

## Fight for places in the Quarter Finals

Being retired as trainer of the Dutch juniors does not mean I am not interested anymore in 'my' players, so I am taking the liberty of following the Dutch teams like a sports reporter. Dennis Stuurman, my fellow bulletin writer, will cover the other matches.

### Round 1: Netherlands White vs. Netherlands Blue

Netherlands White and Netherlands Blue battled against each other in the first match. White performed great in the qualification and was leading the group, with 74 vips scored against the other qualifiers. Blue struggled during the first two days and only qualified at the last moment; they need big wins to finish in top seven.

N	Lucassen	
♠	5	
♥	HB7432	
♦	AH32	
♣	V2	
Z	Coenen	
♠	H762	
♥	AV6	
♦	B975	
♣	H7	

Adriaan and Joost (Ned White), who won the butler in the qualifications with the huge amount of +210 imps from 110 boards, got dangerously high in 5♥.

After a ♠A lead, declarer made an overtrick: ♦Q was with a doubleton and the club loser went away on ♠K, after ♣2 to the ♣K held. The board won 2 imps against +420 at the other table.

On the second board both teams reached a tight 3NT (14 points against 9) with everything breaking friendly for ten tricks. After that, a nice 6♣ bid and made at both tables.

Then Blue got into action.

**Spel 4**  
**W/A**

♠QJ632  
♥K  
♦Q5  
♣KJ1074

♠A10  
♥109432  
♦K964  
♣96



♠K75  
♥Q65  
♦AJ1083  
♣Q5

♠984  
♥AJ87  
♦72  
♣A832

The heart lead in 4♠ gave declarer (North) the chance to get rid of a diamond and play trumps, losing only ♠AK and ♦K. West at the other table played 2♥ (north passed in first position, overcalled 1♠ and South decided not to support with 2♠) and made an overtrick! Score: 13-3 for Ned Blue.

Board 5: A 5♣-save from White went down for 800 with 4♠ making, so 17-3 in favour of Blue.

Then:

N	Verbeek
♠	108763
♥	J843
♦	9
♣	986

2 NT on your right and 3NT on your left: your lead? Blue eloped to 30-4 when they guessed this lead right. Finally, a sharp non vulnerable game gave Blue another 7 imps to win the match 39-4 (18.71-1.29).

The lead against 3NT? While the prozaic ♥3 would have given declarer (♥AKQ94 to ♥106) nine tricks, the spade lead finds partner with ♠A-fourth and spades 2-2 for down two.

**Round 2: Netherlands Red vs. Netherlands Blue**

1)

<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>
1♦	1♠
2♣	2♦
??	

South: ♠2 ♥A542 ♦KQ95 ♣AK107

I would prefer 2♥. It's not necessarily natural but it could get a 3♥ answer by North or 2NT in the right hand.

2)

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♣	pass
1♠	pass	2♣	pass
3♠*	pass	4♦*	??

3♠: equivalent to a 2♠ strong jumpshift

4♦: cuebid

South: ♠ 7 6 5 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ Q 10 7 5 ♣ 10 9 5

Do you feel, as South, inclined to do anything?

1)

**Spel 11**  
Z/-

♠K964  
♥QJ8  
♦1073  
♣Q93

♠8753  
♥K973  
♦AJ62  
♣J



♠AQJ10  
♥106  
♦84  
♣86542

♠2  
♥A542  
♦KQ95  
♣AK107

<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>
1♦	1♠
2♣	2♦
2NT	pass
pass	

Credit to West, Thibo Sprinkhuizen, for leading a spade to defeat 2NT in with one trick. 2 NT in North cannot be defeated.

2)

**Spel 13**  
N/A♠98  
♥QJ754  
♦942  
♣874♠AKQ1042  
♥1098  
♦KJ  
♣A2♠J  
♥K32  
♦A863  
♣KQJ63♠7653  
♥A6  
♦Q1075  
♣1095

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1♠	pass	2♣	pass
3♠	pass	4♦	dbl
4NT	pass	5♣	pass
6♠	pass	pass	pass

South thought it was a good idea to double for the lead. Alas: -1430. A pass would have produced a ♥Q lead and +100. That's life.

Netherlands Blue eventually won the match against their compatriots from Team Red with 24-16 (12.83-7.17).

**Most combative junior**

During the match Netherlands Orange vs. Denmark (Intermediate Finals B) I found the first nominee for the prize of the most combative junior: the young Danish pair Victor Todd-Moir – Søren Christian Bune.

West	Victor	East	Søren
	1♠	dbl	2♥
pass	3♠	pass	4♠
pass	4NT	pass	5♦ (0 aces)
pass	6♠*	dbl**	pass
pass	rdbl***	all pass	

\* Don't need aces

\*\* I have the aces

\*\*\* Still don't need aces?

East's lead of ♥A made life easy for declarer, who ruffed two clubs, discarded a diamond on ♥K and gave up ♦A for +2070.

Only three cards in East were suited as a lead to defeat 6♠!

**Good defence**

This 3NT was made at almost all tables but can function as an example of defensive play.

**Spel 7  
Z/A**

♠3  
♥Q104  
♦KQ42  
♣AQ1054

♠A975  
♥8  
♦J1083  
♣J976



♠J42  
♥A97653  
♦A95  
♣3

♠KQ1086  
♥KJ2  
♦76  
♣K82

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
pass	2♣	pass	1♠
pass	3NT	pass	2♦ (min, bal)
pass			pass

A heart for ♥10 in north and a spade to ♠K, west playing ♠5 (4crd). Then a diamond for ♦K (west ♦3, which looks like a 4crd). Suppose you duck without hesitation (though ♦A followed by ♦9 would be great). Declarer then plays a small heart. If you win ♥A you may realise declarer has five solid club tricks. So a passive heart return is no good. Play a spade and declarer has a first guess. If he plays ♠10 for ♠A, west follows smoothly (and quick, if I may suppose so) with ♦J, giving declarer a second guess.

The problem with  
the world is that  
the intelligent people  
are full of doubts, while  
the stupid ones are  
full of confidence.

Charles Bukowski

### The final battles in the qualification

With only two matches to go in the Intermediate Finals there was still a lot to play for, with Sweden, Poland and Netherlands White in comfortable positions (1/2/3 of group A). The other four teams were in a packed peloton:

- 4: England Red (100.06)
- 5: Norway (99.24)
- 6: Netherlands Red (93.95)
- 7: England White (93.41), in shooting distance
- 8: Belgium Red (89.37), fighting for one place improvement
- 9: Netherlands Blue (79.3), needing two big wins to qualify for the Quarter Finals

In group B Germany Red (123.9) and Czech Republic (122.42) were going into the final battle for the eight spot in the QF's.

It is a privilege that modern technology enables you to follow the scores live. Two times ten boards promised lots of excitement. Bridge is a beautiful game and everybody loves to play, but in a sport the result is sacred, even for juniors.

As we have seen before, also the teams out of contention remained eager in getting a last good match. Vjekoslav, the Croatian captain, assured me that his team really was doing all they could to leave the last place. And Latvia and Austria looked forward to their match on BBO so that their fans at home could watch what happened in Amsterdam.

In 17 sessions all countries played at least once at BBO. They gave the spectators value for their money, with Latvia winning by an inch (32-31).

### The final rankings of the Intermediate Finals

#### *Intermediate Finals A*

<b>1 Sweden</b>	156,21
<b>2 Norway</b>	132,40
<b>3 Poland</b>	126,31
<b>4 Netherlands Red</b>	126,28
<b>5 Netherlands Blue</b>	115,27
<b>6 Netherlands White</b>	113,88
<b>7 England Red</b>	109,12
8 England White	108,81
9 Belgium Red	103,01
10 Latvia	82,81
11 Netherlands Green	75,13
12 Austria	70,77

#### *Intermediate Finals B*

<b>1 Germany Red</b>	157,00
2 Czech Republic	150,47
3 Israel Blue	136,61
4 Denmark	116,98
5 Belgium Yellow	115,42
6 Israel White	113,45
7 Germany Yellow	100,02
8 Ireland	92,05
9 Netherlands Purple	90,11
10 Netherlands Orange	89,49
11 Finland	87,61
12 Croatia	70,79