

Whom Does The Five-Level Belong To?

By Ron Tacchi



France vs. Monaco



Open R3

France stormed out of the starting gate with a whitewash of Iceland and then scored over 75% of the available VPs against Slovenia to leave them leading Group A at the end of Day 1. Monaco, meanwhile, had two comfortable wins against Greece and Finland, which put them in fourth place. This meeting between two teams who would hope to be going to India could be crucial at the end of the competition. Both teams would be eager to do well and consolidate their position.

The French sent out the Bessis father and son partnership with Jean-Christophe Quantin and Marc Bompis to bat for them, whilst the Monégasque contingent comprised of the former Norwegians, Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness, with 'Fantunes' in the other room.

The match promised to be an interesting affair, so I sat back with my copy of *Fantunes Revealed* and awaited the excitement. The first board gave us a flavour of some of the distributions to come.

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

	♠ K J 8 6 4 2	
	♥ 8	
	♦ J 10 6 5 3	
	♣ K	
♠ -		♠ 10 9
♥ AKQJ97		♥ 10 4 2
♦ 9 4 2		♦ A 8 7
♣ AJ73		♣ 10 8 6 5 2
	♠ A Q 7 5 3	
	♥ 6 5 3	
	♦ K Q	
	♣ Q 9 4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Bessis T.</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Bessis M.</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	Pass
Pass	5♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

Here Thomas Bessis as North declined to enter the auction at the first opportunity and was probably surprised when his father opened the bidding with 1♠. Helgemo's 4♥ bid acted as a transfer to 4♠ for Bessis junior and Helness showed excellent judgement in bidding 5♥. Similar judgement was shown by North in raising to 5♠. I seem to remember a Bols Tip about the five-level, though it did not

seem to apply here. Quantin's double concluded the auction and declarer lost the three aces to be -100.

Five Hearts always makes because of the blockage in the diamond suit, assuming declarer can safely negotiate the club suit.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Quantin</i>	<i>Fantoni</i>	<i>Bompis</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
	3♠	Pass	4♠
5♥	Pass	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

In the Closed Room, Fantoni was not shy in showing his hand and Nunes tried his best to make things difficult for Quantin, who brushed the bid aside with a call of 5♥. This time it was Nunes who showed the good judgement by pushing on to 5♠. Here the final contract was not doubled, which meant a net gain of 2 IMPs for Monaco.

Board 18 was an overtrick IMP for Monaco when both rooms successfully reached 3NT and Board 19 was another flat 3NT. Then came Board 20. Had different teams been involved 'The Curse of Scotland' might have been invoked.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

	♠ A 7 6 5 4	
	♥ J 9 6 5	
	♦ 9	
	♣ 10 9 8	
♠ Q 3		♠ 8
♥ 4 3 2		♥ AKQ1087
♦ 7 6 5		♦ AQ842
♣ KQJ72		♣ 4
	♠ K J 10 9 2	
	♥ -	
	♦ K J 10 3	
	♣ A 6 5 3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Bessis T.</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Bessis M.</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	4♠	4NT	5♠
Dble	All Pass		

Yet again we arrive at the five-level in a doubled contract. Helgemo led the ♣K won in hand and trumps were drawn in two rounds ending in dummy. Now came the critical point. The nine of diamonds hit the baize and Helness showed his class by ducking in tempo and now Bessis senior had a decision to make. He rose with the king, but this meant he must now be one off. Had he run the nine he



Tor Helness, Monaco

would have made his contract – he comes to hand by ruffing a heart and then establishing a diamond with a double loser on loser play in that suit, thus coming to eleven tricks. Had the nine lost to the queen then he would almost certainly be two off, but surely Helness's forward move would be an indication of the diamond position and, according to my limited knowledge of game theory, gambling +850 against -500 is better odds than a guaranteed -200.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Quantin	Fantoni	Bompis	Nunes
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	4♠	5♥	5♠
All Pass			

Again the five-level was reached and the first three tricks were identical, but this time when the nine of diamonds was played from dummy Bompis hopped up with the ace, giving the contract to Nunes. The good news was that France had not doubled the contract but it was still 13 IMPs to Monaco.

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ A K 5 3	
	♥ 7	
	♦ K 6	
	♣ K Q 9 8 7 3	
♠ Q 10 6 2		♠ 7
♥ K 10 8 6 5 3		♥ A J 9 2
♦ Q 2		♦ J 7 5 4
♣ A		♣ 10 6 5 4
	♠ J 9 8 4	
	♥ Q 4	
	♦ A 10 9 8 3	
	♣ J 2	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Helgemo	Bessis T.	Helness	Bessis M.
	1♣	Pass	1♥*
2♥	4♣	5♥	Dble
All Pass			

1♥ 0-11 4+♠, possible longer minor

Yet again we reach the five-level doubled. Nunes's 1♥ response showed spades and fewer than 12 points and East took out insurance against 4♠, which fails on adequate defence.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Quantin	Fantoni	Bompis	Nunes
	1♣	Pass	1♥
2♥	3♠	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♥	Dble
All Pass			

Again East took out insurance and in both rooms the contract failed by one trick for a push. Board 22 was a push in a partscore.

Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

	♠ A K Q 8	
	♥ 10 8	
	♦ A Q 8 7 4	
	♣ K 4	
♠ 9 2		♠ J 6 3
♥ K 6 4 3		♥ J 9 7
♦ 5 3 2		♦ K J 10 6
♣ 10 8 6 5		♣ J 9 2
	♠ 10 7 5 4	
	♥ A Q 5 2	
	♦ 9	
	♣ A Q 7 3	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Helgemo	Bessis T.	Helness	Bessis M.
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

North/South had a controlled and unexciting auction to the best spot of 6♠. Declarer received the lead of a club, taken in dummy with the ace, and immediately took the finesse in diamonds which lost to the king. But declarer was in control and merely ruffed out the diamonds for his twelve tricks.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Quantin	Fantoni	Bompis	Nunes
Pass	2♣	Pass	INT
Pass	6♠	All Pass	3♣

After Nunes opened a weak NT, Fantoni invoked Stayman. Nunes's response showed 4-4-1-4 with specifically a singleton diamond. I wonder how many of us have a bid that highlights our singleton after we have opened a NT – weak or otherwise. The play was similar but Fantoni did not take the diamond finesse; he ruffed two diamonds and then exited with a small one and came to the same twelve tricks for another push.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

	♠ A J		
	♥ 9 8		
	♦ 7 6		
	♣ K Q 9 8 6 3 2		
♠ K 7 6 5 4		♠ Q 9 2	
♥ A K 10 7		♥ Q J 3 2	
♦ Q 8 5 2		♦ A 10 9 4 3	
♣ –		♣ 5	
	♠ 10 8 3		
	♥ 6 5 4		
	♦ K J		
	♣ A J 10 7 4		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Helgemo	Bessis T.	Helness	Bessis M.
1♠	2♣	3♣	5♣
Dble	All Pass		



Jean-Christophe Quantin, France

It is beginning to seem that if it is not played at the five-level then it is not worth playing. The defence started with the ♠K, taken with the ace and declarer fired back the ♠J, taken by the queen. Helness continued with a small ♥ and Helgemo took his ace-king and continued with a third round, ruffed high by declarer. He now tried a low diamond towards dummy and when Helness ducked (he had seen him do that earlier to devastating effect) he went up with the king, drew trumps and discarded his losing diamond on the good spade, escaping for one off and –100.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Quantin	Fantoni	Bompis	Nunes
1♠	2♣	Dble	5♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
5♥	All Pass		

This time East doubled rather than cue-bidding clubs and subsequently Quantin had the opportunity to bid his hearts – at the five-level naturally. Fantoni led his ♣K which declarer ruffed. He drew one round of trumps and played a small spade towards the queen, but Fantoni hopped up with the ace and continued with the jack, solving all declarer's problems in the trump suit. Quantin now drew trumps finishing in dummy and played a small diamond towards the queen. This time it was Nunes who hopped up with his king, and now declarer was home for a much needed 8 IMPs. France were now losing 8-16.

Over the next four boards France gained an IMP three times on overtricks to reduce Monaco's lead to 5 IMPs

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

	♠ J 4		
	♥ K 10 3		
	♦ A 10 8 4 3 2		
	♣ A 3		
♠ A Q 3		♠ 8 7 2	
♥ A 9 5 2		♥ Q 7 6	
♦ K 9 7		♦ 6 5	
♣ 5 4 2		♣ J 10 9 8 7	
	♠ K 10 9 6 5		
	♥ J 8 4		
	♦ Q J		
	♣ K Q 6		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Helgemo	Bessis T.	Helness	Bessis M.
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

There was considerable discussion as to the meanings of the 2♥ and 2♠ bids and no consensus was reached, whatever they meant the result was a contract inferior to 3NT. Helgemo started off with the two of clubs, taken by

