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CHAMPIONS ALL



The president of the EBL, Yves Aubry, and the chairman of the EBU, Jeremy Dhondy, at the opening ceremony.

Had this event been held during the summer, the field would have been very different, and some teams who would have been among the favourites to lift the trophy are not here. We still have an excellent field, however, as every team is already a national champion, and there was some fine bridge played in yesterday's matches.

Onstein of the Netherlands, one of only two non-Italian teams to have won the Champions Cup in the past, took

the early lead and held it until Round Five, when they suffered a very heavy defeat at the hands of Allfrey, who had been quite out of form until this match. The multinational EBU team headed by Simon Gillis took over at the top at this point and remained there after the last round of the day, which took us past the midpoint in the qualifying round robin, with five more matches to be played on Friday. Onstein lay second, then came Soulet and Angelini.

RESULTS

ROUND 1

| | Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN SKALMAN | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | 24 - 26 | 9.23 - 10.77 |
| 2 | TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | 1 - 37 | 1.29 - 18.71 |
| 3 | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCHAREST | DEN-PHARMASERVICE | 23 - 26 | 8.86 - 11.14 |
| 4 | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | 7 - 29 | 3.61 - 16.39 |
| 5 | BUL-RADKOV | FRA-SOULET | 13 - 22 | 6.86 - 13.14 |
| 6 | ENG-EBU TEAM | ENG-ALLFREY | 52 - 22 | 17.34 - 1.66 |

ROUND 2

| | Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | ENG-ALLFREY | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | 14 - 11 | 11.14 - 8.86 |
| 2 | FRA-SOULET | ENG-EBU TEAM | 22 - 5 | 15.29 - 4.71 |
| 3 | ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | BUL-RADKOV | 33 - 17 | 15.05 - 4.95 |
| 4 | DEN-PHARMASERVICE | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | 7 - 23 | 4.95 - 15.05 |
| 5 | NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCH. | 35 - 12 | 16.59 - 3.41 |
| 6 | SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN SKALMAN | TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | 5 - 13 | 7.17 - 12.83 |

ROUND 3

| | Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | 19 - 12 | 12.51 - 7.49 |
| 2 | BUL-RADKOV | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCH. | 23 - 32 | 6.86 - 13.14 |
| 3 | ENG-EBU TEAM | TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | 37 - 6 | 18 - 2 |
| 4 | ENG-ALLFREY | SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN | 17 - 34 | 4.71 - 15.29 |
| 5 | FRA-SOULET | NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | 35 - 32 | 11.14 - 8.86 |
| 6 | ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | DEN-PHARMASERVICE | 11 - 24 | 5.72 - 14.28 |

ROUND 4

| | Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | 23 - 41 | 4.48 - 15.52 |
| 2 | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCHAREST | SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN | 23 - 36 | 5.72 - 14.28 |
| 3 | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | 11 - 25 | 5.46 - 14.54 |
| 4 | BUL-RADKOV | DEN-PHARMASERVICE | 37 - 20 | 15.29 - 4.71 |
| 5 | ENG-EBU TEAM | ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | 16 - 4 | 14 - 6 |
| 6 | ENG-ALLFREY | FRA-SOULET | 23 - 29 | 7.82 - 12.18 |

ROUND 5

| Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | 29 - 6 | 16.59 - 3.41 |
| 2 DEN-PHARMASERVICE | FRA-SOULET | 19 - 11 | 12.83 - 7.17 |
| 3 NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | ENG-ALLFREY | 9 - 51 | 0.56 - 19.44 |
| 4 SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN SKALMAN | ENG-EBU TEAM | 9 - 40 | 2 - 18 |
| 5 TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | BUL-RADKOV | 10 - 25 | 5.2 - 14.8 |
| 6 ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCHAREST | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | 16 - 22 | 7.82 - 12.18 |

ROUND 6

| Home Team | Visiting Team | IMPs | VPs |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1 FRA-SOULET | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | 20 - 21 | 9.61 - 10.39 |
| 2 ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | ENG-ALLFREY | 12 - 20 | 7.17 - 12.83 |
| 3 DEN-PHARMASERVICE | ENG-EBU TEAM | 26 - 29 | 8.86 - 11.14 |
| 4 NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | BUL-RADKOV | 25 - 9 | 15.05 - 4.95 |
| 5 SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN SKALMAN | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | 10 - 28 | 4.48 - 15.52 |
| 6 TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCH. | 17 - 0 | 15.29 - 4.71 |

RANKING

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | ENG-EBU TEAM | 83.19 |
| 2 | NED-BC'T ONSTEIN | 74.31 |
| 3 | FRA-SOULET | 68.53 |
| 4 | ITA-ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. | 66.92 |
| 5 | ITA-G.S.ALLEGRA | 59.31 |
| 6 | ENG-ALLFREY | 57.6 |
| 7 | DEN-PHARMASERVICE | 56.77 |
| 8 | BUL-RADKOV | 53.71 |
| 9 | SWE-UPPSALABRIDGEN | 52.45 |
| 10 | TUR-CAYYOLU BRIDGE CLUB | 52.13 |
| 11 | NOR-HEIMDAL BK | 50.42 |
| 12 | ROM-TOP BRIDGE BUCH. | 43.66 |

2015 Beijing Hua Yuan Cup

While the elite of European Open bridge gather at Horwood House near Milton Keynes, England, for the 14th European Champions Cup, four top European Women's teams are in the field for the 2015 Beijing Hua Yuan World Women Elite Tournament in China.

The tournament, which features a total prize fund of US\$215,000, comprises a team event in which the eight invited teams play a complete round robin of 7 x 16-board matches, followed by a pairs event for 24 pairs, playing 23 x 3-board rounds.

The Teams ended on Wednesday morning, this being the final ranking list:

| | | |
|----|------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Beijing Hua Yuan | 89.25 VPs |
| 2. | Italy | 81.17 |
| 3. | France | 74.19 |
| 4. | Netherlands | 72.16 |
| 5. | China | 70.49 |
| 6. | Indonesia | 58.72 |
| 7. | USA | 55.73 |
| 8. | England | 52.79 |

The winners were Ming Sun, Yan Lu, Ru Yan, Ping Wang, Yan Liu, Yiting Li, npc Fengchao Du, coach Jie Liu.

After a day of sightseeing and shopping, the Pairs will be held on Friday and Saturday.

QUALIFICATION

Round 1

As is traditional at major international tournaments, we start with a look at the defending champions, Allegra of Italy, with just one change from a year ago, Dennis Bilde replacing Gabriele Zanasi. In Round One, Allegra faced the second Italian squad, Angelini. Between them, Allegra and Angelini have won 11 of the previous 13 European Champions Cup events and both are amongst the favourites once again this year.

We don't have the bidding and play records for the first couple of boards but they resulted in a fast start for Angelini, who picked up 11 IMPs on Board 1 when Bilde/Duboin played a strange 4♠ down one (trumps were ace-doubleton facing jack-to-five) when they had a four-four heart fit and 4♥ was cold, followed by the same pair getting too high in a competitive auction to lose -100 in 5♣ doubled while teammates were also going plus defending 3♥ down one for another +100. Angelini led by 16-0 after these two deals.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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



| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Giubilo</i> | <i>Bianchedi</i> | <i>Cima</i> | <i>Di Franco</i> |
| <i>Duboin</i> | <i>Tokay</i> | <i>Bilde</i> | <i>Sementa</i> |
| - | - | - | Pass |
| 4♠ | Dble | All Pass | |

Both Norths made a take-out double and both Souths took the normal action of passing, only to find that there was no defence to beat the contract. North led the king of clubs and switched to the queen of hearts to dummy's ace. Both declarers ran the six of spades and held their trump losers to one; ten tricks for +790 and a flat board.



Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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



| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Giubilo</i> | <i>Bianchedi</i> | <i>Cima</i> | <i>Di Franco</i> |
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | 2♥ |
| Dble | Pass | 3♣ | All Pass |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Duboin</i> | <i>Tokay</i> | <i>Bilde</i> | <i>Sementa</i> |
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | 2♥ |
| Dble | Pass | 2♠ | All Pass |

The auctions were identical up to the point where East had to decide how to respond to partner's negative double. For Angelini, Leonardo Cima chose to bid his weak four-card club suit, while Bilde preferred to stay a level lower by rebidding the six-card spade suit. Both Easts played in their chosen contract.

Antonio Sementa led the five of hearts against 2♠. Bilde won the king and played the ten of spades from hand, Sementa winning the ace to continue the heart attack. Bilde won and played the queen of spades. Tokay won the king and returned the jack of diamonds to the queen, king and ace, and Bilde ruffed the jack of hearts, cashed the jack of spades, and played a club up. The friendly club position meant that he had to lose just one club and another trump so had nine tricks for +140.

Massimiliano Di Franco also led the five of hearts against 3♣. Cima won and led a club up so Di Franco rose with the ace and continued with a second heart. Cima won and led the ten of spades but Di Franco rose with a second ace and played the heart queen, Cima ruffing as Alejandro Bianchedi threw a spade. Cima played the queen of spades, ruffing when Di Franco played low, played ace then ruffed a diamond and ruffed another spade with the queen of clubs. However, Di Franco could get rid of the king of diamonds on this trick so that when Cima attempted to ruff another diamond in hand he could over-ruff with the jack and the contract was down one for -100 and 6 IMPs to Allegra.

The next three deals were flat but then came a board with potential for a major swing.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--|
| | ♠ 5 2 | | |
| | ♥ K J 10 5 2 | | |
| | ♦ 2 | | |
| | ♣ A J 9 8 6 | | |
| ♠ A K 9 8 | N | ♠ 10 | |
| ♥ A 3 | W | ♥ Q 9 4 | |
| ♦ A K Q 9 | E | ♦ J 10 7 6 5 4 3 | |
| ♣ Q 3 2 | S | ♣ K 5 | |
| | | ♠ Q J 7 6 4 3 | |
| | | ♥ 8 7 6 | |
| | | ♦ 8 | |
| | | ♣ 10 7 4 | |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|---------------|--|
| | ♠ A K 6 3 | | |
| | ♥ 10 5 3 | | |
| | ♦ A 8 | | |
| | ♣ A J 6 2 | | |
| ♠ 10 4 | N | ♠ 5 | |
| ♥ A Q 9 8 | W | ♥ K J 7 6 2 | |
| ♦ K Q J 5 4 2 | E | ♦ 7 | |
| ♣ 3 | S | ♣ K Q 9 8 5 4 | |
| | | ♠ Q J 9 8 7 2 | |
| | | ♥ 4 | |
| | | ♦ 10 9 6 3 | |
| | | ♣ 10 7 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------|-----------|------|-----------|
| Giubilo | Bianchedi | Cima | Di Franco |
| 2♣ | 2♥ | Pass | 3♥ |
| Dble | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♦ | Pass | 6♦ | All Pass |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------|-----------|------|-----------|
| Giubilo | Bianchedi | Cima | Di Franco |
| – | – | Pass | Pass |
| 1♦ | INT | Dble | 2♥ |
| Dble | 2♠ | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♦ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| Duboin | Tokay | Bilde | Sementa |
| 2NT | Pass | 4♠ | Pass |
| 5♣ | Pass | 5♦ | Pass |
| 5♥ | Dble | 6♦ | All Pass |

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Duboin | Tokay | Bilde | Sementa |
| – | – | Pass | Pass |
| 1♦ | INT | Dble | 2♥ |
| Dble | 3♠ | 4♥ | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | 5♥ | Pass |
| Pass | Dble | All Pass | |

For Angelini, Valerio Giubilo opened 2♣ and that made it possible for Bianchedi to overcall at a reasonably safe level. I'm not sure of the meaning of the subsequent auction, but it resulted in Giubilo declaring 6♦ from the right side. Bianchedi led the jack of hearts and Giubilo called for the queen. When that held he had no further worries and could draw trumps then give up a club and had 12 tricks for a swift and painless +920.

Giorgio Duboin, for Allegra, opened 2NT and that was a little too high for comfort so Mustafa Cem Tokay did not overcall. Four Spades showed one minor, 5♣ was pass or correct, and 5♦ said the suit was diamonds. That suited Duboin just fine and he cuebid on the way to slam, just in case Seven might be possible. Tokay doubled for the lead and Bilde signed off in the small slam.

Sementa led the six of hearts, third and low, and Bilde, of course, called for dummy's ace. He cashed three rounds of trumps now, ending in hand. Tokay discarded the two of spades followed by the nine of clubs, while Sementa threw the spade two followed by the four of clubs. Both defenders had, I believe, shown an even number of spades. Bilde led the ten of spades next and Sementa played low – surely Tokay's first discard would not have been to void himself in a suit, so this looks like a clear error; but how could it hurt, as nobody would run the bare ten – would they? Yes they would! Bilde thought for quite some time but then convinced himself that this was his only real chance, as a defender would have had to make a crazy error to discard from a spade holding which would now ruff out. Bilde played low from dummy and, when the ten held the trick, crossed to the queen of diamonds to take two heart discards on the ace and king of spades, after which he could give up a club and had 12 tricks for a magnificent flat board.

OK, there may be a good reason why I am writing about this championship rather than playing in it, but I would make a take-out double on the North hand rather than overcall INT. Yes, the latter gets across the strength and hand-type very well, but North's shortest suit is the one opened on his right and he does not have a diamond holding which has been in any way improved positionally by the opening bid.

Anyway, both our Norths overcalled INT and both Easts doubled. Both Souths transferred to spades and both Wests doubled to show hearts. Now Bianchedi simply completed the transfer and Cima cuebid to show his shapely hand, converting the 4♦ response to 4♥. That ended the auction and, with 4♠ cold their way, N/S clearly did not do sufficient bidding.

Di Franco led the queen of spades and Bianchedi overtook and continued with a second top spade, ruffed by Cima. He played a heart to the ace then a club up and Bianchedi took his ace and returned a trump. Declarer could win, draw the last trump and just concede a diamond; ten tricks for +620.

Where Bianchedi had simply completed the transfer, Tokay liked his top cards and potential ruffing value sufficiently to jump to 3♠. Bilde bid 4♥ and now Sementa could save in 4♠ as he held a sixth trump. Duboin's pass was forcing now and, with such a shapely hand, it was clear for Bilde to go on to 5♥ as either that or 4♠ might be making. Tokay doubled on the way out and came to his three top winners for down one and –200 for 13 IMPs to Angelini. They had won the match by 29-7 IMPs, converting to 16.39-3.61 VP.

QUALIFICATION

Round 2



Onstein BC't (NED) v Top Bridge (ROM)



Biggest winners in Round One and therefore early leaders were the Dutch BC't Onstein team, and we will take a look at them in Round Two, where they faced Top Bridge Bucharest of Romania.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>♠ 10 9 7 2 ♥ Q 10 8 6 ♦ A J 5 ♣ 5 2</p> | <div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;">N W E</div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;">S</div> </div> | <p>♠ 8 4 3 ♥ A J 7 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A Q 3</p> | <p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 8 4 2 ♣ K J 9 6 4</p> |
| <p>♠ A K Q ♥ K 9 5 2 ♦ 9 6 3 ♣ 10 8 7</p> | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-----------|----------|-------|
| Briciu | Ritmeijer | Ghigheci | Ticha |
| – | – | – | INT |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 3♣ |
| All Pass | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------|--------|------------|----------|
| Verhees | Coldea | V Prooijen | Marina |
| – | – | – | INT |
| Pass | Pass | Dble | All Pass |

For Onstein, Magdalena Ticha, both the youngest competitor in the tournament and the only female, opened a weak no trump and Richard Ritmeijer transferred to clubs – maybe 3♣ would be a better contract, maybe 2♠ would pre-empt the opposition out of their major-suit fit. There was little to the play in 3♣. Marius Briciu led the eight of hearts to his partner's ace and Ovidiu Ghigheci switched to a spade. There were two trumps and three diamonds to be lost so Ticha was down two for –100.

Bogdan Marina, for Bucharest, also opened INT but Ionut Coldea passed and Ricco Van Prooijen doubled as East. Mildly surprisingly, Coldea stood that when many players would have rescued to two of a minor; and Louk Verhees led the six of hearts. Van Prooijen won the ace and returned the three to the nine and ten. Not sure of the heart position, Verhees switched to a spade round to Marina's king. Marina ran the eight of clubs to the queen and van Prooijen returned a heart. That established a third defensive heart trick and there were three diamonds and another club to come for down two; –300 and 5 IMPs to Onstein.

Board 13. Dealer North. All Vul.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>♠ Q 10 9 5 ♥ 7 ♦ Q 8 6 ♣ A J 10 9 5</p> | <div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;">N W E</div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;">S</div> </div> | <p>♠ K 2 ♥ A K J 10 6 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ Q 8 2</p> | <p>♠ J 8 7 6 3 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ 6 3</p> |
| <p>♠ A 4 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ J 9 7 5 2 ♣ K 7 4</p> | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|-----------|----------|-------|
| Briciu | Ritmeijer | Ghigheci | Ticha |
| – | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 3♥ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------|----------|------------|--------|
| Verhees | Coldea | V Prooijen | Marina |
| – | Pass | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♣ | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 3NT | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

For the Romanians, the 2♣ rebid was either natural or any 16+, and 2♦ said that West had game values facing the strong variety. Three Hearts, of course, confirmed the strong type while also showing six good hearts and Briciu, short in hearts and with values in all the other three suits, converted to 3NT.

Ritmeijer led the six of spades, ducked by Ticha. Briciu won the ten and led a low club to the queen and king, Ticha returning the five of diamonds to the eight, ten and ace. Briciu cashed the clubs, Ticha pitching two diamonds, then exited with a spade to the king and ace. Ticha played the jack of diamonds to the queen and king and Ritmeijer could cash the diamond ten then play a heart through dummy and Ticha came to a heart trick at the end for down one; –100.

Van Prooijen opened with a strong club and, after a long and artificial auction, Verhees became declarer in 4♥ from

the singleton.

Coldea led a spade so Marina won the ace and switched to a diamond for the queen and king, ducked in dummy. Coldea returned a heart. Verhees won the ace and cashed the king then unblocked the king of spades before continuing with the jack of hearts. He needed the club finesse but, when the king proved to be onside, had ten tricks and his contract for +620 and 12 IMPs to Onstein; leading by 17-0.

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

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



| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Briciu</i> | <i>Ritmeijer</i> | <i>Ghigheci</i> | <i>Ticha</i> |
| – | – | 1♠ | Pass |
| INT | 2NT | Pass | 3♦ |
| All Pass | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>Verhees</i> | <i>Coldea</i> | <i>V Prooijen</i> | <i>Marina</i> |
| – | – | 1♠ | Pass |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3NT |
| Dble | All Pass | | |

Briciu responded INT to the 1♠ opening and Ritmeijer overcalled 2NT, both minors, Ticha giving simple preference to her longer minor and playing there. Briciu led the ten of spades, Ghigheci winning the ace and returning the queen to declarer's king. Ticha crossed to the ace of clubs to lead a low diamond to her ten, losing to the king. Briciu played back his remaining trump so Ticha won the ace and led a club to the jack. Though that was ruffed, she could now ruff a club and had nine tricks for +110.

Playing Precision, Verhees judged game prospects to be so remote that there was no need to respond to the 1♠ opening. However, when his opponents now bid up to 3NT, he doubled on the strength of his 7 HCP facing an opening bid. Verhees led the ten of spades and Van Prooijen put in the jack. Marina won the king and led a club to the ace then ran the queen of diamonds. That lost and the spade back meant that Van Prooijen could cash five of those for two down and -300. That gave Onstein another 9 IMPs and they led by 26-0 after four boards.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

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



| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Briciu</i> | <i>Ritmeijer</i> | <i>Ghigheci</i> | <i>Ticha</i> |
| – | Pass | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♦ | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>Verhees</i> | <i>Coldea</i> | <i>V Prooijen</i> | <i>Marina</i> |
| – | Pass | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Dble | Rdbl | Pass |
| Pass | INT | Pass | Pass |
| Dble | 2♣ | Dble | 2♦ |
| Dble | All Pass | | |

The Romanian E/W pair had a free run to 3NT. One Club was potentially short, 1♦ a transfer and 1♥ showed the weak no trump type with fewer than four hearts, with 2♦ a strong inquiry. Ghigheci played 3NT on the lead of the seven of diamonds to dummy's jack. He cashed a top heart, unblocking the eight to ease his communications when Ritmeijer showed out, then led a low heart to the nine and ten. Ticha tried a low spade now to the seven, queen and ace and Ghigheci could finesse the seven of hearts and just concede one trick in each black suit to make ten tricks for +430.

Van Prooijen opened a Precision 1♦ and Coldea was tempted to come into the auction with a take-out double of the 1♥ response. Van Prooijen redoubled to show three hearts and, when Marina didn't act, Coldea ran to INT. Now the doubling started. Coldea ran to 2♣ and that was doubled for take-out by Van Prooijen and left in by Verhees so he tried again with 2♦ and this time it was Verhees who made the take-out double. Van Prooijen left it in and led the nine of hearts to the ten, king and ruff. Coldea led a spade to the king then ruffed a second heart and ducked a spade, Van Prooijen putting in the jack and crashing his partner's ten. He played a low diamond to the seven and jack. Verhees cashed the ace of diamonds then switched to a low club and Coldea rose with the ace and returned a low club to Van Prooijen's king. He cashed the king of diamonds and the defence had the rest of the tricks for down four and -800; 9 IMPs to Onstein, who led by 35-2.

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Briciu</i> | <i>Ritmeijer</i> | <i>Ghigheci</i> | <i>Ticha</i> |
| – | – | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>Verhees</i> | <i>Coldea</i> | <i>V Prooijen</i> | <i>Marina</i> |
| – | – | 1♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

Both Easts opened 1♠ and were raised to game, Briciu via a 2♣ response while Verhees gave away less information with a direct leap to game facing the limited Precision opening.

Given a blind lead, Marina led the five of diamonds to the nine and queen, the best start for the defence. Coldea continued the good work by switching to the seven of hearts to the queen, king and ace. Van Prooijen tried a spade to the jack and ace and Marina returned a diamond. Coldea won the ace and cashed the diamond winner so the contract was down one for –50.

Faced with a stronger-sounding auction, Ticha judged to make an attacking lead of the two of hearts but that proved to be fatal to the defence. Ghigheci ran the heart round to his queen, played a heart to the ace then a trump to the jack and ace. Ticha found the diamond switch now but the damage had been done. Ritmeijer took two diamonds then reverted to hearts and declarer ruffed in the dummy then led the nine of spades to his ten and cashed the king; ten tricks for +420 and 10 badly-needed IMPs to Bucharest.

The match ended in a 35-12 IMP, 16.59-3.41 VP win to BC't Onstein, who moved a little further clear at the top of the rankings after two rounds.

A Hand Worth a Deeper Analysis

Maurizio Di Sacco

In a recent Italian Championship, the following hand, reported in the Bulletin by Fabio Lo Presti, offered a fascinating solution, of a kind very much loved by Hug Kelsey and Geza Ottlik.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

Here's the auction:

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|----------|------|----------|
| Pass | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣(i) |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♥(ii) |
| Pass | 3♣(iii) | Pass | 3♦(iv) |
| Pass | 3♠(v) | Pass | 4♣(vi) |
| Pass | 4♦(vi) | Pass | 4NT(vii) |
| Pass | 5♦(viii) | Pass | 5♥(ix) |
| Pass | 5NT(x) | Pass | 7♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

(i) = GF, (ii) = Heart fit, asking (iii) = 5♥/4♦ 15/17 (iv) = Relay (v) = 1-5-4-3 (vi) = Cuebid (vii) = RKCB (viii) = 0/3 key cards (ix) = Trump queen? (x) = Yes, but no outside kings

The writer didn't dig too much: he said that the declarer won the trump lead, cashed two more rounds, then ♠AK, and ♣AK and ♣Q to come to the following ending:

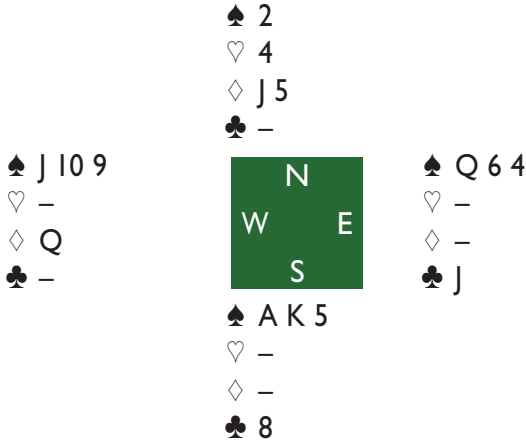
| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ♠ J 10 ♥ – ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ – | ♠ – ♥ 5 4 ♦ A J 5 ♣ – | ♠ Q ♥ – ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ J | ♠ 5 ♥ – ♦ K 4 3 ♣ 9 |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------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

On the penultimate trump, East made a huge mistake ditching the ♠Q, thus causing an automatic show-up squeeze on West in the rounded suits. If he had disposed of two diamonds instead, possibly throwing the queen of

spades on an earlier round and keeping the six, simulating a queen of diamonds originally fourth, the declarer would have had to guess the ending.

As soon as I saw the hand a bell rang and I immediately realized, however – after all the scheme is one of the most classical ones – that there certainly was a superior line, which had also the privilege to be totally automatic: a double squeeze.

Declarer wins the lead, cashes four trumps (diamond from dummy), $\diamond AK$ (getting home if the queen falls) and three rounds of clubs ending in hand. Here's the ending with four tricks to go:

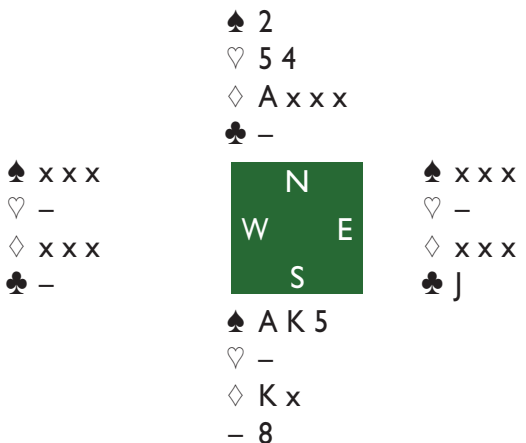


When North cashes the last heart, East must let go a spade to keep the jack of clubs, but South throws the $\clubsuit 8$ and West is caught in a rounded-suit squeeze. This line obviously wins with the clubs splitting, and with four clubs in West you can still rely on a minor-suit squeeze against him.

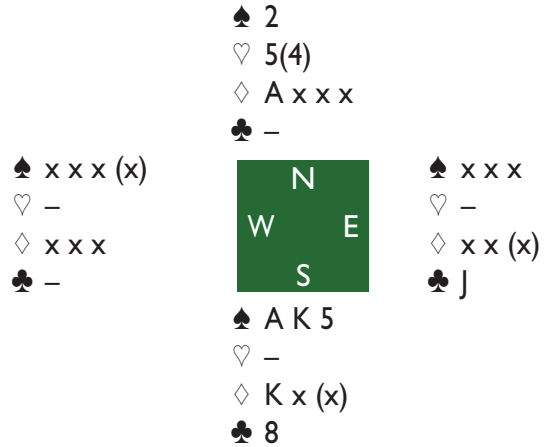
However, the bell kept ringing: my unconscious tried to tell me that something more must have been there, and finally, after a few hours, I was enlightened.

What I had originally spotted is a good, quite classic play, but does not have the 100% of winning chances. There's one, however, which has. A black pearl, to execute which you don't even need the $\diamond J$.

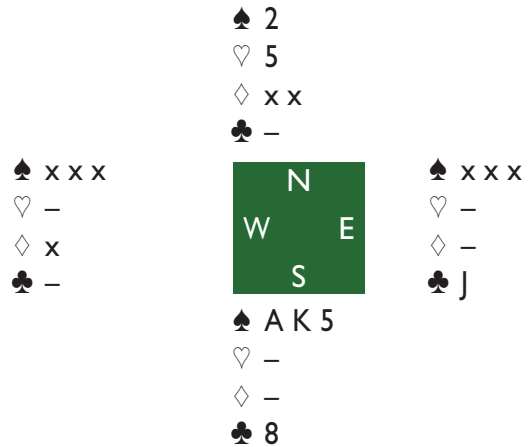
Let's say that you win the lead, and immediately cash three round of trumps throwing a diamond from dummy before testing clubs ending in North. Now, you are home and dry when clubs are 3-3, and you still have the \clubsuit/\diamond squeeze if it's West who is the holder of four-plus clubs, but if East guards clubs, after four trumps he cannot hold both three spades and three diamonds. Let's have a look at the position:



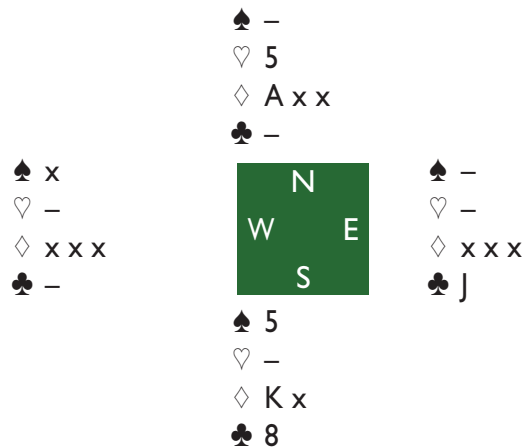
When North plays the fourth heart, East must release either a spade or a diamond. In both cases, his partner will become the only keeper of the suit's guard, thus you will use the other one as the double menace in the double squeeze. Let's try a diamond first:



Since East threw a diamond, to keep three of those, West must pitch a spade. North plays $\diamond AK$ and places the last trump on the table. Here we are:



East is forced to get rid of a spade to keep the $\clubsuit J$. North throws the $\clubsuit 8$ and West is caught in a rounded-suit squeeze. Similarly, if in the seven-card ending East throws a spade, declarer plays out $\spadesuit AK$ and the final position becomes:



On the last trump East must pitch a diamond, but when North gets rid of dummy's ♣8 West is once more squeezed between spades and diamonds.

As proven, this line of play is just perfect, since it wins whatever the position, However, it requires you to read the ending. The keystone is anyhow always the same: you should not cash prematurely ♠AK, as the original declarer did, because this prejudices a double squeeze.

End of the story? No! This hand has still something in reserve.

It is true that you have to guess the ending right, however, other than using your table feel, you can improve your chances by not touching clubs at all, running immediately four rounds of trumps (diamond from dummy). In one particular case, at least, unless you're playing against a formidable defender you can be almost sure of the position. Let's try: remember, the hypothesis is that East has four clubs. Now:

- if clubs were 3-3, as you're going to verify immediately, you win;
- if clubs are 4+ with West, you're going to play for a minor-suit squeeze against him (in the real hand, a 'show up' squeeze: if West had originally four diamonds and the queen doesn't show up, then you can be sure that it is going to fall on your left);
- if four clubs were with East, then:
 - i. independently from whether he originally had three or two hearts (if he started with two, he certainly threw a spade on the third round, since the declarer is known from the auction to hold a singleton) he, as we saw, can-

not hold on to both three spades and three diamonds.

ii. Since you need to be at the same time a fantastic player and a magician to read the complete ending after three cards, it's (almost) impossible for anybody to throw a diamond having originally started with three – as we have seen, It is totally silly to hold on to the spades, whatever your holding – if you see a diamond it is reasonable to assume that East started with either 3-2-4-4 or 2-3-4-4. You will then proceed to use diamonds as the double menace, cashing ♠AK first and then three clubs.

iii. If you see a spade instead, you are really put to a guess, since the original distributions compatible with it are the following:

- iv.
 - 4-3-2-4
 - 4-2-3-4 (obviously, East has already thrown a spade on the previous round)
 - 3-3-3-4

In the last two cases, you have to proceed in the same way as before, but in the last one after the fourth heart you need to use spades as the double menace, thus you have to cash ♦AK, leaving intact your transportation in spades.

As perfect as this line is, you are put to a guess, thus you need to be in top form and to decide to rely on your feelings to use it. Otherwise, the 'simple' double squeeze shown at the beginning is the best choice after all, as it is completely automatic.



QUALIFICATION

Round 3



Onstein BC't (Netherlands) v Soulet (France)



For Round Three, we stay with the leaders as they faced up against the French national champions, Soulet, who were lying third after two rounds.

and 11 fortunate IMPs to Onstein.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| – | Pass | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♣ | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♣ | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| – | Pass | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 6♥ | Pass | Pass | Dble |
| All Pass | | | |

For Onstein, Joris van Lankveld opened a short club then showed a weak no trump type. Berend van den Boss puppeted to 3♣ then showed his five-five and, after a couple of cuebids, the Dutch pairs stopped in game, missing the excellent slam. Erick Mauberquez led a diamond so van den Bos could win, draw trumps and knock out the ace of spades for 12 tricks and +480.

Michel Lebel also showed a weak no trump type and Philippe Soulet too showed the major two-suiter. When Lebel now cuebid, bypassing clubs so denying any wasted control cards opposite his void, Soulet took an optimistic shot at the heart slam, finding that it was an excellent contract but, after the Lightner double and ace and another spade lead, a doomed one. Soulet was down one for –100

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| – | – | Pass | Pass |
| 1♦ | 2♣ | 3♦ | 3NT |
| Pass | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| Pass | Dble | All Pass | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| – | – | Pass | 1NT |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♦ | Pass | 4♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

Slam is playable but not great on the N/S cards but neither pair were close to bidding it.

Louk Verhees opened a weak no trump and Ricco van Prooijen responded 2♦, either hearts or both minors. His 3♦ rebid confirmed hearts so Verhees just jumped to the heart game and van Prooijen trusted him to have gone slower with a hand that might deliver a good slam so passed.

Soulet led the queen of spades. Verhees won and led a heart to the jack and king, won the spade return and led a second heart to the ace. He now played on the minors and so conceded a ruff as well as the queen of hearts; ten tricks for +420.

Van den Boss opened the West hand in third seat after Thierry de Sainte-Marie had passed the empty 11-count South hand. When Mauberquez overcalled 2♣, however, de Sainte-Marie had enough in French style to bid 3NT over the pre-emptive diamond raise. Now the Dutch style, in

which 1♦ would normally be unbalanced, tempted van Lankveld into an indiscretion, as he saved in 4♦ over 3NT and, after a pass from his partner, Mauberquez doubled to end the auction.

There was nothing to the play. There were six top losers and van den Bos lost all of them for -800 and 9 IMPs back to Soulet.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| - | - | - | Pass |
| 1♣ | Dble | 3♣ | 3♦ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♠ |
| Dble | All Pass | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| - | - | - | Pass |
| 1♣ | Dble | 3♣ | 3♦ |
| All Pass | | | |

Despite the possible double club stopper and 15 HCP, van Prooijen preferred a take-out double to get his majors into the game rather than make a 1NT overcall. When Lebel made a pre-emptive club raise, Verhees competed with 3♦ and van Prooijen did not have enough to bid on.

Soulet did well, underleading in clubs to put Verhees to a guess at trick one. He got that wrong, calling for the jack and losing to the queen, so there was to be no discard on the clubs. Lebel switched to the king of spades and Verhees won that and played the king of clubs to confirm who had the ace. When Lebel played low in tempo, Verhees ruffed and led a heart up. Soulet won the ace and played three rounds of spades for Lebel to take a ruff for the setting trick; down one for -100.

After the same start, Mauberquez took his partner's 3♦ a little more seriously and tried 3NT. De Sainte-Marie didn't fancy that, having bid largely on distribution at his previous turn, so converted to 4♠ and was doubled for his pains.

Van den Bos led ace of clubs then ace and another heart to dummy's king, happy to sit back and see how many trump tricks would come his way. Declarer ruffed a heart to get to hand then led a low spade to dummy's seven, los-

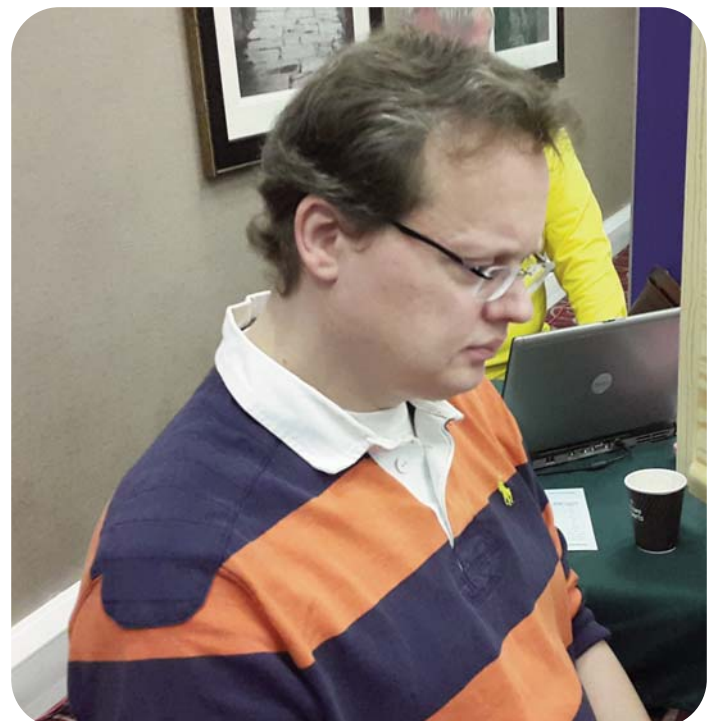
ing to the bare king. He won the diamond return with dummy's ace, ruffed the last heart and led his last spade, van den Bos splitting his honours. De Sainte-Marie won the ace of spades and continued with the nine to West's jack. A diamond back now prevented declarer from drawing the last trump and cashing a third diamond winner. Van den Bos could ruff the next diamond play and, though dummy was over-ruffing, there was no way to avoid losing to the queen of clubs at the end for down two and -500; 9 IMPs to Onstein.

Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| - | - | Pass | Pass |
| 1♣ | Dble | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | 2♠ | 3♣ | 4♠ |
| All Pass | | | |

Identical auctions saw both Norths declare the spade game.



Van Lankveld led the four of spades to the nine, king and ace. Mauberquez played a spade to the jack then took the club finesse, losing to the king. A third round of trumps left him a trick short. He won the queen and played ace of clubs then ruffed the last club and led a heart up but there was no way to avoid losing two of those for one down and -100. Onstein gained 12 IMPs and looked on course for another good win at 32-9 with four boards to play. However, the French team came back very strongly over the last few deals.

Soulet gained 3 IMPs on Board 28 when Soulet/Lebel made a thin heart game while Mauberquez/de Sainte-Marie played in 4♠ undoubled down three for -300. To be fair, nobody had a double - it was just one of those boards. The last two boards produced rather more substantial French gains.

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| - | Pass | 1♣ | 1♦ |
| Dble | 3♦ | All Pass | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| - | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 3NT | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 5♣ | All Pass | | |

Mauberquez's pre-emptive diamond raise shut everyone out - van Lankveld was close to doing something but it would have been a stretch facing a double that showed hearts, not general take-out. Van den Bos led his spade singleton to the three, ten and king. De Sainte-Marie gave up a club to create an entry to dummy and van Lankveld won cheaply and led a low spade for his partner to ruff. Van den Bos returned a club so declarer ruffed in dummy and took a losing diamond finesse. Van den Bos was endplayed now. He led a heart but van Lankveld could only win the ace and return his last diamond. With one loser going away on the heart queen, there was just one spade to be lost so the contract was one down for -100.

Lebel opened an off-shape 1NT and Soulet first transferred to hearts then introduced his club suit.

Lebel showed his spades but, though Soulet now showed diamond values by bidding 3NT, was never going to play anywhere other than in clubs - after all, if partner didn't want to play in a suit where Lebel had AQ1085 then he shouldn't have bid it. There was nothing to the play after van Prooijen had led a diamond to his partner's ace to clear up the only problem suit, and that was +600 and 11 IMPs to Soulet.

Board 30. Dealer East. None Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>v d Bos</i> | <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>v Lankveld</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> |
| - | - | 1♥ | Dble |
| 4♣ | Pass | 4♥ | 4♠ |
| Pass | 5♥ | Pass | 6♦ |
| Pass | 6♠ | All Pass | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Soulet</i> | <i>v Prooijen</i> | <i>Lebel</i> | <i>Verhees</i> |
| - | - | 1♥ | 1♠ |
| 3♠ | 4♠ | 5♥ | Dble |
| All Pass | | | |

Life must be good when you can bid freely to a poor and doomed slam yet still gain 12 IMPs.

De Sainte-Marie doubled the 1♥ opening then bid 4♠ all by himself at his next turn, which he was committed to doing once he decided to treat the South hand as being too strong for an immediate overcall. When Mauberquez now made a slam try, de Sainte-Marie accepted, offering his diamonds along the way. Though Mauberquez signed off in 6♠, it was too late. The queen of diamonds failed to drop on demand and the contract was down one for -50.

Verhees has a different style and was willing to start with a quiet 1♠ overcall. Though van Prooijen made a pre-emptive jump to 4♠ over Soulet's splinter heart raise, Verhees judged to double 5♥ and take the money rather than be pushed to 5♠. When two of his four hoped for winners failed to materialise, Verhees had to pay out -650, Lebel having no difficulty in making three club tricks to go with six hearts and two ruffs in the dummy.

Their big finish meant that Soulet had come out narrowly on top, winning by 35-32 IMPs, 11.14-8.86 VPs. They stayed in third place while the Dutch team retained the lead.

QUALIFICATION

Round 4



Allfrey (England) v Soulet (France)



The champions of France and England met in Round Four with the English team lying next to bottom in the rankings and in urgent need of a strong result. The French champions, meanwhile, were in third place and fresh from a narrow victory over the leaders, Onstein BC't.

club control could have been the key to slam. One can understand Bell's slam interest facing a jump rebid (which also denied three spades) as he had three excellent red cards plus a side-singleton, but the final contract was somewhat ridiculous – at least, until it made!

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|--------|----------|--------|
| Robson | Soulet | Allfrey | Oursel |
| – | 1♦ | Pass | 2♦ |
| 3♣ | 3♦ | Dble | 4♣ |
| Pass | 4♦ | All Pass | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Mauberquez | Gold | de S-Marie | Bell |
| – | 1♦ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | 3♦ | Pass | 3♥ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♦ |
| Pass | 5♣ | Pass | 6♦ |
| All Pass | | | |

The match started with a real bang as Allfrey bid and made a slam with three top losers while the French team stopped in partscore.

For Soulet, Christophe Oursel raised his partner's diamonds rather than respond in a major then, when Soulet competed to 3♦, made a game try and accepted his partner's sign-off. Alexander Allfrey led the two of clubs in response to Andrew Robson's overcall and Robson won the ace then switched to king and another spade to take the defence's three winners; +130.

For Allfrey, David Gold and Mike Bell got way too high when Gold's jump rebid contained a lot of soft values that were of limited value in the play. His club cuebid was also questionable facing a potential singleton – though Bell could have been stronger with 5-4-2-2 shape, when the

What would you lead on the auction above if you held the East hand? De Sainte-Marie chose the four of hearts and Gold could win, cash the ace of diamonds, cash the second heart, then cross to the king of diamonds while drawing the last trump. Two top hearts disposed of his spade losers and he could give up a club then ruff the other one; +920 and 13 IMPs to Allfrey.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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



| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Robson | Soulet | Allfrey | Oursel |
| – | – | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ | All Pass | |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Mauberquez | Gold | de S-Marie | Bell |
| – | – | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3♦ |
| Pass | 4♥ | All Pass | |

Soulet had stronger raises available to him and, with no room to invite, Oursel settled for the partscore. In the other room, Gold could make a Bergen-style Mixed raise and that did give Bell room to invite. Gold accepted the invitation and the good game was reached.

Alas for Allfrey, neither major suit behaved and there were only nine tricks to be had; +140 for Oursel but –100 for Bell and 6 IMPs to Soulet.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Robson | Soulet | Allfrey | Oursel |
| – | – | – | 1♥ |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ |
| Pass | 3NT | all Pass | |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Mauberquez | Gold | de S-Marie | Bell |
| – | – | – | 1♥ |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 3♣ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 5♣ |
| All Pass | | | |

Such is modern bridge that both Souths opened the ten-count with no lead-directing benefit.

Soulet responded 1♠ then jumped to 3NT, as would be the popular combination at clubs up and down the land. Popular, perhaps, but not successful. Allfrey led the three of spades to Robson's ace and, trusting declarer to have something in spades, Robson found the killing switch to the jack of hearts to pick up three tricks in that suit with the

king of spades to come for down one and –50.

The English auction requires a little more explanation. One Spade was like a forcing no trump, zero to four spades, but, as here, with the extra possibility of a balanced game force. Bell's 2♣ rebid was either clubs or, possibly, a 3-5-2-3 weak no trump type, and now 2♠ was invitational or better with club support. three Clubs said no thank you, 3NT said that Gold was willing to play that contract and Bell judged correctly that 5♣ was likely to be a better contract given that Gold had troubled to show his club support to offer the option. Had he instead bid only 4♣ over 3NT, Gold would have passed that.

Mauberquez led a diamond. Bell won in dummy, drew trumps in three rounds and led a heart to the king. that lost to the ace but the even heart split meant that he could win the return and set up the hearts for 11 tricks and +400; 10 IMPs to Allfrey, who led by 23-6.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Robson | Soulet | Allfrey | Oursel |
| Pass | Pass | 1♦ | 2♠ |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♦ | All Pass | | |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Mauberquez | Gold | de S-Marie | Bell |
| Pass | Pass | 1♦ | 2♠ |
| 3♦ | 4♠ | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♦ | All Pass | | |

Sometimes bidding big pays off, sometimes not. after identical starts to the two auctions, Gold jumped to 4♠ with the North cards while Soulet said nothing. Gold's action bullied de Sainte-Marie into bidding 5♦, though he might well have planned to bid either that or 3NT anyway, while Soulet's inaction gave his opponents room to stop out of game. Still, Allfrey was giving Robson plenty of rope for his 3♦ raise when he asked for help in spades then dropped it in 4♦.

With no spade raise, Oursel led a trump against 4♦. Allfrey won on table and took an immediate heart finesse. That lost to the king and Oursel exited with a heart. Allfrey won, drew trumps and played the king of clubs then, when

that got ducked, the ten of clubs to Soulet's jack. There was no way to avoid a spade loser now so Allfrey made just the ten tricks contracted for – +130.

In the other room there had been a spade raise, and Bell led the jack of spades. Dummy's queen won the trick so de Sainte-Marie could draw trumps and concede one heart and one club; +600 and 10 IMPs to Soulet.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------|---|---|---|
| ♠ A K 8 7 4 ♥ 3 ♦ 9 8 3 ♣ K J 9 3 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 | ♠ 3 ♥ Q J 6 2 ♦ Q J 10 4 2 ♣ Q 8 7 | ♠ Q ♥ K 10 8 7 5 4 ♦ 7 6 ♣ A 6 5 4 |
| N | | | | | | |
| W E | | | | | | |
| S | | | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Robson</i> | <i>Soulet</i> | <i>Allfrey</i> | <i>Oursel</i> |
| – | – | Pass | 3♥ |
| 3♠ | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| Pass | Dble | All Pass | |

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>Gold</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> | <i>Bell</i> |
| – | – | Pass | 3♥ |
| 3♠ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

Our two Souths seem to agree with my view that 6-4 hands should generally open at the three- rather than the two-level, when non-vulnerable. Both Wests overcalled and both Easts gambled on finding a bit more in the dummy. When 3NT came back to the respective North players, Soulet doubled while Gold did not. It's fair to say that the average French player will still deliver a better minimum for a pre-empt than the average English player – even in today's day and age, so it was somewhat easier for Soulet to find the double.

Even without the double, Bell found the lead of the queen of spades, which untangled that suit nicely for the defence. He then switched passively to a diamond. Declarer won in dummy and played the jack of spades to Gold's king. The book play jack of the clubs now nicely surrounded the queen and the defence had four clubs and a third spade to cash for down three and –300.

With the double, it was easy for Oursel to lead his spade and he too switched to a diamond. Allfrey won in dummy then cashed out the diamonds before leading the queen of hearts and running it. He had a trick more than de Sainte-Marie but, of course, had been doubled, so two down cost –500 and 5 IMPs went the way of the french team.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------|---|--|---|
| ♠ A J 9 6 5 4 3 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ Q 8 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 10 7 ♥ 8 ♦ Q 10 5 4 ♣ A K J 6 2 | ♠ Q ♥ A Q J 10 7 6 2 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 7 4 3 |
| N | | | | | | |
| W E | | | | | | |
| S | | | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Robson</i> | <i>Soulet</i> | <i>Allfrey</i> | <i>Oursel</i> |
| 3♠ | 4♥ | 4♠ | 5♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <i>Mauberquez</i> | <i>Gold</i> | <i>de S-Marie</i> | <i>Bell</i> |
| 3♠ | 4♥ | 4♠ | 5♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Dble | All Pass |

Again a Frenchman doubled where an Englishman did not. This is a type of auction where the final contract often goes two or three down undoubled and both defenders look at the other and wonder if their partner should have doubled. I am convinced that we need to double more often and accept the occasional –650 when our high cards prove to be less useful than we had hoped, as there will be enough +300s and +500s to more than compensate. Anyway, there were four top losers so that was –100 for Soulet but –300 for Gold, and a further 5 IMPs to Soulet.

As for 4♠, if the defence can cash its three top winners then play a third round of diamonds declarer will have to guess the spade position, ruffing with the ace and playing for the hand that pre-empted to hold the queen being the winning action.

The final two deals were flat so Soulet had come out on top by 29-23 IMPs; 12.18-7.82 VPs. The French were still in third, while Allfrey had sunk to the foot of the table.



Participating Teams

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Bulgaria | Radkov – Bulgarian National Champion Roumen Trendafilov (pc), Vladislav Isporski, Tenyu Tenev, Todor Tiholov |
| Denmark | Pharmaservice – Danish National Champion Hans Christian Graversen (pc), Poul Clemmensen, Emil Jepsen, Lars Tofte |
| England | Allfrey – English National Champion Alexander Allfrey (pc), Mike Bell, Tony Forrester, David Gold, Andrew Robson, David Bakhshi |
| England host | EBU team Simon Gillis (pc), Boye Brogeland, Tom Hanlon, Espen Lindqvist, Zia Mahmood, Erik Saelensminde |
| France | Soulet – French National Champion Philippe Soulet (pc), Michel Lebel, Erick Mauberquez, Christophe Oursel, Bernard Payen, Thierry de Sainte Marie |
| Italy | G.S. Allegra Maria Teresa Lavazza (npc), Alejandro Bianchedi, Dennis Bilde, Norberto Bocchi, Massimiliano Di Franco, Giorgio Duboin, Agustin Madala, Massimo Ortensi (coach) |
| Netherlands | BC't Onstein Louk Verhees (pc), Berend van den Bos, Joris van Lankveld, Ricco van Prooijen, Richard Ritmeijer, Magdaléna Tichá |
| Norway | Heimdal BK Erik Berg (pc), Erik Hoftaniska, Olav Arve Høyem, Aksel Hornslien, Lars Arthur Johansen, Børre Lund |
| Italy 2 | S.S.D. ANGELINI BRIDGE S.R.L. Francesco Angelini (npc), Leonardo Cima, Valerio Giubilo, Lorenzo Lauria, Antonio Sementa, Mustafa Cem Tokay, Alfredo Versace |
| Romania | Top Bridge Bucharest – Romanian National Champion Marius Briciu (pc), Ionut Coldea, Filip Florin, Ovidiu Ghigheci, Bogdan Marina, Iulian Rotaru |
| Sweden | Uppsalabridgen, Skalman Krister Ahlesved (pc), Tommy Bergdahl, Jonas Petersson, Niklas Warne |
| Turkey | Cayyolu Bridge Club Suleyman Kolata (pc), Ismail Kandemir, Ali Ucar, Nafiz Zorlu |

Championship Format

Initially there will be a complete round-robin with 11 matches of 10 boards. Semi-Finals and Final will be held in two segments of 16 boards. All the teams will play until the end.

For the Semi-Finals and Final, the 12 teams will be divided into 3 groups according to their ranking at the end of the round-robin.

- 1 to 4: Group A For the Semi-Finals, 1 chooses his opponent between 3 and 4
- 5 to 8: Group B For the Semi-Finals, 5 chooses his opponent between 7 and 8
- 9 to 12: Group C For the Semi-Finals, 9 chooses his opponent between 11 and 12

At the end of the Semi-Finals, the winners from the same groups meet as do the losers; this allows a complete ranking from 1 to 12.