizes (year ending June 2022) in October of last year.

A combination of circumstances meant that despite the best efforts of IBPA and Mr. Zhu, our Honorary Chairman, we had to postpone the prize-giving. The event was rescheduled to take place in April 2024 in Suzhou, when again at short notice new rules were implemented in China that meant we had to cancel less than a month before the event.

The good news, such as it is, is that we will be able to reward the players who had been planning to attend. And we are back on track with 2023 -- our new year ending date for awards is the calendar year ending 31 December 2023. The prizegiving, we hope, will be at Suzhou this October. The 2023 winners have been selected and will be thus informed very shortly.

Barry Rigal, IBPA President

Rune Brendeford Anderssen has been among the top Norwegian players since the 1980s. He is still going strong and is a man to respect at the table.

During the Norwegian Bridge Federation Realbridge Teams, Anderssen came up with this beautiful play, one of the best I've seen so far in 2022. Anderssen's team faced last year's winners in the Round of 32 in a knockout match of 32 boards. Anderssen's team was close to winning, but had to settle for losing by 6 IMPs.

Dealer North. Both sides vulnerable.

♠ 952
♥ A84
♦ Q965
♣ 1052

♠ J
♥ 10753
♦ 874
♣ A9864

♠ 73
♥ KQ2
♦ AKJ102
♣ J73

♠ AKQ10864
♥ J96
♦ 3
♣ KQ

West	North	East	South
Brekka	Berg	Saur	Anderssen
	Pass	1♦	4♠

All Pass

A heart lead would have sealed the fate of the contract, but who can blame West for leading a diamond, won by East with the ten. The ace of diamonds came next, ruffed by Anderssen with the ten of spades. It looks like there are two hearts, a diamond and a club for the defence -- can you see how Anderssen made his contract? He played the ace of spades and the eight of spades to the nine, then a club to the king. West took his ace and returned a heart to the four, queen and six. East returned a club, won by the queen. Anderssen played the carefully preserved four of spades to the five and tried the queen of diamonds in case the jack dropped. Sadly, West produced the eight. Anderssen didn't give up; he ran the trumps down to:

♠ -	♠ -
♥ A8	♥ K2
♦ 9	♦ J
♣ 10	♣ J
♠ -	♠ -
♥ 1053	♥ K2
♦ -	♦ J
♣ 9	♣ J
♠ KQ	
♥ J9	
♦ -	
♣ -	

Anderssen led the king of spades, West discarding a club and dummy a heart, but what was East to do? He had to keep the jacks of diamonds and clubs, so a heart needed to go. Anderssen read the cards perfectly when he continued with a heart to the ace dropping the king to make the contract. That was perfect declarer play: Anderssen tested all his chances before producing a three-suit trump squeeze on East. I was impressed; it was beautiful play by the expert Anderssen.

2022 JUNIOR PLAY OF THE YEAR - BEN NORTON.

Journalist: Barry Rigal

Dealer South. East-West vulnerable.

♠ A2	♠ KQ106
♥ KQ97	♥ 32
♦ AK63	♦ J97
♣ KQ6	♣ AJ97
♠ 43	♠ J9875
♥ J108	♥ A654
♦ 842	♦ Q105
♣ 105432	♣ 8

West	North	East	South
Brekka	Berg	Saur	Anderssen
			Pass
Pass	2SA	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠ ¹
Pass	3SA ²	Pass	4♣ ³
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

1. Slam try for hearts.
2. Shortage/attitude ask.
3. Either no shortage, or a mild try with a shortage.

Ben Norton wasn't exactly impressed by his partnership bidding to reach slam here against Spain -- with no way to discover the shortage, he simply bid the slam. However, the line of play that he followed was very elegant.

You can hardly blame Andrzej Knap for leading a top spade here, can you? Norton won and, not having the entries to cater for the jack-doubleton of diamonds offside, took a diamond finesse as his best line to play the suit for four tricks, then drew trumps and played the diamonds to pitch dummy's club. That squeezed East down to three spades and a doubleton club in this position:

♠ 2	
♥ 9	
♦ -	
♣ KQ6	
♠ 4	♠ Q106
♥ -	♥ -
♦ -	♦ -
♣ 10543	♣ AJ
♠ J987	
♥ 6	
♦ -	
♣ -	

Norton led a low spade from hand and Knap correctly ducked. Norton then ducked a spade to East, pitching a club from hand, and East was back in the hot seat. He could do no better than return his club jack. Norton ran it to his hand, ruffed a club, and claimed. Note that, on a passive trump lead, declarer could embark on the same line, but East can prevail this time by pitching a spade, not a club on the fourth diamond. Then he wins the second spade and exits with a low club.

That was 11 IMPs to England in a big win, instead of 11 IMPs to Spain and a small win.

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Zatorski	Patreuha	Pachtman
			1♥
Pass	1NT	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♦	2♥	3♦
Pass	3SA	All Pass	

In the other room, East-West had boosted the auction to 3♠ and had been doubled there for -300, losing two high hearts, a heart ruff and three high trumps, so a lot of IMPs were riding on whether 3NT could be brought home. Patreuha led the club queen, asking for an unblock of the jack or count, and my club seven suggested the actual layout. Plan the defence.

Patreuha shifted to a spade. Declarer won in hand and led a diamond toward the ace. Patreuha discarded the queen of hearts and, when declarer finessed in diamonds on the way back, he pitched the jack of hearts. Both plays are necessary to prevent declarer establishing hearts without letting West on lead for the killing club continuation.

Declarer's line of play was logical and technically sound; to succeed, he would have had to play a heart at trick two and duck East's jack -- an impossible play to find.

2022 DEFENSIVE PLAY OF THE YEAR

- PATRYK PATREUHA.

Journalist : Krzysztof Jassem

Dealer South. North-South vulnerable.

♠ A9	
♥ 87	
♦ KJ653	
♣ J832	
♠ J73	♠ 108642
♥ 1093	♥ QJ5
♦ Q1094	♦ -
♣ 765	♣ AKQ104
♠ KQ5	
♥ AK642	
♦ A872	
♣ 9	

2022 BIDDING OF THE YEAR AWARD:

KWIECIEN - STARKOWSKI

Journalist : Marek Wojcicki

Dealer West. Both sides vulnerable.

♠ J	
♥ AK7432	
♦ A8	
♣ AJ85	
♠ 9843	♠ 652
♥ 86	♥ J1095
♦ 763	♦ KJ94
♣ K762	♣ Q4
♠ AKQ107	
♥ Q	
♦ Q1052	
♣ 1093	

In the Jacoby Swiss Teams, Burn's Law was violated when Włodzimierz Starkowski and Michał Kwiecien bid and made slam with a five-one trump fit. North can make 6NT, but the only makeable slam by South is 6♠. How can it be bid in a sensible way? The Polish champions showed how:

North	South
Starkowski	Kwecien
1♣ ¹	1♠ ²
2♥ ³	2♠ ⁴
3♣ ⁵	3♦ ⁶
3♥ ⁷	3♠ ¹⁷
3SA ⁸	5SA ⁹
6♠ ¹⁰	Pass

1. Polish: (i) 12-14 HCP, balanced; (ii) 15+HCP, natural with 5+ clubs; (iii) strong, 18+ HCP, any.
2. 7+ HCP, 4+ spades, forcing to 1NT.
3. 18+ HCP, 5+ hearts, game forcing.
4. Extra length.
5. 4+ clubs.
6. Waiting, usually asks for a diamond stopper (4th-suit forcing equivalent).
7. Natural.
8. Diamond stopper, so the delayed 3NT makes it clear that 3♥ showed a six-card suit.
9. Pick a slam.
10. Perhaps spades?

West led a club. Declarer won with the ace, played a heart to the queen, a spade to the jack, ruffed a heart, cashed the spades and made 12 tricks. Declarer's line of play was about 52%, needing four-three spades and three-three or four-two hearts. Ducking the club at trick one might have increased his chances. At the other table, the North-South pair stopped in 3NT.



the GREAT CANADIAN BIDDING CONTEST

♥ ♠ ♦ ♣



September 2024

TGCBC

Host: Paul Thurston

For panelists, and their bids, see page 36

Editor's Note: Four panelists scored perfect 50s! Keith Balcombe, Ray Hornby, (Way to go pard!), David Grainger and Zygmunt Marcinski. Speaking of Zyg, I am pleased to say that he has agreed to host the June 25 edition of the TGCBC. I am looking forward to that!

Ashot Harutyunyan was the reader with the top score, closely followed by Sheldon Spier. Way to go gents! Over to you Paul! (Text in bold and italic font are the Host's comments.)

Before we get into the meat of this month's Challenge, how about a rousing round of applause for Dan Jacob and Piotr Klimowicz who captured the Gold Medals in the World Senior Pairs concluded last month in Argentina. Captain Dan also spearheaded a tremendous effort by his Senior Team who qualified for the playoffs in the World Senior Teams and finished a very respectable tied 5-8th! Congrats to John (J.C.) Carruthers- Robert Lebi and Mike Hargreaves- Gordon McOrmond as well as Jacob-Klimowicz. And now on to the deals we have to inspect this month. Starting with:

1. Matchpoints. Dealer: South, N-S vul, as South you hold: ♠KJ932 ♥K9 ♦A74 ♣Q82.

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♣	Dbl	Pass	?

What is your call?

The vast majority of the panelists started well by agreeing with your host, and bidding 2♦. Let's start with Bill Treble for why 2♦:

Bill Treble: "When I have nothing but flawed choices I make the cheapest bid. 2NT not even a consideration for me."

Agreeing is our esteemed Editor:

Neil Kimelman: "2♦. 2NT defines this pattern but 2♦ leaves options open for partner: Pass, 2♥ with 5+ cards. Maybe even taking a preference to 2♠".

(Time-out for an unpaid commercial message: While handing out end-of year congratulations, I'd like to add Editor Neil for his wonderful job of editing this magazine - it's never been better!)"

2024 Canadian Senior Teams Champion Robert Lebi agrees with 2♦, but adds a prediction as well:

Lebi: 2♦ the cheapest bid that doesn't grossly misdescribe my hand. There will be more bidding" (Paul - "I like the bid but at the table, three passes followed 2♦").

As for describing that South hand, accurately or otherwise:

Zygmunt Marcinski: With a poor to mediocre hand, treading very lightly seems to be wisest. Of course, there will always be panelists who jump right on to their favourite systemic hobby horse:

Ray Hornby: "2♦, the most flexible call. Passing is far too dangerous a position. And, of course, It would be so much easier if I could have opened this with a weak notrump" (***Sure would be intriguing to find a route to North-South's best contract of 2♦ after the omnipotent weak notrump.***).

Bob Kuz: speaks for the "obvious" facts in search of a call: "2♠, doesn't promise six and I don't have another 4-card suit. "As the at-the-table 2♠ bidder found out, what ♠KJ932 opposite ♠6 doesn't promise is a makeable contract!"

Also bidding in the fast lane:

David Lindop: 2NT! Simply shows a minimum balanced hand while not guaranteeing a club stopper. *"I think David might be an unenrolled member of Ray Hornby's Weak Notrump gang!"*

And for the truly adventurous: Nick L'Ecuyer who passes while offering this explanation: Pass is "Nick Style" as double "always denies a spade fit and/or a biddable suit of his own. If we go minus versus 2♣ doubled, it maybe be the smallest minus available". Well, all that description is totally accurate but doesn't take into account how we might or might not be able to set 2♣. And you won't set it, especially after partner leads his singleton spade right into declarer's "mashed potatoes"; West: ♠AQ10 ♥Qxx Q ♣AKJ10xx.

That leaves the negative doubler with ♠x ♥A98xx ♦K109xx ♣xx to leave any North-South contract higher than 2♦ suffering a minus while 2♦ won't be a walk in the park but I'd bet on declarer.

Starting with a good analysis but ending with a losing decision was Winnipeg's finest Bob Todd who opined: "Pass, I'd rather have a 4th trump but since partner is short in spades, I have no assurance of any part score or game our way making. Likely the issue will be one or two overtricks for declarer. (Likely only one Bob!). Scores:

Bid	Votes	Score
2♦	12	10
2NT	4	7
2♠	3	5
Pass	2	2

At the table, the 2♦ bidders will score well and the rest will scavenge for the leftovers with declarer's advantage likely allowing notrump to escape for down one while 2♠ will be down (at least) two and 2♣ doubled will yield the predicted -140 with an overtrick possible.

2. Matchpoints. Dealer: West, neither vul. As South you hold ♠AKQ1096 ♥10742 ♦A9 ♣6.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	2♣ ¹	?

1. Natural, 6-9 HCPs.

What is your call?

There are multiple possibilities here, as Zygmunt Marcinski so succinctly pointed out: "A complicated hand!"

Zygmunt's choice: 4♣, to show slam aspirations as I expect partner will pass over the anticipated 5♣ (he will) and then I could bid 5♦. Partner will sit there looking forlornly at xxx in spades. (Yes he will but he won't be sitting there idly as he'll be wondering how to cope with West's lead-directing double of that artful 5♦ bid!).

That's the strategic element of the deal as you know a club lead won't be damaging as long as partner's hearts are very good (and what else might he have?) and the 4♣ splinter raise might well shake off the club lead, especially if the follow-up of 5♦ gets doubled. Despite that potential pitfall, the splinter was a much loved call by many, including:

David Grainger: "4♣, partner will know I have a good hand and will bid 4♦ (Last Trainish, I suppose and likely to deter the ♦ lead) if he has something" (but in line with Zygmunt's prediction of partner's ♠xxx, how much can he like his hand?). Not to be deterred from possible uncomfortable future developments triggered by the splinter: And hedging his choice:

Keith Balcombe: "4♣ as I'm unsure of our system so I choose what should be a splinter. I prefer a fit-showing jump of 3♠ so as to get a spade lead if opener rebids 5♣ and partner passes, I will (perhaps) bid 5♥. I may be misreading Keith's comment but I can't quite fathom what magical powers of the fit jump are going to spawn a spade lead against whatever number of hearts we reach. Also a Splinter giver:

Robert Lebi: “4♣. All I really need are excellent trumps”.
Some have a more devious way of checking out partner’s slam worthiness:

Bob Todd: “3♣. How do I find out if partner has a real hand or just a smattering of cards?”

In good company with:

Nick L’Ecuyer: “3♣ but 4♣ is tempting but a follow-up of 4♥ by partner won’t say much as he doesn’t have all that much”.

Trying to re-assure partner about what he is likely to be looking forlornly at:

David Willis: “3♠ fit showing and not a splinter as my hand is too good. ♥ AKQxx is likely good enough for slam.

Andy Stark: “3♠ fit showing and forcing to game – I’ve got it! If partner control bids 4♦, out comes RKC and off to slam”.

Not quite, Andy, as if partner bids 4♦, there will be a Director visit to explain why 4♦ over 5♣ by the opponent isn’t allowed. Francine Cimon is content to show what she has and presumably work out what comes next when next comes:

Francine Cimon: “3♠, a fit bid to show 5+ good spades and 4+ hearts”. (Yup, that’s what she has.)

Danny Miles: “3♠, a fit jump showing 5+4+ majors as a splinter may leave partner worried about spades”.

It would seem to me that both the fit jump and splinter indirectly and inadvertently will put the focus on the diamond suit so maybe the Keycard Brigade has a better idea:

David Lindop: 4NT as Keycard for ♥. Slam should have play opposite as little as ♥ AQJxx.

Bill Treble: 4NT. Maybe Keycard will attract a spade lead?

But while many are having visions of a possible slam, there’s also the Matchpoint angle to be wary of. As it

happens, 5♥ with a non-diamond lead will be North-South’s limit while any foray to the 5-level that gets a diamond lead from East will produce a one-trick set as, just as Bob Todd foretold, partner doesn’t have a real hand, just a “smattering of cards”.

Be honest, who would not overcall over 1♣ with: ♠xx ♥KQJxx ♦Q10xx ♣xx

All to make Neil Kimelman’s slow route to possibly buying the hand look even better:

Kimelman: “With my favourite partner I would bid 2NT, four card limit raise or better. This would set up a key card ask, allowing partner to ‘show’ the heart queen if they hold AKxxxx.... Without this agreement I like 3♣. Less ambiguous as far as strength and does not give any info the opponents. Will key card next.”

To be fair, David Grainger and Bob Todd both suggested 2NT as a possible action.

Bid	Votes	Score
4♣	9	10
3♠	4	7
3♣	3	6
4NT	3	6
2NT	0	3
2♠	1	3*

*As a closing thought on this deal, I point out that David Turner’s thoughtful choice of 2♠ (natural and forcing) just might scoop the pot!

3. Matchpoints. Dealer: North, neither vul. As South you hold: ♠K102 ♥AKJ9764 ♦Q ♣KQ.

West	North	East	South
	1NT ¹	Pass	2♦ ²
Pass	2♥	Pass	?

1. 15-17.

2. Hearts.

a) Do you agree with 2♦? If not, what would you have bid?

b) What do you bid over 2♥?

It came as no surprise that an overwhelming majority vetoed the choice of 2♦ as not appropriate for this slam-drive collection. Of those who gave grudging

acceptance to 2♦, Bob Kuz was the most positive: Next on his agenda was going to be: “4♦ (a self-splinter) followed by Keycard Blackwood”.

Robert Lebi allowed as how “2♦ could be okay as long as I have a route to Keycard for hearts as a follow-up. That was the object lesson suffered by several pairs at our local club when partner’s acceptance of the Two-level transfer elicited 4NT and a cautious pass by many partners who remembered their lesson that 4NT after a 2-level transfer and acceptance was actually (and should be) a quantitative slam invitation so that with their 15 CPs and ♥Qx, passing 4NT had to be right.

In a funny kind of way, they were “right” as 4NT making six scored average plus. Stay tuned! Our majority who rejected the 2-level transfer opted instead for a Texas Transfer (4♦ to elicit 4♥) followed by 4NT as Keycard for hearts. One thing that this vote showed for sure was that teachers who give their students Jacoby Transfers are neglecting a necessary adjunct if they don’t also teach Texas Transfers. As a bit of an ironic twist, those who rejected the 2-level transfer in favour of a 4♦ response offered this follow-up to the problem’s bid that they had to cope with at their second turn.

Bob Todd: (But not before lodging a complaint) “Stupid problem so I’ll have to use a self-splinter of 4♦ before having 4NT as Keycard available”. A plan shared by **David Grainger:** “4♦ as a splinter before Keycard Blackwood”.

I’m not sure whether all of the rejecters of the 2♦ start are just so fixated on Keycard being the “key” to bidding this hand that they’ve missed the possible flaw in the majority’s plan as pointed out by Danny Miles:

Miles: “Too bad we play transfers as there seems to be no benefit to partner declaring when a spade attack through my King could be bad”.

And that’s why the passers of 4NT scored so well as the opening leader with North declaring six hearts did in fact have a singleton spade and lead it to great effect as his partner had the ♠A whereas West would be unlikely to lead the spade ace from ♠AJxxx against six hearts the other way up. This brings me to climb up on my latest soap box and agree with Danny’s lament that “too bad we play transfers”. For those that think and apparently play that responses of 2♦ or 4♦ are the only ways to bring hearts into focus, how do you play an initial response of 3♥ to 1NT?

The vast majority of experts who believe 2♦ and 4♦ “do it all” in the heart department will see no usefulness for a natural heart response and will instead offer various arcane uses for the call (and its companion 3♠) like 1345 shape and game force or 5-5 Majors and invitational for 3♥ and Game forcing for 3♠. My beef with system adjuncts like those has three parts:

1. They come up very rarely (especially the 5-5 hands).
2. Infrequent use can lead to memory issues.
3. The hand types don’t really solve a problem that can’t generally be handled with a different approach and there is a lot of information leakage with the exact shape-showing responses.

Which leads me to unveil a natural and Game-forcing slam invitation of 3♥ for this hand:

1. As more upside and solves many issues immediately: with 6+ cards in a good heart suit, hearts will be trump.
2. Opener doesn’t need “support” to control bid (Qx or even xxx is enough support while Opener might be a bit more cautious with ♥xx) and in fact is heartily urged to cooperate with control showing—as Responder’s suit will be very good.
3. By selecting 3♥ on a hand like the one in this question, Responder can choose to be declarer when he sees a right side-wrong side issue looming while still having the transfer options otherwise. For the curious, if you elected to use the Texas and Keycard route, found an ace missing and opted to play in six notrump, you earn two tops for this deal: in this quiz and at the table where no ruff was available to damage six notrump.

Bid	Votes	Score
a. No	18	3
Yes or maybe	3	1
b. 4♦	18	7
Other	3	1

4. IMPs, Dealer: South, both vul. As South you hold:
 ♠A8 ♥65 ♦J9864 ♣AK95.

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥ ¹	Pass	?

1. 4th suit forcing.

What do you bid?

A real clunker of a problem as there was unanimity in the voting with 2♠ attracting all the panelists' votes – with varying degrees of confidence in their choice – oh well, an early Christmas gift as at least one 10 for all and sundry! Totally confident:

Francine Cimon: “2♠. Doesn't promise 3♠. What else?”

Joined by Julie Smith who offers backup: “2♠. No heart value, poor diamonds, only 4♣”.

How about this pair of Peggers?

Bob Kuz: “2♠. Best bid available – smallest lie.”

Bob Todd: “2♠. Least ugly bid.” (Don't fret Bob I have a potentially even uglier bid for you).

Hints of less than total satisfaction with the universe's choice:

Andy Stark: “2♠. This will not be a popular choice. Since all bids are distortions, I like bidding the cheapest option. Yes, Partner expects a third spade – I will provide it next deal”. Now that's an interesting concept: paying off a deficit in the bidding with a card from another deal. Could catch on!

Ray Hornby and Neil Kimelman show they are partners on the same wavelength as they state that

“partner will know I have only two spades as I would have raised directly with a minimum and 3-1-5-4 and would have bid 3♠ over 2♥ with a 3-1-5-4 and extra values.

Time out for a complaint about that approach: Who would raise ♠ immediately with a hand like ♠xxx ♥x ♦AQJxx ♣AQxx after the given start? Many suggest 2♠ is best because it's the most “flexible” choice. You may need that flexibility to wiggle out of ♠ if partner (as presaged by Stark and others) can't take a joke about waiting until a future deal for the third spade he might be expecting here. Researching the literature on the subject of Fourth Suit Forcing auctions, I found most authors strongly list the purposes of the call as these (in order of priority):

1. To create a game-forcing context to explore further.
2. To show delayed 3-card support for Responder's first-bid major.
3. To possibly locate a stopper in the fourth suit for notrump purposes.
4. To show four cards in the fourth suit
5. To prepare for revealing a great fit for one of Opener's two suits in a game-going, slam-inviting context.

Now for sure, that modest list doesn't really allow for a perfectly accurate description of this South collection as he has none of 2 or 3 and wouldn't be thrilled about being dragged kicking and screaming to the slam level in a minor if he overstated one or both of his minors.

Robert Lebi: zeroed in the problem: “Depends on agreements. If I have no waiting bid over 2♥, I try 2♠”. For “waiting bid”, you could insert “default”. **As is his wont, Zygmunt Marcinski also looks more deeply in to the crux of this deal's problem than most of his colleagues:**

Marcinski: “2♠ as a flexible call, that being the hackneyed term resorted to often by experts in the sense of non-committal”.

Aye, there's the rub! Just how “non-committal” is 2♠ if partner will expect 3-card support? And how will you be able to correct that wrong impression after an unsuccessful spade declaration that comes a cropper

in a 5-2 fit other than by handing over an I.O.U. One future ♠ to partner? Zygmunt continues by hitting the problem's precise bullseye: "If you don't rebid 2♠ on this hand type one of the alternate rebids will lose integrity". Precisely.

Dave Willis: recognizes the loss of integrity by saying he prefers "to make the cheapest bid when I have to lie and see what partner was coming in".
But in line with the above list of FSF priorities, partner might be "coming in spades and often won't find it convenient (or, in the long run, worthwhile) to check back to see if you really do have three spades or were you indulging in a convenient "least of evils lie". To look at a parallel situation in a forcing notrump auction: when the bidding starts 1♠-1Nt-? Opener is constrained from rebidding ♠ without 6+ or ♥ without 4+ and most require 18-19 hcp to raise to 2NT so that, lacking a 4+ card minor. Modern 2-Over-1 systems mandate a rebid of a 3-card minor as the default action. Now this doesn't usually raise terrible issues because the integrity of 2♠, 2♥ and 2NT rebids is maintained and nobody takes the minor suits all that seriously in any case to make a rebid of 2♣ after 1♠-1Nt-? Okay, if not warmly, welcomed on such as ♠AQxxx ♥KJx ♦Kx ♣Jxx.

To summarize this type of solution that occurs in countless contexts: If you're going to "lie", lie about a minor suit and not partner's major or by claiming a stopper for notrump you don't actually have. To bring us full circle to problem 4 for which I would score zero against the panelists' 10 for 2♠. Why because the "integrity" I would choose to damage is that of one of the minors (by bidding 3♦ in this case) to stay in line with the listed priorities of FSF auctions and say:

1. Okay we're going to game.
2. I lack 3♠ or 4♥ or a heart stopper or a fifth club.
3. Please treat this bid as somewhat natural but as it's a "default" rebid don't expect fabulous although five-plus length is guaranteed. The last word on this seemingly "non-problem" can go to a panelist who exudes uncertainty about his choice but seems to see no alternative:

Bill Treble: "2♠. I expect a low score because moderators and panelists hate a two-card preference on FSF auctions".

Right on at least one moderator but not on the panelists!

Bid	Votes	Score
2♠	21	10
Others	0	0

We'll revisit this problem in twenty years to see if I've converted any bidders!

5. IMPs, Dealer: South, N-S vul. As South you hold:
♠- ♥10972 ♦AKQ1075 ♣Q94.

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

1. Game forcing.

What do you bid?

As you may have suspected, this deal comes with a history. In a low-level Ontario tournament the four at the table for this auction were seasoned veterans with lots of awareness of the issues involved after North's 3NT call was delivered with a relatively marked pause for some introspection. (A great gain for live as opposed to Online Bridge as B.I.T.'s can't be blamed on transmission faults.) Alive to possible higher things being on the horizon, South moved again (4♦) and it was off to the six-level with either minor yielding a relatively painless small slam bonus. The question then became was South's further move justified by his hand without input from his partner's B.I.T.? No move from fifteen of our twenty-one panelists who thought they had done their all:

David Grainger: "Partner used up a lot of space to ask me to shut up so I'll shut up".

Dan Jacob: (more loquacious than he has been for this batch): "Pass. Partner's auction indicated doubt about notrump but I do have a source of tricks".

Keith Balcombe: "Pass. I have shown my hand what would I bid anyway?"

Ray Hornby: "Pass. Partner's bidding seems like a warning to me. He has no 4 card major and didn't bid 3♦ over 3♣" (Paul: presumably 3♦ over 3♣ would show more further interest than did 3NT?)

Echoing that theme about what wasn't bid was:

Zygmunt Marcinski: "Pass. My best guess as 2NT asked me to look at my hand. I did and 3♣ was my best move and that wasn't enough. Partner had the option to "help out" with 3♦ over 3♣."

There were a few "further movers" with five votes for 4♦ and one, Bob Todd, who questioned a previous call:

Todd: "4♦. Is there some reason I didn't bid 3♦ over 2♣ to set the trump suit?"

Well Bob, maybe the actual South didn't think of 3♦ or maybe he judged his hand as too playable in there strains and didn't want to use up the bidding space?

Jason Feldman: "4♦. Three notrump could be right but partner is not expecting a void with me and 5 of a minor could be better but I'm not sure which suit".

if my partner had some doubt about either major, he might have investigated that by bidding his stronger major over 3♣. As it went, I wouldn't be overly concerned about the success of 3NT but would agree with:

Nick L'Ecuyer: "Tough one, 4NT might make and six of either minor might be the place to be. For me, 4♦ over 3NT but I'd need specific agreements on the follow-up auction".

Sharing that evaluation but finding a solo action for advancing:

Neil Kimelman: "4♣. I believe we belong in a minor suit game or slam".

Post Mortem: the advancers will get the slam bonus as long as they don't stop in five of either minor as both minor-suit slams will make. But the vote of fifteen of Canada's finest as well as the one vote that really mattered (that of the Director!) judged a move to be

unwarranted and likely motivated at least in part by the B.I.T. For the curious, North's hand was:

♠A109 ♥AKx ♦xx ♣AJ109x

Bid	Votes	Score
Pass	15	10
4♦	5	6
4♣	1	2













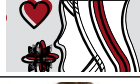







Heartiest Congrats to the Four! Panelists who scored up perfect 50's – I'll try for tougher problems next year: **Zygmunt Marcinski, David Grainger, Keith Balcombe and Ray Hornby.**

And best wishes to all for a very Merry Christmas Holiday Season and a Happy and Healthy 2025.



PANELIST ANSWERS

December 2024 Bidding Contest

	Name	Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		Total
		Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	
	Keith Balcombe	2♦	10	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	50
	Francine Cimon	2NT	7	3♠	7	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♦	6	40
	Jason Feldman	2♠	5	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♦	6	41
	David Grainger	2♦	10	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	50
	Mike Hargreaves	2NT	7	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♥	10	Pass	9	46
	Ray Hornby	2♦	10	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♣	10	50
	Dan Jacob	2NT	7	4NT	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	43
	Neil Kimelman	2♦	10	3♣	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♣	2	38
	Bob Kuz	2♠	5	3♣	6	y/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	41
	Robert Lebi	2♦	10	4♣	10	y/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	48
	Nick L'Ecuyer	Pass	2	3♣	6	y/3♣	2	2♠	10	4♦	6	26
	David Lindop	2NT	7	4NT	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	8	41
	Zyg Marcinski	2♦	10	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	50
	Danny Miles	2♦	8	3♠	7	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♦	8	44
	Julie Smith	2♦	10	4♣	10	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	8	41
	Andy Stark	2♦	10	3♠	7	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	47
	Bob Todd	Pass	2	3♣	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	4♦	6	34
	Bill Treble	2♦	10	4NT	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	46
	David Turner	2♦	10	2♠	3	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	9	42
	David Willis	2♠	10	3♠	6	n/4♦	10	2♠	10	Pass	10	46



MARCH 2025 PROBLEMS

Host: Neil Kimelman

Readers: Please submit your responses by **February 9th**.

1. IMPs, both vulnerable. Dealer South. As South, you hold ♠AJ ♥K10 ♦AJ7653 ♣AK10.

What is your plan?

A1. 2♣, rebidding 2NT.

A2. 2♣, rebidding 3♦.

B1. 2NT.

C1. Open 1♦ and rebid 2NT.

C2. Open 1♦, and rebid 3♣.

2. IMPs, N-S vulnerable. Dealer is West. As South, you hold ♠AQ4 ♥KQ54 ♦K4 ♣KQ87.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	?

a) What do you bid?

b) Do you agree with 2♠?

c) Do you agree with 1♥?

3. Matchpoints, both vulnerable. Dealer is East. As South, you hold ♠AQJ103 ♥J972 ♦A4 ♣K7.

West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

a) What do you bid?

4. Matchpoints, both vulnerable. As South you hold ♠AQ754 ♥Q10 ♦AQJ982 ♣-.

East opens 1♣. You play Klinger, so 2NT shows spade and diamonds.

a) What do you bid?

b) What is your plan after West bids 3♣ (competitive, non-forcing), pass, pass back to you?

5. Pairs, Both vulnerable, South dealer. As South you hold ♠AK10853 ♥AKJ10 ♦9 ♣J4.

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	4♦	?

a) What do you bid?



While driving home from their regular game, Sam was critical of many of Ethan's bids and plays. Trying to change the subject, Ethan asks:

Ethan: I wonder how the name Bridge came about?

Samantha: Because you want to throw your partner off one.

QUIZ

IBPA DECLARER PLAY PROBLEM #27

PUZZLE ON PAGE 22

Contract: 7♠. Lead: ♦K, Plan the play.

♠ AJ96
♥ A10742
♦ 3
♣ AKQ

♠ 7432	♠ 5
♥ 863	♥ KJ95
♦ KQ1096	♦ 8542
♣ 5	♣ 7642

♠ KQ108
♥ Q
♦ AJ7
♣ J10987

I little care is required to take your best play for 7♠, against mildly bad splits.

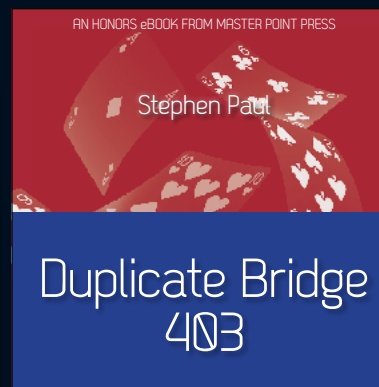
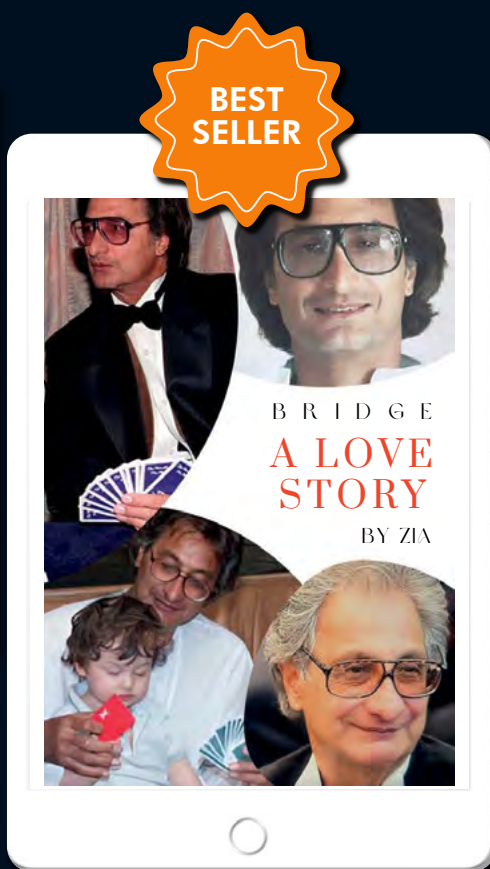
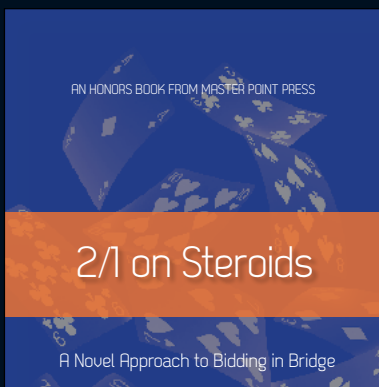
Win the diamond and ruff a diamond with the ♠9. Cash the club ace. Lead the ♠J to the ♠Q, and ruff the ♦7 with the spade ace. Pull trumps and discard the ♣KQ from dummy on the 3rd and 4th round of spades. Your hand is now high.



As I was sailing my ship in the South Pacific I heard human voices coming from a nearby small island. As I got closer I realized there were three people jumping up and down, apparently relieved to be saved. As I came along side of them, they said together: 'Finally, a fourth!'



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