

- 1970: Born 14 February in Trondheim, Norway
- 1988: 3rd European Junior Teams, Plovdiv
- 1990: 1st European Junior Teams, Neumünster
- 1991: Norwegian Open team at Killarney Europeans & World Juniors, USA

# GEIR HELGEMO

- 1992: 3rd European Junior Teams, Palaiseau
- 1993: 3rd Menton Europeans;  
2nd World Junior Teams;  
2nd Bermuda Bowl, Santiago
- 1994: 1st *Cap Volmac* with Tor Helness;  
4th European Juniors, Arnhem
- 1995: 1st World Junior Pairs, Ghent, with Boye Brogeland
- 1996: 1st *Cap Volmac* Pairs with Tor Helness;  
Winner *Generali Masters Individual*, Paris;  
IBPA Personality of the Year



*The IBPA Personality of 1996  
interviewed by Patrick Jourdain*

Congratulations on becoming World Individual Champion at the tender age of 26. It was only last year people were calling you the world's best Junior player; they will have to upgrade that accolade now. Tell us something first about your family.

I have lived all my life in Trondheim, a coastal town in Norway. My father is an electrician, and my mother works in the office of his business. I have two sisters, one older and one younger than me.

**When did you start bridge?**

Both my parents played bridge, and I learned at the age of 12, playing at the nearby bridge club. I read books by Charles Goren, then Reese and Kelsey.

**Which was your first serious event?**

I played in the 1987 Nordic Championships in the under 20s team, but the first real test was the following year at the European Junior Teams in Plovdiv when we won the bronze medal.

**What were the highlights of your Junior career?**

In 1990 Norway won the Junior Europeans in Neumünster. We went to the USA for the World Juniors the following year, but didn't reach the semifinals. We were only third at the 1992 Junior Europeans but did better at the World Juniors in Denmark, losing to Germany in the final. In Arnhem, at the 1994 Junior Europeans, Norway just missed a medal. As Poland, third, could not go to Bali, Norway were invited, but our Federation did not take up the invitation. In 1995 **Boye Brogeland** and I won the first World Junior Pairs held at Ghent University.

**Did you go to University, and what about jobs?**

I read computer science at the University of Trondheim. Half-way through my last year I was offered the job of writing a daily bridge column in Norway's leading Daily, *VG*, which has a circulation of 400,000, a job I still have. I decided to make bridge my fulltime career, so left University early. As a player, my first professional engagement in the USA, which allows one to earn a proper wage, came last year in New Orleans. This year I was in *Rita Shugart's* team, partnering **Tony Forrester**.

**What about your partnerships in Norway?**

In the Norwegian Open team I partnered Glen Grotheim until Tor Helness and I formed a partnership in 1993. Tor and I won the *Cap Volmac* Invitational, the major Dutch event, in 1994 and this year, and were in the Norwegian team which took silver the 1993 Bermuda Bowl in Santiago, losing narrowly to the Netherlands in the final.

**As a Junior I remember you were overweight, but you have become slimmer in the last year. Do you have sporting interests?**

My exercise is playing squash. My other main hobby is less energetic: I am a keen football supporter, following Liverpool. Yes, I enjoy my food, but I don't smoke.

**If you had a magic wand to change something about bridge, what would it be?**

I would like bridge to be popular on television, because more TV coverage would solve other problems too.

**Have you any advice you would like to give the readers of *EBL Review*, for their bridge?**

Read more.

We have known you since 1988 in Plovdiv. It is rare for a successful bridge player to be so modest. Good luck with your future career, and thank you for your time.