



# 49th EUROPEAN BRIDGE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS



## David Bird reports on the Open Series

# It's Norway again!

THE format for the open section of the European Championship was different this year. The field was divided into two sections of nineteen teams, with the first nine from each section progressing to an all-play-all second week with no carry-over.

England achieved nine wins, two draws and seven defeats (including four wins and a draw against the teams finishing in the top eight places) but their best win was by only 20 VPs to 10. With only one match to play they were 4 VPs behind Finland, who occupied the precious ninth qualifying place. In a nail-biting last round, England drew 15-15 with Switzerland while Finland lost 11-19 to Iceland. It was England who went through on a split tie.

These were the placings of England's pairs in the Butler Rankings for the first week: 29th/113 Paul Hackett and Tony Waterlow (+0.33 IMPs per board), 41st Jason and Justin Hackett (+0.15 IMPs), 64th John Armstrong and John Holland (-0.06 IMPs). The Netherlands, Italy and Iceland headed Group A, while Sweden, Russia and Norway headed Group B.

Early in the second week world champion, Boye Brogeland of Norway, produced this virtuoso piece of magic against the Czech Republic:

West	North	East	South
<i>Vozabal</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Slemr</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥
Dble	All Pass		



*Boye Brogeland*

East's 2♦ had suggested game-try values, so few other players would have considered Brogeland's protective bid of 3♥. The Czech West doubled and led the ace of clubs followed by the king. Brogeland ruffed the second club, finessed the ten of trumps successfully and cashed the ace of trumps. He then led the nine of spades, covered by the jack and queen. When he played the king of trumps, throwing a club from dummy, the suit broke 3-3. His next move was to run the eight of diamonds to the nine. East could not afford to return a diamond, so he exited with a low spade. Brogeland finessed the ten of spades successfully and then played his last trump, the jack. East had no good discard from ♠K-8-5 ♦A-J. He chose to throw a spade and was then thrown on lead again with ace and another spade. At trick twelve he had to play from his ♦A-J to dummy's king and Brogeland had his +730. Bravo!

Meanwhile, England began the second

week by beating Estonia 25-4 VPs, Turkey 21-9 and Portugal 18-12. For one glorious period on Sunday, 22nd June 2008, England led the field in all three championships: the open, the women's and the seniors. Had a comet struck the earth, these leads would have been preserved for ever.

In Round 4, the Hackett twins were spectacularly unlucky on this board, where they put up an admirable pre-emptive barrage against their German opponents:

**N/S Game. Dealer West.**

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Jason H.</i>	<i>Wladow</i>	<i>Justin H.</i>	<i>Elinescu</i>
3♥	Dble	4♦	4♠
5♦	5♥	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Justin's 4♦ was a fit-showing bid. North was just about worth a competitive raise to 5♠, but his actual cue-bid of 5♥ seems a massive overbid to me. Four bids later, the Germans had been jostled into 7♠ with two key cards missing!

If there is a reason for Jason to lead a heart rather than a diamond, I cannot see it. He led a diamond and the German declarer was then able to finesse successfully in trumps and ditch dummy's heart loser

**N/S Game. Dealer West.**

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

on the fifth round of clubs. Ouch! At the other table Tony Waterlow and Paul Hackett stopped very reasonably in 4♠, for a loss of 17 IMPs.



*Hervé Mouïel*

When England faced France in Round 7, Hervé Mouïel found a pretty loser-on-loser play:

**Love All. Dealer West.**

♠ A K Q 6 2  
♥ J 7 2  
♦ A 9  
♣ K J 10

♠ Void  
♥ K Q 10 9 8 6  
♦ 10 8 5  
♣ 9 6 5 2

♠ J 9 5 3  
♥ 3  
♦ J 7 6 2  
♣ A Q 7 3

♠ 10 8 7 4  
♥ A 5 4  
♦ K Q 4 3  
♣ 8 4

West	North	East	South
Jason H.	Lévy	Justin H.	Mouïel
3♥	Dble	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

This time the contract was the same at both tables, but only the Frenchman found the winning line. Mouïel won the king of hearts lead and played a trump to the ace, West showing out. He continued with four rounds of diamonds, throwing dummy's heart losers. Justin Hackett won the fourth round of diamonds and had no good return. He exited with the seven of clubs to dummy's ten, but declarer could then ruff a club in his hand for the tenth trick.

The Italians had omitted former world pairs champions, Fantoni and Nunes, from their team in order to make way for a sponsor. As a result of this extravagance, they found themselves in seventh place (with only six teams to qualify for the

Bermuda Bowl) as their last match started against the current leaders, Germany. Board 2 proved to be the board of the championship:

**E/W Game. Dealer South.**

♠ K Q J 10 5  
♥ 9 6  
♦ A 10 9 6 4  
♣ Q

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

♠ Void  
♥ A 8 7 5  
♦ 8 7 5 2  
♣ A 7 5 4 2

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

West	North	East	South
Duboin	Smirnov	Bocchi	Piekarek
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Josef Piekarek's 2NT showed clubs and he ended as declarer in 3NT. What would you have led from Giorgio Duboin's West hand?



*Giorgio Duboin*

The Italian maestro chose the king of diamonds, potentially knocking out the entry to the blocked spades! The contract can still be made, but the successful lines of play are complicated and to some extent double-dummy.

Piekarek won the first trick with dummy's ace and played the queen of clubs to West's king. When Duboin returned his remaining diamond to South's queen, declarer cashed the spade ace and led the jack of clubs to East's ace, West and the dummy throwing a spade. If Norberto Bocchi exits with a low heart now, declarer can succeed by rising with the king, cashing his club winners and exiting with a low

heart, forcing one or other defender to give him a ninth trick. Unerringly, Bocchi exited safely in clubs.



*Norberto Bocchi*

Piekarek cashed his good clubs and led the heart two, Duboin rising immediately with the ten of hearts to exit safely with the queen of hearts to South's king. Declarer had to surrender the last two tricks to East's ♥A-8 and that was one down. A dazzling performance by the defenders and Italy went on to win the match 25-5 VPs.



*John Holland – John Armstrong*

England finished in a respectable 12th place of the eighteen teams that qualified for the second week. If this seems disappointing, remember that there are many strong teams in Europe (as the England footballers discovered recently). Congratulations are due to John Armstrong and John Holland, who finished second out of fifty-three pairs in the Butler Table for the final week, averaging +0.64 IMPs per board. Only Norway's Lindqvist and Brogeland were ahead of them. Tragically, John Armstrong died shortly after the championship. A very fine player and a true gentleman of the game, he will be sadly missed by his many friends.

The qualifiers for next year's Bermuda Bowl were: 1. Norway 299; 2. Russia 287; 3. Germany 286; 4. Bulgaria 285; 5. Italy 279; 6. Netherlands 273. □