18th European Small Federations Games

Bulletin 2

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2026

Let the Games begin!



Players, captains and officials under the EBL flag at the Sponza Palace, Tuesday evening

DAY 1 · FIVE ROUNDS PLAYED

The hosts set the pace

After the Opening Ceremony in the atrium of the Sponza Palace, the 18th European Small Federations Games got under way on Wednesday morning with five rounds of the round robin.

The host country made the most of home advantage: **Croatia** lead after the first day with 72.77 VP, nine clear of the **Czech Republic**, with **Serbia**, Hungary and Estonia completing the top five.

With 14 teams in a full round robin, there are still eight matches to play: four today and four tomorrow. Play resumes at **9:30**.

BROADCAST

Two matches from every round are shown live on LoveBridge

vugraph.lovebridge.com

STANDINGS AFTER ROUND 5

1	**Croatia**	**72.77**
2	**Czech Republic**	**63.82**
3	**Serbia**	**60.89**
4	Hungary	**59.26**
5	Estonia	**55.84**
6	Slovakia	**54.41**
7	Latvia	**52.34**
8	Monaco	**49.05**
9	Slovenia	**44.87**
10	Lithuania	**40.71**
11	Faroe Islands	**37.62**
12	Cyprus	**36.53**
13	Bosnia and Herzegovina	**34.95**
14	Ukraine	**34.15**

From the Opening Ceremony

SPONZA PALACE · 17 NOVEMBER



CITY OF DUBROVNIK

Velibor Puzović

Deputy Mayor of Dubrovnik



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

Peter Belčák

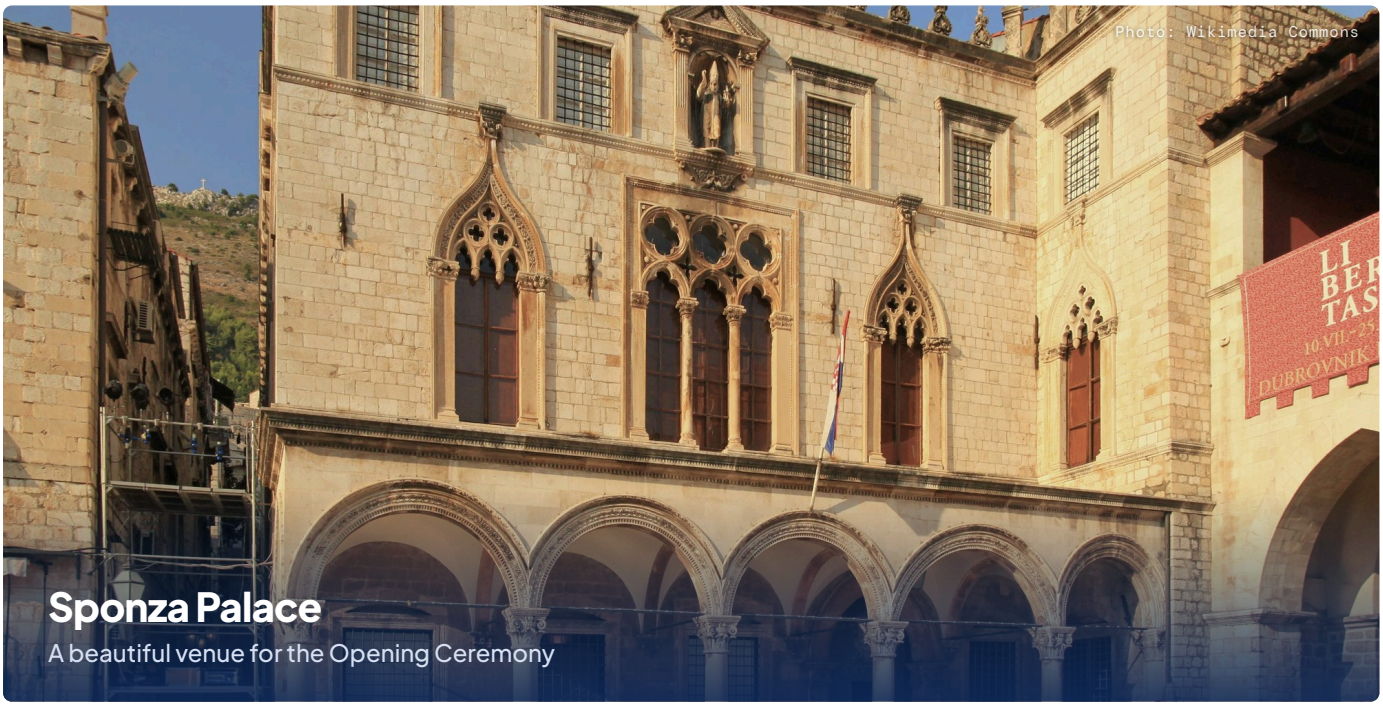
EBL Executive Committee member and Chairman of the EBL Small Federations Committee



HOST FEDERATION

Jurica Carić

President of the Croatian Bridge Federation



Sponza Palace

A beautiful venue for the Opening Ceremony

Built between 1516 and 1522, the Sponza Palace was once the customs house of the Republic of Ragusa and one of the few buildings to survive the earthquake of 1667. Today it houses the State Archives in Dubrovnik.

Round 1 · Monaco v Lithuania

by Brian Senior

Welcome to the 18th European Small Federations Games, from Dubrovnik, Croatia, where 14 teams will battle it out over a complete round robin of 13 x 12-board rounds over three days, to decide who will be the new EBL Small Federations champions.

We begin our coverage with a look at the match between Monaco and Lithuania.


Boguslaw **Gierulski** · Lithuania

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
—	1NT	Pass	Pass
3♣	All Pass		



Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
—	1NT	Pass	2♣
3♣	All Pass		

East/West have an easy nine tricks in NT and a combined 25 HCP, but could they get to their cold game in the face of a strong NT opening from North?

No was the answer to that question. Desmoulins, for Monaco, passed in response to the 1NT opening and Olanski overcalled 3♣. With a 2♣ overcall being artificial, so not an option, 3♣ was too wide-ranging for Vainikonis to go on, and Olanski came to 11 tricks on a diamond lead for +150.

In the other room, Skrzypczak, for Lithuania, used Stayman in response to 1NT. Arnal too overcalled 3♣ and played there, also coming to 11 tricks after a diamond lead, for a push at +150.

Board 2 was a routine game for E/W, Lithuania picking up an IMP when Monaco played in an inferior 3NT instead of the cold 4♠.

Four pairs out of 14 bid to 3NT and none to 5♣, none of the successful pairs having to face a 1NT opening.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ A K J 9 4 2 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ A Q 8 2 ♣ –	
♠ Q ♥ A K 8 7 6 3 ♦ 9 ♣ Q 10 8 4 2	N W E S	♠ 8 7 6 ♥ 10 ♦ K J 6 5 ♣ A K 7 6 3
	♠ 10 5 3 ♥ Q 9 5 ♦ 10 7 4 3 ♣ J 9 5	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	1♠	Dble	Pass
2♣	2♦	3♣	All Pass



CLOSED ROOM · MONACO V LITHUANIA

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
—	—	—	Pass
1♥	Dble	Pass	2♦
2♥	2♠	3♣	Pass
Pass	4♦	Dble	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Board 3 was another bidding test for the E/W pairs. With hearts dividing evenly, the poor heart game is cold, as is the superior club game.

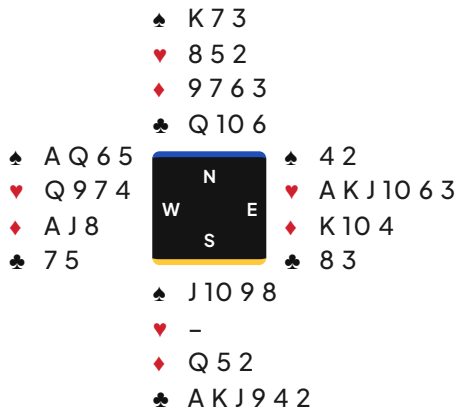
When Vainikonis made a slightly cautious simple raise at his second turn, Olanski thought game unlikely so passed out 3♣, where he ruffed the second spade and could establish the hearts to dispose of all of dummy's diamond losers, so come to 12 tricks for +170.

Where Allavena had started the North hand with a simple overcall then introduced his second suit at his second turn then left his opponents to play their club partscore, Gierulski launched the North hand with a take-out double, showed the spades, then jumped in diamonds, arguably a bit of an overstatement of the strength of the hand. Four Diamonds saw a penalty double from Damiano, but Arnal had undisclosed five-card club support so took the double out into 5♣. Skrzypczak led a spade. Gierulski won the king and cashed the ace of diamonds before playing a second spade. Arnal ruffed, drew trumps, and set up the hearts; 11 tricks for +600 and 10 IMPs to Monaco.

Eleven pairs bid to 5♣, nine making their contract. One declarer went down a trick, while one N/S went on to 5♠, down two doubled for –500.


Jean Pierre **Damiano** · Monaco

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
1♦	Pass	1♥	2♣
2♥	3♣	4♥	4♠
Dble	5♣	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

Olanski opened 1♣, clubs or balanced, forcing for one round, and that appears to have prevented Desmoulins from making a club overcall with the South cards. Desmoulins passed and saw his opponents bid smoothly to the heart game.

Desmoulins cashed the ace of clubs then switched to the jack of spades to the queen and king. He overtook Allavena's ♣Q switch then in turn switched back to spades, the ten losing to dummy's ace. Vainikonis drew trumps, ruffing a spade along the way, then ran all the trumps. When Desmoulins came down to one card in each side-suit, the queen appeared on the first round of the suit and that meant 10 tricks for +620.

Arnal's better minor 1♦ opening meant that clubs had not been bid in front of Skrzypczak, who overcalled 2♣. Gierulski's simple club raise was sufficient to convince Skrzypczak that his side should be declaring the deal and he tried 4♠ over 4♥, just in case there might be a spade fit. Gierulski, however, corrected to 5♣, and Arnal's double concluded the auction.

There were three diamonds and a spade to be lost so 5♣ doubled was down two for –500 but 3 IMPs to Lithuania.

One other pair saved in 5♣ for –500, with everyone else defending 4♥ for –620.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

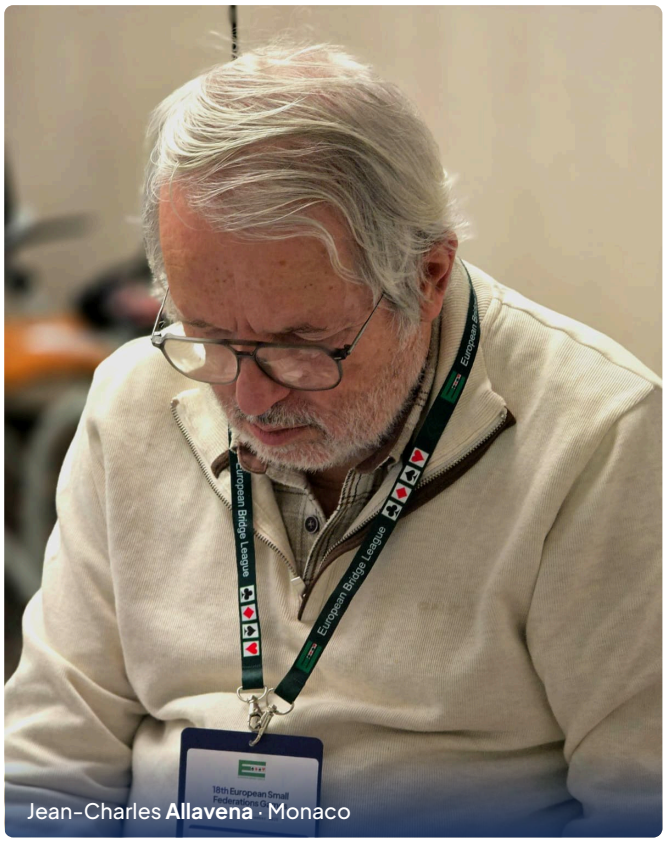
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Vainikonis raised the 1♠ response directly to game, while Damiano contented himself with an invitational raise, which Arnal raised to game.

There was a four-one trump split but both declarers showed how the contract should be played. The lead was a heart. Both declarers won in dummy, cashed the ace of clubs, and led a diamond to the queen and king. They won the heart return with the king, took a heart discard on the king of clubs, then led a diamond to the ace and ruffed a diamond low, as South discarded his last heart. A low club ruff was followed by a low diamond ruff, and a high club ruff. South could over-ruff and return a trump, but declarer had the rest; 11 tricks for +650 and no swing.

Two declarers went down in 4♠, one after a club lead, one a heart.



Jean-Charles **Allavena** · Monaco

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Desmoulins overcalled 2♣, over which Olanski made the slightly odd decision not to introduce his second suit. Allavena's leap to 5♣ meant that E/W would have no second chance to find their heart fit.

Against 5♣, Olanski cashed the major-suit aces then played a second spade, which Vainikonis ruffed. Desmoulins could get rid of his diamonds on dummy's spade winners, but was already down one, so that was –50.

Skrzypczak did not overcall and Arnal did show the hearts with Damiano, not surprisingly, raising him to game.

Gierulski led the queen of diamonds against 4♥, Skrzypczak winning the ace and continuing with the ♦4 to declarer's king. Arnal played a heart to the king, ruffed a diamond high, and drew the outstanding trump. He could ruff the fourth diamond and had 11 tricks for +450 and 9 IMPs to Monaco.

Seven pairs made 5♥, three of them doubled, while four were allowed to play a level lower. Five Clubs went down twice, once doubled, once not, and one auction stopped at 3♣, making an overtrick.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
—	—	—	1♣
3♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
—	—	—	2♣
4♠	5♣	All Pass	

Skrzypczak opened a Precision-style 2♣ and Arnal overcalled 4♠. When Gierulski now bid 5♣, suspecting that he was saving rather than bidding to make but (who knows?) Damiano showed that he was an acolyte of the 'The five level belongs to the opposition' school, as he passed when many would have bid 5♠ as a two-way shot.

After a club lead and diamond switch there were 11 easy tricks for +200.

Arnal led his singleton diamond and collected a ruff. He then cashed the ace of hearts but could not read Damiano's eight as looking for a continuation so switched to the king of spades, not that it mattered, as there was nowhere for the second heart to go, and the contract was down two for –100, but 3 IMPs to Monaco.

Seven pairs made 4♠, one 5♠, and one 5♠ doubled. Five Clubs was down two doubled once, and down one doubled once. It was also down one undoubled once and down two undoubled once.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Olanski	*Allavena*	*Vainikonis*	*Desmoulins*
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Arnal	*Gierulski*	*Damiano*	*Skrzypczak*
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	5NT	Pass
7♥	All Pass		

The match ended with a complete disaster for Monaco.

Olanski opened a strong NT, showed his hearts in response to Stayman, then didn't like his 3–4–3–3 shape and wasted ♠Q so signed off in game, and Vainikonis respected his decision. There was just the king of diamonds to be lost, so that was 12 tricks for +480 and an average minus result for Lithuania with the small slam quite cold.

By contrast, after the same start Arnal cuebid 4♣ and Damiano took control, asking for key-cards then inviting Seven. Having already shown good hearts by way of his 5♠ response to Key-card, I can't see what extras Arnal had to justify his leap to 7♥; could he not compromise by showing the ♣K, or would that not be systemic? Remember, this was a hand that Olanski had not considered worth a 4♣ cuebid: quite a difference in evaluation.

The worst time to go down in a grand slam is when your opponents stop in game at the other table, and that was Monaco's fate on this deal. Down one cost –50 and 11 IMPs to Lithuania. Stop in Six, and those 11 IMPs would have gone the way of Monaco.

Six Hearts went down twice but made six times. Four pairs stopped in 4♥ and one in 3NT.

Despite this deal, Monaco ran out winners by 24–20 IMPs, converting to 11.38–8.62 VPs.


Jerzy **Skrzypczak** · Lithuania



Round 2 · Latvia v Slovakia

by Brian Senior

Latvia started the event with a narrow win, Slovakia with a big one which put them in first place after round one.

Board 13 saw the Latvian N/S pair bid to a thin 4♠, which was down a trick, while Slovakia stopped a level lower to chalk up +140 and 6 IMPs. Slovakia picked up another swing on the next deal.


Karlis **Rubins** · Latvia

Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
—	—	1NT	Dble
Rdbl	Pass	2♦	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			



Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
—	—	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

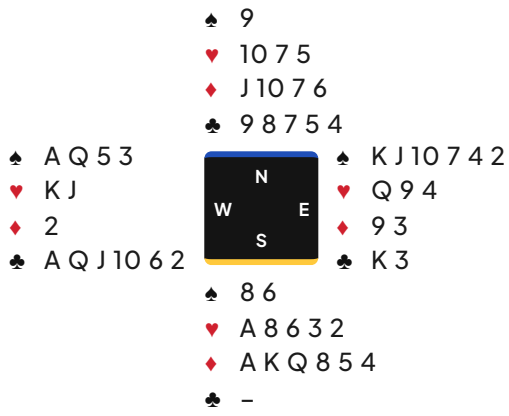
After a pass from Smilgajs, Rumancik opened a strong NT with the South cards, and the Slovakian pair could have an uninterrupted Smolen sequence to the heart game.

Four Hearts rates to go down if the defence can cash its diamond winners at the start, but why would West lead a diamond? In practice, Jansons led a club round to declarer's nine, and Rumancik played three top spades for a diamond pitch from hand, then gave up a diamond, leading low to the queen and ace. He ruffed the diamond return and discarded the fourth spade on the ace of clubs then the last diamond on the king. Smilgajs could ruff with the ♥J, but the ♥A was the only other trick for the defence; 10 tricks for +420.

Things were completely different in the other room, where Vodicka, for Slovakia, could open a mini-NT as East. Rubins doubled and Tomcani made an SOS redouble, Vodicka taking out into his five-card diamond suit. Rubins now bid 2NT, implying playing rather than defensive strength, and Olla cuebid in search of the best game. With no major, Rubins bid 3NT: didn't we all used to say, in our youth, that queen-doubleton was always a stopper? Well, not this time, as Tomcani led the eight of diamonds to the king, Vodicka returned a low diamond to the queen and ace, and the ten back to the jack resulted in a quick two down for –100 and 11 IMPs to Slovakia.

Four Hearts was played 10 times, but beaten only three times. Three No Trump was tried three times, but always defeated.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
—	—	—	1♥
2♣	Pass	2♥[i]	3♦
4♠	All Pass		

(i) Spades

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
—	—	—	1♦
Dble	3♦	4♠	5♦
5♠	All Pass		

What would you open as South? For me, the diamonds are both longer and much stronger so I would open 1♦ and see it through with a slightly light reverse into hearts. That approach worked out better on this deal as it enabled Gabriel to make a pre-emptive diamond raise and Rumancik to go on to 5♦ over the opposing 4♠, which in turn saw E/W bid on to a perilous 5♠.

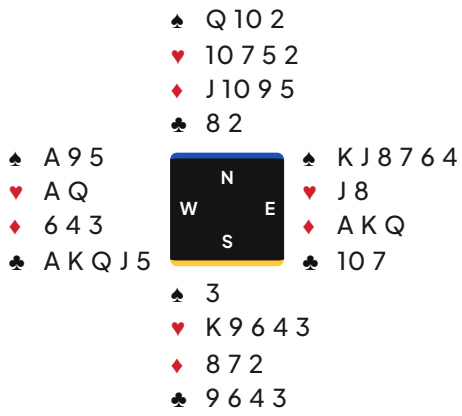
Meanwhile, the 1♥ opening did not meet with the same enthusiasm from Olla, who did not get involved in the auction as North.

Double dummy, even 4♠ can be defeated, but not in real life, requiring, as it does, two club ruffs. Olla led the jack of diamonds and Rubins allowed his jack to hold the trick. When Olla continued with a second diamond it was ruffed and Tomcani had 12 tricks for +480.

Beating 5♠ is a little more realistic, because the hand that wants the ruff is on lead. Cash a top diamond, and the defence is over, but cash the top heart and you can then underlead in diamonds to get your ruff. Rumancik started with a top diamond then switched to a low heart, and as declarer had no guess that too was 12 tricks for +480 and no swing.

Four Spades was played twice, successfully, and 6♠ three times, unsuccessfully. There was one 5♥ doubled down one. Five Spades was made the only time it was played by West: the lead was a heart. Five Spades was played by East seven times. It made four times after a top diamond lead, but was defeated three times after the ace of hearts lead. Well done to those three Souths.

Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
2NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
5♠	Pass	6NT	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Tomcani opened 2NT, showed interest opposite the spade transfer, then showed three key cards but no trump queen, and Vodicka concluded the auction with a jump to 6NT. Tomcani won the diamond lead and cashed the king of spades, the safety play for at most one loser with this combination. A spade to the ace and third spade towards the jack meant 12 tricks for +1440.

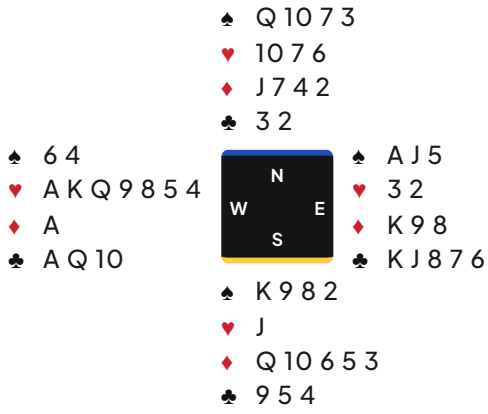
Jansons opened a strong club, Smilgajs showed a positive with at least five spades, and Jansons agreed spades. I don't know whether 3♥ and 4♣ were just cue-bids or had some more exotic meanings in their methods, but 4NT looks like key-card, with Jansons showing three of those but denying the queen. Smilgajs wisely chose to play in spades, as he could see that a club or heart lead could be a danger in NT.

Jansons won the diamond lead and made the safety play in trumps, so +1430 and no swing.

Seven NT and seven spades each went down once and each made once. The rest were all in one or other small slam, just making.

No sooner does one slam come along when another is close behind.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
—	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♦	Pass	7♥	All Pass

Closed Room

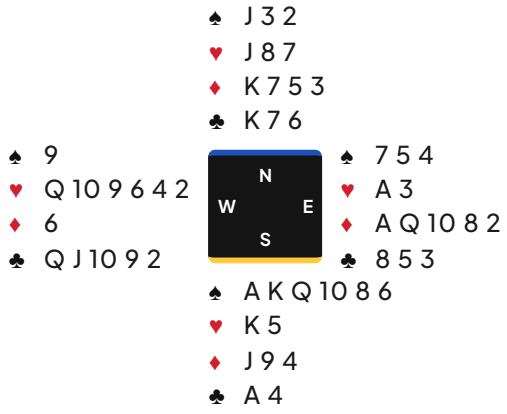
West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
—	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
7♥	All Pass		

Both Easts opened weak NTs and both Wests transferred to hearts. Jansons did so at the two level, then followed through with a self-agreeing splinter, asked for key-cards, and bid the grand slam. Tomcani transferred at the four level, and 4♦ was presumably encouraging, with 4NT asking for key cards. I don't know what 5♠ and 6♦ meant, but they convinced Vodicka that he should bid the grand slam.

There were 15 top tricks, so it was flat at +1510.

Seven NT was bid and made five times, and 7♠ six times. There was one pair in 7♣ and two in 6♥.

Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
3♥	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

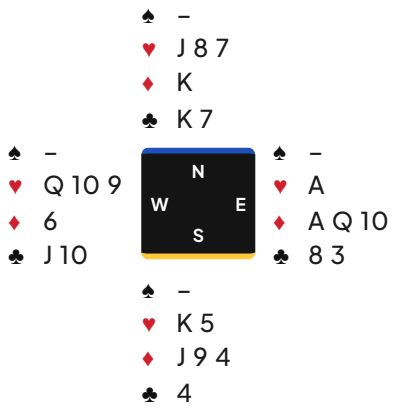
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

Jansons opened the West hand with a weak two bid and that ran round to Rumancik, who made a very heavy 2♠ overcall and played there. I couldn't bring myself to bid only 2♠ with this hand. I'd be choosing between 2NT, which would work very well when it was raised to game, and 3♠, which would work very badly, as we were about to see. Sure enough, Jansons led his singleton diamond and three rounds of those saw him collect a ruff, and there was the ace of hearts to come, nine tricks for +140.

Tomcani opened a level higher, liking the six-five shape more than he disliked being vulnerable. When that reached Rubins he had a similar decision to that Rumancik had faced: a cautious 3♠, a committal 4♠, or maybe 3NT, which would require a trick fewer than 4♠ and could not be beaten via ruffs. I like Rubins' choice of 3NT and it worked out just fine for him, though the play, after a club lead, was interesting, as he could not know that the ace of hearts was onside.

Rubins won the club in hand and cashed all the spades. This was the position after the last spade had been cashed:



Rubins now exited with a diamond to the king and ace, and Vodicka got off play with a club to the jack and king. Now Rubins played a heart, and Vodicka won the ace and led a club to the ten. Down to ♥Q10, Tomcani had to lead to declarer's king, and that was the ninth trick, for +600 and 10 IMPs to Latvia.

Four Spades was made once after a club lead, and 3NT three times, also after club leads. Three No Trump was beaten once, and 4♠ six times. We have seen a +140, and there were also two +170s after club leads.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Tomcani	*Olla*	*Vodicka*	*Rubins*
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

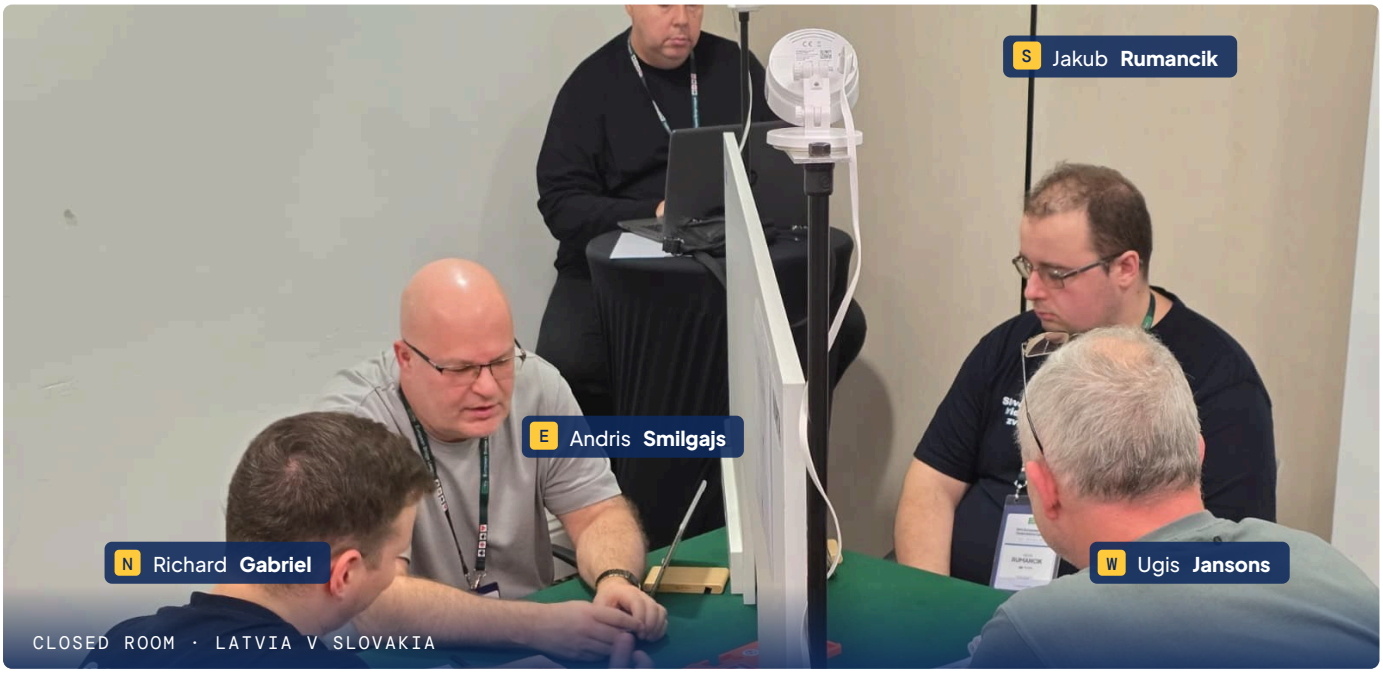
West	North	East	South
Jansons	*Gabriel*	*Smilgajs*	*Rumancik*
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♥
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Olla's 2NT was invitational or better with four-card spade support and, I think, 3♣ showed a minimum, hence Olla's sign off in 4♠. Rubins won the diamond lead and played ace and another spade; 11 tricks for +650.

Gabriel's 2♣ was natural and GF, after which one or both partners simply did too much bidding. It was a case of having a lot of controls but no source of side-suit tricks. Jansons led a club. Rumancik won, drew trumps, and ruffed the club loser. It didn't matter what he did once there was no miracle in hearts, and he was down one for –100 and 13 IMPs to Latvia.

Nobody else got too high, while one East lost –500 in 2♦ doubled to gain 4 IMPs.

The final score was 24–23 IMPs in favour of Slovakia, converting to 10.36–9.64 VPs.



Round 3 · Czech Republic v Ukraine

by Brian Senior

Ukraine and Czech Republic were both in the middle of the pack after two rounds and would be looking to move up the rankings. Both teams coped well with this first deal:


Martin **Schanka** · Czech Republic

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West *Karlykov*	North *Vozabal*	East *Shukhmeyster*	South *Schanka*
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♠	All Pass



Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♠	All Pass

For Czech Republic, Bahnik opened a strong and artificial 2♣ and showed the spades at his next turn. Bahnikova agreed spades and, after an exchange of cuebids, Bahnik asked for key cards then invited Seven, an invitation which Bahnikova quickly declined.

For Ukraine, Karlykov opened a Polish club and the response showed a natural positive, four+ spades. After some exploration, Karlykov asked about key cards then invited Seven, but Shukhmeyster too was not interested looking at his bare minimum hand.

There were 12 easy tricks, but no thirteenth; flat at +980.

Everyone reached slam, but three pairs got too high and were down one in Seven.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
—	—	—	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	6♠	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	—	—	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	Pass	5NT	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

Karlykov again opened the strong version of a Polish club, and rebid an artificial GF over the natural positive response. After some exploration, Karlykov jumped to 4NT and Shukhmeyster in turn jumped to 6♠, which Karlykov converted to 6NT to conclude the auction.

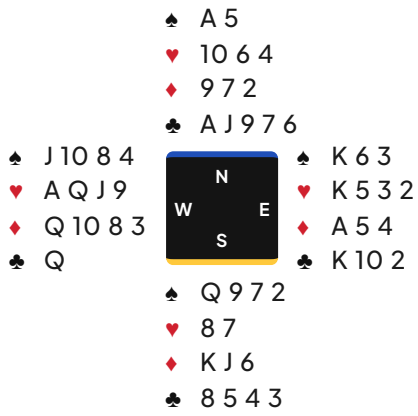
Vozabal led a diamond to the nine and queen and Karlykov played on spades, coming to 12 tricks for +1440.

The Czech pair's strong balanced hand ranges start at 22, so this 21–count was a 1♦ opening for them. I'm not going to try to guess what the next few bids meant, but at the end it looks like one key card plus the trump queen, and Bahnik settled for 6NT, against which Rybnikov led the eight of clubs round to the ace. Rybnikov won the second spade and returned another club to the king. Bahnik cashed the top hearts, crossed to the queen of clubs, and ran the spades. At the end, Saposnicov had to bare the ♦K to keep the club guard, so it showed up and there was no need of a finesse; +1440 and no swing.

Four pairs missed the slam, 10 bid it.


Gennadii **Rybnikov** · Ukraine

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
1♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

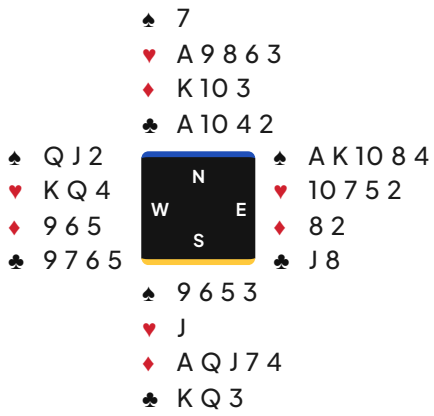
Bahnik opened the West hand, while Karlykov did not, but the same contract was reached at both tables.

Bahnik opened 1♥ then signed off in game when partner responded 3NT, 11–14 with four or more hearts but no shortage. Karlykov passed then showed his hearts and next made an artificial game try, which Shukhmeyster accepted.

Vozabal led ace and another spade, Karlykov rising with the king and drawing trumps in three rounds. He played a club to the queen, losing to the ace, and ducked the diamond return to the king. Schanka cashed the ♠Q and that was down one for –100.

Rybnikov led the seven of diamonds, which Bahnik ducked to the king. Saposnicov switched to a spade, Rybnikov winning the ace and continuing the suit. Bahnik won the king and drew trumps. The spade loser went away on the thirteenth diamond, and a club was conceded, setting up the king and a ruff for the ninth and tenth tricks; just made for +620 and 12 IMPs to Czech Republic.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
—	—	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♠	5♦	All Pass	

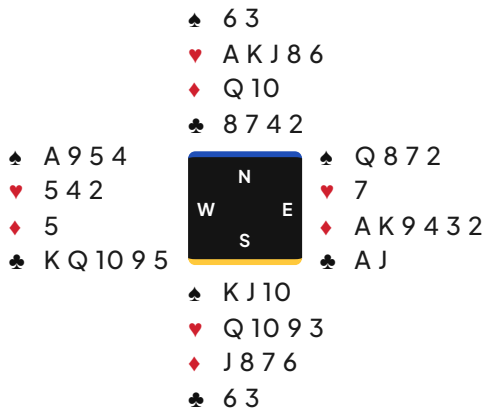
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	—	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	All Pass	

With spades bid and supported against them, it looks natural for Vozabal/Schanka to bid the diamond game. Karlykov led the queen of spades and, when that held the trick, switched to a club to the eight and king. Schanka ruffed a spade, came to the ♣Q and ruffed another spade, then cashed the king of diamonds. Ace of hearts and ruff a heart, run the trumps, and two clubs at the end, so 12 tricks in all for +420.

There was no spade overcall in the other room. Why N/S stopped in 2♥, only they will know. Bahnikova led the jack of clubs, Rybnikov winning the king and playing the jack of hearts to the queen and ace, followed by the nine of hearts to the king. Two rounds of spades came now, forcing declarer to ruff. Having been shortened, he could not afford to play a third heart, so played diamond winners instead. Bahnikova ruffed the third round and played a club, which was won in dummy. The next diamond was ruffed all around, and declarer had nine tricks for +140 but 7 IMPs to Czech Republic.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
—	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	2♥	3♥	Dble
4♣	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

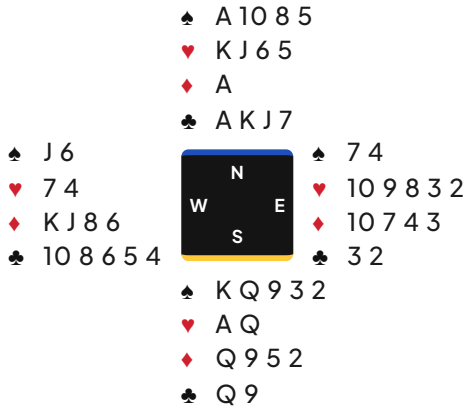
West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	1♥	2♦	2NT
Dble	3♥	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

When Bahnikova could bid 3♠ freely, Bahnik thought she should have a good chance of making game, so raised to 4♠. Saposnicov had a different opinion as to his opponents' chances in 4♠ so doubled.

Saposnicov led the nine of hearts, Rybnikov winning the jack and continuing with the ace, ruffed. Bahnikova cashed the top diamonds to discard the last heart from dummy, then led the queen of spades to the king and ace, trying to cater to a bare ten or jack in the North hand. That got covered by the king and ace, and a second spade was won by the ten. Saposnicov cashed the jack of spades, but that was that; 10 tricks for +790.

There was no double in the other room, where Karlykov, West, was at the helm. Vozabal led ace and another heart, ruffed in dummy, and Shukhmeyster too played the queen of spades at trick two: king, ace. Karlykov ruffed his last heart loser then cashed the ace and king of diamonds before switching his attention to clubs. Schanka ruffed the third club and cashed the other spade, but declarer had the rest; 10 tricks for +620 but 5 IMPs to Czech Republic.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

Vozabal's 3♣ response was 16+ with spade support and 3NT denied a shortage. One cuebid was all it took for Vozabal to launch into Key-card and bid the grand slam.

Rybnikov started with a GF 2♣ response, set trumps, and he too used Key-card on seeing a heart cuebid. Two plus the trump queen was enough to bid the grand slam; flat at +2210.

Only two pairs stopped in Six, the rest all made +2210.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

	♠ A 7 ♥ J 8 6 3 2 ♦ J 10 3 2 ♣ 3 2	
♠ K Q 9 4 ♥ – ♦ K 7 5 ♣ A K Q 10 9 5	N W E S	♠ 10 8 6 3 ♥ K 5 4 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ 8 7 6
	♠ J 5 2 ♥ A Q 10 9 7 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ J 4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Karlykov	*Vozabal*	*Shukhmeyster*	*Schanka*
—	—	—	1NT
2♣	2♥	2♠	3♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	5♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Bahnik	*Rybnikov*	*Bahnikova*	*Saposnicov*
—	—	—	1NT
Dble	2♦	Pass	3♥
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

Karlykov's 2♣ overcall showed five or more clubs plus a major, and when Shukhmeyster could bid freely in support of the assumed spade suit, Karlykov jumped to the spade game. Schanka saved in 5♥ and that was doubled to conclude a lively auction.

The six of spades was led to the queen and ace, and Vozabal ran the eight of hearts, then repeated the heart finesse and cashed the ace. Vozabal led the low spade off the table now and Karlykov won the king then cashed two clubs. The play record stops there, with Vozabal set for down one, however, he is credited with only down two, so –300.

Bahnik's double showed a four-card major and longer minor, and he followed through by bidding 4♣ at his next turn. Bahnikova converted to 4♠ and Rybnikov doubled, ending the auction.

Saposnicov led the ace of hearts against 4♠ doubled, declarer ruffing and playing the king of spades, Rybnikov winning the ace and playing a heart. Declarer's king must have been a big disappointment to him. Bahnikova led a spade to the nine then played on clubs, allowing a ruff with the ♠J. She still had 10 tricks for +590 and 7 IMPs to Czech Republic.

The final score was 32–5 in favour of Czech Republic, 16.91–3.09 VPs. They were up to fourth in the overall standings.



Round 4 · Serbia v Croatia

by Brian Senior

Time to take a look at our host country, Croatia, against Serbia. The match was a very quiet affair. The score had reached only 6–1 to Croatia when this board came along.


Veljko **Vujcic** · Serbia

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Brguljan	*Vujcic*	*Borevkovic*	*Altman*
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♠
Pass	3♥	All Pass	



Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Zipovski	*Zoric*	*Radisic*	*Marinovski*
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Borevkovic overcalled 1♠ and Altman showed an invitational heart raise by cuebidding 2♠. That didn't excite Vujcic, who declined the invitation by signing off in 3♥. He was right, at least in theory, because there are three top losers, even with the spade honours onside, plus an unavoidable trump trick.

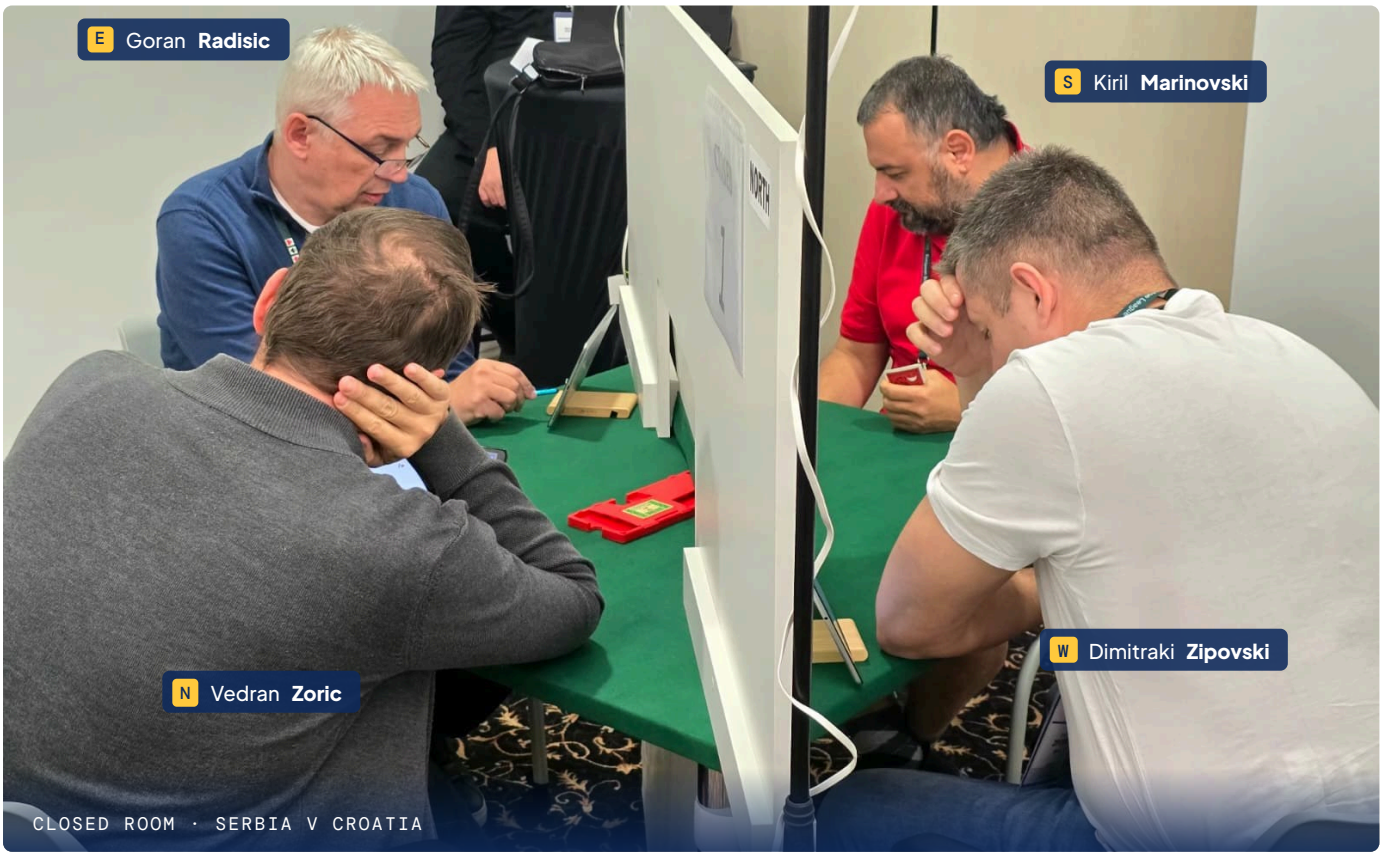
Borevkovic led a club round to declarer's ace, and Vujcic played a spade at trick two. Borevkovic rose with the ace then returned the suit, and Vujcic called for the jack. When that held he cashed the ace and king of hearts then led a spade to the king. That was ruffed, and Brguljan played ace and another diamond to his partner's king; just made for +140.

Radisic did not overcall, so Marinovski used Drury and saw his partner jump to game.

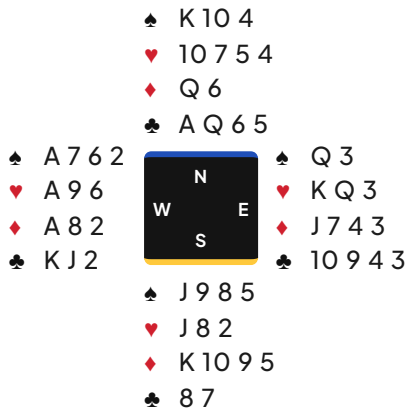
Radisic also led a club. Zoric won the ace and played a spade, and Radisic won the ace and returned a low diamond. Zipovski misread the situation, winning the ace and attempting to give his partner a club ruff. Away went one of declarer's diamonds, and he now cashed the top hearts, crossed to the jack of spades, and discarded the rest of his diamonds on the clubs; 10 tricks made for +420 and 7 IMPs to Croatia.

The boards continued to be small and lifeless, and the score had only moved on to 15–1 in favour of Croatia when we reached the next significant swing deal.


Karlo **Brguljan** · Croatia



Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Brguljan	*Vujcic*	*Borevkovic*	*Altman*
—	—	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	All Pass

Closed Room

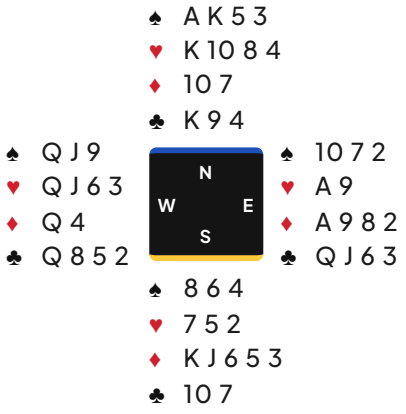
West	North	East	South
Zipovski	*Zoric*	*Radisic*	*Marinovski*
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Brguljan opened a strong NT then, looking at his sterile shape and lack of honour combinations, declined Borevkovic's game invitation. Zipovski, meanwhile, opened a strong club, saw Radisic make a positive response, 1♠ being 8–10 balanced, and jumped to 3NT.

Zoric led the four of hearts against 3NT, Zipovski winning dummy's queen and leading a club to the jack, which Zoric ducked. Zipovski led a low spade towards the queen, and there the play record ends. We can see, however, that if North wins the spade and plays a heart, declarer will win in dummy to repeat the club finesse. When that loses, North returns a spade, and that is dummy's last entry gone, so the fourth club never comes into play and the contract is the two down that was indeed the result at the table; –200.

That was surely a swing to Croatia, but Brguljan would have to bring home eight tricks in 2NT if it was to be a significant one. Again the lead was a heart, won in dummy. However, Brguljan played the ten of clubs next, Vujcic ducking, and continued with a second club to the jack and queen. A second heart lead was won in hand and the king of clubs played to the ace. Altman threw his third heart on this trick, and something about the situation convinced Vujcic to put the king of spades on the table in search of a quick kill. All he achieved was to speed up the play and eight tricks were now there for Brguljan; +120 and 8 IMPs to Croatia.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Brguljan	*Vujcic*	*Borevkovic*	*Altman*
1♣	Dble	1♠	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Zipovski	*Zoric*	*Radisic*	*Marinovski*
1♦	Dble	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

Brguljan opened 1♣, natural or balanced, the latter starting at 10 HCP, and 1♠ said balanced 11+ with no major. One No Trump denied interest in game. The lead was a low spade, which was won in hand with the nine. Brguljan led the queen of hearts to the king and ace, then led a club to the ace and a second club to the queen. The jack of clubs lost to the king, and Vujcic returned the ♥10 to pin dummy's nine. Brguljan won the jack, cashed the fourth club, and exited with a spade. Vujcic won that and cashed the spades then the eight of hearts. That crashed Altman's seven, and now there was no way to prevent the overtrick; +120.

Zipovski opened a potentially doubleton 1♦ and Zoric had the right shape to double. However, when Radisic's strength-showing redouble came back to him he had to run, and opted for his lower-ranking major. But safety was only relative, as Zipovski was not worried about his sub-minimum opening bid and made a penalty double of 1♥, and that ended the auction.

Radisic led the queen of clubs, which Zipovski ducked to declarer's king. Zoric led the seven of diamonds at trick two and Radisic rose with the ace and led a spade to the jack and ace. Zoric conceded a club now, Zipovski winning and returning a low heart. Seeing a chance to even make his contract, Zoric put up the king, and discovered that the hand that had doubled him did not have the ace. The king lost, and a heart continuation saw Zipovski win the jack and queen then return the eight of clubs to the ten and jack. Radisic played the fourth club, and Zoric could make the ♥10, ♠K and ♦K, and that was all; down two for –300 and 5 IMPs to Serbia.

Croatia came out on top by 25–6 IMPs, or 15.37–4.63 VPs, and moved to the top of the rankings.



Round 5 · Faroe Islands v Estonia

by Brian Senior

We complete our coverage of day one of the European Small Federations Games with the match between Estonia and the Faroe Islands.


Pol **Egholm** · Faroe Islands

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Egholm	*T. Vahk*	*Jokladal*	*Gusson*
—	—	—	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		



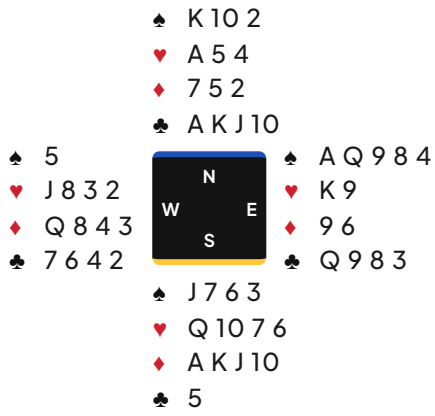
Closed Room

West	North	East	South
J. Vahk	*Mikkelsen*	*Pedmanson*	*Mohr*
—	—	—	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

Jasper Vahk, for Estonia, opened a 14–16 NT and Pedmanson left him to play there. Mikkelsen led the three of hearts to the jack, ducked by Vahk, who won the heart continuation with the ace and ran the queen of diamonds then, when that held the trick, continued with the jack to the king and ace. Next he played the queen of spades to Mikkelsen's ace and Mikkelsen cleared the hearts, playing the queen to Vahk's king. Vahk played the queen of spades and, when the jack fell, continued with the nine. Mikkelsen won the ten and played the fourth heart, but Vahk had an overtrick for +20.

The difference that a point can make. Egholm, for Faroes, also opened 1NT, but his maximum was 17, and Jokladal invited game, being forced by his methods to do so via Stayman. Egholm had a goodish 16 so accepted. The difference in system had an equally great effect on the opening lead: a triumph for non-promissory Stayman. Fearing that dummy would come down with length in the majors, Tonno Vahk chose to attack with a club lead: the queen. Disaster! Egholm won the ace and cleared the suit, won the heart switch on table, and cashed the clubs then took the diamond finesse. Again, the second diamond was covered, but now Egholm switched his attention to spades and had 10 tricks and +630; 11 IMPs to the Faroes.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Egholm	*T. Vahk*	*Jokladal*	*Gusson*
Pass	1NT	2♠	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Closed Room

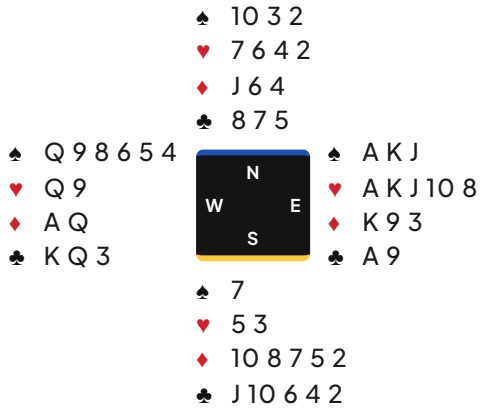
West	North	East	South
J. Vahk	*Mikkelsen*	*Pedmanson*	*Mohr*
Pass	1NT	2♠	Dble
2NT	Pass	3♣	Dble
All Pass			

Both Norths opened a strong NT and both Easts overcalled 2♠, spades and a minor. Now Gusson, for Estonia, used Lebensohl to get to 3NT, while Mohr, for Faroes, preferred to double then make a second, take-out, double. Mikkelsen didn't have a hard job in judging to defend 3♣ doubled.

Jokladal led the eight of spades against 3NT, declarer winning the ten and trying to sneak the ten of clubs past Jokladal, who didn't fall for it and won his queen. Jokladal played ace and nine of spades to set up two winners: if he could ever get in to cash them. He did, but too late. Vahk won the ♠K and took the diamond finesse. It lost, but he could rise with the ace on the heart return, and cash the clubs then the diamonds, and that was nine tricks for +600.

Now, could Mohr/Mikkelsen collect a big enough penalty from 3♣ doubled to justify their decision to defend? Mohr cashed the king of diamonds, got a count signal, and switched to a low heart. Mikkelsen won the ace and played three rounds of clubs. Pedmanson won the queen and cashed the king of hearts before leading a diamond towards the queen. Mohr rose with the ace and played the ♥Q, which Pedmanson ruffed with his last trump. He played ace of spades then ruffed a spade with dummy's last trump, and could cash the queen of diamonds for his sixth trick; down three for –800 and 5 IMPs to Faroes.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Egholm	*T. Vahk*	*Jokladal*	*Gusson*
—	—	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
7♠	All Pass		

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
J. Vahk	*Mikkelsen*	*Pedmanson*	*Mohr*
—	—	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	Pass	7♠	All Pass

Egholm/Jokladal had a simple auction: transfer, ask for key-cards, bid Seven. Vahk/Pedmanson had a long and involved auction, starting with a strong club and response which showed 8+HCP with five+ spades, or 12+HCP with five+ hearts.

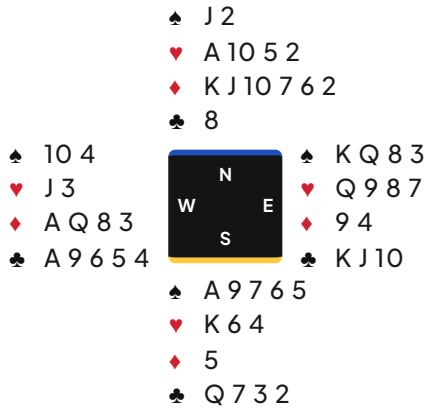
As should be the case when holding a combined 28 HCP and two long suits, so 17 top tricks,

both pairs reached the grand slam by their preferred routes.

One pair stopped in 6NT, one played 7♥, five played 7♠, and seven played in the top spot of 7NT.

On Board 7, N/S had a reasonable game. Essentially, declarer has a five-four trump fit and needs to play it for one loser missing AJ106. There is a bare ten, so you can guess it, or not. Estonia stopped in 3♥ and made it for +140; Faroes bid game but got the trump suit wrong, so –100 and 6 IMPs to Estonia instead of 10 the other way.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.



Open Room

West	North	East	South
J. Vahk	*Mikkelsen*	*Pedmanson*	*Mohr*
—	—	1♦	1♠
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

This board was passed out at one table, but there was enough action at the other to more than make up for that.

Three Diamonds doubled was not a lot of fun to play: but plenty of fun to defend. Mikkelsen won the heart lead with dummy's king to lead dummy's diamond to the ten. So far so good. He continued with the jack of diamonds, losing to the queen, won the heart return, and played the king of diamonds. That lost to the ace and Vahk could also cash the eight. So far not so good. Vahk played a low club to Pedmanson's king and Pedmanson switched to the king of spades. The contract was down three for –800 and 13 IMPs to Estonia.

Board 12. Dealer West. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Egholm	*T. Vahk*	*Jokladal*	*Gusson*
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
J. Vahk	*Mikkelsen*	*Pedmanson*	*Mohr*
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Egholm opened 1♠ and rebid 3♠ over the 1NT response, and now Jokladal made an optimistic raise to game.

Vahk led the queen of clubs, which Egholm ducked. He won the continuation of a low club to the king, cashed the king of hearts, and ruffed a club with the ♠6. That was over-ruffed with the ten and a diamond pushed through. Egholm ran it, losing to the king, and the jack of clubs was then ruffed with the four and over-ruffed with the five. There was still a spade to be lost so that was down two for –100.

Vahk opened 1♣, strong, and the response showed 0–7. Two Spades looks like a serious overbid to me unless there is something about their methods of which I am unaware. If there is a game one surely partner will bid again over 1♠? Anyway, Pedmanson raised to 4♠ and that was that.

Mikkelsen too led the queen of clubs, but here Mohr unblocked with the king. Vahk ducked but won the club continuation with the ace. He cashed the ♥K and ♠A before trying for a club ruff in the dummy. But, of course, that was over-ruffed, and a diamond sent through. Vahk ducked, losing to the king and the jack of clubs cashed. That was two down for –200 and no swing.

Estonia earned a narrow win, by 21–18 IMPs, which converts to 11.05–8.95 VPs.



Bits & Pieces

NEWS AND CURIOSITIES



Meanwhile, in Seoul…

While we were opening the Small Federations Games under the arches of the Sponza Palace, our EBL President **Eric Laurant** was on his very first visit to South Korea, exploring a possible venue for future championships. While there, he also took part in the **2026 Seoul International Bridge Tournament**, and came away with a win.



A souvenir from Dubrovnik

This morning two guests of the hotel stopped by the EBL welcome desk of the Small Federations Games. They politely explained that they are not bridge players, but that they would very much love an **EBL badge lanyard**. The lady's brother plays bridge in Ireland but has never had the chance to take part in an international event, and she is sure that, of all the souvenirs she could bring him from Dubrovnik, this is the one he would love the most!



Deputy Mayor and bridge player at work

A pathologist at the table

Yesterday we arrived at the Sponza Palace a little early for the Opening Ceremony and, while waiting for the buses with the players, took the chance to chat. Then the Deputy Mayor of Dubrovnik, **Velibor Puzović**, arrived, and we immediately discovered what interests us most: he is a keen bridge player! His job keeps him very busy, so he plays mostly online. By profession he is a pathologist and forensic pathologist. One of the beautiful things about bridge is that it brings together so many people from different walks of life inside the same little bridge microcosm.

The conversation soon turned to artificial intelligence in medicine. Puzović explained that highly repetitive tasks, such as counting the cells marked by immunohistochemistry to identify those in mitosis (a predictor of how aggressive some tumours are), are now carried out by AI quickly and with great precision. Pathologists used to count them by hand, with the risk of making mistakes: the human brain is simply not built for very repetitive work. Our minds thrive on variety, on recognising patterns and on solving problems; asked to do the same simple thing thousands of times, attention inevitably begins to drift, fatigue creeps in, and small errors slip through without our noticing. A machine, by contrast, counts the ten-thousandth cell with exactly the same care as the first, leaving the pathologist free to concentrate on what really requires a human mind: interpreting the results and deciding what they mean for the patient.

Upcoming EBL & WBF events

NOVEMBER 2026			
26–29 NOV	**11th EBL/WBF TD Workshop** In memory of Ton Kooijman	Istanbul, Türkiye	
DECEMBER 2026			
12 DEC	**Under 14 Minibridge Championship** 14:00 CET	Online · RealBridge	
JANUARY 2027			
8–10 JAN	**4th WBF Online Women's Teams**	Online · RealBridge	
FEBRUARY 2027			
5–7 FEB	**European Online Senior Transnational Teams Championship**	Online · RealBridge	
11–25 FEB	**European Winter Transnational Championships**	Prague, Czech Republic	
APRIL 2027			
9–11 APR	**European Online Women's Transnational Team Championship**	Online · RealBridge	
12–18 APR	**WBF Women's Online Festival, Spring 2027**	Online · BBO	
MAY 2027			
21–23 MAY	**European Online Mixed Transnational Team Championship**	Online · RealBridge	
JUNE - JULY 2027			
23 Jun – 7 Jul	**European Transnational Championships**	Wrocław, Poland	
AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2027			
1–7 AUG	**World National Youth Teams Championships**	Herning, Denmark	
8–13 AUG	**European National Youth Pairs Championships**	Herning, Denmark	
23 Aug – 4 Sep	**2027 World Teams Championships** Opening ceremony on 23 August · Play starts on 24 August	Bridgetown, Barbados	
NOVEMBER 2027			
4–6 NOV	**19th European Small Federations Games** NEXT EDITION	Varna, Bulgaria	
11–13 NOV	**European Open and Women's Champions Cups**	Venue to be announced	

Full calendar and updates: **worldbridge.org/calendar** · **eurobridge.org**