

# 3<sup>RD</sup> ONLINE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Online on RealBridge • 9 - 11 January, 2026

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Amy Casanova (Editor) & Francesca Canali (Editor & Layout Editor)

## Bobbing and weaving

After two days of Swiss matches, the final groupings have been determined.

The A Group leaders, Türkiye's ISTANBUL, moved up to the top spot after the second session and maintained their lead, finishing with 147.94 VPs. In second place are Scotland's CALEDONIA, who moved up from 13th after the first session to second and maintained their place, finishing with 135.57 VPs.

Big, come-from-behind stories include Israel's PHILOSOPHERS, who were in 30th place after day one. They had big margins of victory in the second session – moving them up to fourth place, and a solid performance in the third session, losing only to the leaders, and finished in third place.

Ireland's GANAINM came out of nowhere from 28th place to 15th, thanks to a third-set blitz, then finished strong in their last match against Türkiye's other team, SANS, sending them from sixth down to 18th and claiming 7th place.

First-session leaders from Denmark and Norway, NORDEN, dropped to third place after the second session and finished in sixth place.

## Ranking after Day 2

#	Team	Adj.	IMPs		#	Team	Adj.	IMPs	
1	ISTANBUL		147.94	FINAL A	26	BID AND RUN		99.47	FINAL D
2	CALEDONIA		135.57	FINAL A	27	SUNSHINE SISTERS		98.97	FINAL D
3	PHILOSOPHERS		126.27	FINAL A	28	RAWSON		98.88	FINAL D
4	BELGIAN WOMEN		122.33	FINAL A	29	HWBT		97.87	FINAL D
5	CELTS		121.94	FINAL A	30	FINLAND		95.81	FINAL D
6	NORDEN		120.38	FINAL A	31	PHOENIX		95.47	FINAL D
7	GANAINM		119.37	FINAL A	32	RUFF DIAMONDS		94.47	FINAL E*
8	SWEDEN		118.78	FINAL A	32	SWISS LADIES		94.47	FINAL D*
9	TERSCH		118.47	FINAL B	34	LA ZETA DE ZORRO		90.42	FINAL E
10	SOUTH AFRICA		117.53	FINAL B	35	SUPA DUPAS	-3.51	89.40	FINAL E
11	TURQUOISE		116.72	FINAL B	36	ISRAEL OFIR		88.58	FINAL E
12	GERMAN LADIES		113.50	FINAL B	37	CRAZIES I		87.97	FINAL E
13	DANTE ISTANBUL		113.05	FINAL B	38	PORTUGAL		85.64	FINAL E
14	RENATE		111.49	FINAL B	39	HAKUNA MATATA		85.18	FINAL E
15	NORWEGIAN VALK.	3.51	111.14	FINAL B	40	TRICK ME NOT		83.63	FINAL E
16	ICELAND1		110.60	FINAL B	41	NESHOT HAHAIL		81.62	FINAL F
17	LOVELY ISRAEL		109.43	FINAL C	42	FAROE ISLANDS		79.94	FINAL F
18	SANS		109.04	FINAL C	43	HEARTBREAKERS 2026		79.82	FINAL F
19	ICELAND 2		108.25	FINAL C	44	SMART TARTAN		76.13	FINAL F
20	VICUNA		108.12	FINAL C	45	SHAMROCKS 2026		74.18	FINAL F
21	LEYLA		106.98	FINAL C	46	AMBER QUEENS		72.49	FINAL F
22	VIKING GIRLS		105.87	FINAL C	47	BOSPHORUS BRIDGE		72.33	FINAL F
23	THE INCREDIBLES		105.06	FINAL C	48	ONO VALLEY		67.80	FINAL F
24	JNZN		103.76	FINAL C	49	SLAM		67.48	FINAL F
25	LATVIA		101.64	FINAL D	50	ADV LADIES		58.84	FINAL F

\* Teams Ruff Diamonds and Swiss Ladies both finished with 94.47 VPs. To determine the final group division, the total Victory Points of each team's opponents ("Swiss Points") was calculated and the team with the largest number of "Swiss Points" was ranked first, and so on. For Ruff Diamonds, the figure was 944.04. For Swiss Ladies it was 1038.17.

# SCHEDULE

**Sunday, 11 January 2026**

Round 1: 10:00 to 11:02

Round 2: 11:10 to 12:12

Round 3: 12:20 to 13:22

Round 4: 13:30 to 14:32

*Break (43 minutes)*

Round 5: 15:15 to 16:17

Round 6: 16:25 to 17:27

Round 7: 17:35 to 18:37

*Protest & correction time ends at 19:37*



# USEFUL LINKS

**Microsite**

**Kibitz Server**

**System Cards**

**Results – Saturday**



## 3<sup>rd</sup> WBF Online WOMEN'S TEAMS

Online on RealBridge, 27 - 29 March, 2026



### TRANSNATIONAL EVENT

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## Building Skills, Confidence, and Community: The EBL Online Women's Team Training Program on RealBridge

The Online Women's Team Training Program, delivered on the RealBridge platform, is one of the most impactful initiatives launched by the European Bridge League Women's Bridge Committee in recent years. Designed to address long-standing gaps in access to high-quality training, the program offers competitive women players across Europe regular, structured opportunities to improve their game in a professional and supportive environment.

The concept behind the program was simple yet powerful. Research and surveys conducted by the Women's Bridge Committee showed that many female players lack sufficient training options within their national federations. Financial constraints, limited coaching resources, and uneven access to international-level practice were repeatedly identified as key barriers to progression. The online training program was created specifically to remove these obstacles.

Each session follows a clear and consistent format. Women's teams from different countries meet online on the RealBridge platform to play a short teams match of 15 boards under conditions that closely resemble face-to-face competition. Using RealBridge's platform, players enjoy a realistic and engaging match experience while becoming familiar with the same environment used in official online championships.

After the match, all participants join a live coaching session led by different top-level international coaches. Selected boards are analyzed in depth, with attention to bidding, declarer play, defense, hand evaluation, and more.

The lectures are interactive and practical, directly linked to situations that arose during the match, making the learning experience immediately relevant and applicable.

Participation has exceeded expectations from the outset. Early sessions attracted nearly 60 teams, representing more than 230 women from across Europe. In later cycles, participation stabilized at an impressive average of 250-320 players per session.

Feedback collected through post-session surveys has been overwhelmingly positive, with players consistently praising the quality of the coaching, the welcoming atmosphere, and the rare opportunity to learn and compete alongside peers from other countries.

Beyond individual skill development, the program has delivered broader strategic benefits. It strengthened the role of national Women's Coordinators, encouraged federations to engage more actively with women players, and created a clear pathway from training to participation in official EBL online and face-to-face championships. For many participants, these sessions became a first step toward international competition.

The success of the Online Women's Team Training Program clearly demonstrates how well-designed digital initiatives can drive meaningful change. By combining accessibility, professionalism, and a strong sense of community, the program has become a cornerstone of the EBL's long-term strategy to grow and strengthen Women's Bridge across Europe.

This is a good opportunity to warmly thank RealBridge managers Shireen Mohandes and Andy Bowles for their outstanding professionalism and dedication, ensuring that every session runs smoothly and successfully.

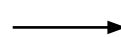
The training program is free for EBL female members, so we encourage everyone to join and enjoy.

The training program is offered free of charge to all female members of the European Bridge League, reflecting the EBL's commitment to removing financial barriers and ensuring equal access to high-quality training.

If you have not yet experienced the program, we warmly invite you to join. Registration is handled via the Women's Coordinators in each national federation.

The next training session will take place in **February 23rd, 2026**.

For full details and the training schedule, please click on the button



**Training Program**

# Istanbul In the Lead

by Amy Casanova

After the first set of boards Saturday, there was a new leader: Turkiye's ISTANBUL (Asli Acar, Ebru Ates, Berrak Erkan, Irem Ozbay and Dilek Yavas). I tuned it just in time to see Yavas declare 3NT on Board 2, playing against Scotland's CALEDONIA (Sheila Adamson, Elizabeth McGowan, Fiona McQuaker, Abigail Milne, Ying Piper and Sam Punch).

Board 2. Dealer East. N-S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Adamson	Yavas	Milne	Ozbay
Acar	Punch	Erkan	Piper
		Pass	1♥
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The auctions at both tables were identical. Yavas received the lead of the ♠8 to the king, which she ducked. Adamson switched to the ♣8, which does make life easier for declarer. She put in the ♣J, losing to the queen. East continued with the ♠9, won with the ace. Yavas now played the ♥Q and then a heart to the ace (not many declarers finessed the 10). At this point, she must sneak in a diamond to her queen. If West hops up with the king, she is killing her entry before the spades are established. If West ducks, declarer has the timing to knock out the ♣A, taking two spades, two diamonds, three hearts and two clubs.

Instead, Yavas played a club to the 10 and ace. Milne had a chance – had she exited with her last spade – but she played it safe with a club, declarer winning with the king and cashing the 13th club. East and South threw hearts and West the ♠4. She

now cashed the ♠Q, throwing dummy's ♦7, and endplayed West with the ♠5, dumping the ♥10. Adamson was forced to lead away from the ♦K J 9 – Yavas put up the ♦Q and scored nine tricks, good for 13 IMPs when Punch was down two at the other table.

Only 14 declarers made 3NT; at three tables West declined a 1♠ overcall, making the lead of a spade less attractive. At many tables, East-West abandoned the spade suit too soon, often with East switching to the ♦10, removing their partner's entry. Perhaps there were signaling difficulties. The spade spots are such that continuing the suit is best for the defense, especially after East raises, but understandably West might be afraid to continue the suit if North has a holding like A Q 9 2. The 9 8 6 is kind of an awkward holding to lead from after raising partner's suit, and all three were chosen by various Easts.

Even though it makes 3NT double-dummy, there are definitely timing and entry issues for declarer. If a spade is ducked and the continuation won, finessing the ♥10 is not essential, but the diamond play must be found then.

Board 5. Dealer North. N-S Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Adamson	Yavas	Milne	Ozbay
	2♣	2♥	Pass*
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

\*Pass = Values

These one-suiters can be difficult to bid accurately. Only one pair – Anber Haciraifoglu and Nurten Demirel – bid 7♣. 6NT was the next highest-scoring spot. About 1/3 of the field languished in a notrump or club game.

#### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Acar	Punch	Erkan	Piper
	1♣	1♥	1♠
Pass	3NT*	All Pass	

\*3NT = Solid clubs

Punch's 3NT rebid shows long, solid clubs and a heart stopper. Several Norths approached the hand this way; others started with a game-forcing 2♣. No one in the South seat considered their hand as slam invitational after the jump to 3NT.

That was another 12 IMPs to ISTANBUL, who won that set 38–0.

Next up they faced Israel's PHILOSOPHERS (Adi Asulin, Ronnie Benin-Barr, Hila Levi, Sylvia Pelossof, Dana Tal and Noga Tal) which was largely flat save for this board:

#### Board 12. Dealer West. N–S Vul.

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

#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
N. Tal	Erkan	D. Tal	Acar
Pass	Pass	1♦*	Pass
1♥	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Dana Tal's 1♦ promised a four-card or longer suit and an unbalanced hand, which she showed by splintering in clubs after the 1♥ response. West kind of punted with a "last train" 4♦ call, which was all the encouragement East need to jump to slam.

Unfortunately for them, Berrak Erkan found the killing club lead. With the 4–0 trump split, declarer can't ruff two clubs and pick up the ♥10, nor can she pull trump with the ♠A out. Unlucky.

At the other table, the auction started similarly but Irem Ozbay signed off over the splinter. That was an 11-IMP pickup for ISTANBUL who won that match 18–5.

Interestingly, these three teams topped the qualifying Swiss, with the CELTS (Sophie Cunningham, Louise Mitchell, Lucy Phelan and Ceri Pierce), from Ireland and Wales, ISTANBUL's next opponent, finishing in fifth, behind the BELGIAN WOMEN (Antonella Couteaux, Nicole Marechal, Marie-Francoise Stas, Dominique Stuyck and Caroline Vandenbossche).

The CELTS were undefeated Saturday and defeated ISTANBUL by 2-IMPs in a match that saw lots of swings.

This one went in ISTANBUL's direction, or their loss would have been more substantial.

#### Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

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


#### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Ozbay	Pierce	Ates	Cunningham
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3NT	All Pass

West showed five spades and four hearts with 5–8 HCP.

Most leads will set 3NT and Sophie Cunningham found one: the ♥10 to the 3, 5 and queen. Declarer next tried a high spade, South winning with the ace and North playing the 6. Their card says reverse attitude and reverse Smith – meaning North liked the heart lead and wants a continuation. But Cunningham switched to the ♣K, letting Ebru Ates escape with nine winners and 11 IMPs when the other pair stopped in 3♠, down two.

Board 29. Dealer North. Both Vul.

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

North-South had a good auction to the top spot – right-siding the contract. 1♣ was two-plus clubs, could have longer diamonds. South's double over 1♥ showed spades. North limited her hand to 11–13 HCP and two or three spades. South continued with a game-forcing 2♦, over which North denied three spades and asked for a heart stopper. South bid 3NT and received the ♥J lead, ducked to her queen. Add five spades and four clubs to that and she was +630.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT*	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

On the lead of the ♥6, declarer must guess to put up the queen. When she tried the ♥10, she was down two for 13 IMPs to the CELTS.

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Ozbay	Pierce	Ates	Cunningham
	1♣*	1♥	Dbl*
Pass	1♠*	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♥*	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

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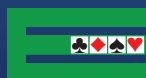
EUROPEAN WINTER  
OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP

EUROPEAN WINTER  
MIXED TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP

EUROPEAN WINTER  
SWISS CUP  
OPEN BAM  
OPEN PAIRS  
MIXED PAIRS



**EUROPEAN WINTER  
TRANSNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
■ PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC · 10 - 19 FEBRUARY, 2026 ■



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# RISE OF A VICKYNG ...OF COURSE IN STILETTOS!

by Francesca Canali

Vicky Chediak is a member of the Viking Girls, the team who won the 2025 edition of the EBL Online Women's Championships.

But Vicky's successes in online bridge started more than 10 years ago. Since then, she has topped several online events and has been subsequently invited to World and European Championships. Getting one badge to an international competition looks like a great achievement already, right? Well, Vicky often has two of them: one as a player and one as staff, as she is a regular member of the hospitality team. Unfortunately, you can't wear both badges at the same time.

**High heels** are her signature, her statement. She dreamt of them since kindergarten and wore them every single day in high school. She still wears them now: at tournaments, at the hospitality desk, everywhere. And this alone is enough to make her our hero.

But don't let the elegance fool you: when Vicky Chediak sits at a bridge table, **she plays to kill.**

"My father made me and my sister very competitive," she laughs. "From Dobble with the kids to bridge, I always play to win. And my son Mateo is the same. I taught him that!"

Virginia - **"but I like Vicky"** - was born in Uruguay to a family where bridge was the family language.

Her father, a veterinarian and WBF Tournament Director, taught both daughters to play. Her mother, a school teacher, played for passion. The four of them played together constantly.

"At first I was not very interested because of the high age of bridge players," Vicky admits. "But everything changed in 2001, at the World Youth Championships in Brazil. I met a lot of young people from all over the world. I made a lot of friends."

### She came home with a mission.

"I told my sister: we are going to make a junior team for Uruguay. We will play the qualifiers at the South American Championships. **And we are going to qualify for the World Championships.**"

It seemed almost impossible. Uruguay had never qualified before.

### The miracle against Brazil

They were four: Vicky, her sister, a friend, and one boy. People called them "the girls team": unusual for the time, since the youth category didn't have subdivisions back then.

They scraped into the last qualifying spot by winning against Brazil.

"The Brazilian team was much more experienced. Everybody thought they were going to kill us."

Going into the final set, Uruguay was 50 IMPs down.

"But we kept fighting. In the last set, we picked up over 50 and we beat them. I remember the Brazilian team being very incredulous and disappointed."

Paris 2003. The World Youth Championships. A dream that came true.

"We were last in the world championships, but we knew this was going to happen. We were the least experienced team. But we were there."

### Love at the table

Bridge gave Vicky more than trophies. At those 2001 Youth Championships in Brazil, she met a player on the Norwegian National team. They fell in love. They married. She moved to Norway.

"This is how my life has been shaped by bridge," she says. Their son Mateo, now 12, is already playing professionally. His goal? The U16 Norwegian national team.

The marriage ended, but the bridge didn't. And neither did love finding her at the table.

### A long bid... to the great slam

**Wrocław, Poland, 2022.** A disco full of bridge players. The young American talent Finn Kolesnik was interested in Vicky. "I told him he was too young and I had a boyfriend. So I said: maybe in 10 years, if I'm single."

**Strasbourg, France** and then **Marrakech, Morocco, 2023.** They met again. "I said I'm not single, so maybe in 9 years."

**Bodø, Norway, 2024.** Vicky was single now. "But I said there's still 8 years. He said 8 years was too many. We negotiated down to 5, then he negotiated more, and I said: **maybe next time we meet.**"

**Poznan, Poland, 2025.** Finn texted her: "Are you single?"

"The rest is history."



Finn, Vicky and Mateo



## The queen of online bridge

"First time I played was in 2014. I did very well and I kept going. I was playing in so many online events and getting very good results."

**Her secret?** "Playing a lot." she says.

BBO is her kingdom. Daylong tournaments, games with friends... and the occasional RealBridge session. Last year, with her team the Viking Girls, by winning the 2nd European Online Women Teams Championships, she earned vouchers and a spot at the Women's Champions Cup.

## The Viking Girls in Jurmala

The Women's Champions Cup in Jurmala (Latvia) was a first for her entire team.

"Playing the European Champions' Cup is amazing. It's just for a few teams. **Very exclusive.** Very VIP. You feel like one of the lucky ones to be there. It's really great that you have the opportunity to join this event through an online Championship."

They finished first in their group. The format (playing until the very end, always with a chance) suited them perfectly.

"When you go to other tournaments they are open and longer. The Champions' Cup is just three days, very concentrated. And it's not only for Europeans: you see some of the very best players in the world."



## Two Vickys

Vicky has been a member of the WBF hospitality staff since 2001 and of the EBL hospitality staff since 2023.

So there's the Vicky at the **hospitality desk** of international championships: warm, multilingual, loving every moment of connecting with players. "I love this job. Meeting people, talking several languages..."

Does she mind not playing when she's working?

"I love to play, but being at hospitality... I love it so much that I don't mind. When playing, I am more stressed. Every time I play I get so tired afterwards. At hospitality it's easier, less exhausting. More social."

And then there's the Vicky **at the table**. The competitor. The one her teammates know plays to win.

"She wants to kill you when you play!" they say.

**Two Vickys. One pair of high heels.**

**OPEN TO PLAYERS  
FROM ALL OVER  
THE WORLD!**

EUROPEAN WINTER  
**OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP**

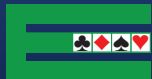
EUROPEAN WINTER  
**MIXED TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP**

EUROPEAN WINTER  
**SWISS CUP  
OPEN BAM  
OPEN PAIRS  
MIXED PAIRS**



# **EUROPEAN WINTER TRANSNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**— PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC · 10 - 19 FEBRUARY, 2026 —**



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## EVENTS

- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP**  
10 - 17 February
- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**MIXED TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP**  
15 - 19 February
- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**SWISS CUP**  
13 - 17 February
- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**OPEN BAM**  
15 - 17 February
- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**OPEN PAIRS**  
15 - 17 February
- \* EUROPEAN WINTER  
**MIXED PAIRS**  
17 - 19 February

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NON-TITLED PL.	€ 390	€ 270

### COMBINED ENTRY INCLUDING OPEN TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP + SWISS CUP + OPEN BAM + OPEN PAIRS

	NON-LOCAL*	LOCAL*
TITLED PLAYERS	€ 560	€ 400
NON-TITLED PL.	€ 340	€ 240

### COMBINED ENTRY INCLUDING MIXED TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP + MIXED PAIRS

	NON-LOCAL*	LOCAL*
TITLED PLAYERS	€ 300	€ 210
NON-TITLED PL.	€ 180	€ 130

### SWISS CUP ONLY

	NON-LOCAL*	LOCAL*
TITLED PLAYERS	€ 300	€ 210
NON-TITLED PL.	€ 180	€ 130

### OPEN BAM OR OPEN PAIRS OR MIXED PAIRS

	NON-LOCAL*	LOCAL*
TITLED PLAYERS	€ 180	€ 130
NON-TITLED PL.	€ 110	€ 80

\* Local players are players from **Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia**.