

70th ANNIVERSARY EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE



70th

EBL
1947-2017

Administering the Mind Sport Bridge
in Europe since 1947

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EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE
70th Anniversary

INTRODUCTION



It has been 70 years since the European Bridge League was created, just after the end of the Second World War.

If we look back over all those years, we can measure the progress that has been achieved.

The EBL started with 8 countries and has grown to 46 affiliated NBOs today.

The championships were initiated with some national Open teams and subsequently have been extended to include a Womens and then a Seniors Series.

Bridge for youth has been widely developed and includes now four Series together with mixed pairs.

The Open Championships, available to anybody, as this year in Montecatini, encompasses 8 different competitions, and allows players from all over the world to participate in our EBL event.

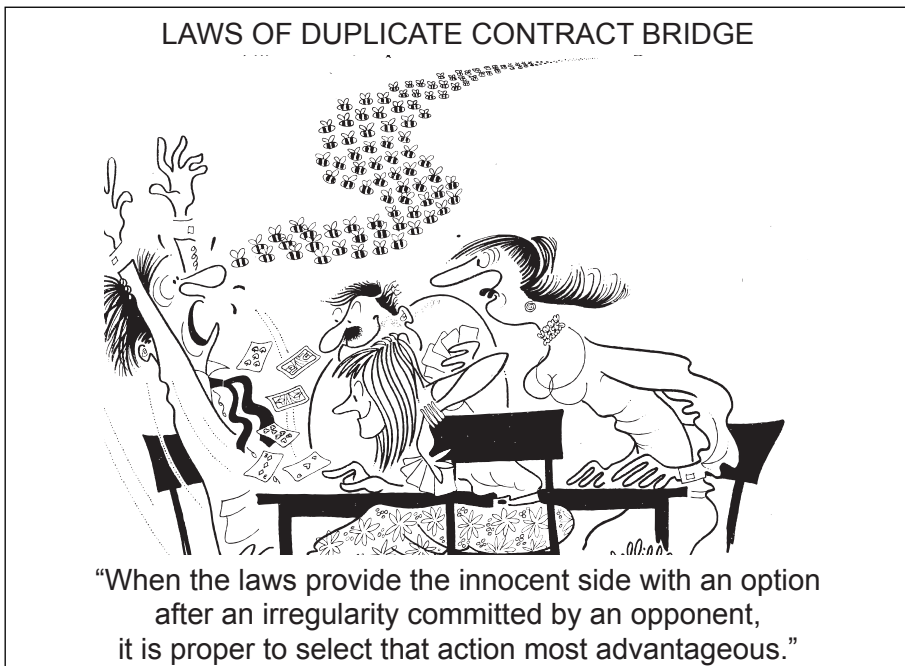
It has been possible to achieve this, step by step through these 70 years, thanks to enlightened leadership and loyal committed staff whose abilities and accomplishments continue to grow. All of them, coming together to share their ideas, their experience, their professionalism, their availability and their dedication have ensured the progress of our sport, while serving all European players.

Moreover, the EBL is also a great sporting organisation focused, day after day, on promotion, development, teaching, tournament direction, technology and the recognition of Bridge by the sporting, public, medical, academic and Olympic institutions.

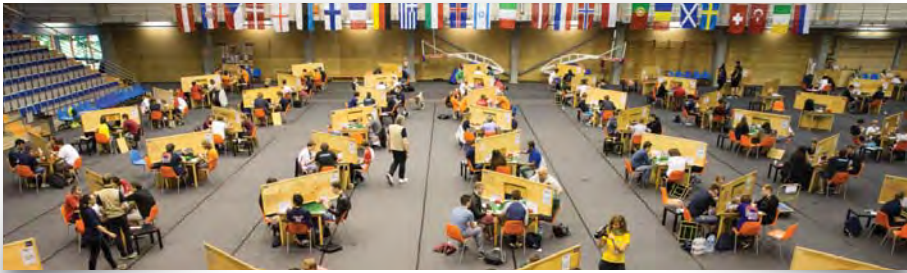
This complete diversity, supported by all the NBOs, has enriched the EBL and we are all united behind our common passion: Bridge.

Long life to the EBL!

Yves Aubry
EBL President



HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE



By Bill Pencharz

The **European Bridge League** (“EBL”) is the governing body of the Sport of Duplicate Contract Bridge in Europe. In this role it provides a wide range of services and support to European Bridge Federations and Bridge players.

Foundation and Development

The EBL was founded in 1947 in Copenhagen by the Bridge Federations of eight countries – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. At the same inaugural meeting the eight founding members of the League voted to dissolve the International Bridge League which had been established in 1932 and organised eight annual Championships in pre-World War II Europe. The founding meeting in Copenhagen was instigated by Herman Dedichen of Denmark who was appointed Honorary Secretary of the EBL. Anthonie J. E. Lucardie of The Netherlands was elected the first EBL President.

From its original eight founding countries the EBL now has a membership of 46 National Bridge Organisations. The membership grew steadily during the 1960s and 1970s with a leap in numbers during Jose Damiani's presidency (1987-1995) following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 which liberated Eastern Europe from state disapproval of card games.

The World Dimension

In 1948 the League, jointly with the Portland Club and the American Contract Bridge League, developed and circulated the International Laws of Bridge. Inspired by EBL President Baron Robert de Nexon (1951-1965) of France, the World Bridge Federation was formed in Oslo in 1958 by delegates from the EBL, USA and South America. Baron de Nexon was elected as first President of the World Bridge Federation ("WBF") and holds the distinguished record of being simultaneously President of the EBL and the WBF between 1958 and 1964.

In its updated Constitution (adopted in June 2016) the EBL is defined as Zone 1, "the geographical area (principally but not exclusively the Continent of Europe) designated by the WBF to that effect". Thus the parent (the EBL) has become subsidiary to the child (the WBF).

Technology and Regulation

At its simplest, all a Bridge Championship requires are tables, chairs and packs of cards. But life is not as simple as that. Events need to be organised – located, equipped and staffed.

And there is a darker side to the Game. There have always been a small minority of top players who will take an unfair advantage if given the opportunity to do so.

The history of European Bridge Championships over the last forty years is one of constant technical improvement, using technology to make the play better for the competitors and harder for the cheats.



In the 1970s Jaime Ortiz-Patiño (EBL Treasurer 1975-1983), a leading Swiss international and later President of the World Bridge Federation, was concerned about the behaviour of certain leading players. Aably assisted by Harold Franklin, the EBL Chief Tournament Director, he introduced Bidding Boxes (a Swedish invention) to EBL Championships. Then in 1979 at the Lausanne EBL Teams Championships he introduced (and paid for) Table Screens.

Computer scoring was also developed in the late 1970s (starting in France and now used universally), followed by Duplimate (dealing and duplicating machines) in the 1980s (invented and patented by Jannersten Förlag), symmetrical cards in the 1990s (the idea of José Damiani) and wireless scoring by Bridgemate (a Dutch invention) in 2005.

The Internet has enabled a large audience to watch Bridge Championships live and online. For once the technology was not developed in Europe – being the invention of the American Fred Gitelman and his company Bridge Base Online (“BBO”). BBO recordings have recently been used to determine whether certain international pairs were communicating illegally to each other.

EBL Championships

Eight European Teams Championships were held before the 2nd World War under the auspices of the International Bridge League. To date a further 45 Teams Championships have been organised by the EBL.

Before covering the Teams Championships in greater detail, mention must be made of other competitions – past and present – organised by the EBL.

The European Bridge League Junior Teams Championship, promoted by André Boekhorst, started officially in 1972, although there had been two “unofficial” Junior Teams events in Prague and Dublin. It had an “unofficial” early few years because the then EBL Executive Committee was reluctant to allow bridge to be associated with young people. To begin with it was a single event for teams under the age of 26, but has since expanded to four categories of “juniors” – Under 26 Open Teams, Under 26 Women Teams, Under 21 Teams and Under 16 Teams.

The European Open Pairs Championship was launched in 1976 and over the years was augmented with Women’s (promoted by Anna Maria Torlontano), Mixed (proposed by José Damiani) and Seniors’ Pairs (developed by Nissan Rand). The event was held in March of each year and benefited from the considerable sponsorship of a tobacco company.

The withdrawal of tobacco sponsorship in 1996 and another leading sponsor in 1999 put great strain on the finances of the EBL. To remedy the problem the EBL terminated the March Pairs Championships and replaced them with a larger Summer event – the European

Open Championships – held in June of every odd-numbered year. The concept of a European Open Championship was introduced by Panos Gerontopoulos (EBL Secretary 1995 - 2010) and developed into a reality by EBL President Gianarrigo Rona (1999 – 2010), starting with the Menton Championship in 2003.

The European Open Teams Championship (from 1932), the European Women's Teams Championship (from 1935) and the European Seniors Teams Championship (from 1995) are the blue riband events of the League. They have been held as far West as Killarney in Ireland, as far East as Beirut, Lebanon; as far South as Malta and as far North as Turku in Finland. Host countries have been widely spread across Europe with England and Italy staging the most (five each). However many more countries have been involved in Junior Championships, Champions' Cups, TD and NBO Seminars and many remain committed to hosting an EBL event in the future.



Participants of the 13th European Youth Pairs Championships held in Liepaja (Latvia) in July 2016

 **EBL** PRESIDENTS



THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRIDGE AND BIDDING SYSTEMS



By Dirk Schroeder

At the beginning of the twentieth century, bridge was the social game of intellectual and social elites. Throughout Europe and America, the conventions followed the English tradition following numerous publications on whist and other games.

Bridge as a **tournament game** developed at the end of the 1920s, after Vanderbilt had developed a scoring system and tournament rules. The competitive play then led to many players striving to invent better bidding systems.

The result of the Culbertson-Lenz-match in the early 1930s led to “**Culbertson**” with its honour trick count becoming the dominating system in the USA. Additionally, the publicity from this match led to America becoming the leading Bridge nation in the world.

The Culbertson ideas were also followed in Europe. However, in some countries, there were bridge experts with their own ideas; in England - the **Acol system** with the losing trick count, in France -

Albarran with “Longue d’Abord” (length first), the Swedes Koch and Werner with their 4 card length system and the Austrians Schneider and Reithofer with their 7-5-3-1-point count and 5-card length system with an artificial one club opening. With the East separated from the rest of Europe by the “Iron Curtain” after the Second World War, it has largely been forgotten that the idea of the strong club system was originally developed in Hungary in the 1930s.

Another phenomenon is worth mentioning - in the Jewish culture, mind sports were encouraged. This was evident not only in chess but also in bridge, and countries with large Jewish communities such as Holland and Poland became leading bridge nations. Germany, with its excruciating anti-Semitic policies, was cut off from the international bridge development. In Russia the communist party rejected bridge as a bourgeois game, so no bridge organisation was established. The other countries mentioned above were the most successful in the team European Championships, which began in the 1930s, each with a team sent by the national federation.

Following the conventions of the time of the intellectual and social elite, it was an unwritten rule that the evening rounds were played in the evening dress. The European Championships were regarded as a social event and the interaction between the players reflected the social conventions of the day.

The Second World War ended the rapid development of Bridge in Europe. For years after the war, people were busy with the elimination of the material and mental damage. When the team European Championships were organised again, they were dominated by the players and nations already known before the war. Initially the countries behind the Iron Curtain were excluded.

In the time that Europe was occupied with its reconstruction, the US Bridge Association (ACBL) developed into the world's leading bridge organisation.

Goren became established as the standard bridge system with 4-card suits and the 4-3-2-1 high card point count as well as conventions such as Blackwood and Stayman.

Matches between Europe, with leading players from various countries, and the USA were dominated by the Americans.

In the fifties, some “**artificial systems**” emerged, which tried to remedy the weaknesses of the natural systems by defining some bids with new meanings such as controls or special distributions. This development started in Italy and led to international successes over the next decades. The international domination of Italian Bridge during this period was not only due to the power of their system, which was not understood by their opponents, but also because the great captain Perroux was able to shape many extraordinarily talented players into a harmonious team.

The “**Blue Team**” won all the world championships from the mid-50s and ended the dominance of the US teams. In many talks with leading US players such as Howard Schenken, Charles Goren and Edgar Kaplan, I realised that the Americans never accepted the fact that the reason for the Italian success was the superiority of the players.

They believed the cause was the superior systems, the lack of information provided or even worse, they accused the European players of cheating.



*The Blue Team
Giorgio
Belladonna,
Pietro Forquet,
Walter Avarelli,
Mimmo D'Alelio,
Benito Garozzo,
Camillo
Pabis-Ticci*

The success of the Italians with their artificial systems led in America to the adaptation of the strong club-opening – with the **Schenken system** and **C.C.Weï's Precision club** with 5 card majors.

With the Americans unable to regain their former domination, the Texas millionaire Ira Corn decided to found and fund a professional team of the most talented young US players “The Aces”. This was the start of professionalism in tournament bridge – although since the 1930s many people had earned their living as bridge teachers or authors.

In the rest of the world the “Pandora’s Box” was opened and more and more artificial systems were developed.

There were two motivations for this:

1. Developing new ideas on how to get to the optimal contract.
2. Destructive systems that prevented the opponent from finding the optimal contract.

From the systems of those days I was most impressed by the “Monaco” relay system developed by **Ghestem**.



*The original
Aces:
Ira Corn,
Bobby Wolff,
Bobby
Goldman,
Billy Eisenberg,
Michael
Lawrence,
Jim Jacoby*

I was less enthusiastic about many other systems, because I felt their real aim was to keep the opponents unclear about the meaning of the bids and thus to win by denying information.

The vast variety of new ideas and systems placed great demands on the regulations and organisations to ensure that Bridge would be a sport with equal opportunities.

The authorities tried to establish rules on how to achieve this equality of opportunity and at the same time to find a way to make tournament bridge so uncomplicated that it could be understood by a wide audience. For many years, the Laws Commission has had a dispute between the supporters of complete system freedom and the regulators who wish to ensure that top level bridge remained understandable for the majority of club players so that the popularity of our game would not be affected.

Over the decades many regulations have been tried. The conclusion today that tournaments with a time limit can be most effectively run with strict restrictions on the allowed systems.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, in 1991 the EBL was able to welcome almost all European countries to the championships organised by the Irish Bridge Union in Killarney.

Since the 1960s, the activities of EBL and WBF have led to a proliferation of international championships. In addition to Team and Pairs Olympics, the WBF expanded the Bermuda Bowl with a Womens' and Seniors' event, and included a trans-national event.

Today there are European Championships for Seniors, Open, Mixed, Women and various youth divisions for Pairs and Teams.

Additionally, there are University Championships, the Champions Cup for National Club Champions and European Championships for Small Federations.

In the course of this development, the EC or Common Market Championships were organised for a number of years and then dropped, after the emergence of the countries from Eastern Europe.

Many national associations do not receive any financial support from their governments and often do not have enough funds to participate.

In the past, sponsors were very generous to bridge, including Dunhill, Philip Morris, Generali, Lavazza amongst many others. Nowadays, sponsors are not so plentiful and we need to recognise and be appreciative of those corporate institutions that support our wonderful sport – at whatever level.

ONLINE BRIDGE



By Sally Brock

Bridge has been my life since I was 18. In the 45 years since, many things have changed - three husbands, three children, countless bridge partners. One thing that hasn't changed is my passion for all things bridge, but now I am particularly passionate about [online bridge](#).

Of course, it can never take the place of the across-the-table game that we all know and love, but there is definitely a huge place for it in most people's lives. I spend a lot of my time urging people to try it – my generation tend not to be very technologically competent and there is something scary about trying complicated things with computers, but it isn't that hard (if I can do it!) and it is so worth the effort.

Online bridge when you're young

One of the problems with playing bridge when you're a youngster is that unless you live in London or another major city, it can be difficult to get around without your parents (speaking from my experience as a taxi driver to 2 kids...).

You probably need them to give you a lift to the local bridge club, or else if you play after school you may need them to drive you home.

Alternatively, maybe you only want to spend an hour or two playing (you mustn't forget that homework, although I/mine always managed to...) so you don't want to play a whole duplicate session.

Another possibility is that either you or your friend (potential bridge partner) can't make it to a scheduled session. Online bridge solves all of these problems.

If it is just you, you can cut into the online duplicate. If you want to play with a particular person, you can arrange to meet a partner at a certain time to play online, or even arrange a team match amongst your friends. You can play whenever you want, with whomever you want, for as long as you want...

Online bridge when you're not quite so young (old!)

Many people who get older take up golf – excellent exercise. However, as you get older still, golf can become a bit too much - or maybe you just need a winter hobby - that is when bridge really comes into its own.

Bridge is an excellent social tool. If you can play bridge you need never be lonely: you will always be able to find someone at your level who would like to play in the daytime, the evenings, go away for bridge weekends, or even for bridge holidays/cruises. If you are on your own you can always find a partner. However, as you get older, as with many things, it can become a bit of an effort to go out to the bridge club whenever you want to play. If you only can take the few steps necessary now to becoming competent at the online game, you needn't always go out.

At first you will probably not play as well. It takes a while to get used to bidding and playing online rather than with actual cards, and you may find you get distracted. However, you can play with and against robots until you get the hang of it, so there are no witnesses to your incompetence!

Online bridge for the serious player

Serious partnerships (should) put a lot of work into developing their bidding system. Having sorted out what that system actually is, the way to make sure you remember it all is to: practice, practice, practice! Even if you live next door to your partner, in order to practice properly you really need four people: which is so much easier to find online. There are no excuses; no traffic to get stuck in, no club duplicates at bad times and you can pack in so many more hands if you don't have to wait for other people. You can either play in an online duplicate (or against robots) or choose solely to practice bidding – which is what I tend to do with my serious partnerships...

Online bridge for teaching/coaching

Quite a large proportion of my income is derived from teaching people online. It works best for experienced players who have been playing the game for a while and feel that they want to move up a gear.

The client and I log onto BBO and play against robots, we also tend to communicate at the same time via Skype. We just play in the main BBO game, and whenever anything of note comes up we stop to discuss it. Because we are playing against robots we are not being anti-social in any way if we choose to stop to talk about a specific situation that has come up, or even to get a cup of tea/glass of wine.

In my view, this is by far the best way to improve; people learn how to deal with situations that actually arise rather than the rather artificial situations posed in most textbooks. It can be quite expensive to pay for a one-to-one face-to-face lesson, but an hour of my time is an hour of my time, so some people choose to play with a friend while I play with a robot, thus effectively halving the cost. One group even plays together as a four while I watch and comment. Of course, there is no travelling time or preparation time for me, so it can end up being quite good value for money.

As well as teaching, there is also the chance to coach people for specific events. As I write this I am preparing the English Under 26 women's team for the forthcoming European Championships. I have been in charge of the group for a while and will captain them in Samorin, Slovakia. As well as practicing in their partnerships, once a week we play a match on BBO and go through the hands on Skype afterwards – we'll see how an effective a tool it is in Slovakia!



Online bridge as a spectator sport

All the major championships, both national and international, are broadcast live on BBO. So when the English teams are playing in a world championship in, say, Chennai, you can log on to BBO and watch.

I personally think it is extremely entertaining. Maybe not something you do single-mindedly, but definitely something to have on in the background as you make dinner, watch TV etc.

It is reassuring to see what silly things some of the truly great players do... it certainly makes me feel better about my own inadequacies. All in all online bridge is a fantastic multi-faceted activity, and the BBO site an invaluable (free) resource; it is the future, so jump in now before you get left behind!



Television coverage of a Bridge match

HALL  FAME



**Benito
GAROZZO**

Italy



**Paul
CHEMLA**

France



**Geir
HELGEMO**

Norway / Monaco



**Nicola
SMITH**

England



**Sylvie
WILLARD**

France



**Bep
VRIEND**

The Netherlands



**John
HOLLAND**

England



**Apolinary
KOWALSKI**

Poland

BENITO GAROZZO



Benito was born in 1927 in Naples; at age six, he learned the concept of trick taking from his brother, who also taught him how to play chess.

During the second World War, he learned how to play bridge using a 1933 edition of a book by Culbertson.

Benito won thirteen world championship titles with the Italian Blue Team, starting in 1961 when he was added as a last minute substitute for the Bermuda Bowl. He played in regular partnership with Pietro Forquet up to 1972 and then with Giorgio Belladonna.

The record of his playing success on our website begins in 1961 with 17 Gold Medals straight in Team events, followed by a few Silvers and again Gold. His most recent podium finish was in the Open Teams of the European Open Championships in Ostende in 2013, where he won a Silver medal – at the age of 86!!

Benito plays on Bridge Base Online most evenings, with the username sillafu and he will be 90 years old in September 2017.

He has shared his thoughts on weak Twos elsewhere in this booklet.



PAUL CHEMLA



Born in 1944 in Tunis, Paul was a brilliant student, emerging from his studies with accolades of "ancien élève de l'Ecole normale supérieure lettres" (superior student) and "Agrégé de grammaire" (Professor of Grammar).

A member of the French Open Team since 1972, Paul has three Gold Medals from Open World Championships, three from European Open Teams and three from European Mixed Teams Championships, and a World Transnational Mixed Team event, in addition to many silver and bronze medals.

Paul won the European Open Pairs on three separate occasions, with three different partners, so it's no surprise that he also won the World Individual Championship in 1998.



*Paul Chemla
playing with
Omar Sharif*

GEIR HELGEMO



Born on St Valentine's Day in 1970, Geir is a professional bridge player who has represented Norway and Monaco in international events.

He has won multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in European and World championships, including the European Junior Teams in 1990, World Junior Pairs championship in 1995, the Rosenblum Cup in 2006, the Bermuda Bowl in 2007, European Open Teams in 2008.

He has won many ACBL titles and many prestigious international bridge tournaments, e.g: the Macallan Invitational Pairs in London in 1998 and 1999 and the Politiken World Pairs in 1997.

In 1996, Geir won Generali World Masters Individual and in the same year, he was voted Personality of the Year by the International Bridge Press Association (IBPA).



Geir (right) with his partner Tor Helness

NICOLA SMITH



Born in 1949 in London, Nicola is the daughter of Pat and Nico Gardener, both international players. She married Jonathan Smith in 1983 and they have two children, Katherine (1984) and Joshua (1987).

She taught bridge for 40 years at The London School of Bridge founded by her father. She was honoured by Queen Elizabeth with the award of the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1995.

Nicola has represented Great Britain and then England in 24 European championships from 1970 to 2016, winning eight gold medals (first in 1975, last in 2016), together with several silver and bronze medals.

She has represented England in eleven Olympiads between 1976 and 2016, winning silver in 1976 and gold in 2008 and 2012, and several further silvers. Nicola was the winner of world women's individual in 1994, with further silver and bronze medals in later editions.

Nicola was on the winning Venice Cup teams in 1981 and 1984, and recorded several further silver and bronze medals.

Nicola has won all national events in England several times including the prestigious Gold Cup in 2015.



Nicola (right) with her partner Sally Brock

SYLVIE WILLARD



Born in 1952 in Trebeurden (Brittany-France), Sylvie is the daughter of well-known French Tournament Director Irénée de Héredia.

She has been part of the French Women's team since 1983 and has won 3 Gold Medals in World Teams events and 7 Gold Medals in European Teams events, together with numerous Silver and Bronze medals.

In pairs events, Sylvie won the European Mixed Pairs in 2015, following earlier Silver & Bronze medals in mixed and women's events.

Winner of many more domestic and international championships, Sylvie has been ranked as the No 1 Woman Player in the world since 2016.

She is also a member of the WBF Executive Council and the WBF High Level Players' Commission.



Sylvie (left) with her partner Benedicte Cronier

BEP VRIEND



Bep is originally is from Andijk, on the North Western coast of the IJsselmeer. She was introduced to Bridge by her cousin while in her teens and she continued to play when she went to study in Amstelveen.

She and her husband, Anton Maas, still live in Amstelveen, appropriately on a street named Olympus.

First playing with the Dutch Womens' Team in 1974, in her career to date Bep has won 2 Gold, 7 Silver and 2 Bronze medals in European Womens' Team events, 1 Gold, 2 Silver and 4 Bronze in World Womens' Teams championships.

She has won medals of every hue in European Mixed Teams and in Womens' Pairs, a Gold and 2 Bronze at World Championships and 3 Gold at European Championships!!!

Of course, the medal she treasures the most is her Mixed Pairs Gold which she won in the 1st European Open Championships in 2003 with her husband.



JOHN HOLLAND



John Holland was born in 1950 in Burnley, Lancashire.

He worked as a purchaser and office Manager for over 20 years, and then became a computer programmer and eventually a full time professional bridge player.

He represented England on the Open team in 2006 and 2008 but it was in Senior Bridge he made his mark.

He was on the winning team in the D'Orsi Bowl in 2009, the World Senior teams (the Rand Cup) in 2010, and the Senior European Championships in 2014.

In addition to his three Gold medals he won a bronze medal in the Rand Cup in 2014 and a bronze in the Open Teams of the European Open Championships in 2005.

John married Michelle Brunner in 2008 and has won every major championship in England.



APOLINARY KOWALSKI



Apolinary was born in 1948 and qualified in Chemistry.

He first represented Poland in swimming competitions.

He represented Poland in Open and Senior teams over many years, winning Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Apolinary won the World Mixed Pairs in 1994 and several further medals in pairs events in European and World Championships.

He also won the Silver medal in the World Open Individual in 1998. He has won many Polish and international tournaments.



THE HALL OF FAME MEMENTO

The **Hall of Fame Memento** was commissioned by the EBL from a famous Polish artist, **Katarzyna Bulka-Matlacz**.

She graduated in 1991 from the Faculty of Sculpture in the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and in 1992 received a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and Art.

A creator of statuettes and mementos for such companies as AXA , Newsweek, Forbes, Credit Suisse, Bonnier, Rossmann, Kraftfoods, Katarzyna's sculptures are being shown in art galleries thorough Europe.

www.matlacz.eu



THE MONUMENTS MEN



By Mark Horton

Saving hands for bridge players around the world...

It was at the European Championships in Amsterdam in 1955 that Herman Filarski launched the **Daily Tournament News** that has been a quintessential ingredient of almost every subsequent event. You might like to take a look at those embryonic issues which were produced on an Olympia Typewriter:

www.bridgedailybulletins.nl/index.php/bridge-bulletins/jsdocumentation/article/article/6/41/index.php?option=com_flashmagazinedeluxe&view=magazine&id=266&tmpl=component

The following year it was Sweden's turn to host the Championships in Stockholm and **Eric Jannersten** was in charge of the 'Bulletin'. Although both these publications were warmly received, it was rumoured that the latitude allowed to correspondents did not sit well with the authorities and five years were to pass before publication was resumed via the English Bridge Union's presentation of Championship News in Torquay 1961.

Then and for many of the years that followed, journalists from across Europe would ply their trade at the Championships, typing up stories that would be faxed or telephoned to the newspapers they represented and subsequently displayed on the walls of the Press Room and they made many contributions to the Bulletins.

At one Championship in Italy while Terence Reese was checking in at his hotel the receptionist asked him if he would like a newspaper each morning. The following day he was overheard remonstrating at the reception desk - "Madam, when I asked for a newspaper it was The Telegraph, not De Telegraaf".

The Bulletins were modest in size - often consisting of no more than six pages - but the quality was high, with contributions from the likes of Terence Reese, Alan Truscott and José le Dentu.

By the end of the '80s it had become the norm for the Editor and his staff to use computers as opposed to typewriters and instead of being produced by Gestetner Duplicating machines the Bulletins were photocopied. The general format was A4 but from time to time experiments were made using different sizes of paper.

That meant that the Bulletins had to be printed 'off-site' which increased the risk that they would not be ready in time for breakfast. In Vilamoura in 1995 the Bulletin staff started work at 09.00 each day, only delivering the Bulletin to the Printer at 05.00 and four hours later they were back to start on the next issue.

For many years the Bulletins were 'black and white' which was a major headache when it came to photographs, which could not be easily reproduced using photocopiers.

With the advent of bigger and better machines capable of copying in colour things improved, but it was clear that the best results could only be obtained by using an off-site Printer.

In those early years, material was mostly gathered by sitting at the table ('bridge the old way') and many pairs believed that being watched was a portent of ill fortune which gave rise to the expression 'the Editor's Curse'.

Talking of Editors, the list of those who have been at the helm includes [Tannah Hirsch](#), [Rhoda Barrow](#), [Albert Dormer](#), [Svend Novrup](#), [Tony Lederer](#), [Derek Rimington](#), [Philip Alder](#), [Tommy Sandsmark](#), [Jos Jacobs](#) and [Patrick Jourdain](#).

One of Patrick's strategies was to ask some of the stars for a good hand at breakfast. At one Championship he alighted upon France's Alain Levy and asked him for 'a good hand' only to be politely informed by Alain that he didn't have one. Patrick repeated his request each morning and after receiving the same reply for the fifth day in a row he retorted, "in that case I'll take a bad one".

The arrival of the Internet meant major changes. Bulletins could be posted online as well as printed which meant that bridge players not only in Europe but also around the world could follow the Championships from the comfort of their own homes. That and the fact that results could be seen almost instantaneously meant that the number of journalists attending the Championships began to decline. Gone were the days when there would be numerous contributions from those working in the press room, which meant that the Editor now needed a number of assistants.

In 1997 when the Championships were held in Montecatini the concept of the 'homepage' was introduced, in which articles written in the language of the host country would be produced. These Italian pieces were entitled 'Cosa Nostra'.

In 2001 the advent of Bridge Base Online (BBO) revolutionised not only the way in which bridge could be presented but also made it possible for a writer to follow the play at more than one table.

This allowed for increased coverage, but came at a price - more reporters were needed. However, in due course it was realised that the solution was simplicity itself - the reporters could work from home, allowing the same extensive coverage of the event at a fraction of the cost.

As technology continued to advance it was decided in 2015 to stop producing printed copies of the Bulletins. If you want to see how the first of these turned out go to:

http://db.eurobridge.org/Repository/competitions/15Tromso/microSite/bulletins/Bul_01.pdf

By dispensing with a printed version of the Bulletin size ceased to be an issue and restrictions on the number of pages that could be produced were lifted.

Bridge enthusiasts Frank van Wezel and Hans van de Konijnenberg from the Netherlands have created a web site that is a collection of daily bulletins from bridge tournaments - and you can find most of the Bulletins from EBL events at: <http://www.bridgedailybulletins.nl/>

WORLD CHAMPION - BRIEFLY!!



By Anton Maas

These days when a bridge session is finished, we leave the playing room, grab our mobile phones from the directors' desk and within seconds we know our position. We see our results on all hands, the hand records and the frequency sheet of all the boards.

70 years have passed since the EBL was founded - how different bridge was at that time and even a mere 35 years ago.

I still remember quite well my first big tournament with **instant computer scoring**, the World Pairs Championships in Biarritz, France 1982. I played with Max Rebattu. Max was not my regular partner those days, but I was young and very confident and didn't see any reason we shouldn't become world champions. And we managed to do so! At least for a while.

Then, for the first time it was not necessary to add up all the scores yourself, the computer calculated this. I knew we did well. Would we have won a medal or not? Maybe we might even have won.

The results appeared on the computer screens. Not a full page as today but line by line. Max and I were on the first line! We were **World Champions**. Great, beer, wine (but no women, I just got married six months earlier!).

Almost an hour later I saw Chip Martel. The results from every board were posted on the wall and he was calculating his score (only the total score appeared on the computer screen).

Somehow I had an uncomfortable feeling. I walked over to Chip and asked: Something wrong Chip? Yes, he said. That's not the answer you like when you finished first. We compared scores and I realized something must have gone wrong indeed. His scores should be better than mine.

Hours and hours later it was official, we had finished second. You might think I could be bitter about this but that's not the case, because now I know how it feels to be a World Champion.

In the 35 years from Biarritz until now, bridge organisation has progressed beyond all recognition. Scoring is almost instantaneous now. On every board, pair by pair, all the results, all the leads etc are known immediately.

It's a shame. It's no longer possible to be a World Champion for just an hour!

TOURNAMENT DIRECTING THROUGH THE YEARS



By Fritz Babsch

The EBL was founded in 1947, succeeding the IBL (founded in 1932), which did not survive the war. The establishment of a European Federation was a great achievement, because Europe was still suffering from the consequences of the war.

I know this from personal experience: in the summer of 1947, I travelled by train to England, taking two days, with many detours and heavy bomb damage to be seen everywhere.

At this time, I had already started to play bridge!
I had found a German-language book about bridge in my grandfather's library and during the cold winter of 1947, I greedily read it by the light of a kerosene lamp.

Bridge literature was scarce in Austria and I did not find out about "duplicate bridge" for many years until I chanced upon a club in Vienna. By this time, the [World Bridge Federation](#) was in existence.

Even though I played very poorly, I was soon participating in the “Vienna Cup” - a teams event; at that time, Vienna bridge life was centred round Coffee houses and there I was confronted for the first time with the an elderly lady who had some little idea of the rules.

They differed only slightly from those in force today but most participants knew little of them. She was the only person in Vienna to possess a “rule book” and she ruled with an iron rod! It was considered very rude to demand to see a rule in the book but I did and she got me involved in scoring and directing.

The often poorly paid or even voluntary **Tournament Director** already had numerous tasks - he was the soul of every tournament, called the “Gofer” in Vienna. He or she was entrusted with the care of the equipment (playing cards, table cloths, boards, etc) and often had to mediate between the players and the local equipment holder.



There were pairs, teams and individual tournaments, with the Tournament Director always “on the run”. Scoring was manual; pairs tournaments with even table numbers were played with simultaneous and relay table. This resulted in occasional tournaments finishing half way through - the TD had forgotten the relay table!

Travel to foreign events was not common – therefore any outside developments remained unknown to us in Austria.

Smoking was everywhere, but no one complained about it. Non-smoking tournaments were short-lived! The transition to smoke-free tournaments would be a long and rocky road.

Anyhow, after playing outside Austria in a few events, I got a rule book and started to study the rules.

I soon found out about decisions on Revokes and if a player hesitated, his partner really needed to pass!! From then on, I began to observe the Tournament Director at events.

The renowned Vienna City Club wanted to organize a large **international tournament** in Vienna in 1972 and approached me to run the tournament, although I had never organised one before.

I said “Yes” and thus buried my career as a player. The Vienna Bridge Congress was a big hit for 20 years. Soon the event in Bled (then Yugoslavia) was offered to me and again I agreed, even though I spoke not a word of the language!

Sometime after starting as a Tournament Director, I met a German colleague, Joachim von Richthofen, who was working with frequencies.

Around 1975, we began to bring computers into scoring, requiring access to a mainframe and thus quite an expensive exercise. Despite much resistance, bidding boxes began to appear.

I organised numerous courses and seminars and in the process learned that not everyone is suited to be a TD, because not all “Rules” can fix something. “Those who cannot see blood, will not be a doctor!”

During my seminars, we occasionally filmed the candidate at work at the table and then played it back to them, sometimes provoking laughter, but also concern. It turned out that a good Tournament Director should not only have full knowledge of the rules but should also be a world-class player and a good psychologist; in many situations, if answering to a violation of the rules, will resort to (little white) lies.

However that in itself is a problem if good players, even if they are successful Tournament Directors, want to succeed in the game, the TD career will take second place. Therefore, the number of really good Tournament Directors is very limited.

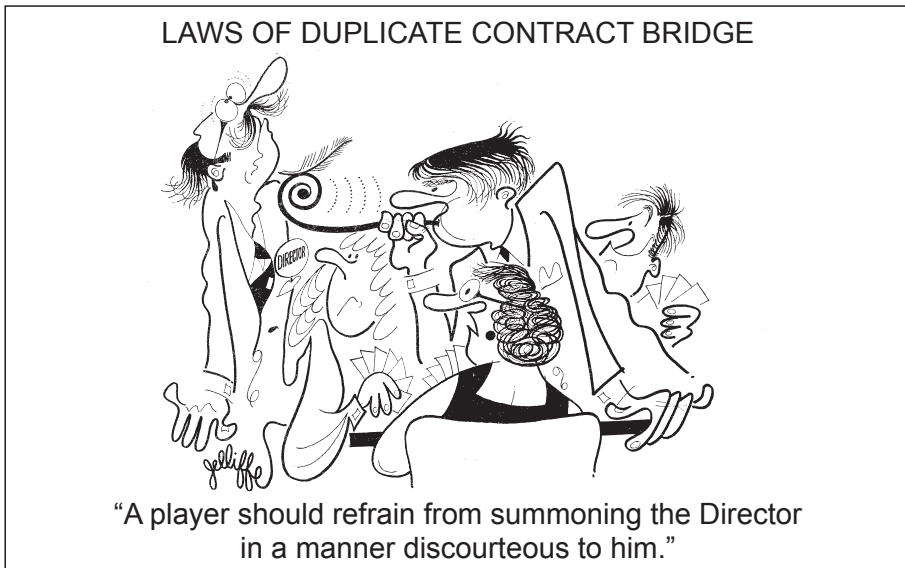
Tournament Director seminars were developed and many fine TDs qualified through those courses. A lot of participants were very experienced TDs in their home countries but some of them were nervous and weak in the practical exercises, others failed in the final written exam. The ten participants who passed with distinction at the first TD seminar went on to notable careers with the EBL or WBF; these included [Ton Kooijman](#), [Claude Dadoun](#) and [Max Bavin](#).

Some problems at tournaments can never really be settled satisfactorily, for instance “slow play”.

Trying to discipline these players rarely yields results, but they can frustrate opposition and TDFs alike. In cases of “hesitation” and other passing of “illicit info”, you will find all players will lie, it’s just a matter of degree. A recent phenomenon is the confirmation of incorrect entries in Bridgemates, leading to difficult problems, such as the awarding of two gold medals at the World Championships! Moreover some rules are naturally quite difficult to apply, because they are open to interpretation – other popular card games have far simpler rules!

Bridge rules tend to lag behind the fairly rapid development of the game.

Increasingly professionals compete with weaker players, and large fields of players with an unbalanced standard have not made the work of the tournament organiser any easier.



HUNGARY RETURNS TO THE SUNLIGHT



By Geza Szappanos

The formation of the [Hungarian Bridge Federation](#) in 1989 was permitted by an already thawing dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our formerly world class players and world class team had scattered and those who survived the Second World War were given no chance to resume competing. They tried to save the sport and pass on their knowledge to posterity in friendly clubs.

Incredibly, the State Security Agency, asked for an opinion on the application for registration, could not find an appropriate legal basis and proposed that the competent Minister refuse approval. The registration, planned simultaneously with that of the Chess Federation, did not take place. Even the disparaging note “gambling - played with cards” appeared on the application.

Many years had to pass before we dared go out in the sun. In 1963, the Municipal Council of Budapest registered the Budapest Bridge Federation (BBF) which had the authority to act in national matters, too.

We succeeded in enticing officers of the EBL and the World Bridge Federation to Budapest and their assistance reinforced the Hungarian strength along with the already active Polish federation. Belladonna & Garazzo came to Budapest to play and with that, we were on the map! State leaders of the time received Mr. Ortiz Patiño, President of the World Bridge Federation and they made more than enough promises.

We received tangible support when we held a Budapest round of the popular Philip Morris Cup boasting high prizes. With the excellent work of our organisers, the successful and highly appreciated European Youth Team Championships held here further boosted our international recognition. On one occasion, the whole Presidium of the EBL participated in the International Budapest Bridge Festival on Margaret Island. 287 pairs attended that Festival and the pairs tournament was also a round of the Philip Morris Cup. Following this, a Hungarian player was elected a member of the Executive Committee of EBL and this was subsequently repeated on two more occasions. We wanted to do more and more and EBL's help was increasingly welcome.

The printed Annual Bridge Calendar now part of the EBL website included all our domestic contests. The tournaments in the countryside were attended by competitors from countless neighbouring countries.

We actively helped to organise bridge contests in Romania and Czechoslovakia, providing technical as well as personal assistance. We initiated and organised the Cup of Socialist Countries. It had four, then five and, eventually, six participants.

As its popularity grew, it became the Friendship Cup, so Austria and Yugoslavia could also attend.

The competitions of the International Budapest Bridge Festival attracted, beside most of the best domestic players, the strongest field from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania, but we also had entrants from all neighbouring countries and from overseas, too. We were the first socialist country to attract the participation of Israeli players to our events. This was a huge diplomatic success and a real breakthrough.

The picture would not be complete if we failed to mention our two famous bridge writers **Róbert Darvas** and **Géza Ottlik**'s whose books and articles are treasured worldwide.

With the continued support of EBL and as a result of our own efforts, we managed to obtain the registration of the **Hungarian Bridge Federation** in 1989. This registration did not only mean the recognition of the **sport** but it was also a solid indication for the state administration that our inclusion in the register of sport federations means the same rights and obligations as those of competitors in other sports.

LAWS OF DUPLICATE CONTRACT BRIDGE



“It is not improper to act on information acquired by inadvertently seeing an opponent’s card.”

The freshly established Federation extended its commitments with renewed strength. EBL's Rules and Ethics Committee contributed to holding a seminar of several days for tournament directors of East and Central European countries which trained and examined directors giving them similar authority as EBL's central TD courses. Mr. Endicott personally held practices and training. As the President of the board of examiners, he offered participants a wealth of constructive criticism and practical advice. We can now meet successful graduates of the seminar at many official EBL events.

Jointly with EBL, the Hungarian Bridge Federation arranged the **first youth bridge camp** and, encouraged by its success, the **European Women's Bridge Meeting**. Both events brought tremendous success both to the Hungarian Federation and to EBL, the official organiser. Thus, it was obvious to invite the Hungarian Federation to organise the **World Youth Championships**. The new venue – Tata – the training centre of Hungarian Olympic athletes, too, was received with enthusiasm and general appreciation. So we left behind the era of being merely organisers in Central and Eastern Europe and we had bright chances of going even further.

The year 2016 finally brought the challenge we had expected for such a long time. We obtained the task of organising the **European Adult Championships**. Mentioning the widely appreciated success of the contests might be immodest on my part, but as an „outsider”, just a senior player, I feel that my jubilee address would be incomplete if I failed to report on this event. It was a compliment to EBL's decision makers, the Hungarian organisers and the excellent cooperation of directors alike.

I hope to enjoy EBL's work and organisation for many years to come and to this I want to wish lasting health and a good run of the cards.

WEAK 2♥ OR 2♠ OPENING



By Benito Garozzo

This convention is used in almost all the bidding systems.

I would like to suggest a method to use it in the most profitable way.

All opening bids show the HCP count and their characteristics. Weak 2 bids should be treated the same way.

The HCP of a weak 2 should be from 3 to 11 according to the vulnerability.

● Non VUL	●	3-10 HCP
● VUL vs non VUL	●	6-11 HCP
● VUL vs VUL	●	5-11 HCP

I do not like to open a weak 2 without at least Q 10 in the suit; this will avoid a situation where my partner would give a trick to the opponents by leading my suit.

Many experts suggest that you don't open a weak 2♥ or 2♠ with 4 cards in the other major.

I believe that unless you have 2 top honours in the other major and your 6 card suit is of bad quality, you should open.

Why? Because without 3 cards in the other major, opponents with enough points to open the bidding are unlikely to double.

Naturally since an opening of 2♥ or 2♠ could then have 4 cards in the other major, we should use a convention that will allow the opener to show it with a minimum or maximum hand.

Below is the convention I developed.

2♥-2NT

3♣ = max without 4♠

3♦ = with 4♠, min

3♥ = 6♥ min, without 4♠

3♠ = with 4♠ max

3NT = 6♥ with AKQ

2♠ - 2NT

3♣ = max without 4♥

3♦ = with 4♥ min

3♥ = with 4♥ max

3♠ = 6♠ min, without 4♥

3NT = 6♠ with AKQ

Over 3♣ = max with slam interest we can use 3♦ to ask for singleton or for 4♣ or 4♦.

2♥/♠ -2NT

3♣ - 3♦ Relay

3♥ = singleton somewhere - 3♠ Relay

3NT = singleton ♥/♠

4♣ = singleton ♣

4♦ = singleton ♦

3♠ = 4♣

3NT = 4♦

Cue = no singleton and no 4 card minor

BRIDGE PLAYERS - RIVALRY, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS



By Philippe Cronier

“A bridge player is a genius who plays with an idiot against two tricksters”

By definition, rivalry is the essence of our game, where symbolic battles determine the winner and the loser. No one involved wants to emerge as the “Loser”.

At bridge, we have a special relationship with a very unique character – our partner. Think about it, our discipline is the only one in any sport where our partner sits opposite us. In other disciplines where two play together, e.g. canoeing, rallying, doubles in tennis - partners are side by side and face adversity together.

With bridge, face to face is how it works within the field of play, closed off from the outside world. There is no doubt that we need to establish a special bond with the male or female with whom we will spend so much time. This is all the more true given that we are talking about not just a leisure activity, but a competitive one.

From Rivalry to Friendship

One of the main challenges for a bridge player is the choice of a partner. This choice is made in two stages - the first contact with the player that we will end up with will be as rivals. **Giorgio Duboin** tells us about his meeting with **Guido Ferraro**:

“It is 1977. Accompanied by my young partner at the time, I pushed open the door of the bridge club in Turin for the first time in my life and was soon seated. Our opponent? A young man pretending to be straight out of a Vittorio de Sica film, thin, sharp as a blade, dark eyes and gelled hair.

“Who are you and why are you here? This is a club for good players, not for novices!”

Guido lost out on the first board and conceded: “you are not a bad player, but you were very lucky!”

I regularly returned to the Bridge club. Little by little, Guido and I decided to play together, first in a few club tournaments, then in junior competitions. “We will make the Italian junior team!”

Over the following eighteen years, each fighting his corner over various issues, Giorgio makes a friend for life, an accomplice and partner in his greatest adventures.



Giorgio (left) and Guido

Dinners on the road, falling out over bridge and reconciling again, their relationship continues to grow. The two become very close and remain so, even when their paths take different directions temporarily, eventually linking up again on Team Lavazza.

The club – a magical meeting place !

Paris in the mid-1970s. Transport us to 68, boulevard of Courcelles, where steps lead to the PCO, the Bridge Club of Paris. Not everyone entering this legendary den is well received. The rule is simple: only the best need play.

Then three medical students met a few steps from the school of medicine, in the Vavin bridge club. **Michel Abécassis**, **Alain Lévy** and **Hervé Mouiel** have somewhat different backgrounds but they quickly recognise their mutual passion - and talent for bridge.

Crossing the Seine, they attempt to integrate into the world of the PCO. Soon, the life of the club - where, some days, they spend more than 20 hours -weaves very close links between them. Their friendship, based as much on success as on controversy, withstands everything and especially the passing of time.

Yet it takes twenty years for Alain Lévy and Hervé Mouiel to decide to play together. The relationship of the two champions at the table is one of the most volatile, but their friendship is so deep that after a few minutes of invective they are ready to settle down and resume quietly.

All the French team will remember a Homeric fight that marked their semi-final against Chinese Taipei at the Rhodes Olympiad in 1996. After a long obscure bidding sequence, Alain Lévy hesitates before bidding.

Hervé Mouiel bids anyway and the pair eventually reaches the grand slam.

The Chinese opponents called the TD.

“Yes, yes, of course, you are quite correct to reserve your rights”, replies Hervé. “But when you see my hand, you’ll see that my bid is really obvious.”

He then spreads his hand and Alain chokes with rage: “You’re really crazy! Not only do you have absolutely nothing, but you bid again after my hesitation! Really, it’s a psychiatrist you need!”.

Alain plays his hand well but cannot avoid going down. Both players come out in a very bad mood and Hervé, vexed, declares that he will pack his bags and return to Paris. Jean-Louis Stoppa, their captain, then takes the two players aside and tells them that he needs to play them later in the event. Our two fellows look at one another, hesitate... and eventually burst out laughing before going to sit down again to win their second Olympic title in a row!



*Alain
Levy
and
Hervé
Mouiel*

A thousand ways to succeed... and one way to fail

As admirable as these two examples are, they are far from being the rule. There are as many ways to manage a successful partnership as there are individuals, and there is no necessity to be friends in life to make a great partnership.

Pierre Jaïs and **Roger Trézel** never dined together. And there are many will know this story featuring **Terence Reese**, who played with **Harold Franklin** during one of the first European Championships in Brighton, in 1950. Reese was having lunch when a breathless official rushes up to tell him:

“Sir, Sir, there is a dreadful storm and your team-mate, Joel Tarlo, has just fallen into the water!”

“Mm... I see... And what about Harold?”

Let’s face it, rivalry between partners often exists, but partnerships that succeed have been able to keep it at an acceptable level. When both players are too competitive, the pair is less effective, and does not survive in the long term. In France, the most famous example of “brothers at war” is probably **Paul Chemla** and **Christian Mari**. But major champions from other countries often face the same problem: great personalities in life and indisputable champions, but often struggling to keep their partners.

In a few years, we will probably be offered virtual partners, brimming with artificial intelligence, able to console us for our bad bids or plays, while congratulating us when we do something clever. And well, when this happens, we will all stop playing. Because, whether we admit it or not, while we like bridge, we also enjoy the imperfect nature of our relationship to this alter ego who sits opposite us. They can be sometimes grumpy, sleepy, alert and focused – all completely unpredictable!

Human, in short.

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