

**11<sup>th</sup>**  
**EUROPEAN CHAMPION'S CUP**  
Eilat, Israel 15th - 18th November 2012



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Issue No. 1

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# STILL EVERYBODY'S GAME



*Giannarigo Rona, David Birman, and Yves Aubry at the opening ceremony*

England and Monaco are leading Group A with 43 and 37 V.P. after they both registered a blitz in their second match. The teams at the receiving end of these blitzes, Sweden and Germany, will have trouble in making it to the semis, I think but for Angelini and Israel Blue it's still wide open.

In Group B Russia did well by scoring 20 and 19 for a total of 39 V.P. This gives them a 6 V.P. lead over the Dutch who, on 33 V.P., are leading the chase with the holders Allegra, Israel White and Radkov all within 5 V.P.'s distance. For Poland, qualification looks far off at this point.

## Programme

**THURSDAY November 16th**

**Rounds 3 - 5**

10.00-12.50	.....Round 3
14.00-16.50	.....Round 4
17.10-20.00	.....Round 5
20.15	.....Captain's Meeting

# RESULTS

## Group A

### ROUND 1

	Home Team	Visiting Team	IMPs	VPs
1	Monaco FM	Hinden -English	35 - 51	12 - 18
2	Angelini	Burghausen I	50 - 37	18 - 12
3	BK Lavec – Smile	Israel Blue	44 - 41	16 - 14

### ROUND 2

	Home Team	Visiting Team	IMPs	VPs
1	BK Lavec – Smile	Monaco FM	13 - 67	4 - 25
2	Israel Blue	Angelini	24 - 8	18 - 12
3	Burghausen I	Hinden -English	26 - 83	4 - 25

## Group B

### ROUND 1

	Home Team	Visiting Team	IMPs	VPs
1	G.S.Allegra	Radkov Bridge Club	40 - 3	23 - 7
2	Het Witte Huis	Consus Kalisz	54 - 24	21 - 9
3	Bridge Club Real	Israel White	66 - 43	20 - 10

### ROUND 2

	Home Team	Visiting Team	IMPs	VPs
1	Bridge Club Real	G.S.Allegra	51 - 18	19 - 8
2	Israel White	Het Witte Huis	48 - 33	18 - 12
3	Consus Kalisz	Radkov Bridge Club	34 - 66	8 - 22

# Ranking after 2 rounds

## Group A

1	Hinden -English Premier League	43
2	Monaco FM	37
3	Israel Blue	32
4	Angelini Bridge Team	30
5	BK Lavec – Smile	20
6	Burghausen I	16

## Group B

1	Bridge Club Real	39
2	Het Witte Huis	33
3	G.S.Allegra	31
4	Radkov Bridge Club	29
5	Israel White	28
6	Consus Kalisz	17

# Round 1, Lavec – Israel Blue

For the 11th edition of the European Champions' Cup, 10 national club team champions sent their representatives to Eilat. To make up the total number of 12 participating teams, both the host country and the country whose team won the previous edition are entitled to an extra team. That's why we have two Italian teams playing here (Allegra, the holders, and Angelini) as well as two Israeli teams, simply called white and blue for no specific reason.

In the first round, the Blues had to face Sweden's Lavec Smile team. On the first board, Lavec were awarded an adjusted score of 3 IMPs and this was board 2:

The cards lay slightly unlucky for NS but for once, their opponents knew about it in time:

Board: 2. Dlr: East/NS

♠ - ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ A K 10 8 7 5 ♣ J 8 3 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ K Q 7 5 ♥ J 3 2 ♦ J ♣ A 10 9 6 4	♠ J 9 8 ♥ A K 10 8 ♦ Q 9 6 4 ♣ Q 5
N						
W     E						
S						

In the Open Room, NS had sold out to 3♦ which could not be made: Sweden +50.

In the Closed Room, there was more action when Zak made a light take-out double:

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
		1♣	Db1
2♠	4♠	Db1	All pass

Barel bid a completely normal 4♠ but Upmark knew enough to have the final word.

When he led his singleton diamond, Nyström took the king and returned a club to Upmark's ace. From here, the only way to defeat the contract by two tricks is to play hearts all the time. Against this defence, the communication for declarer in hearts is gone before all East's trumps are drawn and declarer will thus have to lose his other diamond as well, rather than being able to throw it on the 13th heart. When East returned a club after winning his ace, declarer had time to play trumps from the top, thus keeping the heart communication intact for a late diamond discard. One down only but another 6 IMPs to Lavec.

And then:

Board: 3. Dlr: South/EW

♠ J 10 4 ♥ J 10 8 5 4 ♦ Q 10 ♣ Q 7 5	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ 7 3 2 ♥ A 9 7 6 2 ♦ 9 5 4 3 ♣ 6	♠ Q 8 ♥ Q 3 ♦ A K 8 6 ♣ J 10 9 4 3
N						
W     E						
S						

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	All pass	

In the Open Room, an undistinguished auction led to a very playable game in a 5-2 fit. West led the ♥J to East's ace and East returned his club. Declarer rose with the ace and played a trump, West inserting the jack as dummy's queen won. Declarer then ran dummy's ♠8, playing safe enough for 10 tricks as a club ruff would not hurt him. Lavec +420.

In the Closed Room, this was the auction:

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
NYSTRÖM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
			1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
All pass			

2♣ was forcing to game and thus 3♥ became a splinter.

Now 6♣ is a quite playable slam in a nice 5-4 fit but with an ace missing and the trump queen outside, the slam is slightly against the odds as a few more small things are also needed. So for the neutral observer, it was no surprise to see this slam go down but for Israel Blue, it was not really the start they wanted: 0-19 down after only the first three boards...

After picking up an overtrick on the quiet next board, the Israeli team really hit back on board 5:

Board: 5. Dlr: North/NS

♠ 7 6 5 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ Q 10 7 6 3 ♣ J 5	♠ 10 8 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ A K 4 ♣ A 10 6 3 2	<div style="background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <span>W</span> <span style="margin: 0 10px;">E</span> <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ A Q J 9 4 ♥ Q 6 4 ♦ 8 ♣ K 9 8 4
	♠ K 3 ♥ A J 10 5 2 ♦ J 9 5 2 ♣ Q 7		

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
4♣	1♣	1♠	2♥
	5♥	All pass	

In the Open Room, Ventin bid one more when given the chance, and soon had to regret it. In 5♥ there were two certain losers in the black suits, so something had to happen in either minor: clubs 3-3 with the king onside or the ♦Q doubleton anywhere. The problem is that declarer is stranded in his hand after guessing the trumps correctly and thus has no longer the chance to start clubs from dummy. When South led a club to the ten and East's king, the diamond return removed a vital entry to dummy, as declarer cannot both ruff dummy's last club good and enjoy it too. So Wrang had to concede one down, Israel Blue +100.



Alon Birman, player and facilities manager

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
Pass	INT	2♦!	3♦!(1)
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
4♠	4♥	Pass	Pass
All pass	Pass	Pass	Dbl

In the Closed Room, we saw a much longer auction. Nysström did well to take the save in the end but the Israeli pair now was in a good position to correctly judge. Down three, 500 and 12 much needed IMPs back to Israel Blue.

A few boards later, a subtle message by Michael Barel was not picked up by his partner:

Board: 8. Dlr: West/None

♠ K J 5 4 ♥ 8 7 4 2 ♦ J 4 ♣ A 9 6	♠ A 9 7 2 ♥ 9 ♦ A Q 10 9 7 3 2 ♣ K	<div style="background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <span>W</span> <span style="margin: 0 10px;">E</span> <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid white;"/> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ 10 6 3 ♥ A Q J ♦ 6 5 ♣ Q 8 7 5 4
	♠ Q 8 ♥ K 10 6 5 3 ♦ K 8 ♣ J 10 3 2		

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	INT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All pass			

In the Open Room, Ventin made a loud and clear announcement about his extra values. Holding the priceless ♦K himself, Wrang had no trouble at all to convert 3♦ to game. Lavec an easy +400 when declarer ran the spade lead to his queen successfully.

On this board, 3NT by South was a popular contract which was made on a spade lead most of the time. Only one pair managed to defeat it after the same auction as above.

Cima and Giubilo were playing NS for Angelini against Marsal-Schroeder from Burghausen, Germany's representatives here in Eilat.

After some thought, Schroeder led the ♦J, trying to give nothing away – and rightly so. Declarer called for dummy's queen and East contributed the six, which might show an even number. Dummy's ♥9 came next and East went up with his ace, West contributing the eight, a clear spade suggestion. So Marsal obligingly returned the ♠6, which promised one card higher than the six. After some thought,



Giubilo inserted the eight and West's jack won the trick. Still wondering where the 5th defensive trick might come from, Schroeder continued the ♠K which declarer had to win with dummy's ace. When the queen came down, Schroeder knew that partner held the ♠10 for sure to bring the defensive tally to four tricks. When declarer next led the ♣K from dummy, Schroeder had to win it and now, he could simply return his last diamond and await developments. Marsal would either come to a club trick or score his ♦K if he held it after all. Very well defended and a strong candidate for a defensive prize (if there is one...).

In the Closed Room, Barel showed more sophistication:

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	INT
Pass	2♦	All pass	

Ten tricks, +130 to Israel Blue. I leave it to you, dear reader, to decide who is the main culprit. Did South realise or know that North could be showing a hand of the type he actually held?

Anyway, 7 IMPs more for Lavec who led 30-13 at this point.

Board 11 brought the Israelis 6 IMPs but they might easily have lost a few IMPs instead:

Board: 11. Dir: South/None

♠ A Q 9 8 5		♠ J 7 4 3 2
♥ Q 10 7		♥ A 9 8 5 3
♦ K 10 4		♦ J
♣ J 9		♣ 10 8
	♠ K	
	♥ K J 6 4 2	
	♦ 9 7 6 3 2	
	♣ K 4	

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♥
Dbl	5♦	All pass	3♠

In the Closed Room, the Israelis had a Polish two-bid at their disposal to make life easy, 3♠ showing diamonds and a fair hand. Just made after the standard safetyplay in trumps (the ace first). Israel +400.

In the Open Room, Wrang could not open so this was the auction:

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
1♠	3♣	4♠	5♣
Pass	Pass	5♠	All pass

With nothing to guide them, NS were unclear of the situation and thus neither ventured a double. Three down, Lavec +150 but 6 IMPs back to Israel Blue.

Two boards later, the Blues lost a few more IMPs:

Board: 13. Dir: North/All

♠ Q J		♠ A K 8 5 3 2
♥ 10 2		♥ 6
♦ A 8 7 4		♦ 10 6 3 2
♣ Q J 9 7 3		♣ A 8
	♠ 10 9 4	
	♥ Q 9 8 7 3	
	♦ K Q J 9	
	♣ 10	

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
Pass	1♥	1♠	2NT
	4♥	All pass	

When Ophir Herbst could not overcall 2♠, as this would have been weak, the Herbsts had to sell out to 4♥ which could not be made. Israel Blue +100.

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
4♠	1♥	2♠	4♦
Dbl	Pass	Pass	5♥
	All pass		

In the Closed Room, Upmark could make a stronger jump overcall which enabled his partner to take the advanced (phantom) sacrifice against the vulnerable game when Yaniv made a fitbid in diamonds. This certainly warned Barel but he could not act on his already sub-minimum opening hand. Maybe, Michael did not expect his partner to bid again either. Five Hearts by South was much too high, an opinion expressed by Nyström at the table as well. Lavec +500 and 9 IMPs to them.

On the next board, the Israelis recouped most of this loss when Ilan Herbst made a well-timed opening bid in 3rd position:

Board: 14. Dir: East/None

♠ A 10 8 6 4 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A K J	<div style="background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <span>W</span> <span style="margin: 0 10px;">E</span> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ 9 5 ♥ K 10 9 4 ♦ A 10 8 7 2 ♣ 8 7	♠ K 3 ♥ 6 2 ♦ K Q J ♣ 10 6 5 4 3 2
♠ Q J 7 2 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ Q 9			

Ten easy tricks for +420 and 7 IMPs. The score now stood at 40-26 to Lavec with 6 boards to play and had gone up to 44-30 when the last board arrived:

Board: 20. Dir: West/All

♠ 6 3 ♥ Q 9 2 ♦ K 10 9 7 2 ♣ J 6 2	<div style="background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <span>W</span> <span style="margin: 0 10px;">E</span> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ 9 2 ♥ K J 10 7 4 3 ♦ Q ♣ 10 8 5	♠ Q 10 8 7 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ 8 6 5 ♣ A 9 4
♠ K J 5 4 ♥ A ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ K Q 7 3			

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
1♣	INT	Pass	Pass
		All pass	

In the Open Room, North was caught in two minds. INT is a slight underbid but may also be the best descriptive bid on this particular hand. Nine tricks, Lavec +150.

In the Closed Room, the Israelis were left to their own devices and they worked well:

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	ZAK
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
3♣	3NT	Pass	2♠
			4♣

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
HERBST	VENTIN CAM	HERBST	WRANG
Pass	Pass	1♥	Dbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	All pass	

In the Open Room, 3NT by NS was a good contract in view of the auction. Had both black aces been with East, there would probably have been nine tricks for the taking, provided East leads a heart..

At the table, East tried the effect of leading a low spade. Had declarer called for dummy's king, his contract would have been home irrespective of the position of the ♣A. On the other hand, if West holds the ♠A, East is almost certain to hold the vital ♣A so there also is a case for playing dummy's jack, which declarer actually did at the table. When West won the queen and returned a heart, and later was unkind enough to hold the ♣A, the contract all of a sudden was down four, Israel Blue +400 out of the blue.

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
NYSTROM	BAREL	UPMARK	YANIV
Pass	Pass	2♥!	Dbl
3♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	4♦	All pass	

In the Closed Room, EW made so much noise that NS failed to reach their vulnerable diamond game which only needs a good guess in spades (but remember what happened at the other table...). This time, it did not matter that much as the double-figure swing would be theirs as long as they avoided a minus score. Eleven tricks, Israel Blue 11 IMPs to make the final score 44-41 to Lavec, 16-14 in V.P.



The tournament directors

## G.S. Allegra - Radkov Bridge Club

Italian teams are always among the favourites in major championships. The Italian champions G.S. Allegra include two pairs from their national team: Bocchi-Madala and Sementa-Duboin. They were paired against the Bulgarian champions Radkov in the first round. The very first board already posed a tough problem for both declarers.

♠ A Q 10 7 2  
♥ J 10  
♦ A 7  
♣ A K Q 9

♠ J 8 5  
♥ K 7  
♦ K 10 8 6 3 2  
♣ 8 4

North/South reach 4♠ after an uncontested auction, and East leads the ♦9. How would you play as North?

Of course, the opening lead is likely to be a singleton, since with a diamond doubleton East might well lead another suit.

I believe that the average player is likely to choose the least sophisticated line, winning with the ♦K in dummy and running the ♠J, later trying to guess hearts. Apparently this line gives about a 75% chance of making the contract.

Another idea is playing for 4-3 clubs and ruffing the third (or even the fourth) round of the suit, but playing like this puts all the eggs in one basket. If East has indeed a diamond singleton, West is likely to be short in clubs. In this case declarer may suffer a defensive cross-ruff and go down even when both major suit finesses are onside.

The full deal was:

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ A Q 10 7 2  
♥ J 10  
♦ A 7  
♣ A K Q 9

♠ K 9 4  
♥ A Q 9 6  
♦ Q J 5 4  
♣ 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6 3  
♥ 8 5 4 3 2  
♦ 9  
♣ J 10 7 6 2

♠ J 8 5  
♥ K 7  
♦ K 10 8 6 3 2  
♣ 8 4

In the Closed Room, Andonov (North) won the first trick in hand and tried the ♣AKQ. The above-mentioned defensive cross-ruff materialized and he went down two.

On the other hand, in the Open Room Norberto Bocchi

(North) was trying to avoid defensive ruffs. He also won the ♦A and continued with the ♠A and another spade. West won the ♠K and continued with a third spade. A club ruff was no longer possible. Apparently the fate of the contract depended on the heart suit, but it wasn't necessarily so, because an endplay was also possible.

Next Bocchi made the losing play of the ♦K followed by a diamond ruff, apparently playing for an overtrick in case the heart suit behaves (East wouldn't have led the 9 from ♦9 5 4) and diamonds are 3-2. However, in case of 3-2 diamonds it was much better to play the high clubs first. After West doesn't follow to the third club, declarer plays the ♦K, and if both follow, West is endplayed with another diamond.

This idea worked also in the actual layout in the form of a strip-squeeze. The winning line was cashing three high clubs, followed by the two remaining trumps. This forces a diamond discard from West, when he is endplayed with two more round of diamonds. Of course, the success of this line depends on West having the ♥A, after it was already known that he has the missing points in diamonds and spades. Perhaps Bocchi was right to play East for the ♥A, but it ended in one down, although Allegra still gained 2 IMPs.

Surprisingly, the first two significant swings occurred on partscore deals.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 10 6  
♥ K J 9 8 4  
♦ Q 10 6  
♣ K J 10

♠ Q J 8 4 2  
♥ Q 6  
♦ 9 8 3 2  
♣ Q 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

K 3  
♥ A 10 7 3  
♦ K J  
♣ 9 5 4 3 2

♠ A 9 7 5  
♥ 5 2  
♦ A 7 5 4  
♣ A 8 6

West	North	East	South
Skorchev	Bocchi	Trendafilov	Madala
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	INT	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Sementa	Andonov	Duboin	Radev
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

The key difference was Duboin's failure to open in the 3rd seat in the closed room. An excellent decision, since opening a semi-balanced 11 point hand - 7 of them in the short suits – does not seem to be the road to success with both sides vulnerable.

Trendafilov's Precision 1♦ opening (according to the Bulgarian system it doesn't promise even 1 card in diamonds) led to East-West playing INT in the Open Room, and Madala found the excellent heart lead (Underleading aces from 3-4 card suits is a losing proposition against INT). Declarer tried the ♥Q, covered by the K and A. Next the ♠K was taken by South's ace and another heart was played, North inserting the nine.

Now declarer couldn't prevent going three down, but it depended on North's discards on the spades. Bocchi correctly discarded a diamond on the third spade, but on the next round he became worried about that suit and discarded a heart, so declarer escaped for two down.

In the closed room Andonov was playing 2NT, makeable with best play and defence. Duboin led a club, won in the North hand, next came a diamond to the ace, with East playing the jack. Declarer led a heart to his jack, and East did very well to duck this, tempting North to re-enter dummy with a club and lead another heart to the Q, K and A. Now Duboin played a third club, and the contract was lost. Later declarer discarded two diamonds from dummy on the clubs, and he even went two down. Plus 200 from both tables meant 9 IMPs to Allegra.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ K ♥ 10 9 5 ♦ Q 2 ♣ Q J 9 8 7 6 4	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #336633; color: white;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ 10 8 6 5 2 ♥ K Q 8 6 ♦ A J 5 ♣ 10	♠ A 9 7 ♥ A J 7 4 2 ♦ 8 6 4 3 ♣ A
N						
W     E						
S						

West	North	East	South
<i>Skorchev</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>	<i>Madala</i>
Pass	2♥	All Pass	1♥

West	North	East	South
<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Andonov</i>	<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Radev</i>
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	2♠	All Pass

In my opinion, this swing may be classified as an "unforced error" by Skorchev. West had a textbook hand for a re-opening double: 4-4-4-1 with 9 HCP. The hand belonged to East-West in spades, but Madala was allowed to play 2♥. The contract made easily despite the bad trump break thanks to a cross-ruff, and a defensive slip near the end allowed him to make an overtrick.

In the Closed Room Duboin played the laydown 2♠, and he made no less than three overtricks after some sloppy defence from South, who went up with the ace in the first round of trumps, crashing his partner's king, and followed by underleading the ♥A. Nevertheless, the main damage was done in the bidding. Eight more IMPs to Allegra.

In the following board, Bocchi-Madala displayed some fine bidding, which earned their team 11 more IMPs.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 10 6 ♥ - ♦ A Q 8 5 ♣ A Q 7 6 5 3 2	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #336633; color: white;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ J 7 4 3 2 ♥ A 9 8 5 3 ♦ J ♣ 10 8	♠ K ♥ K J 6 4 2 ♦ 9 7 6 3 2 ♣ K 4
N						
W     E						
S						



Josef Harsanyi, Germany



<b>West</b> Skorchev	<b>North</b> Bocchi	<b>East</b> Trendafilov	<b>South</b> Madala
1♠	2♣	4♠	Pass
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
All Pass			

<b>West</b> Sementa	<b>North</b> Andonov	<b>East</b> Duboin	<b>South</b> Radev
			2♥
All Pass			

The short auction in the Closed Room led to highly undesirable contract of 2♥ by South. Note that Sementa did extremely well to pass with 12 HCP and 5 respectable spades. A spade overcall would have probably resulted in a 4♠ contract going one or two down (depending whether North-South find their heart ruff). We will spare the details of how Radev went down three in 2♥.

In contrast, the Open Room bidding was exemplary. Madala's double of 4♠ was not penalty-oriented, and it left the decision to partner. Many would have bid 5♣ with the North hand, but Bocchi preferred 4NT, showing long clubs accompanied by a 4-card red suit. This led to the perfect contract of 5♦. Indeed, 5♣ was in danger of going down on a trump lead, while 5♦ was cold. Madala made the safety play of ♦A first, catering for a singleton ♦K in the East hand, although it was not necessary in the actual layout.

Thus Allegra built a healthy lead, and despite the fact that there were many tricky boards, they didn't make any sig-

nificant errors allowing the Bulgarians back into the match. They were somewhat lucky in the following hand which appeared towards the end:

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ 6		
	♥ 6 5		
	♦ 6 2		
	♣ A K 9 8 6 5 4 2		
♠ A K J 10 7 5 3 2			♠ 9
♥ A 2			♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 7 5			♦ K Q J 10 3
♣ J			♣ Q 10 3
	♠ Q 8 4		
	♥ K 8 7 4 3		
	♦ A 9 8 4		
	♣ 7		

<b>West</b> Skorchev	<b>North</b> Bocchi	<b>East</b> Trendafilov	<b>South</b> Madala
			Pass
3NT	5♣	Dbl	All Pass

<b>West</b> Sementa	<b>North</b> Andonov	<b>East</b> Duboin	<b>South</b> Radev
			Pass
1♠	5♣	Dbl	Pass
5♠	All Pass		

The Bulgarians used a 3NT opening to show a good hand with a long major suit. Thus East's double of 5♣ was clearly for penalty. Bocchi lost the obvious five tricks for minus 500.

In the Closed Room Sementa simply opened 1♠ which didn't define his hand yet, so he was compelled to bid again after his partner's double of 5♣ (According to the Italian style, most doubles are not penalty-oriented).

This resulted in an apparently dangerous contract of 5♠, but the layout was kind to the Italians and there was no way of setting the contract. For example, if North leads the ♣A and switches to a diamond, ducked by South, declarer takes the marked finesse against South's ♠Q, and after drawing trumps he endplays South with a diamond.

The actual play was the ♣A, followed by a heart. South covered dummy's ♥Q, and now declarer didn't even need the trump finesse. He cashed the ♠AK and continued with high hearts, discarding two diamonds. North was known to be short in both majors, so there was no danger of a ruff. Plus 650 and 4 more IMPs to Allegra.

The final score was 40-3 IMPs in favour of Allegra, translating into a comprehensive 23-7 win. Certainly a good start for the Italian champions.



Giorgio Duboin, Italy

## EBL President's Opening Speech

Mr Eitan Levy - President of the Israeli Bridge Federation

Mr Modi Kenigsberg – Chairman of the Israeli Bridge Federation

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome all of you to Eilat, players, officers, journalists, operators and guests, to participate in the European Bridge Champions' Cup.

I am confident that you will enjoy discovering Eilat, its sunny weather and beautiful beaches.

We are proud to also welcome Gianarrigo Rona, President of the WBF and EBL President Emeritus who will attend our EBL Executive meetings.



I want to thank the Israeli authorities, Mrs Limor Livnat, Minister of Culture and Sports, Mr Meir Itzhak Halevi, Mayor of Eilat and Mr Arik Kaplan, President of the Ayelet organisation.

I would like to congratulate the Israeli Bridge Federation, its President Eitan Levy, its Chairman, Modi Kenigsberg and all the organising committee for the great job they have accomplished.

Today, it is also the Opening of the Red Sea Festival organised by David Birman. For the next 10 days, all over Eilat they will be celebrating the Bridge Festival.

It gives me great pleasure to officially declare open the 11th European Bridge Champions' Cup.

Enjoy your play and your stay in Eilat.



*The play gets underway*