

Schapiro Spring Foursomes 2008

ANYONE worried that bridge might be in decline should have been in Stratford-upon-Avon over the May Bank Holiday weekend. Fifty-seven teams had entered, the highest number since the event moved to that location nearly twenty years ago. The sun was shining (some of the time), the venue was excellent, and all our top players and many from Europe were ready to do battle. Hearing several players grumbling about the seeding reinforced the idea that there was an intensity about the competition ahead.

As usual the format, unique in England, is a double elimination knock-out whereby a team has to lose twice before being eliminated from the main competition, the Schapiro Trophy. In no time, seeded teams were tumbling down into the Punch Bowl, the consolation event. David Mossop of Switzerland showed how to overcome exuberance in the bidding by some excellent card play to land this slam:

Love All. Dealer North.

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

West	North	East	South
	<i>Zivkovic</i>		<i>Mossop</i>
Pass	Pass	2♠ ¹	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣ ²
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦ ²
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

¹Weak

²Cue-bid

West led his singleton spade. The clues were that East probably held a diamond

honour because West didn't lead one from a solid suit, so the odds favoured West holding the heart king. Declarer won the spade ace and tried the heart queen to induce a cover, but rose with the ace felling the king. After clearing that hurdle, all that was required was for West to hold seven diamonds so that after eliminating clubs he could be thrown in on the third round to give a ruff-and-discard. Phew.

On the fifth day, the Schapiro Trophy reached the semi-final stage with the seeding committee vindicated by the first and second seeds being there, even though each had lost a life. The unbeaten team, the tenth seed *Jagger* (Chris Jagger, Ian Pagan, Tim Rees and Filip Kurbalija), as was their right, chose to play the eleventh seeds, *Cooke* (Jon Cooke, Martin Garvey, Jeffrey Allerton, Frances Hinden and Graham Osborne) Both semis were tight but *Jagger* continued their winning ways and seed No. 1, *Allfrey* (Alexander Allfrey, Andrew Robson, Tony Forrester, David Bakhshi, Peter Crouch and Glyn Liggins) prevailed over *Gillis* (Simon Gillis, Boye Brogeland, Tom Hanlon, Espen Lindqvist, Hugh McGann, Odin Svendsen seeded No. 2). Unfortunately the final day was blighted by fire alarms, power cuts and internet problems. The final, *Jagger v Allfrey*, started in very muted fashion with very few swings – indeed, during the first three sets of eight boards, some of the biggest scores were slow-play fines! This part-score deal was a big pick-up for *Jagger*:

N/S Game. Dealer East.

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



REPORTS

Colin Simpson

West	North	East	South
<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Pagan</i>	<i>Robson</i>	<i>Jagger</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²	Pass
Pass	Dble ³	2♣	2♦
Pass	pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass
Pass	3♦ ⁴	Pass	Pass
Dble ⁴	All Pass		

¹ Showing hearts

² Showing three hearts and a minimum

³ Take-out

⁴ Dubious!

In fairness it should be said that West was unlucky that both outstanding diamond honours were with North, so that declarer, Chris Jagger, was able to lose only one trick in each suit and scored +670 against a part-score in the other room.

When the final set started, it was still anyone's game with *Allfrey* leading by 31-26 IMPs. However, the *Jagger* team won it by a huge margin (43-6) IMPs where mistakes, possibly induced by tiredness, had contributed to each of the swings. Congratulations to Chris Jagger, Ian Pagan, Tim Rees and Filip Kurbalija who had played four-handed and been undefeated throughout – a remarkable achievement – with the final score being 57-28 IMPs (after slow-play fines) in their favour.

The winners of the Consolation Knock-out, the Punch Bowl, were Mike Bell, Ed Levy, Roger Mapp and Michael Ranis. The Swiss Teams, the Hamilton Cup, was won by the (mainly) Dutch team of Rob Helle, Stephen Green, Egbert Henstra, Ed Hoogenkamp and Simon de Wijs.

With the upsurge in interest in this great event perhaps next year we can fill the venue with sixty-four teams. Book early! □