

The Swedish team this year is Mikael<sup>2</sup> x Simon<sup>2</sup>. The team has high hopes for this tournament. The goal is to top the result of last year when we finished among the top four in the round robin and qualifying for the final cup play. Form seemed to be fine, judging from the result on the important tournament on Sunday. But Monday was another day and the question to be answered was if the team had stamina to perform well several days in a row.

Our first opponents were the Czech Republic, who decided to show us that a top ranking will not be served on a plate. This was the first board of the White House Juniors this year:

Match 1 – Board 1

	♠ T73	
Board 1	♥ -	
N/-	♦ AJ9764	
	♣ K843	
♠ K862		♠ J9
♥ J3		♥ AQ987542
♦ QT852		♦ K3
♣ J5		♣ 9
	♠ AQ54	
	♥ KT6	
	♦ -	
	♣ AQT762	

West	North	East	South
Boursa	M. Rimstedt	F. Kralik	M. Grönkvist
	Pass	4 ♥	Dbl
Pass	4 NT	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

On the takeout double Mikael Rimstedt showed a positive hand with both minors. With weakness he would have passed. That was enough for Mikael Grönkvist to bid the small slam.

The best defence is to lead a trump. Declarer wins the ten in hand and plays on cross-ruff lines. He ruffs a heart on the table, discard a spade on the ace of diamonds and ruff a diamond, East contributing the king. A heart is ruffed on table, this time West following with the jack, indicating the suit to be distributed 2-8. Another diamond I ruffed, East discarding a heart. When the third heart is played, West discard a spade and dummy ruffs with his last trump. This is the situation and declarer known that East has one or two spades, with one he also has the missing trump.

	♠ 10 7 3	
	♥ -	
	♦ J 9 7	
	♣ -	
♠ K 8 6		♠ J 9
♥ -		♥ A Q 9 8
♦ Q 10		♦ -
♣ J		♣ -

♠ A Q 5  
 ♥ -  
 ♦ -  
 ♣ A Q

The contract can not be made from here if West has both spade honours. East must have one. Then the vital ten in dummy would save declarer. Recognising this, declarer can play a spade. If a honour appears from East, declarer takes the ace, draws the last trump and establish a spade. If it is a lower card, declarer can finesse for the slam.

This was neither the lead, nor the play at the table. Patrik Boursa led his partner's suit, putting the ♥J on the table. This turned out to be a Trojan gift. Recognising that he could discard a spade from the table and force Frantisek Kralik to win the first trick with the ace, Mikael Grönkvist could not resist the temptation. Kralik won the first trick and returned the nine of spades. Grönkvist went up with the ace, drew the trumps with the ace and king, discarded a heart on the ace of diamonds, ruffed a diamond, cashed the king of hearts and discarded the last spade on the table – the card that actually had the chance to save him. He ruffed a spade, and ruffed a diamond. When no good break appeared in the diamond suit he was one down.

This turned out not to be too expensive as the team-mates at the other table were allowed to play in hearts - 4 IMPs to the Czech Republic.

After an easy 4♠ contract on the East-West cards, it was time again for the Swedes to draw the shorter straw:

Round 1, board 3

Board 3    ♠ 52  
 S/EW        ♥ AJ983  
               ♦ T7  
               ♣ KJ94

♠ AK83	♠ T9
♥ Q7642	♥ KT
♦ AQ	♦ KJ98643
♣ 75	♣ 63

♠ QJ764  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ 52  
 ♣ AQT82

West	North	East	South
Boursa	M. Rimstedt	F. Kralik	M. Grönkvist
			Pass
1 ♥	Pass	1 NT	2 ♥*
Dbl	2 ♠	3 ♦	Pass
3 NT	Dbl*	Pass	Pass
Redbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

It was again the Swedish captain (playing) that had to find the right move. In the bidding he had shown a two-suiter – spades and a minor – and partner had given preference for spades. What should Mikael lead?

As cards were sitting, he had 50% chance to find the right lead. When he put the ♠4 on the table declarer immediately claimed nine tricks and wrote +1000 in the score card. Had Mikael found a club or a heart East would have been required to enter -1000 instead. You can easily imagine that this was an expensive choice. However, at the other table East-West played 3 NT doubled and also the Czech South led a spade. Only 6 IMPs to the Czech Republic. However, this match was too much of uphill for the Swedish players that lost 11-19.

The second opponent of the day was Netherlands Blue. Here the team was a bit more successful. This was good defence:

Match 2, board 16

♠ A42  
 Board 16 ♥ 3  
 W/O/W ♦ KQT874  
 ♣ A94

♠ JT765	♠ KQ9
♥ AQ9	♥ J72
♦ A5	♦ J3
♣ QT8	♣ KJ732

♠ 83  
 ♥ KT8654  
 ♦ 962  
 ♣ 65

West	North	East	South
Goris	Hult	Broersen	Ekengren
1 ♠	2 ♦	3 ♦*	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Simon Hult led the ♦K, which declarer Eric Goris won with the ace. He played a trump to the queen and continued with the king. Hult had recognised that he were able to neutralize the dummy. He took the trump ace and continued with the nine. Winning this in dummy (winning in hand would be better) Goris played a club to the queen, ducked by Hult. He ducked also the next club and now the dummy is dead. To continue club at this stage was not the best play. The contract went one down. He should have tried the heart jack. If South makes the mistake of not covering he is home. If South covers he has the tiny chance that North's singleton is the ten.

The best play is to start with a small from hand. When the king wins declarer might figure out that the opponents plans to duck club twice. In that case he is on the table and can play the jack of hearts, covered by king and ace. Now a second club from West puts North on a Mortons fork. If he takes his ace, declarer has three club tricks, and if he ducks declarer gets the required entrance to dummy to finesse again in hearts. The 12 IMP on this board contributed to the Swedish victory 22-8.

The third match was against Hungary. With one board to go Sweden were down a few IMPs. We were lucky that declarer did not manage to make this slam:

Match 3, board 30

Board 30 O/N	♠ Q762 ♥ JT4 ♦ 876 ♣ J82
♠ A83 ♥ Q873 ♦ Q543 ♣ K7	♠ K94 ♥ A9 ♦ AKJT ♣ A654
	♠ JT5 ♥ K652 ♦ 92 ♣ QT93

West	North	East	South
Szirmay-Kalos	Rimstedt	Konkoly	Grönkvist
		2 NT	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
6 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

Mikael Grönkvist led the ♠J declarer Csaba Konkoly carefully winning in hand. He played a club to the king, a club back and a club ruffed in dummy. A heart followed and Mikael Rimstedt's jack went the ace and the last club was ruffed high. Now declarer drew trumps and played the nine of heart. South contributed the five quickly. After considerable considerations he saved the match for Sweden when he let the heart run to Rimstedt's ten. He was quick to return a heart to his partners king. The Swedes stopped in game at the other table and won 11 IMPs, enough to win the match 17-13.

Walking back to the hotel Monday evening the team was in the middle of the standing. Let's see if the Swiss can help the team move up the ladder. They have not given up!