

Winning the Semifinals: Netherlands over Italy

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A super-close Bermuda Bowl semifinal match contested between Netherlands-Italy saw the two teams with 3 imps of each other after 86 boards. Neither team led by more than 10 imps after any 16-board set, and less than 4 imps after sets 3, 4, & 5

<http://www.bridgewinners.com/index.php/component/content/article/167-news-and-articles/1330-2011-bermuda-bowl-final-matchups-set>

3 imps still separated the teams when the match tilted decisively for the Dutch after an excellent, enterprising sequence on board 23 (64 +23: board 87 of 96)

Vugraph Board 23

D

N Bocchi

♠ A10
♥ 86
♦ 10542
♣ 107653

WES	NOR	EAS	SOUTH
P	P	2N	P
3♥	P	4♣	P
4♦	P	4N	P
5♦	P	5♥	P
6♥	P	6♠	P

W Brink

♠ QJ943
♥ K742
♦ 93
♣ Q9

E Drijver

♠ K872
♥ A9
♦ AK87
♣ AK2

S Madala

♠ 65
♥ QJ1053
♦ QJ6
♣ J84

Other Table: 4♠E+2
(NS) Italy: 160 IMPs
(EW) Netherland: 163 IMPs

6♠ East NS 0 EW 0

BBO voice commentators Roland Wald and David Bird noted that the Netherlands squad's 2N opening was a balanced 21-23 which proved decisive. West chose to transfer, and rewarded by East's 4♣ super accept, was able to make a "last train" 4♦ call. No 4♥ cuebid was available; it was surmised that 4♥ would most likely have been a retransfer to spades.

Italy's Lauria also opened 2N, which promised a slightly lower range (20-21 (22) on their WBF card), raising the question: What is the actual value of that control-rich 2N opener?

The Kaplan and Rubens hand evaluator tool: <http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/cgi-bin/ksr.cgi?hand=K872+A9+Ak87+AK2> values the East hand as 21.90 which is really too strong for most of our 2N openers, but maybe not for the Italians. Versace, started with puppet stayman, and then bid 4♦ after Lauria promised a 4 card major asking for his partner's major. Would 4♣ have shown slam interest with both majors? This slam was bid at 3 of the 10 semifinal tables

including both tables in the Poland-France Senior Bowl match.

A few boards later the Dutch, Verhees and Van Prooijen, reached another slam:

26 D

N North

♠94
♥KJ642
♦KJ874
♣Q

WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH

3♣ | 3♦ | P | 2♣

P | P | P |

W West

♠J10
♥
♦Q1062
♣KJ109872

E East

♠AQ862
♥10853
♦93
♣43

S South

♠K753
♥AQ97
♦A5
♣A65

4♥ South
NS: 0
EW: 0

The Italians opened Mexican 2♦, in this case with 2♣, promising a balanced 18-19, and South jumped to the heart game after North's 3♦ transfer over West's club overcall. Should North have ventured a 4♣ cuebid after his partner, having stretched a bit, didn't cuebid clubs?

Slam pretty much requires a favorable location of the ♠A (50%) unless the ♦Q is inside third making the slam (+18%), a reasonable 68% less a few percent if trumps are 4-0 with West (not very likely given the overcall). Are these percentages calculable at the table? The Dutch were the only pair to bid the slam in any of the 5 matches. They had an undisturbed NT sequence which included a 2♠ superaccept followed by cue bids. Btw, the KnR evaluation of the South hand is 17.80. The Italian Versace chose not to intervene with a 3♣ overcall of 1N which could have gone for only 500. World-class bidders, unpressured, find par spots.

In other matches the young USA-2 squad, forced by Zonal contest conditions to compete against the more experienced USA-1 team in the Bermuda Bowl semifinals, played brilliantly to win by 60 imps to qualify for the the 128 board final against the Dutch. They outscored USA-1 by 50 imps in the fifth set to take a commanding 62 imp lead with 16 boards to play. Go Grue crew!!

The Senior's semifinal event was decided by less than 1 imp in the Poland-France match when France picked up 6 imps by defeating a doubled partial! For USA rooters it's USA-2 vs the Dutch in the Bermuda Bowl final, and USA-2 vs. France in the d'Orsi Senior Bowl final.