

The Buffett Bridge Cup – 2008

Louisville, Kentucky
Europe vs United States

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Pre-Bulletin

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Prepared Monday morning

Schedule for Monday, September 25, 2008

Central Standard Time - Kentucky

Session 1: 10:30 – 11:55

Session 2: 12:00 – 13:25

Lunch

Session 3: 14:30 – 15:55

Session 4: 16:00 – 17:25

Session 5: 17:30 – 18:55

BLOWN AWAY!

Winds of 75 miles per hour met some of the players arriving for the Second Buffett Cup match between USA and Europe in Louisville, Kentucky.

Most of the European team had flown in on Saturday a few hours before the edge of the hurricane struck Louisville. The unlucky one was Sabine Auken whose flight from Chicago had been cancelled due to mechanical failure, and the replacement was delayed due to the closure of the airport.

By Sunday afternoon the Europeans were all on site, the Galt House Hotel, with a spectacular setting on the edge of the Ohio River. But the American team still had four of its players stranded at airports seeking flights to Louisville. Play is due to start at 10.30 am on Monday morning.

Last to arrive was Zia Mahmood. "He doesn't want to play with me," grumbled partner Bob Hamman with a grin, "he's just using that old excuse, a cancelled flight!"

Roy Welland, a member of the organising Committee and also on the USA team, hosted a welcoming party on the Sunday evening. There the draw for the first day was conducted.



Some viewers may be confused by the scoring, so here is how it works:

The scoring mimics the Ryder Cup of Golf which follows the Buffett Cup match in the same city. All teams have 12 players and a non-playing captain who selects line-up.

The golf has three formats: four-ball-better-ball, foursomes, and individual. The bridge has Pairs, Teams, and Individual. Each hole played in a golf match has a win, lose or draw result, and each deal in a bridge match has the same. Point-a-board scoring as it is called makes every board of equal importance, whether it is a lowly part-score or a grand slam. If you have a better score than the table with which you are comparing you have won the board, irrespective of the size of the difference. The six bridge tables are in two rows of three with comparison between matching tables. All tables are shown live on www.bridgebase.com

Day 1, Monday, is the Pairs event. Each pair on the USA team has been drawn to compare with a particular pair on the European team at another table holding the same cards. Pairs comparing against each other cannot meet. Each pair plays an 11 board set against each of the other five pairs from the opposing team. When the set is finished the match is scored point-a-board and the winning table earns 4 points for a win in the match, 2 for a drawn match, or 0 for a loss. With three pairs of tables in each set, and five sets during the day a total of 120 matchpoints is up for grabs.

Here is the draw for comparing pairs:

USA compares with Europe

Alan Sontag-David Berkowitz with:

Sabine Auken-Marion Michielsen

Roy Welland-Bjorn Fallenius with:

Michel & Thomas Bessis

Steve Garner-Howard Weinstein with:

Michal Kwiecien-Jacek Pszczola

Zia Mahmood-Bob Hamman with:

Tom Hanlon-Hugh McGann

Dick Freeman-Geoff Hampson with:

Boye Brogeland-Espen Lindqvist

Tobi Sokolow-Janice Seamon-Molson with:

Tor Helness-Jan Petter Svendsen

This draw produced some interesting line-ups. The regular partner of David Berkowitz is Larry Cohen, who has announced he is retiring shortly from top-class bridge. The partnership of Alan Sontag & Roger Bates had come to an end, so a new partnership was born. The Buffett Cup was the first deal Berkowitz and Sontag would have face-to-face. By chance they were drawn to compare with the women's pair from the European Team who was also playing their first board together. (To digress for a moment: here is one difference between the golf and the bridge: the bridge teams are required to have two female players. We have little doubt that within the next hundred years the golf event will get round to the same idea.)

The regular partner of Sabine Auken is Daniela von Arnim. Daniela had a family commitment she could not miss. So Sabine paired up with Marion Michielsen. Michielsen and her regular partner Wortel were part of the Dutch Under 25 team that took gold at the last European Junior Championships. They were also in the Dutch University team that a week before the Buffett Cup won the World University Championships played in Poland. So Michielsen arrived in Louisville as a new world champion.



