

WHITE HOUSE 7TH EUROPEAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONS' CUP



6-9 NOVEMBER 2008, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Friday, November 7th 2008. Bulletin no. 1

Editor: Jan van Cleeff, co-editors: Erik Kirchhoff, Peter Ventura. Text editor: Lex de Groot.

Lay-out editor: Margriet Jansze. Photographer: Elisabeth van Ettinger















Gianarrigo Rona

When the fog lifted in Amsterdam













For quite a while it was uncertain if the European Bridge Champions' Cup would start on time. But suddenly the fog in the Amsterdam area lifted and as a result, the planes carrying our foreign guests were able to land safely at Schiphol Airport. So, after the tournament opening address by EBL president Gianarrigo Rona the matches commenced at 4 p.m. sharp.

Twelve of Europe's strongest club teams will compete for gold, silver and bronze and - of course - the prize money. Favourite for the title is Parioli. The Romans have won the Cup four times already. But there are other strong candidates in this star-studded field.

round robin A

place	Click on team to see its results and members.	VP	 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	+/- VP
1	 T.C.P. ANGELINI B.T.	40			19	21			
2	 AVALANCHE BC	35				12	23		
3	 BRIDGECLUB STAR	30	11					19	
4	 BRIDGEFÉLAG REYKJAVÍKUR	27	9	18					
5	 HEIMDAL BC TRONDHEIM	26		7				19	
6	 FRANCE National Champion	22			11		11		

round robin B

place	Click on team to see its results and members.	VP	 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	+/- VP
1	 QUANTUM BC	39			24		15		
2	 A.B. SAN GIORGIO DEL SANNIO	32				15		17	
3	 BRIDGECLUB BAMBERGER REITER	31	6					25	
4	 THE WHITE HOUSE	31		15			16		
5	 STORSJÖBYGDENS BK	29	15			14			
6	 DENMARK National Champion	16		13	3				







round robin A

1	 HEIMDAL BC TRONDHEIM  BRIDGECLUB STAR
2	 T.C.P. ANGELINI B.T.  AVALANCHE BC
3	 BRIDGEFÉLAG REYKJAVÍKUR  FRANCE National Champion

round robin A

1	 BRIDGECLUB STAR  BRIDGEFÉLAG REYKJAVÍKUR
2	 FRANCE National Champion  AVALANCHE BC
3	 T.C.P. ANGELINI B.T.  HEIMDAL BC TRONDHEIM

round robin B

4	 QUANTUM BC  THE WHITE HOUSE
5	 BRIDGECLUB BAMBERGER REITER  A.B. SAN GIORGIO DEL SANNIO
6	 DENMARK National Champion  STORSJÖBYGDENS BK







round robin B

4	 DENMARK National Champion  THE WHITE HOUSE
5	 BRIDGECLUB BAMBERGER REITER  STORSJÖBYGDENS BK
6	 QUANTUM BC  A.B. SAN GIORGIO DEL SANNIO

round robin A

1	 AVALANCHE BC  BRIDGECLUB STAR
2	 BRIDGEFÉLAG REYKJAVÍKUR  HEIMDAL BC TRONDHEIM
3	 FRANCE National Champion  T.C.P. ANGELINI B.T.

round robin B

4	 THE WHITE HOUSE  BRIDGECLUB BAMBERGER REITER
5	 QUANTUM BC  DENMARK National Champion
6	 A.B. SAN GIORGIO DEL SANNIO  STORSJÖBYGDENS BK

Same old story?

The seventh edition of the European Bridge Champions' Cup is organised by the Dutch Bridge Federation and hosted by Bridge club Het Witte Huis (The White House) under the auspices of the European Bridge League. The venue is the White House club building in Amsterdam. The event is made possible through the sponsorship of Messrs. Max Abram and Herman Drenkelford. These two bridge lovers are also supporting several other bridge events and are all-important to top bridge in The Netherlands. Through the years, the formula of the championship has remained more or less the same. This year, eleven European national team champions plus The White House team are competing for the Cup. The round robin on Friday and Saturday consists of two groups of six teams. The semi finals and finals will be played on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. The Cup's history clearly reveals the dominant role of Italian bridge. Lorenzo Lauria and Alfredo Versace played each year. Their track record is impressive: they won five times out of six. And Tennis Club Parioli, Francesco Angelini's bridge club, is a four-time winner. The only time a non-Italian club was victorious, was in 2006 (in Rome!) when Germany's Bamberg took first prize. The Poles were the only team to do battle with the Italians in the finals twice. Like last year, for instance, when Politechnika Wroclaw lost the final against Parioli. Board 20 of the final's second segment saw the Italians chalk up an excellent result:



Max Abram



Herman Drenkelford

W/All

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Dubin</i>	<i>Angelini</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Versace</i>
1♠	dbl	pass	2♥
pass	2♠	pass	2SA
pass	3NT	all pass	

Once Dubin decided to open 1♠, the Italians had much room to explore and were never in trouble. The spade lead went to the Jack and Queen, so that Alfredo Versace could play clubs twice from his side. He comfortably scored ten tricks.

(deal repeated for convenience)

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

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
2♠	dbl	pass	3♥
pass	4♣	pass	5♣
all pass			

Deprived of one round of bidding, Balicki and Zmudzinski soon ran into trouble. Although 5♣ can be made double dummy, Balicki went two down when he elected to win East's spade lead with the Ace instead of ducking it to his Jack. The winning line is complicated and requires considerable foresight.

Let West win the first spade trick; he will switch to the ♦K. Win the Ace and play a heart to the Queen. Cash two high spades, pitching two diamonds, and lead a club. The best defence, which Nunes would undoubtedly find, is to rise with the ♣A and return a spade. Now Balicki should ruff high and cash the other top club, dropping the doubleton Jack to make the contract.



Claudio Nunes

And yes, there is another winning line. Win the ♠A at trick one and continue with the Queen. When West covers (transferring the spade guard to East), you ruff and play clubs from the top, then duck a diamond at an early stage, rectifying the count. In the ending East will be squeezed in hearts and spades. This transfer squeeze would have given Balicki a firm shot at the best played hand-of-the-year.

Previous results European Bridge Champions' Cup

2002: 1. Allegra, Turin, 2. Israel, 3. Norway

2003: 1. Parioli, Rome, 2. Herkules, Stockholm, 3. De Lombard, Rotterdam

2004: 1. Parioli, Rome, 2. Computerland, Wroclaw, 3. Allegra, Turin

2005: 1. Parioli, Rome, 2. Schaltz, Copenhagen, 3. Allegra, Turin

2006: 1. Bamberg, Germany, 2. De Lombard, Rotterdam, 3. Allegra, Turin

2007: 1. Parioli, Rome, 2. Politechnika Wroclaw, 3. Bamberger Reiter, Germany

Will it be the same old story? Tennis Club Parioli is once again present and the Romans are strong contenders for another gold medal. Last month, the players showed top form by winning the first World Mind Sports Games in Beijing.

L'HISTOIRE SE RÉPÈTE (ALMOST)

Last week, this deal was played on StepBridge, the Dutch internet bridge club.

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

West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	pass
1♥	pass	2♦	pass
2♠	pass	3♥	pass
4♥	all pass		

The heart game only requires a spade ruff in dummy. Easy - but was it? North led a *low* heart to the Jack and Ace. Declarer crossed to dummy's ♠A and finessed in trumps. On lead with the ♥Q, North returned a club to his partner's Ace, and South exited with his last trump. Suddenly 4♥ was in danger, the outcome depending on declarer's view in diamonds; a high diamond could provide a discard for the spade loser. In view of North's brilliant opening lead, declarer played him for the ♦A and thus went down.

The question still to be answered was, who was the North player that offered declarer a losing option? The genius making the trump lead was none other than Mr. Herman Drenkelford, co-sponsor of the 7th edition of the White House European Bridge Champions' Cup, together with Mr. Max Abram. Don't worry, dear visitors, Mr. Drenkelford is here only to support the Cup and shall not play.



Lorenzo Lauria

The deal strongly resembles one that made bridge history eight years ago. The declarer was Lorenzo Lauria, someone who certainly should be feared and who is playing here as a member of Tennis Club Parioli, Rome. Let's go back to the final of the Bridge Olympiad, Maastricht 2000, between Italy and Poland.

W/EW								
Brd. 16		♠ A 2						
		♥ A K 9 6						
		♦ Q 9 5 2						
		♣ K J 6						
♠ Q 8 6 3			N			♠ K J 10 5		
♥ J 2			W	E		♥ Q 3		
♦ 6 4 3			S			♦ A 10 8 7		
♣ 8 7 5 2						♣ A 9 3		
		♠ 9 7 4						
		♥ 10 8 7 5 4						
		♦ K J						
		♣ Q 10 4						

In the closed room Cesary Balicki opened the North hand with 1NT, which he was allowed to play. After a diamond lead he managed to make nine tricks. The other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Jassem</i>	<i>Lauria</i>	<i>Tuszynski</i>	<i>Versace</i>
pass	1NT	pass	2♦ ¹
pass	2NT ²	pass	3♦ ³
pass	3♥	pass	3NT
pass	4♥	all pass	

- 1) transfer
- 2) super-max
- 3) retransfer

Tuszynski got off to the sneaky ♥3 lead, and it seemed that Lauria might go wrong, playing West for Q J x in the suit.

He took the Jack with the Ace, played a diamond to the dummy and led another heart, going up with the King after some thought. When the queen dropped, Lauria had landed the game and a swing to Italy.

Lauria had good reason for playing the King on the second round of hearts. Expert players are reluctant to lead a singleton in the trump suit, especially against a likely 5-4 fit. Besides, the diamond Ten might drop in three rounds.

An interesting incident

The two Dutch teams playing in the Champions' Cup are Star and Het Witte Huis. Star from Utrecht (Willemsens-Brüggemann, Winkel-Kelder and Michielsen-Hop) is the Dutch reigning champion. Het Witte Huis from Amsterdam (Jansma-Paulissen, Schollaardt-Jacobs and Verhees-Van Prooijen) is the hosting bridge club. At the time when Star won the title (January 2008) Jan Jansma and Louk Verhees were still members of the team. After that they moved to Het Witte Huis, though playing with different partners.

Meanwhile, the new Dutch 'Meesterklasse' season has started. Het Witte Huis is doing fine. They are likely to qualify for the play-offs. Star, however, is having difficult times. Last Saturday an interesting incident occurred in the Meesterklasse, in the match between Star and Het Witte Huis:

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

Star's Henk Willemsens played 6♦ from the East seat. The slam looks cold, but was it? After a spade lead, declarer drew trumps in three rounds and showed his cards: "You get the #HA. I pitch two clubs on two high hearts. Dummy is high."



Maarten Schollaardt

North, Maarten Schollaardt, refused the claim. He stated that he could duck the ♥A twice! Then declarer, one entry short to utilize his hearts, is forced to attack the club suit. The percentage play is to first play a club to the nine. When the ten wins, the Queen might drop under the two remaining high clubs. With the actual layout this plan would have failed. The director concurred with Maarten's reasoning and had 6♦ scored as down one. Despite this disaster, Star still managed to win the match by 21-9 VPs.

Dull

When your editor sat down to watch the Danish Champions play against San Giorgio del Sannio from Italy (round robin I), Peter Fredin mentioned that I had missed two exciting boards already, board 3 and board 4. Peter Fredin? Yes, the Swede is a temporary member of the Danish team. Both boards had been passed out, rather dull, it seemed. Board 3 looked pretty normal, but the pass-out on board 4 was quite bizarre, as West had a balanced fifteen count. Later, it turned out that Carlo Magnani had overlooked an Ace. The same Carlo played an important role on this board as well:

West	North	East	South
<i>Magnani</i>	<i>Bruun</i>	<i>Fioretti</i>	<i>Fredin</i>
			pass
3♣	3♠	4♣	4♠
?			



Carlo Magnani

S/NS	♠ A K 9 8 4 2			
Brd. 15	♥ 2			
	♦ A 9 6 3			
	♣ 9 2			
♠ 7		N	♠ 5	
♥ A J		W	♥ K 7 6 4 3	E
♦ Q 8 2			♦ K 10 7 4	
♣ K J 10 8 6 4 3		S	♣ A Q 5	
	♠ Q J 10 6 3			
	♥ Q 10 9 8 5			
	♦ J 5			
	♣ 7			

West, who already had opened a rock-solid 3♣ - green against red – gave it another shot with 5♣, duly doubled by North and passed by the others. In a way, Matthias Bruun was right to double, since 4♠ is the maximum in North-South and in 5♣ it is unlikely that one plays to drop the ♦J. However, when North led his stiff heart, declarer had no difficulty at all making eleven tricks.

At the other table North-South played in 3♠, making ten tricks. After the match was over they were very happy to learn that they had won twelve IMPs on the board, winning the match by 17 VP.

For Dutch readers only

Op StepBridge bestaat vanaf dit kampioenschap de mogelijkheid tot het volgen van de Nederlandse topteams. Daartoe heeft de Nederlandstalige internetbridgeclub voor zijn leden een vugraph mode gecreëerd. Het programma kan worden gedownload vanaf www.stepbridge.nl. Tijdens deze zevende European Bridge Champions' Cup kunnen de fans zo live de verrichtingen volgen van landskampioen Star en gastheer Het Witte Huis. De wedstrijden worden van deskundig commentaar voorzien door de nationale top. Zo versloeg Huub Bertens de kraker tussen Parioli en Star.

Bulgarian Rhapsody

In a match flawlessly played by Bulgarians Victor Aronov and Yulian Stefanov, representing Quantum BC, against Entcho Wladow and Michael Elinescu, defending the colors of Germany, these boards drew my attention.

Rnd1 Brd10	♠ Q J 10		
E/All	♥ 6 5		
	♦ A 10 4		
	♣ K Q J 5 4		
♠ A 9 5 4 2	N	♠ -	
♥ 7 2	W	♥ K J 9 4	
♦ Q 8 7 5	E	♦ K J 9 3 2	
♣ A 8	S	♣ 10 9 7 2	
		♠ K 8 7 6 3	
		♥ A Q 10 8 3	
		♦ 6	
		♣ 6 3	

West	North	East	South
<i>Elinescu</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Wladow</i>	<i>Aronov</i>
		pass	2♥*
pass	2♠	3♦	pass
4♦	all pass		

At this vulnerability Entcho Wladow took a very optimistic view when he bid 3♦. Of course, he was somewhat protected as Stefanov had not shown a very strong hand and by the fact that he was a passed hand, so that further action by partner seemed not very likely. Still, Elinescu bid a quite reasonable 4♦, ending the bidding. Victor Aronov surveyed the auction and concluded he had to reduce ruffs to have a chance defeating the contract. He led his singleton trump and received his reward soon enough. The first trick was for dummy's eight and Wladow tried a club. Aronov won the Jack of clubs and fired back Ace of diamonds and another diamond. After that start Aronov still had to defend carefully, throwing a heart and a club. After that blistering start Wladow tried some heart finesses, to no avail, and was glad he had not been doubled. Minus 300 was

good for a modest loss of 4 IMPs against 3♠ making at the other table.

Board 17 showed another skilfull defence by the Bulgarians.

Rnd 1 Brd 17	♠ A 6 5		
N/None	♥ -		
	♦ K J 8 6 5		
	♣ K 9 6 4 2		
♠ K 8 3	N	♠ Q J 10 7 4 2	
♥ A K 9 7	W	♥ Q 10 8 6	
♦ Q 9 7 2	E	♦ 4	
♣ Q 10	S	♣ A 7	
		♠ 9	
		♥ J 5 4 3 2	
		♦ A 10 3	
		♣ J 8 5 3	

West	North	East	South
<i>Elinescu</i>	<i>Stefanov</i>	<i>Wladow</i>	<i>Aronov</i>
	1♦*	1♠	dbl
rdbl	2♣	2♠	3♣
4♠	dbl	all pass	

Stefanov took the right view by leading the ♥5!! This was obviously a Lavinthal signal because he knew that partner would probably ruff it. Indeed, Aronov ruffed with the ♠5 but instead of obeying partner he shrewdly shifted to the ♣9. Probably Entchow Wladow should have gone right here, but apparently he was afraid that Aronov was 4-0-5-4 and fearing a zillion ruffs he went up with the Ace and started on trumps. The rest wasn't that difficult. Victor Aronov took the Ace, cashed the King of clubs and played the Jack of diamonds, to Stefanov's Ace, who gave his partner a second ruff for down two. Aronov knew of course what he was doing at trick two. He himself had the Ace of spades, so the second heart ruff could not vanish. By putting maximum pressure on Wladow, he squeezed out five extra IMPs. The match ended with a superb 49-4 win for the Bulgarians.

Squeeze, finesse or drop?

In the second match of the round robin it was Star, the Dutch national champions, versus Parioli, the reigning European champions. On board 5 it seemed that Lauria-Versace had missed a game:

N/NS	♠ Q 4			
Brd. 5	♥ 7 4 3			
	♦ A K 9 5			
	♣ A Q 7 5			
♠ J 6		N	♠ A 10 8 7 3	
♥ A Q		W	♥ 9 6 2	
♦ 10 6 4 3		E	♦ J 8 7	
♣ K 10 9 6 3		S	♣ J 4	
	♠ K 9 5 2			
	♥ K J 10 8 5			
	♦ Q 2			
	♣ 8 2			

West	North	East	South
<i>Nunes</i>	<i>Kelder</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Winkel</i>
	1NT	pass	2♦ ¹
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	4♥	all pass	

1) transfer

Fulvio Fantoni kicked off with a trump to the King and Ace. Claudio Nunes cashed the ♥Q and switched to the ♣10. The match was broadcast on StepBridge vugraph, the Dutch internet bridge club. Commentator Huub Bertens predicted the

way the play would go. Declarer would finesse in clubs and continue with the ♠Q, for East's Ace. Declarer would win the heart return, cash the ♣A and ruff a club, cash the ♠K and play his last trump. That way, West must surrender. He would be squeezed in the minors.



Hans Kelder

Hans Kelder played differently. Okay, he finessed the ♣Q, but then entered his hand with the ♦Q and led a spade to the Queen. East did win and returned his last trump. At this point Kelder cashed the ♣A, ruffed a club and advanced his last trump, pitching a club from dummy. Now his squeeze was gone. He cashed his two remaining high diamonds and when J and 10 failed to drop, he had to fall back on the spade suit. He led a spade from dummy and saw East follow with the eight. Kelder thought for a while. Should he cash out in spades or finesse the nine? He opted for the latter and made his game. Final words to Huub Bertens: "He did it the hard way."

Round Robin 1 – Heimdal BC Trondheim v Avalanche BC

Behind the favourite team, Tennis Club Parioli, with four previous titles in the Champions' Cup, both the Norwegian and the Russian teams are likely to be contenders in the race for the qualifying spots. This bulletin editor therefore sat down to watch Heimdal BC Trondheim (Norway) play against Avalanche BC (Russia). I followed Andrey Gromov and Alexander Dubinin's bout with Terje Aa and Jon-Egil Furunes in the Closed Room.

On Board 4 the Norwegians defended nicely.

Board 4. W/All.

<p>♠ A J 4 ♥ 8 7 3 2 ♦ A K 10 4 ♣ K 4</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ K J 10 9 5 ♦ 8 5 ♣ J 10</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 5 3 2 ♥ Q ♦ 9 6 3 2 ♣ A 6 5</p>
<p>♠ 6 ♥ A 6 4 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ Q 9 8 7 3 2</p>			

Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Furunes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
1NT	Pass	2♥*	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
All Pass			

*transfer

Despite the bad spade break East-West were likely to make eight tricks in spades. All vulnerable, would you have reopened in the pass-out seat? Anyway, Dubinin did.

Furunes led the Ace of diamonds, and then switched to a heart. Declarer won and played a spade towards dummy, but West hopped up with the Ace, and was able to give his partner a heart ruff. West came back in diamonds, thus East could ruff another heart. The defence scored two more trump tricks for down three; North-South - 300.

Open Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponoma reva</i>	<i>Saelens minde</i>	<i>Gromova</i>	<i>Austberg</i>
1 NT	2♣	pass	2♥
all pass			

In the Open Room Austberg took eight tricks in comfort, but that was 9 IMPs to Russia.

Not much really happened on the next 12 boards. The score stood at 27-25 IMPs in the Norwegians' favour after 16 boards. Then the fireworks began...

Board 17. N/None.

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

Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Furunes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Dubinin</i>
	1♦	1♠	Dble
2♦*	3♣	3♠	Pass
4♠	Dble	Pass	5♣
Dble	All Pass		

Gromov bid aggressively, which led to a sensible game in clubs. I sympathize with the optional double at the third turn.

Aa led his singleton diamond to the three, nine and jack. Declarer cashed the spade ace, ruffed a spade, and then played a trump to the king. East

could win the ace, but the defense could only take one more trick; N/S +550.

I doubt declarer would have succeeded on a different opening lead.

Open Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponomareva</i>	<i>Saelensminde</i>	<i>Gromova</i>	<i>Austberg</i>
	1♦	1♠	2♣*
2♦*	pass	2♠	pass
3♠	pass	4♠	all pass

This could have been a huge swing for the Russians, since E/W were left to play in Four Spades in the Open Room. Austberg held the flow of IMPs down when he led a heart. North was able to ruff the lead, and eventually declarer was one down, but yet 11 IMPs to Avalanche BC.

In the match between The White House (Netherlands) and Storsjöbygdens BK (Sweden) the Swedes sitting E/W managed to avoid playing game in spades. North opened One Diamond, East came in One Heart (showing exactly a four card suit) and West rose to game in hearts. The contract was made by Leif Ruthstrom in a quite funny fashion.

South led his singleton spade, but North could not believe that East had as many as six spades, thus he played low, and declarer was allowed to take the trick in hand. The contract seemed glorious at first sight, but at trick two the bad news were revealed, when declarer drew one round of trumps. Next came a spade from dummy, North won the ace and gave his partner a spade ruff. South correctly played a trump to declarer's *ten*. A diamond was played towards dummy and when South erred by playing low (South must win the ace and clear trumps) North won the trick with the king. This was the ending:

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

♠ ---
 ♥ J 5
 ♦ A
 ♣ J 8 5 3

North did not have any trumps to play, so he tried a diamond. Declarer ruffed with the *queen* of trumps, and then played the trump eight to dummy's nine. The trump king drew South's last trump and a club loser could be pitched in hand. At this point the hand had only winning cards – contract just made.

At the other table the Swedes on a diamond lead made eleven tricks in Five Clubs doubled and that was worth 14 IMPs for them.

On Board 18 E/W could make Seven Hearts, when a losing diamond could be discarded on the fifth spade. How would our pairs approach that bidding challenge?

Board 18. E/N-S.

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

Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Furunes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Dubinina</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Furunes did not believe Aa to have AK in hearts and clubs and therefore passed over Four Hearts. But what on earth could partner have when he cuebids? No points for fantasy, Furenes.

At the other table the Russians did not have any problems reaching slam:

Open
Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponoma reva</i>	<i>Saelens minde</i>	<i>Gromo va</i>	<i>Austberg</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♦*	Pass	5♣*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

South led a diamond to North's ace and back came the jack of spades to queen and king. Another spade was won by North, who exited with a diamond, which was won by East. Declarer played a club from hand, but South hopped up with the king, and then forced dummy to ruff a spade. Now dummy was down to equal trump length as North. A club from dummy was won by South's ace and one more spade was ruffed in dummy. Declarer tried to cash the queen of clubs, but North ruffed, knocked out dummy's last trump by cashing the jack, and then played a heart. The defense also had to have two heart tricks. When the smoke had cleared declarer was down five (!); N/S +1400.

Board 19. S/E-W.

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

Closed Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Furunes</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
			1NT
pass	2♣	2♥	pass
pass	dbl	pass	pass
2 NT	dbl	pass	pass
rdbl	pass	3♦	pass
pass	dbl	all pass	

Furunes acephalous overcall was the start of a bloody affair. Gromov doubled Two Hearts and Dubinin did well by passing. Furunes tried to escape but N/S showed no mercy, doubling Three Diamonds as well.

Open Room:

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponoma reva</i>	<i>Saelen sminde</i>	<i>Gromov a</i>	<i>Austberg</i>
			1NT
pass	2NT	pass	3♣
pass	3♠	pass	3NT
all pass			

The auction developed more quietly in the Open Room, N/S reaching Three Notrumps. West led a club and East's jack hold the first trick. Back came another club, won by declarer's king. The king of spades was cashed, followed by a losing spade finesse. East exited with a spade, and West pitched a diamond. Declarer had only eight tricks, but after cashing the winning spade he asked for a diamond from dummy. East won the trick and when another diamond came back declarer could claim nine tricks. That was N/S +400 but still 14 IMPs to Avalanche BC thanks to the 1400 from the Closed Room.

Avalanche BC spurt best and won the match by 66 IMPs to 26, 23-7 converted to VPs. That was a very good start for them. Meanwhile the Norwegians have to struggle to reach a semi final spot.



BULGARIA, QUANTUM; NANEV, Ivan, pc; VASSILEV, Ilia; STEFSANOV, Yulian; ARONOV, Victor; MIHOV, Vladimir; GUNEV, Rossen



DENMARK'S NATIONAL CHAMPION ; BLAKSET, Lars, pc; BLAKSET, Knut; ADAMSEN, Klaus; BRUUN, Mathias; FREDIN, Peter



FRANCE'S; NATIONAL CHAMPION; SALAMA, Maurice, pc; CHEMLA, Paul; LEBEL, Michel; MEYER, Jean-Paul



GERMANY; BC BAMBERGER REITER: GROMOELLER, Michael pc; KIRMSE, Andreas; ELINESCU, Michael; WLADOW, Entschö; PIEKAREK, Josef; SMIRNOV, Alexander



ICELAND; BRIDGEFELAG REYKAVIKUR: BALDURSSON, Jon, pc; JONSSON, Thorlakur; ARMANNSSON, Sverrir; JORGENSEN, Adalsteinn; EINARSSON, Bjarni



ITALY; ANGELINI B.T. T.C.P: ANGELINI Francesco; LAURIA, Lorenzo; FANTONI, Fulvio; NUNES, Claudio; VERSACE, Alfredo; BOVE, Ercole, pc



ITALY; A.B. SAN GIORGIO DEL SANNIO: FIORETTI, Francesco; MAGNANI, Carlo; PIZZA, Ettore; SELVAGGI, Giambattista; CUCCORESE, Claudio; CUCCORESE, Antonio; SIMEOLI, Carlo, npc



NETHERLANDS; BRIDGECLUB STAR: WILLEMSSENS, Henk, pc; MICHELSEN, Marion; HOP, Jacco; KELDER, Hans; WINKEL, Marcel; BRUGGEMANN, Remco



NETHERLANDS; THE WHITE HOUSE DE BOER, Wubbo, npc; SCHOLLAARDT, Maarten; JACOBS, Leon; VERHEES, Louk; VAN PROOIJEN, Ricco; JANSMA, Jan; PAULISSEN, Gert-Jan



NORWAY; A HEIMDAL BC, TRONDHEIM: AA, Terje, pc; AUSTBERG, Per Erik; SÆLENSMINDE, Erik; LUND, Børre; FURUNES, Jon-Egil



RUSSIA; AVALANCHE; GROMOV, Andrey, pc; GROMOVA, Victoria; DUBININ, Alexander; PONOMAREVA, Tatiana



SWEDEN; STORSJÖBYGDENS BK: ELMROTH, Gunnar, pc; TRAPP, Leif; AXNE; Olle; RUTHSTRÖM, Leif; WALKER, Rob; OLOFSSON, BG