



Opatija, 15 July 2010

Bulletin nr 1

Dobro došli u Opatiju

Good Evening,



Thank you for coming – I wish you a warm welcome in Opatija for these, the 10th European Youth Bridge Pairs Championships.

As you know, I was elected two weeks ago in Ostend as President of the EBL and I am pleased to begin with a Youth event.. You are our future – you are our representatives from across Europe to promote bridge.

I would like to thank Mr Ivo Dujmic, Mayor of Opatija, and Mr Zlatko Komadina, President of the county,

Primorsko-Goranska, for their support in receiving this event in Opatija.

Thanks to Jurica Caric, President of the Croatian Bridge Federation, the members of the Croatian Board, and the President of the Bridge Club of Opatija, for their great job in organising these championships.

Thankyou also to Giannarigo Rona, WBF President elect and EBL President Emeritus. Everything was organised by Giannarigo and the EBL team before my election and this evening I have just to come and make a speech.

To all of you Juniors, Girls and Youngsters, these championships are YOUR championships. It is a bridge competition but also an occasion to meet players from 23 countries, to make new friends with the same values, sharing the same sport and the same pleasure. Do your best and enjoy yourselves.

I declare open the 10th European Youth Bridge Pairs Championships.

Yves Aubry (EBL President)

ATTENTION

The first session will start at **10:00** this morning. Don't be late!

A bit of Geography and a lot of History

Opatija is situated in the gulf of Kvarner, which is between the peninsular and coastal areas of Croatia. The peninsula is called Istria, and although Opatija is geographically on the peninsula, it is not within the county of Istria itself, but rather in Primorje-Gorski Kotar county, which is the region around Rijeka, which is the big city you see to the left when you look out at the sea from the hotel. Opatija has about 13,000 inhabitants, the greater Rijeka area has around 220,000.

The area was inhabited since Neolithic times but the first known settlement was Celtic, and called Tarsatica. Even today, there is still a part of Rijeka called Trsat. The Romans rebuilt Tarsaticum in the first century, and called it Flumen (river). Fiume is still the Italian name for Rijeka. The area was dedicated to St. Vitus in the 4th century. In Medieval times the Croats translated the city to Reka sv. Vita, from whence comes Rijeka (which still means river in Croatian).

Just south of Rijeka the Benedictine Monks founded an abbey and dedicated

it to St. Jacob. The church of St Jacob, from 1506, can still be seen in the city which grew around it. In German, this city is still called Sankt Jakobi, but in Croat, they shortened Opatija Sv. Jacova to Opatija. So now we have a city called “Abbey” next to one called “River”.

In 1466, the area came under the control of the Austrian Habsburgs, who kept control until the end of World War one, when the region was under dispute. Would the city become Italian (as “Fiume”) or Croat (as “Rijeka”). The city itself contained 88% of Italians, but the surrounding areas were mostly Croat. In November 1920 the treaty of Rapallo created the “Free state of Fiume”. Its area of only 28 km² proved not to be viable and by the treaty of Rome in 1924 the territory was annexed to the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes”. That country changed its name to Yugoslavia in 1945.

Croatia declared its independence in 1991 and this area has been part of that country since then.



The church of St. Jacob

History of the European Youth Pairs Championships

The European Youth Pairs Championships were launched in 1991 in Fiesch, Switzerland. The EBL kept its sole auspices of the Championship until the 2nd edition held in Oberreifenberg, Germany, two years later.

In 1995, the 3rd edition of the competition was taken over by the WBF and held in Ghent, Belgium. Now open to all WBF member countries, the event continued as a world competition, incorporating the corresponding European competition, for over a decade. In 2006, a separate Schools series was added for the first time. However, the 2006 competition was also the last of the series of the World Youth Pair Championships organized by both the WBF and EBL.

Over the years, several people who have won these championships have gone on to make a name for themselves in Open Bridge at the European and World level. None more so than the 1995 winners, Geir Helgemo (then already a Bermuda Bowl silver medallist), together with a young Boye Brogeland, for whom it was only the first of many successes at the European and World level.

In 1991 (in the Czech Republic) and in 2001 (in Poland), Andreas Gloyer of Austria won two titles. Both his partners, Bernd Saurer and Martin Schifko are often seen near the top of continental competitions.

Four years ago, in Slovakia, the event saw the first ever win of a Women's pair

in an Open competition, when Sara Sivelind and Cecilia Rimstedt won the gold medal. That would probably be the last time as well, as from the 9th edition of the competition, held in Wroclaw, Poland, in 2008, a third series was added, for female young players, the 'Girls'. At the same time, the European Youth Pairs Championships were disassociated from the corresponding World competition and again restricted to European players only. The format of the tournament was also changed, hereafter allowing national pairs only.

The title holders, winners two years ago in Poland, were Frederic Volcker and Thomas Bessis of France. Thomas has since strung together a series of successes, including one European title (Open Teams 2007), one World championship (Transnational Teams 2007), and an American championship (as well as two titles of European Champions as the coach of the French Ladies).

Also worth noting is the fact that Polish pairs have won 10 of the 36 medals awarded in the nine championships, but never the Junior gold.

A good omen, perhaps?

Thursday's Program

10:00-13:30	Qualification 1 st session
14:30-18:00	Qualification 2 nd session

Format of the Competitions

Extract from the Conditions of Contest

3a. Format

The European Youth Pairs Championships is a match-pointed pairs tournament and shall consist of three stages, as outlined below. The results of each stage will be converted to percentage results for carryover and cumulative results.

Qualification stage

Thursday 15th July 2010, starting 10:00
Two sessions. In all three series, 24 to 30 boards will be played in two- or three-board rounds in each session, as determined by the Operations Director, scored in each session 'over the field' within each series.

Depending on total entries and technical requirements the top-ranked approximate 50% of the pairs in each series will go to the Semi-final A and the others to the Semi-final B: the exact number will be decided before the start of the event. There will be a carry-over in accordance with section 3.c.

Semi-final stage

Friday 16th July 2010, starting 10:00
Two sessions. In all three series, 24 to 30 boards will be played in two- or three-board rounds in each session, as determined by the Operations Director, scored in each session 'over the field' within each series.

In the Juniors: The top ranked 25 pairs in the Semi-final A plus the top ranked 5 pairs in the Semi-final B will qualify for the A Final.

In the Youngsters: The top ranked 15 pairs in the Semi-final A plus the top ranked 5 pairs in the Semi-final B will qualify for the A Final.

In the Girls: The top ranked 7 pairs in the Semi-final A plus the top ranked 3 pairs in the Semi-final B will qualify for the A Final

There will be a carry-over in accordance with section 3c

In all three series, pairs not qualifying for the A Final will play in the B Final. The pairs from the different series will play in a combined B final with separate ranking for the three series. There will be no carry-over.

Final stage

Saturday 17th July 2010 starting 10:00
In the Juniors A Final: Barometer scoring, 58 boards – two per table. (scored 'over the field' within the series.)
In the Youngsters A Final: Barometer scoring – 57 boards – three per table. (scored 'over the field' within the series.)
In the Girls A Final: Barometer scoring – 54 boards – two sessions, in each sitting three per table. (scored 'over the field' within the series.)

In the B Finals two sessions will be played in two- or three-board rounds in each session, as determined by the Operation Director, scored in each session 'over the field' within each series.

Screens will be used in the A Finals, and depending on local conditions may also be used for other stages of the competition.

3b Changes to Format

The program and/or format (including number of qualifying pairs, and the carry-over provisions) may be altered by the Chairman of the EBL Youth Committee for organizational reasons, provided that clear notice is given to all participants in advance. This includes the amalgamation of two or more series for one or more stages, depending on the number of entries for each of the series.

3c Carry-over

Qualification stage to semi-final stages

Juniors, Girls and Youngsters: $\frac{1}{4} Q$

Semi-final A to final A

Juniors : $\frac{1}{4}(SF + \frac{1}{4} Q)$

Girls: $\frac{1}{3}(SF + \frac{1}{4} Q)$

Youngsters: $\frac{27}{84}(SF + \frac{1}{4} Q)$

Q = the percentage score obtained in the two qualifying sessions and
SF = the percentage score obtained in the two semifinal sessions.

Semi-final B to final A

Sr = Score of rank r in Semi-final A

Pq = Pair from semi-final B, rank q

Juniors series: The top ranked five pairs will receive the carry-over scores:

Pq gets carryover:

$$S13 - (q-1)(S13-S17)/4$$

Youngsters series: The top ranked five pairs will receive the carry-over scores:

Pq gets carryover:

$$S8 - (q-1)(S8-S12)/4$$

Girls series: The top ranked three pairs will receive the carry-over scores:

Pq gets carryover:

$$S4 - (q-1)(S4-S6)/2$$

Semi-finals A and semi-finals B to Final B:

There will be no carryover.

HELP!

Between the three championships, there are around 70 tables in play. It would be a miracle if a member of the Bulletin staff happened to be at the right table at the right time to watch the most brilliant plays, defences or auctions – to say nothing of the biggest penalties, disasters and funny stories.

So, if anyone at your table does anything that you think newsworthy, please come and tell us about it. We are easy to find, one floor up in the Conference Centre. Or speak to Brian Senior, Micke Melander or Herman De Wael any time that you see one of us.



Herman, Brian and Micke

US Open Trials 2010

USA is entitled to two teams in the Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup and Seniors Bowl.. It holds an Open trial each year, with the winners qualifying to represent USA at the next World Championships. So this year's winners will be joined at the 2011 World Championships in Eindhoven, Netherlands, by the winners of the 2011 US trials. Why two separate trials? I strongly suspect that this is the professional lobby at work – after all, if you were a highly paid professional bridge player, wouldn't you want a payday every year rather than only one year in two? However, the USBF, the body which is responsible for the trials and the US teams strongly denies this, so perhaps it is just me being my usual cynical self. The Women and Seniors each have only one trial, next year, to select both USA teams.

This year's US Open trial attracted an entry of 23 teams. These were seeded and the lowest 18 teams were split into two nine-team round robins from which the top six qualified for stage two. That saw a new 12-table round robin with the top eight progressing to the round of 16, where they were joined by two exempted teams. There were five straight matches in the round of 16 with the five winners being joined by three new exempted teams at the quarter-final stage, after which it was just straight knock-out with no further drop-ins.

As ever, the favourites were the Nickell team, current Bermuda Bowl champions, but enforced changes of personnel have gradually eroded the dominance they once had and the rest of the field is a lot closer than it was a few years ago. As it turned out, Nickell will be very grateful for the trial-every-year approach to

national selection, because they went out at the semi-final stage this year, losing to Fleisher by 231-244 over 120 boards despite taking the last set by 46-8 IMPs. The other semi-final saw Diamond see off H. Weinstein by a comfortable 305-216.

The final was another 120-board match, between Fleisher (Marty Fleisher, Michael Kamil, Chip Martel, Lew Stansby, Bobby Levin and Steve Weinstein) and Diamond (John Diamond, Brian Platnick, Eric Greco, Geoff Hampson, Brad Moss, Fred Gitelman), both of whom had been exempted to the quarter-finals. Fleisher won only two of the eight sets but those, the second and seventh, were by 51-6 and 57-4 respectively, and that was sufficient to see Fleisher home by 260-218. Fleisher will be USA1 at the 2011 Bermuda Bowl.

A feature of the US trials was the number of huge swings at the slam level, often with potential for the swing to have gone in the opposite direction to the actual one. Take this one from Nickell's semi-final against Fleisher.

Board 85. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Levin	Nickell	Weinst'nKatz	
–	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Dble	Rdbl	5♥	5♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Rodwell	Martel	Meckst'h Stansby	
–	1♠	Pass	2♠
Dble	4♦	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

Meckstroth/Rodwell saved in 5♥ doubled and lost the normal five tricks (declarer lacks the club spots to escape for only two tricks in the suit even with the jack onside) and probably expected a small gain on the board. However, Nickell/Katz knew that the match was going badly and took the view that this was an opportunity to try for a major swing to try to shift the scoreboard momentum.

Six Spades was all about the opening lead. Had Steve Weinstein led his singleton diamond, Bobby Levin could have won the ace of spades and given him a ruff to set the contract and give Fleisher a 12-IMP swing. But Levin had doubled for a heart lead and Weinstein duly did as requested and led that suit. Nick Nickell won the heart lead, crossed to dummy with the ace of clubs and led a spade up. When the ace appeared he needed only to win the return and draw the last trump to claim his slam; +1430 and 14 IMPs to Nickell. Was there a case for Weinstein to find the killing lead despite his partner's lead-directing double? Certainly – the double was almost sure to have been made on a high-card holding rather than a void, and Weinstein held a worrying number of hearts, suggesting that even if he

established a winner in the suit it might not be cashable. In that case finding partner with one of the spade and diamond aces might be the way to defeat the contract.

An early deal from the final offered another huge opportunity.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Hamps'nLevin	Greco	Weinstein	
–	4♣	4♠	5♣
Dble	Pass	5♠	Pass
Pass	6♥	6♠	Dble
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Fleisher	Diam'nd Kamil	Platnick	
–	4♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass
5♠	Pass	Pass	6♥
Dble	All Pass		

Levin opened a Namyats 4♣, showing a hand too good for a 4♥ pre-empt and, when Eric Greco overcalled 4♠, Weinstein showed his club ace. That gave Geoff Hampson an opportunity to double, which would surely have resulted in Greco finding the lead to defeat 6♥. However, when Levin took the push to 6♥ over Greco's 5♠, Greco judged to save, perhaps being concerned

that a club might be the only trick the defence would have against the heart slam.

Of course, with Hampson holding the ace of diamonds as well as the clubs, 6♥ would have been beaten by two tricks. Meanwhile, there were two diamonds and a club to be lost in 6♠ doubled for 300 to Fleisher.

The auction was very different in the other room, where John Diamond opened with a simple 4♥ but then went on to 5♥ over Mike Kamil's 4♠ overcall. Fleisher and Platnick each in turn took the push to the next level and Fleisher finally doubled 6♥. Again, a slam came down to the opening lead. Was West's double asking for a specific lead or did it just say that the slam would be defeated on power if East made his normal lead? Perhaps influenced by the fact that it seemed to be a complete guess which minor to lead if that was what was required, Kamil just led a simple king of spades. It was routine for Diamond to ruff, draw trumps and knock out the ace of diamonds to establish two club pitches; +1660.

Diamond picked up 16 IMPs for making the slam. Had Kamil guessed to lead a club, he would have picked up +500 and 13 IMPs for his side.

Board 99. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Diam'd	Weins'n	Platnick	Levin
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Stansby	Gitelman	Martel	Moss
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

I can only assume that Weinstein responded 2♣ rather than the more normal 1♠ on the basis that he always intended to support hearts next and so wanted to show where his main strength lay. Whatever his reasoning, Levin's splinter response meant that the ♠K looked to be wasted and he quickly signed off in 4♥.

Diamond led a diamond to the queen and ace. Levin ruffed a diamond and led a low spade off the dummy. Platnick erred by going up with the ace and twelve tricks were easy for +480. However, had he played low Levin could have played to ruff his last diamond and drawn trumps, claiming twelve tricks when they divided evenly, so no harm was done.

Fred Gitelman made the 1♠ response and saw his hand improve dramatically when Brad Moss showed his clubs. With a double fit, Gitelman judged his hand to be too good for a simple jump to 4♥ so set up a force by bidding the fourth suit. When he next admitted to heart support, Moss took control, asking for key cards then bidding the heart slam. Six Clubs is better than 6♥, but we have already seen that twelve tricks are available on a diamond lead – as

opposed to a heart or a spade, which cause serious communication problems in 6♥, and a diamond is what Lew Stansby duly led. But rather than take the simple line of playing to ruff two diamonds, Moss set about the spades, which might be necessary if he needed a discard for his fourth club, for example. When the ace of spades was offside and the suit broke badly, Moss found himself a trick short. Instead of 11 IMPs to Diamond for a making slam, the 11 IMPs went the other way for one down. Three boards later came another huge swing.

Board 102. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Diam'd	Weins'n	Platnick	Levin
–	–	1♠	2♦
5♦	7♦	Dble	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Stansby	Gitelman	Martel	Moss
–	–	Pass	2♦
4♦	5♦	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Brian Platnick opened the East hand while Chip Martel did not, leading to quite different auctions.

After the 1♠ opening, Levin overcalled 2♦ and Diamond, with a huge hand in support of spades, used Exclusion

Keycard. With almost all his high-card strength in partner's suit, Weinstein could well imagine that his opponents could make a slam, possibly even a grand, so he jumped straight to 7♦ to make it as difficult as possible for his opponents. Platnick's double showed an even number of key cards outside diamonds, so Diamond knew there was one missing and had to settle for the penalty. With one club honour onside, Seven Diamonds was four down for -800, an excellent save against a vulnerable slam.

Martel passed as dealer and Levin opened with a weak 2♦. Stansby's 4♦ overcall showed the majors and Gitelman saved in 5♦. Martel passed that then pulled his partner's double to 6♠ as a grand slam try, following the normal principle that pass then pull is stronger than an immediate bid. Of course, Martel had a huge fit in the majors and, once the opposition were bidding up to the five level, could see that Stansby would be very short in diamonds. Stansby, however, did not have the hand to go on to seven. When the defence did not cash the ace of clubs at trick one, the club loser went away on the hearts and Martel made all thirteen tricks for +1460 and 12 IMPs to Fleisher.

Board 112. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Moss	Weins'n	Gitelman	Levin
Pass	1♠	2♦	Pass
2♠	Dble	3♦	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Stansby	Greco	Martel	Hampson
Pass	1♣	2♦	3♣
3♦	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Double Dummy, it is possible to make 7♥ with careful play, though it is less clear that you actually want to play in seven. The way the two auctions panned out, neither pair ever managed to even mention the heart suit.

Having chosen to open 1♠ rather than 2♣, Weinstein found that there was never a time when he could introduce hearts in a way that would suggest how close to having slam in his own hand he was. When Levin admitted to some spade support, Weinstein settled for the

unsubtle approach of asking for key cards then bidding the small slam. He just lost a spade trick so scored +980.

Greco started with a strong club but, obliged to bid his first suit at the three level, he could not introduce hearts in a meaningful way and he too settled for the "ask then guess a level" approach. Well down in the match and with boards running out, Greco's guess was to try the grand slam.

Not for the first time, we see a slam decided by the opening lead. On anything but a trump lead it is normal to play spades from the top and lose to the queen. That would have meant 14 IMPs to Fleisher. But Martel led his trump, looking for the safest lead, and found that it was actually the most dangerous lead, picking up partner's trump trick. That meant +1510 and 11 IMPs to Diamond, but it was far too little far too late and, as mentioned above, Fleisher won the match and will be the USAI team at the 2011 Bermuda Bowl.



Chip Martel, Marty Fleisher, Bobby Levin, Lew Stansby, Steve Weinstein, Michael Kamil

photo by Dave Smith, courtesy of ACBL