



3rd TRANSATLANTIC SENIORS CUP

Julian Klukowski Memorial Trophy

Jan. 23rd - Feb. 9th 2023



PREBULLETIN

Thursday, January 4th. 2023

Editors: Mark Horton, Marek Wójcicki

Dear Friends

We wish everybody all the best in New Year 2023.

Playing from home has some advantages. Taking into account that face-to face play returned, we left all weekend days free, and once again we would like to invite everybody to the Transatlantic Seniors Cup.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Those, who have already registered, are asked to complete all data, and send convention cards. It should be sent to TD Aleksander Krych, e-mail aleksander.krych@pzbs.pl

We still remind that number of players at the team is limited to 12 and we do not play any Friday, Saturday nor Sunday, so most live games can be played during TSC.

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FORMER MEDALISTS

2021

1. TURKEY

Nafiz Zorlu, Mesut Karadeniz, Namik Kokten, Hu-seyin Avcioglu, Mehmet Copur, A.Orhan Ekinci, Mehmet Ali Ince

2. TEAM LEVINE

Bob Morris, Eddie Wold, Martk Lair, Mike Levine, Jeff Meckstroth, Mike Passell, Eric Rodwell

3. ITALY

Andrea Buratti, Amadeo Comella, Giuseppe Failla, Sergio Freddio, Virgilio Gagliardi, Franco Garbosi, Gianpaolo Guermani, Bernardo Mancini, Aldo Mina, Ruggero Pulga, Stefano Sabbatini, Paolo Uggeri

2022

1. LITHUANIA:

Vytautas Vainikonis, Wojtek Olański, Apolinary Kowalski, Jacek Romański, Jonas Drobulis, Marek Wittek, Bogusław Gierulski, Jerzy Russyan

2.USA LUSKY:

John Lusky, Alan Falk, Jeff Aker, Frank merblum, Barry Rigal, Glenn Milgrim, Doug Doub, Drew Casen, Jim Krekorian

3.POLAND MARKOWICZ:

Wiktor Markowicz, Krzysztof Moszczyński, Michał kwiecień, Włodzimierz Starkowski, Piotr Bizoń, Marek Błat

Website of the tournament:

<https://r.pzbs.pl/2023/tsc/web/>

TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

QUALIFICATION (all times are p.m.)

Mon. 23 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #1 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #2 (10 bds.)
Tue. 24 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #3 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #4 (10 bds.)
Wed, 25 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #5 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #6 (10 bds.)
Thu. 26 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #7 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #8 (10 bds.)
Mon. 30 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #9 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. 10 (10 bds.)
Tue 31 Jan.	7.30 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #11 (10 bds.) 9.15 CET Qual. Swiss Rd. #12 (10 bds.)

PLAY OFF AND 3RD PLACE SWISS

(all times are p.m.)

Wed 1 Feb.	6.30 CET Round of 16 (3x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #1 (20 bds.)
Thu 2 Feb.	6.30 CET Quarterfinal (3x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #2 (20 bds.)
Mon 6 Feb.	8.00 CET Semifinal 1st half (2x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #3 (20 bds.)
Tue. 7 Feb.	8.00 CET Semifinal 2nd half (2x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #4 (20 bds.)
Wed. 8 Feb.	8.00 CET Final 1st half (2x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #5 (20 bds.)
Thu. 9 Feb.	8.00 CET Final 2nd half (2x10 bds.) 8.00 CET Bronze-medal Swiss #6 (20 bds.)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Here is the information about entry fee payment:

Address of the PBU:

Polski Związek Brydża Sportowego
00-019 Warszawa, ul. Złota 7/3.

Account for EURO payments (300 €):

SWIFT/BIC: PKOPPLPW
IBAN: PL23 1240 1040 1978 0011 0130 8604

Payment of:

Entry fee to the Transatlantic Seniors Cup.

Account for USD payments (300 \$):

SWIFT/BIC: PKOPPLPW
IBAN: PL 31 1240 1040 1787 0010 9967 8419

Payment of:

Entry fee to the Transatlantic Seniors Cup.

DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT IS JAN. 17th, 2023.

Please be advised that the above accounts are in

euro and US dollars respectively, not in the Polish currency!

Wire transfers in any other currency will result in double currency conversion costs to be deducted from the amount transferred, which can make your exact fee insufficient.

IMPORTANT: Our bank only accepts conventional wire transfers. No credit card payments or on-line payments are supported.

The wire transfer should be sent by the sender's bank directly to our bank with the OUR cost option. Only this option is a guarantee that the recipient will receive the entire amount sent by the sender.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us by:

email: beata.madej@pzbs.pl

phone: +48 511 425 060

SENIOR AT YOUR SERVICE

Mark Horton

Mark Horton looks back at the 2022 edition of the Transatlantic Seniors Cup.

The event, organised by the Polish Bridge Union, was in memory of Julian Klukowski, one of their most successful senior players. It attracted a formidable field of 36 teams from all over the world, contesting a 10 round Swiss after which the top 16 advanced to the knock-out phase.

If my calculations are correct, 18 World Champions took part in the Transatlantic Seniors Cup. Canadians Boris Baran & George Mittelman, Poland's Michał Kwiecień, Victor Markewicz, Krzysztof Moszczyński, Włodzimierz Starkowski, Apolinary Kowalski & Jacek Romanski, France's Alain Levy, Philippe Cronier, Michel and Véronique Bessis, Sweden's Anders Morath, England's Paul Hackett, John Holland & Gunnar Hallberg, Scotland's Liz McGowan and Germany's Jochen Bitschene. Adding the names of the players who won European and National titles and world championship medals would just about encompass the entire field.

Let the Games Begin

Readers with long memories might recall that in previous editions of the Transatlantic Seniors Cup teams representing England and Sweden also clashed in the opening round. In 2021 Sweden managed a demolition job, winning by 60 IMPs. Marek thought it would be a good place to start – and his instinct did not let him down.

Board 1 North/None	♠ 32 ♥ K97654 ♦ 6532 ♣ Q										
♠ Q86 ♥ QJ108 ♦ K1074 ♣ 83	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AK94 ♥ – ♦ A9 ♣ K1097652
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J1075 ♥ A32 ♦ QJ8 ♣ AJ4										

Open Room

W Mould	N Nilslund	E Hyett	S Fallenius
	2♦*	3♣*	3♥*
pass	pas	dble	all pass

2♦ – Weak major (5+) or strong ♦/NT;

3♥ – Pass or correct.

It is generally considered to be the case that the players like to have an opportunity to settle in, perhaps starting with one or two deals that are not too testing. The same is true for commentators and journalists, but as you can see the opening board was not straightforward.

Whilst the majority were prepared to open the North hand 2♦ or 2♥, there were several votes for a pass. In the match between Israel and USA Greenspan Dani Cohen and Yosi Engel were one of a select few to bid game: after 1♣-(Dble)-INT-(2♥)-5♣ South's double saw them score +550 and collect 12 IMPs against the failing 3NT (doubled) that was reached in the other room.

Far be it for me to criticize, but I have never been a fan of making a takeout double with a balanced hand (and here you are facing a passed partner). 10 players were happy to double, only three being content to go quietly.

East's overcall was automatic but what about South's 3♥ and the re-opening double?

It looks obvious to bid 3♥ when you are more or less sure of a nine-card and it was the choice of 14 players. Scotland White's Roy Bennet was the only player to pass – and that led to a gain of 8 IMPs when 3♣ was passed out while NS were three down in 4♥ doubled in the other room.

East's re-opening double was not the popular choice, the majority favouring 3♠.

However, very few pairs reached 5♣.

Defending 3♥ doubled West led the ♣8 and declarer won with the ace, pitched a spade on the ♣J and exited with the ♠J. West won and returned the ♠8, declarer ruffing in dummy and playing a diamond. East took the ace and exited with the nine, West winning

and, seeing no danger, continuing with the $\diamond 7$. When East could not ruff declarer won, ruffed a spade, ruffed a diamond and played the $\clubsuit 4$. West, down to $\heartsuit QJ108$ discovered he could score only one trump trick, as when he ruffed with the $\heartsuit J$ declarer under-ruffed with dummy's six for a dramatic +530.

To avoid this grizzly fate West must exit with his remaining spade. Declarer can ruff in dummy and come to hand with a diamond, but when he ruffs another spade West disposes of his last diamond ensuring one down.

East would have been better to exit with a black card after taking the $\diamond A$, but as is often the case the biggest mistake came at trick one. If East withholds the $\clubsuit K$ declarer has no way to secure more than seven tricks.

That's only half a deal and I was already exhausted!
Closed Room

W Sellden	N Holland	E Wenneberg	S Hallberg
	2 \heartsuit *	3 \clubsuit	3 \heartsuit
pass	pas	3 \spadesuit	pass
3NT	pass	pass	dble
all pass			

2 \heartsuit – weak.

If North leads a heart 3NT will make in a canter (that happened 5 times) but when North started with the $\diamond 5$ the defenders were one step ahead. Declarer won with the king and played a club for the queen, king and four, South winning the next club and returning the $\heartsuit 2$ for the queen and king. North played back a second diamond and the defenders were assured of five tricks, -100 and 10 IMPs.

This time Sweden won 33-15.

The Right Stuff

Over the last few years, I have penned the odd article revolving around how the eventual development of the engine Alpha Zero may change bridge forever. One of the things it is sure to do is be hyper-active in the auction, especially in the vital area of defensive bidding.

This deal from Round 5 would be tailor-made for the machine:

Board 18 East/NS	\spadesuit Q95	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>\spadesuit –</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\heartsuit J</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\diamond AK107632</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\clubsuit 107542</td> </tr> </table>	\spadesuit –	\heartsuit J	\diamond AK107632	\clubsuit 107542
	\spadesuit –					
\heartsuit J						
\diamond AK107632						
\clubsuit 107542						
\heartsuit 752	\heartsuit Q986					
\diamond Q94	\diamond J5					
\clubsuit K83	\clubsuit QJ96					
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>S</td> </tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	
N	E					
W	S					
	\spadesuit AK10642					
	\heartsuit AK1043					
	\diamond 8					
	\clubsuit A					

With only one major-suit card East certainly wants to be involved in the auction, but what's the best approach? It might be nice to be able to open 2NT to show both minors, but there is a huge disparity between the two suits, and you also telegraph your hand to a certain extent. There is also a risk that you might end up in the wrong suit if you get involved in a highly contested auction. Two players were able to open 2NT. There was also two votes for an initial pass, although it flies in the face of the old adage 'twice armed is he who's cause is just, but thrice armed he who gets his blow in first'. Aside from the player who could open 3NT the remainder were choosing between 3 \diamond (13 votes), 4 \diamond 7 votes and 5 \diamond 9 votes.

Given that you expect NS to get to 6 \heartsuit should East double if West is on lead, or double and lead a diamond (perhaps the ten or seven) or just lead diamond without doubling. At the only table where 6 \heartsuit was doubled South was declarer having doubled 3 \diamond , bid 5 \spadesuit on the next round and then 6 \heartsuit on the round after that. West did not lead a spade. The other 10 pairs who bid 6 \heartsuit all made it.

One South bid 6 \diamond over East's 5 \diamond opener and then went on to 7 \heartsuit after West's raise. East doubled and Belgium's Zvi Engel led the $\spadesuit 8$ for -500.

I initially spotted the deal while watching two of the all-time greats, Canada's Eric Kokish and Joey Silver.

Open Room

W Urseanu	N Daigneault	E Savin	S Baran
		2NT*	3 \diamond *
4 \clubsuit	4 \heartsuit	5 \clubsuit	6 \heartsuit
all pass			

2NT – '2 minors, constructive, 12 HCP'

3 \diamond – Major focus on spades.

With no knowledge of the diamond fit East led the $\diamond A$ and declarer recorded a painless +1430.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kokish	Matei	Silver	Gliga
		4 \diamond	5 \diamond
6 \clubsuit	dbles	pass	6 \heartsuit
pass	pass	7 \clubsuit	dbles
7 \diamond	dbles	all pass	

West's 6 \clubsuit is a terrific bid, of a type that is often overlooked (where 4 \diamond was the opening bid no-one else though of bidding clubs). It can help partner in the bidding or the defence. When South bid 6 \heartsuit over North's double it was clear he held an exceptional hand but it was also clear that the decision as to what to do over it should rest with East. He may have been tempted to double, but that would require West to find a spade lead and for the defenders to be able to score a second trick. It was also possible that NS might be able to retreat to 6 \spadesuit . It was highly likely that 6 \clubsuit was based on a hand with diamond support in which case 7 \clubsuit had to be cheap. West converted to 7 \diamond and lost a heart, a club and a club ruff for -500 – less than the value of a vulnerable game.

It was a brilliant exhibition of defensive bidding that brought in 14 IMPs.

Danger UXB

Not appreciating that different deals would be used in every match I told Marek that I would keep an eye on the matches involving the two English teams. In the one between Lithuania and England Pryor the deals were explosive – it was like walking through a minefield.

Board 2 East/NS	\spadesuit AK94 \heartsuit 84 \diamond Q3 \clubsuit KQ873										
\spadesuit 5 \heartsuit KQ2 \diamond K97542 \clubsuit J95	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		\spadesuit 1083 \heartsuit AJ109753 \diamond 1086 \clubsuit –
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	\spadesuit QJ762 \heartsuit 6 \diamond AJ \clubsuit A10642										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Cliffe	Romański	Ward	Kowalski
		3 \heartsuit	3 \spadesuit
5 \heartsuit	6 \spadesuit	dbles	all pass

I have a vague memory that Bobby Wolff was once involved in a similar deal to this one where in response to partner's Lightner double the answer was to lead from a three-card suit. From West's point of view partner was much more likely to be void in diamonds and he led the $\diamond 7$ which resulted in a quick claim and +1660.

If West had risked leading the $\heartsuit K$ East's three would have been a pointer to the right continuation and -500.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olanski	Kendrick	Vainikonis	Pryor
		3 \heartsuit	3 \spadesuit
4 \heartsuit	5 \heartsuit	pass	5 \spadesuit
pass	pass	dbles	all pass

- 2 \clubsuit – Game forcing or 22-23 balanced;
- 2 \diamond – Relay;
- 4 \clubsuit – Cue-bid.

Here West led the $\heartsuit 9$, so the damage was only +1050 – and the swing was 12 IMPs.

Board 12 West/NS	\spadesuit Q10752 \heartsuit 5 \diamond 5 \clubsuit AQJ963										
\spadesuit J98 \heartsuit KQ10986 \diamond K87 \clubsuit K	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		\spadesuit – \heartsuit A \diamond AQJ9432 \clubsuit 108754
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	\spadesuit AK643 \heartsuit J7432 \diamond 106 \clubsuit 2										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Cliffe	Romański	Ward	Kowalski
1 \heartsuit	2 \heartsuit *	3 \diamond	4 \spadesuit
pass	pass	5 \clubsuit	dbles
5 \diamond	5 \spadesuit	pass	pass
dbles	all pass		

2♥ – Spades and a minor

West led the ♣K and declarer won with dummy's ace, drew trumps ending in dummy and pitched two diamonds on the top clubs, +850. Would it have helped if East had bid 4NT over 4♠?

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olanski	Kendrick	Vainikonis	Pryor
1♥	1♥*	5♦	5♠
pass	pass	6♦	pass
pass	dbl	all pass	

South led the ♣2 and North won and switched to the ♠5. Declarer ruffed, ruffed a club, ruffed a spade and cashed the ♦J. He unblocked the ♥A, ruffed a club and pitched two clubs on the top hearts, +1090 and an 18 IMP swing.

On the Edge

With the end of the qualifying contest in sight it was time to focus on the battle to avoid 'relegation'. In Round 8 the draw brought together two teams I had predicted would be major contenders, Canada McGill and Sweden who were languishing in 19th and 20th position. A big win for one of them would renew their hopes, at the same time almost certainly condemning the losers to the third place Swiss.

Both teams fielded some of their biggest guns.

Board 11 South/None	♠ Q65	
	♥ AJ532	
	♦ 9	
	♣ K1043	
♠ A107	N W S E	♠ K832
♥ 1074		♥ KQ98
♦ A832		♦ J6
♣ 762		♣ AQ8
	♠ J94	
	♥ 6	
	♦ KQ10754	
	♣ J95	

Open room

W	N	E	S
Fallenius	Silver	Nilsland	Kokish
			2♦
pass	pass	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣*	pass
3NT	all pass		

East was not sure about the meaning of his 3♣ bid – clearly he was hoping it was Staymanic.

North led the ♦9 and it was covered in turn by the jack, queen and ace. A heart to the king was followed by the ♠2 for the nine, ten and queen and North returned the ♥3. Declarer put up dummy's queen and unblocked the ten when South discarded the ♦4. A spade to the ace and a club to the queen were followed by two more spades, but declarer was out of ammunition and finished one down, -50.

It's worth noting South's play of the ♠9. If he plays the four, declarer can put in the seven. We'll see why that is important in a moment.

As the play went, after taking the ♠Q North must leave the heart suit alone, as if declarer plays low from dummy he will secure nine tricks. After a risky club switch declarer can win with dummy's queen and play a spade, but South goes up with the jack, forcing declarer to win with the ace. When he continues with the ♥10 North must rise with the ace and with no entry to hand declarer will be a trick short. It's safer for North to return a spade rather than a club. However, if South does not put in the ♠9 on the first round of the suit declarer will have an extra entry to hand in spades.

Declarer can avoid this issue by playing dummy's ♠8 at trick three, intending to run it. That way he preserves two entries to hand (now it does not help South to cover with the nine).

You might like to consider how the play might go if South had been dealt the ♠QJ9. Then he could put up an honour on the first round of spades and assuming West wins and plays the ♥10 North can win with the ace and return a spade.

Declarer can avoid all problems by playing a heart to the eight at trick two, which is by no means impossible. (The six declarers who made 3NT all played hearts in this fashion.)

By the way, if declarer ducks the first round of diamonds South has the opportunity to find a club switch (not an easy play to find).

Closed Room

W Kirr	N Berntsson	E Carruthers	S Wegnelius
pass	1♥*	1NT	pas
dbl.	all pass		2♦*

- 1♥ – 11-15, 5+♥
- 2♦ – Non-forcing
- 2♦ – ‘Undiscussed, penalty for me’

West led the ♣2 and East won with the queen and switched to the ♦J for the king and ace. The ♥4 saw declarer take dummy’s ace, ruff a heart and cash the ♦Q. The ♣J was overtaken by dummy’s king and when that held declarer ruffed a heart and exited with the ♣9, East taking the ace and returning the ♥Q. Declarer ruffed with the ♦7 and West overruffed and exited with the ♦3 to declarer’s ten, East discarding the ♠8.

Everyone was down to three spades and when declarer played a spade to the queen he was two down, -300 and 8 IMPs worse off.

If declarer guesses to exit with the ♠J he saves a trick.

Classical Movies

Our grandchildren like to have a movie night where they can enjoy pizza and popcorn while watching a film. Their current favourites are Nanny McPhee and The Lion King. I am always happy viewing a classic along with a decent bottle of Bordeaux and the other night I watched Darkest Hour. During the film one of the actors quotes from Macaulay’s Horatius at the Bridge:

*To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers, and the temples of his Gods.*

Bridge players often find themselves in a tight spot and students of the classics will doubtless be familiar with these lines from the start of the poem:

*Lars Porsena of Clusium, by the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin should suffer wrong no more.*

*By the Nine Gods he swore it, and named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and West and South and North,
To summon his array.*

Without more ado join me for the quarter-final between Austria and USA Lusky:

Board 6 East/EW	♠ 97	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>♠ Q642</td> <td>♥ K8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ 10943</td> <td>♦ Q1042</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ J9875</td> <td>♣ 987</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ Q2</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	N	E	♠ Q642	♥ K8	♥ 10943	♦ Q1042	♦ J9875	♣ 987	♣ Q2	
	N		E									
♠ Q642	♥ K8											
♥ 10943	♦ Q1042											
♦ J9875	♣ 987											
♣ Q2												
♠ J5	♠ AK1083											
♥ 10943	♥ QJ652											
♦ J9875	♦ K3											
♣ Q2	♣ 4											

Open room

W Aker	N Feichtinger	E Simson	S F.Terraneo
		pass	1♥*
pass	3♣*	pass	3♠*
pass	4♣	pass	4♦*
pass	6♣	all pass	

- 1♥ – ‘11-16, 4+♥, longer suit possible’
 - 3♣ – Strong, 6+♣
 - 3♠ – Natural, 5♠
 - 4♦ – Cue, 1st or 2nd round
- East led the ♥K and declarer won, cashed the top clubs and claimed, +1390.

Closed Room

W Berger	N Doub	E Franzel	S Merblum
		pass	1♠
pass	3♣*	pass	3♥
all pass			

- 3♣ – Strong

East led the ♦2 and declarer won in dummy and played a club to the jack. When it held he cashed the ♣A, crossed to dummy with a spade and ran the ♥Q, +490, which cost another 10 IMPs. I fear that playing against a team where most of the players live in Vienna, I would have been unable to resist the temptation to cash the red aces and then run the clubs, which would be too much for East.

Questions and Answers

Many years ago I was taking part in a knock-out quiz competition, where by a series of minor miracles our team had reached the final. We need to get the last question right to force a play-off. 'Who wrote Beethoven's tenth Symphony?' When the rest of the team turned to me, the supposed expert on classical music, I pointed out that the great composer had only penned nine. Was it the right answer? I'll leave you to ponder that while we examine the deals from the first two sessions of the final between Lithuania and USA Lusky. Lots of tough questions would be posed – could the players come up with the right answers?

Board 1 North/None	♠ A952 ♥ K75 ♦ J3 ♣ J962										
♠ 1073 ♥ 8632 ♦ 74 ♣ A1075	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4 ♥ AQ10 ♦ AKQ10652 ♣ K3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KQJ86 ♥ J94 ♦ 98 ♣ Q84										

Open room

W Aker	N Romański	E Simson	S Kowalski
pass*	pass 2NT*	1♣*	1♠

1 – '16+ or their value'

Pass – '0-5 or penalty of spades'

2NT – '4♠, good'

EW could not come up with the right answer on this deal, declarer easily recording 11 tricks for +150.

If East tries 3♠ over 2NT and West bids 4♣ would East's 4♦ see West advance to game?

Closed Room

W Olański	N Doub	E Vainikonis	S Merblum
	pass	1♦	2♠
pass	3♠	dbler	pass
4♣	pass	4♦	pass
4♥	pass	5♦	all pass

Declarer ruffed the second spade, cashed five round of diamonds and then took two rounds of clubs to play a heart. North had come down to the singleton king, +400 and 6 IMPs.

Board 2 East/NS	♠ KJ108 ♥ AK742 ♦ 62 ♣ 32										
♠ A53 ♥ QJ98 ♦ AQ5 ♣ J97	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 972 ♥ 653 ♦ 10873 ♣ Q104
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q64 ♥ 10 ♦ KJ94 ♣ AK865										

Open room

W Aker	N Romański	E Simson	S Kowalski
		pass	1♦
dbl.	rdbl.*	pass	2♣
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
all pass			

Rdbl – 4+♥

I have a feeling that many of you will know my views about doubling with a balanced hand (especially opposite a passed partner), so I will not dwell upon West's contribution to the auction.

East led the ♠9 and West took the ace and switched to the ♥Q. Declarer won and ducked a club, West continuing with the ♥J. Declarer ducked and when West went back to spades he cashed his winners for +600.

As you can see, East needs to find a unlikely diamond (or heart) lead when West can win and switch to the ♥Q. Interestingly when I presented it to the man on the Clapham omnibus he went for a heart!

Closed Room

W Olański	N Doub	E Vainikonis	S Merblum
		pass	1♣
pass	1♥	pass	2♣
all pass			

Declarer took West's lead of the ♥Q in dummy and played three rounds of clubs, easily securing nine tricks for +110 but losing 10 IMPs.

Board 4 West/All	♠ K107 ♥ QJ64 ♦ AJ107 ♣ 92										
♠ 982 ♥ K952 ♦ KQ62 ♣ A4	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J3 ♥ A1087 ♦ 53 ♣ J8763
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AQ654 ♥ 3 ♦ 984 ♣ KQ105										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Aker	Romański	Simson	Kowalski
1♦*	pas	1♥	1♠
2♥	dbl.*	pass	3♣
pass	3♠	all pass	

1♦ – ‘2+♦, 10-15, occasionally stiff honour’

Dble – ‘Points’

West led the ♠8 and declarer won with dummy’s king and played a club for the queen and ace. The trump return was taken in hand and when a diamond to the jack held declarer cashed the ♠10 and then played a diamond to the nine and king. With the ♣J inside there were ten tricks, +170.

North had a close decision over 3♣ – are you surprised he was not seduced by the lure of a vulnerable game.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Doub	Vainikonis	Merblum
1♣*	dbl	2♣	4♠
all pass			

1♣ – 2+♣

West led the ♣A and switched to the ♥2 and East won with the ace and returned the ♣J. Declarer won, drew trumps ending in hand and advanced the ♦9, claiming when West played the queen, +620 and 10 IMPs.

Board 8 West/None	♠ QJ10 ♥ KQ763 ♦ – ♣ QJ975										
♠ AK9 ♥ J84 ♦ A963 ♣ 1062	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8765432 ♥ 95 ♦ 542 ♣ A
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ – ♥ A102 ♦ KQJ1087 ♣ K843										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Aker	Romański	Simson	Kowalski
1♦*	1♥	3♠*	4♥
4♠	pas	pass	5♥
pass	pass	dbl.	all pass

1♦ – ‘2+♦, 10-15, occasionally stiff honour’

3♠ – ‘Non-forcing’

East led the ♣A and switched to the ♦2. Alas, West held one diamond too many and declarer ruffed the ace and drew trumps for +750.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Doub	Vainikonis	Merblum
1♣*	1♥	pass	2♣*
pass	2NT	3♠	4♥
4♠	dbl	all pass	

1♣ – 2+♣

2♣ – Diamonds

South led the ♦Q and North ruffed dummy’s ace and returned the ♥3, South taking the ace, cashing the ♦J and switching to the ♣K. Declarer won and drew trumps, -300 and a 10 IMP gain.

If North cashes the ♥K and then plays a low heart South can play diamonds, eventually securing a trump promotion for -500.

Board 12 West/NS	♠ 1083 ♥ A65 ♦ AJ10 ♣ Q865										
♠ 754 ♥ KQ10742 ♦ 9 ♣ K102	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KQ962 ♥ J83 ♦ 865 ♣ 73
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AJ ♥ 9 ♦ KQ7432 ♣ AJ94										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Aker	Romański	Simson	Kowalski
2♥	pass	3♥	all pass

North led the ♠8 and the contract drifted one down, declarer losing two spades, a heart, a diamond and a club, -50.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Doub	Vainikonis	Merblum
2♦*	pas	3♥*	4♦
pass	5♦	all pass	

2♦ – ‘Mini-multi’

3♥ – Pass or correct

Declarer won West’s heart lead in dummy, cashed the ♦AJ and then ran the ♣Q. West won and switched to the ♠5 for the queen and ace and declarer played back the ♠J. East won, but declarer could cross to dummy with the ♦10 and pitch a club on the ♠10, +600 and 11 IMPs.

With only two flat boards it had been a combative set, Lithuania taking it 47-29.

By contrast, the second session saw points change hands on only five deals. These were the two that really mattered:

Board 3 South/EW	♠ KQ5 ♥ 632 ♦ 8 ♣ K109732										
♠ 102 ♥ KQJ8 ♦ J653 ♣ AQ5	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AJ9764 ♥ A107 ♦ K4 ♣ W4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 83 ♥ 954 ♦ AQ10972 ♣ 86										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Romański	Merblum	Kowalski
1NT*	pass	4♥*	pass
4♠	all pass		pass

1NT – 12-14

4♥ – Spades

North led the ♣10 and declarer won with the queen and played a spade to the nine. When it held, he continued with a heart to the king and a spade for the queen and ace. Three rounds of hearts followed, a diamond going from dummy as North ruffed in. That meant 11 tricks, +650.

Aside from the obvious risk involved in leading away from a king a diamond lead should defeat 4♠. South wins, cashes a second trick in the suit and then switches to a club.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Russyan	Rigal	Gierulski	Milgrim
2♥	pass	3♦*	2♦*
3NT	pass	4♥	pass
			all pass

2♦ Weak

On this layout EW can make 3NT, but naturally East went back to hearts. North led the ♦8 and after cashing two tricks in the suit South switched to the ♣8. North won with the king and in due course collected a spade for -100 and 13 IMPs.

Board 7 South/All	♠ A72 ♥ J10953 ♦ 9 ♣ KQ97										
♠ 9863 ♥ A7 ♦ A1076 ♣ A53	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q5 ♥ Q2 ♦ Q8543 ♣ J864
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ KJ104 ♥ K864 ♦ KJ2 ♣ 102										

Open room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Romański	Merblum	Kowalski
			pass
pass	1♥	pass	2♣*
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	3♣	pass	3♦
pass	3♥	all pass	

2♣ Drury fit

East led the ♦3 for the jack and ace and West switched to the ♣3, declarer winning with the king and playing a heart for the king and ace. That meant he took nine tricks, +140.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Russyan	Rigal	Gierulski	Milgrim
			pass
1♦	1♥	3♦*	4♥
all pass			

3♦ Preempt

After the same start West cashed the ♣A at trick two and continued with the five. Declarer won and ran the ♥J, +620 and 10 IMPs.

The set score was 29-2 and USA Lusky enjoyed an overnight lead, 58-49.

To answer the question I posed earlier, Beethoven's 10th symphony was usually attributed to Brahms. However, it later transpired that Beethoven had sketched out the idea of another symphony before his death in 1827. That gave rise to Beethoven X: The AI Project which you can read about it at www.beethovenx-ai.com.

The Last Castle

After three weeks of play it boiled down to this; 24 deals in which the protagonists had the opportunity to win the last battle and become champions. Whose castle would be reduced to rubble?

Board 1 North/None	♠ 63 ♥ K103 ♦ AJ875 ♣ AQ2										
♠ K9872 ♥ 92 ♦ 964 ♣ K65	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AJ10 ♥ AJ8764 ♦ Q32 ♣ 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q54 ♥ Q5 ♦ K10 ♣ J98743										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Casen	Russyan	Krekorian	Gierulski
	1♦	1♥	2♣
dble*	rdbl	2♥	3♣
pass	pass	dble	all pass

Dble 'Usually 2♥ + 5♠'

West led the ♥9 and East took the ace and now does best to switch to spades – three rounds of the suit securing a trick for West's ♣K and limiting the damage. Naturally East tied to beat the contract and returned the ♥J. Declarer won with the queen and ran the ♣J, pinning East's ten. Declarer drew trumps via the marked finesse, pitched a spade on the ♥K and took his top tricks, +570.

No doubt you can see how declarer might have scored a couple of extra overtricks once East had returned a heart.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Simson	Vainikonis	Aker
	1NT*	2♦*	2NT*
pass	3♣	3♥	all pass

1NT – 14-16

2♦ – One major

2NT – Puppet to 3♣, usually weak or strong ♣

South led the ♦K and continued with the ten, North taking the ace and returning the seven. South ruffed and switched to the ♣J. It was not easy

for North to find the strongest defence of overtaking with the queen and playing a fourth diamond and when the jack held South switched to the ♠5. Declarer won with the jack, cashed the ♥A, crossed to dummy with the ♠K and played a heart for one down, -50 but an 11 IMP gain, wiping out Lithuania's deficit and handing them a 2 IMP lead.

Board 6 East/EW	♠ 10 ♥ AKQ642 ♦ Q ♣ KQ1082										
♠ 843 ♥ J9753 ♦ A76 ♣ 64	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q652 ♥ 10 ♦ K98532 ♣ 73
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AKJ97 ♥ 8 ♦ J104 ♣ AJ95										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Casen	Russyan	Krekorian	Gierulski
3♦	4♥	2♦ all pass	2♠

East led the ♦8 and West won and returned the seven, declarer ruffing and cashing the ♥AK. When East discarded declarer took the ♥Q and then played on clubs. West could only score two heart tricks, +420.

Suppose North bids only 3♥? Would you as South then bid 4♣? On the other hand if North doubles 3♦ then South will surely bid 4♣ and now a slam can be envisaged.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Simson	Vainikonis	Aker
		pass	1♠
pass	2♥	pass	2NT*
pass	3♣	pass	4♣
pass	4♦*	pass	4NT*
pass	6♣	all pass	

2NT – 'Could be off-shape'

4♦ – RKCB

4NT – 2 key cards, no ♣Q

There was nothing to the play, declarer ruffing a couple of hearts for +920 and 11 IMPs.

Board 10 East/All	♠ 854 ♥ K8 ♦ KQ432 ♣ K106										
♠ A107 ♥ AJ9 ♦ A985 ♣ J72	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ QJ ♥ Q65432 ♦ 106 ♣ A84
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ K9632 ♥ 107 ♦ J7 ♣ Q953										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Casen	Russyan	Krekorian	Gierulski
		pass	pass
1♦	pass	1♥	pass
1NT	pass	2♥	all pass

South led the ♦J and declarer took dummy's ace and played two rounds of hearts, North winning, cashing the ♦Q and switching to the ♣6. Declarer ducked, won the next club with the ace and took the spade finesse, +170.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Simson	Vainikonis	Aker
		pass	pass
1♣*	1♦	dbl*	pass
1♥*	pass	4♥	all pass

1♣ – 2+♣

Dble – Hearts

1♥ – 3♥

Once West freely supported hearts East applied Meckstroth's Law and jumped to game. North led the ♦Q and when declarer ducked, he switched to the spade eight for the jack, king and ace. Declarer unblocked dummy's ♠Q, came to hand with the ♥A and played the ♥9. North won and played a diamond, but declarer won with the ace, pitched a club on the ♠10 and then took the ruffing finesse in diamonds for +650 and 10 IMPs.

Board 11 South/None	♠ 108 ♥ 872 ♦ AK4 ♣ AQ1098										
♠ KJ96 ♥ K965 ♦ 82 ♣ KJ4	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q75432 ♥ J3 ♦ Q76 ♣ 32
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A ♥ AQ104 ♦ J10953 ♣ 765										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Casen	Russyan	Krekorian	Gierulski
			1♦
dble	rdble	3♠	pass
pass	dble	pass	4♥
all pass			

West led the ♠K and declarer won, played the ♦J to dummy's ace and a heart to the ten. When that held he played a club to the nine and a second heart, taking East's jack with the ace and playing a club for the king and ace. He continued playing clubs and the defenders could only score two hearts and a diamond at the end for +420.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Simson	Vainikonis	Aker
			1♦*
pass	2♣*	pass	3♣*
pass	3♦*	pass	3♥*
pass	4♣	pass	4♥*
pass	4♠*	pass	5♦*
pass	6♣	all pass	

1♦ – 2+♦

2♣ – Forcing for one round

3♣ – 4/1 majors either way, 5♦, 3♣

3♦ – Ask

3♥ – 1435

4♥ – Control

4♠ – RKCB

5♦ – 2 key cards, no Q

Played by South, 6♣ can be made, but with North as declarer was dealt a mortal blow when East found his Achilles heel and led the ♥3. The queen lost to the king and in the fulness of time the last trick was taken by West's ♥9, -50 and another 10 IMP swing.

Board 12 West/NS	♠ AQ5 ♥ KJ982 ♦ K6 ♣ J73										
♠ J1062 ♥ A4 ♦ J109 ♣ Q1065	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K98 ♥ Q ♦ 872 ♣ AK9842
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 743 ♥ 107653 ♦ AQ543 ♣ –										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Casen	Russyan	Krekorian	Gierulski
pass	1♥	2♣	4♣*
5♣	pass	pass	5♥
all pass			

4♣ – Splinter

East led the ♣K and declarer ruffed in dummy and played a heart, West taking the ace and switching to the ♠J. Declarer took the ace, cashed the ♥K and then played diamonds, +680.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Olański	Simson	Vainikonis	Aker
pass	1NT	3♣	all pass

Obviously South would be stretching by doubling opposite a 14-16 INT but the shape is good. 3♣ was unbeatable, +110 and 13 IMPs.

Lithuania had amassed 38 IMPs over the last five deals of the set to win it 61-12 and move ahead by 40 IMPs, 110-70.

Board 2 East/NS	♠ J987 ♥ A743 ♦ 95 ♣ Q75										
♠ K2 ♥ 652 ♦ KQJ ♣ K10842	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A63 ♥ KJ8 ♦ A8742 ♣ 96
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ Q1054 ♥ Q109 ♦ 1063 ♣ AJ3										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Russyan	Merblum	Gierulski
		1NT*	pass
3NT	all pass		

INT – 12-14

South led the ♠4 and declarer won with dummy's king and played a heart to the jack, South winning with the queen and returning the ♠10. Declarer took North's jack and cashed five diamonds, but South took the next trick with the ♣A and the defenders cashed two spades and a heart for -50.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kowalski	Casen	Romański	Krekorian
		1♦	pass
2♣	pass	2♦	pass
2♠*	pass	3NT	all pass

2♠ – 'Values'

When South led the ♥10 North took the ace and returned the three, South taking declarer's jack with the queen and exiting with the nine. Declarer won, played a club to the king and shortly afterwards claimed his contract, +400 and 10 IMPs.

Board 3 South/EW	♠ 6 ♥ K854 ♦ AK1043 ♣ KQ9										
♠ K9873 ♥ Q632 ♦ 752 ♣ A	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AQ54 ♥ – ♦ QJ98 ♣ J10742
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J102 ♥ AJ1097 ♦ 6 ♣ 8653										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Russyan	Merblum	Gierulski
			pass
pass	1♦	pass	1♥
pass	3♥	pass	4♥
all pass			

West led the ♠3 and East won with the ace and switched to the ♦Q, declarer winning with the king, playing a heart to the ace followed by a club when East pitched the ♣2. West won and exited with a diamond and declarer ruffed and played a club. West ruffed and exited with the ♠K but declarer ruffed in dummy, ruffed a diamond with the ♥J and ran the ♥10. He could draw the outstanding trump and claim, +420.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kowalski	Casen	Romański	Krekorian
			2♥
pass	4♥	dbld	pass
4♠	5♥	pass	pass
dbld	all pass		

East's perfect shape double struck gold, as 4♠ would not have been defeated.

West led the ♣A and switched to the ♠3, East winning with the ace and returning the ♣2 for a rapid one down, -100 and another 11 IMPs, stretching the lead to 61 IMPs.

Board 4 West/All	♠ 103 ♥ J7 ♦ K105432 ♣ Q72										
♠ 92 ♥ 1062 ♦ AJ8 ♣ AKJ53	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ AKQ76 ♥ K985 ♦ 96 ♣ 84
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ J854 ♥ AQ43 ♦ Q7 ♣ 1096										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Russyan	Merblum	Gierulski
1NT*	pass	2♣*	pass
2♦	pass	3♠*	pass
3NT	all pass		

INT – 12-14

3♠ – 5♠, 4♥

North led the ♥J and the trick was completed by the king, ace and two. It was virtually impossible for South to find the only winning move at this point, which is to switch to the ♦Q and he returned the ♥3. Declarer won with the ten and played a back a heart, South taking the queen and switching to the ♦Q. It was a case of 'too late the hero' as declarer could win with the ace, cross to dummy with a spade and play a club to the jack. When North won and returned the ♣7 declarer emerged with an overtrick, +630.

My au pair suggested that North should have doubled 2♦ – 'it would have reminded him to lead one'.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kowalski	Casen	Romański	Krekorian
1♣*	pass	1♠	pass
1NT*	pass	2♦*	pass
2NT	pass	3NT	all pass

1♣ – Polish

1NT – 12-14, balanced

2♦ – Game forcing, artificial

North led the ♦4 and declarer took South's queen with the ace, went to dummy with a spade and played a club for the six, jack and queen. The ♥J was covered by the king an ace and when South produced a se-

cond diamond the contract was four down, -400 and 14 IMPs were recovered.

Board 6 East/EW	♠ AQ865 ♥ 86 ♦ 5 ♣ KJ983										
♠ 102 ♥ KJ109542 ♦ AKJ8 ♣ –	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ KJ9 ♥ AQ7 ♦ Q962 ♣ Q74
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 743 ♥ 3 ♦ 10743 ♣ A10652										

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Russyan	Merblum	Gierulski
		1NT*	pass
4♦*	pass	4♥	pass
pass	4♠	db1e	all pass

INT – 12-14

4♦ – hearts

Don't you just love North's 4♠. Although it gave EW a chance to find the laydown slam it was one they were never going to take. East led the ♣A and when West followed with the two it would not have been ridiculous to switch to a club. However, East went with the ♦2 and West took the king and continued with the ace. Declarer ruffed and played the ♠6. East with the nine and played a third diamond, declarer ruffing and no doubt fearing the trumps might be 4-1, played the ♣K, West finally securing at least one club ruff for -300.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kowalski	Casen	Romański	Krekorian
		1♣*	pass
1♥	1♠	db1e*	2♠
4♣*	pass	5♣	pass
5♥	all pass		

1♣ – Polish

Dble – 3♥

4♣ – Short

5♣ was not alerted. Had West bid 5♦ over it would East have regarded his ♠K and excellent trumps enough to bid a slam?

North led the ♠A and declarer claimed, +680 and 9 IMPs.

Board 9 North/EW	♠ AK8653	
	♥ 7	
	♦ 5	
	♣ KQ1062	
♠ Q92	N W E S	♠ 74
♥ A94		♥ KJ653
♦ Q942		♦ 8763
♣ 953		♣ 87
	♠ J10	
	♥ Q1082	
	♦ AKJ10	
	♣ AJ4	

Open Room

W	N	E	S
Doub	Russyan	Merblum	Gierulski
	1 ♠	pass	2 ♣*
pass	4 ♦*	pass	4 ♠
all pass			

2♣ – Game forcing, 2+♣

4♦ – Splinter

East led the ♥3 and West took the ace and continued with the four, declarer ruffing, crossing to dummy with the ♦A and running the ♠10. He claimed 12 tricks after a second round of spades, +480.

Closed Room

W	N	E	S
Kowalski	Casen	Romański	Krekorian
	1 ♠	pass	2 ♦
pass	3 ♣	pass	3NT
pass	4 ♠	pass	5NT*
pass	6 ♣	all pass	

5NT – Pick a slam

East led the ♥5 and West won and returned the nine, declarer ruffing, cashing the ♠A, crossing to dummy with the ♣A and advancing the ♠J. When West followed with the nine declarer took the king, and played a spade, claiming when East ruffed in with the ♣8. +920 was worth 10 IMPs, but Lithuania took the session 38-29 and the match 148-99. They were the new holders of the Julian Klukowski Memorial Trophy!

A View of the Bridge

As I penned these lines we were coming to the end of a terrific tournament. The 36 teams had provided a wealth of entertainment and it was fitting that once again the final involved the USA and Europe. Looking through the list of players I noted at least 50 that I had played against over the years and a fair number that, on occasion, had the misfortune to sit opposite me. Although I am not directly involved in the organization of the event my long relationship with the Polish Bridge Federation tells me that everything proceeded smoothly and efficiently.

I'll sign off with what might be termed The Deal that Never Was.

The Lost Chord

It is often the case that you spot a deal with some interesting possibilities that are not explored by the players. This was one such from this year's Transatlantic Seniors Cup.

Playing an International team event for Seniors I pick up the following collection:

Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠	A 8 3
♥	A 10 7 2
♦	A 6 5 4 2
♣	10

When West passes my partner opens 1♣ and when I respond 1♦ he rebids 1♠. Although the values required for an opening bid have been eroded, I still tend to follow the philosophy that with an opening bid opposite a hand that has opened it is your responsibility to make sure that a game is reached. Not wishing to employ what someone once referred to as 'the pitiful crutch' by bidding 2♥, I bid a somewhat undisciplined 3NT, abandoning any thoughts that 4♠ might be the best spot. That leaves us with this simplistic sequence:

W	N	E	S
pass	1 ♣	pass	1 ♦
pass	1 ♠	pass	3NT
all pass			

West appears to be in some difficulty with his opening lead, but eventually the ♣8 appears on the screen and dummy is revealed:

♠ KJ74											
♥ Q95											
♦ J9											
♣ AJ42											
<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ A83											
♥ A1072											
♦ A6542											
♣ 10											

Players who lead a through a bid suit usually have either a very good holding or a shortage. When I play dummy's two East wins with the queen and after some thought switches to the ♦Q. I duck that and when West contributes the ♦8 East continues with the ♦3. I could duck that as well, but if, as I suspect West is able to win with the king another club will leave me badly placed. Taking the view that the diamonds are probably 4-2, I go up with the ace and am pleased to see West follow with the seven. Assuming I am right about the diamonds, even if the spades are good for four tricks it is clear I am going to need some tricks from the heart suit, so my next move is to play the ♥2. When West follows with the six, I put in dummy's nine and East wins with the jack and returns the ♥4. Checking that Garozzo is not on my left I play the seven and win with dummy's queen as West follows with the ♥2. Marking time I play a heart to the ten and then cash the ♥A, West discarding the black fives while I throw a club from dummy. These cards remain:

♠ KJ74											
♥ –											
♦ –											
♣ AJ42											
<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ A83											
♥ –											
♦ 654											
♣ –											

The only thing I know for sure is that West started

with two hearts and East four. I am inclined to place West with four diamonds and East two. If West's opening lead is from a shortage, he will have the spade length and given that I most likely need the spade finesse I play a spade to the queen, West following with the six and East the two. With three certain winners left I am up to eight tricks, but I don't think the spades are breaking, so I need to find one more. Eventually light dawns and I exit with dummy's ♣J discarding a diamond from my hand as East wins with the king. West discards the ♦10 on this trick, but when East exits with a club and I pitch another diamond West, down to ♠Q109 ♦K finds himself awkwardly placed. Like the chess player faced with unavoidable mate he presses the concede button.

This was the full deal:

	♠ KJ74	
	♥ Q95	
	♦ J9	
	♣ AJ42	
West/EW		
♠ G10965		♠ 2
♥ 63		♥ KJ84
♦ K1087		♦ Q3
♣ 85		♣ KQ9763
	♠ A83	
	♥ A1072	
	♦ A6542	
	♣ 10	

Post mortem

There was nothing the defence could do if declarer took the right view of how the cards were distributed. However, we did not gain on the deal. In the replay, North opened INT and East overcalled 2♣ promising any single-suited hand. When South doubled for take-out North decided to pass and that cost -500 so we lost 3 IMPs.

Website of the tournament:
<https://r.pzbs.pl/2023/tsc/web/>

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