

SESSION 6 Venice Cup / Final

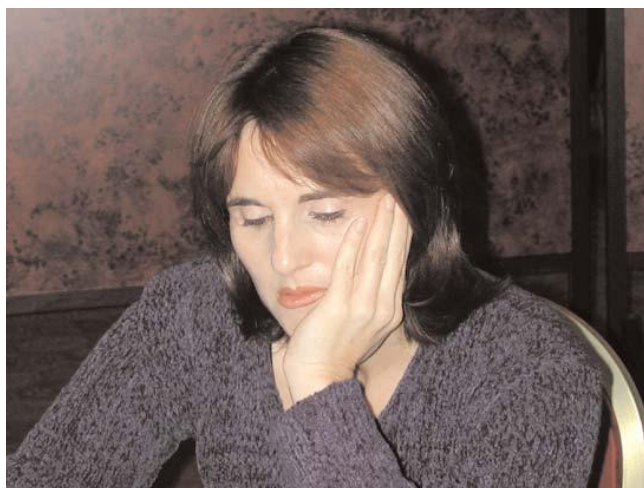


France v Germany



Making it Count

The dramatic conclusion to the Venice Cup Final is brought to you by Linda Lee of Masterpoint Press.



Daniela von Arnim, Germany

With sixteen boards to go in the Venice Cup, the score looked very rocky for the squad from Germany. The mostly French audience cheered as the players were named and play began. But the German ladies had come to play. They showed all of us how to come from behind, winning the set by 49 IMPs to win the world title by 2. The way to win is to find the courage to stay within yourself and simply play your very best.

The action started at Board 1. The auction in the closed room was very simple: West opened 1NT fourth in hand to buy the contract and failed by one trick, 50 points for Germany. In the open room the auction got very confused very quickly.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 4 2 ♥ 9 5 4 ♦ A 8 5 3 2 ♣ A Q 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 6 5 3 ♥ A J 10 ♦ 6 ♣ J 8 7 3 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ K Q 8 ♥ K Q 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ K 6 4		♠ A J 10 9 ♥ 8 7 6 ♦ K 9 7 4 ♣ 9 5										

West	North	East	South
Bessis	Auken	D'Ovidio	von Arnim
	1NT	Pass	Pass
Dble	Rdble	2♣	2♥
2NT	Pass	3NT	Dble
4♣	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

Auken's redouble showed some five-card suit other than clubs. Von Arnim wanted to compete over 2♣ and meant 2♥ as pass or correct. The French now lost their way in this complex auction and ended up in 4♣ doubled which failed by two tricks. That was 6 IMPs to Germany, who had started their comeback. The French lead was down to 41.

Board 4 was the first brilliancy by Von Arnim and although it only earned a single IMP it was a portent for the hands to come. The French ladies in the closed room had sold out to 2♠ played by West (Rauscheid) which failed by one trick, 100 to France. In the closed room Von Arnim competed to 3♥ and it was now up to her to make it and save the board.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 8 4 ♥ K 8 6 ♦ 7 6 3 2 ♣ A 6 3 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 7 6 ♥ 10 5 ♦ Q 5 4 ♣ K Q 10 8 7	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ Q J 9 5 3 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ K J 10 9 ♣ 4		♠ A 10 2 ♥ A J 9 7 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ J 9 5										

West	North	East	South
Bessis	Auken	D'Ovidio	von Arnim
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
1♠	Dble	2♠	Dble
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

Bessis led the ♣4 which von Arnim won in dummy with the ♠A. She now ducked the ♠10 to West's jack. Bessis returned the ♦J and Von Arnim made the key play of ducking this to break up the defenders' communication. Bessis continued with the ♦9 won by Von Arnim's ♦A. The key to the hand was to guess the heart position. Von Arnim reasoned that West had at most the KJ of diamonds and no club honours. It seemed that West had to have the ♥Q to justify her overcall so after a lot of thought Daniele took the backwards heart finesse, leading the ♥J from her hand, and was rewarded when the hearts lay perfectly for this play. After running the ♥J declarer had only to ruff a spade in dummy, cash the ♥K and guess the safe route off dummy by ruffing a diamond to draw the last trump.

The partisan audience sportingly applauded this inspired play by their opponents.

Board 5 brought 6 more IMPs for Germany when both sides reached 3♦ and the French had some problems on the play. Board 8 put Von Arnim on play again on a difficult hand.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ 9 5 3 ♥ A K 10 ♦ A K Q 2 ♣ Q 6 2	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ A K J 6 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 10 9 5 4 ♣ A 10 8	♠ Q 10 8 4 2 ♥ 9 8 6 5 ♦ 8 6 3 ♣ 4
N						
W     E						
S						

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Bessis	Auken	D'Ovidio	von Arnim
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Dble	3♣	All Pass	

In the closed room West opened the hand 1♦ and this became the final contract, making for +90.

In the open room the auction got more heated when Von Arnim overcalled her chunky four-card spade suit. South's 2♣ call was not forcing but Auken competed to 3♣ and it was now up to Von Arnim again. Bessis cashed the top two diamonds and correctly read D'Ovidio's ♦8 as a request for a spade shift. Von Arnim won the ♠A and played a heart to her ♥Q and Bessis' ♥J. The spade return went to the jack and queen, declarer ruffing. Declarer led a heart to Bessis' ♥10. After throwing a heart on the ♠A, Von Arnim now had to locate the ♣Q. Did she have enough clues? D'Ovidio had already shown up with the ♠Q and Bessis had shown a strong hand in the auction. But this was the one that got away when Von Arnim cashed the ♣A, misguessing the suit. Down one for 1 IMP away and a missed opportunity for German who still trailed by 35 with half the boards played.

Board 9 brought 12 more IMPs to Germany when the French side climbed all the way to 4♠ doubled down two tricks in the Open room in a competitive auction while the German East-West bought the hand in a quiet auction in 2♠. The once great lead had been cut to only 23 IMPs. The audience knew that this was now going to be a fierce battle.

Germany picked up an IMP for an overtrick on the next board, then Board 11 found Von Arnim on play with another queen to find.

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 2 ♥ 7 5 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 7 6 3 ♣ Q 4	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ A Q 6 3 ♥ A Q 8 6 ♦ 4 ♣ J 10 9 8	♠ 10 8 5 ♥ J 10 9 ♦ A 9 8 5 2 ♣ 3 2
N						
W     E						
S						

♠ K J 9 7 4	♥ K 4
♦ K	♣ A K 7 6 5

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Bessis	Auken	D'Ovidio	von Arnim
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠

In the closed room the French had already made 6♣ and Von Arnim had to find the ♣Q once again to avoid a loss which would surely end any chance for her team. The opening lead was the ♦Q won by the ♦A and now D'Ovidio, unaware of the critical importance of the club suit switched to the ♣3. After drawing trumps Von Arnim led the ♣J off dummy, believed D'Ovidio's club peter, and dropped the ♣Q to make her contract and win 2 IMPs for the German side. They were still trailing by 20 IMPs with 5 boards to go.

Board 12 produced a lead problem for the French that was destined to have major consequences.

Board 12. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ 6 4 2 ♥ Q 10 6 4 ♦ Q J 5 3 ♣ 9 4	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	♠ A 5 ♥ K 9 8 7 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ K Q J 10	♠ K Q 9 3 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ 7 5 2
N						
W     E						
S						

♠ J 10 8 7	♥ J 5
♦ K 7 2	♣ A 8 6 3

You see the following auction:

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

<sup>(1)</sup> Strong and artificial

What would you lead from ♠KQ93 ♥A32 ♦864 ♣752 after the above auction, knowing that your choice may decide the Venice Cup? It seemed as if D'Ovidio would guess correctly between the minor suits and lead a diamond, which would have beaten the game and pushed the board with the closed room. However, she kept fingering different spades and after several false starts and despite all the French supporters trying to 'think' her into a diamond lead by psycho-kinesis, the ♠3 became the lead and declarer was able to bring the game home. The lead was down to 8.

Board 13 and Board 14 were pushes and with only two deals left it seemed the French might just hang on.

Board 15, however, gave von Arnim one more chance to bring home the Cup.

Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

<p>♠ A J 8 7 6 5 ♥ 8 ♦ J 9 7 ♣ J 10 7</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W     E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W     E	S	<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ J 7 6 3 2 ♦ 6 2 ♣ A K Q 2</p>
N					
W     E					
S					
	<p>♠ K ♥ A Q 10 5 ♦ A Q 10 8 ♣ 9 8 4 3</p>				
	<p>♠ Q 9 4 2 ♥ K 9 4 ♦ K 5 4 3 ♣ 6 5</p>				

**Closed Room**

West	North	East	South
Rauscheid	Cronier	Nehmert	Willard
2♠	Dble	Pass	3♦
All Pass			

**Open Room**

West	North	East	South
Bessis	Auken	D'Ovidio	von Arnim
2♠	Dble	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The auction started out the same way in both rooms but the Germans, who had been the more aggressive bidders throughout the match, continued on to 3NT while the French stopped in 3♦. Von Arnim showed some values with her 3♦ bid and Auken liked her chunky suits and took a positive view of the value of the ♠K. The French had made +130 in the closed room. The spotlight was now on Bessis. If she could find a club lead the French could cash out for one down and would have a lock on the Venice Cup. On the lead of a heart or a club the Germans would have at most eight tricks without giving up a spade and the French would have another chance to defeat the contract. However, Bessis could not really be faulted for making the natural spade lead.

Now it was von Arnim's turn in the hot seat yet again. She had eight top tricks and the only hope for her contract was to bring the heart suit in for four tricks, correctly guessing the ♥J. After winning the opening lead with the ♠K in dummy von Arnim played off three rounds of diamonds, East discarding a heart. At this point nine of West's cards were known, six spades and three diamonds, and East had become a strong favourite to hold heart length. Von Arnim cashed one more diamond on which East let go a club, and then made the odds-on play of a heart to the ♥9 to make her contract and give Germany the lead by 2 IMPs. Some might argue that the technically correct play was to cash only three rounds of diamonds which would allow declarer to cash the ♥A before taking the heart finesse. But that is a quibble when one considers the courage needed to count out the hand and take a first-round finesse against a jack on the penultimate board of a very long and important match. Unfortunately for the French supporters the last board was flat and there was no opportunity for any final heroics from the French ladies. The Germans had come from behind outscoring their opponents 51 to 2 in the final stanza.

## The Norwegian Vikings

by Jon Sveindal

**TOR HELNESS** (b 1957) of Oslo, stockbroker, "Grand old man" of the successful Norwegian squad. Wife Gunn (also international for Norway) is here, as well as their two sons Jonas (15) and Fredrik (11) who spend long hours following the game in the VuGraph room. Amongst Tor's merits are silver and bronze in Bermuda Bowl, three bronzes in European Ch.ships, bronze from World Teams. He has also won several prestigious invitational events with his partner.

**GEIR HELGEMO** (b 1970) of Trondheim. Bridge celebrity #1 in Norway, and a bridge professional. Runs a daily column in Norway's biggest paper, "Verdens Gang". Rose from junior fame to world superstardom. Has several North American titles under his belt in addition to his World Individual Championship, two Bermuda Bowl medals and two medals from European teams. Co-author of several bridge books.

**TERJE AA** (b 1961) of Trondheim. Post office employee - married with two daughters. Successful internationally with his partner Glenn with two bronzes from Europeans, bronze and silver in Bermuda Bowl.

**GLENN GRØTHEIM** (b 1959) of Trondheim. Engineer working as an electricity broker. Married with two boys. Apart from his merits with Terje he has an additional bronze from Europeans. Put together "The Viking Club" - a relay precision system - which was published some ten years ago. An English edition was recently made available.

**(REIDAR) BOYE BROGELAND** (b 1973) of Bergen. Degree in economics and business administration, but being another junior celebrity who made it big with the big guys, he is of course a bridge professional. Publisher and editor of "Bridge i Norge", an independent bridge magazine. His cohabitor, Tonje Aasand, is prima inter pares among his many fans in Tenerife. While being rated the most prominent junior player from 1996 to 1999, Boye won two bronzes in the Europeans Championships, and a bronze medal in a Bermuda Bowl. His open merits are in partnership with.

**ERIK "SILDA" SÆLENSMINDE** (b 1964) of Bergen. The only one of the players who does not respond to anything but his nickname, meaning "The Herring". In fact, apart from "Coach", he is the only one with a nickname! Bridge professional whose carrier was boosted when he partnered Boye.

The Team: Nice guys and friends!

**EINAR ASBJØRN BRENNE (NPC)** of Trondheim. 54-year-old banking consultant, in charge of the team since 1997. Married with one daughter. A talented young player who took a long break and returned to the game as a very successful captain for Norway.

**ROLF E. "COACH" OLSEN** (Coach!) of Oslo. The 34-year-old accountant started coaching when Brenne took over, and his trustworthy and endless efforts for the team are praised by the others.