

## Semifinals and more

Thursday evening was the first night off for many, so they could hit the town (although some faces tell me Wednesday had been a late night).

All finals are broadcasted on BBO; always interesting to follow them. Unfortunately Hans van Staveren, our highly appreciated tournament director, got eye problems Wednesday evening and upon checking this Thursday morning in the hospital, the doctor kept him there for surgery. Hans, recover quickly and fully, and I hope to see you again soon. Without Hans, Marieke Quant (Neth) and Jacob Duschek (Den) had a busy day.

Poland, impressive in the qualifications as well as in the quarterfinals, had the right to choose their opponent in the Semifinal. It chose Turkey White, which overtook Norway at the last moment (Norway scored 5-54 against Denmark in the final round). So Israel, always one of the strong junior teams, played against Sweden, the winners of Quarterfinal B. Three sessions of 14 boards, a real KO. The other 20 teams played 'consolation' finals B/C/D/E/F with the same boards.

The BBO operators needed my laptop, so I sat down at the tables and then lost my notes somewhere. This one I remember from the Semifinals.

W/NS

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♦	pass	4 ♦*	4 NT
pass	5 ♦	pass	pass
??			

\*bid your major

West: ♠ V 3 2 ♥ K Q J 10 6 2 ♦ 4 ♣ 10 4 3

- Pass
- Double
- 5♥
- Something else

I will present Jeugdbridge.nl with more interesting hands soon.

Poland took an early lead and built this up to 90-34 with 14 boards to play. Although Turkey fought as hard as it possibly could, the Polish juniors prevailed. Israel, three-time winner of the Carrousel Cup, might have looked like the favorite against Sweden, which reached the Semifinals through the back door. The young Swedish team (the U20 world champions of 2014) proved to be strong contenders though: 22-15 after 14 boards, 42-34 in the second round and 29-14 in the third round. This earned Sweden a spot in the Finals of WHJI 2015 against Poland.

Although there were already four days of intensive bridge behind us, the play in the consolation finals was intense. The proud winners were: Norway (B), Hungary (C), England (D), Finland (E) and Netherlands Blue (F).

What can be better for a tournament than to have a female world champion as a distributor of the prizes? Anneke had gathered an immense prize table with cups and medals for the winners and gifts and souvenirs (and decks of BridgeBig cards) for every participant.

On [www.bridge.nl](http://www.bridge.nl) (site NBB) and on [www.jeugdbridge.nl](http://www.jeugdbridge.nl) you can find links to the results, the bulletins, and more information.

### *The future of junior bridge*

I talked to many coaches and captains about the future of junior bridge. It would be great if more tournaments like WHJI could be organised (Paris Youth Open is excellent!). Young people need to practise at a high level and get some experience. Also, meeting young people from other nationalities can be valuable.

The financial side of the matter worries us. Participating in the World Youth Open Bridge Championships in august is so very expensive that after Tromsö, which swallows almost all the money of many national federations, it is difficult (if not impossible) to participate in Opatija. Apart from travel and stay, I have doubts about the entry fee of €1150 for a team with two pairs to play teams and pairs. Personally I think that bridge tournaments for the Youth should be without entry fee. Maybe that is a bridge too far, but €400 for pairs and team tournament should be sufficient. EBL, WBF, and Eusa (which unwisely organises the University Championships three days after Opatija) should really consider this matter.

Now back to the board:

W/NS	<i>North</i>	
	♠ K 9 5	
	♥ 8 7 4	
	♦ Q J 5 3	
	♣ K 8 5	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
♠ Q 3 2		♠ A 10 8 7 6 4
♥ K Q J 10 6 2		♥ A 9 3
♦ 4		♦ 10 9 6
♣ 10 4 3		♣ 9
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ J	
	♥ 5	
	♦ A K 8 7 2	
	♣ A Q J 7 6 2	

4♦ probably shows length in hearts and in spades, so 5♥ should be a safe save. Or were you afraid to push North-South to 6♦?