

European Youth Team Championships 2015

The Final Round – Poland v Turkey (U26)

By Brian Senior

Going into the final round, Poland led the U26 Championship by 1.87 VPs from Sweden with Norway 8.48 VPs behind. A draw would therefore ensure the silver medal for the Poles, but they hadn't come this far to settle for anything less than gold. Behind Norway, England and Netherlands were waiting to pounce should the host nation falter at the last, but only the top three could still win the European title.

For this final round, I will concentrate on the match between the leaders, Poland, and Turkey, and keep my fingers crossed that the decisive action doesn't happen elsewhere. Our match started with a slam board.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	2♥	2♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	5NT	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Wojciech Kazmierczak's weak two-suited opening put a lot of momentum into the auction. Can Erdem Tukenmez overcalled and Fatih Aydin was far too strong for a simple game bid so cuebid – initially just an invitational-plus spade raise. When Tukenmez accepted the invitation, the Turks were off to the races and soon settled in the small slam. With any three-zero trump split pretty much marked as the length with South, and North a strong favourite to hold the king of hearts, 6♠ is an excellent contract and duly rolled in for +980. The Turks do not play two-suited weak openings so Can Korkmaz passed as dealer in the other room. Kamil Nowak opened the East hand at the one level and Pawel Jassem's two-over-one response forced to game. When Nowak bid his spades for a third time, Jassem

made a slam try, but the order of the suits meant that he would have had to commit to the five level to show the diamond control and he was not inclined to go past game with such a balanced hand with no source of tricks. Meanwhile, Nowak could not go on when looking at two low diamonds, so the slam was missed. To be fair, with no heart opening at this table, it was a slightly sub-par contract anyway. Plus 480 meant 11 IMPs to Turkey, and Poland's lead in the competition had not survived a single deal as Sweden moved into a narrow lead. Elsewhere, England lost 11 IMPs while Netherlands gained the same number to move ahead of them into fourth place.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	–	–	2♠
3♥	3♠	3NT	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	–	–	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♥	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

On Board 1, we saw a weak two-level opening make it easier to reach a making slam on the opposing cards. Here we see the reverse effect as Michal Klukowski's two-suited opening took away any chance for the Turkish pair to have a normal exploratory auction. Aydin overcalled and Tukenmez closed proceedings with 3NT, where he made 12 tricks after a spade lead for +690.

In the other room, there was no pre-emptive opening. The Poles quickly found the diamond fit and initially seemed to be exploring for the best game. However, Nowak always had greater things in mind and his 4♣ continuation over 3NT informed Jassem that this was actually a slam exploration. When Jassem co-operated with a heart cuebid, Nowak took control and, on discovering that the queen of trumps was missing when Jassem bid 5♠ in response to the queen ask, settled for the small slam.

Deniz Unalan led his singleton heart. Nowak won in hand with the queen, cashed a top

diamond then crossed to the king of spades to lead the jack of diamonds. When Korkmaz followed with the nine, he assumed there was no four-one split and rose with the king then conceded a diamond so that the defence could not interrupt his future plans. Winning the return in hand, he ruffed out the hearts and had 12 tricks for +1370 and 12 IMPs to Poland. They led in the match by 14-11 and also in the overall standings. Meanwhile, England now led their match while Netherlands trailed in theirs, so England were back up to fourth. Norway also picked up 12 IMPs here to cement their third place.

Poland picked up another 8 IMPs on Board 4, where Jassem/Nowak stopped safely in 1NT+2 while Aydin/Tukenmez were down two for -200 in a thin no trump game. It was 22-11 in favour of Poland.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	–	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	–	Pass	1♦
2♠	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Aydin made a simple overcall and Kazmierczak introduced his clubs then cuebid before raising clubs to the four level. Perhaps he would have done better to try 3♦ over 3♣ and now Klukowski might have bid 3♠ to ask for a stopper. As it was, Klukowski couldn't see what game was going to make so passed 4♣. He was right in a sense, as they had just passed the making game. Four Clubs made on the nose, Kazmierczak losing two spades and the king of clubs; +130.

In the other room, Jassem made a weak jump overcall and Korkmaz bid 2NT, asking for 3♣ to allow him to compete in that suit. However, with strong reversing values, Unalan made his natural rebid and now Korkmaz bid 3NT. The defence played three rounds of spades but Jassem did not have a semblance of an entry so the king of clubs was the only other trick for the defence; +430 and 7 IMPs to Turkey, who closed to 18-22.

On Board 7, Kazmierczak, possibly affected by having just missed game on Board 6, made a very aggressive try for game and was down one in a hopeless 5♦ while Korkmaz played in partscore for +130 and 6 IMPs to Turkey, and they had the lead at 24-22. After seven boards, Poland trailed by 22-24, Sweden led by 34-0 and Norway led by 25-0 (after six boards). Sweden led by over 5 VPs and Norway were within 5 VPs of second-placed Poland. Lower down the rankings, Netherlands were collapsing and over 30 IMPs down to Bulgaria. That meant that France, over 30 IMPs ahead against Italy, were up to fifth ahead of the Dutch. the England match was almost level. Poland picked up a couple of minor swings to move into a narrow lead in the match and then...

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	–	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	–	1♦	2♣
Pass	2♦	Dble	2NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Tukenmez passed as dealer so the Poles had the auction to themselves. Kazmierczak's second call of 2♥ was not FSF but, rather an artificial game force, a puppet to 2♠ so that he could then continue to describe his hand. When he persuaded Klukowski to show a heart control, that fit his hand perfectly and he asked for key cards then bid the cold slam for +1430 after a top diamond lead.

In the other room, Nowak opened the East hand and the Turkish N/S pair were in a totally different situation. I am sure that North's combination of bids should be a slam try – with only game in mind he would have bid 4♠ over 2NT – but the whole situation was unclear and Unalan was never going to bid on when looking at a minimum overcall and singleton

spade. Plus 680 meant 13 IMPs to Poland, who led by 40-24.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2♣	3♦	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2♣	4♦	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♠
Dble	6♥	All Pass	

Both Norths started with an artificial game force and both Easts made a pre-emptive overcall. For Tukenmez, that meant a jump to 3♦, over which Klukowski could show his second suit without too much pain and, when Kazmierczak made an almost obligatory cuebid, he could sign off in 4♥ to limit his hand. Klukowski won the diamond lead, drew trumps and, mindful of the bidding, played West for the club length by running the jack. He had 12 tricks now for +480.

For Nowak, a pre-emptive overcall meant 4♦, and that made Unalan's showing of the second suit a little more stressful. However, when Korkmaz cuebid the diamond control, Unalan followed through with a spade cuebid and found himself in 6♥.

Jassem led the king of spades. Unalan won that and drew trumps and, with 22 IMPs hanging on his next play, led a club to the ace so was down one for –50 and 11 IMPs to Poland. Though Nowak had shown out on the second heart, he surely still rated to be the shorter defender in clubs, given his leap to 4♦, but at the table you have to play them the way they feel at the time.

This double whammy had propelled Poland into a 51-24 lead. As nothing much had happened for a while in the Swedish match, Poland was also back on top of the rankings, with Sweden also losing a game swing to give the Poles a little breathing space. Elsewhere, Norway led by 28 after 14 deals, England trailed by 4 after 11, France had dropped a few but still led by 25 after 14, and Netherlands had turned things around to

lead by 17 IMPs after 13 boards and move back up to fourth. That Dutch recovery was largely due to one of the most remarkable results I have ever seen at any championship on Board 10. While the Bulgarian N/S bid to 6♠ for a solid +1430, their E/W pair defended 1♥ redoubled, making all 13 tricks for the score of –3120, and 17 IMPs to Netherlands!

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dble	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	3♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♠
Dble	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Jassem opened the natural variety of Polish Club, showing 15+ with five or more clubs, and doubled for take-out at his next turn. Nowak now drove to game – Jassem could have been stronger than this, when game could have been very good.

Unalan led a low spade to the bare ace and Nowak led a club to his king then back to the queen and ace. The nine of spades was covered by queen and king and Unalan cleared the suit. Nowak cashed his red winners then exited with a diamond in hope of endplaying Korkmaz to lead into the club tenace at the end, but it was Unalan who won the diamond and he could claim the rest of the tricks for down three and –300.

At the other table, Aydin opened a standard 1♣ then made a support double. He was willing to defend 2♠, but Tukenmez competed with 3♣ and that pushed Klukowski up a level.

It looked as though 3♠ might be one too many, but Klukowski managed to bring it home. Aydin led the queen of clubs so he won the ace and led a heart to the jack and ace. Aydin cashed the ace of spades, which did Klukowski no harm, then switched back to clubs, Klukowski ruffing out the king. He led his low diamond next and Aydin did not read the position so played low and the queen scored. That gave Klukowski an entry to lead a

second heart up, Tukenmez rising with the king and returning a club, which was just what Klukowski wanted. He ruffed, played queen of hearts and ruffed his last heart, ruffed a club and exited with the king of diamonds to make the king and jack of spades at the end for +140 and hold the loss on the board to 4 IMPs. Nicely played, but what were the defenders thinking about?

Poland still led by 23 IMPs after 15 boards but Sweden had overtaken them with a double game swing on Board 13, making 4♠ one way and 4♠ the other, to lead their match by 43 IMPs. Norway was still safely in third while England was back ahead of Netherlands in fourth with France sixth. and then it was time for yet another twist at the top.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
–	2♥	2♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Those weak two-suited openings do seem to come up a lot, and in this match it seemed that they only came up on deals where the opposition had to decide whether or not to play slam. Kazmierczak's 2♥ opening took crucial space away from the Turks. Tukenmez overcalled 2♠ and, with no great spade fit but plenty of high cards and a double heart stopper, Aydin simply jumped to 3NT so slam was never even in the picture.

It could have been worse. Had Kazmierczak led his second suit, the defence would have been able to take the first five tricks and 3NT would have been defeated. As it was, he led the queen of hearts and Aydin took his ten winners for +430.

At the other table there was no weak opening from North so the Polish E/W pair had the auction to themselves and made good use of the space available to them. Two Clubs was game-forcing, either natural or with support. Nowak showed his minimum then the club

support and a series of cuebids saw them bid smoothly to the small slam; +920 and 10 IMPs to Poland.

The Poles led by 39 IMPs with three boards to play but were less than a VP ahead of Sweden, who led their match by 48 with five boards to play. Norway were third, while Netherlands had just sneaked past England again.

Poland gained 6 IMPs on Board 18 when Turkey went down in partscores at both tables, but the Turks got 7 back on Board 19 when they made partscores at both tables. It was fitting, at the end of a wild and exciting set, that the last board of the championship should be yet another slam.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Aydin	Kazmierczak	Tukenmez	Klukowski
1♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Jassem	Korkmaz	Nowak	Unalan
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Dble
Pass	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

Aydin opened 1♣, three-plus cards, and the 2♠ response showed 9-11 with five-plus spades and four-plus hearts. Two No Trump asked and 3♠ showed the sixth spades. After an exchange of cuebids Aydin checked on key cards and bid the small slam. Klukowski led a low diamond and, with no fast discard available to him, Tukmenez had no option but to run it. That passed off peacefully so he drew trumps in two rounds then played the king of clubs off the table and had 12 tricks for +1430.

Jassem opened a three-way Polish Club, this time the strong artificial version, and his 2♦ rebid was an artificial game force. At his next turn he agreed spade and, after hearing two

cuebids from Nowak, asked for key cards and bid the slam. Unalan too led a low diamond round to declarer's ten. Nowak led a club at trick two and when Unalan ducked he had lost his ace; 13 tricks for +1460 and 1 IMP to Poland.

The match ended in a 69-36 IMP win to Poland, 16.66-3.34 VPs. Sweden still had three boards to play and were ahead by 0.92 VPs. They would win the championship if they won their match by 49 or more IMPs, that is, did not concede more than 10 IMPs over those last three deals.

On Board 18, Sweden picked up 4 IMPs to lead by 63, defeating 1NT by one trick in one room and 2♠ by one trick in the other.

Board 19 was flat when the Swedish E/W pair went down one in 4♠ but Greece were also down in 3♠. So it all came down to the last deal, with Sweden having a 14 IMP cushion.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

West	North	East	South
Gronkvist	Oikonomopoulos	Gullberg	Sakellaris
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

The Swedish transfer responses to a potentially short club opening made West declarer. Ioannis Oikonomopoulos led a diamond and there was no winning guess. The slam was one down for -100, and it was all going to be decided at the other table. If Greece could bid and make slam the title would go to Poland, if not, it would go to Sweden.

West	North	East	South
Kapayannides	Hult	Sofios	Ekenberg
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

The natural auction saw East become declarer. They still, however, had to bid the slam, otherwise Sweden would survive by a single IMP. Katerina Kapayannides set trumps and, after cuebidding, asked for key cards then bid the slam. There was the usual diamond lead but it didn't matter. Michalis Sofios had no trouble in coming to 12 tricks for +1430 and 17 IMPs to Greece. Sweden still won the match, by 75-29 IMPs, but that meant only 18.23 VPs, and it wasn't quite enough.

What an incredible finish, and if the king of diamonds had been in the other hand it would all have been so different, with Swedish joy and Polish tears, instead of the actual Polish joy and Swedish tears.

Norway took bronze, while England finished fourth, Netherlands fifth and France sixth.