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BRIDGE TODAY



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The Magazine for People Who Love to Play Bridge

Tips from the Bermuda Bowl
From the final 16 boards between Italy and the USA — Page 13

Also:

- 2 The Red Pencil
by Pamela Granovetter
- 3 You Owe it to Your Partner
by Migry Zur-Campanile
- 6 Bridge Movie
Andrzej Matuszewski
- 9 Kantar's Korner
by Eddie Kantar
- 26 Being Ulf
by Anders Wirgren
- 29 The Wizards of Aus
by Ron Klinger

Switch in Time Forum



The contract is 6NT.
Declarer is running his long suit.
How do you know which suit to hold
and which to discard?

Answer on pages 31-32.

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aged with a Bridgetoday.com \$59 membership. Thank you! — Matthew and Pamela Granovetter



The Red Pencil

by Pamela Granovetter

“Was you ever stung by a dead bee?” I was never a fan of the “Multi 2♦” convention. In fact, I have always referred to it as “the dreaded Multi.” However, when I began to play with Migry Zur-Campanile (about one-and-half years ago), I decided to play the dreaded Multi to make her happy. She liked it, and, after all, Meckwell play it to good advantage. Zia plays it the way Migry and I decided to play it — a 2♥ or 2♠ opening bid shows a good weak two-bid (a good playing hand with defense as well, but less than an open-

ing bid) and 2♦ shows the weaker weak two-bid. Multi comes with dozens of agreements you have to remember, but, what the heck, it seems to work out well in the top-expert level....

In the classic film “To Have and Have Not,” the Walter Brennan character goes around asking people, “Was you ever stung by a dead bee?” Well, that’s the way I feel about Multi. After 15 or 20 misadventures with it, I feel like I’ve been stung by a dead bee!

Take the latest example. Migry and I were playing on Bridge Base Online when the following hand occurred.

North dealer	North (Migry)		
None vul	♠ A J 5 4		
	♥ 10 9 6 4		
	♦ K 6 5		
	♣ Q J		
West		East	
♠ Q 3		♠ 6	
♥ Q J 8 7 5		♥ A 3	
♦ A 10 9 7		♦ Q J 8 4	
♣ A K		♣ 9 8 7 6 3 2	
	South (Pamela)		
	♠ K 10 9 8 7 2		
	♥ K 2		
	♦ 3 2		
	♣ 10 5 4		
West	North	East	South
—	pass	pass	2♦
double	3♥	4♦	(all pass)

My hand was hardly a “good playing hand” so I opened the bidding with 2♦,

albeit fearing the worst. East thought his partner’s double showed diamonds, so he bid 4♦ over Migry’s 3♥ (pass or correct) bid, and it went all pass. (This never happens to Meckwell!) There they landed, confusion and all, in their best contract, and I tried to defeat it by leading the ♥K. This allowed East to make an overtrick, but, as you can see, 10 tricks are always there. All the other results that day were North-South bidding and making 3♠, for +140.

What does this have to do with bridge? I think there’s a mystical aspect to bridge (read Barry Rigal’s “Morphic Resonance” articles in previous issues of BT, for example), which includes: “Some conventions do not work for some people!” In fact, Edgar Kaplan used to say this very thing. Migry is also aware of the weird bad results we’ve had with this convention, and, mercifully, she has agreed to cross it off our card.

My tip is: If a convention doesn’t work for you, even if the convention seems great in theory, put a red pencil through it.

You Owe it to your Partner

by Migry Zur Campanile



One of the areas of my work that I enjoy the most is partnership coaching. This means not only helping a pair to build a well-organized system and supplying them with all sorts of material to strengthen the weaker areas of their game, but, more important, to help the players develop “partnership chemistry.” This elusive component makes 1+1=3 and often leads to extraordinary results by pairs who “on paper” are not great players.

How can this be done?

With a lot of work, dedication, commitment by all those involved, aiming to build the right blend of “partnership discipline” in order for both players to be mutually supportive and to come to trust completely in each other’s actions.

The first step in the process of building mutual trust is to remove one of the biggest enemies of partnership harmony, what I call the “solo flight.” This occurs when a player takes a completely unilateral action, be it a bid, a lead, or a switch in defense, which may or may not work out but that for sure will be almost impossible to read correctly by partner. Such actions seriously undermine partnership confidence and, in extreme cases, turn the game into a roller-coaster of results, with tops and bottoms randomly determined by the success and failure of this ‘Russian Roulette’ style of

bridge. The bottom line is that you owe it to your partner not just to play your best but to play *responsibly*.

Here is an example of what I mean:

You are the dealer, South, with the opponents vulnerable.

♠ 4
♥ A Q J 8 7 5
♦ 10 8
♣ J 10 9 8

South	West	North	East
2 ♥	pass	4 ♥	4 ♠
?			

You open a weak 2♥, it goes pass on your left, and partner raises you to 4♥, East, however, has ideas of his own and bids 4♠. What do you do, given that you are not vul versus vul?

The normal bid if you have any respect for partner’s ability in taking the right decision is *pass*.

You have no idea, and neither does East, if he bid 4♥ to make or as an advance sacrifice and thus you have no business getting involved in the final decision.

This was the complete hand:

South dealer North
 E-W vul ♠ K Q 10 6
 ♥ K 9 6 2
 ♦ A K 7
 ♣ 6 5

West
 ♠ 2
 ♥ 10 4
 ♦ 9 5 4 3 2
 ♣ K Q 10 9 3

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ A Q J 8 7 5
 ♦ 10 8
 ♣ J 10 9 8

South	West	North	East
2 ♥	pass	4 ♥	4 ♠
?			

East was under a lot of pressure from the auction and chose to bid 4♠, which rates to go at least three down on normal defense while 5♥ is one off.

Another common area for “solo flights” is when defending a contract. On defense it is all too easy to disregard the “normal” play and to follow your “instinct,” wherever it may lead. Unfortunately, even when you are right, partner will be unlikely to understand your ploy and more often than not will unwittingly contribute to its failure.

Matchpoints • North dealer • E-W vul

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

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♣	1 ♥	1 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

The player in West had a problem. He had just started playing “seriously” with a new partner after having many such unsuccessful experiences before, and knew very well that he should usually lead partner’s suit — especially from a hand that did not have obvious entries. On the other hand, West thought, South is obviously prepared for a heart lead, while a diamond lead might easily be the winner.

A “boring” heart or an “imaginative” diamond?

Well, the West player at the table had no doubts and, trusting his “instincts,” he led the ♦6. Here was the whole hand:

Mousetrap



The Preempt & Double

Some play that after a weak two- or three-bid, a double by the opener says: “I want to take the sacrifice. Please bid unless you hold a trump stack and are sure you want to defend this doubled.” Using this treatment, South could double 4♠ in the hand presented above, and North would convert to penalties by passing it out.

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

	North	East	South
—	1 ♣	1 ♥	1 NT
pass	3 NT	(all pass)	

North had obviously opted for 3NT, hoping that his club suit would be enough

to see the contract home. As we can see the diamond lead turns out to set up declarer's ninth trick, to go along with six clubs, and two aces. Three notrump making was an exceptional result for North-South since at almost all the other tables the "boring" heart lead forced the declarers to the spade finesse immediately, since there was no other entry back to hand after starting to cash the clubs and that meant a swift down two.

Only a couple of expert declarers took the view that the spade finesse was a slightly below chance play on the bidding (although East could easily have bid his vulnerable 1♥ without the ♠K and "only" the ♥K-Q-J-10-9 and the ♦A). They took the first heart and run all the clubs, forcing East to come down to six cards and to hold the ♠K guarded, the singleton ♦A and ♥K-Q-J in this position:

	♠ A Q 8 ♥ 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ —	
♠ 6 5 ♥ 4 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ —	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K 7 ♥ K Q J ♦ A ♣ —
	♠ J 10 9 ♥ — ♦ K 10 7 ♣ —	

Now a small diamond from dummy did the trick and East was end-played after taking three heart tricks.

Our player in West was good enough not to miss this line when all four hands were turned over and pointed it out to his upset partner ("Not to worry, pard, but if I lead

your suit, declarer will squeeze-endplay you — at least my lead prevented that!"). It was little comfort to East when South was happily entering 400 on the almost empty plus column.

This breach of partnership discipline affected both players, who ended up looking at each subsequent board for reasons to berate each other and finished with a dismal score.

Could West's lead have worked? Certainly. Was he then right to try it? Absolutely not. He had an entryless hand and the chances of finding partner with what was needed to set up and access the diamond suit were rather minimal. In such situations we should always make our normal lead, whatever that might be, and not look for "lucky guesses," which most of the time bring only luck to the opponents!



Brilliant Imagination and Technical Excellence

versus Primitive (?) Simple Minds

by Andrzej Matuszewski, *Warsaw*

The first deal of this board-a-match event, besides being technically interesting, is quite exciting. You (South) receive:

♠ A J 10 4 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ Q J 10 9 3 ♣ 3

No one vul.

Righty deals and opens 1♣.

You know that in the most important suit (spades) you are quite strong so you technically (and bravely!) double.

LHO follows with a forcing 2♥ (with normally 6+ cards). Still your partner has something to say: a responsive double that promises four spades.

Righty bids 4♥. You are the first person to pass in this auction. Lefty follows with a pass, but your partner makes another double!

You don't like the situation, but a player's "class" can be assessed in situations like this, so you study the hand carefully with a poker face.

You realize that you can pass it out only with something like ♥Q-J-10-9, so you correct to 4♠. This is duly doubled by your LHO and it finishes the auction:

	West	North	East	You South
	—	—	1 ♣	double
	2 ♥	double	4 ♥	pass
	pass	double	pass	4 ♠
	double	(all pass)		

West leads the ♦5 and you see the following:

	North
	♠ Q 7 5 3
	♥ —
	♦ A 8 4 2
	♣ 10 8 6 4 2
♦ 5	
	South (you)
	♠ A J 10 4
	♥ Q 7 4
	♦ Q J 10 9 3
	♣ 3

It takes a fraction of a second for you to play the ace and technically unblock the 10 from hand. You don't want to lose four tricks at once (that could make you depressive)!

Your next move is also logical. You have to draw some trumps. You play a small spade, put in your ten and it wins the trick (West, who you assume holds the king, probably didn't know what to do next or

tried to make your life more complicated by ducking). It doesn't motivate you to take another spade finesse anyway!"

North
 ♠ Q 7 5
 ♥ —
 ♦ 8 4 2
 ♣ 10 8 6 4 2

South (you)
 ♠ A J 4
 ♥ Q 7 4
 ♦ Q J 9 3
 ♣ 3

Now you have to concentrate mentally to find a next move. You make an effort and find a club switch.

It has some technical merits. First of all it cancels their communication line. Secondly, since you have to lose this trick, you decide

*West's best defense was to win and return a spade.
 — editor

This is the final position when you start to cash diamonds:

North
 ♠ Q 7
 ♥ —
 ♦ 4
 ♣ 10 6

South
 ♠ —
 ♥ Q 7 4
 ♦ J 10
 ♣ —

to do it at once — also, you have a certain plan in mind. . . .

You play the ♣3 and West's jack takes the trick. West plays clubs back to East's queen. You ruff in hand and decide that this is the time to start establishing diamonds, so you lead the ♦Q. After some deliberation, lefty discards a heart. East wins and returns a diamond. You technically play a small one! After another deliberation West throws another heart.

This is fortunate. It is impossible now that he started with four spades (else he would have ruffed)! You win in dummy cheaply with the ♦8 and play a third club. They follow while you ruff it.

Now you are about to finalize your plan!

You cash the ♠A and they follow as you expected!

West, who holds the king of trumps and the high hearts, has a choice: He can discard again, allowing you to take the diamond trick or he can ruff with the ♠K, allowing you to establish a club trick later in dummy. (East holds the high club.)

Well done. Without your imaginative maneuvers at the beginning of the play there would be no chance for the above ending.

They didn't understand anything but agreed on your claim: down one. This was the whole deal:

	North		
	♠ Q 7 5 3		
	♥ —		
	♦ A 8 4 2		
	♣ 10 8 6 4 2		
West		East	
♠ K 9 8		♠ 6 2	
♥ A K 9 8 6 2		♥ J 10 5 3	
♦ 5		♦ K 7 6	
♣ J 9 7		♣ A K Q 5	
	South		
	♠ A J 10 4		
	♥ Q 7 4		
	♦ Q J 10 9 3		
	♣ 3		

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♣	double
2 ♥	double	4 ♥	pass
pass	double	pass	4 ♠
double	(all pass)		

You are feeling good. You even have time to analyze the deal and see that if you were

North, instead of South, your partner might not have doubled 1♣ and West would have bought the contract in 4♥. I'm sure you would find a club to lead as North. This would complicate declarer's communication!

You would lead the ♣2! This shows (via suit-preference) the suit to get back to you.

The play would continue this way:

After winning in dummy, declarer would lead to the ♥A and most probably would try to reach dummy in clubs to finesse in hearts. You know how that story would end!

Meanwhile, in the other room, the obvious 4♥ is reached by your teammates, and North starts primitively with the ♠3. It was not difficult for your teammate West to collect 12 tricks after South played spades back. Their ♦A never took a trick. You win the board in an overkill.

The next deal is not as spectacular, but some subtle technical knowledge is quite useful to find a correct strategy...

You are vulnerable and they are not. You hold:

♠ A 9 6 5 3 ♥ A K 6 ♦ Q J ♣ Q 9 2

After your partner's pass, East opens 1♣ – could be three.

Traditionally, you have a strong overcall with spades, where you double first and then bid spades. You are not that naive! You don't like your points. Furthermore you don't see many (if any!) finesses that can be made against East's honors.

You bid a "gentle" 1♠. It isn't your last intelligent move. After pass on your left, 2♠ from partner and East's pass, you don't find it tempting to invite a game!

This was the whole deal:

East dealer ♠ Q J 7 2
 N-S vul ♥ J 7 2
 ♦ 6 5 3
 ♣ K 6 4

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

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♣	1 ♠
pass	2 ♠	(all pass)	

You score eight tricks and get a valuable +110. No chance for an overtrick! After West's club lead to the jack, you win the queen and attack diamonds. They play the second and third round of diamonds, which you ruff. So you try three rounds of hearts. West is now forced to give you something.

He leads a spade and you pick up the ♠K but then lose two club tricks. You are so proud of yourself in the auction, right?

At the other table your colleague in the East chair opens 1♦. You would not believe what an awful bid South makes. He bids 1NT without any sure stopper in diamonds and with five cards in the most important suit! This finishes the auction.

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♦	1 NT
(all pass)			

They really don't have the diamonds stopped! Your teammate, however, believes South and leads the ♥4. When the jack holds, declarer finesses in spades. In fact, your teammates do well after this to hold the contract to 2NT, saving their four diamond tricks and ♣A. You lose the board 110 to 120. After two hands there is a draw. Welcome to board-a-match scoring!

Kantar's Korner

by Eddie Kantar



How Can This Be Wrong?

Your partner opens 1♣, natural, the next hand overcalls 1NT (16-18) and you bid 2♣ holding ♠ K 9 x x x ♥ Q J x x x ♦ x ♣ x x.

Have you lost your mind? No, you and partner have decided that a raise to 2♣ in this sequence is next to worthless. It takes up no room, it's a bit risky with the clubs possibly stacked in the 1NT bidder's hand, not to mention that there is some risk that partner has three clubs.

Why not use the 2♣ response to show both majors (5-5) with 5-8 HCP? Surely it must be more valuable to show both major suits with one bid than to raise 1♣ to 2♣ after a 1NT overcall. Please.

Do the same if partner opens 1♦ and it is overcalled with 1NT. Use the raise to 2♦ to show weak majors. After all, if you are not using this convention, what are you going to do with hands like this?

Prevent Defense

Sometimes defenders have to use a little imagination to defeat low-level contracts.

For example, can you see any way for East-West to defeat South's 2♥ contract on the following hand after the lead of a high spade by West?

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

Solution: It can be done, and here's how. West cashes a second spade and then shifts to a club. East cashes three clubs as West discards the ♠J. Now East leads a spade. South has to ruff and now there is no way for South to get to dummy to take either red-suit finesse and must go down one.

Alternatively, West can shift to a club at trick two and East returns a spade at trick three, then West returns a club at trick four — this feels like ping-pong!

Any other sequence of plays allows South an entry to dummy with the ♠Q, a club ruff or a red-suit lead. South can then avoid the loss of a red-suit trick by finessing hearts before diamonds.*

*Kantar's defense would also be useful to defeat a 3♥ doubled contract two tricks. — *editor*

Where is the Void?

Your partner opens 1♣ and catches you with this bombshell:

♠ K Q J 10 x ♥ K x x ♦ A K Q x ♣ 3

You respond a quiet 1♠ and partner raises to 2♠. You waste no further time and leap to 4NT (RKB). Partner responds 5NT, showing two keycards plus an unknown void.

If partner has:

♠ A x x x ♥ — ♦ x x x x ♣ A K x x x,
you belong in 7♠.

But if partner has:

♠ A x x x ♥ x x x x ♦ — ♣ A K x x x,
6♠ is high enough.

In other words, there are times when you have to know where that void is. When spades is the agreed suit and the response to 4NT is 5NT, why not try this:

West	East
1 ♣	1 ♠
2 ♠	4 NT
5 NT	?

Bid 6♣ to ask partner where the void is. Responder bids 6♦ or 6♥ to show a void in that suit and 6♠ to show a club void (impossible in this sequence). If instead of 6♣, you bid 6♦, that is the queen-ask. If partner has the queen, partner bids a grand; otherwise partner signs off in 6♠.

What if hearts is the agreed suit and the response is 5NT? Assuming partner can have a void in only one of two suits, again you can use 6♣ to ask for the void. This

time partner bids 6♦ to show a void in the lower-ranking suit and 6♥ to show a void in the higher-ranking suit. 6♦ remains the queen-ask.

West	East
1 ♦	1 ♥
2 ♥	4 NT
5 NT	6 ♣ (Where is your void, old boy?)
6 ♦	(Club void, old man.)
6 ♥	(Spade void, old man.)

Note: Players who use 4♠ as Kickback when hearts is the agreed suit will get a response of 5♠ to show two keycards and a void. For them 5NT can ask for the void and 6♣ can be used as the queen ask.

Break Those Moysian Fits

When you know your opponents are playing a 4-3 trump fit, what is your best defense?

South dealer	♠ 7 4		
None vul	♥ K Q 10		
	♦ K Q 7 5		
	♣ J 10 7 5		
♠ K J 8 5 3		♠ A Q 9 2	
♥ 9 5 4 3		♥ 6 2	
♦ J 10		♦ 9 8 6 4 2	
♣ K 8		♣ 6 2	
	♠ 10 6		
	♥ A J 8 7		
	♦ A 3		
	♣ A Q 9 4 3		



South	West	North	East
1 ♣	pass	1 ♦	pass
1 ♥	pass	3 ♣	pass
3 ♦	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♠5

North-South were desperately trying to arrive at 3NT, but it soon became apparent

to everyone on the planet that neither had a spade stopper. North's leap to 4♥ was meant to show strong three-card support. The 3♣ bid, invitational, had clearly denied four-card heart support. East won the first spade and returned the deuce to West's jack. Now what? West was looking at a sure trick in the form of the ♣K, but where was the fourth trick coming from?

West planned to establish the setting trick with the ♥9 (or a spade). It all starts by leading a third spade. Declarer does best to ruff in dummy, discarding a club, and run the ♣J to the king. West plays a fourth spade, the *coup de gras*. South does best to ruff in dummy, cash the remaining high trump, cross to the ♦A and play the ♥A-J. When the suit does not break 3-3 and the ♥9 has not appeared, West is looking at the ♥9, the setting trick.

Had declarer elected to ruff the third spade in dummy, cash the ♥K-Q, return to the ♦A, draw trumps, cross to the ♦K and run the ♣J, West would win and cash two more spades. Two in the soup.

Bridge Yesterday

I recently was organizing (rummaging through) some old files and came across this article from some years ago. (Will the editors let this one get by?) This is how I wrote it up:

One of the most prestigious pair events in the world is the annual Sunday Times held in London. Each year 10 select pairs are invited to compete against the top English pairs.

This year the American entry was Sam Stayman playing with Matthew Granovetter, both from New York. They finished a respectable sixth. Last year the winners were Alan Sontag and Peter Weichsel, also both from New York. They were invited but were unable to attend this year.

Unfortunately, one of the biggest sets in the history of the Sunday Times event befell the American pair on the following deal against a strong French pair, Leon Yallouze and Leon Tintner.

West dealer	North (Stayman)		
Both vul	♠ 10 5		
	♥ J 10 5 3		
	♦ K Q 9 7 3		
	♣ Q 3		
West (Yallouze)			East (Tintner)
♠ Q J 9 7 3 2			♠ 4
♥ 8 4 2			♥ A K 6
♦ A 10 6			♦ 8 5 4
♣ 5			♣ A J 10 9 6 2
	South (Your editor and mine)		
	♠ A K 8 6		
	♥ Q 9 7		
	♦ J 2		
	♣ K 8 7 4		

Granovetter won the opening lead and led the ♦J, which held, as did a second diamond to dummy's queen. Shifting tacks, Matthew tried a low heart from dummy and the proverbial roof caved in. Tintner rose with the king and led a diamond over to Leon's ace. Yallouze reasoned that his partner could not have another spade and lead a diamond, so he smartly shifted to the ♣5. The 3 was played from dummy and Tintner's 9 forced out the king. When the ♥Q was led, East won and cashed five more clubs to defeat the contract four tricks or 1100 points. We still love you, Matthew.* (This sentence was not in the original write-up!)

West	North	East	South
Yallouze	Stayman	Tintner	Granovetter
2 ♠	pass	pass	2 NT
pass	3 ♠	pass	3 NT
pass	pass	double	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♠Q

Yallouze's 2♠ was weak, Matthew's 2NT was natural and the 3♠ response by Stayman was Stayman. Stayman using Stayman. Three notrump denied four hearts and Tintner had heard enough and doubled.

The winners of the event were the young Scottish pair, Barnett Shenkin and Monty Rosenberg. (Notice how I spelled Michael Rosenberg, who was unknown in the USA at the time.) *Ciao!*

*Editor's Note: Thank you for reminding me of this hand, Eddie. Your severance pay is in the mail.

Italy vs USA



Bermuda Bowl Conclusion (part II)

by Matthew Granovetter

USEFUL TIPS FROM THE LAST 16 BOARDS

Nov. 6, 2005, Estoril, Portugal — With 16 boards to play, the Italians led by nine imps, 221 to 212. In one room, Fantoni and Nunes were North-South, against Hamman and Soloway, East-West. In the other room, Meckstroth and Rodwell were North-South, against Lauria and Versace, East-West.

On board 1, an easy 4♥ was bid and made at both tables. On board 2, the first swing occurred.

Board 2	North		
East dealer	♠ 8 7 5 2		
N-S vul	♥ Q 10 9 5 2		
	♦ A 2		
	♣ Q 5		
West		East	
♠ Q 4 3		♠ A 10 9	
♥ K J 8 3		♥ —	
♦ Q		♦ K 10 8 7 5 3	
♣ 8 7 6 4 2		♣ A K J 3	
	South		
	♠ K J 6		
	♥ A 7 6 4		
	♦ J 9 6 4		
	♣ 10 9		

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
—	—	1 ♦	pass
1 ♥	pass	2 ♣	(all pass)

It's difficult to find fault with Hamman-Soloway's auction, yet they missed a very good minor-suit game. Hamman made 11 tricks after a trump lead. Hamman's bidding showed the minors and less than a strong club opening, so Soloway didn't picture the possibility of game. Playing standard, you would raise to 3♣ with the West cards, because partner could hold a nice 16-18 point hand for his rebid. Perhaps then Hamman was supposed to open 1♣, strong, with his beautiful "15-point six-controls plus a void" hand. But 1♣ openings with long diamonds are the most difficult to handle, since over 1♦ by responder, East must rebid 2♦.

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
—	—	1 ♦	pass
1 ♥	pass	2 ♣	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♦	pass
4 ♣	pass	5 ♣	(all pass)

At the other table, Versace gave a courtesy raise to 3♣ and Lauria stopped off to show his six diamonds before bidding game. Rodwell led a spade and declarer made 12 tricks, plus 420 and 7 imps to Italy.

Tip #1: Whether or not you play a strong club, consider upgrading a hand with lots of controls and very strong distribution.

Board 3 shows why some say “Down one is good bridge.” The USA went down two tricks, vulnerable, in a partscore, while Italy went three down!

Board 3	North		
South dealer	♠ A 10 9 3		
E-W vul	♥ 7		
	♦ K J 10 9 7		
	♣ Q 6 4		
West		East	
♠ K 2		♠ J 8 7 4	
♥ A Q 6		♥ J 8 4 2	
♦ 8 6 4 2		♦ Q 5	
♣ K J 8 3		♣ A 10 9	
	South		
	♠ Q 6 5		
	♥ K 10 9 5 3		
	♦ A 3		
	♣ 7 5 2		

South	West	North	East
<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Soloway</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Hamman</i>
pass	1 ♦	pass	1 NT
(all pass)			

Opening lead: ♥10

Hamman and Soloway open four-card majors frequently, so Hamman decided to respond 1NT, rather than 1♥. He won the ♥10 opening lead in his hand with the jack and led the ♣10 for a finesse. Fantoni won the ♣Q and shifted to the ♦7. The diamond avalanche began and on the fifth round of diamonds Hamman had nothing good to throw from dummy. He couldn't discard a spade, so he threw the ♥Q, one of his winners. The squeeze on dummy worked nicely for the defense. Fantoni exited with a club and the defenders waited for their two spade tricks. In fact, Hamman did well to play for down two. He could have won the club return in his hand and led a spade to the king (losing three spade

tricks), but he decided the ♠A was probably with North and cashed out for down two, -200. Declarer could have made the first seven tricks if he had guessed to finesse clubs through North.

South	West	North	East
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Versace</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Lauria</i>
pass	1 ♣	1 ♦	2 ♦
pass	2 ♥	(all pass)	

Versace and Lauria play a standard, natural system, with lots of gadgets. Here Versace opened the bidding in his stronger minor and Lauria used one of these gadgets, a 2♦ cuebid to show the majors, which made West declarer in 2♥. Rodwell, with king-ten-nine-fifth of trump, didn't mind.

Meckstroth led his singleton trump to the 8, 9, and queen. Versace led a diamond toward dummy and Meckstroth put up his king then exited with a diamond to partner's ace. Rodwell was a bit endplayed and exited with a club to the queen and ace.

Now Versace would have done best to continue clubs, but he had an idea that Meckstroth had led from a doubleton heart, so he called for the ♥J to smother whatever spot card the clever Meckstroth had led from. Rodwell covered the jack with the king, and the ace won the trick as Meckstroth discarded a club. This was a big disappointment to Versace. He cashed a club and ruffed a diamond. Rodwell overruffed, drew the last trumps with his 10, and led a spade. Versace played the 2. Meckstroth won the ace and cashed two more diamond tricks for down three, -300, 3 imps to the USA.

Tip #2: When you have an opportunity to show two suits, don't do it with only 4-4 shape. Hold at least 5-4.

Board 4
 West dealer
 All vul

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

West
 ♠ Q 10 9 6 5 3 2
 ♥ J 10 5 4 3
 ♦ 10
 ♣ —

East
 ♠ A
 ♥ A 8 7 6
 ♦ K 5
 ♣ A 10 6 5 3 2

South
 ♠ 4
 ♥ K Q
 ♦ A Q 9 8 7 6 2
 ♣ J 9 4

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
3 ♠	pass	4 ♠	5 ♦
pass	pass	double	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♠2

This hand shows a difference in style in the two countries, going back 60 years. USA players are preemptors when they hold wild distribution, while Italian players are usually cautious about preempting with a side major. Soloway's 3♠ is not out of the "book" but it almost hurts to say pass with that hand. When Hamman raised to game, Nunes bid 5♦ and bought it, doubled. Soloway led the ♠2, suit-preference for clubs and Hamman switched accurately to the ♣A and a club. The ♥A was the defenders' fourth trick, for down two, -500.

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
pass	pass	1 ♣	3 ♦
3 ♠	pass	3 NT	pass
4 ♥	(all pass)		

Versace passed and it was Rodwell who preempted! Versace bid both his suits and found the 5-4 heart fit. Had his partner held only three hearts (and perhaps two spades), he might have been in the wrong spot, but this was Italy's day. His partner had a clear preference. Even as it was, 4♥ is not so easy after a diamond lead. But who leads partner's suit these days?

Meckstroth, hoping to stop spade ruffs in dummy, tried a trump lead and regretted it. Versace ducked to Rodwell's queen, and a club back allowed declarer to throw his diamond loser. The ace of trump took out the remaining trumps, the ♠A was cashed and a club ruffed in the West hand. Next came the ♠Q, ruffing out the king. Declarer spread his cards, stating he would ruff another club and ruff out the ♠J for 12 tricks, +680, 5 imps to Italy.

It's hard to say what would have happened after a diamond lead and continuation, tapping the West hand. Declarer can make the contract by setting up clubs or setting up spades if he leads the ♠Q on the second round. But he might not. This is yet another example of the danger of trump leads: It makes life easy for declarer. Italy was now ahead 233 to 215, with 12 deals remaining.

Tip #3: When an opponent show two long suits and plays in the shorter suit, it's usually right to "tap" rather than lead trumps.

Board 5
 North dealer ♠ J 9 7 5 4
 N-S vul ♥ 9 8
 ♦ 9 6
 ♣ A Q 10 2

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

South
 ♠ Q 2
 ♥ K Q J 10 5 4 3
 ♦ K 8 5
 ♣ K

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
—	pass	1 ♦	1 ♥
2 ♦	pass	3 ♣	3 ♥
3 ♠	pass	4 ♣	pass
4 ♦	(all pass)		

Soloway and Hamman skirted the ice here when Soloway made an aggressive 3♠ game-try bid in reply to his partner's game try of 3♣. Hamman, however, held back wisely and let 4♦ go. After all, he had opened 1♦ and rebid 3♣ freely over his partner's weak raise. Nunes led the ♥K.

Hamman cleared his throat as dummy came down. At least they had stopped in four, undoubled. He ruffed the lead in hand and led a club. Nunes won the king and switched to the ♠Q. Hamman won in dummy with the king and led another club to North's queen, on which Nunes discarded his second spade. When Fantoni returned the ♠9, however, Hamman mis-guessed by playing the ace. Nunes ruffed and returned a heart to the ace, Hamman discarding his other spade. Then he took the diamond finesse and cleared his throat

again when it lost. Nunes returned a trump and Hamman was left with three more trump tricks and a clear throat: down three, -150.

This time down three was good, because it was undoubled! Here's the auction at the other table:

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
—	pass	1 ♣	1 ♥
1 ♠*	double	2 ♦	3 ♥
pass	4 ♥	5 ♣	pass
pass	double	(all pass)	

*denies four spades, like a transfer to 1NT

Lauria had the advantage of starting with a natural 1♣ (though it could be two cards on a balanced hand). When Rodwell overcalled 1♥, Versace showed some values without a spade suit with his artificial 1♠ bid. To show spades, Versace would double. Meckstroth, in the catbird seat, doubled to show his spade suit, and Lauria "reversed" into diamonds. He surely meant his bid as not forcing, but when the auction escalated to 4♥, he took still another aggressive bid of 5♣.

This was just what Meckstroth was dreaming of. He doubled and collected 500. Lauria lost four trump tricks and a diamond, down three, 8 imps to the USA.

Tip #4: Don't bid the same values twice. At some point you have to stop bidding.

On board 6, one notrump was the contract in both rooms, both times played by the Americans, once making 90 and once down 100, for a push board. Italy clung to a 10-imp lead going into board 7....

Board 7
 South dealer
 All vul

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

West
 ♠ A Q 10 9 2
 ♥ J 9 7 5 3
 ♦ 7 5
 ♣ 2

East
 ♠ 3
 ♥ A 10 8 4 2
 ♦ K J 9
 ♣ 8 6 4 3

South
 ♠ J 7 5 4
 ♥ 6
 ♦ A 10 8
 ♣ A K 10 9 5

South	West	North	East
Nunes	Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman
2 ♣	pass	2 ♦	pass
2 ♠	pass	3 ♣	(all pass)

After the natural 2♣ opening by Nunes, Fantoni invited game with his junky 12, and they rested in 3♣. Soloway led the ♦7 to the jack and ace. Nunes drew four rounds of trump, discarding a diamond and then played the ♦10, ducked. Another dia-



Fulvio Fantoni enjoying it all

mond lead put Hamman on play. He played ♥A and a heart. Nunes threw one spade on the ♥K and one on the ♦Q, then lost two spade tricks, making three, +110.

It seemed like a nothing board, except... if you examine the East-West cards, you'll see that 4♥ is on for 10 tricks. But how can you reach it?

South	West	North	East
Rodwell	Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria
1 ♦	2 ♦	2 ♥	4 ♥
pass	pass	pass	

Over the Precision nebulous 1♦, Versace slipped in a 2♦ Michaels cuebid. Meckstroth's 2♥ game try was brushed aside by Lauria's jump to 4♥, which Meckstroth chose not to double.

The 4♥ contract can always be made if declarer takes the right view, but the actual Meckwell defense wasn't best. The ♣A lead followed by the ♦A not only obviated the diamond guess, but told declarer where the ♠K was. Declarer ruffed it out and it was just as well that Meckstroth hadn't doubled. Lauria scored 620 and 12 imps to Italy.

Tip #5: If you don't have a "Michaels" bid in your system versus a 2♣ opening bid, make one up ASAP! Here's a "mousetrap" suggestion: Use a 2♦ overcall for the majors and give up a natural 2♦ overcall. You could play 3♣ to show a good hand with six diamonds if you like. But the majors are more important to get into the auction with.

Board 8
 West dealer
 None vul
 North
 ♠ 8 4
 ♥ A K J 10 9 2
 ♦ K 9 3
 ♣ 3 2

West	East
♠ A Q J 7	♠ 9 5 2
♥ —	♥ 7 6 4
♦ Q 8 7 2	♦ J 6 5 4
♣ A J 9 7 4	♣ 10 6 5

South
 ♠ K 10 6 3
 ♥ Q 8 5 3
 ♦ A 10
 ♣ K Q 8

West	North	East	South
<i>Soloway</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦
2 ♥	3 ♥	pass	4 ♥
(all pass)			

The swing on this hand was a result of the contrast in USA/Italy styles again. This time, the American blasting methods worked better. Here Nunes cuebid 2♦ with the South cards, allowing Soloway to slip in a 2♥ bid, describing his hand. The final contract was 4♥, making 10 tricks, +420.

West	North	East	South
<i>Versace</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
1 ♦	1 ♥	pass	4 ♥
double	(all pass)		

Rodwell's jump to game worked better, because Versace was left with the obvious takeout double and his partner wasn't going

anywhere. Maybe his partner should have. This contract scored 590, 5 imps to the USA. With eight boards to go Italy led 245 to 228.

Tip #6: When game seems like a good bet, just bid it.

Could the USA close the 17-imp deficit? Six imps were recovered on the next board.

Board 9
 North dealer
 E-W vul
 North
 ♠ 10 7 5
 ♥ 8 5
 ♦ K 10 6 3
 ♣ K Q 7 5

West	East
♠ 8 4 2	♠ A Q J 9 3
♥ K 7 3 2	♥ A J
♦ Q J 7	♦ 9 8 4
♣ A J 4	♣ 9 8 3

South
 ♠ K 6
 ♥ Q 10 9 6 4
 ♦ A 5 2
 ♣ 10 6 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Soloway</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
—	pass	1 ♠	pass
1 NT	(all pass)		

Opening lead: ♦3

Soloway's 11-point 1NT response, with three-card support, worked well when Hamman had a minimum and passed. There were eight tricks for +120.

Board 9	North	
North dealer	♠ 10 7 5	
E-W vul	♥ 8 5	
	♦ K 10 6 3	
	♣ K Q 7 5	
West		East
♠ 8 4 2		♠ A Q J 9 3
♥ K 7 3 2		♥ A J
♦ Q J 7		♦ 9 8 4
♣ A J 4		♣ 9 8 3
	South	
	♠ K 6	
	♥ Q 10 9 6 4	
	♦ A 5 2	
	♣ 10 6 2	

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
—	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 NT	pass	3 ♠	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♥10

At this table, Versace's 2NT bid to show spade support, invitational to game or better, worked poorly, not surprisingly. When you can open a 12-point hand like the East hand, it can hardly be good tactics to force to the three level with the West hand.

Even after the heart lead into the A-J, declarer could not make it. He cashed a second heart trick and played ♠A and ♠Q to the king. Rodwell shifted to the ♣10, jack, queen. Meckstroth returned a diamond to Rodwell's ace, and Rodwell returned a club. Lauria went up with the ace and tried to cash the ♥K, but Meckstroth ruffed with his ♠10 and declarer had to concede down one. That meant 6 imps to the USA, who now trailed by only 11.

Tip #7: Try playing "semi-forcing" one-notrump responses. Opener passes only with balanced minimums, in which case you can stay low.

At the Table



Lorenzo Lauria (back to us) chats with his opponent, Jeff Meckstroth (right), while on the other side of the screen Eric Rodwell (left) chats with Alfredo Versace (not visible).

Photo by Ron Tacchi.

Board 10
 East dealer
 All vul

North
 ♠ 5 2
 ♥ 10 7 5 3 2
 ♦ 9 8 3
 ♣ 10 7 5

West
 ♠ A Q J 8 4
 ♥ A 4
 ♦ 6
 ♣ A K Q 9 8

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

South
 ♠ K 6
 ♥ K Q 9
 ♦ A Q J 10 5
 ♣ J 6 2

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
—	—	pass	1 ♣*
double	pass	1 ♠	pass
2 ♣	pass	2 ♦	pass
4 ♠	(all pass)		

*could be a balanced strong hand without a club suit

Opening lead: ♥K

Soloway had a great hand, but Hamman showed no signs of life, so Soloway settled for game. The ♥K was led, taken by the ace. Hamman played safe for his contract, cashing the ♠A and leading the ♠Q. Nunes took it and cashed out for 620 to the USA.

If they had reached slam, it would have made, with a bit of luck. After the ♥A wins the first trick, declarer would have to rely on friendly splits. He plays two top clubs and ruffs a club, then finesses trumps. On the fourth and fifth club East's two remaining hearts are discarded. It's the sort of slam you would not like to be in ... until you see the full hand!

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
—	—	pass	1 ♣*
1 ♠	pass	3 ♠	pass
4 ♣	pass	4 ♠	(all pass)

*Precision 16+

Opening lead: ♥2

Here Versace had his bid over the Precision 1♣ opening and Lauria preempted to 3♠, never expecting it was a slam hand in his direction. Versace, who has seen the weak jump raise before, made one slam try and then settled for game. Meckstroth led a third-or-fifth-best heart. Rodwell played the queen on the 8 and Versace won the ace and played the same ♠A and ♠Q to the king.

Here, however, Rodwell was looking at the East hand as dummy. Therefore, you must appreciate Rodwell's next two plays. Staring at the East hand, he cashed the ♥K and then the ♦A! He trusted Versace completely to hold 5-5 shape for his 4♣ bid. This saved an imp and the board was a push.

Perhaps Rodwell figured that his partner would have led a doubleton if he held one. Therefore, partner held at least three diamonds and West had only one diamond at most. His second inference was on declarer's play at trick one. How did he know his partner held five hearts and not three (to the 10)? Because declarer, with ace-third of hearts facing jack-third, would have ducked the queen at trick one.

Tip #8: In a close match, play tough for every imp!

Board 11	North		
South dealer	♠ A 9 8 6		
None vul	♥ 9 6		
	♦ K 6 4		
	♣ K Q 7 2		
West		East	
♠ Q 10 3 2		♠ K 5 4	
♥ A K Q 8 4		♥ 10 7	
♦ 3		♦ 10 8 7 2	
♣ A 5 3		♣ 10 9 8 4	
	South		
	♠ J 7		
	♥ J 5 3 2		
	♦ A Q J 9 5		
	♣ J 6		

South	West	North	East
Nunes	Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman
pass	2 ♦*	pass	2 ♥
pass	3 ♣	(all pass)	

*Flannery (four spades and five hearts, 11-16)

Opening lead: ♣2

Soloway's Flannery opening followed by a 3♣ fragment game-try caught a poor dummy. I've rarely used Flannery, but I would suggest a better method here would be to rebid 2♠ to show a 4-5-1-3 or 4-5-3-1 super max, giving partner the chance to pass 2♠. Using this idea, the 3♣ rebid would show 4-5-0-4 shape specifically.

Fantoni found a killing low trump lead. Soloway let the ♣J hold and took the second trump lead with the ace, then started cashing hearts.

On the third heart honor, Fantoni ruffed with the ♣Q and a diamond was discarded from dummy. Now Fantoni drew West's last trump with the ♣K and switched to the ♦K. Nunes was delighted. He overtook with the ace and cashed two more rounds,

then led his ♥J, ruffed in the East dummy with the last trump.

This was Soloway's fourth trick and he was feeling good that he was not vulnerable. There were three cards remaining in everyone's hand. East had the ♠K-5-4, West the ♠Q-10-3, North the ♠A-9-8 and South the ♠J-7 and a high diamond. Soloway called for a spade from the East hand, and might have taken no more tricks had Nunes followed with the 7. He would play the queen, losing to the ace. Then when North returns a spade, Soloway would duck, playing the jack to be in the longer spade holding. South would win the singleton jack and cash a diamond trick at the end for down five. But Nunes kindly put up the ♠J when a spade was led off dummy, so Soloway took two spade tricks for a respectable down three, -150.

South	West	North	East
Rodwell	Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria
pass	1 ♥	double	pass
1 NT	(all pass)		

Here Rodwell bought the contract in the South seat after a 1♥ opening bid and takeout double. Rodwell had a tough call to make over the double. He wanted to show some values (a jump to 3♦ would have worked better) and suggest notrump. He settled on 1NT but the defense was too good. Versace led the ♥A (7 by East), and switched to a spade. Lauria won the king and returned the ♥10, pinning dummy's 9. Rodwell ducked this and a spade was returned. The best declarer could do was cash out for down one, -50, 5 imps to Italy, who led now by 16.

Tip #9: Save important spot cards (the ♥10 in this case) rather than squandering them to give count.

Board 12	North		
West dealer	♠ K Q 8 2		
N-S vul	♥ 8 5		
	♦ Q 7		
	♣ A Q J 9 5		
West		East	
♠ 9 7 6 5		♠ J 10 3	
♥ A 9 3 2		♥ Q J 7	
♦ J 10 6 5 4		♦ A 9 8 3 2	
♣ —		♣ 7 4	
	South		
	♠ A 4		
	♥ K 10 6 4		
	♦ K		
	♣ K 10 8 6 3 2		

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
pass	1 ♣	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♠	pass	3 ♣
pass	3 ♠	pass	4 ♣
pass	4 ♦	pass	4 ♥
pass	5 ♣	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♥7

The Italians' auction began with a two-way 1♣ opening and a forcing, natural 2♣ response, promising another suit as well. Fantoni's 2♠ was natural, showing clubs and spades, and so was 3♣. Fantoni's 3♠ denied a red-suit stopper for notrump and Nunes 4♣ was a slam try according to Fantoni (who later said his partner should have bid 5♣). We did not get Nunes' reply.

Fantoni now cuebid the ♦Q! Well, having denied the king, he thought he was showing the queen. The 4♥ bid was a cuebid and 5♣ showed an odd number of keycards. All this left Hamman on lead with the East cards.

Hamman, thinking that dummy might hold the ♥A-K, tried to set up a heart trick by starting with a low one, the 7, figuring

declarer would go up. But the lead worked miserably, when dummy hit with the K-10 and it was partner who held the ace.

Declarer, however, thought Hamman had indeed done something sneaky, but played him to have underled his ace! He went up with the king, and Soloway, innocent to the proceedings, won the ace and shifted to a spade. He thought partner held the ♥J-8-7 and that declarer was trying to get him to continue hearts when a killing spade shift was necessary to set up a spade trick before the ♦A was dislodged. He pictured North with the ♠Q-10-x-x and the ♥Q-5. (Later, Soloway took the blame, since declarer probably would call low from dummy with that holding.) Fantoni won the ♠A, drew trumps and discarded the ♦K on the third spade honor to make his game. Plus 600 to Italy.

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
pass	1 NT	pass	2 ♣
pass	2 ♠	pass	3 ♦
pass	3 ♥	pass	3 ♠
pass	4 ♣	pass	5 ♣
(all pass)			

Meckstroth started with a 14-16 notrump. Rodwell used Stayman and then bid 3♦, showing a six-card minor. The 3♥ bid asked which and 3♠ said "clubs." Meckstroth supported to 4♣ and Rodwell raised to game. Here the defense was easy. Versace led the ♦J. Lauria won the ace and shifted to the ♥Q. Down one, and 12 imps to Italy, now leading by 28. With only four boards left, things looked bleak for the USA, but board 13 put them back in the ballgame....

Tip #10: Normal opening leads may not be "killing" opening leads, but they make life easy for partner.

Board 13
 North dealer
 All vul

North
 ♠ K 8 7 4 3
 ♥ Q
 ♦ K 6
 ♣ A K Q 6 2

West
 ♠ Q J 10
 ♥ 7 6 2
 ♦ Q J 10 8 7 3
 ♣ J

East
 ♠ A 9 5 2
 ♥ J 9 8 5 3
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 8 4 3

South
 ♠ 6
 ♥ A K 10 4
 ♦ A 9 4 2
 ♣ 10 9 7 5

♠ 8 7
 ♥ —
 ♦ K
 ♣ Q 6 2

♠ —
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ J 10 7 3
 ♣ —

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9
 ♥ J 9 8 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ 8

♠ —
 ♥ A K 10
 ♦ 9 4 2
 ♣ —

On the ♥A-K, Hamman (East) threw the 5 and *jack* (nice play!). Nunes now tried to reach dummy with a diamond lead instead of ruffing the ♥10. Hamman ruffed and the slam failed.

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
—	1 ♠	pass	2 ♣
pass	3 ♣	pass	3 ♦
double	pass	pass	redouble
pass	3 ♥	pass	3 ♠
pass	4 ♣	pass	4 ♥
pass	4 ♠	pass	4 NT
pass	6 ♣	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♦Q

The Italians climbed to 6♣ in the usual Italian “cuebids” fashion. Soloway led the ♦Q and Nunes had to play it.

He won the diamond lead in hand with the ace and led his singleton spade to the king and ace. Hamman returned the ♣4 to the jack and ace. Nunes ruffed a spade in hand and went back to dummy with the ♥Q. Then he cashed the ♣K in case the trumps were 2-2 and he could claim. They weren't.

He next ruffed a spade with his last trump and then discarded two spades on the ♥A-K in this position:

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
—	1 ♣*	1 ♥	1 NT
pass	2 ♠	pass	2 NT
pass	3 ♣	pass	4 ♣
pass	4 ♦	pass	4 NT
pass	6 ♣	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♥3

Here Meckstroth started with a Precision club, Lauria overcalled, and Rodwell showed a strong hand with the 1NT response. After clubs were agreed, Meckstroth used Redwood (4♦), found two keycards and bid a slam. Lauria led a heart. Meckstroth (North) won in his hand and led a spade away from his king. Versace won the trick and switched to the ♦J. Meckstroth won in his hand, preserving the ace in dummy, and ruffed a spade. Then he led a trump to his hand and ruffed another spade. Now he claimed. He drew trump and had a diamond entry to the ace for two pitches on the ♥A-K. That was +1370 and 16 desperately needed imps to the USA.

Suddenly the Italian lead was “only” 12.

Tip #11: Don’t be afraid to drop a high card in order to fool declarer about your distribution.

Board 14	North		
East dealer	♠ K 9 8 4		
None vul	♥ K J 4		
	♦ 9 7 6 2		
	♣ Q 3		
West		East	
♠ A Q 2		♠ J 10	
♥ Q 3		♥ A 9 5	
♦ K 4		♦ Q J 10 5	
♣ K J 10 9 6 2		♣ 8 7 5 4	
	South		
	♠ 7 6 5 3		
	♥ 10 8 7 6 2		
	♦ A 8 3		
	♣ A		

West	North	East	South
Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman	Nunes
1 NT	(all pass)		

Soloway’s slightly offbeat 15-17 notrump met with a slightly conservative pass by Hamman and no balancing bid by Nunes. After the spade lead, won in dummy, Soloway led a club to South’s ace. Nunes returned a spade. Soloway finessed, losing to the king, and won the next spade in hand with the ace. He ran clubs and led a diamond. Spades were 4-4, so it didn’t matter

where the ♦A was. Soloway had two overtricks, +150.

West	North	East	South
Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria	Rodwell
1 ♣	pass	1 ♦	double
2 NT	pass	3 NT	(all pass)

Versace’s 2NT rebid over Rodwell’s takeout double was also offbeat, to say the least, but it got the job done ... assuming you want the job to be done ... that is, it got the partnership to 3NT, which is not the best contract in the world, but makes after a spade lead.

Versace also led a club at trick two, but then went up with the ♠A when Rodwell returned a spade. Had North led from three spades to the king, this nice play of the ♠A blocks the spade suit. Versace took nine tricks as well for +400 and 6 imps to Italy.

A heart shift at trick three would have defeated the contract, but how could Rodwell know to do that? Perhaps, if Meckstroth had played the ♣Q under the ace, he would be screaming for a switch (reverse Smith Echo or “alarm clock” — call it whatever you like), but it’s difficult to drop that precious queen in the heat of battle. The score with two boards remaining was Italy 268, USA 250.

Tip #12: Discuss “alarm-clock” signals with your partner.

UPGRADES

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Board 15
 South dealer ♠ K
 N-S vul ♥ A Q J 9 8 4 2
 ♦ J 8
 ♣ 10 6 4

West
 ♠ 10 8 3 2
 ♥ 10 7 6 3
 ♦ K Q 4 2
 ♣ 3

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

South
 ♠ 9 7 6 5
 ♥ —
 ♦ A 9 5
 ♣ A Q 8 7 5 2

South	West	North	East
Nunes	Soloway	Fantoni	Hamman
2 ♣	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

Opening lead: ♦ 7

After the diamond lead by Hamman, Fantoni lost one spade, two hearts, one diamond and one club, down two, -200.

South	West	North	East
Rodwell	Versace	Meckstroth	Lauria
2 ♣	pass	3 ♦*	pass
3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	(all pass)

*transfer to hearts

Here Meckstroth jump-transferred to hearts. So Rodwell with the void got to play it. He received the ♦ K lead, so he was also down two, a push board.

Tip #13: Don't open 10-point hands, even if you do have ace-queen, ace and a void. You may find yourself against the field with this tip, but my experience is that the light distributional opening bid loses more than it gains.

Board 16 turned out to be another push board. Nunes-Fantoni reached 4♠ down two on a 4-4 fit, while Meckstroth-Rodwell played 3♣ down two on a 6-2 fit. Once again, no one had a penalty double, so the championships ended on a somewhat "down 2 is good bridge" sort-of note. The Italian team, however, was on top, winning by 18 imps, their first Bermuda Bowl victory in 30 years. They've won several Olympiads and Rosenblum Cups but not the Bermuda Bowl. It was an exciting match down to the last few boards with lots of interesting lessons for the audience back home. Congratulations and *ciao*.

Scoreboard

Teams	Carry-over	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6	Set 7	Set 8	Total
ITALY USA	0 - 20	19 - 24	33 - 37	22 - 24	43 - 43	42 - 17	32 - 18	30 - 29	47 - 38	268 - 250



Being Ulf

by Anders Wirgren

I have three declarer play problems for you. In all of them, you are playing imps with an expert partner and expert defenders. Since the deals were all played in Sweden, you have to accept that the opening leads are third or fifth and the signals are upside-down.

1) North dealer, neither side vulnerable

	North
	♠ K 2
	♥ A 6 5 4
	♦ K J 8 7 2
	♣ J 5
♠ 10	
	South (you)
	♠ A J 5 3
	♥ J 10 9 8 7
	♦ 9
	♣ K 10 4

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♦	pass	1 ♥
pass	2 ♥	pass	2 ♠
pass	4 ♥	(all pass)	

You go up king in order to follow up with a spade to the jack and the ♠A to dispose of one of dummy's clubs before tackling trumps. (If West led from the queen, you'd be wrong, but this is unlikely after your 2♠ bid.) East follows with the ♠6 to the first trick, but on the second spade trick the queen comes from East. You win the ace. Now how do you continue?

2) North dealer, North-South vulnerable

	North
	♠ A Q 10 6 2
	♥ A 10
	♦ K 7 6
	♣ 6 5 4
♥K	
	South (you)
	♠ 8 7
	♥ 8
	♦ A J 10 5 3 2
	♣ A K 8 7

North opened the bidding with 1♠, you responded 2♦, and eventually you became declarer in 6♦. East-West have passed throughout, and West leads the ♥K. You win the ace, ruff the ♥10 and lead a spade up. When the king comes from West you win the ace. Play on!

3) South dealer, neither side vulnerable

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

♦8

South (you)
 ♠ A Q 10 9 2
 ♥ Q 6 5 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ A 9

As South, you opened 1♣, strong and artificial, got a natural and game-forcing 2♦ response, and later wound up in the slightly too optimistic contract of 6♠.

You win West's opening lead, East playing the 9, and take a successful heart finesse. Then you lead a trump from dummy, with the plan of finessing the queen, and if it wins, play ♠A, spade, to reduce the possibility of a diamond ruff. East foils that plan by playing the king, won by your ace. Do you still play trumps from the top?

Solutions

The common theme with these three deals is that my good friend Ulf Nilsson was a defender on each of them. Even though Ulf is one Sweden's most successful players of today, he doesn't play much bridge nowadays. The father of three small children means other things have higher priority.



Ulf Nilsson

Let's look at the full deals:

1) North dealer, neither side vulnerable

North
 ♠ K 2
 ♥ A 6 5 4
 ♦ K J 8 7 2
 ♣ J 5

West
 ♠ 10 9 8 4
 ♥ Q 2
 ♦ A 6 5
 ♣ A Q 9 6

East
 ♠ Q 7 6
 ♥ K 3
 ♦ Q 10 4 3
 ♣ 8 7 3 2

South
 ♠ A J 5 3
 ♥ J 10 9 8 7
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K 10 4

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♦	pass	1 ♥
pass	2 ♥	pass	2 ♠
pass	4 ♥	(all pass)	

West's opening lead of the ♠10 was won with the king, and on the second spade trick Ulf played the *queen*, the card he was known to hold. South could have succeeded by pitching a club on the ♠J, then guessing diamonds or establishing a club trick, but the sight of the ♠Q scared South into playing ♥A, heart — only to see the defenders take four tricks.

2) North dealer, North-South vulnerable

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

Here, South in 6♦ won the opening lead of the ♥K with the ace, ruffed the ♥10 and led a spade. With the favorable lie of the

defenders' cards (there are even 14 tricks on top), it's not easy to see this contract failing, but Ulf found a way to lead declarer astray.

Once again, he did so by playing second hand high and went up king, taken by the ace. That convinced declarer that spades weren't breaking, so he turned his attention to clubs instead. Had he cashed one high diamond at this point, everything would have been OK, but when he led three rounds of clubs before touching trumps, Ulf won the trick and played his last club, which declarer ruffed high to take a diamond finesse. . . .

Had Ulf played a low spade to the first spade trick, declarer would almost certainly go after spades instead, making his slam with an overtrick.

3) South dealer, neither side vulnerable

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

Against South's 6♠ contract, West's diamond lead was won in hand. The ♥J won the second trick, and a trump was led from dummy. Once again everything was lying favorably for declarer, and his plan of finessing the queen then playing ♠A, spade, would have been a winner. And running the spade would have led to an overtrick.

But when Ulf broke the rules and played second hand high again, South had strong enough trumps to cater to a 5-1 break, so he won the ace and played a low spade from hand. Imagine his chagrin when Ulf scooped up the jack and returned a diamond for West to ruff. . . .



The Wizards of Aus

Hands from Australian Tournaments

by Ron Klinger

I'm not sure if the following story is about Morpheic Resonance or not, but it happened in real life and at the time seemed like a coincidence. There were five boards to go in the 2004 Olympiad Open Teams match between Australia and Estonia. My team, Australia, was trailing 23 to 60. Then came three double figure swings in a row, all five-level decisions, that helped us close the gap.

Board 16
 West dealer
 E-W vul

North
 ♠ 9 6 5
 ♥ K 10 2
 ♦ 10 9 8
 ♣ J 10 5 2

West
 ♠ J 7
 ♥ Q
 ♦ K Q J 7 6 4 3
 ♣ Q 7 3

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

	<i>Hans</i>		<i>Nunn</i>	
West	North	East	South	
3 ♦	pass	pass	double	
pass	3 ♥	pass	4 ♥	
(all pass)				

Opening lead: ♦A

North had a tough problem in responding to the double.* The 3♥ choice worked

out well. East cashed the ♦A and switched to the ♣4, 8, queen. West returned a club to the king and ace. When the ♥Q fell on the first round of trumps, declarer had 10 tricks for +420. At the other table:

	<i>Neill</i>		<i>Klinger</i>	
West	North	East	South	
3 ♦	pass	3 NT	4 ♥	
4 NT	5 ♥	double	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♦K

My 3NT bid wasn't exactly solid. Against 5♥ doubled, I overtook the ♦K with the ace, cashed the ♠A and exited with a spade. Partner showed up with the ♣Q, so declarer had a club to lose for one down and 11 imps to our team.

It was unwise of North to bid 5♥ with only one visible trick. We were about to land in 5♦, which South would double, for a likely two-trick set. And if we foolishly played in 4NT, North would be equally happy after a heart lead from partner.

*an esoteric double — editor

Board 17
 North dealer ♠ 9 5
 None vul ♥ A 10 8 7 4 2
 ♦ A Q 5
 ♣ 8 3

West
 ♠ K J 10 7 6 3 2
 ♥ J
 ♦ 10
 ♣ A K 10 4

South
 ♠ A
 ♥ 3
 ♦ K J 7 4 3 2
 ♣ J 7 6 5 2

East
 ♠ Q 8 4
 ♥ K Q 9 6 5
 ♦ 9 8 6
 ♣ Q 9

Board 18
 East dealer ♠ A 7 5 2
 N-S vul ♥ Q 9
 ♦ —
 ♣ A Q 10 7 6 4 3

West
 ♠ 10 8 4
 ♥ A K 10 5
 ♦ K 9 8 6
 ♣ J 9

East
 ♠ K Q J 3
 ♥ 3
 ♦ Q J 7 5 4 3 2
 ♣ 5

South
 ♠ 9 6
 ♥ J 8 7 6 4 2
 ♦ A 10
 ♣ K 8 2

	<i>Hans</i>		<i>Nunn</i>	
West	North	East	South	
—	1 ♥	pass	2 ♦	
4 ♠	5 ♦	5 ♠	(all pass)	

Declarer had three aces to lose. N-S +50.

<i>Neill</i>	<i>Klinger</i>		
West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥	pass	1 NT
4 ♠	(all pass)		

East-West +420 and +10 imps to Australia. In the first auction, our teammates' two-over-one, not-forcing-to-game, style worked better than the 1NT forcing style. It was surely difficult for East to double 5♦. But once again the five level belonged to the opponents. In our auction, perhaps South could balance with 4NT, but does he have any safety?

Both East-Wests played in 5♦ doubled after North had shown clubs and South hearts. At one table, my teammate Tony Nunn (South) led the ♣2 and declarer lost three aces for -100. At my table the auction was unusual due to our system:

<i>Neill</i>	<i>Klinger</i>		
West	North	East	South
—	—	1 ♥ (1)	pass
1 ♠ (2)	2 ♣	pass (3)	2 ♥
3 ♦	3 ♥	5 ♦	double
(all pass)			

- (1) shows 4+ spades, unbal hand 10-17 points
- (2) artificial relay, 10+ points
- (3) The pass shows four or more diamonds.

Now North was on lead and started with the ♥Q. Away went the club loser for +550 and +12 imps to leave a final margin of 3 imps to Estonia.

Of course, I'm not showing all of our bad hands, because the point of this article was merely to show how the same theme, in this case five-level decisions, can suddenly come in a streak when you most want it or least expect it.



The Switch in Time Forum

by the Granovetters

Questions and answers based on the “obvious shift principle” and other defensive methods, discussed in the book “A Switch in Time”

Preview

East dealer	North (dummy)							
E-W vul	♠ A K 2							
	♥ 9 3							
	♦ Q 9 7 5 2							
	♣ A K 7							
		East (you)						
♠ 8		♠ J 9						
	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♥ J 8 6 5 2
W	N	E						
	S							
		♦ J 6						
		♣ Q 9 8 3						

West	North	East	South
—	—	pass	1 NT
pass	6 NT	(all pass)	

Opening lead: ♠8

You are East against strong opponents. The ♠2 is played from dummy, you play the ♠J, and declarer wins with the queen. At trick two, declarer plays a low diamond from his hand. Partner wins with the king, as you follow with the 6. Partner continues with a spade to dummy’s king.

At trick four, declarer plays a diamond to his ace, at trick five he plays a spade to dummy, on which you throw a heart. At trick six he cashes the ♦Q. You throw a low club, and declarer throws a low club. So far everything is easy.

At trick seven, declarer plays the ♥9 to the ace, and at trick eight he cashes the ♠10 (partner following), discarding a diamond from dummy. This is the position, before you discard:

	North (dummy)	
	♠ —	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 9	
	♣ A K 7	
		East (you)
		♠ —
		♥ J 8 6
		♦ —
		♣ Q 9 8



Your play.

Solution

Actually, this hand can be solved without obvious shift carding if you are playing against a good declarer. You have an easy heart discard. Why? Because if the layout is this ...

	North (dummy)	
	♠ A K 2	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ Q 9 7 5 2	
	♣ A K 7	
West		East (you)
♠ 8 7 6 3		♠ J 9
♥ 10 4		♥ J 8 6 5 2
♦ K 10 8 3		♦ J 6
♣ J 5 2		♣ Q 9 8 3
	South (declarer)	
	♠ Q 10 5 4	
	♥ A K Q 7	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ 10 6 4	

... the hand is cold even if you keep your hearts. If you throw a club on the fourth spade, declarer cashes the ♥K-Q to squeeze West:

	North (dummy)	
	♠ —	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 9	
	♣ A K 7	
West		East (you)
♠ —		♠ —
♥ 10		♥ J 8 6
♦ 10		♦ —
♣ J 5 2		♣ Q 9
	South	
	♠ —	
	♥ K Q 9	
	♦ —	
	♣ 10 6	



Therefore, you discard a heart, hoping the hand is (as it was in real life):

	North (dummy)	
	♠ A K 2	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ Q 9 7 5 2	
	♣ A K 7	
West		East (you)
♠ 8 7 6 3		♠ J 9
♥ 10 7 4		♥ J 8 6 5 2
♦ K 10 8 3		♦ J 6
♣ 5 2		♣ Q 9 8 3
	South (declarer)	
	♠ Q 10 5 4	
	♥ A K Q	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ J 10 6 4	

What does all this have to do with Switch in Time carding? The answer is that you don't really have to work so hard at the table or waste time on this hand if your partnership is using SIT methods. Against slams, or other situations where your side is known to have very little in the way of high-card points, you signal where your length is.

On this hand, West follows to the second-third-fourth spades with the 7-6-3, signaling length in hearts, the higher ranking side suit. If West had two hearts and three clubs, he would follow to the spades with the 3-6-7. If he had equal length he follows with the middle spade first.

A Happy, Healthy and Successful
New Year to everyone!
— Pamela and Matthew Granovetter