

Bulletin 2

Wednesday October 22nd

2025 Spring Nationals

Day 5, and How Exciting

There are just two teams remaining in the Open Teams Championship. Good luck in tomorrow's Final.

Today also concluded the Plate – Congratulations to the Jacob Team. The Shield also wrapped up, congratulations to the Wilkinson Team.

Milne v Dalley Semi Final



Ashley Bach, Shane Harrison, Arlene Dalley, Dave Wiltshire.

Hung v McCallum Semi Final



Andy Hung, Kate McCallum, Sartaj Hans, Axel Johannsson



Liam Milne, Paul Dalley, James Coutts (Facing us), Tony Nunn



Bruce Neill, Jamie Thompson, Peter Buchen, Ben Thompson

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The Championship – Down To Two

The Knockouts, Drop-ins, Days off and Semi Finals are over.

The Two Teams playing off in the **Open Teams Final** tomorrow are the **Hung Team** (Ben Thompson, Jamie Thompson, Sartaj Hans, Andy Hung) and the **Milne Team** (David Wiltshire, Jessica Brake, Susan Humphries, Shane Harrison, Liam Milne, James Coutts).

The Hung Team topped their Qualifying Pool and only lost one half of a 28-board match on their way to a Day off on Tuesday. They played the McCallum Team in the Semi Final, a rematch of the “Day Off Decider” and were tied after the first quarter, down at half time and three-quarter time, but finished strongly to win by 27 IMPs.

The Milne team were also undefeated in the Qualifying stage, but lost in the second round meaning they had to win their next two matches to make it to the Quarterfinal. They played the Gumby team over 56-boards and led the whole way in a low scoring match. Their Semi Final was against the Dalley team, and Milne was down by 40 IMPs early in the match. They clawed some IMPs

back and got within 2 IMPs of the lead a few times through the match. They were down by 24 IMPs with four board to go, but picked up 6, 17, 7, and 8 on the last four boards to clutch victory on the penultimate board, and win by 14 IMPs.

The 17 IMP swing came on this board:

Board 26

Dealer E
Vul Both

♠ A92

♥ T7

♦ -

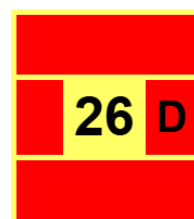
♣ AQJT8643

♠ QT75

♥ AKQ83

♦ 83

♣ 97



♠ KJ864

♥ J

♦ KQJ952

♣ K

♠ 3

♥ 96542

♦ AT764

♣ 52

Liam Milne and James Coutts bid the North-South cards to 6♣ and received the Ace of Diamonds lead, ruffed, and 13 tricks.

The other table tried 4♠, and the poor Spade break mean that they were down by 2.

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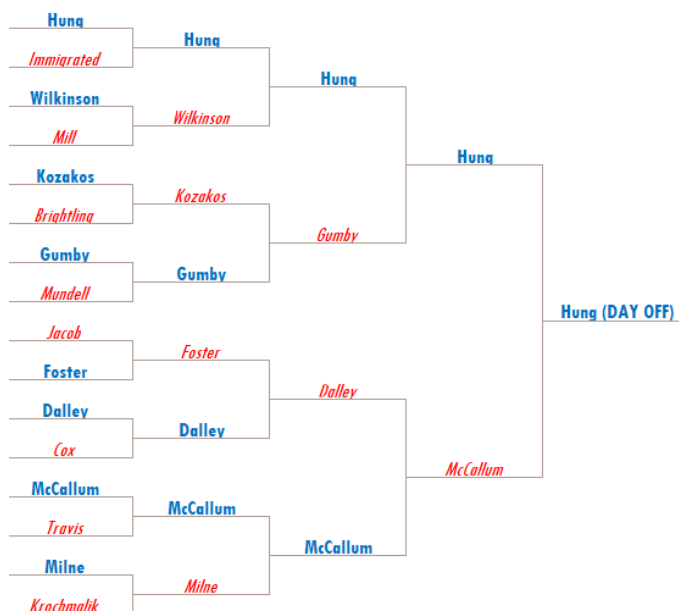
Path to the Finals

The **No Loss** Pool contained most of the top seeds and here was how they played out.

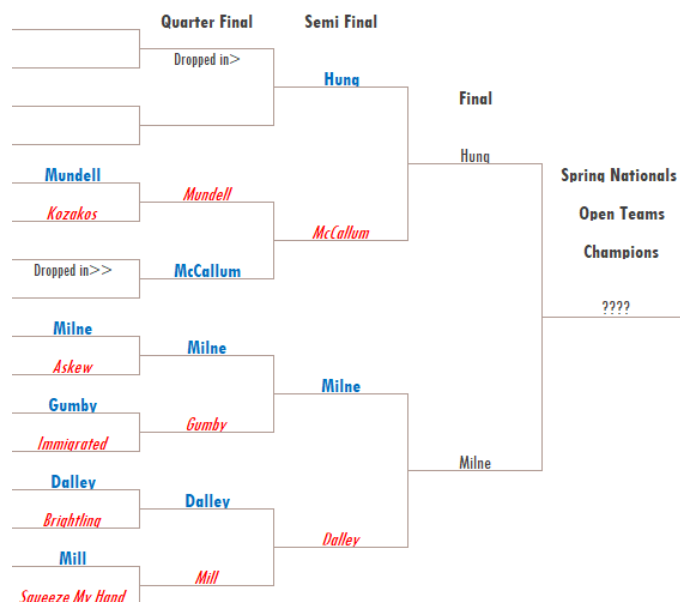
The top two from each pool started with no losses, and they started as 16, and played a Knockout to see who makes it to the “Day Off”.

As each team lost, they still had a 'life', and some of them made it through to the next graph.

Hung managed to skip the Quarterfinals, and McCallum lost last, and dropped into the Quarter final.



Some teams survived one loss, and there is how the teams with one loss, as well as the last couple of survivors arrived in the pointy end of the competition.



There are just two teams left, and they will play a 56-board final on Thursday.

There will be Vugraph coverage on Real Bridge.

You can click [here](#), and put in your name, and click on the Event to watch

<https://kibitz.realbridge.online/>

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The Plate

Congratulations to the **Jacob Team** (Lysandra Zheng, Zachary Yan, Ella Jacob, Nick Jacob Leon Meier) for winning **the Plate**.

They are the first names on the new Spring Nationals Open Teams Plate Trophy. Presented by convenor, Shannon.



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The Shield

Congratulations to the **Wilkinson Team**, (David Appleton, Brad Coles, Stephen Fischer, Michael Wilkinson) inaugural winners of the Spring Nationals Open Teams Shield.

They arrived in the Shield in the third round and won seven out of eight matches and scored 64.2 VPs on the final day. They only took the lead in the last round.



Wilkinson v Watkins

(L-R : Matt Smith, Michael Wilkinson, Yiwei Qi, Stephen Fischer)



Wilkinson v Watkins

(L-R: Heath Watkins, Brad Coles, Kate MacDonald, David Appleton)

Here are the top 10 Shield finishers

Place	Team	Name	Win	Draw	Loss	IMPs	Total
1	<u>9</u>	<u>WILKINSON</u>	7	0	1	192	145
2	<u>13</u>	<u>MUNDELL</u>	2	0	2	167	138
3	<u>18</u>	<u>WATKINS</u>	3	0	1	139	137
4	<u>8</u>	<u>MILL</u>	3	0	1	135	136
5	<u>17</u>	<u>BLOOM</u>	3	0	1	129	135
6	<u>16</u>	<u>IMMIGRATED</u>	4	0	2	135	134
7	<u>4</u>	<u>GUMBY</u>	2	0	2	120	132
8	<u>33</u>	<u>WATTS</u>	4	0	2	113	130
9	<u>25</u>	<u>LEIBO</u>	2	0	2	94	126
10	<u>15</u>	<u>KROCHMALIK</u>	5	0	3	156	126

Depending on when they dropped in to the Shield, some teams have played more or fewer matches than others.

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Showing Finesse

This hand came up in the **No Loss** Section of the Championship in Round 3 Set 2, and showed why Sophie Ashton is one of the best.

She was sitting East on the following hand:

Board 18	♠ 62		
<i>Dealer E</i>	♥ A5		
<i>Vul N-S</i>	♦ Q54		
	♣ T86432		
♠ 985		♠ KT	
♥ KQ2		♥ 8743	
♦ AJT9873		♦ K62	
♣ -		♣ AQ95	
	♠ AQJ743		
	♥ JT96		
	♦ -		
	♣ KJ7		
W	N	E	S
<i>Maurits</i>		<i>Sophie</i>	
--	--	1♣	(1♠)
2♦	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Sophie opened 1♦ and then rebid 2NT after hearing her opponent overcall 1♠ and her partner Maurits bid 2♦. Maurits gambled on 3NT, like quite a few other players, though about half the field tried a Diamond contract.

South led the Jack of Hearts at trick one, waiting for a Spade lead to come back through Declarer.

Sophie played the King of Hearts from Dummy, and North won the Ace of Hearts. Although a Spade switch would have caused a swift defeat, North played back another Heart, and Sophie felt that he was trying to deprive her of entries to Dummy

Trick two went Five of Hearts, Sophie carefully played the Eight, South played the Nine, and rather than rush in and take the Queen right away, she ducked, knowing that South couldn't hurt her.

South played another Heart, Sophie won the Queen and North discarded a Club.

Sophie picked that South had likely six Spades (North didn't raise) and four Hearts, so played North for the bad Diamond break.

She led the Jack of Diamonds and finessed on the first round. South showed out – Ben's your uncle.

Picking up the bad split in Diamonds meant that Sophie succeeded where most others couldn't. Making game was a game swing to the Gumby team

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Useful Conventions With Will – Giorgio Part 2 of 4

In Part 1 of our Giorgio series, I introduced the concept of using 2♣ as an artificial response to a 1♥ or 1♠ overcall.

Here is an example auction:

W	N	E	S
(1♦)	1♥	(P)	2♣*

South is asking about the 1♥ overcall, and very often has a Cue Raise type of hand, showing a fit and invitational or better points.

You can expand the use of Giorgio to include good balanced hands without a fit.

If your partner overcalls 1♥, and you are responding, I recommend that a 1NT response shows around 8 – 12 points. You aren't obliged to respond to an overcall with only 6 or 7 points like you would be to an opening bid.

If you have 13+ points and a balanced hand, you could jump to 2NT, but if your partner has a modern style 'frisky' overcall, you might be too high. Enter **Giorgio**.

You can bid 2♣* the Giorgio Enquiry, with a balanced hand of about 13+ points, even with no fit for partner's overcall.

Your partner will often bid 2♥ (repeating their suit) to show a very minimum overcall, around 7 – 10 points. You can then pass them and play in 2♥ in a 5-2 fit, which is likely to be better than 2NT. You could still bid 2NT invitational if you want to, but playing a partscore in 2♥ is usually better than 2NT.

If the overcaller bids 2♦* showing a sound overcall of 11 – 13 points, then you can bid 3NT (or 2NT, invite) *and denying a Heart fit*.

If partner has a very good overcall, say 14+, then you can bid on to game, hopefully investigating all options along the way.

The ability to investigate a game, and stop in a 5-2 fit at the two-level is great. The ability to discover how good, or bad, partner's overcall is at a lower level allows you to compete more accurately.

You can stop lower on a bad day, and still bid to the right game on a good day.

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Pinning The Ten

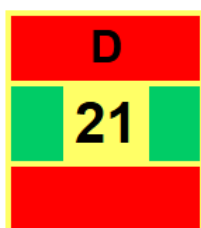
This hand showed some great card play from current Australian Under-26 Team representative Heath Watkins in his winning **Plate Round of 16 Knockout** match.

Board 21
Dealer N
Vul N-S

♠ KJ876
♥ AJ9
♦ 5
♣ 6432



♠ AQ92
♥ T5
♦ J98
♣ AKT7



♠ 543
♥ Q43
♦ 6432
♣ Q85

♠ T
♥ K8762
♦ AKQT7
♣ J9



Heath was South on this hand, and had the following auction:

W	N	E	S
	Kate		Heath
--	P	P	1♥
X	2♦*	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Heath's partner is another Youth Team representative, Kate MacDonald, who passed as the dealer, and then used a 2♦ Transfer Heart Raise over the Double.

Heath opened 1♥ and accepted the invite and jumped to game.

The lead was the Ace of Clubs and then the King, and another Club, ruffed by Heath. He played a Spade up, and West played the Ace. He counted West to have started with the Ace and King of Clubs and the Ace and Queen of Spades.

It was now time to play Hearts, and in isolation, finessing to the Jack would be the normal play, but here it would lose to the Queen.

Heath figured that West would be less likely to have the Queen of Hearts, since if they did have that card they might have overcalled 1NT instead of Doubling.

Heath played the Ace of Hearts, then led the Jack back, finessing the Queen from East while pinning the doubleton Ten in West's hand.

Great play Heath.

Heath and Kate are pictured from their trip to Italy this year.



Jess Brake found the same play in the Championship Quarterfinal and gained 12 IMPs and went on to win the match.

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Overheard

South: "I had to bid game. I had a four loser hand"

North: "Yes, but you lost five tricks."



Frances Garrick and Neil Williams played in the Matchpoint pairs on Tuesday.



With the Hung Team earning themselves a day off on Tuesday, a House team was needed to keep even numbers. Seated at table 1, thanks to the house team of Daria Williams, Glen Chick, Ian Jamieson and Tony White



Andrew Spooner from the Plate Runner Up Kozakos team.



The Wilkinson Team receive the trophy (Michael Wilkinson, Brad Coles, absent Stephen Fischer, David Appleton) with convenor Shannon.

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Beer Card (Pseudo) Squeeze

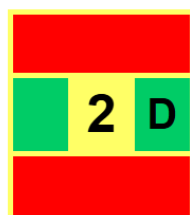
Talented Junior Adrian Le excitedly reported that he made a beer card – every youth player's DREAM on a (pseudo) Squeeze on the following deal from **Monday's Plate Group stage**.

W	N	E	S
<i>Adrian</i>		<i>Aaron</i>	
--	--	1♣	1♠
X	P	1NT	P
2♥	P	P	P

Board 2
Dealer E
Vul N-S

♠ T963
♥ K87543
♦ A76
♣ -

♠ J4
♥ Q
♦ Q8542
♣ A9863



♠ AQ752
♥ JT96
♦ 3
♣ KT4

♠ K8
♥ A2
♦ KJT9
♣ QJ752

Adrian made a Negative Double of South's 1♠ overcall, and then pulled partner's 1NT to 2♥.

North led the Jack of Spades, covered with the King and Ace. The Queen of Spades was cashed and then South played the Nine of Hearts, Three, Queen, Ace. Adrian led Dummy's Two of Hearts, and when South played the Six, he inserted the Seven! He drew another trump, and then conceded the Natural trump trick.

When he regained the lead, he cashed his Spades and Hearts and North thought they had to keep the Ace of Clubs, so discarded all of their Diamonds, allowing him to play to the King of Diamonds, the Jack back to his hand, dropping the Queen and the Seven of Diamonds at trick 13!

Editor's Note: I also made a beer card on this hand, on an auction never to be revealed, I played in 3♥X, and at some point, South tried the Ace of Clubs, which I ruffed, and this caused North to legitimately be Squeezed out of Clubs and Diamonds for a Doubled Beer Card!

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Mini Monday

There was a new event on the Spring Nationals Calendar this year, **Mini Monday**, for “newish to congress players”. There was a presentation before the game from teacher Joan Butts and director John McIlrath, then they played a Red Points session.

This event was a stepping stone for players who haven't played in a National event before. If you know anyone who should be playing in Nationals, encourage them to join Mini Monday next year!



Joan and the super keen players.



Joan with the winners of the Mini Monday Congress event:
Susan Emmett And Lillian Clark



Joan between the second place getters of Mini Monday
Ramarathin Krishnamachari and Joe Gomes

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Interesting Hands

(by Leigh Matheson)

There were a few interesting hands from the Open Teams Plate on Tuesday.

♠ KT65
♥ 86432
♦ A83
♣ 7



♠ AJ9742
♥ 9
♦ JT
♣ KQ86

W
2♥*

N
X**

E
4♠

S
All
Pass

*2♥: weak hand, both Majors

**X: takeout

How would you play 4♠ by East on the ♠3 lead?

On the above deal I reasoned that North rated to have the ♣A, having showed opening values in the auction. And surely no one would risk leading from the queen of trumps. Given these assumptions I found a nice play that all but guarantees the contract: lead a club towards hand to effect a Morton's Fork.

If North ducks when I lead a club, I effectively cross ruff most of the

hand without losing a club trick. If North wins the ♣A, I can discard two of dummy's diamonds on my club winners and ruff a diamond and a club.

The issue with the plan is entries (isn't it always?). If I win the opening lead in hand and then cross to dummy to lead a club, North will likely win the CA and switch to a diamond, and I have no ready entry to hand to cash the top clubs.

To get around this I kept the ♠A as an entry. I won the opening lead with the ♠K and called for a club from dummy. North won the ♣A and returned a diamond to dummy but I was still one down. The full deal:

Board 4
Dealer W
Vul Both

♠ -
♥ KT5
♦ KQ9742
♣ AT92

♠ KT65
♥ 86432
♦ A83
♣ 7



♠ AJ9742
♥ 9
♦ JT
♣ KQ86

♠ Q83
♥ AQJ7
♦ 65
♣ J543

South did in fact lead away from ♠Qxx on the opening lead. Oh well.

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Interesting Hands ...

(by Leigh Matheson)

I made up for it in the next set when this hand produced fireworks:

Board 16
Dealer W
Vul E-W

♠ JT94	♠ A3	♠ KQ
♥ K4	♥ AJ7652	♥ Q
♦ 63	♦ QJT	♦ AK98542
♣ QT953	♣ J7	♣ AK8

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	-	2	-	-
E	5	4	-	2	3
W	5	4	-	2	3

Board 6
Dealer E
Vul E-W

♠ AT953	♠ 87	♠ K
♥ 7	♥ 94	♥ AKQJ8653
♦ T2	♦ AKQ76543	♦ J
♣ KT865	♣ 2	♣ AJ4

Makeable contracts

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	6	-	6	3	-
W	6	-	6	3	-

W	N	E	S
Pass	1♥	X	2♥
Pass	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

This was the auction at our table:

W	N	E	S
—	—	1♥	Pass
1♠	5♦	6♥	Pass
Pass	7♦	X	All Pass

South led the ♥10, low from dummy and North reluctantly played low, allowing my ♥Q to win the first trick. I then played trumps from the top, discarding a spade from dummy. North was now on lead and needed to guess which Ace to cash. Fortunately for me the ♥A hit the

6 of the 8 E/W pairs bid 6♥. Half of them were left there to score +1430. At the other 3 tables North found the nice grand slam sacrifice that goes for only 1100 and an 8 Imp gain.

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Interesting Hands ...

(by Leigh Matheson)

Richard McAuliffe found a nice play on this hand:

Board 20	♠ 73	
<i>Dealer W</i>	♥ KQT842	
<i>Vul Both</i>	♦ A3	
	♣ 874	
♠ AJT9865		♠ K
♥ J53		♥ A96
♦ K		♦ Q98752
♣ Q5		♣ A96
		♠ Q42
		♥ 7
		♦ JT64
		♣ KJT32

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	-	1	-	3	-
W	-	2	-	3	-

W	N	E	S
3♠	All		
	Pass		

West led the ♥K against 3♠. Fully appreciating this could be the layout, Richard played low from dummy. The defence continued with a heart ruff, diamond to the Ace and second heart ruff. But Richard was now in control. He could win any return, draw trumps and discard his club loser on the ♦Q. South exited with the ♣K, a Merrimac Coup to kill the entry to the diamond winners before trumps were drawn, but as declarer had only 1 loser to get away the contract made.

Late in the day this double dummy gem of a hand came up:

Board 23	♠ Q865	
<i>Dealer S</i>	♥ 87	
<i>Vul Both</i>	♦ 843	
	♣ QT72	
♠ 43		♠ KJT72
♥ 642		♥ KT95
♦ KJ952		♦ AT
♣ K84		♣ J9
		♠ A9
		♥ AQJ3
		♦ Q76
		♣ A653

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	1	2	1	-
W	-	1	1	1	-

W	N	E	S
—	—	—	1♣
Pass	Pass	1♠	X
Pass	1NT	2♥	All
			Pass

We've done well to right-side the contract, but with South's takeout double effectively showing 4 trumps sitting over me, I knew I had my work cut out.

South led the ♣A and another club to dummy's ♣K. I led a spade to the ♠J and ♠A and South continued with a third round of clubs, forcing me to ruff. I cashed the ♦A, ♦K and finessed the ♠10, reaching this position:

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(6 card ending)

♠ Q8
♥ 87
♦ 8
♣ Q

♠ —
♥ 642
♦ J95
♣ —

23
D

♠ K72
♥ K109
♦ —
♣ —

♠ —
♥ AQJ3
♦ Q
♣ 6

I led the ♠K and South is awkwardly placed. He elected to ruff with the ♥J and return the ♦Q, forcing me to ruff. Since West couldn't ruff with the ♥7 or ♥8, I basically know this to be the final 4-card end position:

(4 card ending)

♠ Q
♥ 87
♦ —
♣ Q

♠ —
♥ 642
♦ J
♣ —

23
D

♠ 72
♥ K10
♦ —
♣ —

♠ —
♥ AQ3
♦ —
♣ 6

Interesting Hands ...

(by Leigh Matheson)

Needing 2 of the last 4 tricks, I led a spade and South had no answer.

If South ruffs with the ♥Q, dummy discards a diamond. My ♥K10 can knock out the ♥A and dummy also ruffs a club.

South instead chose to discard (low ruffing also follows the same line of play). West ruffed and returned the ♦J, which everyone ruffs (North had to ruff to prevent me from discarding). South draws my trump, but dummy's ♥6 is bigger than South's ♥3.

Going back to the 6-card ending South could have defeated the contract by discarding the ♦Q on the ♠K! Now after the ♠K holds South can ruff the next spade with the ♥J and return the ♥3.

If you're scratching your head trying to follow, I'm with you. After all, I could have been the bright one to lead a LOW spade in the 6-card ending, which allows the contract to make no matter how the opponents defend.



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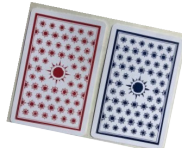
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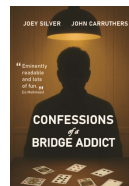
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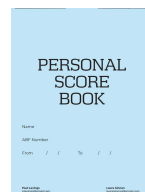
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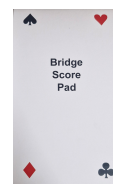
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