

Team "Trials" and Tribulations

It's Nickell vs Ekeblad in Finals

Yesterday's action made for a great VuGraph show. When the smoke cleared, it was **Nickell** over **Deustch**, 213-199, and **Ekeblad** over **Schwartz**, 294-238.

If you missed the VuGraph presentations, we have extensive coverage of the action throughout the USBC in all of the Daily Bulletins. The Bulletins are accessible online through the USBF website.

Tomorrow and Sunday it will be Nickell vs Ekeblad in the Finals. All of the action will be presented live at Bridge Base Online.

Thanks again to the generous donation from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange which made this all possible.



"The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're okay, then it's you."

-Rita Mae Brown

A couple of old guys were golfing when one said he was going to Dr. Taylor for a new set of dentures in the morning. His friend remarked that he had gone to the same dentist a few years before. "Is that so?" the first said. "Did he do a good job?"

Well, I was on the course yesterday when the fellow on the ninth hole hooked a shot," he said.

"The ball must have been going 200 mph when it hit me in the stomach.

That," he added, "was the first time in two years my teeth didn't hurt."

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Remaining USBC Teams

Deutsch: Seymon Deutsch, Gary Cohler, Bart Bramley, Sidney Lazard, Grant Baze, John Kranyak

Ekeblad: Russell Ekeblad, Ron Rubin, Fred Gitelman, Brad Moss, Chip Martel, Lew Stansby

Nickell (bye ► semi-finals): Frank Nickell, Dick Freeman, Bob Hamman, Paul Soloway, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell

Schwartz: Richard Schwartz, Michael Becker, Drew Casen, Jim Krekorian, David Berkowitz, Larry Cohen

Remaining USWBC Teams

USA1: Narasimhan: Hansa Narasimhan, Irina Levitina, Jill Levin, Jill Meyers, Debbie Rosenberg, JoAnna Stansby

USA2: Quinn: Shawn Quinn, Sue Picus, Hjordis Eythorsdottir, Rozanne Pollack

**HOSPITALITY INFORMATION from Barbara Nudelman, Joan Gerard, and Rena Hetzer**

The hospitality suite is in room 3321. It will be open for **Breakfast** at 8:30 AM till game time for all players.

USBC Lunch: Lunch will be served in the suite at the mid-afternoon break (approximately 2:45 PM). We may be a bit crowded but we'll see to it that everyone gets to eat.

USWBC Lunch – There are no actual lunch breaks, but we will try and offer a more substantial breakfast in the hour just before your starting time. Of course, you are welcome to join us for the regular lunch break the rest of the week.

The suite will be open most days until the completion of play for soft drinks and snacks.

Hotel Restaurants: **Metro:** 6am - 10pm daily; **Tre Cena:** Breakfast: 6:30am-11 AM M-F, 7am-11am S/S; Lunch 11am-5pm daily; Dinner 5pm-10pm daily; **Knuckles** 4:30pm-12am Su-F, 4:30pm-1am Saturday

Check in-room for **room service menu** ... available 6am-12am.

Once again, we are here to feed you and listen to all of your trials and tribulations at the bridge table. If you need something just ask... we might not be able to help but we will surely try.

"If knowledge can create problems, it is not through ignorance that we can solve them."

-Isaac Asimov

Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement center were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: "Slim, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?"

Slim says, "I feel just like a newborn baby."

"Really!? Like a newborn baby!?"

"Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants."

Getting to the Airport in Comfort:

There is no shuttle from the hotel to the airport. We recommend that you call **Windy City Limousine** to arrange transportation **(866) 94-WINDY**. Their drivers are courteous and helpful ... and unlike many of the cab drivers, they speak English and know their way around the city and the suburbs.

What a Difference a Lead Makes

Board 28

Dealer: W

N/S Vul.

♠ 983
♥ KQ4
♦ 2
♣ K75432

♠ AK765

♥ 72

♦ KQ986

♣ 8



♠ 4

♥ AJT963

♦ AJT75

♣ J

♠ QJT2

♥ 85

♦ 43

♣ AQT96

Both rooms played six diamonds. The auctions varied some, but both Norths had to make a tough choice.

West - Meckstroth	North - Baze	East - Rodwell	South - Cohler
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

West - Kranyak	North - Nickell	West - Bramley	South - Freeman
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Nickell disdained the lead of the unbid suit, choosing instead the unusual lead of the king of dummy's first bid suit. This allowed Kranyak to discard his club loser on the king of spades... making 6!

Baze chose the more normal lead of the seven of clubs. The result? 16 IMPs to Deustch.

Interestingly, at both tables in the Ekeblad/Schwartz match, they played four hearts.

A seaman meets a pirate in a bar, and they take turns to tell their adventures on the seas. The seaman notes that the pirate has a peg leg, hook, and an eye patch. Curious, the seaman asks, "So, how did you end up with the peg-leg?"

The pirate replies, "I was swept overboard into a school of sharks. Just as my men were pulling me out, a shark bit my leg off."

"Wow!" said the seaman, "What about the hook?"

"Well...", replied the pirate, "We were boarding an enemy ship and were battling the other sailors with swords. One of the enemy cut my hand clean off."

"Incredible!" remarked the seaman. "How did you get the eye patch?"

"A seagull dropping fell into my eye," replied the pirate.

"You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?" the sailor asked.

"Well...", said the pirate, "That was my first day with the hook."

"Acquaintance, n.: A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to."
-Ambrose Bierce

More Best of Late Night

"How many of you folks were affected by the big stock market plunge yesterday? Four hundred points, the stock market dropped 400 points yesterday. And big corporations were really, really affected by it. As a matter of fact, Taco Bell had to lay off 200 rats. Yeah, the market drops 400 points and, today, out of habit, JetBlue apologized."

-David Letterman

"Prince Charles says he wants to ban McDonald's. He said banning McDonald's is the key to living a healthy lifestyle. Really? Why did he single out McDonald's? I think banning Dominos would make more sense. They deliver the junk food to your house. At least with McDonalds you have to get off your fat ass and walk to your car. Prince Charles says he wants to ban McDonald's to teach people that excess is bad. Who better to teach people that excess is bad than a guy who lives in a giant castle?"

-Jay Leno

""You know the guy who directed the 'Titanic' movie, James Cameron, the film director? Well, listen to this: he now claims that he's found the tomb of Jesus Christ. Hmm, I just hope this doesn't lead to a court battle in Florida, that's all."

-David Letterman

"The Nielsen ratings for this years Oscars were up, compared to last year's, especially among 18- to 34-year-olds. Keep in mind that statistic is misleading because viewers who were 18 at the beginning of the show, were over 50 when it ended."

-Conan O'Brien

"The critics are already saying that the show was too long. And I say, "Hey — wait a minute. It's not fair to judge the show until it is over."

-Jay Leno

"The Academy Awards were held just across the street from us. I heard that Al Gore — and this is only a rumor — I heard he got a little crazy at the Vanity Fair party . . . I'm told he left the light on in the bathroom."

-Jimmy Kimmel

"A new poll finds that President Bush's father, George Bush, is the most popular living ex-President. Apparently voters were just excited to hear the words 'George Bush' next to the phrase 'ex-President.'"

-Conan O'Brien

"Some politicians in Florida are trying to ban the use of the term 'illegal alien' because they think it is offensive. The Florida officials say, 'We prefer the term good swimmer.'"

-Conan O'Brien

""According to a report by this genealogist, Al Sharpton's ancestors were slaves once owned by Strom Thurmond's relatives. Now Al Sharpton wants a DNA test to see if they are related. And you know, somehow, this is going to end up that Strom Thurmond is the the father of Anna Nicole's baby."

-Jay Leno

"Since former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack dropped out of the presidential race four days ago, Vilsack supporters are divided about which candidate to support now. Apparently, one guy likes Obama and the other guy's backing Hillary." - Conan O'Brien

"If any of you at home are wondering about the former vice president's seeming largess, I will have you know, he has not gained weight. He is so passionate about saving this Earth, he is trying not to exhale. ... Here's an inconvenient truth: cake isn't a food group."

-Jon Stewart

(continued on page 7)

Puzzle Page

NOW ^{HE} RE	BA NK	GEAR GE ^{AR}	LAUG	HTER
IFLAND IFIFC	CONTRACT	SITTING WORLD	DAY L8 DOLLA	BARBERSHOP BARBERSHOP BARBERSHOP BARBERSHOP
YOU DESERVE TODAY			FIF ERRE	HORNS
PEN _{sword}				
TEMPORARY				SHCRYAME

Rebuses

Solutions to Puzzles at bottom of page... no peeking!

The Lone Ranger and Tonto

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went camping in the desert. After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep. Some hours later, Tonto wakes the Lone Ranger and says, "Kemo Sabe, look towards sky, what you see?"

The Lone Ranger replies, "I see millions of stars."

"What that tell you?" asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, it's evident the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What's it tell you, Tonto?"

Tonto is silent for a moment, then says, "Kemo Sabe, you dumber then buffalo chips. Someone has stolen tent."

Answers to Rebuses:
He came out of nowhere; break the bank; shifting gears; sidspsitting laughter; one if by land, two if by sea; contract extension; sitting on top of the world; a day late and a dollar short; barbershop quartet; you deserve a break today; crossfire; horsing around; the pen is mightier than the sword; temporary setback; cryin' shame

All or Nothing Lead in the Semi-Finals

Opening leads are among the hardest thing in bridge. All you have to go on is the auction and the thirteen cards you have in your hand. One of the all-time greats found a most unusual lead against 3NT. Here is the hand:

Board 47
Dealer: S
N/S Vul.

♠ KQJ64
♥ A3
♦ 732
♣ 732

♠ AT875
♥ J92
♦ A5
♣ Q54



♠ 93
♥ QT4
♦ KQJT6
♣ AT8

♠ 2
♥ K8765
♦ 984
♣ KJ96

West - Lazard	North - Soloway	East - Bramley	South - Hamman
			Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The auction was the same in both rooms. In the other room, Baze led a club. There were, after all, two unbid suits. Both work well on this hand, but he thought that with three clubs and only two hearts, this might work best.

In this room, however, Paul Soloway found a real all-or-nothing lead. If it worked, it would be huge, and if it didn't, at least the opponents weren't vulnerable. Paul led the FOUR of spades. It was pretty impressive to see the first trick be the two-three-four-five in no-trump. Lazard made nine tricks and his contract. Rodwell took eight for down one.

Partners Can Shake Hands but They Shouldn't Squeeze Each Other!

West - Lazard	North - Soloway	East - Bramley	South - Hamman
			Pass
Pass	1♣ (strong)	Pass	1♦ (negative)
1♠	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Lazard led the ♠3 and the queen held in dummy. Hamman led a low club off dummy to the jack and ace. Sidney switched to the four of diamonds. At this point, Bramley won the ace.

The correct play by Bramley is dependent on his partner's red suit holdings. If Lazard holds the ♠K, ten fourth of hearts and only three diamonds, it is important for Bramley to insert the ♦T to keep communication open even when partner holds Qxx instead of Kxx of diamonds. It also keeps the count from being rectified for the spade, heart squeeze. Of course, if partner held the ace of spades and the Kxx of diamonds with no ♥T, Bramley must win the ace of diamonds as he did and continue diamonds to keep declarer from scoring nine tricks.

Also, if partner holds Kxxx of diamonds, East must win the ace and continue diamonds to beat the hand. It is never easy to be in this position.

As it was, when Bramley won the ace of diamonds and continued with the jack, his side was able to take three diamond tricks but Lazard fell victim to a major suit squeeze.

Board 59
Dealer: S
None Vul.

♠ QJ8
♥ AKQ85
♦ 97
♣ KO5

♠ K7532
♥ T763
♦ K64
♣ A



♠ 4
♥ J9
♦ AJT3
♣ T98742

♠ AT96
♥ 42
♦ Q852
♣ J63

(continued from page 4)

The Best of Late Night...

"Paris Hilton in the cooler. And you know the problem with Paris being in prison, she's surrounded by sex offenders; she's surrounded by drug dealers; felons . . . you know, just like when she was on the outside."

-David Letterman

"All 10 Republican presidential candidates took part in the debate. Ten. Experts say it was like many of history's classic debates, except with eight extra people. "

-Conan O'Brien

"An 18 year-old woman was arrested after spending the past eight months pretending to be a student at Stanford university and living in their dorms, even though she was not enrolled there. She pretended to be a student for eight months. Hey, that's nothing. I pretended to be a student for four years!"

-Jay Leno

"During last night's Democratic debate, all the candidates said if they were elected, they would get rid of the military's "don't ask, don't tell policy" for gay soldiers. "Don't ask, don't tell" would be replaced by a new policy, 'Don't tell me you're wearing those boots with that gun.'"

-Conan O'Brien

"A lot people make fun of Los Angeles. They say we have no soul; we're always in the tanning booth. Meanwhile, I don't see any other city throwing Paris Hilton in jail."

-Jimmy Kimmel

"They say she has three blankets, but no pillow. I actually feel a little bit bad for her, especially since I've stolen so many pillows from Hilton Hotels."

-Jimmy Kimmel

"Earlier today, Scooter Libby was sentenced to 30 months in prison. Afterwards, Scooter said, "I just hope I have the chance to clear my incredibly stupid name."

-Conan O'Brien

"Earlier tonight was the season premier of "America's Got Talent." David Hasselhoff is one of the judges. Should David Hasselhoff really be judging other people's talents? That's like getting your hair cut by Donald Trump."

-Craig Ferguson

"Angelina Jolie celebrated her 33rd birthday. Happy Birthday to Angelina Jolie. She adopted a cake."

-David Letterman

"After serving eight years in jail, assisted suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian was on "Larry King Live." When Kevorkian saw Larry King he said, "I swear, he was like that when I got here."

-Conan O'Brien

"Lindsay Lohan out of rehab, then back in rehab. Lindsay Lohan's 21st birthday party was going to be sponsored by a brand of vodka. If your birthday party is sponsored by a vodka company, perhaps you're not taking the whole sobriety thing seriously. That's like the NRA hosting Dick Cheney's duck hunt. "

-Craig Ferguson

"I got kicked out of ballet class because I pulled a groin muscle. It wasn't mine."

- Rita Rudner

Missed Opportunities

Board 94
Dealer: E
E/W Vul.

♠ KJ
♥ AKQ52
♦ Q8653
♣ J

♠ QT8732
♥ 74
♦ T97
♣ 32



♠ A6
♥ T986
♦ K2
♣ AK865

♠ 954
♥ J3
♦ AJ4
♣ QT974

In the closed room in the Deutsch/Nickell match, North/South got to four diamonds making five. In the open room where Bramley was North and Lazard was South, they arrived in five diamonds. They were down in the match and the specs in the VuGraph were rooting for Bramley to make the hand.

On the surface, the hand looks easy. Hamman opened a 14-16 no-trump. Solo-way transferred to spades and Bramley bid two spades as Michaels. When Lazard bid three clubs, pass or correct, Bramley corrected to three diamonds. Lazard raised and Bramley put it in game.

The specs could see that there were only two losers: one spade and one club. However, Bramley tried a line that would allow him the luxury of making the hand without having to guess out the spade position. He tried ruffing out clubs to pitch away the spade cards. Unfortunately for Bramley, the straight-up spade guess would have worked. And the club position was hopeless. Bramley used up all his trumps, and by the time he guessed the spade position, Hamman was able to win his ace of spades and cash his good club to defeat the contract one trick.

One of Many Big Swings

When your team has a big lead, you hope for flat boards. When you're down, you hope for volatility. The final segment of the semi-finals certainly catered to big swings.

On the first board, Berkowitz and Cohen held the N/S cards for the Schwartz team. They bid to 4♥ with no opposition. (see below) Similarly, in the other match, Bramley and Lazard bid to 5♦:

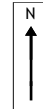
South - Berkowitz	North - Cohen
1♣ (strong)	2♦ (positive)
3♦	3♥
4♥	All Pass

South - Lazard	North - Bramley
1♦	2♦ (inverted)
2♥	3♦
4♣	4♥
5♦	All Pass

Board 106
Dealer: E
Both Vul.

♠ J9
♥ AK3
♦ Q9862
♣ 975

♠ KT82
♥ 9764
♦ 3
♣ 8632



♠ AQ754
♥ T2
♦ J4
♣ QJT4

♠ 63
♥ QJ85
♦ AKT75
♣ AK

In both matches, the other tables bid to 3NT.

Gitelman opened 1NT and was raised to 3NT. Meckwell had an artificial club auction to land in the same spot.

Against Gitelman, Krekorian led the ♠2. Gitelman played the jack from dummy and E/W had no trouble unblocking the spade suit to set the hand.

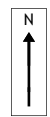
Against Rodwell, Baze led the ♠2. Rodwell played low from dummy; Cohler won the ace and returned his fourth best spade. After winning the king, Baze returned the ten and Cohler had to decide whether Baze started with three of four spades. He decided to overtake the ten and the suit blocked! There was no swing in this match.

Great Grand Gary

Board 112
Dealer: W
E/W Vul.

- ♠ Q862
- ♥ T843
- ♦ T763
- ♣ 5

- ♠ AK743
- ♥ A96
- ♦ 4
- ♣ AQ98



- ♠ JT9
- ♥ KQJ72
- ♦ AJ52
- ♣ K

- ♠ 5
- ♥ 5
- ♦ KQ98
- ♣ JT76432

West- Baze	North- Meckstroth	East - Cohler	South - Rodwell
1♠	Pass	2♥	4♣
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
7♥	All Pass		

In the other room, Lazard bid boldly with the South cards and played 5♦ doubled for a 1700 point set. Imagine his pleasure when his teammates said, "Win 11!"

On a diamond lead, 7♥ is straightforward, but Rodwell found the best lead of a club, and the hand appears doomed. Cohler found an amazing route to bring home the hand. He won the king of clubs, cashed the ace of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. He cashed the ace of spades and played the ace of clubs. When North discarded a diamond, Gary discarded a diamond too. This was followed by the queen of clubs on which North discarded his last diamond and declarer shed a spade. Now Cohler made the key play. He led the nine of hearts and when Meckstroth followed low, Cohler ran the nine!! Now he was able to cash the spade king and crossruff for 13 tricks.

Since Cohler led the nine of hearts before cashing dummy's ace, a cover by North would do no good. Cohler would still be able to make the hand by returning to dummy with a spade, trumping a loser low and crossruffing for the remainder of the tricks. Great play, Gary!!

Boris and Natasha Pick the Winners:

Natasha arrived in the US well groomed in her multi-colored babushka and ready to pick the winners of the USBC.

She was disappointed to learn of Schwartz's demise. On the other hand, her overall pick, Nickell, is still the one seed and still alive. Natasha doesn't take any wooden nickels, but "frank"ly speaking, she wooden bet against this Nickell. Richie heads to the track as Ekeblad and Nickel strong club each other to death!

"Boris," she calls, "Bring me some vodka and orange juice. It's too early for a White Russian!"

Boris: Well, it is over. Oh sure, there are still a couple of teams left, but for everyone else it is finished. Ekeblad beat Schwartz like a woman from Minsk doing laundry by the shore of the Volga river. They let it get close at the end, but it was never in doubt. So for 3rd year in row, Ekeblad will be in final of United States Championship. Very impressive.

Let's see, who is in the other side of the final...Why, it is that team of upstarts, Nickell. Who would have guessed that they would come in cold and beat a strong team headed by Seymon Deutsch?

Let us raise a glass of Vodka to all the members of the Schwartz and Deutsch teams. You fellows all played well. Just not your turn.

Nickell has played in so many Bermuda Bowls that they actually feel it is their birthright to attend. Nick has a summer home there and a 2nd citizenship.

But first, there is a small matter of Ekeblad. Boris look up Ekeblad in Ukrainian dictionary and definition was "Not through the Iron Duke". Ekeblad has issued challenge to his team. Beat Nickell or go home without the ring. Boris not quite get drift but seemed quite effective when noted Stansby with tear in eye.

How to pick this one. Boris truly believe that one team will win, but it is like picking best mackerel to repair sofa with...very difficult. Boris only have 4 days to watch Ekeblad and 2 to watch Nickell. Boris go out on huge limb here.

Boris pick Ekeblad to upset favored Nickell team. Boris return in 2 days to accept small stipend and congratulate team Ekeblad. Boris like team Nickell but they win too much. 3 years in row in final means Ekeblad must win. Da.

Ron Johnston had a quadruple bypass and is doing very well at Allen Medical Center in Waterloo, Iowa.