

London Sevens

by Paul Lamford

Last year's London Rugby Sevens at Twickenham attracted 80,000 people and made the Guinness Book of Records for the most spectators dressed as superheroes!

The attendance at Young Chelsea for this year's Lederer was not quite as large, but the presence of two players active on the London scene, Zia, who held the record of seven wins and Andy Robson, who was one of his nearest challengers on six, meant that thousands logged on to watch the action on Bridge Base. Throw in many other top



players including the ubiquitous Victor Silverstone, who had also won the event six times, and it was clear that there was going to be some good bridge.

The defending champions, Ireland, were sadly missing, because the event clashed with the Irish Camrose trials. However, a strong Welsh team, a composite from the all-Welsh final of the Spring Fours, ensured some representation from another home country, and the Presidents Team had the Scots, Coyle and Matheson.

Indeed, attempts to get Italy or Sweden to play had faltered in the months up to the event, and it would have been nice to see the likes of Fantoni and Nunes; maybe next year. There were plenty of foreign internationals anyway, including the 2007 Bermuda Bowl winner Erik Sælensminde and the 2009 winner Zia Mahmood. There was a tough defensive hand as early as match one:

Andrew Robson

Ruff and Tumble

Love all. Dealer West.

	♠ KJ10962	
	♥ K106	
	♦ K	
	♣ J92	
♠ AQ8		♠ 74
♥ QJ874		♥ A52
♦ AQ85		♦ 764
♣ Q		♣ K7543
	♠ 53	
	♥ 93	
	♦ J10932	
	♣ A1086	

West	North	East	South
<i>Salisbury</i>	<i>Sandqvist</i>	<i>Tedd</i>	<i>Charlsen</i>
1♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	Rdble	3♥	3♠
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Dble	All Pass	

Two rooms reached the pushy Four Hearts by West; Salisbury was doubled. Indeed, North seemed to do a lot of bidding on an 11-count! Zia was in Four Hearts against Cliffe and Burn.



Zia Mahmood, watched by a fan

Against Salisbury, Sandqvist led the king of diamonds. Declarer won and exited with the queen of clubs, won by South, who naturally enough led the jack of diamonds. Salisbury covered, and North had to discard to beat the contract. When he ruffed and exited with a club, Salisbury could ruff, run the queen of hearts, and had just enough entries to establish the long club and enjoy it for +590.

Burn did better by exiting with the five of spades instead of leading the jack of diamonds, and Zia put in the eight. North won with the nine, and now exited with a spade, fatally, and Zia had ten tricks. A club would have been fatal as well – North gets endplayed, forced to lead a spade or allow the long club to be developed. However, North can exit with a heart, playing his partner for the nine, and declarer has no way home.

Unlucky Slam

Zia was very unlucky in the second round when he and David Gold bid an excellent slam against the Olympiad Gold Medallists.

Choice of Clubs

E/W vul. Dealer West.

	♠ 83	
	♥ 87	
	♦ AQ752	
	♣ J954	
♠ 764		♠ QJ1092
♥ K54		♥ J109632
♦ 9864		♦ K3
♣ QT8		♣ none
	♠ AK5	
	♥ AQ	
	♦ J10	
	♣ AK7632	

West	North	East	South
<i>Stockdale</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Zia</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠*	Pass	4♣*
Pass	4♠*	Pass	6♣

David Gold modestly told me that the methods here were Zia's idea. I think South's rebid showed 20-22. South would have gone through Kokish, 2H, with 23-24 and North would relay with Two Spades to find out whether South had hearts or balanced. David Gold's 3S was a slam-try in a minor, and Zia's 4C was optional Keycard Blackwood. If North liked his hand he would show the number of keycards he had, otherwise he would bid 4D. So, North's 4S said he liked his hand and had one key card, and Zia's 6C was a logical choice. The operation was a success but the patient died. West led a spade, and Zia won, tested the clubs and tried the diamond finesse, conceding one down when neither behaved. A 90% slam had failed.

Bakhshi and Forrester had an invitational auction with less science. North raised a similar 2NT to 4NT, and South declined, perhaps having already upgraded his hand to 23-24. West, Barry Myers for London, found the lead of the eight of diamonds; declarer played 10, and East won with the king. Now Frank To had a tough choice of major suit switch, but guessed wrong to lead the queen of spades. The longer major would have worked better here, but partner could have a card in either, and the queen of hearts will not be enough. Forrester had no problems giving up a club, making eleven tricks.

Guess Who?

N/S vul. Dealer South.	♠ 1054
	♥ K10974
	♦ 73
	♣ Q109
♠ AQ96	♠ J83
♥ 3	♥ 2
♦ QJ2	♦ K9654
♣ K5432	♣ AJ76
	♠ K72
	♥ AQJ865
	♦ A10 8
	♣ 8

West	North	East	South
<i>Malinowski</i>	<i>Priday</i>	<i>de Botton</i>	<i>Teltscher</i>
			1♥
Dble	3♥	Dble	4♥
Pass	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

Artur Malinowski won the best-played award on the above hand. Indeed the play was simple, but his reasoning was excellent. After the normal start of 1H – (Dble) – 3H (a couple of Norths bid 4H which tempted South to press on to 5H – which Shields and Denning for the Spring Fours took for 800. Janet de Botton made a responsive double on the East hand and South bid a normal Four Hearts; when this came round to Janet

de Botton, she tried again with 4NT. Myers, for London, after a similar start to the auction bid Four Spades, but declarer was forced to go one off on the club lead, either sustaining a ruff or losing control.



Artur Malinowski

In 5C, North, Friday, led the king of hearts and switched to a spade, which cleared up any doubts in that suit. West won the king with the ace, then played the king of clubs and finessed the jack for +400. Why did he do this? For two reasons. If South had a doubleton club, he would have been less inclined to go on to Four Hearts, and, also, North might have led or switched to a club with a doubleton. With Qxx he was never leading one. And given that the finesse was around 50% with the drop around 52% at the start, anything to tilt the balance was enough.

David Burn was seen mumbling after this award: "Years ago you needed a brilliancy to win the best-played hand in the Lederer. This year it goes to a simple finesse!"

The heading Guess Who? was a two-player party game invented in England in 1979. I am sure Artur would have enjoyed it.

We did not have to wait long for the best bid hand, and as Seven is the theme of this article, it is appropriate that the only pair to bid and make 7NT should get the award. Especially as Martin Garvey and I, the judges, would have given it to Zia and David Gold for their earlier auction to an unsuccessful 6C, had it not been for the following hand:

Grand Opening

The opening bid was the key to success here:

E/W vul. Dealer East.	♠ Q	
	♥ 10643	
	♦ 654	
	♣ QJ943	
♠ K97654		♠ A1082
♥ AQ9		♥ K7
♦ A72		♦ K83
♣ K		♣ A1085
	♠ J3	
	♥ J852	
	♦ QJ109	
	♣ 762	

West	North	East	South
Zia	Justin	Gold	Jason
		1NT	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3♠*	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♥	Pass
7NT	All Pass		

There is a bit of a myth that Zia is a law unto himself in the auction, but he showed that he could bid constructively on this hand. However, it was Gold's judgement that made it all possible. 1NT was 15-17 – both the excellent Richard Pavlicek hand evaluator (at <http://www.rpbridge.net/xhe1.htm>) and the K&R hand evaluator (at <http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/cgi-bin/knr.cgi>) rate East's hand as over 15 points, the former rating it 16.

Zia transferred to spades and David Gold re-evaluated again, breaking with 3S. He did have a super-break of 3C available, showing a superb hand for spades, so he was limited by failing to do that. After two cues, West bid RKCB for spades, then asked for



specific kings that had not been previously cued. East showed the king of hearts, and Zia thought he could count six spades, three hearts, two diamonds and two clubs, and indeed was able to claim when spades broke 2-1. It would have been a travesty if he had suffered another 3-0 break in a ten-card fit.

Zia and David Gold receive their award for the best bid hand

Four Queens

E/W vul. Dealer East.

	♠ AJ7	
	♥ K94	
	♦ AK1093	
	♣ A8	
♠ Q5		♠ 962
♥ 762		♥ QJ85
♦ 654		♦ Q72
♣ Q9642		♣ 1053
	♠ K10843	
	♥ A103	
	♦ J8	
	♣ KJ7	

West <i>Smith</i>	North <i>Sandqvist</i>	East <i>Brock</i>	South <i>Charlsen</i>
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2D
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Neither Nicola Smith nor Sally Brock look old enough to have won World Championships a quarter of a century apart, but the excellent programme confirmed their successes in 1981, 1985 and 2008. They needed all their experience to break this seemingly impregnable slam by Thomas Charlsen. North's 2C was an artificial game force and 2NT showed a three-card spade raise. This was followed by Key Card Blackwood to reach the good slam. Nicola led the six of hearts, consistent with her actual holding, but also consistent with J76, J876 or J8762. Sally defended well by putting in the queen when dummy played low, and Charlsen took his normal line in spades of low to the ace, followed by running the jack, so that he could pick up Q(9)xx with East. Nicola won and continued with the seven of hearts, and Charlsen decided to believe Sally. At this point he had no idea that diamonds could be established with one ruff. When he put in the nine of hearts it was all over, and an unbeatable slam had been taken off. Some commentators on Bridge Base thought Nicola would not lead from the jack of hearts against a slam, but when you look you will see that the defenders have all four queens, so they might be pushed to find a safe lead. They had to lead some suit after all, and Jxx(x) might well have been the least evil. This defence earned Nicola and Sally the best defended hand. As Tony Friday said at the closing ceremony, "Never trust a woman!"



Nicola and Sally receiving their prize for best-defended hand from Mike Hill

Some thought the awards this year were for relatively low-key performances, and the judges, Paul Lamford and Martin Garvey, were indeed looking for brilliancies but a few chances went begging. Andy Robson had an opportunity on this deal:

Treble Chance

Love all. Dealer West

	♠ AK95	
	♥ K98	
	♦ A9654	
	♣ A	
♠ 1062		♠ QJ7
♥ 10		♥ 542
♦ QJ87		♦ K3
♣ K6432		♣ QJ975
	♠ 843	
	♥ AQJ763	
	♦ 102	
	♣ 108	

West	North	East	South
<i>Justin</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Jason</i>	<i>Robson</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

Many pairs were in Six Hearts, and on a minor suit lead there are enough entries to establish and enjoy the diamonds. Justin Hackett found the most testing start, a spade, and Andy won and ducked a diamond. East won and returned a second spade, perforce won in the dummy. Andy won and cashed two rounds of hearts, fatally, as the hearts



were 3-1 and the diamonds 4-2. The correct line, I believe, is to cash the ace of diamonds (you have no chance on a 5-1 break) and ruff a diamond high. Now they are known to be 4-2, and when you cross to the nine of hearts, you know the trumps are 3-1 as well. Now you can fall back on your last chance that spades are 3-3 by ruffing a diamond high, crossing to another heart in dummy, throwing a spade on the long diamond, ruffing out the spade, and finally using your ace of clubs to enjoy the thirteenth spade. So, the third, unlikely, chance would have worked. An almost complete dummy reversal with three ruffs in South! "Very disappointing," was Andy's comment about missing the line.

Stefanie Rohan, the organiser, had judged well to put the All Stars against the Gold Cup holders in the last round, as they turned out to be joint leaders, and Forrester-Crouch v Zia-Gold was the table which attracted the big crowd to Bridgebase – over 1200 spectators when I logged on.

Justin Hackett

The following hand was a fascinating clash between Zia and Forrester, with the latter coming out on top, as he did in the event as a whole. A big win in the last round gave the Gold Cup team a clear victory, allowing Andy to equal Zia's record of seven wins.

Power of Ten

Game all. Dealer East

	♠ KJ64	
	♥ AJ1084	
	♦ Q	
	♣ KQ5	
♠ A103		♠ Q952
♥ none		♥ KQ9763
♦ AKJ732		♦ 4
♣ AJ94		♣ 108
	♠ 87	
	♥ 52	
	♦ 109865	
	♣ 7632	

West	North	East	South
<i>Zia</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Crouch</i>
		2♥	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3NT	Pass		

2H was a standard weak two in the free-wheeling style that Zia prefers, and 2NT was an enquiry. The 3C response was another Zia idea, showing either a good weak two or a bad weak two. No doubt Zia could have asked again, but instead chose the final contract. Perhaps he would have been interested in playing in hearts opposite ♥AKQxxx, as the lack of an entry to dummy could prove fatal. With an awkward lead, Tony Forrester chose the king of clubs, and Zia won and fired back a club, which Forrester ducked. In dummy for the first and possibly last time, Zia took the diamond finesse as that was the most likely source of tricks. Forrester won and faced an



Tony Forrester

awkward problem. Exiting with the jack of spades would have worked, but he cashed the queen of clubs (on which dummy threw a heart) to avoid being thrown in with it, and then exited with the jack of spades. This should have been fatal. Zia put on the queen, and needed to unblock the ten from hand. Declarer can get home in two ways then, by leading the king of hearts, and when North wins and returns the jack of hearts, declarer ducks and North is endplayed. Or Zia could cross to the ace of spades, cash the minor suit winners and exit with the three of spades. If that were the ten, North would duck it (!), but as it is declarer must come to his ninth trick in the majors. Zia did not know the diamonds were 5-1 at this time, but that jack of spades exit might have given him a clue to the layout. Another candidate for best-played hand went begging, and we won't name the defender who switched to the queen of diamonds from North early in the play. I think that declarer was the only one to make this difficult 3NT.

Final Scores:

- 1 Gold Cup Winners (Allfrey, Robson, Forrester, Crouch, Bakhshi) 251
- 2 Olympiad Gold Medallists (Smith, Brock, Senior, Dhondy, Brown, Stockdale) 230
- 3= All Stars (Zia, Gold, Saelensminde, Gillis) 223
- 3= Crockfords (de Botton, Malinowki, Hackett, Hackett, Sandqvist, Charlsen) 223
- 5 Shapiro Spring Fours (Tedd, Salisbury, Denning, Shields) 202
- 6 London (Burn, Cliffe, Myers, To) 190
- 7 Young Chelsea (Hillman, Bennett, Rosen, Jones, Bowdery) 185
- 8 Presidents' Team (Teltscher, Priday, Silverstone, Dixon, Coyle, Matheson) 176

There was a parallel Play with the Stars event, for the Teltscher Trophies, at Andrew Robson Bridge Club, Hurlingham Bridge Club and Roehampton Bridge Club. The winners were N/S: Shirin Moazed and Paul White (Hurlingham) (teamed up with the Olympiad Gold Medallists) and E/W: Pip Railing and Martin Jones (ARBC) (teamed up with Zia Mahmood and David Gold). The latter were unable to attend but a beaming Shirin Moazed of Hurlingham BC collected her trophy from Bernard Teltscher the LMBA President.



Shirin Moazed

Mike Hill, LMBA Chairman, presented the prizes, and the generous sponsor, Bernard Teltscher, gave a short speech. They thanked the hard-working organiser Stefanie Rohan and all her helpers, the Young Chelsea Bridge Club, and the Bridgebase team including Roland Wald for their coverage.



Andrew Robson, Alexander Allfrey, Tony Forrester and Peter Crouch