

Robson Leads Men, Sokolow Leads Ladies

A strong third session saw England's Andrew Robson move into the lead in the Men's competition. Robson scored 64.02% in Session Three and now leads Norberto Bocchi by nearly three tops. Not far behind Bocchi come Alain Levy and Jens Auker, then a small gap to Bobby Wolff, Lew Stansby, Tor Helness and Jon Baldursson.

Meanwhile, the Ladies event is led by Tobi Sokolow. (USA) She has a two-board lead over Gloria Ho of Chinese Taipei, with Benedicte Cronier (France) a further board back in third place. Next come Sabine Auker, Catherine D'Ovidio and Veronique Bessis.

Men's Rankings After Session Three (76 Boards)

Rank	Player	MP	%	Rank	Player	MP	%
1	Andrew ROBSON	1084.5	59.46	27	Tony FORRESTER	915.8	50.21
2	Norberto BOCCHI	1017.4	55.78	28	John MOHAN	915.3	50.18
3	Alain LEVY	1006.2	55.16	29	Henri SZWARC	914.5	50.14
4	Jens AUKEN	1003.2	55.00	30	Paul CHEMLA	913.9	50.10
5	Bobby WOLFF	987	54.11	31	Zia MAHMOOD	908.6	49.81
6	Lew STANSBY	971.5	53.26	32	Alfredo VERSACE	906	49.67
7	Tor HELNESS	971.4	53.26	33	Luis LANTARON	902.6	49.49
8	Jon BALDURSSON	966.8	53.00	34	Apolinary KOWALSKY	901.2	49.41
9	Steve HAMAOU	961.5	52.71	35	Soldano DE FALCO	895.9	49.12
10	Krzysztof MARTENS	959.9	52.63	36	Piotr GAWRYS	893.2	48.97
11	Hervé MOUIEL	958.2	52.53	37	Christian MARI	886.1	48.58
12	Giorgio DUBOIN	946.8	51.91	38	Boye BROGELAND	885.2	48.53
13	Yalcin ATABEY	942.5	51.67	39	Subhash GUPTA	884.4	48.49
14	Gabriel CHAGAS	941.8	51.63	40	Justin HACKETT	882.2	48.37
15	Antonio SEMENTA	941.5	51.62	41	J-C QUANTIN	881.6	48.33
16	Patrick HUANG	936	51.32	42	Agustin MADALA	880.2	48.26
17	Andrej GROMOV	929.5	50.96	43	Claudio NUNES	875.5	48.00
18	Dick FREEMAN	929.1	50.94	44	Fredrik NYSTROM	859.6	47.13
19	Ishmael DEL'MONTE	928.7	50.92	45	Eric KOKISH	855.9	46.92
20	Michael CORNELL	924.5	50.69	46	Jan JANSMA	854.2	46.83
21	Bob HAMMAN	924.5	50.69	47	Frank MULTON	850.9	46.65
22	David BIRMAN	922.8	50.59	48	Walid EL AHMADY	825.8	45.27
23	Rashid UL GHAZI	918.8	50.37	49	Fred GITELMAN	814.3	44.64
24	Fulvio FANTONI	917	50.27	50	Guido FERRARO	800.2	43.87
25	Christo DRUMEV	916.3	50.24	51	Jiansheng JIN	760.1	41.67
26	Marc BOMPIS	916.3	50.24	52	Jason HACKETT	750.7	41.16

Ladies Session One

As with the Men on Wednesday, so with the Ladies yesterday, we start by taking a look at the defending champion, Benedicte Cronier of France. The first three boards made for a lively start to the session.

Board 1. None Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ A 8 5 ♥ K ♦ A Q J 2 ♣ A Q J 6 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 10 3 ♥ Q 10 8 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ 9 4</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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		<p>♠ 7 ♥ J 9 7 5 4 2 ♦ 8 6 4 3 ♣ K 7</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
<p>♠ 9 6 4 2 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 10 8 5 3</p>												

West	North	East	South
Cuzzi	Cronier	Lara	Gaviard
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♠	Dble	3♠
4NT	Pass	5♣	All Pass

Maria-Joao Lara made an aggressive negative double, planning to show her long hearts later, but she never got the opportunity to do so, which perhaps should not have come as a big surprise to her, looking at a weak hand with spade shortage. Daniele Gaviard's pre-emptive spade raise caused problems for Monica Cuzzi, who attempted to solve them by bidding 4NT for the minors. Well, perhaps that is what 4NT should mean in a regular partnership, but I have come across plenty of people who play it as RKCB for the suit promised by the negative double, hearts, and Lara duly denied any key cards.

Cronier led a spade against 5♣ and Cuzzi won the ace, ruffed a spade and took the diamond finesse, losing to the king. Cronier's trump return meant that there would be no second spade ruff and Cuzzi was one down, losing a spade and a heart; —50 and 5 MPs out of 12 for E/W.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ K 8 5 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ Q 9 8 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 7 3 ♥ A 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ J 7 6 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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		<p>♠ A 9 6 4 2 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ A K</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
			<p>♠ — ♥ K J 10 9 5 ♦ Q J 9 8 7 ♣ 10 4 3</p>									

West	North	East	South
Cuzzi	Cronier	Lara	Gaviard
—	—	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Dble	3♦
4♠	Dble	All Pass	

When Lara/Cuzzi stopped in 2♠, Gaviard competed with a two-suited 2NT, not wishing to risk a pass of a balancing double. Looking at four tricks, as she thought, Lara doubled Cronier's 3♣ and Gaviard ran, showing the red suits.

Why Cuzzi thought that this auction offered her the option of jumping to 4♠, when partner had not tried for game over the 2♠ raise, only she will know, but Cronier wasted no time in informing her that she had made a mistake.

Gaviard led the ♦Q against 4♠ doubled and Lara won the ace, cashed the ace and king of clubs, then played a spade to the king, doing well not to wince when Gaviard showed out. She threw a diamond on the ♣Q then ruffed a club before exiting with her last diamond. Cronier won that and played back the ♠Q, ducked, then the ♠J to declarer's ace. Now Lara played a heart and Gaviard went in with the king, thought for a moment, then played the ♥J. Cronier won the ♥A and cashed her two trump winners for down three; —500 and all 10 MPs to N/S.

Benedicte Cronier



Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ Q ♥ AKQ94 ♦ Q764 ♣ A62</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ A5 ♥ 82 ♦ AK109853 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ K862 ♥ 1075 ♦ J ♣ KQ1073</p>	<p>♠ J109743 ♥ J63 ♦ 2 ♣ J98</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Cuzzi	Cronier	Lara	Gaviard
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	2♦	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

The heart game was about to be made with an overtrick, so that in a sense Gaviard made the right decision when she saved in 4♣.

The only trouble with that was that she left Cronier with no winning option as both 4♣ and 5♦ are fated to go down by four tricks on accurate defence, though at least 4♣ is slightly more testing for E/W.

Cronier chose to go back to her seven-card suit, perhaps hoping that 4♣ implied some sort of diamond tolerance at least. There was nothing to the play and that was —800 and just 1 MP to the French pair.

Board 4. All Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ Q854 ♥ 109762 ♦ J85 ♣ A</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ AJ72 ♥ 5 ♦ 74 ♣ Q98752</p> <p>♠ 1063 ♥ AQ ♦ AKQ62 ♣ KJ10</p>	<p>♠ K9 ♥ KJ843 ♦ 1093 ♣ 643</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Meyers	Smith	Ho	Harasimowicz
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♥
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Ewa Harasimowicz led a low heart round to Gloria Ho's queen. Ho led a spade at trick two and Harasimowicz went in with the king to switch to her lowest club to dummy's bare ace. Ho crossed to hand by playing a diamond to the king then led the ♠6 for the queen and ace.

Now Nicola Smith, perhaps expecting an honour in partner's hand for the low club switch, which would certainly be standard English style, returned a low club. It appears that declarer has the club finesse for free here, but Ho went up with the king, thinking the queen would be offside, and held herself to nine tricks for +600. that was worth 8 MPs as 3NT had failed where South managed to avoid the heart lead.

Note that declarer would have made ten tricks had Smith not played back a club by the simple expedient of establishing a spade winner in the dummy.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 5 ♥ J1097 ♦ J43 ♣ A10732</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ J863 ♥ K86 ♦ A1097 ♣ J6</p> <p>♠ A942 ♥ Q432 ♦ 85 ♣ KQ4</p>	<p>♠ KQ107 ♥ A5 ♦ KQ62 ♣ 985</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Meyers	Smith	Ho	Harasimowicz
—	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

E/W could find no way into the auction once Ho had not opened the 11-count in second seat so they defended 2♠. Ho led the ♦8 and dummy's ten was allowed to hold the trick. Smith led the ♠K and, when that held, continued with the queen, which Ho won as Meyers discarded an encouraging club. Ho switched to king then queen of clubs before switching to a low heart.

Declarer won the heart in dummy after sitting and shaking her head for a while, wondering why she had not unblocked the ♠8 at trick three when West showed out. Had she done so, she would have been able to ruff the club high then lead the ♠6 to

dummy's seven to draw trumps without having to risk a four-one trump break. Not to worry, Smith ruffed the club with the jack anyway, cashed the blocking spade and led a diamond to dummy. When Ho had to follow there were ten tricks for a useful +170 and 9 MPs to N/S.

If East just plays a second diamond after winning the ♠A, declarer cannot get a ruff in either hand without in turn running into a diamond ruff, so is held to nine tricks.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ 7 ♥ KJ964 ♦ 864 ♣ Q1094	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ 106 ♥ A85 ♦ A52 ♣ AK765	♠ AJ542 ♥ Q7 ♦ KJ109 ♣ J3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ KQ983 ♥ 1032 ♦ Q73 ♣ 82											
West Meyers — INT	North Smith — 2♣	East Ho 1♠ All Pass	South Harasimowicz Pass									

The North hand is very defensive in nature with its 5-3-3-2 distribution, but it is very tempting to find a bid when looking at 15 HCP all in aces and kings and Smith duly overcalled.

Ho led the jack of diamonds and that looked to Smith as though the king would usually be offside so she ducked in dummy and won her ace. She continued with three rounds of clubs, both East and dummy throwing a spade.

Meyers won and cashed the other club winner, again East and dummy pitching spades, then led a low heart. Ho won the ♥Q and returned the suit, Smith ducking for a second time. She won the third heart and led spade and Ho won her ace then cashed the ♦K for one down; —50 and 12 MPs to E/W.

With every other E/W pair playing the hand their way and going down either 100 or 200, it didn't matter whether Smith made 2♣ or not but, had she gone up with dummy's ♦Q at trick one, it would still have been easy enough for the defence to prevail—they need only to shut out dummy's spade winners.

Board 7. All Vul. Dealer South.

♠ 10842 ♥ Q5 ♦ 43 ♣ K10842	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ AQ53 ♥ AJ73 ♦ AJ95 ♣ 5	♠ 96 ♥ 982 ♦ Q2 ♣ QJ9763
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ KJ7 ♥ K1064 ♦ K10876 ♣ A											

West	North	East	South
Poplilov	Vriend	Wei-S	Sokolow
—	—	—	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

A very straightforward auction saw Bep Vriend and Tobi Sokolow reach the contract we would all want to be in. Kathie Wei-Sender led the queen of clubs to dummy's ace and Vriend played king then another heart and was soon claiming all 13 tricks for +1460 and 9 MPs.

Board 8. None Vul. Dealer West.

♠ A ♥ Q95 ♦ 9753 ♣ A10832	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ KJ52 ♥ AK872 ♦ Q62 ♣ Q	♠ 964 ♥ J103 ♦ AK108 ♣ 976
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ Q10873 ♥ 64 ♦ J4 ♣ KJ54											

West	North	East	South
Poplilov	Vriend	Wei-S	Sokolow
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Dble	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

If we assume that North's jump raise is normal, then it is clearly a close decision whether South should or should not go on to game. The fifth trump is a big plus feature, of course, while the ♦J rates to be of limited value and the hand is a minimum in high-card terms. In the event, three N/S pairs stopped in a partscore and chalked up +140, while the other four bid game and went one down, so Sokolow/Vriend scored 3 MPs for —50.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ 8 3 ♥ J 6 5 2 ♦ A J 7 4 2 ♣ J 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A K J 10 6 ♥ 10 8 4 3 ♦ 10 6 ♣ K 10</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ K 9 ♣ A 9 8 6 5 4</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Poplilov	Vriend	Wei-S	Sokolow
—	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

This was the popular auction and everyone played 4♥ but nobody made it — not surprisingly. Wei-Sender led the ace of clubs then switched to her trump. Vriend won the trump and cashed a second round, after which she had no chance for success. She next played ace, king and jack of spades, and Wei-Sender covered. The ♠Q was ruffed and over-ruffed, and Matilda Poplilov returned her remaining trump, not that it mattered.

Vriend had to lose two diamonds from here, as the clubs were blocked so she had no discard, for down one and 9 MPs.

It might have got interesting had declarer unblocked the club at trick three then played a second heart to dummy to play the ♣Q.

It looks as though the defence can still prevail unless West ruffs in with the jack, but West has to be careful and one can imagine the contract being let through at times.

Board 10. All Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ Q 2 ♥ K 7 5 ♦ J 8 3 2 ♣ A Q 7 6</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A K 9 7 ♥ A J 6 3 ♦ K Q 10 5 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ 10 8 4 2 ♦ 6 ♣ J 10 5 4 2</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

♠ 10 8 4 3	♥ Q 9	♦ A 9 7 4	♣ K 8 3
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West	North	East	South
Sokolow	Midskog	Auken	D'Ovidio
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♣	Dble	3♣	Dble
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Facing a potential three-card suit, Sabine Auken's pre-emptive raise was slightly aggressive at the vulnerability but she did not make her name by being timid. Catherine D'Ovidio made a responsive double rather than commit to the weak four-card spade suit. Catharina Midskog cuebid in reply so now D'Ovidio bid the spades, ending the auction.

Sokolow led a low diamond and D'Ovidio put in dummy's ten, which held the trick, of course. She cashed the top spades then played ♦K followed by a diamond to the ace to lead the queen of hearts for the king and ace. Auken could choose when she took the ♠J, but one club trick was all there was to go with it; +650 and 7 MPs to N/S, the normal result.

Board 11. None Vul. Dealer South.

<p>♠ K 8 7 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ 7 6 4 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ J 10 9 3 ♥ Q J 4 2 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q 5 ♥ A K 10 6 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ K Q 5</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

♠ 6 2	♥ 8 7 5	♦ A K 5	♣ A J 10 9 8
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West	North	East	South
Sokolow	Midskog	Auken	D'Ovidio
—	—	—	1♣
Pass	1♥	INT	All Pass

D'Ovidio led the ♣J round to Auken's king. Declarer played the ♠Q at trick two to try to get honest count signals from the defenders and she succeeded in that aim as D'Ovidio began a peter. Needing some aid from her opponents, Auken tried the effect of exiting with a low diamond. D'Ovidio let that run to Midskog's ten and back came a second diamond. D'Ovidio won and cashed her remaining diamond then fingered a heart before correctly getting off play with a spade to the nine and ace. Auken cashed the top hearts then tried the spades and was one down for —50 and 4 MPs to E/W.

The contract could have been made had D'Ovidio ever switched to a heart as only one dummy entry would then have been required to pick up a third trick in the suit. As so often, passive defence was what was required.

As INT was made at two other tables, a small well done to D'Ovidio for her thoughtful defence.

Ladies Rankings After Session Two (54 Boards)

Place	Player	MPs	%
1	Tobi SOKOLOW	402	62.04
2	Gloria HO	378	58.33
3	Bénédicte CRONIER	366	56.48
4	Sabine AUKEN	353	54.48
5	Catherine D'OVIDIO	351	54.17
6	Véronique BESSIS	351	54.17
7	Diana GORDON	348	53.70
8	Betty Ann KENNEDY	343	52.93
9	Kathie WEI SENDER	341	52.62
10	Maria Joao LARA	339	52.32
11	Carla GIANARDI	333	51.39
12	Danièle GAVIARD	332	51.24
13	Jill MEYERS	330	50.93
14	Nicola SMITH	328	50.62
15	Migri Z-CAMPANILE	326	50.31
16	Sharon OSBERG	320	49.38
17	Janice S-MOLSON	319	49.23
18	Daniela VON ARNIM	318	49.07
19	Matilda POPILOV	312	48.15
20	Shawn QUINN	312	48.15
21	Sylvie WILLARD	306	47.22
22	Bep VRIEND	304	46.91
23	Maria ERHART	289	44.60
24	Anneke SIMONS	283	43.67
25	Catharina MIDSKOG	279	43.06
26	Monica CUZZI	277	42.75
27	Sheri WINESTOCK	276	42.59
28	Ewa HARASIMOWICZ	256	39.51



Catherine D'Ovidio

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

West	North	East	South
Sokolow	Midskog	Auken	D'Ovidio
3♦	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

If I have just praised Catherine D'Ovidio on the previous deal, this time I have to be critical of her aggressive balancing double. Exactly what you might imagine happened that, whenever three-of-a-major would be a good contract, partner would bid game and that would be too much.

Sure enough, Midskog jumped to 4♠, against which Auken cashed the ace of clubs then switched to a diamond. Sokolow won the diamond and switched to her singleton heart and duly received her ruff. There was still a trump to be lost so Midskog was down two for —200 and just 1 MP.



Tobi Sokolow

Kibitzing The Stars

By Kees Tammens

As you walk into the room for the first session of the Generali World Masters, the overwhelming atmosphere of champions conquers you.

As bidding is unlikely to be decisive in this Individual, the focus goes onto the play and defence. After some problems at the start, the kibitzer sits down behind Zia for Board 9.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ K J 5 ♥ K Q 7 4 3 ♦ J ♣ 10 9 8 2</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ 10 8 3 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 10 8 3 2 ♣ Q J 5 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 6 4 2 ♥ 10 9 ♦ A K Q 6 5 ♣ A 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
<i>El Ahmady</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Zia</i>	<i>Mohan</i>
—	Pass	INT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

After a typical INT opening, Zia reaches game from the right side (a club lead defeats 3NT if it is played by West, so Zia justified his bidding).

South, John Mohan led a diamond to the bare jack in dummy and Zia led the ♠K, ducked. After that, the jack of spades would have led to nine tricks as the spades break three-three, but Zia instead decided to play the low spade to his queen. Mohan was able to win this trick and switch to a club for the jack and ace, thereby cutting declarer's communications and leaving him a trick short.

On the run of four diamond tricks, dummy would be squeezed in three suits; one down for —100 and just 4 MPs out of 24 for E/W.



Board 14. None Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 9 7 2 ♥ A K J 6 2 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 10 4 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ K J 3 ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ J 8 7 4 ♣ Q 9</p>	<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ A 10 6 3 ♣ A K 8 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
<i>Mouiel</i>	<i>Zia</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Ferraro</i>
—	—	1♣	1♠
Dble	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	Dble	All Pass	

Zia is not a player who holds back when he is behind. Going for the +300, he decided to double Herve Mouiel's 3♥ contract.

Zia led the king of spades followed by the jack, before switching to the eight of diamonds. Declarer ducked the diamond and Guido Ferraro won the queen and returned a spade, ruffed in dummy. Mouiel cashed the ace of diamonds then ruffed a diamond. Next he cashed the ace of hearts before crossing to the ace of clubs and cashing the ♣K before leading the last diamond, ruffing while Zia had to follow suit. Mouiel exited with his losing club now and Zia was obliged to ruff then lead away from his ♥Q10 at the end to give declarer nine tricks and a very nicely played +530 for 20 MPs.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ 10 ♥ 8 ♦ A K 9 8 6 5 2 ♣ Q 9 6 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ 9 7 2 ♥ K J 7 5 4 ♦ J ♣ A K 10 4</p>	<p>♠ A Q 8 ♥ A 10 9 2 ♦ Q 10 4 3 ♣ 7 2</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

♠ K J 6 5 4 3
♥ Q 6 3
♦ 7
♣ J 8 5

West	North	East	South
Martens	Huang	Birman	Bocchi
3♦	3♥	3NT	4♥
5♦	All Pass		

My prediction of no bidding problems proved to be not strictly true as Krzysztof Martens had a nasty choice — especially in a matchpoint game — at his second turn. Double, 5♦, 5♣, 4NT and Pass all have their merits and the simple kibitzer had a strong preference for 4NT. That was not the winning action, but the Polish professor chose the right one when he bid 5♦, just making for +600 and 14 MPs.

The matchpoint game can be interesting because every trick counts. Alain Levy was very careful in a rather too high 3NT contract on this next deal.

Board 17. None Vul. Dealer North.

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

West	North	East	South
Atabey	Mohan	Bocchi	Levy
—	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

A small club was led to dummy's jack and declarer started well with a small diamond to his ten. Norberto Bocchi won the continuation of the king of diamonds and played back a diamond to Levy's queen. Hoping for a miracle, Levy led a heart to the ace and a heart back to the ten and jack.

Yalcin Atabey switched to the king of clubs and Levy ducked, so Atabey had to change tack, choosing the ♠Q, again ducked. A second spade was won by declarer's ace and Levy cashed the king of hearts then played the final heart to West's queen, endplaying him to lead into the ♣A9.

Despite being too high, by getting out for down one, Levy managed 13 MPs out of 24, instead of only 5 MPs had he been down two.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

West	North	East	South
Wolff	Nystrom	Gawrys	Kokish
—	—	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♣	2♥	3♥
4♥	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

Eric Kokish helped Fredrik Nystrom to find the killing defence on this deal by his bidding. Four Hearts was made at all the other eleven tables at which it was played.

Nystrom led the ace of clubs and Kokish dropped the jack, clearly showing four cards after the 3♥ bid. A trick in spades cannot be sufficient and will not be going anywhere anyway, so for a chance to beat the contract South needs to hold very suitable diamonds. So Nystrom switched to his doubleton diamond and Kokish won the queen, cashed the ace and gave his partner a ruff for one down, +100 and all the matchpoints.

(Given that nobody else managed to defeat the heart game, many people have discussed how the defence should get it right. Zia is of the opinion that, given the defensive carding methods in use here, after South has supported clubs, he should drop the ten at trick one. This cannot be a doubleton, nor can it be a count card from a three-card holding. Which only leaves a four-card holding and, as that must include the jack, it follows that the ten is suit preference for diamonds.)

I am sure that it will be of great comfort to Zia to know that I agree with him (BS.)

It is also only fair to point out that Eric was the only South to double the final contract, making it that much easier for partner to play him for the required diamond holding.

Killing Lead

When your opponents blast a slam without the use of any cuebids, it is often the case that the opening lead will be crucial to the contract's outcome. Sure enough, that was the case on Board 26 of the Ladies event, first session.

Board 26. All Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ J 6 4 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ 8 3 ♣ J 8 7 6 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ 10 8 7 3 ♥ K J 8 ♦ J 4 ♣ 10 5 4 2</p>	<p>♠ K ♥ 6 5 ♦ A K Q 6 5 2 ♣ A K Q 9</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Bessis	Lara	Hara'wicz	Kennedy
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

Maria-Joao Lara, Portugal's representative at these Championships, opened with the systemic semi-force of 2♦ and Betty Ann Kennedy made a positive response of 2♠ then, when Lara showed an eight-plus playing-trick hand with diamonds, just blasted the small slam.

Well, the books do recommend making aggressive leads against small slams in a suit, but it takes a certain amount of nerve to lead away from king-jack into a strong hand on your right. But that is what Ewa Harasimowicz did lead, the eight of hearts, and Veronique Bessis was delighted to take her ace and return a second heart to the king for a quick one down. Bravely done.

The slam was bid at two other tables, once making and once being defeated. I do not have the auctions from the other tables, but it appears that England's Nicola Smith was the other player to find the lead to defeat the slam.

Harasimowicz/Bessis scored 11 MPs for beating 6♦. Had the contract been allowed to make by a non-heart lead, —1390 would have scored just 1 MP out of a possible 12.

Session Three – Men

At the end of the second session, Denmark's Jens Auken still led the field, though by a smaller margin than before. It is time to take a look at our leader.

Board 1. None Vul. Dealer North.

<p>♠ A J 7 5 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ A 10 6 5 3 ♣ 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ 9 3 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ 7 2 ♣ A K Q 10 8 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 6 ♥ A Q J 10 7 ♦ K J 8 ♣ 9 7</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Kokish	Chemla	Auken	Chagas
—	1♣	1♥	1♠
Dble	2♣	2♦	3♣
3♥	4♣	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

Rather than support hearts immediately with three small trumps, Eric Kokish chose to make a competitive double, suggesting diamonds plus heart tolerance. Jens Auken wanted to do something with his extra values so bid the three-card diamond suit and now Kokish was happy to support hearts at his next turn. He must have been close to jumping to game but contented himself with a simple 3♥, completing the picture he had in mind from the outset — a three-card limit raise.

Four Hearts is a good contract on the E/W cards but Auken did not like his two low clubs and was willing to sell out to 4♣. Kokish was not and, as so often, believed that his extra call after showing his general hand should be a double. Auken, as balanced as could be for his bidding to date, had no reason to move so 4♣ doubled it was.

Auken led the eight of diamonds and Kokish won his ten to switch to a heart. Paul Chemla put up the king with little hope in his heart and Auken won, cashed a second heart, then played king and jack of diamonds. there was nowhere for declarer's spade losers to go so that was down three for —500 and 20 MPs to Auken/Kokish.

A nice way to start the session for our leader.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ K Q J 2 ♥ A 9 7 ♦ Q 10 6 5 4 ♣ 4</p>	<p>♠ 5 4 ♥ K 10 5 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ A K Q 5 2</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">N W E S</p> </div> <p>♠ A 10 9 8 ♥ Q J 6 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ A 9 ♣ J 10 8 7 6</p>	
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West	North	East	South
<i>Kokish</i>	<i>Chemla</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Chagas</i>
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Dble	3♠	All Pass

Chemla did not wish to overcall 2♣ while holding four cards in a major suit, nor to double with only two cards in the other major, so passed at his first turn but then doubled when his opponents found their spade fit. When Auken raised himself to 3♠, Kokish clearly assumed that it was not forward going, and passed, so the decent game had been missed.

Gabriel Chagas led the ♥3, ducked to Chemla's king, and he switched to a trump. Auken drew three rounds of those ending in dummy then led a diamond to the king and ace. He got the diamond right to come to ten tricks for +170 but, with five pairs bidding and making game, that was worth just below average, 10 MPs.

The leader scored a zero on Board 3 when his partner played INT on a combined 25-count and made a trick less than looked normal while most pairs were bidding and making game. However, the damage was repaired on the next board.

Board 4. All Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ J 7 5 4 ♥ K Q J 7 ♦ Q 9 ♣ 6 5 2</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 8 ♥ 9 5 ♦ 8 7 5 ♣ J 9 8 7 4</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">N W E S</p> </div> <p>♠ A 9 2 ♥ A 6 4 ♦ K 4 ♣ A K Q 10 3</p>	<p>♠ K 6 3 ♥ 10 8 3 2 ♦ A J 10 6 3 2 ♣ —</p>	
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West	North	East	South
<i>Wolff</i>	<i>Levy</i>	<i>Gupta</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

First we take a look at the vugraph table, where the most popular auction took place, resulting in India's Subhash Gupta declaring 3NT.

Piotr Gawrys led the jack of diamonds and Gupta put up dummy's queen then played a club to his ace, discovering the bad break as Gawrys threw the three of spades. Gupta crossed to a heart to take the club finesse and soon had the normal result of +630 for 10 MPs.

Auken had Zia Mahmood on his right, and Zia was not in the mood to go quietly with the South cards.

West	North	East	South
<i>Auken</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Jansma</i>	<i>Zia</i>
Pass	Pass	2NT	3♦
4♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass

I don't know if take-out doubles are part of the official method in this tournament, but surely that would be the normal call if available, presumably leading to East rebidding 3NT on the strength of the good club suit. Anyway, Auken cuebid to ask for a major and Jan Jansma chose the lower one.

Zia led ace followed by two of diamonds, a revealing signal, and Jansma won the king and played on trumps. When the four-two split came to light, he had to draw all the trumps before touching clubs, and that put Tony Forrester to two discards. As it turns out, he would have done best to throw spades, but that was not so easy to see. In practice, Forrester threw a club and his remaining diamond.

Trusting his opponent's trick two signal, and having seen him turn up with ten red cards and North unwilling to throw a single spade, suggesting that South had some spade length also, Jansma had two good reasons for his next play, which was to finesse the ten of clubs. When that held the trick, he could cash out the suit and had eleven tricks for +650 and 22 MPs.

The first four deals of the session saw the leader score 52 MPs against 48 average but his lead was down to only 6 MPs over Andrew Robson at this early point in the session.