

WBF WOMEN'S BRIDGE NEWSLETTER



September 2025

Editor Mary Kelly Rogers

ONWARDS FOR THE FUTURE

Update on WBF Focus

Giving Credit where Credit is Due

Like Eating a Whale with a Teaspoon

The Henning Experience

Rimstedt Sisters at NABC Toronto

Cecilia Dwyer Rimstedt

Mixed event give women an opportunity to start

Job of TD recommended for Women

YCBC Women's Teams

World Junior U24 Women Winners

Playing Open on Wom

2nd WBF Online Team Jan 3-5, 2025

Meet Sondra Blank from Montreal

Reflections on WBF Officers' Seminar Bangkok

Gold - Norway European Team Championships

Germany - Gold European Online Women's Teams

SAVE THE DATE Women's Online Festival

SAVE THE DATE

Uniting women, bridging gaps - World Bridge Federation Women's Teams Online

World Bridge Federation
2025 ONLINE WOMEN'S TEAMS
3 TO 5 JANUARY 2025

You are invited to take part in the Second WBF Online Women's Teams

This is a transnational event

Teams can have up to 8 players and they will play at times that are convenient for them.

www.worldbridge.org

SAVE THE DATE

Two minute video of Inaugural WBF Online Women's Teams February 2024

A postcard from the organisers to the players

Mary Kelly Rogers,
Anna Gudge,
Shireen Mohandes,
Andy Bowles &

The WBF Online Women's Teams 16-18 February 2024.

Click on this link

<https://realbridge.online/wbf-womens-teams-2024-info.html>

Building on the success of the inaugural
WBF Online Women's Teams
On January 3-5 2025
This time Transnational
Without the cost of travel and accommodation
With all the Rules
Procedures & Regulations of Face to Face
Winners receive Free entry to the next WBF Transnational Women's Teams
WBF Online Masterpoints will be awarded

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January 2025





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October 2024



16TH WORLD BRIDGE GAMES
 Buenos Aires, Argentina - 22 October - 3 November, 2024




3
 Three Events open to all players from 28 October through 3 November

Experience BA's passions
 Tango, Steak and parilla, Malbec, Football, Theatre, Art, ...



November 2024

SAVE THE DATE

Women's Online Festival

Autumn 2024 **4-10 November**



Hi All,

Building on the success of the inaugural WBF online Women's teams in February, the WBF Women's Committee will organise the event again from January 3rd to 5th 2025.

USA (Seabass) won the WBF February tournament and Germany won the EBL Women's Online teams which followed in June. Annaïg Della Monta reports on the team's experience. Sylvia Shi of Seabass gave her account in our March edition [here](#)

Chair of WBF Women's Committee, Suzi Subeck, writes here on WBF Focus and has a piece: 'Give Credit where credit is due' and the credit is for Cecilia Dwyer Rimstedt. This is followed by praise for Cecilia from Carina Wademark. Cecilia was on the Swedish team that won the Venice Cup in 2019 and Carina was their coach.

WBF Communications Manager, Anna Gudge, now Anna Newton, who is well known to all competitive players and more besides, is congratulated on her recent marriage to Mark Newton.

Regular contributor, Mark Horton writes of the Herning experience and WBF Chief TD, Jeanne van den Meiracker, who directed at the championships, urges women to become TDs. It's fulfilling!

Norway won Gold at the Team Championships in Herning, Denmark and NPC Anne-Lill Hellemann shares her team's thrills and journey. Lone Bilde from Denmark shares the pride she felt by her Federation's hosting of the event and, of course, Denmark's qualification for the Venice Cup.

Aida Abu Jaber reflects on the successful WBF Officers' Seminar in Bangkok and reports on her 'aha' and her 'yesss' moments at the Seminar.

Kim Frazer, on behalf of the Australian Bridge Federation, highlights how Mixed has given women the opportunity to star. Marc-André Fourcaudot profiles Canadian player Sondra Blank's path through bridge, playing both Women's and Mixed, which is fascinating.

Another regular contributor, Sophia Baldysz, writes 'Playing Open and Women' and suggests that the 'end goal' is to get more and more people involved in this great card game'.



Top: Esther Sophonapanich, Aida Abu-Jaber
Helen Kruger

Centre: Suzi Subeck (Chair), Mary Kelly Rogers (Vice Chair)
Bottom: Sevinc Atay, Wang Yannan Anna Newton

Sophia also shares some highlights from the recent World Youth Championships.

Page 31 lists the winners of the U26 Women's Teams and Pairs; Poland won Gold in both. The U26 Women's prestigious Joan Gerard award was won by Ella Rosthoej of Denmark.

The new BBO Free Daily Women's Pairs and Women's Daylong, which are growing fast in numbers, are featured on Page 6 along with the WBF Women's Spring Festival news and results. Amy Mitura from USA won free entry, with national partner of choice, to the National Women's Pairs at the 16th World Bridge Games in Argentina in October. The Autumn Festival is played 4-10 November 2024.

The WBF Women's Committee look forward to receiving entries from across the world for our second WBF Online Women's Teams on RealBridge, January 3rd to 5th, this time transnational, this time with a microsite and with daily Bulletins. Mark Horton will be the editor.

Winners will receive FREE entry to the next WBF Transnational Women's Teams and WBF Online Masterpoints will be awarded.

Thank you to all Contributors who make this newsletter possible.

Mary Kelly Rogers
Editor
WBF Women's Committee (Vice Chair)



By: Suzi Subeck
 WBF Executive member
 WBF Women's Committee Chair

The WBF is forging a serious effort to make itself better known around the globe. Jan Kamras, WBF President, established a committee under the leadership of Ben Thompson, Australia, to promote our events and build enthusiasm for our programs. Ben is a genius at this and in a short time, we have begun a strong campaign. The committee has had assistance (knowingly and unknowingly) through caring, devoted players from many countries. This piece is an opportunity to thank some of those who, like us, are working to build awareness of our great game.

We thank Sam Punch of BAMSA (Bridge: A Mind Sport for All), who has been publicizing our bridge events as well as other bridge events on her Facebook website. Sam's projects are not only interesting but provide us with useful statistics and data to determine our target audiences.

We thank Paul Linxweiler, ACBL Bulletin Editor, for including publicity for our upcoming Buenos Aires Championships in the daily bulletins at the recent Toronto NABC (North American Bridge Championship).

We thank our many NBOs (National Bridge Organizations) for publishing our banners on their sites. Working together is

the best way to bring world bridge back to pre-pandemic levels using both online and face-to-face platforms.

The WBF Women's Committee is endeavoring to strengthen Women's Bridge through our annual online competitions. Our inaugural Teams tournament, the brainchild of Mary Kelly Rogers and organized by her, assisted by Anna Newton, née Gudge, was highly successful. Last time national teams took part from each zone and we are expanding next year's Competition to be Transnational. (If you liked those players you competed against this year, you can recruit them as teammates for next year!!) We are hoping the expansion to Transnational status will forge more worldwide friendships online which will give players a stronger desire to attend World Championships to meet their new friends face-to-face.

This year's Competition drew 64 teams, all enjoying the camaraderie and comfort of the field. The feedback was excellent. We thank Andy Bowles and Shireen Mohandes who prepared a timetable to allow for round-the-world play in sensible real time. As always, RealBridge provided a great platform and everything ran smoothly. The

event was a big success and a feather in our cap!

Our WBF Women's Festival, with prizes sponsored by both by WBF and BBO, is going from strength to strength.

The WBF Women's Newsletter, under the capable direction of Mary Kelly Rogers, Ireland, is another foray toward bringing back women's bridge and enhancing the women's game. It is designed for and about the women who play.

And finally, the Women's Committee is encouraging more female players to consider expanding their horizons by becoming tournament directors. The current ratio of male to female directors is extremely lopsided with males far outnumbering females. *Read more about this on page 16 in the story by Jeanne van den Meiracker, a current star in this field.*

Stay safe! Keep playing "Bridge for Peace!"

Suzi Subeck





Purpose of this Teams event:

To provide an opportunity for an international competitive bridge without potential limitations of cost or travel.

Entries are through

The WBF website

If you need further information

Please make contact

by emailing

Mary Kelly Rogers

wbfwomen@worldbridgefed.com

Timetable

Players will be asked to indicate availability via a form.

Not all players will play at the same time.

For example, you may play 3 matches on Friday evening, 4 or 5 on Saturday, and 4 or 5 on Sunday.

Play will not start earlier than 9am in your time zone, and it will end before 23:00 in your time zone.

The WBF Women's Committee invites women players worldwide to participate in a Teams event on RealBridge

3 to 5 January, 2025

Event Summary

Entry	<p>You may enter your team with your team name through the WBF website. http://championships.worldbridge.org/</p> <p>Team name and player names need to be finalised by the closing date.</p> <p>Any number of teams may enter, the players may be from any nation which is a member of the WBF.</p> <p>Entries close on 7th December 2024.</p>
Entry Fee	<p>The entry fee will be 60 Euros for the entire team before 16th December 2024. See payment method on WBF website under the Banner for the event.</p>
Format	<p>The format of the Tournament depends on number of teams. It will probably be a Round Robin.</p>
Schedule	<p>The tournament is played over 3 calendar days. Matches are timed so that the teams will meet others from around the world at mutually convenient times.</p>
Prize and Awards	<p>Winners receive FREE entry to next WBF Transnational Women's Teams and WBF Online Masterpoints will be awarded.</p>



Entering the WBF Online Women's Teams

January 3 to 5, 2025

WBF Registration

Each player in the team must be registered in the WBF Database. If you are not registered in the database please go to:

<http://www.worldbridge.org/rules-regulations/competitions/participants-commitment>

where you can download the registration form to complete and return to anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com or you can email Anna and she will send you a copy.

If you are not sure and need to check, you can go to:

<http://www.worldbridge.org/people-finder> and type in your last name (you don't need to enter your country) and you will get a list ... please remember that if you registered some time ago and have subsequently changed your name you also need to check your original name. If it has changed please email anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com and Anna will arrange to update your entry.

WBF Commitment form

Each player must also have a registered Commitment form in place – if you have played in a WBF Championship event since 2017 you should already have one, but if not please go to <http://www.worldbridge.org/rules-regulations/competitions/participants-commitment> where you can complete the form digitally and it will be sent to the WBF automatically.

Systems Card

Each participating pair must register their system card in advance, no later than 30 December 2024. This must be in the correct format and the main card must be two sided only. Supplementary sheets (maximum 6) may be added to give additional necessary information. These must be emailed either as the original Word / Excel file or as a PDF to anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com. Full details and blank cards for completion can be found at : <http://www.worldbridge.org/rules-regulations/competitions/wbf-system-card-editors> . Note that HUM and Brown Sticker methods are NOT permitted for this event.

If you have any queries please email

Anna Newton, WBF Communications Manager at anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com

THE TEAM

Top: Mary Kelly Rogers

& Anna Newton -WBF

Bottom: Shireen Mohandes
RealBridge

Marc van Beijsterveldt WBF Chief TD

Dirk de Clercq WBF Accounts

Please email:

WBF Women's Committee

General Information:

Mary Kelly Rogers

Event Coordinator

wbfwomen@worldbridgefed.com

WBF

Registration, Commitment form & Systems Card:

Anna Newton, WBF Communications Manager

anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com

RealBridge

RealBridge Support

Shireen Mohandes

Email support@realbridge.online



Anna Gudge got married!

*Congratulations
Anna & Mark Newton*



Anna is our:

- WBF Communications Manager
- Webmaster for Women's Online World Bridge Club
<https://www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org/>
- Proactive for WBF Women's Festival on BBO
- WBF Registrations, System cards and Commitment forms are all processed by Anna.

New Email Address:

anna.newton@worldbridgefed.com

Anna Newton

WBF Communications Manager

www.worldbridge.org





Games For the women's bridge community.

- Free Women's Pairs Every day at 1pm New york (7pm Paris)
- Women's Daylong Reward: Every day, all day

What's Happening on BBO For Women

1. BBO offers a Free Women's Pairs game every day with optional video chat. The daily free pairs game typically has around 10-15 tables, sometimes more. It's a fun game that introduces new players to bridge in a friendly and stress-free environment, with no commitment required — everything is free, and all they have to do is show up . There is also a monthly leaderboard tracking players who have won the most points each month.
2. BBO also offers a Women's Reward Daylong every day, which is quite popular with around 150 players daily. In this tournament, each player pays an entry fee of 1 BB\$, which goes towards prizes for the top finishers. The format is convenient as you can play your hands at any time within a 24-hour period, it's played with robots, and you can win BB\$ and BBO points if you perform well. The Women's Reward Daylong also features a monthly leaderboard highlighting the top players.
3. Additionally, BBO will host the Women's Autumn Festival this fall. Date - the week of November 4-10, 2024

Spring Festival 2024

- The list of winners can be found by [clicking here](#) and the online [Master Point Awards are here](#)
- All information can be found on the Women's Online World Bridge Club <https://www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org/>
- The Festival in April was the 28th edition in 17 years and is the Brainchild of WBF Women's Committee founder/chair Anna Maria Torlontano
- Winners were from across the World. Participation was up 50% - Almost 5000 entries; 819 Players Sponsored by WBF President Jan Kamras & BBO

Info Link to Free Daily Women's Pairs

[free daily Women's Pairs](#)

Info Link to Women's Daylong

[Women's Daylong Reward game](#)

Winner Spring Festival

Amy Mitura -USA



Amy and a partner of her choice from USA have a free entry to the National Women's Pairs in Buenos Aires in October 2024.

SAVE THE DATE



Aaida Abu Jaber



Secretary of the Jordan Bridge Federation
Member of the WBF Women's Committee



Back Row Left to Right:
WBF Vice President Eric Laurant
Jordan delegate Aaida Abu Jaber
WBF Treasurer Marc de Pau
President of the Jordan Bridge Federation
Ramzi Goussous.

Front Row Left to Right:
Chair of WBF Seminar Committee Kari-
Anne Opsal
WBF General Secretary Arianna Testa

Reflections on the Days in Bangkok

WBF OFFICERS' SEMINAR MAY 2024

Jordan delegate Aaida Abu Jaber

Attending the WBF NBO Officers' seminar in the vibrant city of Bangkok was truly delightful.

As a representative of Jordan's NBO, I was there to give an overview of the Jordan Bridge Federation (JBF) [4.JBF Presentation 2.pdf](#) (worldbridge.org), acquainting my fellow officers with the intricacies of bridge in Jordan and the various efforts of our NBO to increase player participation and enhance awareness. I also pointed out that the JBF will celebrate its silver jubilee in 2024, having been formally established in 1999 under the Jordan Olympic Committee auspices.

The thing that most astounded me at the seminar was how all of us, from all over the world, were dealing with the same issues and problems: aging players, financial restraints, declining player counts, ethic matters; yet we were also faced with the same opportunities: the allure of playing online, access to advanced technology, and the potential for virtual/hybrid championships.



Group that attended the Seminar Bangkok

25 Officers from 14 NBOs Four Zones

ZONE 4 – Bridge Federation of Asia & the Middle East (BFAME)

ZONE 6 – Asia Pacific Bridge Federation (APBF)

ZONE 7 – South Pacific Bridge Federation (SPBF)

ZONE 8 – African Bridge Federation (ABF)

Topics of the Officers' Seminar

held in Bangkok

[WBF President Welcome Message.pdf](#)

[WBF President's Report.pdf](#)

[1. ABF – Online Introduction to Bridge for Young Players.pdf](#)

[2. CCBA.pdf](#)

[3. GABSI – Kickstarting Bridge for All 2.pdf](#)

[4. JBF- Presentation 2.pdf](#)

[5. MCBA – CHALLENGES FACING SMALL NBOs.pdf](#)

[6. Women's Bridge – MaryKellyRogers.pdf](#)

[7. CTCBA.pdf](#)

[8. Zone6 Report.pdf](#)

[9. WBF Governance & Finances – MarcDePauw.pdf](#)

[10. WADA – Anti-Doping.pdf](#)

[11. BFI.pdf](#)

[12. FRMB – Marrakech World Bridge Championships.pdf](#)

[13. Int'l Bridge – Eric Laurant.pdf](#)

[14. Cheating – Eric Laurant.pdf](#)

[15. Loneliness The Netherlands – Eric Laurant.pdf](#)

[16. Ethic video.pdf](#)

[16a. Ethic video mistakes.pdf](#)

[Useful links.pdf](#)

I was particularly amazed by the presentation made by my colleague from the Women's Committee, Mary Kelly Rogers. In addition to being delivered in a pleasant and tranquil tone, her thoughts on Women's Bridge provided me with multiple epiphanies.

Although I work in marketing and am a big believer in originality and innovation, I am all for not reinventing the wheel when it comes to building and enhancing bridge in smaller zones. I like to pick up knowledge from others, building on their advantages, and taking lessons from their mistakes.

So, after Mary established the solution to the existential question: **To Be or Not to Be** for women's bridge, she proposed various suggestions that worked for women's bridge in the European Bridge League (EBL) and those were my "aha" moments.

Brilliant ideas to build women's bridge worldwide included creating zonal committees, designating zonal coordinators, and creating a database.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I want to recall that "yessss!" moment I experienced at the seminar.

The WBF Council will be considering extending the Women's Online championships to Open, Seniors, Mixed, and Youth divisions in order to build on the success of the inaugural Online Women's Teams 2024, in which 64 teams from 31 countries took part.

I'm excited to put the seminar's ideas into practice and collaborate with the Women's Committee and other NBOs to keep this lovely game going.

Aaida Abu Jaber



Suzi Subeck, Member of WBF Executive Chair of WBF Women's Committee



In the Semi-Finals of the United States Mixed Bridge Championships in Schaumburg, Illinois, in May, there was a shining moment for Cecilia Dwyer-Rimstedt on Board 55. On this hand, Cecilia demonstrated that women are skilful declarers too! She makes women in bridge proud!

Dealer South All Vul

Declarer South ♠ -
 Vul All ♥QT9764
 ♦Q63
 ♣T954

♠KJ64 ♠AT953
 ♥A8 ♥J53
 ♦92 ♦AT74
 ♣87632 ♣K

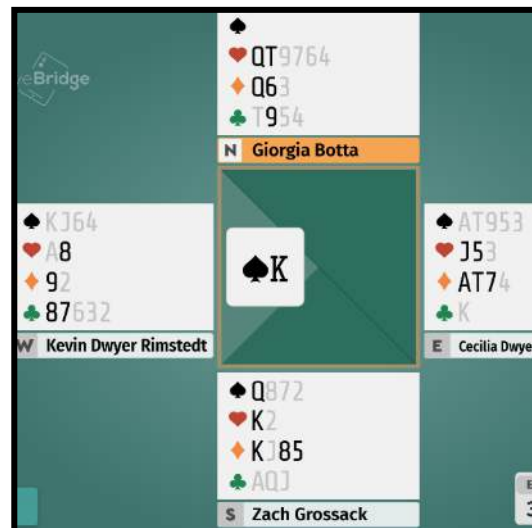
 ♠Q872
 ♥K2
 ♦KJ85
 ♣AQJ

Kevin Dwyer Rimstedt	Giorgia Botta	Cecilia Dwyer Rimstedt	Zach Grossack
West	North	East	South
			1 NT *
P	2♦	P	2♥
2♠	P	3♠	P
P	P		

1NT = 14-17; 2♦ = Hearts

Zach Grossack led the ♠ 7 against 3♠ . Cecilia won her 9 while Botta discarded a low heart. The ♣K was won with the ace, Zach returning a spade to dummy's jack. Cecilia ruffed a club and played a small diamond. Zach won his jack and exited with a small spade. Cecilia won the spade and ruffed a club with the trump ace. She played the ♥3 to the ace in dummy and cashed the ♠K felling Zach's queen. **Botta was in big trouble!!**

The Position:



Poor Giorgia! She can't pitch her good club. She can't pitch from the QT of hearts ... After much thought, she threw the ♦6. No problem for declarer...

Cecilia countered by discarding her small heart. She played the ♦9 from dummy to the Q, A, 8, followed



Star Player
Cecilia Dwyer
Rimstedt

Cecilia Dwyer Rimstedt

Cecilia represented the Sweden women team the last time in Wuhan 2019, when we won Venice Cup the first time.

Before her Venice Cup Gold Medal, Cecilia had won the U26 Pairs in 2006 and was on the Venice Cup team that won bronze in 2017, won silver in the European Championships in Ostende 2018, was in 2nd place in 1st IMSA world masters championship 2019 and 2nd place in Beijing Hua Yuan Cup in 2019. Cecilia also won the open mixed pair championship in Lisbon 2019

Since then, her achievements have continued. Here are some and there may be more I do not know of in USA. In the Open World Championship in Wroclaw 2022 she won Gold in the Women's team with team Brody and Bronze in Mixed with team Donner.

Now she is married to Kevin Dwyer Rimstedt and has added Dwyer to her name. She lives in USA and will represent USA for the first time in Mixed teams in Buenos Aires in October, just like her sister Sandra.

Cecilia is the third Swedish woman who got married and started to play for USA, Jenny Wolpert, Sandra Rimstedt and Cecilia Rimstedt, all of them world Champions. Cecilia is a true star!

Carina Wademark

by the ♥J to Zach's king. Zach was endplayed in diamonds and forced to yield a ninth trick to the offense!

Cecilia, part of a prominent bridge-playing family, will not be overshadowed by her siblings.

Credit to Zach for finding the spade lead, however, against a star declarer, the deuce would have afforded North/South with a fighting chance that was lost on the lead of the 7.

It is important that bridge journalists recognize women players in situations like this. For a long time, bridge journalism has focused its attention to play by male players. Giving kudos when earned as often as possible to women players will build respect for their game and help promote women's bridge.

Suzi Subeck



SWEDEN: Carina WADEMARK coach, Emma ÖVELIUS, Ida GRÖNKVIST, Kathrine BERTHEAU, Cecilia RIMSTEDT, Sanna CLEMENTSSON, Jessica LARSSON, Kenneth BORIN captain



Carina Wademark was Coach to the Swedish Women's Team when they won Venice Cup Gold for the first time in Wuhan in 2019. Sweden's success continued with Carina as Coach when Sweden won Venice Cup Gold in Salsomaggiore in 2022.

RIMSTEDT SISTERS AT NABC

Courtesy of the ACBL's Daily
Bulletins from the Summer NABC
in Toronto

<https://live.acbl.org/bulletins/NABC242>

WAGER WOMEN'S PAIRS AT NABC



Winners of the Freeman Board-a-Match Teams: Kevin Dwyer Rimstedt, Cecilia Dwyer Rimstedt, Sandra Rimstedt and Shan Huang. Their npc is Joyce Hill (not pictured).



Winners
Marjorie Mitchelin & Kismet Fung



Runners- Up:
Marjorie Cole & Sandra Rimstedt

Follow Cecilia and Sandra At the !6th World Bridge Games Women's Teams USA

Lynn BAKER (U.S.A.)

Cecilia DWYER RIMSTEDT (U.S.A.)

Jill MEYERS (U.S.A.)

Sandra RIMSTEDT (U.S.A.)

Kerri SANBORN (U.S.A.)

Olivia SCHIRESON (U.S.A.)

Joe STOKES (U.S.A.)

Sam DINKIN (U.S.A.)

16th WORLD BRIDGE GAMES
Buenos Aires, Argentina • 22 October - 3 November, 2024*

*Registration and Opening Ceremony on 21 October





After the introduction of the Ladies' Champion Cup last year, we – the European ladies – were gifted with another new event to support the development of women's Bridge: the first Online European Women Championship.

Yes, a real European Championship on Real Bridge over 3 days ! The event was perfectly organised – we can also highlight the great communication, the very friendly atmosphere, the strict rules to prevent cheating and the emphasis on alerting bids. Furthermore, each pair had to submit a convention card in advance. It was as close as it could get to a real event.

Annaïg Della Monta



A Perfect Opportunity

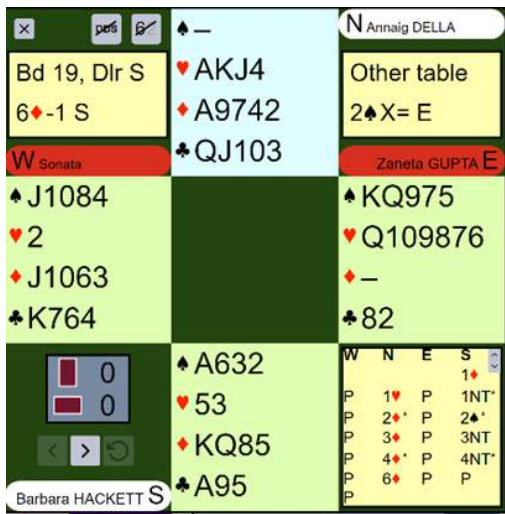


This was a perfect opportunity to finalise our team training for the European Championship which were scheduled a few weeks later in Herning, Denmark. The German Ladies team comprised of the following players: Karin Wenning and Ingrid Gromann, Mieke Plath and Susanne Kriftner; both pairs had played for several years together in the national team, and a new resurrected pair, Barbara Hackett and Annaïg Della Monta (we actually played together 15 years ago, after a break of 10 years, we just started again!). 4 of us would represent Germany in Herning.

On the first day due to last minute change, Susanne and Karin had to form a new partnership for 3 matches, which turned out to be very successful as they won the internal team butler. It is often the case when you play with a new partner that you are more careful trying to make your partner's life easier !

An Important Quality in Bridge

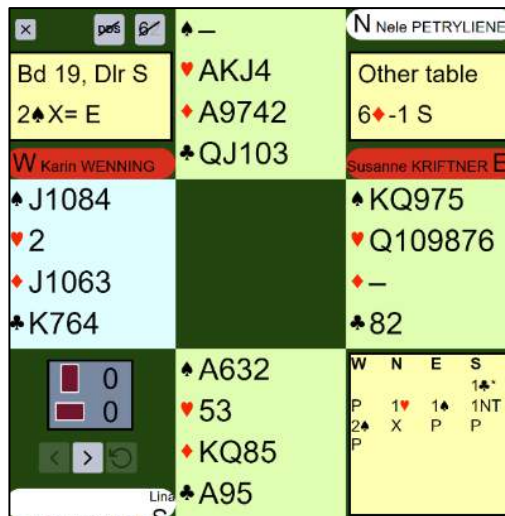
If you have a bad board, you should put it behind you and concentrate on the next one. Especially in Teams! Here you are compared with only one result and anything can happen ... Here is an example:



The bidding:

- 1 ♦ = at least four
- 1 NT = 12-14, 4 spades possible
- 2 ♦ = GF Relay
- 2 ♠ = 4 spades, 3 Heart still possible
- 3 ♦ = diamond fit, opener should continue to describe her hand
- 3 NT = no 3 Heart
- 4 ♦ = conditional key card
- 4 NT = positive response, 3 (or 0) aces
- 6 ♦s!

The contract looks good, but with the diamonds 4:0 and the king of clubs not onside, Barbara was unfortunately quickly one down. We wouldn't win on this board, - would we?



At the other table, the bidding was slightly different:

Susanne interfered with 1 spade, raised by Karin. South optimistically passed North's Double. The lead was a heart to the ace, back came a club: Susanne was then able to develop the hearts and win the contract. She lost the 2 black aces as well as 3 tricks in hearts.



The contract is actually 2 down on best defence – East gets forced and cannot develop the hearts.

So: 12 IMPs won despite going down in the good slam

Board 38	♠ J	E/W Vul
	♥ AK85	Dir E
	♦ AKQ8543	
	♣ 8	
♠ AT3		♠ K976
♥ 2		♥ JT96
♦ 6		♦ JT
♣ AKQ97		♣ J53
642		
	♠ Q8542	
	♥ Q743	
	♦ 972	
	♣ T	

You hold the North and are fourth in hand, Non Vul against Vul.

Table 1 : After East's pass, your partner opens 2 Heart: both Majors weak. To your left comes X (12-15 or strong), what do you do?

Table 2 : after two passes, West opens 2 diamonds multi (Weak2 in a major or strong) - what do you bid?



Top Annaïg and Barbara, Middle Karin and Ingrid, Bottom Mieke and Suzanne

Best part was to come

At the EM opening ceremony, the prize giving ceremony of the Online EM took place. It was definitely for us the most exciting part of the tournament, what a feeling to get on stage to get our first European Gold Medal ! Luckily, there were only 4 of us, as we could hardly fit onto the podium...

Thanks again to the organisers of this great event. With 48 teams competing, with various levels of expertise, it was enjoyable for everyone, and we warmly recommend you participating next year. We will be back at the next EBL online championship to defend our title!.. and we hope to play in the 2nd WBF Online Women's Teams Jan 3-5, 2025.

An interesting bidding problem

At the first table, after much thinking, the Belgian lady bid 6 Hearts, which was promptly doubled by Annaïg. After Barbara's King of clubs (to find out partner's length), the ace of spades and ace of clubs was ruffed, declarer drew two rounds of trumps and lost control. Five down and a nice score of +1100 for our team.

At the other table, Ingrid bid 5 diamonds, West found another 6 clubs bid, which Ingrid then doubled for 2 down and 17 IMPs for the German Ladies

At the other tables, most of the time declarer was in 5 diamonds - often doubled and just as often made as down!

We won the Qualification

After having won the qualification, we still had to play 7 matches @ 7 boards on Sunday in the A Final against several players that we would meet again a few weeks later in Denmark. After some good actions and a pinch of luck, we succeeded and won the tournament. Our first European Title ! The only drawback of the tournament was that we could not hug and celebrate together despite a lot of virtual cheers with champagne glasses.



Gold for Germany

Annaïg Della Monta

Jeanne van den Meiracker recommends

the job of TD for women

Jeanne's story:

I started playing bridge in 1976 at the Bridgekring'35 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. It was a club with 220 members which was regarded as a large club.

In 1988 the club needed directors, so me and my partner Hanneke Kreijns followed the course for club directors.

I liked it so much, that I ended up becoming an international director in the course of 1993. From that moment on I directed in more than 50 European and World championships.

At that time, I had a full-time job and I used my vacation days to direct. Most of the time, the directors' staff is only men, with occasionally a few women such as Marieke Quant from the Netherlands and Michaela Balint from Romania.

But they all gave it up for the moment.

In the beginning it was hard, because it happened that the players thought that I was a waitress - (before we had the jackets!)

I am working as a TD now for 31 years and I still love it.

When we work in a European or World Championship the TDs are like family.



Jeanne's family at the World Championships Marrakech 2023



More Women TDS

I wish to encourage more women to follow the international TD course. It is a challenge that is very rewarding. Do think about it!

Recently a new element in directing was added to my profile when I directed in the 1st European Online Women's Team Championship, held in June.

It was a great experience working with Shireen, Andy Bowles and Jacek Marciniak.

Shireen and Andy supported both the TD's and the players tirelessly.

It was helpful that we could talk to the players because of the presence of sound and image.

48 teams participated!

The 2nd WBF Online Women's Teams will be held January, 3rd to 5th 2025.

I will be directing there too, so I hope that many teams will subscribe.

See you there!

Jeanne van den Meiracker

The Herning Experience, by Mark Horton



Herning proved to be an exceptional venue for the 2024 European Team Championships, which also incorporated the Senior and Women's Pairs (there is a rumour that it might be the venue for the 2025 World Championships).



Mark Horton

Mark as well as being perhaps the best-known bridge journalist in the world, is a regular contributor to our Women's newsletters. He is a long time editor of Bridge Magazine and A New Bridge Magazine. He now edits Bridgerama US for 52 Entertainment and is Chief Editor to the WBF and the EBL.

Norway - GOLD

Ann Karin FUGLESTAD, Liv Marit GRUDE, Marianne HARDING, Torild HESKJE, Bodil Nyheim OIGARDEN, Gunn Tove VIST, Anne-Lill HELLEMANN captain, Leif-Erik STABELL, coach

France - SILVER

Marion CANONNE, Donatella HALFON, Margaux KUREK BEAULIEU, Anais LELEU, Carole PUILLET, Anne-Laure TARTARIN, Stephane GARCIA captain, Wilfried LIBBRECHT coach

Türkiye - BRONZE

Asli ACAR, Berrak ERKAN, Ozlem KANDOLU, Eren OZAN, Irem OZBAY, Dilek YAVAS, M.Gokhan YILMAZ captain, Zeynep YILMAZ coach



Women's Pairs

Gold: Poland - Cathy & Sophia Baldysz
Silver: Finland - Pia Erkkila & Raija Tuomi
Bronze: Serbia- Jovana Zoranovic & Selena Pepic



Women's Teams

Gold: Norway
Silver: France
Bronze: Türkiye

Dearer South ♠A7
None Vul ♥9
♦A973
♣QT9543

♠J6
♥J843
♦K652
♣872

♠QT98532
♥1075
♦JT
♣A

♠K4
♥AKQ62
♦Q84
♣KJ6

B Drnovsek	C Baldysz	T Drnovsek	S Baldysz
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
P	2♥*	3♠	4♥
P	6♣	P	P
P			

- 1♣ 11-14 balanced or 4441♦ (4315/3415)
or 15+5+♣ or 4414 or 18+ any
- 2♥ Clubs
- 4♥ Control

Dearer East ♠JT73
N/S Vul ♥75
♦962
♣KQ96

♠AKQ
♥AQJ8432
♦A
♣T7



♠852
♥KT6
♦Q7
♣A5432

♠964
♥9
♦KJT8543
♣J8

Open Room

C Baldysz	Halfon	S Baldysz	Canonne
West	North	East	South
-	-	P	3♦
4♥	P	P	P

Closed Room

Puillet	Zachmucha	Tartarin	Morawska
West	North	East	South
-	-	P	3♦
Dble	P	3NT	P
6♥	P	P	P

Helped on their way

In the Women's pairs, Cathy and Sophia Baldysz looked set to win by a historic margin, at one point being more than five tops ahead of their nearest challengers. This deal from the second session of the Final helped them on their way:

I'm applying a little guesswork as to the meaning of 2♥ and 4♥, but I am confident about 1♣ and 6♣. West led the ♥J and declarer won in hand and played a club, East winning and returning a spade. Declarer won, cashed the ♣K and then played four rounds of hearts, ruffing. A club to hand took care of the outstanding trump and the ♥6 disposed of the remaining small diamond, making dummy high for +920 and a complete top. If North is declarer, a diamond lead is fatal.

No clear favourite

There was no clear favourite in the Women's Teams. The reigning World Champions, Israel, were concentrating their efforts on the Mixed Teams and there were new faces in many of the established squads. That was especially true in the case of France, who almost captured the title after a thrilling last round confrontation with Norway.

As is frequently the case, the pre-emptive opening caused a problem for someone. West had a very good hand, but was facing a passed partner and Cathy Baldysz settled for jumping to game, +480

With game in her own hand, Carole Puillet doubled. Perhaps recalling the words of Terence Reese, that Qx is a good holding for notrumps, Anne-Laure Tartarin went for the nine trick game, which had the huge advantage of suggesting that she had some values. That was enough to enable West to jump to the laydown slam, +980 along with 11 IMPs.



One of the deals of the tournament

This same match between Poland and France included one of the deals of the tournament.

Locating the heart fit proved to be a poisoned chalice. Marion Canonne led the $\diamond 2$, and when dummy's eight was not covered declarer played a heart from dummy. North took the $\heartsuit A$ and returned a diamond for her partner to ruff. Two rounds of clubs saw North win and give South another diamond ruff and then a third club allowed North to score the $\heartsuit 10$, three down, -150.

In the Closed room East's $3\heartsuit$ did not promise five, so the nine-trick game was reached.

Ewa Morawska led the $\clubsuit 7$ and the defenders played three rounds of the suit, South exiting with the $\clubsuit 9$ and North discarding a diamond. Declarer took the $\clubsuit Q$, played three rounds of diamonds ending in dummy and heart for the ten and queen. Now she exited with a low heart and although North could win and cash the $\diamond J$ that was the last trick for the defence, +400 and 11 IMPs.

If North had pitched a spade, declarer would need to cross to dummy with the $\diamond Q$ and then play on hearts. Given that South is known to have six clubs, you would be inclined to place North with the heart length and many players went down in $3NT$ by just playing the heart king, hoping for three hearts to the ace with North.

It can't cost to go to dummy with a diamond and play a low heart to the king. When you see the $\heartsuit 10$, restricted choice comes into play, suggesting that you should override the thinking about the heart length and continue with a low card. You need to keep in mind that if North was dealt $\heartsuit AJx$ or $\heartsuit A10x$ he must put in the jack or ten to give declarer a second-round guess. If you thought North was capable of pitching the $\heartsuit A$ from $\heartsuit A10/\heartsuit AJ$, you might go wrong, but as the discard is so difficult to find you should play as Tartarin did.

However, if North had discarded the $\heartsuit A$ on the third round of clubs, even Houdini would have been unable to score more than eight tricks!

East was known to hold 19-21 points and North could see 13 between her hand and dummy. Partner had produced the $\clubsuit A$, leaving at most 4 points unaccounted for. You need to find an entry to partner's hand, and you might imagine that the $\spadesuit K$ is the best hope. However, partner is more likely to have the $\spadesuit Q$ than the king.

Dearer North $\spadesuit T876$

N/S Vul $\heartsuit AT$

$\diamond J7654$

$\clubsuit K5$

$\spadesuit J954$

$\heartsuit 763$

$\diamond KT98$

$\clubsuit J3$

$\spadesuit AK$

$\heartsuit KQ854$

$\diamond AQ3$

$\clubsuit QT6$

$\spadesuit Q32$

$\heartsuit J92$

$\diamond 2$

$\clubsuit A98742$

Open Room

C Baldysz	Halfon	S Baldysz	Canonne
West	North	East	South
-	P	$1\clubsuit$	P
$1\diamond$	P	$1NT^*$	P
$2\clubsuit^*$	P	$2NT^*$	P
$3\clubsuit$	P	$3\heartsuit$	P
$4\heartsuit$	P	P	P

- $1\clubsuit$ 11-14 balanced or 4441{ (4315/3415) or 15+5+} or 4414 or 18+ any
- $1\diamond$ 0-6, any or 7-11 minor(s) or 16+ balanced
- $1NT$ 18-21 balanced

Closed Room

Puillet	Zachmucha	Tartarin	Morawska
West	North	East	South
-	P	$2NT\clubsuit$	P
$3\clubsuit^*$	P	$3\heartsuit$	P
$3NT$	P	P	P

$2NT$ (19)20-21



Would you have found the winning defence?

There is no need to worry, as across all four series no one did.

Aggressive pre-empting style

There is no doubt that adopting an aggressive pre-empting style can pay dividends. Here is another example featuring the eventual champions, Norway and their Swedish neighbours:

West's 3♥ was enough to silence everyone. North led the ♠ K and South won and switched to the ♦ J, followed by the ♦ 10, declarer taking dummy's ace and playing two rounds of hearts, collecting North's ♥ 109 as South won with the ♥ A and returned a diamond. Declarer ruffed, drew trumps and ran the ♣ J, South winning and exiting with a diamond.

Declarer ruffed and took another club finesse. When that lost South had to return a club to dummy, but as declarer had thrown the ♣ 3 she was left with a losing spade and was two down, -200.

West led the ♥ K and relying on her to have a six-card suit declarer won, unblocked the ♠ A and played on diamonds. East won and switched to the ♣ 3 and when West could not beat the ♣ K declarer cashed her winners in diamonds and spades before playing a second club to score 10 tricks along with 10 IMPs

Dearer West ♠ KQJ2
All Vul ♥ T9
♦ KQ75
♣ 872

♠ 765
♥ KQJ875
♦ 92
♣ J6

♠ T9843
♥ 3
♦ A43
♣ AT93

♠ A
♥ A642
♦ JT86
♣ KQ54

Open Room

Harding	M Johansson	Fuglestad	Sivelind
West	North	East	South
3♥	P	P	P

Closed Room

Y Johansson	Vist	Hallqvist	Heskje
West	North	East	South
2♦	P	2♥*	P
P	Dble	P	3NT
P	P	P	

2♦ Multi
2♥ Pass or correct



Marianne Harding

A successful aggressive bid!



GOLD FOR NORWAY

Dearer South ♠ 7654
 N/S Vul ♥ 94
 ♦ K987652
 ♣ -

♠ AK9	♠ QJ8
♥ Q8763	♥ A52
♦ AJ	♦ Q3
♣ T76	♣ AKQ43

♠ T32
 ♥ KJT
 ♦ T4
 ♣ J9852

Open Room

Pierce	Bareket	Rees	Saada
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	P
1NT*	P	2♣*	P
3♣	P	3♦*	P
3♥	P	4♣*	P
4♦	P	4NT*	P
5♥*	P	6♥	All Pass

1NT	14-16	4♣	Control
2♣	Puppet Stayman	4♦	Control
3♣	5♥/♠	4NT	RKCB
3♦	Asking	5♥	2 keycards + Q♥

Closed Room

Asulin	Plakett	Pachtman	Deschepper
West	North	East	South
-	-	-	P
1NT*	P	2♣*	P
2♥	P	3♣	P
3♥*	P	4♦	P
4♥	P	4NT*	P
5♥*	P	6NT	All Pass

1NT	(14)15-17, could be semi balanced
2♣	Non-forcing Stayman
3♥	5♥
4NT	RKCB
5♠	2 keycards + ♥Q

One of the most discussed

European teams have won the last three Venice Cup contests. They have a strong hand for 2025, so don't be surprised if one of our teams make it four in a row.

Israel dismantled their 2023 Venice Cup winning team to concentrate on the Mixed Teams, and it paid a huge dividend as they were convincing winners.

This deal was one of the most discussed across all four events.

The Play in Open Room

North led the ♠6 and declarer won with the ♠A and played two rounds of hearts, ducking when South followed with the ♥J followed by the ♥10. That gave declarer a second trump loser, but even if she had played the ♥Q she would have been one down on this layout.

How should this heart combination be played?

The principle of restricted choice has a role to play. If South started with ♥J109 then she can play her cards in any order, but give her ♥KJ9 and she is unlikely to drop the ♥J on the first round of the suit. The odds are slightly in favour of playing the ♥Q on the second round, but it's partly a question of table feel.

In the Closed Room, perhaps East's 4♦ bid persuaded North to lead the ♦9 (18 players led a diamond from North's hand against a slam) and that ran to declarer's jack. A club to the ace disclosed the 5-0 split and when declarer played two rounds of hearts South took the king, sparing declarer a guess. The 3-2 split meant there were 12 tricks, giving 14 IMPs to Israel.

Mark Horton

CELEBRATIONS - EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS - GOLD for NORWAY



Leif-Erik STABELL, coach, Torild HESKJE, Gunn Tove VIST, Bodil Nyheim OIGARDEN, Liv Marit GRUDE, Anne-Lill HELLEMANN captain, Marianne HARDING, Ann Karin FUGLESTAD



Anne- Lill
Hellemann
(NP Captain)
Describes
The path to
success

CELEBRATIONS

We came to Herning with the intention to play bridge more competitively than we did in Marrakesh. Our goal was first to qualify for the Venice cup, but honestly our real goal was aiming for a medal.

The Norwegian ladies have been playing together for many years, making the team strong through working hard on the systems and a lot of practice.

The results have thus slowly improved over the years. The team was full of confidence. We started out in the championship with teams we considered strong and the women played very well. After round 5 we were leading and we kept the leading position through most of the rounds ending up only to be followed by France.

Before the last round only these two teams, Norway and France could win. Amazingly for an exciting finish both for us and the spectators, we played the last round against France! It was like a final, and the Norwegian ladies could afford to lose by 20 IMPs. With two boards to go, France was leading by 6 IMPs, and it looked like a done deal for Norway. But in a nervous finish, France won 5 IMPs on the penultimate board and 11 on the last, to win by 22.

However, in the open room, it was a 5 minutes break. That was when the director came to the table and announced that there would be an adjusted score on board no.5:

In the **closed room**, Gunn Tove opened 3♣ second in hand, and Torild jumped to 5♣. South cashed her two Aces, but that was it. Norway +400.

Open room:
Contract 3NT – West is Declarer

Final Rankings		
Rank	Team	VPs
1	NORWAY	307.84
2	FRANCE	306.19
3	TURKIYE	270.54
4	ITALY	266.58
5	POLAND	264.49
6	ENGLAND	251.13
7	NETHERLANDS	239.15
8	DENMARK	235.52
9	SWEDEN	229.48
10	HUNGARY	199.86

Closed Room

Heskje	Cannone	Vist	Halfon
West	North	East	South
-	P	3♣	P
5♣	P	P	P

Open Room

Puillet	Fuglestad	Tartarin	Harding
West	North	East	South
-	P	P	P
1♦	P	1♥	P
X	2♠	P	P
3NT	P	P	P

Board 5. Dealer North. N-S Vulnerable.

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



GOLD for NORWAY

Ann Karin (North) led ♠10, and Marianne (South) won ♠A and returned ♠6 (standard current count) to ♠Q and ♠K. Ann Karin cashed ♠9 and Marianne followed with a "neutral" ♠4. She could have signalled for a heart with ♠7, but was worried that West had something like:

♠Q852

♥Jx

♦AKQJx

♣AK

when a passive defence would have left declarer with 8 tricks only. Ann Karin thought for half a minute and returned a club. West claimed the rest, France +430. However, there was a problem. East explained to North that the double of 1♠ could show a number of different hands, including 3-card hearts or 18-19 balanced. When West jumped to 3NT, she explained that she had shown a strong hand with 3-card hearts - not necessarily balanced. On the other side of the screen, West explained to South that 3NT denied 3-card hearts.

With this explanation, it was impossible for Ann Karin to find the ♥Q switch. Instead, she "knew" that a club switch had to be safe - declarer had to be 4315 or 4342, and would be a trick short even if she had ♣AK.

The director polled a number of other players (which he has to do) and ruled that North would have had a 50% chance of finding the ♥Q switch with the correct explanation. Thus, the score was adjusted to E/W +200 and 5 IMPs to Norway.

This meant that France won the match 35-19, but they would have needed 5 IMPs more to take the title. So finally we could celebrate the victory.

Anne-Lill Hellemann

European Championships in Herring, Denmark

Like Eating a Whale with a Teaspoon



Lone Bilde
Member of the
Danish
Women's Team
Qualified for
Venice Cup
2025




For the first time since 1977, a European championship took place in my home country. The joy of playing in a town where the main language was Danish and where we were proud to flag our national team shirts in the streets and be cheered for - could not be underestimated. Our team for Herring consisted of the usual suspects, Trine Bilde & Charlotte Koch-Palmund, Anita Buus-Thomsen & Dorte Cilleborg Bilde, Helle Rasmussen and myself, spiced up with the new faces Rico Hemberg (NPC) and Marie Henriksen (coach). Our ambition was to qualify for the Venice Cup in 2025 and as history later revealed, we made that goal, qualifying in a comfortable 8th seat. And the bit of nerves and excitement about our qualification which may have looked as if it were in jeopardy towards the end of the championship only provided extra entertainment for our local supporters. At least so we can say afterwards.

Our Northern friends from the Faroe Islands, also participated in Herring. When we met their women's team, I asked my screen mate how it was to participate in the EC for the first time. "Well you know", she said, "**It is like eating a pilot whale with a teaspoon**". With a hint to the extremely difficult task of winning imps against other nations.



Herring, in the middle of the heathland of Jutland, is well reputed in Denmark for their big conferences, sports and music events. Herring also turned out to be an excellent host for a big bridge event: Fine venue, many restaurants and shops just outside the door, and a smooth and efficient organization with more than 300 volunteers who gave hours of hard work to make the championship a good experience for all participants.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vulnerable.

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

A lot of pairs across all teams in the EC had difficulties with the north-south hands and most pairs ended up defending against 3 hearts (sometimes doubled) but with a grand slam in clubs this was not very profitable. Both Faroe Islands teams made it to a slam in clubs (in the open teams even to a grand slam). The bidding went 1♠ (3♥) x (pass) 4♣ (p) 7clubs - all pass.

So, this board swallowed a big mouthful of the whale.

Helle (North), me (South), played against Tina Dogani (West) and Lina Mamadaki (East) from Greece. At our table, I found myself quite distracted from something (maybe the last board), so I by coincidence got to press “confirm” on the tablet, without even looking at my hand. And that meant that I started the bidding in South by a pass. What a state of shock I was in when I realized that! The bidding then went Pass (3 hearts) pass (pass) ? and now my turn.

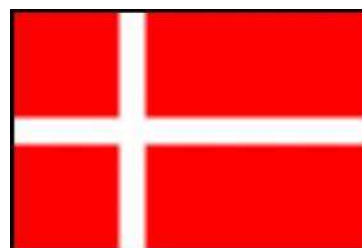
What to do? I ended up bidding 4 hearts (spades and a minor) - so at least now Helle could no longer pass 3H doubled. She chose to bid 5 clubs (Pass or correct) (I guess her intention was for me to manage the assumed shaky 5 diamonds myself as a declarer). But she was quite surprised to see me pass and table a hand that was fit for a grand slam. My ears are still red for passing, but the fun is that the board was a win of 8 imps for us.

Big congratulations to Norway, France and Turkey for their medals and thanks for a great championship.



Captain & Coach
Rico Hemberg (NPC) and Marie Henriksen (coach)

Lone Bilde



By Kim Frazer



Kim, a player of renown, is perhaps more well-known for her articles on the mental side of bridge which appear regularly in Australian Bridge Magazine.



Pele Rankin



Lauren Travis and Sophie Ashton



Ella Jacob and Jessica Brake

Mixed events give women an opportunity to star

The Australian bridge National Circuit features several premier tournaments which are held in all parts of the country throughout the year. When I first started playing in these events several years ago, more than 50% of the field were women players yet almost none were members of the winning teams or pairs in the open categories. Women's pairs and teams' events featured in most of these events. Since the rise in popularity of mixed pairs events, women's pairs events have almost disappeared from the national circuit. In 2024, women have been starring in these prestigious mixed events albeit with a male partner at their side and have also taken podium finishes in Open teams and pairs events.

Women who star

Earlier this year, Pele Rankin took out a national event double when she won both the mixed and open pairs events at the Australian Swiss Pairs championships in partnership with George Kozakos. Pele has been representing Australia internationally in women's events since 2011, and more recently has focused on the newer mixed pairs/teams events.

Made their mark

Lauren Travis and Sophie Ashton have also made their mark in 2024 narrowly missing the teams' final at the Autumn Nationals (with teammates Sartaj Hans and Dave Wiltshire). Lauren has graduated from the youth ranks to be a very strong open player achieving selection in 2023 on the Australian Mixed team which competed at Marrakech. Sophie has been particularly prominent on the national circuit for a few years now winning multiple open national championships. This year she won the Jim & Norma Borin Mixed Pairs in Melbourne (with Liam Milne) and was 3rd at the River City Gold Mixed Pairs in Brisbane and 2nd at the National Open Teams in Canberra.

Rising stars

Rising stars include Ella Jacob and Jessica Brake who have continued to develop as players from their early days as youth representatives to be serious contenders in the final stages of major championships throughout the year. Ella won the Bobby Richman Pairs Championship at the Gold Coast and was a semi-finalist in the Open Teams. Jessica has had several podium finishes in the past few months – each with a different partner. In addition to winning the Butler Open Pairs (alongside husband Shane Harrison), she was 2nd in the Victor Champion Cup Open Swiss Pairs (with Andy Hung) and was 3rd (with Josh Tomlin) in the Australian Mixed Pairs in Tasmania



Renee Cooper

Continues to impress

Another player who has continued to impress is multiple Australian team representative - Renee Cooper. Renee is playing a bit less on the local circuit this year as she pursues her business career and selective international bridge opportunities. However, even with her limited participation, she has shone in being part of the winning team at the National Open Teams Championships in Canberra earlier this year. She will also be representing Australia as part of the Australian Women's Team at the World Bridge Games later this year.



Laurie Kelso and Kim Frazer

WBF Chief TD and Author

In May Queensland hosts the River City Gold Mixed Pairs which is one of the few Matchpoint events on the Australian circuit. This very popular event saw a rare appearance as a player by WBF Chief Tournament Director Laurie Kelso who paired up in a winning combination with Kim Frazer (Author of piece)



Top: Jenny Thompson
Bottom L to R
Dagnar Neumann Allison Stralow

Three Women on Board

I should also mention that the five-member Board of the Australian Bridge Federation features three women – Allison Stralow as President, Jenny Thompson as Secretary (also a multiple international representative and wife of WBF Vice President Ben Thompson) and Dagnar Neumann. Dagnar has enjoyed several successes on the Australian bridge circuit, most recently winning the Mixed Pairs at the Australian National Championships (alongside Maurits van der Vlugt) and she was also a member of the winning NSW Open team in the Interstate Teams event at those Championships. In 2024 she will be representing Australia as part of the Australian Mixed Team at the World Bridge Games.

Women are succeeding

With the year just over half-way through, it is clear from these results that a variety of women, both younger and older, are achieving success on the Australian Bridge scene.

No article about women in Australian Bridge would be complete without mentioning Pauline Gumby. Pauline holds the most masterpoints of any Australian on our ranking scheme. She is a multiple Australian team representative in Open, Senior and Mixed categories and a multiple national champion. This year was no exception as she was a member of the team that won the South West Pacific Teams in Canberra in January.



Pauline Gumby
Highest Ranked

Kim Frazer



On behalf of the Australian Bridge Federation Ltd

Meet Sondra Blank from Montreal

by Marc-André Fourcaudot



Marc-André 'The Fork' Fourcaudot from Canada has represented Canada on several occasions in the Open and Mixed world events. He was also the non playing captain of

the Canadian Open team and the Women's team. He is very proud to have been already asked to be a Women's team captain for 2025, for our National Trials and hopefully the next World event.

Sondra Blank began her bridge journey in 2007 and has been a prominent figure in Canadian Women's Bridge for the past 15 years. A lifelong card enthusiast, she finally took her grandmother's advice to try bridge while on a cruise.

Sondra feels fortunate to have taken lessons from Barbara Seagram while living in Toronto, which significantly shaped her game.

I started playing with Sondra in 2009, following a recommendation from Canadian (now US) Bridge superstar Vince Demuy, who predicted she would become an exceptional player. He was absolutely right.



Sondra and Marc-André

Sondra Blank's bridge journey has seen her transition from playing with juniors to excelling in women's and mixed teams. She has claimed victory in five Canadian Women Team Championships and the last four Canadian Mixed Team Championships since the event's inception in 2019.

Sondra

Mixed partner and BFF

(Best Fan Forever)



Canadian Mixed Team Championships CMTC – Gold

Michael Gamble, Kismet Fung
Marc-André Fourcaudot, Brenda Bryant,
Sondra Blank, Ranald Davidson

A native Montrealer who spent close to a decade in Toronto, Sondra never played junior bridge officially but often competed with Toronto's junior players, who welcomed a young female into their teams. The writer believes this experience effectively counts as junior bridge.

When asked if she identifies more with Montreal or Toronto, Sondra chooses Montreal for all the obvious reasons.

She explains her attraction to different bridge categories by saying, "All of the above... Women was the genesis, Mixed the rise hoping for a better world, Open could be the future!"

Sondra has represented Canada in six world championships, and will again in October in the World Bridge Games in Argentina.

She also frequently attends North American Bridge Championships. She prefers world events for two main reasons: they feature the best of bridge and offer travel opportunities to many incredible places around the world.



The Late Eric Kokish

Sondra Blank is renowned for her meticulously documented notes, a habit cultivated under the mentorship of the late Eric Kokish.

This dedication has turned her into a 'notes addict,' complete with an array of gadgets in her toolkit. Her favorite convention is Gazzilli, either for its table results or for having the final say when challenged by non-Gazzilli players in a bidding problem discussion.

Sondra has one bridge superstition: her lucky pens. When she's winning and playing well, she continues using the same pen. Unlike others with the same superstition, she has a rule: she brings at least five pens to every tournament!



Sondra Blank

Before a game, she enjoys a double espresso, and after a game, she celebrates with a Vodka Cranberry—doubling the drink if she wins. Sondra's greatest satisfaction in bridge comes from making her partner's life easier, whether through bidding or defense in complex situations. According to her mixed partner, laying down a great dummy also significantly makes life easier!

In 2023, after triumphing in both the Canadian Women and Mixed teams, Sondra Blank chose to compete in the Venice Cup in Marrakesh. She and her partner became well-known in Canadian bridge circles for prioritizing the Women's event over their Mixed partners.

Sondra now prioritizes Women's events in odd years and Mixed events in even years. Balancing priorities is second nature to her.

She is a mother of four children (ages 13, 11, 10, and 8) with a 39-year-old husband.

Additionally, she is the founder of a thriving business in the personalized and promotional items sector within the manufacturing industry. Her e-commerce journey began in 2012

<https://www.hiboutchoux.com/>

Sondra is also a CrossFit enthusiast, dedicating 5-6 days a week and 2-3 hours per day to her workouts. This rigorous routine helps her maintain her health and carry her husband and bridge partners!



Sondra's home is like a mini farm, complete with dogs, chickens, ducks, quails, and her best buddy, a pig named Pancetta. When playing online bridge with her camera on, Pancetta's noises often seem like disapproval of her partner's bidding!



Despite her fondness for Pancetta, dogs remain her favorite animals—just don't let Pancetta know.

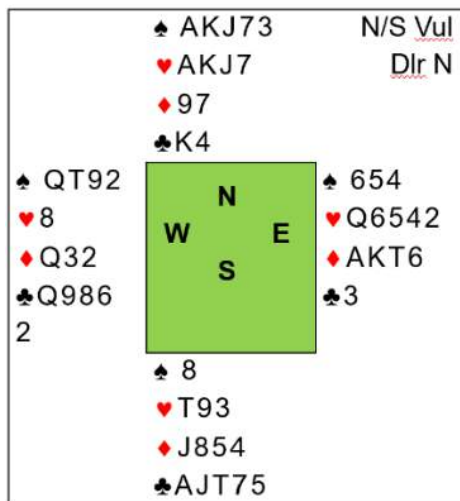
Sondra is also a tattoo enthusiast, with an uncountable number of tattoos adorning her body. She got her first tattoo at 13 and managed to keep it hidden from her mom until a hospital stay at 16. Her favourite tattoo is of Medusa, and two others are inspired by bridge, depicting the Queens of Clubs and Hearts.



Balancing a successful bridge career with professional and family life is something many of us strive for, and Sondra excels in this regard. Her passions and enthusiasm span many areas. Over the past 15 years, she has achieved remarkable success while also overcoming battles against two cancers. Sondra strongly encourages everyone to get regular colon checks.

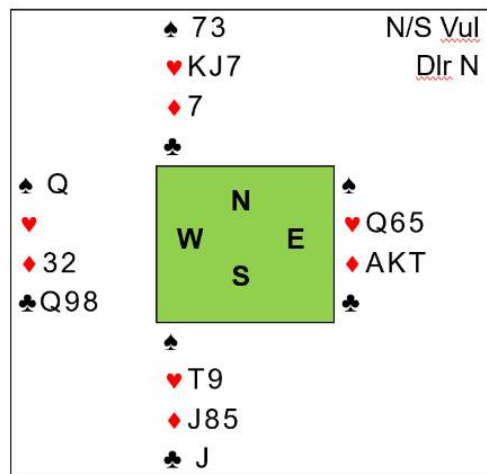
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/colorectal-cancer>

Here's an interesting hand played by Sondra in the 2024 Canadian trials. She is in **3NT** after dummy showed a 17-19 hand with exactly 5♠s and 4♥s.



♥8 was led and won in dummy. ♣K and a ♣ to the Ace reveal the bad news when East pitched a ♥. Prospects are poor, Sondra needs to find a way for the defense to mis judge what they must do. After a successful ♠ finesse, she realized that establishing the suit can't be a success since defense can cash 1♠ 1♣ and 3♦.

She instead ran the ♦9 when East ducked smoothly. West was at the crossroad and reluctant to cash his ♣Q establishing two tricks in declarer's hand. ♠ was returned. Sondra read the hand correctly at this point, and cashed the other top ♠ to strip East hand of this suit.



When this 6-card ending was reached, Sondra played a ♦ from dummy. East had no solution. At the table ♦K was won and exited a ♥ won in hand with the 10. ♦ was played to allow East to cash the Ace and the 10 but was endplayed for the second time and had to give the last two tricks in dummy.

Note that when a second ♦ was played from dummy cashing top ♦ does not help the defense, declarer can always come to 9 tricks at this stage.

Marc-André Fourcaudot





In the past couple of years there have been questions raised whether the u26W category should still exist. What if we just kept the open teams – u16, u21, u26, u31?

I've had the opportunity to play in open and girls teams – u21, u26W and this year u31. Let's have a look at what it looked like in the u31 at this year's European Youth Teams Championships in Wrocław, Poland:

Of the 13 teams that played 5 of them had at least one woman player. And of those 5 teams 2 of them were awarded medals, which shows that women can perform well in a male-dominated field as well as in a women-only field.

However, based on experience at the table I think it benefits girls greatly that they have the opportunity to choose whether they wish to play in the open or the girls team. It also gives them a great opportunity to prepare for a future career in women's bridge – this was my case as well, since I played in the junior girls and then simultaneously in the women's at the same time.

I would go against my principles if I wrote a bridge article without at least one hand, this time we'll go into a declarer play:

Board 19. Dealer South. E-W Vulnerable.

♠ A Q T 9 6 5	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border: none; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K		♥ Q T 7 6 5									
♦ A T 4		♦ K 7 6 3									
♣ 9 6 2		♣ T 5									
		♠ 8 4									
		♥ A J 9 8 4 3									
		♦ J 8 5 2									
		♣ A									

Declarer Play

South opens 1 heart, West bids 1 spade, I settle for 3NT with the soft values and a source of tricks. I get the 7 of spades lead.

I can't make it legitimately. Even if hearts break I have no entry and with the clubs blocked I can't enjoy 7 tricks.. Or can I? West sticks in the 9 of spades, so I duck – if he plays A of spades and a spade I can throw the ace of clubs on the king of spades and as long as clubs break, I'm home. We now turn our attention to West... ace of spades and a spade. Whew! I pitch the ace of clubs, cash my 7 club tricks and hope for a tenth if opponents pitch all their hearts. They don't, so I just enjoy the 400 of making the contract.

And what did it look like in the girls categories

Let's hand it over to Natalia Suszanowicz and Dominika Lucka, gold medallists in the World Youth Transnational Women's Pairs and Teams in Wrocław:




Gold Medallists

Natalia Suszanowicz & Dominika Lucka

"In bridge you also have to take advantage of the chances given to you, as on this board. I was given a chance to make 3NT after the 1st lead, so I took it."

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vulnerable.

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

9 of clubs lead, I ducked, queen, small. 8 of hearts shift to the king. I continued with hearts and North won my jack with her ace and switched to the 10 of diamonds, I took it with the queen in my hand. Now I cashed AK of clubs, returned to my hand with the ace of spades, cashed the queen of spades and the jack of clubs and the queen of hearts. South is now going to be endplayed, I throw her in with my last heart and she had to lead into my king of diamonds for my 9th trick”.

All I can add is: **well done Natalia!**

And what did players say about the girls category?



Amber Lin – USA - bridge player and junior coach

“It’s a comfortable environment for women to enjoy and learn bridge”



Olivia Schireson – USA - bridge player

“A lot of women would like to play in an area where they will not be put down and can raise their confidence”

Final word

I think the end goal is to get more and more people involved in this great card game. And with the girls category more players will be playing. And as far as what happens in the girls category at the table? Just look at Natalia and Dominika’s board for reference.

Sophia is profiled [here](#)
 Page 12 in the March 24 newsletter
 Her medal accomplishments are amazing
 From Junior to Women’s, Mixed and Open

Sophia Baldysz 

U26 Women



Poland wins
Gold in

Women's Teams and
Pairs



Denmark
wins

Joan Gerard Award



U26 Women

Winner: Ella Rosthoej

Pictured with Gianarrigo Rona
WBFB President Emeritus

Ella turned 18 on October 7th 2023 and on the same day made her debut in the Danish 3rd division. She also graduated from high school this summer.

The Joan Gerard Award is presented to *youth players who demonstrate aptitude, fair play, good sportsmanship and a friendly international spirit*

<http://www.worldbridge.org/awards/joan-gerard-youth-awards/>

8th World Youth Transnational Championships Wroclaw, Poland • 13 - 18 July, 2024



Medallists U26 Women's Teams



1. **Poland**
Ewa BAGROWSKA, Matylda BRZYKA, Dominika LUCKA, Ewa MORAWSKA, Maria NIKLAUS, Natalia SUSZANOWICZ, Rafal MARKS (npc)
2. **France U26W**
Constance BELLOY, Margaux KUREK BEAULIEU, Elise NUGUES, Wilhelmine SCHLUMBERGER, Wilfried LIBBRECHT (npc)
3. **Poland 2**
Wiktoria FORYS, Natalia FRECHOWICZ, Milena GRYZLO, Magdalena KAPALA, Kaja PUSTULKA, Maja TROJANSKA, Rafal MARKS (npc)

Medallists U26 Women's Pairs



1. Natalia SUSZANOWICZ – Dominika LUCKA (POL),
2. Maren Idland SAEGROV – Erleta PLANA (NOR),
3. Dido COLEY – Lily KEARNEY (ENG)



is delighted to announce its eighth

Women's Teams Weekend in London

Date: 12–13 October 2024

Saturday 12th October – Qualifying Rounds (starting at 10:30am)

Sunday 13th October – Final for top 6 teams. Consolation event for others.

Entry fee for weekend: £320 per team (FREE for junior teams) includes a buffet lunch on both days and prize giving drinks on Sunday

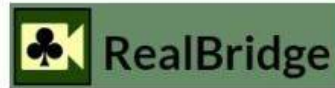
Entry fee if playing on Sunday only: £160 per team (FREE for junior teams)

Holder: Debbie Sandford, Kath Stynes, Sally Anoyrkatis, Venetia Anoyrkatis

Register your entry online via the website at ycbc.co.uk or email

organizer Paula Leslie at paula2012leslie@gmail.com





World Bridge Federation
**2025 ONLINE
WOMEN'S TEAMS**
3 TO 5 JANUARY 2025

Entry	<p>You may enter your team with your team name through the WBF website. http://championships.worldbridge.org/</p> <p>Team name and player names need to be finalised by the closing date.</p> <p>Any number of teams may enter, the players may be from any nation which is a member of the WBF.</p> <p>Entries close on 7th December 2024.</p> <p>There can be 8 players in a team.</p> <p>This is a transnational event</p>
Entry Fee	<p>The entry fee will be 60 Euros for the entire team before 16th December 2024. See payment method on WBF website under the Banner for the event.</p>
Format	<p>The format of the Tournament depends on number of teams. It will probably be a Round Robin.</p>
Schedule	<p>The tournament is played over 3 calendar days. Matches are timed so that the teams will meet others from around the world at mutually convenient times.</p>
Prize and Awards	<p>Winners receive FREE entry to next WBF Transnational Women's Teams</p> <p>WBF Online Masterpoints will be awarded</p>

UPCOMING WORLD BRIDGE EVENTS

16th WORLD BRIDGE GAMES

Buenos Aires, Argentina • 22 October - 3 November, 2024*

*Registration and Opening Ceremony on 21 October



1st Small Federations Online Open Teams

Online on RealBridge • 12 - 15 December and 19 - 22 December, 2024



WBF Online Women's Teams

3 to 5 January 2025 - RealBridge

World Bridge Federation

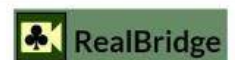
ONLINE WOMEN'S TEAMS

3 to 5 January 2025

Teams can have up to 8 players, and they will play at times that are convenient for them.

This is a transnational event.

www.worldbridge.org



GO TO <http://www.worldbridge.org/> THEN Click on Banners for Information