

Day 5 Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Championships, Hefei, China

Previous posts: [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 3](#), [Day 4](#).

Another hot and humid day in Hefei. Day 5 of the 2025 APBF sees the last two matches of the second round robin and the first match of the third. The way that the draw works the top ranked teams all play each other in the last few rounds so this is a hard day for us with matches against New Zealand and Japan.

[Match 6 RR 2](#) vs New Zealand (Hugh & George, David & Maurits)

After losing to NZ in the first round robin we are highly motivated to turn this around. Again, we are facing the same strong lineup.

An exciting and swingy set of boards saw us prevail by 22 IMP (58-36) for 15.66 VPs. A good win at a perfect time!

There were many interesting hands – here are some of the highlights (and lowlights).

[Board 19](#) was the third hand of the match. George opened 1H and Brian Mace made a modern style aggressive overcall of 1S on Kxxxx T9x K9xx x. This improved my hand and we bid a light slam. It turned out that this needed the S finesse but this was fairly marked on the bidding. +940 against -450 at the other table in 4H and 10 IMPs to us.

[Board 21](#) was a triumph for the Kiwis. David and Maurits doubled 3S and got off to the lead of the HA. Declarer had no trouble wrapping up 10 tricks for -930. George was more aggressive and overcalled 4S. This was doubled showing values and E tried 5C. I was tempted to double this but did not and regretted it when we beat them 2 tricks. As it turned out the double would only have saved one IMP. 13 IMPs to NZ.

[Board 26](#) was a close 4S contract, bid at both tables. Double dummy only 9 tricks could be made. George and I didn't find the winning defence, so we scored -620 and lost 12 IMPs when the contract went one down at the other table. 12 IMPs to NZ giving them a lead of 4 IMPs with 4 boards to go in the match.

[Board 27](#) was a part-score swing when David & Maurits made 2S. We defended the same contract and beat it two tricks after nice defence from George and unfortunate guessing from the declarer. 5 IMPs and we were back in the lead by 1.

[Board 28](#) was arguably the funniest hand of the event so far! Strap yourself in for a wild ride. At our table Brian Mace passed as dealer, a very conservative action in my opinion at the vulnerability (Maurits opened 4H at the other table). I opened 1C on my shapely 10 count and Malcolm Mayer overcalled 1D. George bid 1S and Brian came to life with 2H. I had a tricky decision. 2S was clearly not enough, 4S would typically be 18-19 balanced so that was out. I could bid 4D splinter but that seemed a bit much. I settled on 3S which reflected my playing strength but overstated my HCPs a little. Malcolm bid a surprisingly conservative 4H. George bid an enthusiastic 6S and I passed. Now Malcolm bid 7H! This was passed back to me. Clearly the auction was forcing so I doubled although not with much conviction. Now what to lead? I reluctantly chose the SA. The dummy was a great disappointment, and I found myself wondering if this was going to make. Brian ruffed in the dummy and led a small D from dummy's QJT842. George held AK965.

If you have been following my reports you might remember [a hand from Day 3](#) when we played the same pair and defended 5D. On that occasion George held AK9x in hearts and the dummy had JT8xxx. When Brian led a low card he rose with the Ace which now allowed Brian to make 5D by establishing the suit. This hand has been haunting George ever since and there was no way Brian was going to do this to him again! He envisaged a hand where Brian was void in diamonds so without a flicker he played low! I was somewhat surprised to win my singleton 7. Brian won my club return and trumped another diamond with the H7. To his amazement I overtrumped with the 8 and returned my other trump. He still had three spades

and could only trump two of them so that was 500 to us and 14 IMPs when Maurits made 13 tricks in 5H at the other table.

I hear some of you asking how could he possibly have made 13 tricks? One of the opponents revoked. Stress and tiredness are starting to take their toll.

On the [next hand](#) I was the dealer with x QJ987xx AJxx x at all vulnerable. I tried a sporting 4H opening (actually fairly normal probably). Malcolm had AT98x – KT98x xxx. He bid 4S which may seem deranged but certainly has my sympathy. George bid 5H and Brian tried 6S. George doubled this. He led the CA and gave me a ruff. I cashed the DA and played another one which George ruffed. Three down for 800 and another 12 IMPs when teammates bought the contract in 5S undoubled for -200 (notice that we could make 5H so 5S was a good sacrifice even if doubled).

The observant amongst you may have noticed that a trick was lost in the defence at both tables. Either a D lead or a D switch after the CA would have allowed the defence to take 2 diamond ruffs as well as 2 aces and a club ruff.

A good win and we hit the lead for the first time in the event.

Match 7 RR 2 vs Japan (David & Maurits, Hugh & George)

The last match of the second round robin against the strong Japan team who were just behind us on the leaderboard.

A much more normal set after the chaos of the previous match. A great result with a win by 24 IMPs (41-17) for 16.03 VPs.

We got off to a poor start at our table. On [Board 2](#) my left hand opponent opened 1D, George passed and RHO bid 3C, natural invitational. Vulnerable against not I held Kxxxx AJTxx xx x. It was very tempting to bid but also very dangerous. After some consideration I passed and 3C was the contract. We beat this one trick but this was poor compensation for the vulnerable game that we could have made in 4H. Interestingly it would have been better for us if the HK had been in the other hand. Now they would have made 3C but 4H would have gone one down. Possibly an example of be careful what you wish for! At the other table Maurits responded 1NT to the 1D opening and the Japanese were able to show both majors at the two level. They bid 4H to win 11 IMPs.

We struck back quickly on [Board 3](#) where both NS pairs saved in 5D over 4S. At our table W made a very poor decision to bid 5S and went 2 down for -200. David and Maurits doubled 5D for one off. A good result since 4S was not making against best defence. Bidding 5 over 5 is a perilous undertaking. 7 IMPs back.

[Board 5](#) was another 7 IMPs when I opened an aggressive weak 2 bid and the opponents slipped in the defence to allow the contract to make. At the other table my hand passed then responded 1NT after partner's opening bid. This went 2 down for -200.

On [Board 8](#) David and Maurits did well to bid 4H while our opponents made 9 tricks in 2C. Another 7 IMPs.

The last hand [Board 14](#) was a tricky 3NT contract. George got a soft defence and played carefully to make 9 tricks. David and Maurits found a much more challenging defence which resulted in one down and 10 IMPs to the good guys.

A great finish to the second round robin with us leading by 7 VPs from Indonesia with Japan another 8 VPs back in 3rd.

In the third round robin we will now play the other teams for the last time in reverse order of their finishing positions so the matches will get progressively more difficult.

Match 1 RR 3 vs Korea (David & Maurits, Phil & Terry)

Korea are the weakest team and have only won one match so far. The pressure is on for a win.

This was a very flat set which was not good for us. The team played well with few opportunities and eked out a win by 13 IMPs (26-13) for 13.72 VPs.

[Board 18](#) was lucky for us. Phil played in 4S on the lead of A and another D. When he misguessed the trumps he was going down on a diamond return ruffed. Fortunately, this did not happen and the contract made. 10 IMPs when they played 3S making at the other table.

[Board 21](#) was a tricky hand. David declared 3NT on a diamond lead to the K. There had been no opposition bidding so he had no clue that the diamonds were 7-2. He could have made the contract by ducking the first trick. Instead he wanted to keep the J of diamonds concealed so he won the first trick. This resulted in 4 down and 12 IMPs to Korea when they made 3NT at the other table. Ducking was probably the best technical play. I suspect I would have done what David did.

On [Board 26](#) David made 4H while the Korean declarer went down. The team didn't report to me how they managed to beat this contract, but the resulting 12 IMPs were very precious.

7 flat boards out of 14 was not what we hoped for against this team, but a win is a win.

Some favourable results in other matches meant that at the end of the day we were leading by 16 VPs from Indonesia with Japan 3VPs behind them in third. China is one VP further back in fourth place.

6 more matches to go – tension is high.

All the scores and hands are available [here](#).