

bridge *Canada*



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Left to right: CBF Past President Nader, Hanna, Hall of Fame inductee Joan Eaton, CBF President Shelley Burns, Hall of Fame inductee Gloria Bart.

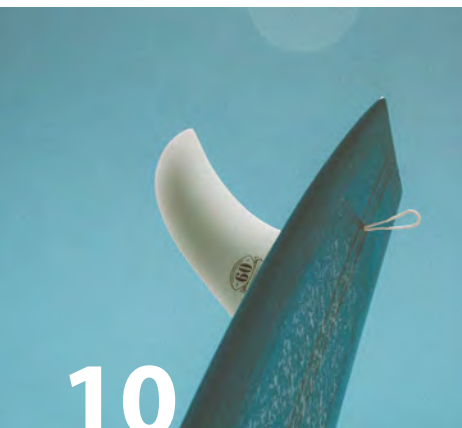
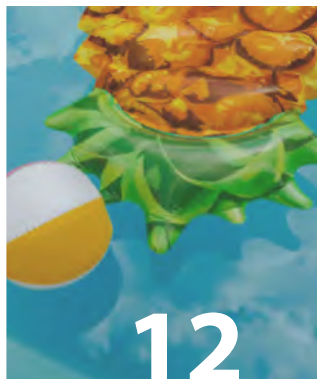


LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD INDUCTEE

Left to right: Shelley Burns, inductee: Neil Kimelman, Ina Demme.

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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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 when renewing your ACBL membership.
2. Visit cbf.ca and click **JOIN THE CBF**.
3. Email info@cbf.ca for more information.

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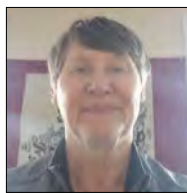
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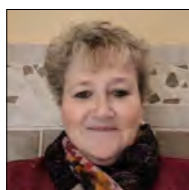
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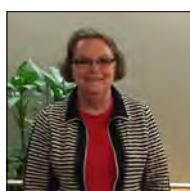
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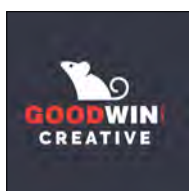
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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

The Goods

2025 CANADIAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS (CBCs)

The Championships have come and gone. Congrats to all of the winners listed elsewhere in this issue. These teams will represent Canada at the World Championships, being held in August in Denmark. Hart House at the University of Toronto was a lovely venue, and gave me the opportunity for some lovely walks with some of my teammates.

Both the Open and Senior winners have provided reports of their victories, which are featured in this issue, starting on page 12.

HALL OF FAME AWARDS

Gloria Bart and Joan Eaton were worthy inductees into the Canadian Bridge Hall of Fame. In addition, yours truly was the only the 5th person recognized for the CBF Lifetime Achievement Award. Complete coverage, including pics, can be found on page 8.

WHAT'S NEW IN CANADIAN BRIDGE?

Canada-United States relations have spilled over into the bridge world. Many player will not be travelling to the US, for any reason, which has caused some individuals to promote a separate Canadian bridge structure as a replacement for the ACBL.

In my view, this is a very complex issue, and recommendations need to strongly consider the following factors:

- The CBF exists on a shoestring budget, primarily operated by a few, but dedicated, volunteers. While the ACBL is a multi-million entity, with many, many paid employees. The CBF does not have even one full time staff member. Simply speaking, there is no capacity at this time.
- The next US federal election is less than four years away, and may reset the relationship with our Southern neighbor, to the way it was previously. Experience has taught me to blindly jump to change current structures in our bridge community, as a knee jerk reaction to a specific event, is rarely a good, long term strategic decision.

Neil Kimelman

Bridge Canada Managing Editor





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUBMISSION FOR JUNE 2025 BRIDGE CANADA AND WEBSITE

The last few months have been a busy and productive time for our Board as we work on making positive changes. Our goal is to listen to our members, and to implement financially sound initiatives that will both help grow our membership, and help raise funds to benefit not only our International players, but our Canadian Clubs and Club players. Read on for what's happening at the CBF:

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Welcome **Marielle Decelles-Brentnall** as our Zone 4 Representative. Marielle brings her IT and business expertise as President of a telecommunications company in Winnipeg.

Welcome **Sheila Xu** as our new Treasurer. Sheila is a CPA who lives in Ontario and is also on the Unit 166 Board.

Sheila is replacing **Cathy Walsh** who has been an invaluable and conscientious contributor in guiding the CBF, and I have had the great pleasure of working closely with Cathy during my time on the Board.

CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

We recently held our Canadian Championships alongside the Toronto Easter Regional, and I had the honour of presiding over our Awards night where we recognized those who have made great contributions to Canadian Bridge. **Nader Hanna** who was our long-time CBF president, made presentations to our

newest CBF Hall of Fame inductees **Gloria Silverman Bart** and **Joan Eaton**.

Ina Demme who was our previous Administrative Assistant was the perfect person to present our Lifetime Achievement Award to **Neil Kimelman**, who has also served as CBF President (twice!).

It was truly inspiring for me to be amongst Canada's top players, Canada's Bridge celebrities and Bridge icons!

I would like to congratulate all our Canadian Teams and Open Pairs winners. Please check out our website, and lend your support to these top Teams as they compete on the world stage in Denmark.

We are listening to player feedback, and are working hard to set up our Championships in a format that is appealing and financially viable. We'll keep you posted.

NEW INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

My priority is always to grow the game of Bridge, and my vision is for the CBF to become relevant to our Clubs and players by involving them in enjoyable Canadian Bridge events!

1. Watch for our new "**Maple Leaf online Friday night games**" where we welcome **ALL** players. Those who are CBF members can **share profit with their home Club** (or Clubs), so let your friends and Clubs know! This will be a competitive yet social event as we'll be using **RealBridge**, which is a platform with video where you can talk with your opponents and partner (between hands!).

You are welcome to practice on the RealBridge platform over the next few months before our game goes "live" – **check out the RealBridge Taster sessions under "Where can I play?"**

2. The CBF encourages all Clubs to get involved in running games to raise money for Alzheimer's Canada. Choose one date between **June 15 and 22** to run one or more fundraising games. Check out the Club Manager tab on our website.
3. Other initiatives include improving the CBF website, enriching content, improving responsiveness and ease of interaction, and improving compatibility with mobile devices. This is a work in progress led by our **Webmaster Louise Mascolo**.

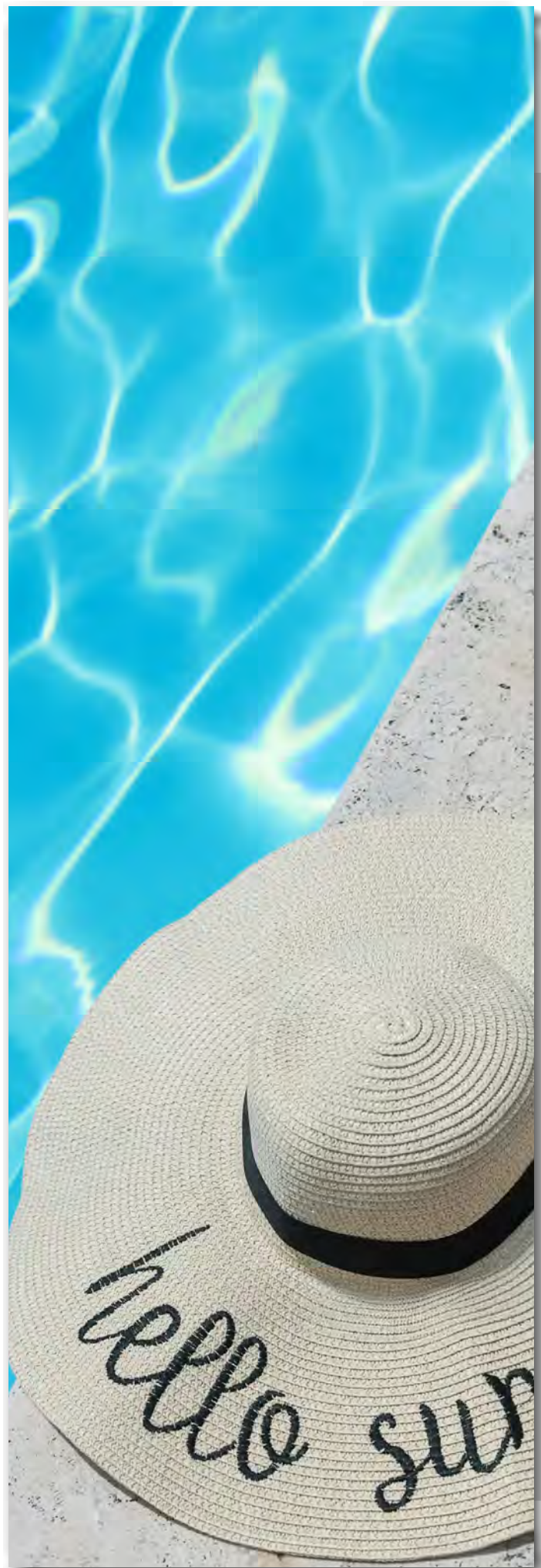
ONLINE AGM

We are embracing technology, and we will run our **AGM on Zoom on Monday June 23rd 7:30 ET**. More information to come, but please "save the date"! Keep checking our **Website** www.cbf.ca for the most up to date information. We welcome your involvement and support in helping to **keep Bridge "alive" in Canada!**

Sincerely,

Shelley Burns

CBF President





LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

2025 RECIPIENT – NEIL KIMELMAN

By Shelley Burns



The CBF recognized Neil Kimelman's contributions to Canadian Bridge with the 5th ever recipient by honouring him with the Canadian Bridge Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is given out only when the CBF Board feels it is warranted. Prior to Neil, the only other recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award have been Dick Anderson, George Retek, Jan Anderson, and Jean Castonguay.

Ina Demme, the former CBF Executive Assistant, spoke to Neil's contributions over a span of almost 50 years. She especially highlighted Neil taking the CBF publication **Bridge Canada**, and introducing many new columns and features. She was especially complementary of The Great Canadian Bidding Contest (TGBCB).

Here is a list of some of Neil's contributions to Canadian Bridge, and related bridge achievements:

- 2013-to present: Managing Editor of the **Bridge Canada**.
- 2010-21: Served on the CBF Board of Directors as Zone IV representative.
- 2020-21: President of the CBF Board.
- 2016-17: President of the CBF Board.
- 2022 to present: Ad hoc advisor and writer for the CBF Board.
- 2017: Host Board member for the Canadian Bridge Championships.
- 1977-1989 ACBL Unit 181 Board member
- 1977-79 ACBL Unit 181 President.
- Writer of three acclaimed bridge books: *Improve Your Bidding Judgement*; *The Thin Red Line*; *The Right Bid at the Right Time*.
- Prodigious contributor, and writer of numerous articles, for the CBF Bridge Canada publication, *The Bridge World* and Unit 181 online site.
- Bridge teacher and mentor.

- Bridge book editor.
- High level player with one CNTC win and many medals in CBC. Also high finishes in WBF and NABC events.

Neil, on behalf of all of the CBF Board, congratulations and thank you for your dedication to the game we love. Well Deserved!

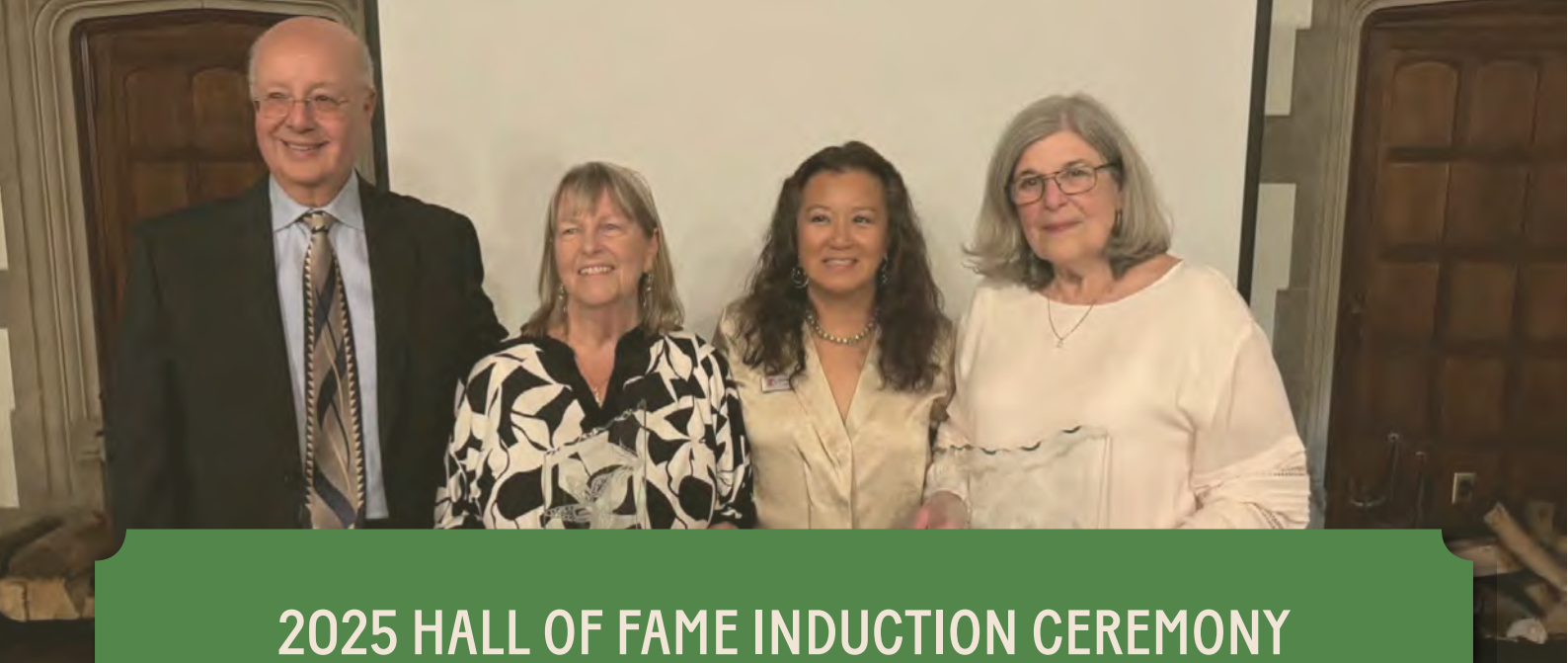


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2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

By Nader Hanna

The Hall of Fame committee has elected Gloria Silverman Bart and Joan Eaton as the 2025 inductees into the Canadian Bridge Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony took place at the Hart House in Toronto on April 17, during the Canadian Championships.

The Hall of Fame Award recognizes Canadian bridge players who have achieved prominence in the game of bridge, and who are held in high regard for their ethics, deportment and sportsmanship.

The Hall of Fame is managed by a committee (most of the committee members are themselves in the Hall of Fame). The committee evaluates nominees for induction using an objective criterion which considers the nominees' record in World, North American and Canadian championships. Other significant contributions to Canadian bridge, are also considered. Committee members then vote to decide if the nominee should be recommended to the board of the Canadian Bridge Federation for induction.

Both Gloria and Joan are top players who had an outstanding record of success spanning more than three decades. They each represented Canada nine times in World Championships and are ranked as World International Masters by the World Bridge Federation (WBF).

Gloria's achievements include:

- Bronze medals at the 1988 Bridge Olympiad Women's Teams, and the 1989 Venice Cup
- 2 wins in North American Championships (2010 Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs, and 2011 Keohane North American Swiss). She also has 2nd place finishes in the 2010 Freeman Mixed BAM, and the 2015 Silver Ribbon Pairs
- 6 wins in Canadian Women Teams Championships (1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1994), as well as 2nd place finishes in the 1989 and 2001 Canadian Open Team Championships, the 1984 and 1999 Canadian Women Team Championships, and the 2000 Canadian Open Pairs Championship.

Joan's achievements include:

- 4 wins in North American Championships (1998 Rockwell Mixed Pairs, 2003 Whitehead Women's Pairs, and the 2012 and 2014 Freeman Mixed BAM). She was also 2nd in the 2005 Wagar Women KO Teams.
Joan's 4 NABC wins is the second most by a Canadian woman player after Hall of Fame member Agnes Gordon, who won 10 NABC's in the 40's, 50's and 60's.
- 7 wins in Canadian Women Teams Championships (1994, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2016), as well as six 2nd place finishes in (1987, 1994, 2004, 2007, 2014 Canadian Women Teams

Championships, and the 2021 Canadian Mixed Teams Championship).

As is the custom; to commemorate their induction into the Hall of Fame, new inductees are presented with a glass sculpture engraved with a symbol from the indigenous Haida mythology.

The symbol chosen for Gloria was the Salmon, which symbolizes instinct, persistence and determination.



The symbol chosen for Joan was the Hummingbird, which symbolizes independence, intelligence and determination.



The Hall of Fame, which was created in 2010, currently has 34 members. Hall of Fame members and their achievements can be found on the CBF website at www.cbf.ca/members-hall-of-fame.

THE DIFFERENCE - A PLAY PROBLEM

SOLUTION PAGE 40

Contract: 3NT, Matchpoints, local club game.

Lead: ♣6.

♠ 82
♥ AJ104
♦ J873
♣ AQ9

♠ Q4
♥ 765
♦ AQ942
♣ KJ10

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
			1NT (12-14)
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Plan the play.



PLAYING BRIDGE IS A LONG LESSON IN
HUMILITY.

2025 CANADIAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS MEDALISTS'

CNTC - Open – Canadian National Teams Championship Open

Gold: Feldman - Jason Feldman, Daniel Miles, Daniel Lavee, Jacob Freeman, Jeff Smith, Frédéric Pollack

Silver: Jian Luo - Jianfeng Luo, Shigang Liang, Kai Zhou, Alex Hong, Yan Wang, Edward Xu

Bronze: Jai Luo - Jiawei Luo, Fengming Chen, Qian Ren, Tiger Hu

Bronze: Willis - David T Willis, Irving Litvack, John Carruthers, Martin Kirr, Joey Silver, George Mittelman

CNTC - B – Canadian National Teams Championship B

Gold: Xu - Sheila Xu, Mingqiang Bao, Lai Qing Luo, Mingmin Zhu, Kelvin Shu, Jerry Lan

Silver: Pontifex - Marlene Pontifex, David Sired, Bob Neudorf, Rasim Sari, Leigh Anne Schafer

CNTC - C – Canadian National Teams Championship C

Gold: Faille - Charles Faille, Frédérick Faille, Francis Savaria, Dominique Béland

Silver: Forget - Martin Forget, Myriam Serrurier, Steve Karam, Manon Charpentier

CWTC – Canadian Women Teams Championship

Gold: Chen - Yuan Chen, Lisa Chen, Weijun Chen, Xia Hong, Rose Hou, Jingyuan Gong

Silver: Smith - Julie Smith, Judy Harris, Lesley Thomson, Ina Demme, Yimei Cao, Wenmin Chen

Bronze: Fung - Kismet Fung, Sondra Blank, Candice Huang, Cindy He

Bronze: Burns - Shelly Burns, Chantal Dubé, Linda Connell, Deb Harper

CSTC – Canadian Senior Teams Championship

Gold: Jacob - Dan Jacob, Piotr Klimowicz, Michel Lorber, Zygmunt Marcinski

Silver: Todd - Bob Todd, Douglas Fisher, Raymond Hornby, Neil Kimelman, Paul Thurston, Lino D'Souza

Bronze: Roche - Michael Roche, Michael Hargreaves, John Carruthers, Martin Kirr

Bronze: Rayner - Nader Hanna, John Rayner, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas Gartaganis, Doug Baxter, David Lindop

CMTC – Canadian Mixed Teams Championship

Gold: Senensky - Barry Senensky, Barbara Shnier, Marielle Decelles-Brentnall, Bob Kuz

Silver: Miles - Daniel Miles, Kismet Fung, Sondra Blank, Jeff Smith, Olivia Laufer, Jacob Freeman

Bronze: Hou - Rose Hou, Yan Wang, Cindy Hong, Terry Du, Jingyuan Gong, Kole Meng

Bronze: Wang - Michael Wang, Candice Huang, Yiei Cao, Edward Xu, Cindy He, Jianfeng Luo

COPC – Canadian Open Pairs Championship

Gold: Fengming Chen - Marie Duval

Silver: David Lindop - Doug Baxter

Bronze: Kole Meng - Terry Du



CNTC Open - Gold - Team Feldman
 Danny Miles, Daniel Lavee,
 Jacob Freeman, Jacob Feldman,
 Jeff Smith, Frédéric Pollack



CNTC Open - Silver - Team Jian Luo
 Shigang Liang, Alex Hong, Edward Xu, Yan
 Wang, Jian Luo, Kai Zhou



CNTC B - Gold - Team Sheila Xu
 Mingmin Zhu, Sheila Xu,
 Kelvin Shu, Lai Qing Luo



CNTC C - Gold - Team Faille
 Charles Faille, Frédéric Faille,
 Francis Savaria, Dominique Béland



CNTC C - Silver - Team Forget
 Myriam Serrurier, Martin Forget,
 Manon Charpentier, Steve Karam



CWTC - Gold - Team Chen
 Weijun Chen, Lisa Chen, Yuan Chen,
 Xia Hong, Rose Hou, Jingyuan Gong



CWTC - Silver - Team Smith
 Julie Smith, Judy Harris,
 Wenmin Chen, Yimei Cao,
 (missing: Leslie Thomson, Ina Demme)



CSTC - Gold - Team Jacob
 Piotr Klimowicz, Michel Lorber,
 Dan Jacob, Zygmunt Marcinski



CSTC - Silver - Team Todd
 Douglas Fisher, Bob Todd,
 Raymond Hornby, Neil Kimelman,
 (missing: Paul Thurston, Lino D'Souza)



CMTC - Gold - Team Senensky
 Barry Senensky, Barbara Shnier, Marielle
 Decelles-Brentnall, Bob Kuz

CNTC Open - Bronze
 Team Jai Luo: Jiawei Luo, Fengming
 Chen, Qian Ren, Tiger Hu
 Team Willis: David T Willis, Irving
 Litvack, John Carruthers, Martin Kirr,
 Joey Silver, George Mittelman

CNTC B - Silver
 Team Pontifex: Marlene Pontifex, David
 Sired, Bob Neudorf, Rasim Sari,
 Leigh Anne Schafer

CWTC - Bronze
 Team Fung: Kismet Fung, Sondra Blank,
 Candice Huang, Cindy He
 Team Burns: Shelly Burns, Team Forget:
 Dubé, Linda Connell, Deb Harper

CSTC - Bronze
 Team Roche: Michael Roche, Michael
 Hargreaves, John Carruthers, Martin Kirr
 Team Rayner: Nader Hanna, John
 Rayner, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas
 Gartaganis, Doug Baxter, David Lindop

CMTC - Silver
 Team Miles: Daniel Miles, Kismet Fung,
 Sondra Blank, Jeff Smith, Olivia Laufer,
 Jacob Freeman

CMTC - Bronze
 Team Hou: Rose Hou, Yan Wang, Cindy
 Hong, Terry Du, Jingyuan Gong,
 Kole Meng
 Team Wang: Michael Wang, Candice
 Huang, Yiei Cao, Edward Xu, Cindy He,
 Jianfeng Luo

2025 CANADIAN OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

FELDMAN: LAST TEAM STANDING

By Danny Miles



L to r, Danny Miles, Daniel Lavee, Jacob Freeman, Jason Feldman, Jeff Smith, Fredeeric Pollock.



L to r, Shigang Liang, Alex Hong, Edward Xu, Yan Wang, Jian Luo, Kai Zhou.

The CBF's 2025 Bridge Week took place in conjunction with the annual Easter Regional tournament in downtown Toronto. This allowed teams that got knocked out in various Bridge Week events to still play bridge during their stay. In addition, a number of teams playing in the later portion of Bridge Week arrived early for some practice at the regional.

The setting was the Hart House at the University of Toronto, a 100+ year old building filled with character (and high ceilings!). While it would have been nice for play to take place at the hotel with the regional, the CBF did a good job on a tight timeline to find an acceptable location within a decent walk or short cab ride from the hotel. Here's hoping the next time Bridge Week returns to Toronto (2027, anyone?) arrangements are made to ensure the playoffs take place at the hotel where the regional is being played (and the players are all staying at).

Team FELDMAN (Jason Feldman, Danny Miles, Jacob Freeman, Daniel Lavee, Jeff Smith, and Fred Pollack) emerged from the original quarterfinalists to capture the Sam Gold trophy as the CNTC Open Champions. We will represent Canada at the 2025 Bermuda Bowl (World Championship) in Denmark in August.

QUARTER FINALS

In the Quarterfinals, the youngest pair on Team FELDMAN, Daniel Lavee and Jacob Freeman, showed no mercy when their opponents tried a lead directing bid during Daniel & Jacob's game forcing auction.

Board 11, Dealer South, neither vul.

♠ Q1063
♥ 7
♦ QJ1074
♣ A102

♠ 8
♥ AQ10853
♦ A32
♣ 874

♠ AJ42
♥ KJ964
♦ K8
♣ 96

♠ K975
♥ 2
♦ 965
♣ KQJ53

(P)-1♥-(P)-2NT
(3♣)-P-(3♦)-4♥
(4NT)-P-(5♣)-Dbl
All Pass

The defence was (nearly) double dummy perfect - scoring a spade, a heart, two diamonds and three trump tricks for +1100 and a 12 IMP pick up against 4♥ making 5. Below are the Quarter Final results, plus all team members.

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
D. Wang	39	10	15	43	107
Jai Luo	35	58	37	41	171

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Jian Luo	10	37	18	45	110
Rayner	48	29	2	1	80

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Prodan	0	15	19	14	78
Willis	1	46	29	51	127

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Feldman	35	17	44	32	128
Jacob	11	6	12	27	56

D. Wang: Difan Wang, Xiaojing (Eve) Deng, Nokyin (Jim) Lee, Lu Gan, Xiaodong Zhao

Jai Luo: Jiawei Luo, Fengming Chen, Qian Ren, Tiger Hu

Jian Luo: Jianfeng Luo, Shigang Liang, Kai Zhou, Alex Hong, Yan Wang, Edward Xu

Rayner: Nader Hanna, John Rayner, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas Gartaganis, Doug Baxter, David Lindop, Paul Thurston

Prodan: Andrei Prodan, Adrian Barna, Dorin Toma, Gabriel Tatar

Willis: David T Willis, Irving Litvack, John Carruthers, Martin Kirr, Joey Silver, George Mittelman

Feldman: Jason Feldman, Daniel Miles, Daniel Lavee, Jacob Freeman, Jeff Smith, Frédéric Pollack

Jacob: Dan Jacob, Piotr Klimowicz, Michel Lorber, Zygmunt Marcinski, David Turner, Roy Hughes

SEMI FINALS

In the Semi-final, Jai LUO took an early lead over FELDMAN when Feldman-Miles (somewhat randomly) wrong-sided two game contracts. In the second quarter, FELDMAN had piled on 59 IMPs in the first 11 boards when deal #26 came along.

Feldman

♠ 96

♥ K32

♦ AKJ1097

♣ K2

Miles

♠ AKJ

♥ AQ1096

♦ 5

♣ AQ106

The bidding:

Miles

Feldman

1♥

2♦

3♣¹

3♥

3NT²

4♠³

5♣⁴

5♦⁵

5♠⁶

7♥¹

Pass

1. Extra shape/strength.
2. Serious slam try, spade cue bid.
3. RKC.
4. 3 keycards.
5. ♥Q ask.
6. I have the ♥Q and ♠K.

The grand slam depends on little more than not losing a trump trick. West didn't take very long before deciding on a low spade lead, which went to the 10 and Jack. This seemed a very odd choice, leading away from a Queen into the spade cue bid. A trump would be the "standard" lead against a grand slam. Backing his judgement that West had either 1 or 4 trumps, Miles cashed the ♥A, played the ♥10, and when West followed, closed his eyes and called "low"; when he opened his eyes, much to his relief, East was still thinking about what to discard. Plus 2210 was good for a 20 IMP pickup on the way to an 81-22 segment. From there, FELDMAN cruised into the finals. Semi-final box scores:

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Jian Luo	67	25	4	30	126
Willis	0	28	35	33	96

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Jian Luo	34	22	28	7	91
Feldman	15	81	19	24	139

THE FINALS

Agreements - Partnerships often have some obscure tools that rarely come up. These aren't recommended for most players, as you need to remember the convention, know follow ups, how to handle competition, and appreciate any inferences from action or lack of action. A couple of these agreements helped FELDMAN in the finals:

CNTC Final Day 2 AM Board 12:

<u>Smith</u>	
♠ 9654	
♥ Q873	
♦ 963	
♣ 72	
<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠ Q8	♠ J
♥ AJ106	♥ K92
♦ KQJ8	♦ 10742
♣ AQJ	♣ K9853
<u>Pollock</u>	
♠ AK10732	
♥ 54	
♦ A5	
♣ 1064	

(2NT)-P-(3NT) -?-

Fred Pollack heard the opponents bid 2NT-3NT. He and Jeff Smith agreed that a double of 1NT-3NT or 2NT-3NT calls for the lead of opening leader's shorter major. Pollack risked a double for a spade lead, which would defeat 3NT by three tricks. At the table, the opponents ran to 4♣; however, the director ruled a slow pass suggested pulling 3NT and rolled the contract back to 3NT. Doubled, down three for +800. At the other table, there was no double, and North led their stronger major, allowing declarer to carefully untangle 9 tricks for 14 IMPs to FELDMAN.

Finals, Segment 6, Board 16:

Another rare agreement for Feldman-Miles came up on this board. Miles held ♠Q ♥K ♦AKQJ97 ♣AK1095.

A 4NT opening, while both minors for some, asked for specific aces for Feldman-Miles (a 5♣ response shows none). Vulnerable against not, Miles was concerned his aggressive opponents may interrupt their auction; indeed, at the other table, a featherweight 2♠ jump overcall by Pollack caused the opponents to misjudge. In addition, keeping the nature of his hand hidden may result in a misdefence or poor opening lead.

Perhaps a slight overbid, Miles chose 4NT and Feldman responded 5♠, showing the spade ace while denying the heart ace. Miles placed the contract in 6♦, which was cold on the lie of the cards - dummy delivered ♠AK108 ♥QJ86 ♦103 ♣872, allowing enough pitches for declarer's clubs. Finally, a short quiz:

1. You hold ♠985 ♥87643 ♦6 ♣J953. Neither vul, partner opens 1♦ in first chair. Do you respond?
2. You hold ♠Q932 ♥Q7652 ♦98 ♣93. Your vulnerable opponents bid (starting with RHO) 1♣-1♥-1NT-3NT. What do you lead?
3. You hold ♠J10952 ♥A108543 ♦2 ♣8. You pass and your opponents bid (1D)-P-(2D) showing invitational or stronger. Do you come in?

Answers

1. You hold ♠985 ♥87643 ♦6 ♣J953. Neither vul, partner opens 1♦ in first chair. Do you respond? Unclear, but today you should. Passing leads to declaring 1♦ with trumps breaking 6-2, down two. Responding 1♥ allows partner to rocket you into game with their 4-4-4-1 twenty count, an easy make. This was part of a 45-0 run FELDMAN put on in the first 5 deals of segment 6 of 8 to blow the match wide open.

2. CNTC Final 1 AM Board 6. Partner is marked with some values and therefore is very unlikely to hold five spades. If they have a five card suit, it is much more likely to be diamonds. Miles led a diamond, hitting partner with ♠A6 ♥108 ♦KQ1063 ♣Q1065 giving the defence a chance. In real life, declarer can and did make 3NT for no swing.

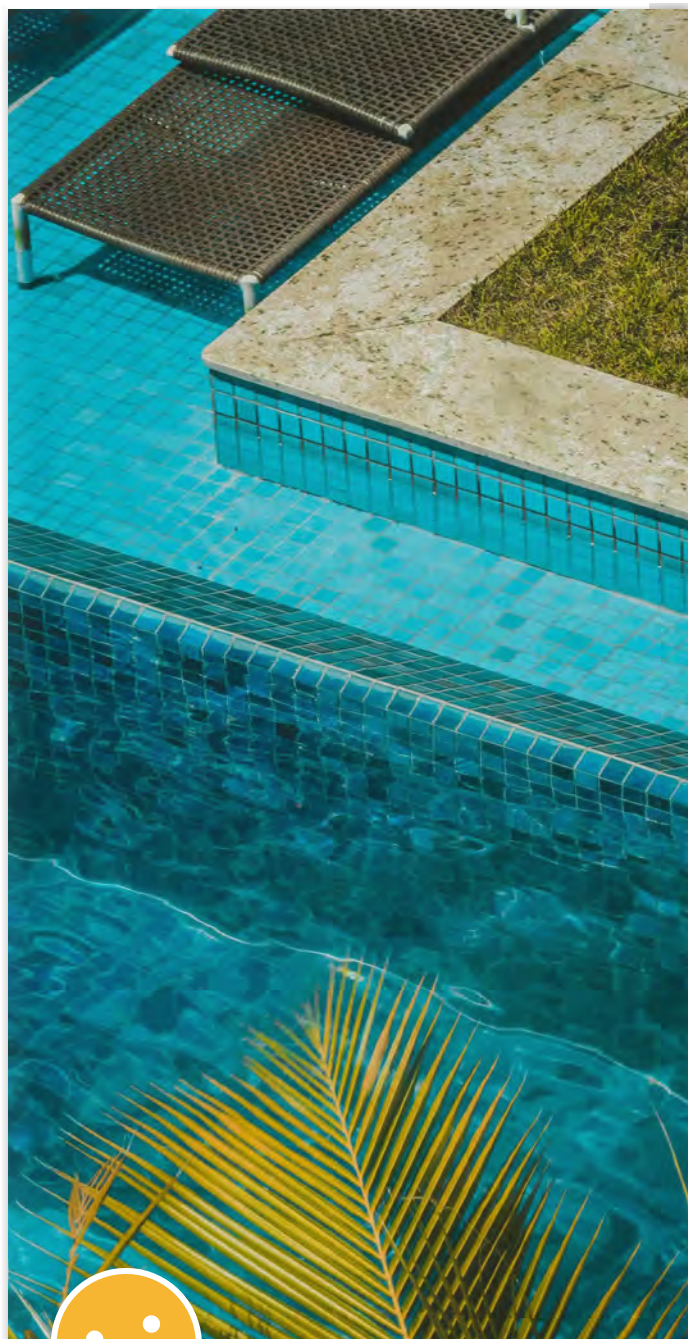
3. CNTC Final Thurs Segment 7 PM Board 14.

Coming in turns costly in a way people don't always appreciate. After this hand bid 3♦ to show the majors, Miles-Feldman employed an Optional Keycard Ask and reached 6♦, needing only to pick up K954 opposite AQ107 in trumps for no losers; trivial on the auction. At the other table this hand remained silent and declarer misguessed for 14 IMPs to FELDMAN.

The finals by Quarter:

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	
Jian Luo	18	18	26	15	
Feldman	6	16	18	31	
	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Total
Jian Luo	35	11	17	17	157
Feldman	39	53	38	18	219

In August we proudly represent Canada, playing against the best teams other countries have to offer! Wish us well!!!



The Lightner Double Saga

I once made a Lightner Double,
And my partner went into a huddle.
They emerged with a lead,
That allowed the slam to succeed,
And I got a bottom for my trouble.

2025 CANADIAN SENIOR TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

'Anything but a slam dunk...'

By Michel Lorber



Left to right: Piotr Klimowicz, Michel Lorber, Dan Jacob, Zygmunt Marcinski.



Left to right: Doug Fisher, Bob Todd, Ray Hornby, Neil Kimelman.
Missing: Paul Thurston, Lino D'Souza.

The Canadian Senior bridge team championships took place the weekend of April 19-20 on the Campus of the University of Toronto. In the final, my team JACOB (Dan Jacob - Piotr Klimowicz, Michel Lorber - Zygmunt Marcinski, David Turner - Roy Hughes) broke open a close Final match against TODD (Bob Todd - Douglas Fisher, Raymond Hornby - Neil Kimelman, Paul Thurston - Lino D'Souza) with a great last segment, to roll to victory. The Quarter scores:

Final	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Jacob	28	30	37	54	149
Todd	27	23	26	1	77

SEMI FINALS

The sentimental favorites were team RAYNER (Nader Hanna, John Rayner, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas Gartaganis, Doug Baxter, David Lindop), who's namesake, a very talented and personable member of the Canadian bridge community for many decades, had recently passed away.

One noteworthy piece of news was that one of our pairs, David Turner and Roy Hughes, were unable to play due to some health issues. We played four handed, as did three of the four participating teams.

JACOB vs RAYNER

Team Jacob used a 40 imp pickup in the 3rd quarter to pull away after an extremely tight first half and eventually won by 55imps. The Quarter scores:

Semi-Final 1	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Jacob	38	24	49	32	143
Rayner	40	24	9	15	88

TODD vs ROCHE

The other semifinal followed a similar script, with TODD using a 44-9 fourth quarter to pull away from the Round Robin winners and Hall of Fame rich ROCHE team, (Michael Roche - Michael Hargreaves, John Carruthers - Martin Kirr), by 50imps. The Quarter scores:

Semi-Final 2	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Roche	19	28	27	9	83
Todd	25	33	31	44	133

Here are a few leads against slams to get you thinking:

1. You hold ♠64 ♥Q9 ♦K86 ♣KJ9432. Partner passes as dealer with neither side vulnerable, RHO open 1♥ and the uninterrupted auction is:

1♥	2♠ ¹
3♥	4NT ²
5♥3	6♥

1. Natural, Strong.
2. Keycard Blackwood for Hearts.
3. 2 Key Cards, no Queen of Hearts.

2. As South, you hold ♠- ♥KJ5 ♦K10654 ♣QJ653. Both sides are vulnerable and your partner is the dealer, and opens 3♣, RHO passes and you choose to bid 5♣. The full auction:

North	East	South	West
3♣	Pass	5♣	Dbl
Pass	6♠	Pass	7♠
Dbl	All Pass		

If there is a winning lead and you find it, you won't regret having bid only 5♣.

3. As south, you hold ♠842 ♥A632 ♦654 ♣QJ5. The dealer on your right opens 2NT (20-21) you pass and the full auction is as follows:

	2NT
3♣ ¹	3♠
4♥ ²	4NT ³
5♣	6♠
Pass	

1. Regular Stayman.
2. Slam try in Spades.
3. 1 Key Card for Spades.

You lead the 2s, and dummy is ♠J975 ♥Q4 ♦Q873 ♣A42. Partner plays the spade queen which declarer wins and now leads a spade to the Jack with partner following. This is followed by a spade to the ace with partner pitching a heart. Declarer now leads the ♥5 towards dummy's queen. Plan your defence.

SLAM DECISIONS

The Event featured many slam decisions which were large contributors to the outcome. In the Semi-final, I made system errors on two slam hands. One resulted in bidding a slam which was a lucky make while our opponents didn't bid slam resulting in a sizeable gain and the other was a small loss when the opponents went down in slam. Our teammates slam accident involved playing in 6♣ with trumps of K9x opposite A10xxx which they made instead of playing in 6♥ with AQJxx opposite Kxx for a small loss. The third quarter featured back-to-back poor slams bid at only one of the tables, ours made and theirs didn't resulting in 24 imps for our side.

Here is what happened on the above slam hands:

1. 6♥ by East. The full deal:

Marcinski

♠ 109832
♥ 85
♦ 1097532
♣ -

West

♠ AKQ75
♥ K76
♦ Q4
♣ AQ7

East

♠ J
♥ AJ10432
♦ AJ
♣ 9763

Lorber

♠ 64
♥ Q9
♦ K86
♣ KJ9432

This deal occurred in the semifinals. I led the ♣4. Partner hadn't made a Lightner double, so declarer wasn't tipped off about his void. It seems normal to try to win the Ace at trick 1, but having it ruffed resulted in going down. The lead at the other table did not challenge declarer.

2. The second hand comes from the first quarter of the final.

Not having bid 6♣ originally would haunt me if I didn't guess what suit my partner was ruffing. Do I have anything more than the relative lengths of my red suits to go on? Would partner preempt with 3307 being

playable in both Majors? Is the doubler of 5♣ more likely to have the Majors if two suited and if so, could that tip the odds? I didn't listen to my inner doubts and led a "normal" diamond with resulted in -2470. The full deal:

Marcinski	
♠	J106
♥	-
♦	Q82
♣	K1098742
Kimelman	Hornby
♠	A8532
♥	AQ10942
♦	AJ
♣	-
Lorber	
♠	-
♥	KJ5
♦	K10654
♣	QJ653
	♠ KQ974
	♥ 8763
	♦ 973
	♣ A

Hornby could have bid 7NT which would now make based on the marked heart position. At the other table the bidding went as follows:

Todd	Klimowicz	Fisher	Jacob
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
2♣	3♠ ¹	5♣	6♣
Pass	6♥	Dbl	6♠
All Pass			

3♠ was a fit showing jump. Note that 4♥ is the limit of the hand if north leads a spade or South leads a diamond and North returns a spade when he gets in, because south can return a diamond after getting his ruff and prevent a timely dummy entry for the heart finesse.

3. I considered leading the Heart Ace but ultimately decided, since partner hadn't doubled 4♥, to make a passive low trump lead. Dummy was: ♠J975 ♥Q4 ♦Q873 ♣A42.

Partner plays the spade queen which declarer wins and now leads a spade to the Jack with partner following. This is followed by a spade to the ace with partner pitching a heart. Declarer now leads the ♥5 towards dummy's queen. It's now too late to ask which heart partner threw

(although I'm sure you would have noticed on the previous trick) and decided that he showed 5 hearts which means that you need to win the Ace of Hearts right now, before it gets pitched on a diamond and 33 clubs allows the opponents to make. Note that it is wrong to win the Heart Ace if declarer started with 4324 distribution and otherwise it won't cost. Here is the full hand:

Marcinski	
♠	Q3
♥	J10987
♦	J109
♣	1097
Kimelman	Hornby
♠	J975
♥	Q4
♦	Q873
♣	A42
Lorber	
♠	842
♥	A632
♦	654
♣	QJ5
	♠ AK106
	♥ K5
	♦ AK2
	♣ K863

Editor's note: *This was the 3rd last board, and I accurately judged we needed a swing, so pushed for slam.*

Sometimes, a slam is avoided, but the try is punished. On Board 6 of the 3rd quarter, my partner navigated a tricky 3NT for +400. Our opponents made the same nine tricks at the other table, but they had pushed themselves to 4NT while exploring slam.

Midway through the fourth quarter, we scored +800 after a vulnerable weak notrump opening where responder was 4441 and opener 3334 left no eight card fits to escape to with no game our way. On the hand prior to the final opening lead problem, we score +800 rather than bidding a non-vulnerable slam on a finesse. We should probably have scored +1100 even with the cards lying this way, but it would have been easier to score +1100 had the finesse been on. Both these boards figured to be sizeable gains which they turned out to be the case.

Ultimately, winning the slam battles was successful formula for being victorious at the 2025 Canadian Senior Team Championships. Off to the Worlds!

2025 CANADIAN MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

OR *"Why You play the Game"*

By Bob Kuz



CMTC - Team Senensky / Left to right: Barry Senensky, Barbara Shnier, Marielle Decelles-Brentnall, Bob Kuz

The journey towards the Mixed Teams title started on January 10-11, with the Round Robin portion to qualify for eight playoff spots. There was some consternation among the participants as the organizers decided to use a two group format instead of a complete Round Robin where each team would face all opponents. Under the group format, subjectivity comes into play as organizers must use judgement to determine the groups. A complete Round Robin eliminates that need.

The SENENSKY team also faced an insolvable logistics problem. The CBF had scheduled the CSTC and CMTC playoffs for the same days. Torn between the two, Ray Hornby elected to play in the Seniors event. I was approached about playing with Marielle Brentnall. Even though we are from the same city, I had not played with her in any event. We agreed to give it a try and hope for the best.

On Day 1 we found our squad firmly in last place after the four Saturday matches. We were on the wrong end of several slam swings and didn't help our cause by going down on several hands where both sides bid game, but only one side made it. A one day total of 20.99 VP out of 80 was humbling.

Day 2 saw a complete reversal of that form. Accurate game and slam bidding with proper play produced the big swings needed to climb back into contention. The

opponents helped as well. Twice they bid to the four level in competition. Twice they never led their suit. Twice we benefited. After the three Sunday matches we had achieved a total of 53.12 VP out of 60 to move somewhat miraculously into 3rd place and the Playoffs. Staying calm and just bidding our cards paid off! The Playoff portion would be a face to face competition in Toronto during the annual Easter Regional.

QUARTER FINALS

In the Quarter Finals the FOURCAUDOT squad chose us as their opponents. A probable pre-tournament favourite, they were anchored by Judy and Nick Gartaganis who possess too many CNTC titles to count.

Our Quarter Final match with FOURCAUDOT was a close contest. Unexpectedly, we found our squad leading by five after three quarters. A strong fourth had us add 14 more IMPs to that total for a 149 -130 victory. An upset for sure with large smiles for us.

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Miles	32	24	65	18	139
Smith	26	25	8	25	84

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Fourcaudot	51	32	26	21	130
Senensky	44	53	17	35	149

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Hou	38	30	24	50	142
Lin	37	6	35	10	88

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Wang	23	40	62	43	168
Tian	52	15	12	24	(-1) 102

Miles: Daniel Miles, Kismet Fung, Sondra Blank, Jeff Smith, Olivia Laufer, Jacob Freeman

Smith: Julie Smith, Stephen Vincent, David Yu, Wenming Chen

Fourcaudot: Marc-André Fourcaudot, Pascale Gaudreault, Xiaojing (Eve) Deng, Difan (Peter) Wang, Judith Gartaganis, Nicholas Gartaganis

Senensky: Barry Senensky, Barbara Shnier, Marielle Decelles-Brentnall, Bob Kuz

Hou: Rose Hou, Yan Wang, Cindy Hong, Terry Du, Jingyuan Gong, Kole Meng

Lin: Jessica Lin, Peter Wong, Lisa Chen, Shigang Liang, Ping Feng, Mike Xiao-Fang Xue

Wang: Michael Wang, Candice Huang, Yiei Cao, Edward Xu, Cindy He, Jianfeng Luo

Tian: Hongbo Tian, Daniel Chen, Xiufang Jia, Yingrong Dai

SEMI FINALS

In the Semi Final we would face the HOU team. We got off to a great first quarter lead of 65 - 25. In the third quarter we added 17 more IMPs to our total. The second and fourth quarters played out evenly for a final score of 188 - 122. We had made it to the Finals! In the Finals we would face the MILES team, another squad with multiple national titles of their own.

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Miles	37	55	29	25	146
Wang	30	17	25	34	106

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Senensky	65	34	39	45	183
Hou	25	34	22	41	122

Miles: Daniel Miles, Kismet Fung, Sondra Blank, Jeff Smith, Olivia Laufer, Jacob Freeman

Senensky: Barry Senensky, Barbara Shnier, Marielle Decelles-Brentnall, Bob Kuz

Hou: Rose Hou, Yan Wang, Cindy Hong, Terry Du,

Jingyuan Gong, Kole Meng

Wang: Michael Wang, Candice Huang, Yiei Cao, Edward Xu, Cindy He, Jianfeng Luo

THE FINALS

	Q.1	Q.3	Q.3	Q.4	Total
Miles	42	22	55	16	135
Senensky	40	39	11	57	147

As we sat down to start the Final Marielle informed me that she was not feeling well. She was worried that if the problem escalated, she would need to get to a hospital. We crossed our fingers and sat down to play. The Seniors Team Final was being played as well. I couldn't help but notice that of the 20 players involved in both Finals, 11 called Winnipeg home at one point in their lives.

The first quarter score was 42-40 for MILES. Swings were in full display on these boards. MILES won six IMPs on the first board when our partners didn't bid a making game. We returned the favour on Board 6 bidding and making 4♠ on a 5-2 fit.

On Board 12 I held ♠KJ1087 ♥AK ♦J985 ♣83. We were vul vs not vul, and RHO opened 1NT (15-17). I chose to bid 2♠, spades and a minor. LHO doubled for takeout. My partner bid 4♠, which got doubled. Partner's hand was ♠96542 ♥Q54 ♦6 ♣AJ92. A heart lead produced +990 for our side and 13 IMPs. We gave it back with interest on the very next hand:

Kuz

♠ J106

♥ -

♦ Q82

♣ K1098742

West

♠ A8532

♥ AQ10942

♦ AJ

♣ -

East

♠ KQ974

♥ 8763

♦ 973

♣ A

Brentnall

♠ -

♥ KJ5

♦ K10654

♣ QJ653

South (Marielle) opened 1♦ and West bid 2♦, both majors. I made the mistake of not bidding 3♣, which by our agreement, was competitive. This would have solved our problem on the hand (maybe). My LHO bid 4♦ which was explained as undiscussed. South passed and West bid 6♥, Pass, Pass to South, who fell from grace by doubling. East, in the pass out seat, now corrected to 6♠. Pass, Pass to me and I doubled, thinking partner had to know I was void in hearts, since she must have heart tricks/length. -1860 later with our partners' -200 in 6♥, Miles had 19 IMPs back when we led the ♣Q and declarer pulled trumps and ran the ♥6.

The second quarter was better for us. We won the quarter 39 - 22. In this set we gave up six IMPs three times, twice using poor judgement on what our face cards were worth and the third time, when defending, we did not follow the principle in IMPs that overtricks don't matter. When you need partner to hold something, assume they have it. Board 21:

♠ J1082	
♥ 102	
♦ J94	
♣ KJ62	
♠ A3	♠ 975
♥ K8643	♥ -
♦ K2	♦ A10876
♣ A954	♣ Q10873
♠ KQ64	
♥ AQJ975	
♦ Q53	
♣ -	

We collected 12 IMPs when MILES played the hand at both tables. At our table they bid 5♣ to make, going down one for +100. At the other table Senensky doubled them in 4♠, collecting +500 along the way.

On board 24 we had a good descriptive auction:

Kuz
 ♠ A82
 ♥ A74
 ♦ Q854
 ♣ K87

Brentnall
 ♠ 3
 ♥ KJ92
 ♦ KJ1032
 ♣ AQ3

Kuz	Brentnall
1NT ¹	2♣
2♦	3♦
3♥	4♣
4♠	5♦

Making five. This was a big gain when at the other table, they had a less information to get to 3NT, down one on a spade lead.

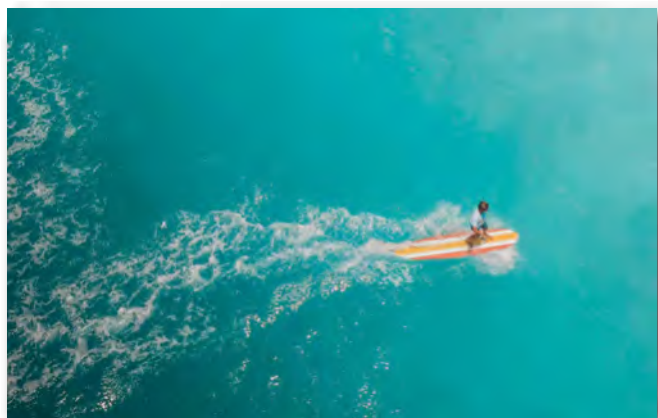
In the third quarter MILES came on strong winning 55 - 11 and leading in the match 119 - 90.

On board 1 both tables got to 4♥. They made four at our table, down one at the other.

On board 3 both sides played 3NT. Correct defence at our table led to -50. At the other table incorrect defence led to -400. 10 IMPs away. Then came Board 8:

♠ A9754	
♥ A103	
♦ KJ4	
♣ 96	
♠ 1082	♠ Q6
♥ KJ8	♥ Q654
♦ 1096	♦ 8732
♣ J1084	♣ AK2
♠ KJ3	
♥ 972	
♦ AQ5	
♣ Q753	

Both sides reached 4♠. A heart shift at trick two guaranteed defeat. At my table they shifted to a diamond so I was able to set up a club trick for a



heart pitch. My LHO had made a takeout double on the second round of bidding and a heart loser was inevitable. Wrongly, I chose to take a backwards spade finesse, playing LHO for a stiff ♠Q, or ♠10, singleton or doubleton. Down one and 10 IMPs away when their declarer played spades straight up. A disastrous turn of events for us.

A seasoned squad and a 29 IMP lead going into the final segment seemed like a tall task but then I remembered what my better half said as I left for the playing site. "There is a reason you play the game". So we sat back down for the final quarter. Things did not get better after the first hand. Board 15:

♠ K1082	
♥ KJ3	
♦ KQ10	
♣ A108	
♠ 9765	♠ AQJ
♥ 6	♥ 1042
♦ 32	♦ A7654
♣ QJ9642	♣ K3
♠ 43	
♥ AQ9875	
♦ J98	
♣ 75	

Both N-S bid to 4♥. At our table West led a diamond. Declarer played the 10. I won and returned a diamond in case Partner could ruff. Declarer played ♥K then led to his ♥A. Next came a spade to the king and my ace. I exited a red card which was won in dummy. A second spade was played and my jack came down. I lazily exited with a red card causing declarer to win in dummy. He played a third spade and my last honour came down while declarer ruffed it. With CA as an entry, MILES had 10 tricks and 12 IMPs. 7 IMPs changed hands over the next 4 Boards with MILES increasing their lead to 44 IMPs.

Then Board 20 saw the start of the comeback:

♠ Q65	
♥ 976	
♦ J4	
♣ A6532	
♠ K10432	♠ AJ98
♥ J10	♥ K8543
♦ K9873	♦ -
♣ K	♣ QJ84
♠ 7	
♥ AQ2	
♦ AQ10652	
♣ 1097	

Our auction was short and sweet. East opened Flannery in 3rd and West bid 4♠, ending the auction. The opening lead was the ♣A, followed by a heart shift which was ducked to the ♥Q, then ♥A, 3rd heart. Marielle ruffed with the ♠10, as North followed suit. She then played ♠K, followed by a spade to the jack, winning as South showed out. She pulled the last trump and claimed. Her instincts were right about the location of the ♠Q. Why was North cashing an empty ace on opening lead? When we discussed the hand later, it was pointed out that the defence had their tricks in, before the 3rd heart was played. When the 3rd round was played she should have taken a moment to decide who she was going to play for the ♠Q. If North, then ruff with ♠K and finesse the ♠10. If South, ruff with the ♠10, cross to dummy's ♠A and finesse with the ♠J. We were lucky hearts were 3-3.

At the other table our partners were -100 in a diamond partial when the 1♥ opener was followed by a 2♦ overcall. West passed expecting a reopening double which never came. 11 IMPs our way. The lead was now 33 IMPs with 8 to play. Board 22 saw 5 more IMPs our way when North chose to come in over 1NT and go down one in 2♠ for -50 and our partners got to play 1NT for +120. Board 23 saw 10 IMPs come to us when we played 3♦ for +130 (5♦ was 1 of 2 finesses, both losing), while our partners defended 3NT for +300. 4 IMPs found their way to our side over the next three boards reducing the lead to 1 IMP with 2 hands to go. Board 27:

♠ 83
♥ A10952
♦ AQ5
♣ J105

♠ 4	♠ QJ109652
♥ 64	♥ 8
♦ J10964	♦ K7
♣ QJ62	♣ 986

♠ AK7
♥ KQJ73
♦ 642
♣ AK

Both sides bid to 6♥. At our table, we were silent. Declarer won the opening spade lead and pulled trumps in two rounds. They cashed ♣A, then played the ♠K. I don't think they took a good look at partner's card on ♠K. The 3rd round of spades and clubs were ruffed and now a diamond was led with the nine in the West hand holding the trick. West led ♦J and declarer finessed. Down one. At the other table a spade was led. Trumps were pulled, declarer then cashed ♣AK, ruff a spade, ruff a club, diamond to the ace, 4th round of hearts to South, and lead up to the ♦Qx. East wins, but now must give up a ruff and sluff. 14 Imps to us and the lead was down to zero. The last hand brought more action to the match.

The last Board:

♠ 1092	♠ J7
♥ J93	♥ 872
♦ 10854	♦ KJ972
♣ J75	♣ Q103

♠ Q643
♥ KQ1065
♦ 3
♣ A98

♠ AK85
♥ A4
♦ AQ6
♣ K642

Flannery came to our rescue once again. West opened 2♦ and East and signed off in 2♥. South doubled. West

passed and North bid 3♦. East passed and now South bid 3NT. There was a possibility that South believed that North had some values for bidding 3♦ directly, thinking that Lebensohl applied here. When East doubled, South ran to 4♦. East doubled again. +800 for us. At the other table, three passes to South whose 2NT opening was passed out. Declarer was able to get out for -100.

12 IMPs for us. The comeback was complete. We had won the CMTCs! For Marielle Brentnall, it was her first National team win. For Barbara Shnier it was her second, having won the Women's title last year. For Barry Senensky and myself, our second, having won the CSTCs in 2022.

From the brink of elimination to the playoffs. From the depths of a demoralizing third quarter to the top of the podium. This is the reason you play the game.



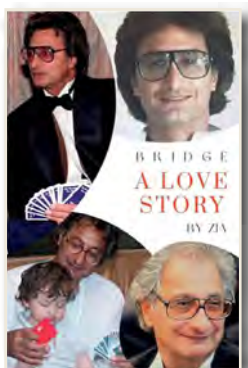
No matter how many tournaments you have won, and Masterpoints you have, you can still learn something from each session, if you are open to continual learning.

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.



2024 IBPA AWARDS AWARDS COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY -DECEMBER 2023.



RAY LEE MASTERPOINT PRESS IBPA BOOK OF THE YEAR

Bridge: A Love Story, by Zia Mahmood

Bridge: A Love Story is the compelling memoir of Zia Mahmood and his passion for the greatest game ever invented.

Zia unlocks his personal bridge vault to share the secrets to his remarkable and enduring success for over 50 years. Fast-paced, irreverent, humorous and instructive, this book is for all levels, from beginner to super-expert.

Join him as he travels the world playing mega high-

stakes games in exclusive clubs as well as under the spotlight at international tournaments.

Who does Zia believe is the greatest player in the world? Why is bridge "sexy"?

How did the rampant cheating scandals wreak havoc on the game?

If you enjoyed Zia's best seller, *Bridge My Way* which Omar Sharif called "Simply the best bridge book ever written," you won't be able to put this down.

Zia is one of a kind and so is his story.

IBPA PERSONALITIES OF THE YEAR

RealBridge:

Andy Bowles (Operations Director)

Graham Hazel (CEO and CTO)

Shireen Mohandes (Commercial Director)



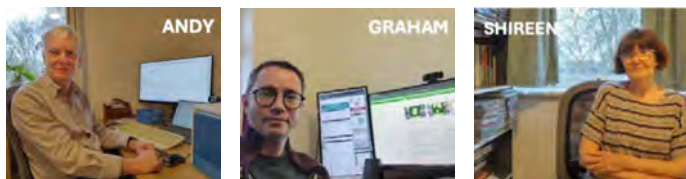
LOCKDOWN PROJECT

In April 2020, Graham Hazel, an English bridge player and software developer, found himself at home with children to teach and a day job, with some time on his

hands. Like many, he was trying to play more online bridge, and finding that it was okay, but not quite like the real thing. What do you do when the software doesn't do what you want? If you're Graham, you write your own. Two months later, he had the core of what you see at the table today – an interface for playing bridge, with built-in audio and video. He showed it to Shireen Mohandes and she was instantly smitten.

A LONG HOT SUMMER

They spent the summer designing and building the rest of the system, testing exhaustively on different types of hardware, and spreading the word about the new platform. When everyone else in the UK was gingerly edging out of lockdown, they were still at home, staring at a screen with twelve RealBridge windows open, adding features and testing. RealBridge wanted a platform that was good for everybody, so they consulted everybody: players, tournament directors, teachers, club owners, and major-event organizers. Everybody had ideas: mostly good; some challenging; others impractical.



A group of about 30 people from around the world rallied round and joined in the testing sessions for which RealBridge offers their thanks. Clubs in England, Norway, Germany, Australia and India started running games on the beta version. National bridge organizations got interested, starting with the English Bridge Union and the USBF. Both of these organizations were very supportive, and started running events on RealBridge.

LAUNCH

In November 2020 RealBridge launched the platform commercially. By now there was a solid core of clubs and teachers using the platform and had been used successfully for two national events and one (nervous) international one.

THE FIRST FEW YEARS

Four years on, and RealBridge has been adopted by more than 500 clubs and teachers, about 35 NBOs,

several zonal organizations, and the World Bridge Federation.

On the technological side, RealBridge has added a lot of useful functionality for teaching, high-level bridge, everyday club bridge, and vugraph.

Their objective is that everybody in the world to be able to play on RealBridge, and they want every event played on RealBridge to be a success. To that end they used to tell people "If we're awake we'll answer the phone," but that has morphed into just, "We'll answer the phone."

Not all of what RealBridge does is commercial – all of the team are bridge players, and they care about bridge. They offer the platform to run free international junior events, and organize games that bring together people from different countries (including the famous or infamous "Up Over versus Down Under" competition, where players from the UK and Ireland took on players from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in an 800-player extravaganza). If someone runs an online fundraiser for junior bridge, you'll probably find them in the background helping out with the technical side. They also sponsor other bridge technology developers, by helping them with IT resources and financial support.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Online bridge will never replace face-to-face bridge, but it doesn't have to be a poor relation. RealBridge is determined to be a big part of the future of bridge. RealBridge is there for a small club to run their three-table pairs without having to go out in the cold, for the WBF to run championship events with teams from all over the world, and for everything in between. They are continuously working on new features.

WHO HAS HELPED TO SHAPE REALBRIDGE?

RealBridge has had huge amounts of advice and support from players, directors and organizers at every level. Amongst NBOs and major event-organizers, RealBridge's greatest helpers have been Jan Martel at the USBF, the EBU led by Gordon Rainsford, Marianne Harding from Norway, Pierre Schmidt from France, Sukrit Vijayakar's Bridge from Home team in India, Sus

Vang from Denmark, Linnea Edlund from Sweden, Gary Barwick and Matt McManus in Australia, and many others.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Finally, RealBridge was featured on the TV news in the UK: In 2021 Bessie Hyder, from the North of England, had her 106th birthday. She celebrated in style, by eating some cake, then joining a game on RealBridge.

JUSTIN LALL PLAY AWARD

Winner: Justin Mill (Australia)

Journalist: Nick Jacob (Australia)

Event: 2023 National Open Teams

Justin Mill is one of Australia's finest talents. His partner, Rodrigo Garcia da Rosa of Uruguay, is one of Argentina's best players. People who know the two young stars have been excited to see what they can produce as a partnership. Take this board, where Justin found a beautiful line of play in the quarter-finals of the 2023 National Open Teams in Australia.

Board 41. Dealer North. East-West vulnerable.

♠ Q10965	
♥ A	
♦ K42	
♣ A965	
♠ J73	♠ -
♥ 98	♥ Q7643
♦ QJ10983	♦ 76
♣ 32	♣ KQJ1084
♠ AK842	
♥ KJ1052	
♦ A5	
♣ 7	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Butts	Mill	Courtney	Garcia da Rosa
	1♠	4♣	4NT ¹
Pass	5♠ ²	Pass	5NT ³
Pass	6♦ ⁴	Pass	6♥ ⁵
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

1. RKCB for spades.
2. Two keycards and the queen of spades.
3. Confirming all keycards.
4. King of diamonds, denying the king of hearts.
5. Last train.

Lead: king of clubs. Justin and Rodrigo brushed aside Michael Courtney's preempt to breeze into the grand slam. The contract was excellent. Trumps breaking 2-1 would allow declarer to draw trumps and claim on a crossruff. Three trumps in East would allow declarer to draw trumps and establish the 13th trick in hearts. Hence Justin played a small trump towards dummy's ace.

East's discard posed a problem for declarer. Had East held seven clubs, which looked a near certainty on the auction, declarer would have been unable to trump a low club on the table without being overruffed. Hearts 4-3 would still provide the 13th trick, so Justin turned his attention to that suit. A heart to the ace was cashed for a club discard, but West's club discard on the third round of hearts showed that this suit would not break either.

Justin trumped the heart low and took stock. East was now marked to be 0=5=2=6. Joan Butts' spade jack would prevent a full crossruff, so Justin set about pruning East's idle cards for an exquisite ending. The diamond king was cashed before declarer trumped his third diamond on the table. Justin now finessed the spade ten to reach the following ending:

♠ Q9	
♥ -	
♦ -	
♣ 96	
♠ J	♠ -
♥ -	♥ Q7
♦ QJ10	♦ -
♣ -	♣ QJ
♠ K8	
♥ J10	
♦ -	
♣ -	

When declarer continued with the spade queen from hand, East was caught in declarer's entry shifting squeeze. A heart discard would allow declarer to

overtake the spade with dummy's king, a heart would be trumped to fell East's queen, and dummy could be reached with a club ruff to cash the good heart for trick 13.

A club discard fared no better. Declarer could duck the spade in dummy, remaining in hand to trump East's last club. Now a heart ruff to hand allowed declarer to win trick 13 with that precious club.

"Ah, an over-under squeeze," mused Michael. "That's what they used to call this in 1935." With opponents failing to reach grand slam at the other table, Justin's one-in-a-million play was rewarded with +1510 and 11 IMPs.

THE JUAN-CARLOS VENTIN BIDDING AWARD

Winners: Linlin Hu and Yinghao (Dunga) Liu (China)

Journalist: Jian-Jian Wang (USA)

Event: 2023 Chinese National Club Championship

When watching a tournament, it is always delightful to see players achieving the best result with an outstanding bid or play, sometimes both. The following deal is from the recent Chinese National Club Championship.

Round 3. Board 12. Dealer West. N-S vulnerable.

♠ K1095	♠ A3
♥ J108	♥ AKQ5
♦ KQ	♦ A432
♣ AQ93	♣ 1064
♠ J2	
♥ 7632	
♦ J10875	
♣ 85	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Liu		Hu	
1♣ ¹	Pass	1NT ²	Pass
3♦ ³	Pass	3♠ ⁴	Pass
3NT ⁵	Pass	4♦ ⁶	Pass
4NT ⁷	Pass	6♥ ⁸	All Pass

1. 16+, any shape.
2. 12+ balanced.
3. 16-17 balanced, with a four card major.
4. Four hearts.
5. Four spades.
6. Four diamonds.
7. Denies four diamonds.
8. Great four card suit, offering a choice of slams.

It was a deal with East-West holding 32 HCP, but no eight-card fit in any suit. Linlin Hu and Yinghao (Dunga) Liu, representing ORG Club, demonstrated their slam bidding skills.

Liu upgraded his 15-count because of the nice middle-card combinations. Then Hu tried to locate a fit in red suits. When that effort didn't pay off, he made the most important bid in the whole auction – 6♥ as a choice of slam. With good three-card support and doubleton diamonds, Liu decided that was the best spot to land. Among 16 pairs of competitors in this top-flight tournament as trumps. All other 15 pairs played notrump, with ten pairs gaining overtricks in 3NT or 4NT while five pairs went minus in 6NT.

South led a trump against 6♥, and it was up to Hu to bring the contract home. Hu won the jack of hearts in dummy, followed by cashing the king-queen of diamonds and the heart eight to hand. After ruffing the third diamond, Hu came back to hand with the ace of spades and drew trumps. If hearts broke 3-3, a simple play of the spade three to dummy's nine would secure the contract, as North would be endplayed after winning the trick. However, when South showed four hearts, Hu had to clear trumps. Because South had nine cards in the red suits, Hu believed it was time to give up the simple finesse in clubs, and went for the strip-squeeze instead. When Hu played the ace of diamonds, North was hopelessly looking at dummy's last four cards: ♠K10 and ♣AQ. He could not afford to leave his spade queen or club king unguarded, which would give declarer two tricks in that suit. However keeping two cards in each suit was no better. Hu played the ♠K, and

exited to East's ♠Q, allowing the ♣AQ to be the game going winners.

GIDWANI AWARD FOR BEST DEFENCE

Winner: Yinghao (Dunga) Liu (China)

Journalist: Jian-Jian Wang (USA)

Article: One-two punch

Event: 19th Asian Games

The 2022 Asian Games, officially the 19th Asian Games, were held from 23 September to 8 October 2023 in Hangzhou, China. Since 2018, bridge has been among the mind sports with full medal status at this second-largest multi-sport event after the Olympic Games. Here is a brilliant defence executed by the bronze medalist Yinghao (Dunga) Liu of the China Open Team, in the early round-robin match against the final gold medal winner, Hong Kong, China.

Round 11. Board 14. Dealer East. Neither vulnerable.

♠ 942	
♥ AQJ63	
♦ 10983	
♣ K	
♠ KJ76	♠ 53
♥ 4	♥ 9852
♦ AJ642	♦ K75
♣ A43	♣ 9762
♠ AQ108	
♥ K107	
♦ Q	
♣ QJ1085	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Liu	Sze	Hu	Chiu
		Pass	1♣ ¹
1♦	Dbf ²	2♦	Dbf ³
2♠	Dbf	3♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

1. 2+ clubs.
2. 4+ hearts.
3. Four takeout.

The contract is played from the correct side, as a spade lead from East would easily set it. With West on lead, to give the defense any chance a diamond underlead away from the ace of diamonds is required, and that is exactly what Dunga did. First hurdle cleared!

Hu won his king, and duly shifted to the five of spades. Chiu's 10 was taken by Dunga's jack. Now, it was time for some serious thought. Based on the bidding and play so far, Dunga was able to correctly deduce the actual layout, but was there a way to beat 4♥? Even the expert tournament commentators were unable to figure it out when looking at all four hands, until Dunga put the six of spades on the table.

At first glance, this seemed to solve declarer's problem in spades, but a closer look reveals that it was actually a big trouble-maker. The bridge between the declarer and dummy was broken! Declarer could no longer set up the clubs and clear trumps at the same tie. In reality, declarer took dummy's nine, and ruffed a diamond back before drawing trumps. When he tried the king of clubs from dummy next, Dunga could score his ace along with two diamond winners for two down.

It took two marvelous moves by Dunga to defeat this solid contract: an underlead to his partner first, then a free finesse for the declarer next. In the other room declarer had no trouble taking 11 tricks.



the GREAT CANADIAN BIDDING CONTEST



June 2025 TGCBC Host: Zygmunt Marcinski

*For panelists, and their bids,
see page 38*

It is my pleasure to welcome a new host for the June contest. Zyg Marcinski has been a leading Canadian bridge bidding theorist for many, many years. He has formed formidable partnerships and teams, being very successful in CBF and non CBF play alike, with seven combined COTC and CSTC wins, as well as a number high finishes in both NABC and WBF Championships. I had the pleasure (?) of losing to his team in the 2025 CSTC Final. Welcome back panelists and readers alike.

TGCBC warmly welcomes, and will consider using all deals, from panelists and readers alike.

Five panelists tied with 49, for the top score for June: Keith Balcombe, Neil Kimelman, Paul Thurston, David Turner, and Edward Xu.

Problem 1

As South, you hold ♠KQ10953 ♥QJ94 ♦A2 ♣4. E-W vul, IMPs.

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

What do you bid?

Bid	Votes	Score
Dbl	19	10
3♣	3	7
2♥	1	7
2♠	1	4

The panel vote was a landslide in favour of the balancing double. Let's see first what the few voices in the wilderness had to say.

Three of these five voices chose 3♣ – two (COOPER and SMITH) wishing to establish a game force, with SMITH “looking for the best game” and the third (STARK) a one-round force since “not sure partner will bid over 2♥”.

4 of the 5 voices chose to bid rather than double as they wanted to drive to game. Only two voices offered advanced another reason for their preference to bid rather than double.

COOPER: “I prefer that double have 2-3 clubs and be more prepared for a possible leave-in...”

This stylistic preference might have attracted more consideration from your host had he not added as support for his choice of 3♣ the following:

..“3♣ gets across the message of (...) likely short clubs (since no double)”

CIMON: 2♠. “I don't like my defence if partner passes 2♣ doubled - my hand is more oriented for offence.”

Would a new suit bid of 2♥ be forcing? This might have been a better problem to have posed to the panel as it attracted a full spectrum of views from those panelists who weighed in on it: not forcing (TURNER and LEBI), not sure (STARK) or “no consensus” (BALCOMBE), a one-round force (TREBLE – whose 2♥ vote backed this view), forcing (TODD who doesn't “buy into” the current fashion of playing it as non-forcing). I concur with BALCOMBE that it's a matter of partnership agreement – likely in the context of the meaning ascribed to responder's jump shift options on his initial response.

Only a few of the doublers expressed some concern with the high(ish) ratio of offence-to-defence of this hand but concluded that it was a worthwhile risk.

MILES (echoed by **THURSTON**): "If they make it, at least it's not game."

I agree – I'd be MUCH more concerned about double if the overcall were 2♥ and my round suits were reversed. So why double?

HARGREAVES: Double. Not proud of this but, assuming we use support doubles, we have no 9 card fit anywhere and a spade lead, if partner passes, rates to be good for our side. I can't think of another call that works better than the double.

BALCOMBE: "No support double so no nine-card fit looming".

I concur, adding that the inferences and follow-up implications of the "support double" mechanism that has gained great popularity in the past 25 years have not yet received the attention they deserve.

Far and away the most popular rationale for the double was that it kept all possible balls in the air. Summing up for this majority is L'ECUYER:

L'ECUYER: "To me double is flexible and accounts for all the possibilities that partner could do."

One of these possibilities is that opener is positively hungry for a "sign of life" double that he can convert into penalties. What happened in real life?

♠ 2
♥ A3
♦ Q10943
♣ AJ1075

♠ AJ4
♥ K5
♦ J5
♣ KQ9832

♠ 876
♥ 10876
♦ K876
♣ 6

♠ KQ10953
♥ QJ94
♦ A2
♣ 4

South bid 3♥, and wound up in 4♠, down one. Their team lost 15 when their opponents reopened with a double, and nipped 2♣ doubled for +1100.

Problem 2

As East you hold ♠10 ♥1082 ♦AKQ6532 ♣102. Neither vul, IMPs.

West

West	North	East	South
	1♣ ¹	1♦	Dbl
2♣	2♦	?	

1. 2+ clubs.

What do you bid?

Bid	Votes	Score
3♠	2	10
5♦	6	9
4♦	5	9
3♣	4	8
3♦	7	7

The panel's balanced divergence of views here is a host's and reader's delight. Some panelists quibbled with the initial 1♦ overcall.

MILES (echoed by **COOPER**, **LINDOP** and **L'ECUYER**): "An initial 3♦ may have worked better, taking more

room and giving partner a chance to sacrifice.”

COOPER also considered and rejected:

COOPER: “Why didn’t I jump cue bid 3♣, which would ask for a club stopper? The hand is too weak, as I’d like a side trick for that.”

Holding this very high offence to defence ratio hand, understandably there were no second-round passers. A minority eschewed soliciting partner’s input and chose a unilateral tactical bid in an effort to make everyone guess – yet there was no consensus as to what to bid with this goal in mind.

KUZ (a 3♦ bidder): “Keep the barrage going.”

THURSTON (a 4♦ bidder): “Serve and volley, getting ready for Wimbledon!”

JACOB (a 5♦ bidder): “With likely 0 defensive tricks, I’d rather not give them the level.”

STARK (a 5♦ bidder): “Have a nice day, South.”

XU (another 5♦ bidder): “Opps may or may not have slam. I choose to cut the communication.”

I’m not convinced: given that partner showed a limit raise or better and I hold THESE diamonds he must be doing it on power, so it seems much more likely that if anyone can make slam it’s us and not the enemy. L’ECUYER (a 4♦ bidder) was the only panelist to explicitly consider the possibility that it’s partner who has a good hand.

TURNER (a 4♦ bidder) tries for BOTH obstruction AND description: “Descriptive for partner and makes lefty with club length guess what to do.”

The majority preferred to describe their hand and hence involve their partner – yet here too there was wide divergence as to what bid constitutes the best description. The 3♣ bidders are all catering for 3NT, uniformly believing that they’re asking for a stopper.

FELDMAN: “Let’s see if partner can bid 3NT”.

As the common expert approach when the opponents have bid (or implied, as here) more than one suit is to cue bid values, I am not persuaded that a 3♣ bid asks for, rather than shows a club stopper. The diamond

bidders thought their choice was descriptive and that “partner will get the message”.

GRAINGER (a 3♦ bidder) suggests a more subtle approach towards 3NT: “With nothing in the other suits, just show some life and partner can bid 3NT if they choose to.”

HARGREAVES: 3♦. Not sure what 2♣ showed. In my partnerships it would be a sound raise to 2♦ but there’s an argument for it being clubs, given that 1♣ was 2+. In any event, 3♦ seems quite descriptive.

CHEN (another 3♦ bidder): “To emphasize my suit quality while I could pass otherwise.”

KIMELMAN (a 4♦ bidder): “I think this a good description of my hand for partner to know what to do. I believe bidding this way has made partner the captain, and I will defer any decisions to [them].”

The two 3♠ bidders argue cogently that this bid shows spade shortness and a hand with at least some ambitions towards game (be it 3NT or 5♦) or more.

SMITH (echoed by **MILES**): “Telling my story: very good diamonds and short spades.”

I’m sold. The full deal:

♠ KQ32	
♥ AJ43	
♦ 74	
♣ Q63	
♠ A95	♠ 10
♥ 7	♥ 1082
♦ J109	♦ AKQ6532
♣ AK8754	♣ 102
♠ J8764	
♥ KQ965	
♦ 8	
♣ J9	

At the table East bid 3♣, South bid 3♠, West bid 5♣, North passed, East bid 5♦ to end the auction.

Problem 3

As South, you hold ♠A1064 ♥AK10987 ♦107 ♣9. N-S vul, IMPs.

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

What do you bid?

Bid	Votes	Score
3♠	16	10
4♠	5	7
2♠	3	5

No one considered a pass, and everyone rebid some number of spades suppressing the excellent heart suit – so the question boiled down to how many spades to bid? A minority went high with 4♠.

STARK: “Eons ago a similar problem came up at the Ottawa Regional. Nick L’Ecuyer bid 4♠ and said “I hope partner doesn’t make a move”. I haven’t forgotten the lesson.”

And right he is about a panelist whose aggression has not ebbed with the passage of time (indeed, he’s even worried about precluding slam!).

L’ECUYER: “4♠. Bid what you think you can make.”

Since the prevailing adverse vulnerability makes it unlikely that partner is “messaging around” with his 1♠ response, the aggressive 4♠ rebid is unlikely to get us into serious trouble. The serious reservation I have about 4♠ is that it’s an overstatement (I’m troubled by the doubleton diamond and I’d rather have a diamond void for this bid) and may reasonably incite responder to further action that propels our side overboard.

A smaller minority goes low with 2♠, though two are closet 3♠ bidders.

CIMON: “Very conservative (...)”

HORNBY: “(...) part of me wants to bid 3♠ with my 6-losers”

HARGREAVES: 2♠. Not passing. Not bidding hearts. What else is there?

The majority aims for the middle of the fairway with 3♠, relying on their general assessment of playing strength:

BALCOMBE: “Seems like the value bid to me. I might bid 4 if my minors were reversed.”

GRAINGER: “Great playing strength, not to mention vul atimps”

JACOB: “In spite of the lack of HCPs even ♠KJxxx in partner’s hand may produce game”

KUZ: “Need so little for game to make.”

LEBI: “Light on HCPs, heavy on playing strength.”

THURSTON: “A hopeful (but maybe slightly stretched) 3♠ seems more in line [than 2♠] with this collection’s playing strength if not its high-card content.

Convinced by 3♠? I am. What happened at the table? Partner held ♠KQJx ♥62 ♦J854 ♣Q43, and passed 2♠, missing a decent vulnerable game.

Problem 4

As South, both vul, pairs, as Dealer you hold ♠AQ97 ♥QJ9753 ♦4 ♣AK. Both vul, IMPs.

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

What is your plan?

Bid	Votes	Score
3♥	14	10
2♠	8	9
Pass	1	6
4♥	1	5

The parade of vexatious 6-4 distributional hands this month continues here.

The sole pessimistic passer was **JACOB**, though he's on the cusp of joining the minority 2♠ camp:

JACOB: "Game is unlikely. Yes, partner may have ♠K and 3 trumps; would a 2♠ bid entice some further action?"

On the other side of the spectrum is a not infrequent teammate of JACOB:

HARGREAVES: Close between hanging partner, via 4♥, or cutting him some slack while hoping he's going to guess well via 3♥. It's imps, we're vulnerable, it's extremely unlikely anyone can double us, so 4♥ is my choice...bid promptly and with an aura of confidence.

The majority choice is a straightforward and non-descriptive 3♥, with CIMON offering a good analysis that falls short of shedding light on her choice of 3♥ instead of 2♠:

CIMON: "I will double with a weak opening hand if I have shortness in diamonds, in case partner had a trap pass. So with a good hand I have to bid again. With six hearts, I prefer to raise, rather than bidding 2♠."

COOPER (with KIMELMAN in agreement) explains further why to prefer hearts over spades.

COOPER: "I would not bid 2♠ because hearts should be a fine trump suit even if we have a 4-4 spade fit. I also don't want partner passing 2♠ with a bust and 3-2 in the majors."

The large minority plumps for 2♠ in the hope that this will allow partner to accurately evaluate whatever slender assets he may be blessed with:

DENG: (echoed verbatim by **HORNBY**): "Game try."

STARK: "Just to let partner re-evaluate. If partner holds one of the [major suit] kings, maybe I'll get the bump to 4♥."

TURNER: "Partner's strength is quite limited but he may have 4 goodies in spades too weak for a negative double, eg J10xx 10x Jxxx xxx."

Although I usually fall into the camp of collaborative descriptions such as 2♠, here the ♥ texture pushes me to side with COOPER and KIMELMAN in the 3♥ camp.

What happened at the table?

Partner held ♠J105 ♥A4 ♦J876 ♣10762. Over 2♠, with only a doubleton partner might only bid 3♥, but he'll comfortably raise 3♥ to 4♥.

Problem 5

As East, you hold ♠K732 ♥J95 ♦84 ♣7532. Both vul, IMPs.

West	North	East	South
-	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦ ²
3♦	4♥ ³	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- 11-16, either 6+♣ or unbalanced with 5♣ and one or two side 4-card suits.
- Artificial ask, at least invitational.
- 5+ hearts, equal or longer clubs.

What do you lead?

Bid	Votes	Score
Spade	18	10
Diamond	5	7
Club	1	5

The spade lead won by a country mile. Let's see first if the minority offers any persuasive argument in favour of their choices. What's the case for a diamond lead?

COOPER: "A poker player might feel that he can bully us out of a diamond lead: he may have 3 little diamonds and infer shortness. My style is to lead partner's suit without a very compelling argument to the contrary. The harmony of the partnership is more important than any one deal."

HARGREAVES: If I don't lead diamonds, and the diamond would have worked....maybe your partner wouldn't say something like 'if I'd have bid spades, would you have led a diamond?' Obviously one could choose a spade, on the basis that dummy is prepared for the diamond lead...plus he probably has the spade ace... So I lead the pedestrian diamond, but wouldn't be the least bit surprised to learn that the spade was better. Neither round suit deserves consideration.

LINDOP (echoed by **HORNBY**): "Partner won't be happy if I don't lead his suit and it turns out to be right. Partner didn't preempt in diamonds so maybe partner has ♦KQ and a heart winner."

CIMON: "I don't think that South has 2 spade losers off the top. I hope we can cash one diamond and one spade. Maybe declarer won't be able to pitch the spade loser in dummy on the heart suit."

Both LINDOP and CIMON have a plausible construction that they're hoping for. Can the lone trump leader persuade us?

CHEN: "South's 6♣ looks likely a distributional hand with 3 clubs (or 4) and short hearts, good controls in diamonds and spades. Leading trumps could reduce their tricks."

Considering but rejecting the trump lead was:

TURNER: "I couldn't come up with a plausible 6511 construction where a club lead works."

With hearts breaking well and uncertainty as to whether or not you will gain the lead again to advance a second trump, a trump seems like a forlorn hope. What made the spade so popular? For most it was the possibility of partner having the ace and cashing two fast tricks.

BALCOMBE (with a nod to COOPER's and LINDOP's partnership harmony concerns):

BALCOMBE: "They might be off two cashing spades. If this is wrong, I expect partner to say 'If I had bid spades would you then have led diamonds?'"

GRAINGER: "They're always prepared for the diamond lead and our round holdings strongly suggest we need to try to take the first two tricks."

KIMELMAN: "If we have two tricks to cash it will be in spades. Declarer could be 2-5-0-6. With spade length in dummy, I see no reason to lead the king."

LEBI: "Hopefully we can take 2 spade tricks"

THURSTON: "Get ours as fast as we can (if we can)."

TODD: "Where do we find 2 tricks before declarer sets up hearts?"

For a few it was simply the "sound" of the opponents' seemingly confident auction, pushing them towards aggression and away from the "safety" of the diamond opening lead.

L'ECUYER (echoed almost verbatim by KUZ, JACOB, and SMITH): "It looks like they are ready for a diamond lead so I will lead a spade."

STARK: "A good auction for an aggressive lead. Maybe we take the first two spades. For sure they don't have more than one diamond loser."

DU (with **XU** agreeing): "My 3 card heart holding, along with the auction, suggest an aggressive opening lead."

Only one panelist mentioned the possibility of a fast-cashing trick followed in due course by a slow heart trick, and guesses to lead a spade instead of a diamond in search of the fast-cashing trick as a 2-for-1 parlay in case the opponents are off the first two spade tricks.

TREBLE: "It looks as if we need two fast tricks or one immediate trick and a slow one to be defeating their contract. My nondescript ♥J9x does not make me particularly optimistic. If LHO has shot 6♣ with two possible diamond losers, the joke will be on me."

One spade leader did so only after throwing his hands up in frustration:

MILES: "Where are all the diamonds? Dummy probably has 0/1/2+ with the ace. I'm having trouble putting together anything that makes sense where a spade lead is required".

But there's a valuable lesson to be learned here: having the opportunity of firing the first salvo is a precious advantage for the defense that comes with the responsibility of investing the effort to try and visualize a winning construction that is consistent with the auction.

Do you have a headache yet? I certainly did when faced with this in a recent competition.

The full deal:

♠ 4	
♥ K108643	
♦ -	
♣ AKJ1086	
♠ A965	♠ K732
♥ Q	♥ J95
♦ KJ109653	♦ 84
♣ 9	♣ 7532
	♠ QJ108
	♥ A72
	♦ AQ72
	♣ Q4

So kudos to all the spade leaders for the courage to ignore partner's 3♦ bid – after all, the opponents were indeed missing both the A and K of spades. And hats off to BILL TREBLE for spotting the humble heart assets and putting his finger on the actual construction.



Bridge Rules Revisited 1

Rule of Eleven – this is the total number of tricks that we usually make when my partnership bids a slam.

PANELIST ANSWERS

June 2025 Bidding Contest

		Hand 1		Hand 2		Hand 3		Hand 4		Hand 5		
	Name	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Bid	Score	Total
	Keith Balcombe	Dbl	10	5♦	9	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠3	10	49
	Fengming Chen	Dbl	10	3♦	7	3♠	10	3♥	10	♣2	5	42
	Francine Cimon	2♠	4	5♦	9	2♠	5	3♥	10	♦8	7	35
	Stephen Cooper	3♣	10	3♣	8	3♠	10	3♥	10	♦8	7	45
	Eve Deng	Dbl	10	3♣	8	3♠	10	2♠	9	♠2	10	47
	Terry Du	Dbl	10	3♦	7	4♠	7	3♥	10	♠2	10	44
	Jason Feldman	Dbl	10	3♣	8	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠3	10	48
	David Grainger	Dbl	10	3♦	7	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠2	10	47
	Mike Hargreaves	Dbl	10	3♦	7	2♠	5	4♥	6	♦	7	35
	Hornby	Dbl	10	3♣	8	2♠	5	2♠	9	♦8	7	39
	Dan Jacob	Dbl	10	5♦	9	3♠	10	Pass	6	♠3	10	45
	Neil Kimelman	Dbl	10	4♦	9	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠2	10	49
	Bob Kuz	Dbl	10	3♦	7	3♠	10	2♠	9	♠2	10	46
	Robert Lebi	Dbl	10	3♦	7	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠3	10	47
	Nick L'Ecuyer	Dbl	10	4♦	9	4♠	7	3♥	10	♠2	10	46
	David Lindop	Dbl	10	4♦	9	3♠	10	2♠	9	♦8	7	45
	Danny Miles	Dbl	10	3♠	10	4♠	7	3♥	10	♠3	10	47
	Julie Smith	3♣	7	3♠	10	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠2	10	47
	Andy Stark	3♣	7	5♦	9	4♠	7	2♠	9	♠3	10	43
	Paul Thurston	Dbl	10	4♦	9	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠2	10	49
	Bob Todd	Dbl	10	3♦	7	3♠	10	3♥	10	♠2	10	47
	Bill Treble	2♥	7	5♦	9	4♠	7	2♠	9	♠2	10	42
	David Turner	Dbl	10	4♦	10	3♠	10	2♠	9	♠7	10	49
	Edward Xu	Dbl	10	5♦	10	3♠	10	2♠	9	♠3	10	49



SEPTEMBER 2025 PROBLEMS

Host: David Turner

To readers: submit your answers by August 7th.

1. IMPs, Dealer: West, vul: N-S. As South you hold
♠1087432 ♥AK5 ♦3 ♣AK7.

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♦	2♠	?

- a) What do bid?
b) What is your plan over partner's likely next calls?"
Be specific.

2. IMPs, Dealer: South. Vul: NS. As South you hold:
♠A1032 ♥AKQ765 ♦4 ♣K8.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♣	1♥ 4♣ ¹
4♦	5♦	Pass	5♥
Pass	5♠	Pass	?

1. Splinter

- a) Do you agree with 4♣?
b) What now?

3. IMPs, Dealer: North, Vul: None. As South you hold:
♠KQJ32 ♥2 ♦AK109x ♣KJ.

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

What do you bid?

4. IMPs, Dealer: South, Vul: Both. As South you hold:
♠Q9 ♥AKQ92 ♦KQJ97 ♣4

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

What do you bid?

5. IMPs, Dealer: North, Vul: Both. As South you hold: 9, 65, J8742, KQT43

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	?

What do you bid?



Ethan: Bridge is a game of inches.

Samantha: Too bad you always have a foot in your mouth.

SOLUTION TO THE DIFFERENCE - A PLAY PROBLEM

PUZZLE ON PAGE 11

Contract: 3NT, Pairs, local club game. Lead: ♣6.

The bidding:

Dummy
 ♠ 82
 ♥ AJ104
 ♦ J873
 ♣ AQ9
Declarer
 ♠ Q4
 ♥ 765
 ♦ AQ942
 ♣ KJ10

West	North	East	South
			1NT (12-14)
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Plan the play.

Well the good news is that you avoided a spade lead. If you can bring in five diamonds tricks you can make 3NT.

The best play is the ♦J at trick two. Why? West has likely led from club length, and has some spade length, so rates to be short in diamonds. Why? East didn't bid, which they may have with six or more spades. So it looks like West has club length and at least three spades.

So, win the club in dummy, making sure you keep another club entry in dummy. So win the club queen, playing the ten. Trick two diamond trick goes J, K, A,

6. Now cross to the ace of clubs. East shows out. Now, if it wasn't before, the finesse for the ♦10 is the best choice.

The full deal:

	<u>Dummy</u>	
	♠ 82	
	♥ AJ104	
	♦ J873	
	♣ AQ9	
♠ KJ105		♠ A9763
♥ K9		♥ Q832
♦ 6		♦ K105
♣ 765432		♣ 8
	♠ Q4	
	♥ 765	
	♦ AQ942	
	♣ KJ10	



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

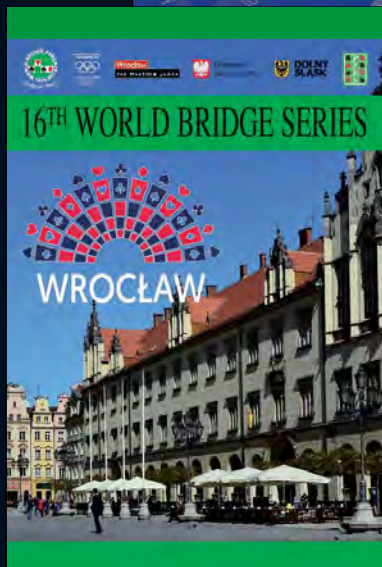
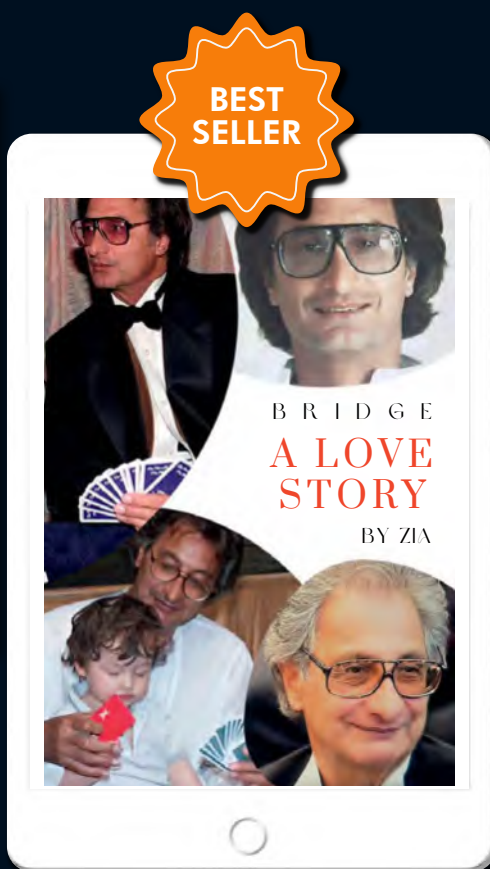
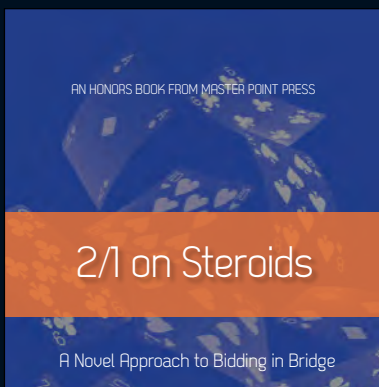
2025

MONTH	DATE	EVENTS
JUNE	All Month	North American Pairs – <i>Flight A, B and C</i>
	June 15-22	1 Day - Day of Bridge / Alzheimer Societies
JULY	All Month	North American Pairs – <i>Flight A, B and C</i>
	July 12-17	World Youth Team Championships - Italy
AUGUST	All Month	North American Pairs – <i>Flight A, B and C</i>
	August 20-31	World Bridge Team Championships, Denmark
SEPTEMBER	All Month	Qualifying games in clubs for the 2026 CBC – Sept. to Dec. (CNTC and COPC)
	All Month	International Fund games – In person Clubs
	Sept. 15-30	Registration for CBF Online Team League
	September 20	CBF Online Game on BBO – 1:15 EST – COPC 2026 Qualifier
OCTOBER	All Month	Qualifying games in clubs for the 2026 CBC – Sept. to Dec. (CNTC and COPC)
	All Month	CBF Online Team League – Oct. through Feb.
	Oct. 16 (Thur)	Erin Berry Rookie Master Game at in person Clubs
	October 18	CBF Online Game on BBO – 1:15 EST – COPC 2026 Qualifier
	October 20	CBC 2026 – Round Robin Registration Opens (Teams)
NOVEMBER	All Month	Qualifying games in clubs for the 2026 CBC – Sept. to Dec. (CNTC and COPC)
	November 15	CBF Online Game on BBO – 1:15 EST – COPC 2026 Qualifier
DECEMBER	All Month	Qualifying games in clubs for the 2026 CBC – Sept. to Dec. (CNTC and COPC)
	December 15-21	Stardust Week – Gold Points at Clubs
	December 20	CBF Online Game on BBO – 1:15 EST – COPC 2026 Qualifier



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