

ENGLAND IN THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN TEA <i>final position</i> just above average for the day, held on to 6th place out of the 30 teams	MIXED TEAM <i>final position</i> just above average for the day but slipped back to 5th place out of 25 teams
WOMEN'S TEAM <i>final position</i> averaging nearly 17/20 VPs per match, moved up into first place of the 21 teams	SENIOR'S TEAM <i>final position</i> just above average for the day but slipped back from 8th to 9th place out of 23 teams

DAY ELEVEN

The first match of the day threw up this deal. It is not compulsory to open with the East hand but 26 of the 30 Easts in the Open event did, and once South makes a take-out double North has to guess what to do. John Atthey, here for the Mixed teams, tried the slam. After the diamond ace was ruffed at trick one, the slam is touch and go. Declarer drew trumps and played a heart – which West must duck but they failed to do that. From this point there is a complicated criss-cross trump squeeze which delivers 12 tricks, but it was not found. In the Open England gained 7 imps from 4H when their opponents had an accident and stopped in 4C. In the Seniors one East passed and defended 4H, while the other opened 2S and collected +50 from 6H (after X-P-5H-P-6H). Both teams in the women's match played in game (making).

That match saw the Seniors drop to 11th place but they recovered in the next match back to 8th position. This deal was particularly interesting. Everyone seemed very keen to bid with the East cards (in the Open half bid 3H), and against the English Women they actually overcalled 4H. That meant no room for a slam try in spades and Nevena Senior got to play in 4S, and found there were two unavoidable losers. Those with auctions such as illustrated bid onwards to the doomed slam. Across the field there were 42 plus scores for NS, but 64 for EW – and that was mostly 6S-1. There were 5 pairs who bid to the cold 6D, but only one of them made that contract.

26	N North ♠ K10985 ♥ 9 ♦ QJ ♣ 96532	W N E S 2♣ P 1♥ P 3NT P 2♥ P
W West ♠ AQJ ♥ J5 ♦ A1063 ♣ KQ84	E East ♠ 4 ♥ AQ108743 ♦ 95 ♣ AJ10	
	S South ♠ 7632 ♥ K62 ♦ K8742 ♣ 7	

across the Mixed three quarters of the field bid the slam with three going down, across the Seniors just over half bid the slam but four went off, and in the Women's two thirds bid the slam and three went off.

11	N North ♠ K1082 ♥ K4 ♦ J983 ♣ AK6	W N E S P 1♠ 3♥ 1♦ P ? 4♥
W West ♠ QJ63 ♥ J75 ♦ Q65 ♣ 1093	E East ♠ 7 ♥ Q1098632 ♦ 104 ♣ J84	
	S South ♠ A954 ♥ A ♦ AK72 ♣ Q752	

The final match of the series came next and it was full of slams. One was a trivial grand slam but it was bid two third of the time in the Mixed and Open, but only at half the tables in the Seniors and the Women. On this deal there were double figure swings at all England tables – it was not an easy slam to bid. How do you proceed from here, where 3N shows 15-17 and a doubleton heart? The Norwegian Open team – who won the Open series – showed the way by bidding 4D, with a hand too good to sign off in 4H. Now West cue bid 4S (doubled) and there were soon in the slam. Those who chose 4H at this point played there. Across the Open half the field bid the slam (although two went off in 6N),

DAY TEN

All teams were back in action today, and this board in the first match produced some interesting questions and a number of swings. Would you give a positive response on the West hand here? Would you have opened 2♣ with the East hand? It does depend on NT ranges but in the Open 16 opened 2♣ (sometimes 2♦) while 7 opened 2N and 7 opened 1♣. Eleven stopped out of slam (one in 5♣-1) and of those in slam two failed in 6♣ and two failed in 6♥. The English Women and Mixed stopped in game, but the other two bid the slam. The testing lead against the slam, the ♠Q (found less often the ♦Q) can be overcome by bashing out clubs before trumps, over-ruffing, cashing ♥A and returning to hand to continue clubs.

30	D	N North		W N E S			
		♠ K972 ♥ K6 ♦ 642 ♣ 10542		2♥ P 2♣ ?			
W West				E East			
♠ 1063 ♥ A109852 ♦ K75 ♣ 6				♠ A54 ♥ QJ ♦ A10 ♣ AKQJ98			
		S South					
		♠ QJ8 ♥ 743 ♦ QJ983 ♣ 73					

D 16		N North ♠ QJ1093 ♥ 93 ♦ Q932 ♣ 94	W N E S 1♠ P 2♣ 4♥ P P P P 5♥ P 6♣ P P P
W West ♠ AK854 ♥ 1065 ♦ KJ10 ♣ 108			E East ♠ 62 ♥ 8 ♦ A865 ♣ AKQ732
		S South ♠ 7 ♥ AKQJ742 ♦ 74 ♣ J65	
			6♣ E NS: 0 EW: 0

The Seniors had a narrow squeak on the final deal from the next match. The Turkish opposition had a misunderstanding, with East bidding 4N intending to show diamonds alongside long clubs, but his partner took it as ace asking. The result was a tight slam, and after two rounds of hearts, declarer drew trumps and played to the diamond king and finessed successfully. From here all he needs to do is cash all his trumps and North is squeezed into submission. But he failed and the contract drifted down one. All the other tables in England matches avoided the 4N bid, just bidding 5♣ over 4♠, and they duly collected 12 tricks.

In the third match of the day (no Open team match) this was the most interesting hand. West has a choice to make over the diamond raise. One option is 3♥ (suggesting a suit playable opposite a doubleton) and another is a fourth suit forcing of 3♠. Martin Jones for the Mixed chose 3♥ and it then proceeded 3♠-3N-4♥, to an unbeatable contract. The Seniors bid 3♠-3N-P to a more difficult contract. The Women bid a FSF 2♠ over 2♦ leading to 3♥-4♥-P. Against 3N, the defence usually started with three rounds of spades. If North plays a fourth round now, then they are destined to be squeezed when the diamonds are played and will conceded the contract. If instead North find the ♣K play at this time, the contract goes one down.

19 D		N North ♠ A1032 ♥ J983 ♦ Q53 ♣ KJ	W N E S 1♥ P 2♣ P 2♦ P 3♦ P ?
W West ♠ 975 ♥ AKQ52 ♦ J1074 ♣ Q		E East ♠ QJ ♥ 76 ♦ AK98 ♣ A10964	
	S South ♠ K864 ♥ 104 ♦ 62 ♣ 87532		

Only the Mixed had a fourth match today, and in that they beat Estonia by 47 imps. John Atthey & Sally Anoyrkatis bid three slams which the opposition mirrored, but they made three to the opponents' one. In one case it involved careful play when the trumps broke 4-0, and in the other choosing to play in the 4-4 club fit was worth a trick, which was missing when you play in 6N.

DAY NINE

The Open is down to a reduced schedule now with only two matches today (skipping the 0930 match), while the others all have three (except that there was a BYE for some). In the first match the second board told us something about the way the game is played today. You are holding ♠AKQT865-♥92-♦4-♣K53 at favourable vulnerability after two passes. What do you open? In the Mixed, 9 of the 13 Wests in this position immediately bit to the 4-level, which was of course too high; as did 9 of the 11 Wests who had an opening bid in front of them. A very few of the declarers made their contract and only four were doubled. There were just 6 declarers in 66 tables who stopped out of game.

D 29				
	N North	W	N	E S
	♠ AKQ32		1♠	2♦ 4♠
	♥ 73		5♦	P P ?
	♦ 83			
	♣ A965			
W West		E East		
♠		♠ 987		
♥ AQJ95		♥ K62		
♦ Q7654		♦ AKJ102		
♣ 732		♣ Q4		
	S South			
	♠ J10654			
	♥ 1084			
	♦ 9			
	♣ KJ108			

In the second match, there was enormous potential for swings on this board. Across the Open, 21 tables overcalled 2D as shown here and two double, which left only 7 who passed. Passing was not always fatal as in three of those cases partner came to life with 4N and the diamond fit was found. The big issue is whether to let the opponents play in 5D or not; six tables bid on and pushed the opponents into 6D and only one of the six defeated the slam. The slam was voluntarily bid 11 times and in four of those cases South diagnosed that the opposition were ready for a spade lead, and they fished out a club to beat the slam.

The third match of the day was the BYE for both of the Seniors and Mixed teams. The match started with this hand to bid (for NS but rotated here for display). It was a flat result in both matches (grand slam in Open and small slam in Women). In the Open 24 out of 30 tables reached the grand slam, while in the Women only 5 out of 20 tables reached the grand slam (and one played in game!) How should it be bid? For England, Ben Norton opened 1H with the bid hand and hears 1S-2S(good raise)-3S; he now organised to ask for aces and then made a grand slam try which his partner – with a few extras – was happy to accept. Across the field there were 16/30 who opened 1H, 4/30 who had a special bid for this sort of hand, and 10/30 who opened either a strong 1C or a strong 2C. In the Women's section the corresponding numbers were 13/20, 2/20 and 5/20. Opening at the 1-level with a 9-trick hand seems to be the favoured choice.

W West	E East
♠ J	♠ AQ2
♥ AKQ87652	♥ J103
♦ A	♦ K985
♣ 984	♣ AK2

DAY EIGHT

The big hand in the first match today was this one. How do you describe this 9-playing trick hand with your second bid? It is just about a game force in clubs; the Croatia against England in the Mixed made the bidding simply by rebidding 6♣, and his partner raised to 7♣. Very luckily for England Martin Jones fished out a diamond lead – the only suit to beat the grand slam. Two of the English Souths started with 3♣ (and ended in 6♣ and 7♣) while the fourth had an artificial choice showing a hand too good for a 3♣ rebid. This at least avoid the 2♠ choice some others found they had to make. In the Open team's match, it got more complicated as East doubled 1♥ and now Tom Paske could redouble and jump in clubs to show an enormous hand. The final outcomes were +16 for the England Mixed when the diamond was led, +13 imps for the Seniors when their opponents had an accident and stopped in 4♣, a gain of +10 for the Women when they opponents stopped in 4♥, and -11 for the Open when a trump was led against 7♣ (declarer can now ruff out the hearts for the 13th trick).

14				
	N North	W	N	E S
	♠ Q532			P 1♥ P 1♣
	♥ AJ9852		P	1♥ P ?
	♦ K			
	♣ A5			
W West		E East		
♠ KJ8		♠ 10964		
♥ Q64		♥ K103		
♦ J972		♦ Q108653		
♣ 843		♣		
	S South			
	♠ A7			
	♥ 7			
	♦ A4			
	♣ KQJ109762			

The most interesting deal in the second match was this one. The easy auctions on this deal came about when

26 D	N North		W N E S			
	♠ Q762 ♥ KJ107642 ♦ 106 ♣ 106		1♣	3♥	P	P
W West		E East		X	P	?
♠ K95 ♥ Q ♦ AQ10 ♣ AQ9732		♠ A ♥ 98 ♦ J98732 ♣ KJ85				
		S South				
		♠ J10843 ♥ A53 ♦ K654 ♣ 4				

East opened the bidding with a weak two in diamonds; West enquired and then bid game and that rolled home for a +600 score. But many were not playing a weak two in diamonds and at those tables it started off as shown. Against the English Women the double was taken out to 4N (two places to play) and West bid 5C and played there; Nevena Senior found the lead of the H2, and Nicola Smith recognised that this was a request for a diamond ruff. Declarer failed to realise this and rose with the DA at trick two and when that was ruffed, 5C was down! Against Helen Erichsen's 5C (from East after West opened 1N) the lead was HA and there was no hint of a diamond void and so no

diamond switch. Across the field there were 11 pairs playing in 6C on a heart lead, and only six of them found the diamond return to beat the slam.

W West	E East
♠ J1076	♠ A83
♥ AK	♥ J64
♦ A532	♦ K86
♣ Q32	♣ A1086

The Open team had a short day and disappeared now while the others toiled on – some for two more matches. This simple hand came up in match three and two England teams gained a game swing when the opponents did not find the obvious line. On the fourth best heart lead found against everyone's 3N, you

need to develop tricks in two suits out of spades (3 tricks 20% of the time) and/or diamonds (3 tricks 36% of the time) and/or clubs (about a 37% chance of 3 tricks). If you go about the clubs by playing to the queen (and when it loses then to the ten) you get three clubs, and ducking one diamond gets a trick there – and you are home because the hearts are split 4-4. Spades do divide evenly but you must lose two to gain one, and that gives you five losers. At the end of this match Sweden, Belgium and Turkey all took a 13-imp gain when the English team against them bid 6NT on 32 hcp and lots of tricks, except that they were missing two aces and had not checked on this.

The final match of the day featured only the Seniors and the Mixed. It featured this deal; across 46 tables, 36

25 D	N North		W N E S			
	♠ 10732 ♥ Q76 ♦ Q52 ♣ Q84		1♥	P	1♦	P
W West		E East		4♥	P	P
♠ A95 ♥ K9542 ♦ A8 ♣ J105		♠ KQJ ♥ AJ83 ♦ J1064 ♣ 32				
		S South				
		♠ 864 ♥ 10 ♦ K973 ♣ AK976				

tables played in 4♥ by West, and 20 tables made ten tricks, and 16 tables made nine tricks. (There were also ten heart contracts by East). Success depends on playing the hearts successfully – so after the ♥K drops the ten from South, do you finesse or play for the drop? The a priori odds are that QT is slightly more likely that singleton T – but there is something else to factor in. This is the fact that North might have chosen to lead a heart if they held ♥76, but they would never choose to lead a heart if they held ♥Q76. If you allow as little as even a 10% chance North might lead a trump from the seven-six, then this swings the odds in favour of a finesse. Well done those who drew this inference! At

the table a surprising number did finesse the heart – but one reason many did was that South ventured a takeout double of 2♥ in the middle of the auction. Sometime silence is golden!

DAY SEVEN

All four teams had three matches and this produced two wins for each of the four teams. This board from the first match was a serious loss to each of our teams except the Women – who gained 11 imps on it. Most auctions started like this and the person with the decision to make was South. The majority vote was for pass, although the German Seniors ventured 2♦ here. This ruled out 3N for EW and they settled for 4♣, just making. When South was silent, there were winning choices for East (3N by Nevena Senior for our Women’s team) but also losing choices (as when the Norwegian Women who bid to 5♣-1). Our Open team defended 3N by East but South led partner’s heart suit for -400, which is not as good as the lead from the Lithuanian South who was silent but led a diamond to collect down three against our Mixed team. Bidding diamonds and scaring them off seems a middle route, but sometimes it is better to keep silent and find the surprise attack.

24	N North		W N E S			
	♠ A73 ♥ QJ108532 ♦ A6 ♣ Q		1♣	1♥	1♠	?
W West		E East				
♠ K ♥ A9 ♦ 982 ♣ AKJ7642		♠ Q10952 ♥ K6 ♦ Q10 ♣ 10983				
		S South				
		♠ J864 ♥ 74 ♦ KJ7543 ♣ 5				

		N North			
		♠ Q62 ♥ J ♦ AKJ653 ♣ K73			
W West				E East	
♠ 1085 ♥ AQ2 ♦ 107 ♣ QJ1054				♠ AKJ43 ♥ 8764 ♦ Q4 ♣ A8	
		S South			
		♠ 97 ♥ K10953 ♦ 982 ♣ 962			

In the second match of the day, England scored well on this board, played in 4♠ at almost all tables. North had most times bid diamonds, so the defence started off with two top diamonds and a switch to the HJ, won by the queen. Declarer was then looking at the possibility of finesses in spade and in clubs, and had two losing hearts to dispose of. Brian Senior (for the Seniors Team) made it very simply by finessing the ♠Q, drawing trumps and bashing out clubs from the top. Others took a winning club finesse first but now life became awkward. After a second club, one declarer tried ♠J, losing to the queen but thereby generating an extra entry to set up the clubs. But others did not force an entry to the West hand and then you are not able to set up the clubs. England Open team made 11 tricks while their opponents made only 9 tricks.

England Open team made 11 tricks while their opponents made only 9 tricks.

The third match was a BYE for the Women’s team which means they missed this interesting hand. The first question I how does your system cope with a flat 26 hcp hand, and after you have shown that what does partner do with an 8-card diamond suit? It’s not something for which we routinely prepare.

As it was the most common contract (24 of 30 tables in the Open) was 6♦, and that then leaves you with the problem of how to play the diamond suit. You have plenty of outside winners, so you are looking to avoid two diamond losers. There is a safety play here, leading the ten or nine from the long hand and only just covering what the next hand plays; if that hand shows out, you rise with the ace and lead towards the Q9. The traveller suggests that only ten out of twenty four declarers spotted this. England Open lost 16 when both teams were in 6♦, and the other English teams both gained by stopping in game while their opponents misplayed the slam!

W West		E East	
♠ AKQ9 ♥ AQ9 ♦ A2 ♣ AK76		♠ 8 ♥ 104 ♦ Q10976543 ♣ J5	

DAY SIX

This day started with the biggest win yet to report, when the Open Team clocked up 20-0 against Ireland, moving themselves up to third place in the rankings. That was a score of 80-3, while in the Mixed match the same boards only generated a score of 18-11, and in the Seniors only 22-12. There was an interesting defence to find on this – and many didn't. The lead was usually a club to the ace, and declarer played a spade to the king and a second one to the jack and ace. With only three spade tricks to go with one club and five diamonds declarer needs one in hearts. But at this point, for the Seniors, Alan Mould played back ♠T. When declarer ducked this he could revert to clubs, forcing a ruff, and when declarer got around to hearts he had no trumps left and lost a club tricks. Declarer needed to win the third spade and overtake his diamonds to play hearts towards his hand. The contract failed in both rooms in our Mixed match, succeeded in both in the Women's, and gained 10 imps for England in the Open and Seniors.

27 D		N North ♠ KQ642 ♥ KJ104 ♦ QJ8 ♣ 10	W N E S P 1♠ P 1NT P 2♦ P 2♣ P 4♠ P P P
W West ♠ A1087 ♥ Q65 ♦ 32 ♣ K653			E East ♠ 9 ♥ A972 ♦ 1064 ♣ Q9742
		S South ♠ J53 ♥ 83 ♦ AK975 ♣ AJ8	4♠ N NS: 0 EW: 0

D		N North		W N E S			
1		♠ AJ1084		1♠ 2♥ 4♥			
		♥ K5		5♥ 5♠ X P			
		♦ A943		P P			
		♣ KQ					
W West				E East			
♠ 2				♠ K3			
♥ 109874				♥ AQJ63			
♦ 1085				♦ 76			
♣ 9763				♣ A1085			
		S South					
		♠ Q9765					
		♥ 2					
		♦ KQJ2					
		♣ J42					
				5♠x N NS: 0 EW: 0			

In the second match of the day it was the turn of the Mixed team to clock up a large win against the Irish, while the Seniors were hammered by the Swedes, while the Open had a small win over Austria and the Women had a comfortable win over France. The first board in this match produced swings in all four of England's matches. The auction shown was that of the English Women, pushing the opponents too high. In the Open 8/30 pushed on to 5♥; five got doubled but the other three gained when NS bid on and went minus in spades. A number of NS pairs also bid freely to the five level or six level.

In the third match, there were plenty of swings but it was on the final board where England picked up most, with two 12 imps swings and two 13 imps swings. The auction shown was from a multi-2♦ opener and 4♣ asking partner to transfer into the major, so that East could be declarer. The downside was that South (Kay Predy for the Seniors for example) could double to show clubs and find the sacrifice. It was not that the sacrifice was a great bargain (it could lose 800 but in practice never did) – but it gave the opponents the chance to go wrong and many did by bidding on. Against our Open and Women's teams the opponents freely bid the hopeless 6♥, while in the Seniors and the Mixed auction shown ended with the opponents in 5♥-1.

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D		N North		W		N		E		S	
9		♠ K98		1♠		P		1♥		P	
		♥ 62		4♦		P		4♥		P	
		♦ Q853		4NT		P		5♣		P	
		♣ QJ85		2							
W West				E East							
♠ A732				♠ Q1065							
♥ J10				♥ AKQ875							
♦ AJ74				♦ K10							
♣ AK9				♣ 2							
		S South									
		♠ J4									
		♥ 943									
		♦ 962									
		♣ 107643									

There was an extra match this day for both the Seniors and the Mixed. There were plenty of swings as both teams clocked up a good score – but this was the biggest swing of them all (both gaining 17 imps). For many the contract was 6♠ and success depended on how smoothly North played after ace and another. In the two sections 15 made 6♠ (either a lucky guess or North gave the game away) while 19 went off (playing with the odds by inserting the ten). John Attheyf for England Mixed solved the problem, at the point shown in the bidding here, by bidding 6N. When they led the ♣J he could make 6N whatever the spade layout.

DAY FIVE

For the first match today there were two big slam decisions for the North-South pairs. On the first one here the majority of pairs (30 out of 30 in the Open, 24/24 in the Mixed, 19/20 in the Women and 19/22 in the Seniors) bid to 6N and that's quite reasonable, say 70% – but with the diamonds breaking 4-2 and the heart finesse wrong it fails. There was however one pair in the Open (from Latvia) whose auction involved a double showing spades over the K6, and in order to protect the king from what might have been an ace-queen over, they chose to play in 6♥ instead. As you can see – that's a much better contract, as you can ruff a spade for the twelfth trick, and that gets you into the high 80% range, and that was the slam which was unbeatable. The successful auction took 10 rounds of bidding! The board was flat in 6N-1 in all four England matches.

N	North
♠	K6
♥	J109
♦	AKQ98
♣	AQ2
S	South
♠	A842
♥	AK87
♦	52
♣	K73

N	North
♠	A854
♥	K65
♦	A2
♣	J1084
S	South
♠	K97
♥	A8
♦	KQ1098
♣	AK3

The other slam was a little less with the odds, and nearly always starts with the North hand showing a weak 1N opener. It was then up to South and we find that across the field it was bid about half the time (at 54 tables out of 96 across the four events). The slam rolls home if the diamonds come in for five winners (a 54% chance, you just give up a club), and if that doesn't happen you must arrange to collect four club tricks (a 22% chance) making the total chance of success around the 65% mark. In the Open and the Mixed Teams, England gained 13 imps on this board, while in the Women it was flat in slam and in the Seniors it was flat in game. This match ended with a big win for the Women over Portugal, a sizeable win for the Open over Germany, a small win for the Seniors over Poland, and a draw for the Mixed against Spain.

In the second match the most interesting board was B10, shown here. This bidding was quite common although – for good reason – some Norths continued to 5♠ and that, usually doubled, was the final contract. The key issue is defence against 5♣ and what South should do after the first spade stands up. In the Seniors only 2/13 Souths, including against England seniors, found the winning defence (a heart switch). They should be helped in this by North signalling suit preference on the opening lead. In the Open Teams, Michael Byrne got to make 5C while David Gold bid on to 5♠ in the other room – and the winning low diamond lead at trick one was never to be found. That was 15 imps to England, but in the Mixed the reverse happened and England lost 16 imps (5S was doubled). Our Seniors team gained 12 imps and the board was flat in the Mixed in 5♣ making. Over the whole match, the Mixed team beat Germany, the Women's team beat Ireland and the Open team beat Croatia – all by a small but useful margin. The Senior team lost by a small amount to Italy.

10 D		N North	W N E S
		♠ 108732	X 4♣ 1♣ 1♣
		♥ KJ65	P P 5♣ P
		♦ K843	
		♣	
W West	E East		
♠ Q5	♠ 4		
♥ 10874	♥ A93		
♦ AJ97	♦ Q2		
♣ J76	♣ AKQ10942		
		S South	
		♠ AKJ96	
		♥ Q2	
		♦ 1065	
		♣ 853	
		5♣ E	NS: 0 EW: 0
		Bridge Base	

Match three of the day saw the Open team play Croatia and there was only one double figure swing (away); the defence have four aces to cash against 4♠ but 17 out of 30 tables (all in the same contract) allowed declarer to make. It seems defence is difficult! The English Women gained 10 imps in the same circumstances. In the Mixed it was again a 10 imp swing – the wrong way, and in the Seniors a swing in the right direction. Three teams had a small win while the Open team lost by 2 imps to Georgia.

The Mixed had one extra match on this day, finishing with a small loss to Belgium.

For the first four days we only have the Open team in operation – after that the Women, Seniors and Mixed join in.

DAY FOUR

There was more than just the Open Teams today, there was also the final of the European Mixed Pairs Championship – the last step after three days of qualifying rounds. The winners were Gloucestershire member Dan McIntosh playing with Claire Robinson (from London). They were prominent through the four days and won despite scoring 25% on each of the last two boards (in a 70% final session). They received a Gold Medal as a result.



Meanwhile the England Open team got to play matches 9, 10 and 11. The match against Israel was scored 11-13 (where one other match scored 65-40 on the same 16 boards!). England was leading until the last board; second hand, at green, held ♠-♥AT8632-♦J98-♣5432 and after RHO passes, what do you bid? Israel started with 3H and go to game, but England started with 2H and did not. Across the 30 teams, 13 chose the more aggressive opening.

Next came Hungary and England won that 25-11 imps (the lost scoring of the 15 matches!). The one big swing was a hand on which Hungary missed a game everyone else bid. Why? It depended rather on what you say (at favourable vulnerability) in third seat holding ♠QT8♥T632-♦7-♣KQ872. Our man opened a very light 1♣, and the opponents learned that 3N would not make and they settled for 3♦. Those in this position favoured 1♣ over pass (by 9 to 8) but there were three who ventured to open 3♣ on this – but despite, that the other side always reached game. Not that it always made – as many bid 3N over a “prepared” club and this time the clubs were real and the club lead beat that game.

7 D		N North ♠ 93 ♥ K976 ♦ QJ8765 ♣ J	W N E S 4♣ 5♦ P 1♦ 5♥ P 5♣ P P X P P P
W West ♠ AKJ108765 ♥ Q10842 ♦ ♣		E East ♠ Q4 ♥ 53 ♦ K10 ♣ K1098763	
	S South ♠ 2 ♥ AJ ♦ A9432 ♣ AQ542		5♣x W NS: 0 EW: 0

The final match of the day was against Ukraine and that was fairly one-sided with England collecting 16.26 VPs. The biggest swinging board (on which England gained 14 with both tables in the same contract) was this. This particular start to the auction looks uncontroversial, and this was the contract at ten tables (one undoubted). The contract was made except by Ukraine and Finland. All the other tables pushed on to the six level, ending with ten tables playing in diamonds (all making except for the team in 7D) and that leaves 9 teams who were pushed into 6S – doubled and down one. There were double figure swings in 10 out of 15 matches.

DAY THREE

This was a more promising day, even though it started with a small loss to the Romanian team. The first swing came from different choices with ♠A9-♥J3-♦AQJ73-♣K764 after 1♣-P-1♠; the Romanian chose 2♦ and his partner got very excited and they ended in a making a game bid at only one other table. Our man (like 8 of the other 18 in this position) chose 1N at this point and diamonds got lost. A few board later we had a flat 790 for 4♠x making in both rooms; the interesting choice was the opening bid in first seat at amber with ♠T985432-♥9-♦AK54-♣Q. Across the field the choice split between 1♠ (4 times), 3♠ (17 times) and 4♠ (3 times) with six passing. One of the 1♠ openers and one of the 4♠ openers defended (for a poor score) as did 12 of the 3♠ openers. In terms of the proportion coming out on top, the 3♠ openers lose! England has a little luck later when Romania bid a slam on a finesse, which failed. There was 84 imps swung on this match, with 5 flat boards.

Second match was against Iceland and there were three double figure swings, one of which was Iceland bidding a slam off two cashable aces. Other than that there was a flat grand slam (at 26 of 30 tables) and a flat small slam (except for the table which bid one too many).

Third match was Norway – one of the leading teams. Three slams in this match – the first bid at 22/30 tables and flat in this match (once to a grand slam making on a 70% chance), the second was bid at 28/30 tables but the Norwegian declarer had a choice between a squeeze and a finesse at the end, and he (uniquely across the field) went wrong to give England 15 imps. The third was an easy grand slam bid at 26 tables (with one table stuck only in game). In the end, England won imps on six boards and Norway won imps on six boards – but the score was +26 and that was 16 VPs to England, who finished the day in seventh place, just ahead of Ireland.

DAY TWO

Three matches today, starting with Bulgaria – where things did not go well. It looked OK on Board One both tables saw a strong 1N opener doubled, and passed out for -500. Of the seven whose 1N was doubled, three chose to escape by re-doubling when it came back to them – and they were better off. A few boards later came this hand ([link](#)). A lot swing about how much obstruction West produced at this point. Across the field there were nearly equal numbers chose 2♠ (nine) and chose 3♠ (eleven) and there were eight who passed in this position. England bid 2♠ and East raised to 3♠ when North doubled. South leapt to 5♣ at that point and North bid the grand. It's not a great contract (probably a little under 50%) but it made. Against England it went 2♣-P-2♦-3♠-4♥-end, and England were one of seven teams playing in game. Six bid the grand slam and against that bid on to lose -1700, which might have been a gain by for the fact that their team-mates stopped in game. This board cost England 16 imps. Slams hurt again later when an England pair bid a slam missing two cashable aces – but in a position where it was hard

D		N North		W N E S	
5		♠ A9 ♥ AK10654 ♦ A ♣ AKQ7		? 2♣ P 2♦	
W West				E East	
♠ K107652 ♥ J7 ♦ Q1073 ♣ 8				♠ Q83 ♥ Q8 ♦ J9654 ♣ 952	
		S South			
		♠ J4 ♥ 932 ♦ K82 ♣ J10643			

28		N North ♠ KJ952 ♥ 843 ♦ 109732 ♣	W N E S 1♦ P 1♥ P 3♣ P 3♠ P 4♣ P ?
W West ♠ Q ♥ 9 ♦ AKJ654 ♣ AKJ74		E East ♠ A1087 ♥ KQ52 ♦ Q8 ♣ Q92	
	S South ♠ 643 ♥ AJ1076 ♦ ♣ 108653		

to see this was the case.

It got a bit better against France in the second match. With the French only scoring 10 imps across the sixteen boards. This was a flat board in the England-France match but generated a 20 imp swing in another. After the start shown, many tables bid up to 6♣ on this deal, and the Englishman sitting South doubled – a Lightner double asking for an unusual lead, and partner duly led a high diamond to give a ruff at trick one. The other table bid up to 6♦ which also had a trump loser by force – and that one was made by dint of a heart to the ace and a club ruff. In the Denmark-Ukraine match however after reaching 6♣xx at both tables, the two Wests

decided that a redouble was in order. That was fine but for reasons as yet undisclosed, one team went three down in this contract (-1000) while the other made it (+1380) – for a 20 imp swing. The second-best EW score on this was Spain who were the only team to stop below slam (somehow in 4N).

The third match was against another very strong team - Italy. One hand presented a particular bidding problem, not solved by everyone (costing England 11 imps). The weak hand got to open the bidding (first in

♠ AKQ94	♠ J32
♥ AQ10	♥ J42
♦ 53	♦ 6
♣ AK4	♣ QJ9763

hand, at green) and nineteen of thirty players opened 3♣ and partner usually bid game but three took a chance on bidding a slam, and saw the ♦A led, but declarer had the perfect hand and there were 12 tricks. The majority therefore played in game, and that wasn't much of a swing except for the cases where

the strong hand showed a lot of HCP in a balanced hand, and the weak hand just raised to game. The opponents cashed six diamonds at these four tables; the other three who got to bid 2N has a five-card ask from partner and played in 4♠. At the end of the day England had scored 51.5 from five matches, and Denmark was leading the table.

DAY ONE

In the Spain match, we gained 11 imps early when the opening bid in third seat (1♥ or 3♥ at these two tables) determined whether or not the pair bid on over 4♠, and curiously it was the 1♥ bid which did that! The hand was ♠73-♥AKT9732-♦J-♣KT8 with only the opponents vulnerable. Across the field 18 opened 4♥ and 8 opened 1♥ - with one each for 2♥ and 3♥. The other two tables saw partner open in first seat. But we lost the same imps later when ten tables out of thirty bid to 6♥ which was decent (75%?) and making (all gaining 11 imps for their side) - and we were not one of those in slam. The Danes who bid to 7♥ and went off on that hand felt even worse when they found that their opponents had stopped in game.

In the Lithuania match: a tight double of 3♠ handed the opponents a score of 730, but when the Lithuanians pushed our men into a game they had initially rejected, that levelled the scores. We gained one other gain swing on better judgment on a 4621 hand. The final board of the match saw the opponents bid a grand slam needing five tricks from AKJ73-T2 (only a 19% chance) and that failed.

After day one, 25.8 VPs out of 40 maximum – decent position.