

MONTHLY INVITATIONAL TEAMS



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Bertheau vs. Levine

Determining the top four was down to the last board of the Round Robin. Gupta lost to Bertheau and had to watch breath withheld to see whether they would be overtaken. They could exhale when Wolfson's 1 IMP-victory over Setton only brought the team honorable mention as the first non-qualifier.

Ireland-Levine was a thriller turning into a horror-movie from an Irish perspective as they went from a narrow, but sufficient, lead to lose 37 IMPs in the last three boards, propelling Levine into second ahead of Nickell and Gupta.

That left Bertheau the choice between the T-Rex and the Velociraptor. They chose to face Nickell (that must be a first) and their courage was rewarded with a win.

That left Gupta and Levine in each other's arms, and halfway it looked like another close encounter until Levine slayed their rivals to face Bertheau in today's final.

Yesterday we parted with six amazing teams. It has been a pleasure and a privilege hosting and watching you during the past four days and we hope to see you again.

All players should enter BBO 10 minutes before the beginning of a match. TD Denis Dobrin will instruct you where to sit. All players must have their name in their BBO-profile. Private isn't allowed for the sake of opponents and kibitzers.

Today's Schedule

Saturday April 24









11:00 Eastern Time / 17:00 CET – Final Segment 1/3 (14 boards)

After 10 minutes break – Final Segment 2/3



After 10 minutes break – Final Segment 3/3



Results

Round Robin Final Ranking

rk	team	VPs
1	 BERTHEAU Peter Bertheau, Gunnar Hallberg, Simon Hult, Oren Toledano, Daniel Zagorin, Ami Zamir	92.40
2	 LEVINE Geir Helgemo, Tor Helness, Mike Levine, Jeff Meckstroth, Bob Morris, Eric Rodwell, Eddie Wold	77.26
3	 NICKELL Ifti Baqai, Mitch Dunitz, Eric Greco, Geoff Hampson, Ralph Katz, Bobby Levin, Nick Nickell, Steve Weinstein	73.25
4	 GUPTA Simon De Wijs, David Gold, Naren Gupta, Daniel Korbel, Zia Mahmood, Bauke Muller	71.62
5	 WOLFSON David Berkowitz, Billy Cohen, Gary Cohler, Steve Garner, Eldad Ginossar, Jeff Wolfson, Dror Padon	69.04
6	 IRELAND Leslie Amoils, Grainne Barton, John Carroll, Nick FitzGibbon, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann, Adam Mesbur, Mark Moran	62.20
7	 SETTON Thomas Bessis, Pierre Franceschetti, Lorenzo Lauria, Hilda Setton, Alfredo Versace, Frederic Volcker	57.29
8	 EDMONDS Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Jodi Edmonds, Piotr Gawrys, Zachary Grossack, Michal Klukowski, Joel Wooldridge	56.94

SEMIFINAL

team	c/o	Seg1	Sum1	Seg2	Total
 BERTHEAU	10.1	<u>41</u>	51.1	<u>41</u>	92.1
 NICKELL		<u>48</u>	48	<u>26</u>	74

team	c/o	Seg1	Sum1	Seg2	Total
 LEVINE	6.1	<u>45</u>	51.1	<u>58</u>	109.1
 GUPTA		<u>54</u>	54	<u>13</u>	67

Results

Event website
mit.bridgeresults.org

High Anxiety

By Mark Horton



The seventh round offered numerous chances for the teams needing swings. This was one of them:

Board 5. Dealer North. NS Vul.

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

How do you like your chances in 7♣? As long as the black suits behave 13 tricks should be straightforward.

Wolfson v Setton

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Versace	Cohler	Lauria	Padon
—	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♠*	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠*	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

- 2♦ Relay
- 2♠ 4♦
- 4♣ Club fit, RKCB
- 4♦ Odd keycards
- 4♥ Ask ♣Q
- 4♠ ♣Q and cue

South led the ♦8 and declarer won with the jack, played a club to the ace, cashed the ♠A, South dropping the king under the ace, ruffed a spade with the ♣8, went to dummy with a heart and ruffed a spade with the ♣9, claiming when the suit divided.

This line delivers all the tricks even if the spades are 4-2, as long as North has the ♣J.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Wolfson	Franceschetti	Garner	Setton
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT*	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3♦*	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

1NT Forcing

- 3♣ Game forcing, says nothing about clubs
- 3♦ Asking relay

North led a diamond and declarer won and went after the spades, soon claiming all the tricks, but losing 11 IMPs - a big blow to Wolfson's hopes of making the cut.

David Gold (Clearly partnering Zia when this picture was taken)



West led the ♥K and when East followed with the ten he cashed the ♠A and continued with the three, East ruffing and returning the ♥8. West won and played the ♠4 and East ruffed. The defenders were sure of eight tricks, -800, but it was a 12 IMP loss.

Edmonds v Nickell

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hampson	Z Grossack	Greco	Edmonds
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣*	1♥	2♣*	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

- 1♣ Strong Club
- 2♣ Game forcing, natural
- 4♥ 'I was hoping this would be RKCB in clubs'
- 4NT '1 key card if RKCB, not clear though'

After the diamond lead, declarer setup the spades, +1440.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Brink	Nickell	Drijver	Katz
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♥*	Pass	2♠*	Pass
3♥*	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♠*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♣*	Pass
6♣	All Pass		

Bertheau v Gupta

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Zia	Zagorin	Gold	Bertheau
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	7♣	All Pass

2NT 'Shows some values'

4NT 'Should be RKCB ♣'

Declarer won the diamond lead and played to set up the spades, +1440.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hallberg	Gupta	Hult	Korbel
—	Pass	Pass	2♦
Dble	All Pass		

2♣ Gazilli
 2♦ 8-11
 2♥ 15+, 2 suited hand
 2♠ 2♥ puppet to 2♠
 3♥ 6♠, 4♣
 4♦ Cue bid
 4♠ Last Train
 4NT Optional Blackwood
 5♣ Minimum

A diamond lead was followed by the regulation line of play, and an 11 IMP loss.

Ireland v Levine

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Helness	Carroll	Helgemo	Moran
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♦*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Dble	Pass	Pass
Rdbl	Pass	4♠*	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

2NT Game forcing
 3♣ One 5 card minor
 3♦ Relay
 3♥ Clubs
 Rdbl 'First'
 4♠ RKCB



South led the ♥7 and declarer won with dummy's ace, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a spade with the ♣8, crossed to dummy with a club and ruffed a spade with the ♣9, +1440.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
FitzGibbon	Meckstroth	Mesbur	Rodwell
—	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥*	Pass	5♣	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

3♣ Natural with values
 4♥ 'Probably RKCB for diamonds'

South led the ♦7 and declarer won with the jack, played a spade to the ace, ruffed a spade and then ruffed a diamond with ♣10. To his horror, North overruffed which meant a loss of 16 IMPs and an early flight back to Ireland.

Blind spot

By Toine van Hoof



Even world class players now and then have a blind spot.

This was a board from one of the earlier rounds (hands rotated to make it more difficult for nosey parkers to trace back the name of our unfortunate declarer):

Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
—	—	—	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West led the ♥J. Declarer won with the ace and cunningly continued with the ♥2.

East was not to be fooled and rose with the king. He returned the ♥5. South pitched the ♦7 and West ruffed. Declarer won the ♣5 return with the ace and played the ♣2 to East's king.

Now South had to ruff the ♥Q with a high trump and could not afford to ruff his last club with the ♠K. So he ruffed with the ♠2 and East overruffed for down one.

Double dummy South could have survived by ducking the ♣A and subsequently setting up dummy's diamonds.

There was, however, a much simpler way as was demonstrated by the two other declarers who received the lead of the ♥J in their 4♠ contract. They won with the ace, drew trumps and developed a heart as their tenth trick. Piece of cake.



Thomas Bessis is not our featured declarer, but he looks so cute we will bring his picture anyway. Photo: Peg Kaplan

DISCOVER THE NEW

BeBRIDGE

♥♦♣♠ by Le Bridgeur

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HAS JUST BEEN
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Trio

Semifinals

By Mark Horton



As the spectre of retirement begins to loom (say in 20 year's time) I am busy assembling a collection of my favourite movies. Quartet is high on my list, a delightful comedy about a group of retired musicians. A terrific cast of British stars is headed by Maggie Smith and it also includes some terrific classical music, not least the famous quartet from Rigoletto. I had been planning to write about four deals, but the sun is shining and the au pair wants to have a pub lunch.

Board 3. Dealer South. EW Vul.

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

Bertheau v Nickell

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hampson	Zamir	Greco	Toledano
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Pass
1♥*	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

- 1♣ Strong
- 1♥ Artificial GF without 5+♠ or 6 other
- 2♦ Waiting, asking for major

North led the ♠J and declarer won with dummy's ace, ruffed a club and played a heart for the ten and king. he ruffed the diamond return, ruffed a club, drew trumps and claimed when the club queen put in an appearance, +680.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hallberg	Baqai	Hult	Dunitz
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥*	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♥	All Pass

- 1♥ 'May have longer diamonds'
- 4♦ Splinter

West's trumps were modest and it was unclear if a void in partner's suit was an asset. Declarer had no trouble taking 12 tricks for a flat board.

I'll leave to consider the best way for East to proceed over 4♥; the possibilities include 4♠ and 5♦.

Levine v Gupta

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Korbel	Meckstroth	Gupta	Rodwell
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Declarer collected the regulation 12 tricks, +680.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Helness	de Wijs	Helgemo	Muller
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♦*	Dble	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	5NT*	Pass
6♦	Pass	6♥	All Pass

1♦ 3+♦
5NT 'Pick'

South led the ♦5 for the queen, ace and a ruff and declarer ruffed a club and played a heart for the queen and king. Helgemo won the heart return, ruffed a club, came to hand with a spade and drew the outstanding trump, +1430 and 13 IMPs.

The au pair wanted to know what would have happened if South had followed smoothly with the ♥2 on the first round of the suit. If declarer ruffs a club and repeats the heart finesse south wins and can play the ♦K, establishing a trick for North's remaining heart.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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



Oren Toledano and
Ami Zamir

Bertheau v Nickell

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hampson	Zamir	Greco	Toledano
1♣*	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♥*	Pass
5♣*	Dble	5NT*	Pass
6♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass

1♣ Strong
2♦ Natural, good 11+
4♥ RKCB
5♣ '2 without'
5NT 'Pick a slam'

South led the ♣3 for the two, eight and ace and declarer cashed dummy's top spades and then ruffed the ♠10 with the ♦8. South overruffed and cashed his ace, -100.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hallberg	Baqai	Hult	Dunitz
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥*	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

South led the ♦2 and declarer won with dummy's king and played the ♥Q, South taking the ace and exiting with a diamond. Declarer won, ruffed a diamond, came to hand with the ♣A, drew the outstanding trump and played the ♠AK10.

When he decided to ruff the third round he was one down, -100 and no doubt surprised to discover it was a 3 IMP gain.

3♥ Splinter

The lead of the ♣7 was covered by the jack, queen and ace and declarer drew trumps, North discarding the ♥7. Declarer took dummy's top spades and then ran the ♠10 claiming when South discarded, +1370 and 16 IMPs.

Levine v Gupta

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Korbel	Meckstroth	Gupta	Rodwell
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♥*	Pass
5♣*	Dble	5♥	Pass
7♦	All Pass		

4♥ RKCB
5♣ '2 without'

South tabled the ♥A and later overruffed declarers ♦8, -200.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Helness	de Wijs	Helgemo	Muller
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass

Board 15. Dealer South. NS Vul.

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

Bertheau v Nickell

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hampson	Zamir	Greco	Toledano
—	—	—	Pass
1♣*	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♣*	Pass	3♥*	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
5NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

1♣ Strong
2NT 14-15, no long suit or shortness
3♣ Stayman
3♥ 4♥, not 4♠
3NT 'Should be forcing'
4♦ '4 cards, 3NT is forcing'

South led the ♦2 and declarer won with dummy's jack, played a spade for the queen and ace and won the diamond return. He played a heart to the ace and then cashed his diamonds before surrendering, -50.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Hallberg	Baqai	Hult	Dunitz
—	—	—	Pass
1♣*	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	4NT	All Pass

1♣ 3+♣

North led the ♠9 for the queen and ace and declarer finished with 11 tricks, +460 and 11 IMPs.

Levine v Gupta

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Korbel	Meckstroth	Gupta	Rodwell
—	—	—	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	5NT	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

North led the ♠10 and when declarer played dummy's queen South took the ace and exited with a spade, -50.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Helness	de Wijs	Helgemo	Muller
—	—	—	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	5NT	Pass
6NT	All Pass		



Gunnar Hallberg

North led the ♣6 and declarer won with dummy's jack and played the ♠Q. South won and returned the ♦5, enabling declarer to try for a Vienna Coup, cashing four clubs and the ♥A before cashing the diamonds. Nice try, but no swing.

The au pair pointed out that after a high spade lead by North declarer might consider withholding dummy's queen. If South started with a singleton ace you are home, but you can also get home at double-dummy by cashing four clubs followed by four diamonds after which a spade endplays South. This also works if South started with four spades and the ♥K, as the last diamond will force South to blank the ♥K or discard a spade. Declarer pitches his remaining small heart and plays a spade, overtaking it with the king and playing a third spade, securing the last two tricks with the ♥A and a spade - the ♠2 if you want to be really classy!

You may have noticed that Nickell lost 27 IMPs on these three deals in a match they lost by 18.1 IMPs. Had they made 6NT they would have turned the tables.

No Common Ground

Round 6

By Mark Horton



You only have to look at any of the bidding competitions run by bridge magazines to appreciate that in almost every non-obvious situation there will be no consensus by the expert panel as to the best bid. I found an example in Round 6:

Board 2. Dealer East. NS Vul.

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

This does not appear to be too complicated; if East opens 1♠ South can overcall in clubs at whatever level he considers appropriate, which could end proceedings unless North thinks his hand is worth a move or East is tempted to re-open with a double.

On the other hand my textbooks are not full of advice about how best to deal with this particular hand pattern, which I once christened a 'Cologne'.

Bertheau v Wolfson

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Ginossar	Zagorin	Cohen	Bertheau
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

In Alan Truscott's The Bidding Dictionary he includes this in the list of sequences with no standard meaning, suggesting it might be a hand with around 19(?) points. Clearly South hoped that 5♣ would be interpreted as an attempt to play there, but North took it as a cue bid agreeing hearts.

This unfortunate contract was six down, -600. It was the only occasion where East did not open 1♠.

Closed Room

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Zamir	Berkowitz	Toledano	Cohler
—	—	1♠	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

Declarer won the spade lead in dummy and played the ♦Q, East winning and exiting with the ♣J. That meant declarer could score only eight tricks, -200 but a 9 IMP pick up.



Frederic Volcker

Levine v Gupta

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
de Wijs	Wold	Muller	Levine
—	—	1♠	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

East led the ♠Q and declarer ducked, hoping to see a second spade. However, East switched to the ♣J and declarer took dummy's AK and then played the ♥9 for the ten, jack and queen. East had pitched the ♦3 on the second club and he now cashed the ♦A and continued with the four.

West won with the king, cashed the ♣10 and played a diamond, East winning and exiting with a heart. A spade had to be lost at the end, -300.

Edmonds v Setton

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Versace	Drijver	Lauria	Brink
—	—	1♠	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Declarer won the spade lead in dummy and played a diamond, the trump return restricting him to eight tricks, -300.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Klukowski	Bessis	Gawrys	Volcker
—	—	1♠	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	Pass	4♣
All Pass			

After taking West spade lead in dummy declarer overtook the ♣Q with the king, cashed the ace, played a heart to the ace and then pitched a diamond on the ♠K which meant he had eight tricks, -200 and 3 IMPs.



Eddie Wold and Mike Levine

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Helness	Gold	Helgemo	Zia
—	—	1♠	2♣
Dble	Rdbl	2♦	3♣
Pass	3♥	Dble	4♣
All Pass			

West led his spade and declarer won and played the ♠K pitching a diamond. That ensured nine tricks, -100 and a 5 IMP swing.

Nickell v Ireland

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
McGann	Greco	Hanlon	Hampson
—	—	1♠	3♣
All Pass			

The spade lead saw declarer play the ace followed by the king, +110.

Closed Room

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Dunitz	Carroll	Bagai	Moran
—	—	1♠	2♣
Dble	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	3♦*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West led the ♠3 and declarer won with dummy's ace and played a heart for the six, nine and ten.

West switched to the ♦6 and East took the ace and returned the ♠Q, declarer winning with dummy's king as West pitched the ♦7. Declarer overtook the ♣Q, cashed a second club and exited with a diamond and West won with the nine. Cashing the ♦K and the ♣10 will result in four down, but unsure of the position, West played the ♥4 and East won with the queen, cashed the ♠J and exited with a spade, West scoring the last two tricks with the red kings, -300 and a 9 IMP swing.

We saw South overcall 2♣, 3♣ and 4♣. I would go for 3♣, which at the prevailing vulnerability must show a good suit in an otherwise weak hand. It also has the merit of keeping 3NT in the picture if partner is minded to bid it.



Eric Greco
Photo: WBF

44th WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS
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Victim of the Day

Christina Lund Madsen

by Christina Lund Madsen



(On Zia's request (and because the editor spent most of yesterday travelling back from Sweden) we republish this interview from six months ago in a slightly updated version. We will be back with more new Victims next event.)

How old are you, where are you from, tell us about your family and background?

- I have now reached the age where I need to wear reading glasses and was kicked out of a party because I was too old. I am Danish and live just north of Copenhagen. I am a journalist and have been lucky to manage to combine my education with my passion. I am happily divorced and have two boys aged 11 and 12 who I will bring to bridge tournaments as soon as I can trust them to go to the pool without drowning and not disturb me during play because they cannot find the iPad charger.

How has corona life been for you?

Tough. I am a very social person. I work at home so I don't see many people daily besides my children. I miss all my bridge friends terribly and often dream about you at night. Yet in Denmark we have been lucky; the government has provided financial support for those affected by Covid (such as myself) and bars and restaurants reopened this week after four months lockdown.

How did you begin to play bridge?

- I grew up to the sound of my parents and grandparents playing cards. My parents taught my sister and me when we were about 8 and 10 and I played two years with my mom at my parents' local club when I was 14-15. However I never played bridge with anyone my own age and there were boys at basketball so I only played a few times during my teenage years. In the summer of 2001 I went to a junior camp in Poland and that was it for me. I became completely obsessed with the game and met the most intelligent and fun people from all over the world, many of whom are my close friends today.

What is your most memorable moment in bridge?

- Bridge has given me so many unforgettable moments I can hardly pick one. I choose to tell you about how my biggest moment became a wound for life. In Dallas in 2014 I won the Open Swiss at the nationals on a team with my friends Roy Welland and Sabine Auken and their German teammates Josef Piekarek and Alexander Smirnov. I was added as a fifth player and played only with Josef. I did not earn a single dollar that event and crashed in a good friend's hotel room, and now one of my biggest dreams came true. I felt my feet did not touch the ground that day or the next to come. A little more than a year later the cheating scandal happened. Piekarek-Smirnov confessed to having cheated. My teammates and I forfeited the title and I did no longer mention my biggest moment to anyone.



On Borneo with my sons Hektor and Oskar in 2019.

I won the European Championships the following year and thought that would heal the wound, but it didn't and I think no win ever will, because there is nothing like the first.

Tell us something about yourself not many people know.

- I have never done drugs and I love superheroes. I have a thing for fantasy especially. Heroes with swords and characters with honourable hearts and special abilities. As a child I used to dream I was a superhero. As a teenager I dreamt more of making out with the superhero. Now I tell my kids I am one.

Tell us a funny story from a bridge tournament.

- Hrm. I think many people would appreciate if I skip this question. Since I had a reputation for skinny dipping (before my body's decay during Covid...) I will share one story involving that.

It was the World Championships in Bali 2013. I was there working as a bridge journalist for the first time. The Swedish women did not qualify for the knockouts and since I'm more or less an adopted Swede we decided to drown our sorrows in waves on Bali with the midnight moon as our only witness.

And two English

bridge players wearing glasses and shorts and holding their towels and proudly declaring they were going for a swim. The naked Scandinavian girls beat them to it. Then a massive wave came and flushed away all the belongings of one player. She had no problem walking home without her clothes, but among them was a clock from her grandmother. She was devastated. So we all searched the sea (naked) looking for her clock. The Brits were very helpful but I kept wondering why they were wearing their glasses in the ocean.

The next day they met a countryman to tell him how they had spent their evening. England had also been knocked out, and the player was a little annoyed (he played this week and his name rhymes with mould) and said "Just don't tell me you went skinny dipping with the Scandinavians." His friend replied: "Yes – and I kept my glasses on!"

There was more than one funny story from Bali, but you have to read Sjoert Brink's interview from the pre-bulletin of the first Major Alt to get another one.

What interests do you have besides bridge?

- I am not sure I would call it an interest as much as self-torture, but I run a bit more than the average bridge player. A year ago, I had to run my first marathon to avoid paying John Kranyak 500 dollars (yes, we were drunk when we made the bet and at the time I liked my chances).

What goals do you have in bridge and life?

- I want to be a world champion before I turn 50. But most of all I want to write a book. I have written about 100 pages of "The Student", which has absolutely nothing to do with bridge. I plan to sell it to Netflix and retire in a few years and work on the world championship...

Name three things you are really bad at.

- Leaving a party early. Keeping my mouth shut. Realising I'm in love.

Vinita Gupta's question for you: What is the secret of your enthusiastic approach to life?

- Strangely most people think I have lived a sorrowless life because I always seem so happy. I think it is the other way around. If you have had your share of hardship you become more appreciative of the joys life has to offer. I never want to regret not pursuing a dream. I might fail, but at least I tried.

When were you most happy?

- As for happiness you often don't realise how happy you were until after. But I think during the World Championships in Chennai 2015 and sleeping in a tent in the rainforest with my children are the happiest times of my life.

If you could give an advice to future generations, what would it be?

- Strive to be the best version of yourself. Teach your children not to bully others. There is no excuse for maltreating anyone.

Who would you like to partner, kiss, kill between Dennis Bilde, Ton Bakkeren and Sebastiaan Drijver (picked by Sjoert Brink)?

- You never fully realise how annoying this question is until you are presented with it. I would kiss Ton because I think he would appreciate it more than the other two and I would like to see his face when I do it. I would partner Dennis because I owe him (at least) a world championship and we always have very entertaining system chats on the plane before an event, especially if they don't run out of champagne. Though I love playing with him, I will kill Bas for reasons that only he and the participants at his wedding will know about. (The most annoying thing is I asked Sjoert: "So who do you think I picked?" and he without hesitation got all three right including why.)



A happy moment before the kill. Photo: EBL



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