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Monday, 17 March 1997

WELCOME TO THE HAGUE !

This historic city, which combines both ancient and modern, provides the perfect setting for the 9th European Open Pairs and 4th Seniors Pairs Championships.

In the Open event, all the medal winners from 1995 are competing here, but they will face exceptional opposition, not least from our hosts, the Netherlands.

The pairs to watch out for will surely include van Cleef & Jansma, van der Neut & Maas, Gielkens & van Zwol and van der Pas & Vriend.

A formidable French contingent includes the winners in 1991 and 1993, Quantin & Abecassis, and an array of World Champions – Chemla & Perron, Mouiel & Multon, Levy & Mari.

Poland have a powerful contingent which, apart from the holders, Gawrys & Lasocki, includes Romanski & Kowalski.

Great Britain's challenge will be spearheaded by Hackett & Waterlow, who will be hoping to continue where they left off two years ago.

Italy will be hoping for another good performance from Pattacini & Sementa but they have several other pairs who can be expected to do well, particularly their women, de Lucchi & Rosetta, Gianardi & Rovera and Golin & Olivieri.

Germany's main hopes rest with two of their Venice Cup winners, von Arnim & Auken.

Other pairs to keep an eye on are Norway's Helgemo & Tislevoll, Denmark's Madsen brothers and the Israeli combination of Birman & Zeligman.

In the Seniors event, Poland's Nowak & Stobieki are defending their title, whilst the runners-up, Bahnik & Picmaus will be hoping to go one better and take the gold medals home to the Czech Republic.

Great Britain's Garthwaite & Hobson will be hoping it's third time lucky – in the last two Seniors Championships they have finished fourth!

Watch out for Israel's Rand & Katz and be sure to check out the form of the pair that includes one of France's Olympic Champions, Szwarc & Bridi.

TODAY'S PLAYING TIMES

Open Pairs Championship and Seniors Pairs Championship

1st Qualifying Session

19.00 - 23.00 hrs.

Please remember to bring two copies of your convention card to the table!

Return to Rome

According to legend, if you wish to return to Rome you must throw a coin over your shoulder into the Trevi Fountain.

However, as you can see, there are alternative methods of achieving that objective.

The 1995 European Pairs Championships were dominated by Poland. Polish pairs won the Seniors Championship, the Open Consolation and the Open Pairs Championship. The main event was won by Piotr Gawrys and Krzysztof Lasocki by a huge margin. Along the way, they won each of the three sessions of the semi-final stage – a remarkable achievement. Here are a few of their boards from that championship.

Board 2.
North/South Game. Dealer East.

♠ 10 4 3 ♥ K 10 7 5 4 3 ♦ Q 10 8 3 ♣ –	<table 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		♠ A K 2 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ K 2 ♣ A Q 7 6 3	♠ Q J 9 5 ♥ J 8 6 ♦ A J 6 5 4 ♣ 10
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 8 7 6 ♥ 9 ♦ 9 7 ♣ K J 9 8 5 4 2												
West	North	East	South									
<i>Lasocki</i>	<i>Perron</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Chemla</i>									
2♦	3NT	Pass	Pass									
Pass	6♣	4♥	5♣									
		Dble	All Pass									

The second semi-final session saw the Poles earn a big board against the 1976 and 1985 champions, Paul Chemla and Michel Perron of France.

Lasocki opened a third seat multi, catching Perron with a big hand. He made the practical bid of 3NT but the auction was only beginning. Gawrys bid 4♥, for correction if his partner held spades, and Chemla tried 5♣. Though he was facing a passed hand, the French play a reasonably sound opening style and it was hard for Perron, with his fine fit and controls, not to raise to six.

6♣ down one would have been a terrible score for the French but Gawrys added insult to injury by doubling. Lasocki did not find the diamond lead but Chemla had nowhere to go and eventually had to try the diamond himself; -200.

Of course, if you are going to dominate an event to the extent that the Poles did in 1995 it helps to have a little luck as well as good play.

Board 23.
Game All. Dealer South.

♠ J 4 ♥ – ♦ J 8 7 6 5 2 ♣ A K 10 5 3	<table 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		♠ K 5 2 ♥ K Q 10 7 5 4 3 ♦ K ♣ 8 6	♠ A 8 7 3 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ A 10 9 4 ♣ Q J
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ Q 10 9 6 ♥ A J 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ 9 7 4 2												
West	North	East	South									
<i>Lasocki</i>		<i>Gawrys</i>										
2NT	Pass	4♦	Pass									
4♥	Pass	6♦	All Pass									

2NT was Polish, showing both minors and 4♦ was natural and non-forcing. But when Lasocki cuebid what was obviously a void, Gawrys reassessed his hand and took a reasonable shot at the slam.

When South led a spade, however, chances did not look good. Gawrys won, ruffed a heart and led ♦J, covered by king and ace. As the queen was still out, Gawrys released the ♣QJ, ruffed a second heart to reach dummy and continued clubs. As South had to follow to four rounds of clubs, all three spades disappeared from the East hand before he could ruff. Declarer's twelfth trick was a spade ruff in hand.

Board 3.
East/West Game. Dealer South.

♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ J 8 7 3 ♦ A 6 ♣ J 3 2	<table 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		♠ Q 7 5 ♥ A 9 4 ♦ Q 10 8 5 2 ♣ 10 9	♠ A J 9 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ 7 6 5 4
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 8 4 2 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ K J 9 ♣ A K Q 8												

West	North	East	South
Lasocki	Salama	Gawrys	Cronier
Pass	INT	Pass	1♣
Dble	Pass	2♥	All Pass

This early board from the final was another huge result for the Poles. Lasocki made a balancing double of INT and Gawrys guessed to bid hearts. In fact, a pass would have been the winning action but that was tough to find.

Cronier led four rounds of clubs against 2♥ and Gawrys pitched dummy's diamond loser on the fourth round. Now came a diamond to the ace. Gawrys played the jack of hearts next, ducked, and a second heart. Salama won and played a third trump and Gawrys had to guess the spades. He chose low to the king then a finesse of the jack, making eight tricks for +110 and a joint top. Had the ♠Q been offside Gawrys would have been two down for a zero.

Board 4.
Game All. Dealer West.

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

Lasocki opened a Polish club as West and rebid INT, showing a weak no trump. Gawrys enquired with 2♣ and Lasocki bid 2NT, maximum but normally less than three spades. Gawrys jumped to 4♠.

With the ♣Q offside, a cursory glance suggests that 4♠ is doomed to fail but look closely at the heart position. The con-

tract was cold after Cronier's normal lead of a top heart, declarer being able to throw two clubs on the queen and eight of hearts. Indeed, it looks as though the contract is unbeatable double dummy on any lead.

Board 15.
North/South Game. Dealer South.

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

West	North	East	South
Kubak	Gawrys	Fucik	Lasocki
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

It was Polish, natural, weak no trump or strong and artificial, and 2♠ showed the strong version and so was game-forcing.

Fritz Kubak of Austria led ♣6 and Jan Fucik signalled with the queen. Lasocki played a heart to the queen and ace and Kubak continued with ♣3. Fucik unblocked the jack, the continuation of a lower card asking for an unblock where a higher spot card would have said don't unblock. Lasocki led ♠J from dummy and Fucik won the king and played his last club through declarer's nine. Kubak cashed the fourth club but that was the end for the defense.

It looks as though there are only nine tricks available but the good defense was worth a 75% score for the Austrians.

Internet News

These are the first European Pairs Championships which will be followed on the Internet.

There are two sites you can visit when you get home.

If you want to access to the official site of the **World Bridge Federation** the reference you require is

www.bridge.gr

To look at the official site of the **NBB** you go via

www.bridge.nl

The Multicoloured Tulip

Alexandre Dumas's 'The Black Tulip' was published in 1850.

All the action is set in 17th Century Holland and The Hague features prominently in the early chapters.

For those not familiar with the story, it involves the efforts of Cornelius Van Barle to produce the first black tulip, despite being wrongfully imprisoned for the possession of incriminating papers left with him by his godfather, of one of the two De Witte brothers, who are brutally murdered at the beginning of the story.

It also tells of his romance with Rosa, the daughter of his jailer, Gryphus, and the efforts of his jealous rival (for the tulip, not Rosa!) Isaac Boxtel, to steal the tulip from him.

The tulip was first introduced into Holland in 1571 and in no time at all Amsterdam, Haarlem, Hoorn, Utrecht and Rotterdam were set up as centres of a new trade that continues today.

What is not so well known is that Dumas had originally intended that the book be linked to bridge, which, like the tulip, was sweeping through Holland at the time. The grand finale was to be a match between teams captained by William of Orange and Van Barle.

We have been fortunate enough to obtain part of that long lost manuscript and we reproduce an extract from the soon to be published novel entitled 'The Multicoloured Tulip'.

It had, thought Cornelius Van Barle, by anybody's standards, been a pretty poor month.

Following the death of his father, his life long bridge partner, the other two members of his all conquering team, Cornelius and John De Witte, had been viciously murdered by a mob in The Hague. It was rumoured that their deaths had been planned by their arch rivals, the team led by William of Orange.

The same day that they had been murdered he had been arrested on a charge of hiding seditious papers in his house. So far as he was aware, for he had never found the time to look at them, the documents handed to him by his godfather were nothing more than his latest ideas on bridge, which broke new ground in the development of multi-meaning opening bids.

After a brief trial he had been sentenced to life imprisonment and was quickly despatched to the prison at Loevestein. It was a miserable existence, enlightened only by the attachment he had formed with Gryphus's daughter Rosa and the occasional game of bridge which her father from time to time allowed.

Cornelius had taught Rosa to play and that evening after supper they settled down to play against Gryphus and Isaac Boxtel. Cornelius had no idea that Boxtel was determined to try and obtain a copy of his bidding system, which he intended to publish and claim as his own.

This was one of the early boards:

Dealer East.
North/South Game.

<p>♠ K Q 9 5 ♥ 10 2 ♦ Q J 10 6 3 ♣ A 3</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ J 10 8 6 3 ♥ Q 3 ♦ 9 4 ♣ K Q 10 4</p>	<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ A 7 6 5 4 ♦ 7 ♣ 9 8 7 6 2</p>
N						
W E						
S						
<p>♠ A 2 ♥ K J 9 8 ♦ A K 8 5 2 ♣ J 5</p>						

West	North	East	South
Rosa	Gryphus	Van Barle	Boxtel
Pass	3♥ ⁽²⁾	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	3♠
Dble	All Pass	Pass	Pass

⁽¹⁾ Weak, either hearts or spades and a minor.

⁽²⁾ Transfer.

Just as in modern times, Dutch players were fond of aggressive opening bids, especially with weak hands. Van Barle was using one of the many multimeaning bids that were popular then. They also knew all about transfers.

Not seeing where declarer could make any tricks, Rosa decided to double.

The opening lead was the queen of diamonds. Boxtel did not view the dummy with any great enthusiasm. Prospects were poor and with no particular plan in mind he ducked the opening lead, hoping West might give him some help.

Rosa spent some time considering her next play. They were playing upside down signals, so it was probable that the seven of diamonds was a singleton. She had a feeling that a low spade might be best but eventually she opted for the ace and another club.

That was better thought Boxtel who could now see his way to eight tricks. He cashed his remaining club winners, discarding a spade and a diamond from hand and paused for thought.

East's hand-type was now obvious and as long as he held the ten of hearts the contract could be made. When declarer played a heart to his nine Rosa won with the ten and exited with a low spade. Declarer could make only six tricks and was -800.

Rosa and Van Barle continued to have the better of things throughout the evening.

This was the final deal:

Dealer North.
East/West Game.

♠ K 10 9 8 6 4 ♥ J 9 7 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q 7 ♥ A Q 6 5 ♦ K 10 9 8 3 ♣ 5 4	♠ A J 3 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J 10 7 6 3 2
N						
W E						
S						

West	North	East	South
Rosa	Gryphus	Van Barle	Boxtel
	1♦	1♥	2♣
2♥	3♣	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Boxtel's bid of Four Clubs was an idea of the De Witte brothers which had appeared in all the Dutch magazines of the time. The reply of Four No-Trumps promised two key cards and the queen of trumps.

West led the two of hearts. Boxtel put in dummy's eight and East won the trick with the queen. He returned a trump which was taken in dummy.

Declarer's first move was to try to bring down the jack of hearts. He played the king from dummy, forcing East to cover, and ruffed in hand. He continued with the ace of spades and a spade ruff, noting the fall of East's queen. He was disappointed when West's heart on the next trick proved to be the nine.

It was time to take stock. He could finesse either way in diamonds or he could ruff another spade, hoping East had started with ♠KQ7. Eventually he decided to combine the two possibilities and ruffed another spade. When the king did not appear, he ruffed a heart back to hand and drew the remaining trump. Eventually he took the losing diamond finesse and was one down.

Van Barle smiled inwardly. The advice he had received about overcalling with length in the opener's suit from old Friar Lawrence was not so bad after all.

That night as he lay in his cell, Van Barle contemplated his situation. Surely there must be something in life more exciting than bridge?

Why of course, there were tulips!

Suppose he were to invent a new variety – perhaps, just like one of his many bridge conventions, one of many colours.

Of course, it would be named the Multicoloured Tulip.

Con-Girl

One of the features of the 1995 event was the appearance of thirteen year old Anna Nielsen of Iceland, who partnered her father, Gudlauger.

Anna showed she had a wise head on young shoulders on this deal from the Consolation.

Board 17.
Love All. Dealer North.

♠ 9 6 3 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ K 10 6 2 ♣ A 7	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ Q ♦ Q J 9 3 ♣ K Q 9 3	♠ A K 8 4 ♥ K J 2 ♦ 7 4 ♣ J 6 4 2
N						
W E						
S						

♠ J 7 ♥ A 10 8 6 4 ♦ A 8 5 ♣ 10 8 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ Q ♦ Q J 9 3 ♣ K Q 9 3	♠ A K 8 4 ♥ K J 2 ♦ 7 4 ♣ J 6 4 2
N						
W E						
S						

West	North	East	South
Anna	Collaros	Gudlauger	Catzeflis
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♣	All Pass		

The Icelandic pair, in common with the field, reached the apparently hopeless 4♣, with four top losers and no likelihood of escape. And what does a con-man do in such circumstances? He creates a smokescreen.

Pierre Collaros of Switzerland ruefully admitted after the session that he had been conned – and by the youngest player in the field. Collaros was full of admiration.

Collaros led a trump. Anna won in hand and led a heart. South took the ace and led a second trump. Anna won in hand and cashed the two hearts on which she threw two clubs from dummy! Then came a club. North won and played his third trump, taken in the dummy.

Now Anna cashed the club and led ♦Q, as if taking a finesse. South played low and there was just a chance that North might also duck. No, he took his king but, confused by the earlier play, he saw no harm in playing his heart. A moment later he saw that he had been conned. Declarer threw one diamond on the heart and two more on her winning clubs.

The unmakeable game was home!

