

# 4th European Open Championships

THE 4th European Open Bridge Championships took place in June in Sanremo, a popular tourist destination on the Italian Riviera close to the French border. This year there were 1756 players participating, which was a significant improvement over the attendance figure for Antalya in 2007 – no doubt partly down to the ‘perpetual spring’ weather of Sanremo being more attractive than the overwhelming heat of Antalya.

English players had enjoyed considerable success in 2007, but medals were much harder to come by this time around. In the opening event, the Mixed Teams, Janet de Botton, Artur Malinowski, Nick Sandqvist and Nevena Senior repeated their bronze medal success of two years ago and bronze medals were also won by Jeffrey Allerton, Frances Hinden, Paula Leslie and Graham Osborne. Congratulations to both teams. However, that turned out to be the end of the good news as sixth place in the Mixed Pairs (Sandra Penfold – Brian Senior) and the quarter-finals of the Women’s Teams (Sandra Penfold, Nevena Senior, Nicola Smith and Sally Brock) were the best results in the rest of the events.

Two years ago Lilo Poplilov had been a member of the *Dhondy* team that won the Mixed Teams. This year the holders did not reach the knock-out stage, but Poplilov had his moment of fame on the hand below from the Swiss phase of the event:

This is a strangely symmetrical hand. For East-West, 4♠ is beaten by a heart ruff and 4♥ suffers from a spade ruff. For North-South, 5♣ has a diamond ruff amongst its problems and the superior 5♦ is seemingly defeated by a club ruff; however, an imaginative declarer can get home in 5♦ unless West is wide awake.

At Poplilov’s table he became declarer in 5♦ doubled after West had shown both majors with her opening bid and had subsequently doubled 5♦ and led her club. The lead was clearly a singleton, so declarer needed to find a way to cut the defence’s communications. Poplilov won the club in hand and played a heart to dummy’s ace and when West followed with the ♥6 her goose was cooked. Two more rounds of hearts followed and declarer pitched his spade on the third round as West was forced to win the trick and could no longer obtain a club ruff. To foil the Scissors Coup West needed to unblock two high hearts under the ace and king so that her partner could win the third round. Easy enough when you can see all fifty-two cards, but not so easy at the table.

In Antalya Nevena Senior had topped the Women’s overall rankings (based on the points awarded for each event). This year she had to settle for sixth place, two places ahead of her partner, Sandra Penfold, but that still made her England’s best overall performer. Here she is in action in the semi-final of the Women’s Pairs:



Tony Gordon

REPORTS

West	North	East	South
Leslie	Penfold	Sheasby	Senior
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
Dbl	3♦	End	2♦

The defence began with three rounds of hearts against 3♦ and then Suzanne Sheasby switched to the ♠10 which ran round to dummy’s king. Trumps were then drawn in two rounds with Paula Leslie discarding a club on the second round. As the opening bid marked East with the ♣A declarer seemed destined to lose a club and a spade for one down, but on the bidding and play so far Senior felt it was likely that West had a 5-2-1-5 shape, in which case she could see her way home.



From the left: Nick Sandqvist, Nevena Senior, Janet de Botton and Artur Malinowski

She continued by cashing the ♠A, to remove East’s last spade, and then played a club to the ten. East won the trick with the queen but found herself endplayed as a heart would allow declarer to throw a spade from one hand while ruffing in the other hand while a club would establish dummy’s king. (Perceptive readers will have noticed that West can defeat the contract by ruffing the third round of hearts and playing a club, but that’s a tough defence to find.) □

Game All. Dealer West.

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

Diagram: A diamond suit diagram with North and South positions. North has the 10 and South has the 5.

N/S Game. Dealer South.

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

Diagram: A diamond suit diagram with North and South positions. North has the 10 and South has the 5.