



ENGLAND WIN GOLD IN MIND SPORTS OLYMPICS

While the country gets set to welcome the Para-Olympians the Mind Sports Olympics are concluding with England's Women's Team retaining the Gold for bridge.

The six woman side, which includes a pharmacist and a company director, saw off the challenges of 43 other countries during the two week World Mind Sports Games in Lille, France and beat Russia (the 2004 Gold Medal Winners) during a gruelling two day final ending today (Wednesday) to land the Gold. The event is organised by the International Mind Sports Association, is held every four years and runs concurrently with the Olympic Games.

The team were defending their title after they won Gold at the first World Mind Sports Games in 2008 - against China. Heather Dhondy, Nevena Senior, Nichola Smith and Sally Brock were all in the team in 2008; whilst Susan Stockdale and Fiona Brown have joined the team to help England defend the title.

The victory ends a sensational few months for the England Women's team, following their success in becoming the European Champions in June qualifying them for the World Championships in September 2013.

Sally Bugden, Chairman of the English Bridge Union, said: "We are all so very proud of our team, who have once again thrust English bridge to the forefront of the world game. Their success represents a great achievement for the game in this country, and we still reign as the World Mind Sports champions of women's bridge."

The team's non-playing captain Jeremy Dhondy said "The women have all played well and with great determination through 12 gruelling days to land their second major title in succession."

For interviews please contact Jeremy on **07967 475925**.

Please contact **Matt Betts**, the EBUs press and communications officer, on **07723 307674** or email **Matt@ebu.co.uk** for more information.

Biographical information below:

The gold medal heroes of the Women's team have a wealth of experience in international championships:

Heather Dhondy (age 46), based in London, is a retired accountant and now full time bridge teacher. Aged only 24, Heather began playing for the England women's team. The highlight of Heather's international career until today occurred in 2008 at the Mind Sports Games in Beijing where the England women won the Gold medal. Heather also won the Bronze medal in the Olympiad in Istanbul in 2004 and won the World Mixed Teams in Rhodes in 1996 as well as four European Championships, the first two (1997, 1999) for Great Britain and the last two (2001, 2012) for England. In addition, she has won a record 13 Lady Milne trophies (the home nations' competition) over the past 18 years.

Nevena Senior is originally from Bulgaria and now lives in Nottingham where she is married to a bridge writer and player. Internationally, Nevena has won 10 medals from European and World Championships for three different countries (Bulgaria, Great Britain and England). Her best achievement (until today) was winning the European Ladies Pairs in 1987 in Brighton, winning the Gold in the Mind Sports Games in Beijing 2008, and winning Gold at the 2012 European Championships.

Nicola Smith lives in London. In Dublin, Nicola played in her 22nd European Championship, which is more than anyone else and a tremendous achievement. At world level she has won the Venice Cup twice (1981 and 1985) and the World Women's Individual once (1994) as well as winning silver medals in the Venice Cup (1976) and the World Women's Olympiad (1976, 1984, 1988, 1992). At European level, she has won the European Women's Teams 6 times (1975, 1979, 1981, 1997, 1999, and 2001) as well as a host of other European competitions and has a clutch of silver and Bronze medals at world Women's level as well. In 2008 Nicola was part of the team for the World Mind Sports Games in 2008, where they won the gold medal; this was followed by Gold in the European Championships. In 1995, Nicola's contribution to the game of bridge was honoured at national level when she was awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen.

Sally Brock (age 58) lives in Buckinghamshire, England, where she works as a typesetter for travel guides and as a professional bridge player. Sally played in her first European Championship in 1979, which England won. She played and won the European Championships again in 1981, later winning the Venice Cup in the same year. In 1985, Sally was in the winning team again with Nicola Smith. After a break to bring up her family, Sally returned to the international scene at the end of 2008 to play in the women's team for the World Mind Sports Games in 2008, where her team won the gold medal. With the rest of the team, this was followed by a Gold at the European Championships.



Susan Stockdale (age 29) first learned to play bridge under the tutelage of her parents and her bridge quickly progressed. After her junior international debut at the age of 14, Susan went on to represent Great Britain and England at junior level in many home internationals, Junior Channel Trophy teams and European Championships. Susan went on to partner Fiona Brown with whom she has had many successes and international appearances for the England Ladies, including the Venice Cup last year (where the team came fourth). Susan was part of the team that won Gold at the recent European Championships. Susan now lives in Loughborough, working as a director of a company that markets and distributes products to the veterinary and animal healthcare sectors.

Fiona Brown (age 27) is from Australia, but has lived in England for a number of years. Fiona's bridge partnership with Susan Stockdale began in 2008, when they debuted in the Junior Channel Trophy. As a pair they have represented England six times in the Lady Milne, played in the English under 28 team which finished 5th in the World Mind Sports Games, played three times in the European Championships on the England Women's team (in 2012, she was part of the team that won Gold), and once in the Venice Cup where the team came fourth. Fiona currently works part - time in an independent pharmacy which allows her the flexibility to play bridge.

What are the World Mind Sports Games?

The 2nd World Mind Sports Games have been held in Lille (France) at Lille Grand Palais - 9th to 23rd August 2012, further information, please see: <http://tinyurl.com/bu4b3pt>

The Team

Like all great teams, the England women have a team ritual: they don't sit at the bridge table before putting on a few drops of lavender oil to keep the bad spirits away.

What is Bridge?

Bridge is a trick-taking card game of skill and chance. It is played by four players who form two partnerships (sides); the partners sit opposite each other at a table. The game consists of the auction (often called bidding) and play, after which the hand is scored. Further information on the EBU and bridge can be found on the Media section of our website, please view: <http://tinyurl.com/cmyl52z>

Who Plays Bridge?

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, tennis legend Martina Navratilova, actor Omar Sharif and the world's top investor, Warren Buffett...to name just four. In this country an estimated 300,000 people play bridge regularly in hundreds of clubs in cities, towns and villages up and down the land.

About the English Bridge Union

The English Bridge Union was formed on 23 May 1936 and is a non-profit making membership-funded organisation committed to promoting the game of duplicate bridge. It is also a National Bridge Organisation in its own right affiliated to the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation. New players are the lifeblood of the game and the EBU are keen to encourage them. For more information on the English Bridge Union please visit: <http://www.ebu.co.uk/media/pressresources.htm>