

Irish Eyes

by Paul Lamford

This year's six nations championship at Rugby (a game with an oval ball for those not familiar with it) was won by Ireland for the first time in 24 years; indeed they performed the grand slam, beating all the other home nations. It was therefore appropriate that their bridge team should win this year's Lederer invitational team tournament. Their success was particular meritorious as they were without Hugh McGann and Tom Hanlon, the mainstays of their successes in 2004 and 2005.



Zia Mahmood

It was good to have Zia playing again, for the first time as World Champion, and I don't know whether he was tired from his exertions in Sao Paolo, but his partnership with David Bakhshi did not do as well as expected. He had played a lot of bridge in recent months – he was in the European Championship in San Remo after the US trials. A couple of times, also, Robson and Allfrey had a poor set, and Andy had offered a glass of champagne to anyone at his club, playing in the parallel Play with the Stars event, who performed better than him over the first 24 pairs. “How many bottles?” he was heard asking his director, Nick Boss, who ran the event at the ARBC.

The *Luck of the Irish* is a rather indifferent 2001 film, which features a lucky gold coin. The Irish needed this luck as early as the first match, where Priday and Teltscher faced a nasty defensive problem for the Presidents.

Cashback

Love all. Dealer West.

♠ KQ7	♠ J8432
♥ AQ2	♥ none
♦ K65	♦ A10832
♣ KQ97	♣ 843
	♠ 5
	♥ KJ109863
	♦ J7
	♣ A62
	♠ A1096
	♥ 754
	♦ Q94
	♣ J105

West	North	East	South
<i>Fitzgibbon</i>	<i>Priday</i>	<i>Mesbur</i>	<i>Teltscher</i>
1♣!	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

West's 1C was strong, 1H was natural and game-forcing, and 1NT showed 17-19, 2H showed six and 3H set the suit. Now some cue bids led to the very poor slam – but who needs Blackwood when you have your lucky coin?

North led a normal spade, and a couple of very strong players on Bridgebase Forum, where I posed it as a problem, would have failed immediately as they would have put in the ten as South. Indeed the whole event was broadcast on Bridgebase where there were almost 15,000 players online in a busy international weekend. Bernard avoided that trap by winning with the ace, but now had to decide whether North had the king of spades or the ace of diamonds. He had heard the rumours that the Irish sometimes bid slams off two aces (and even occasionally an additional trump loser) but thought it was an old wives' tale, and returned partner's suit. I think he was right; West is

much more likely to have something like QJx in spades when his partner has cued 3S, as he might find the king or ace, rather than a singleton, opposite. Anyway the swing was enormous, as West now claimed immediately, and the Presidents did well to almost draw the match despite that setback.



100%

It is rare that a contract that is only reached at one table is exactly 100%, but such was the case in the best-bid hand for the weekend. Indeed the two 6NT contracts bid in the event were almost 100% apart in their probability of success, but not quite (the Irish one above only needs diamonds 0-8 with the diamond void on lead, and that player holding the ace of spades, not to mention clubs playing for four tricks).

Keith Bennett

Love all. Dealer West.

♠ AKJ92	♠ Q6
♥ 10	♥ KQJ54
♦ 10654	♦ AK972
♣ AQ2	♣ K
♠ 5	
♥ A983	
♦ Q83	
♣ 98643	

West	North	East	South
<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Hackett</i>	<i>Rosen</i>	<i>Hackett</i>
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
4 NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

The key to this hand was to avoid playing in diamonds, which Keith Bennett did comfortably by never supporting the suit. After the normal 1S – 2H start, he upgraded his hand with the two red tens, and rebid a 15-19 2NT. After two natural slam tries by Rosen, he saw no benefit in playing in diamonds, and bid a natural 4NT. Rosen bid what he thought he could make, and Bennett claimed fairly quickly once he had done a bit of unblocking. Ireland bid the reasonable diamond slam, but their luck was out for once, and they lost 10 IMPs to Norway, who were smarting after a heavy first-round defeat.

Duck Soup

The previous hand won the best-bid hand award, but Brian Callaghan and I had to wait until round 7 for the best-defended hand. The figure 100 again played a part, as the defenders are stated in different sources to have at least 100 international caps between them. I am sure the defence was duck soup to them, but it had to be found. And it was only fair that this time Keith Bennett was the victim as he had won the best-bid hand prize.

E-W Vul. Dealer South			
		♠	K65
		♥	Q8
		♦	7632
		♣	Q1032
♠	A43	♠	QJ102
♥	KJ973	♥	1064
♦	AQ10	♦	J54
♣	A6	♣	K74
		♠	987
		♥	A52
		♦	K98
		♣	J985
West	North	East	South
<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Matheson</i>	<i>Rosen</i>	<i>Coyle</i>
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		Pass

A simple auction brought the Young Chelsea pair, who were in contention for second place, but not realistically the trophy, to the normal game. North avoided giving the tenth trick immediately with a pointed suit lead (even Zia's likely choice of the eight of hearts might have worked) and led a small club. West won and advance the king of hearts, as only a singleton queen was of any use to him. Both opponents ducked, and North won the next trump to play a second club. East won with the king and ran the queen of spades and both opponents ducked smoothly. Now, technically, declarer should switch to diamonds, but he repeated the spade finesse, and North now won. There was no further entry to dummy, and declarer was one down.

The other team to disappoint was Norway, who included three World Champions and a strong sponsor who is the current holder of the European Mixed Teams title. They only really looked the part when beating the winners convincingly, and when Young Chelsea's heavy loss to them ended the latter's interest in the event.

Simple Squeeze

In the following hand, a Grotheim on the top of his form might have made the contract. Certainly a lot of the clues were there.

Game All. Dealer East

♠ A6		
♥ A9753		
♦ AQ2		
♣ 987		
♠ T3	♠ J9742	
♥ KJ106	♥ Q8	
♦ K8743	♦ T6	
♣ A3	♣ QJT4	
	♠ KQ85	
	♥ 42	
	♦ J95	
	♣ K652	

West	North	East	South
<i>Sandqvist</i>	<i>Grotheim</i>	<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Tundal</i>
1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
All Pass		2♣	3NT



Grotheim seems to share Brian Callaghan's high regard for aces, and stretched to overcall a 15-17 NT as North, and was soon in game which required precise defence to beat it. East led the queen of hearts, ducked all round, and a second heart, again ducked. Now West could have set up a third heart to go with the two club tricks that E/W must make, but did not know the layout and exited with a diamond to South's nine. Declarer led a spade to his ace, and could now have made the contract by ducking a club to East; the defence can exit with a spade to South, but declarer now takes a diamond finesse and ducks a second club. East will be squeezed in the black suits when North's two red suit winners are cashed. Instead Glenn exited from the North hand with a heart and could no longer make the contract, when the defence just waited for their five winners. Should declarer have found the winning line? Well West is marked with the ace of clubs, so I think so, but it would have been a fine piece of card-reading.

Glenn Grotheim

Endplay Either

The best-played hand was also a candidate for the best-defended hands at some tables, and a missed opportunity at another:

N-S Vul. Dealer East

♠ 106	♠ AJ8432
♥ QJ8	♥ K
♦ AKJ76	♦ Q5
♣ J83	♣ AQ95
	♠ Q5
	♥ A952
	♦ 2
	♣ K107642
	♠ K97
	♥ 107643
	♦ 109843
	♣ None

West	North	East	South
<i>Furunes</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Austberg</i>	<i>Cooke</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	1♠	Double	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

Cameron Small, for the TGR Super League Winners, contented himself with a game-try on the North cards which Cooke was quick to decline (indeed he would have folded if that had been an option). East led a diamond and West won and switched to the ten of spades to the jack, to queen and king. A heart to the jack and ace and a second trump was won in dummy with the nine. Now Small ruffed a heart and exited with the queen of diamonds to the king. West was endplayed; a heart or diamond is clearly fatal, so he exited with a club. Small covered and pitched a diamond from dummy to endplay East for nine tricks.



**Nick Fitzgibbon and
Tommy Garvey of Ireland**

When David Bakhshi was North, he just bid game when Zia raised, and East, Andrew McIntosh, for the Gold Cup team, raised the stakes by doubling. Again East led his singleton diamond, and West, Nick Sandqvist, won and continued with the king and jack of diamonds, fatally in theory. Now North ruffed with the jack and went off. The winning line was to ruff with the ace, cross to dummy with the king of trumps, and discard the king of hearts on a diamond. This line succeeds if the opposing trumps are 2-2 or if West has Qxx.

Brian Callaghan gave a well-received talk about the best play and bidding awards at a closing ceremony, where LMBA President Bernard Teltscher presented the prizes to the winners. The line-ups and final scores:

- **President's Team:** Bernard Teltscher, Tony Priday, Victor Silverstone, Chris Dixon, William Coyle, John Matheson
- **Ireland:** Tommy Garvey, John Carroll, Adam Mesbur, Nick Fitzgibbon
- **TGR Super League Winners:** Frances Hinden, Mike Scoltock, Martin Garvey, Jon Cooke, Graham Osborne, Cameron Small.
- **Gold Cup:** Janet de Botton, David Burn, Nick Sandqvist, Artur Malinowski, Jason & Justin Hackett, Andrew McIntosh
- **Holders:** David Bakhshi, Andrew Robson, Alexander Allfrey, Zia Mahmood
- **England:** Espen Erichsen, Tom Townsend, David Gold, Nick Irens, Norman Selway, Simon Cope
- **Norway:** Rune Hauge, Tor Helness, Glenn Grotheim, Ulf Tundal, Jon Egil Furunes, Per Erik Austberg
- **YC Knockout:** Richard Hillman, Jon Green, Keith Bennett, Neil Rosen

		FINAL TABLE									
No	vs team:	IRE	ENG	YOU	TGR	GOL	PRE	NOR	HOL	TOTAL	RANK
3	IRELAND		46	39	36.5	28	31	18	51	249.5	1
6	ENGLAND	14		28	49	51	46	37	6	231	2
8	YOUNG CHELSEA	21	32		41	41	44	7	43	229	3
7	TGR SUPER LEAGUE	20.5	11	19		45	23	44	42	204.5	4
4	GOLD CUP	32	9	19	15		42	48	39	204	5
1	PRESIDENT'S TEAM	29	14	16	37	18		42	47	203	6
2	NORWAY	42	23	53	16	12	18		19	183	7
5	HOLDERS	9	54	17	18	21	13	41		173	8

The popular 'Play with the Stars' parallel event for the Teltscher Cups was held at the Andrew Robson, Roehampton and Hurlingham Bridge Clubs. Pairs played the first 24 Lederer boards on the Saturday and then scored up as teams-of-four with the top Lederer pairs in their direction, which this year were Zia Mahmood and David Bakhshi for the Holders, and Adam Mesbur and Nick Fitzgibbon for Ireland.

The winners were: North-South: Juliet Scott & Aline Sandberg (Hurlingham BC) on +32 and East-West: Patti Gamble & Denis Bennett (Andrew Robson BC) on +43 IMPs. Any club wanting to hold a heat of this fun event next year, or for any details of next year's event, contact Stefanie Rohan at the LMBA (stefanie@metrobridge.co.uk).

Thanks are due to Barry Rigal for his excellent commentary, ably assisted by David Bird and Ian Payn, Brian Callaghan and Mike Graham for finding interesting hands and Gordon Rainsford for photographs and the Young Chelsea Bridge Club for providing a free venue.