

World Championships by Derrick Browne

The World Bridge Championships are now underway in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The most prestigious event, called the Bermuda Bowl, is held every two years, bringing together 22 open teams which qualify from competitions within the eight zones of the World Bridge Federation.

The United States have won 17 times, while Italy has prevailed 14 times. Other winners were France (twice), Great Britain, Brazil (in 1989 when Perth hosted the event), Iceland, The Netherlands, and Norway, who are the current title holders.

The women's event, called Venice Cup, was established in 1974 and has been won by just five countries: USA (ten times), Great Britain (twice), Germany (twice), The Netherlands and France.

Australia started well in the Bermuda Bowl, with a 43-24 IMP win against one of the two USA teams. The first big swing came on the third board. How much would you bid with the North hand?

Dealer South, EW vul.

NORTH
S KQT876543
H T
D 32
C 2

WEST
S J
H AJ74
D A984
C 9654

EAST
S A
H K862
D KJ
C AKQJ87

SOUTH
S 92
H Q953
D QT765
C T3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Thompson</i>		<i>Brightling</i>
Pass	4S	5C	Pass
6C	6S!	Dble	All pass

With a good 9-card suit and a weak hand it is routine to pre-empt at game level, 4S. East overcalled 5C and West, with a good fit, a couple of aces, and a singleton in the enemy suit, raised to 6C. The pre-empter is not supposed to bid again but Ian Thompson for Australia figured his 9-card suit and lack of defence allowed an exception, given the favourable vulnerability. This went for minus 800 but a gain of 11 IMPs when slam was made at the other table.

Two boards later came another big swing to Australia. At one table, East opened 1C and the American South made a Michaels Cue Bid of 2C (showing both majors), and North finished up declaring 3S, one down. At the other table, East-West were playing Precision, where a 1C opening would have shown any 16+ HCP hand, so East opened a short 1D and Richard Brightling, South for Australia, finished up declaring 3S, doubled by West:

Dealer South, EW vul.

NORTH
S T72
H 9
D AJT62
C A732

WEST
S K93
H AQ8
D 9874
C 984

EAST
S Q5
H KT63
D K5
C KQJ65

SOUTH
S AJ864
H J7542
D Q3
C T

West led a club, won by dummy's ace. Brightling then called for dummy's heart and East hopped up with the HK to switch to a spade. This was ducked to West's SK, and a spade back saw the ace capture East's queen. Brightling ran the DQ, losing to East's king, but he would make the rest of the tricks – he ruffed the club return, ruffed a heart in dummy, ruffed a club back to hand, drew the last trump and ran dummy's diamonds, for an overtrick, plus 930 and 11 IMPs to Australia.