

Open Teams Round 5

By Ram Soffer



France v. Sweden



After four rounds the French team was ranked third in their group, slightly behind Norway and Austria. In round five they were tested against Sweden, the 2012 world champions.

The first deal was rather curious, but it provided no swing. Both Easts reached a 4♠ contract without revealing too much info, and both Souths had to lead from their ♣K 5 or ♦A 10 8 5 3 in order to cash four quick tricks plus a ruff. However, at the table the leaders made the more expert choices of ♠9 8 5 (Nyström) and ♥10 8 6 (Volcker), in both cases allowing the contract to make.

Two boards later there was a more delicate push:

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ♠ J 8 7 2 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ A J ♣ A 9 7 6 | ♠ 4 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ K 8 3 2 ♣ Q J 10 5 4 <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ A Q 10 6 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ K 8 ♠ K 9 5 3 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ Q 10 9 5 ♣ 3 2 | |
|--|--|---|--|



Alain Levy, France

| West | North | East | South |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>Bertheau</i> | <i>Levy</i> | <i>Cullin</i> | <i>Volcker</i> |
| Pass | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♣ | Dble | 3♦ | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

Levy didn't open, but he doubled West's 3♣ Puppet Stayman for the lead. Volcker led the ♣3, and Cullin was well aware of South's club shortness. He won his ♣K and continued immediately with ♠A and ♠10 from his hand, hoping to prevent a club ruff. However this turned out to be a losing play against the actual layout. Deep Finesse indicates a heart as the winning play at trick three, but that would have looked silly if hearts were 4-2. South ducked the ♠10 and declarer realized that continuing trumps would give him only nine tricks. He ruffed a club with the ♠Q, but South over-ruffed. Later North won the ♥A and gave his partner another overruff in clubs; E/W -100.

| West | North | East | South |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| <i>M. Bessis</i> | <i>Upmark</i> | <i>T. Bessis</i> | <i>Nyström</i> |
| Pass | 1♣ | Dble | 1♥ |
| 1NT | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

The Swedes sitting N/S were more active in the bidding. Upmark opened in the third seat, and Nyström's 1♥ was a transfer to spades, so a 4♠ contract was out of the question, and the French reached 3NT instead.

Upmark led the ♣Q, taken by dummy's ♣K while declarer dropped a deceptive ♣9. Michel Bessis played hearts, and Upmark waited with his ace until the third round, seeing 9-6-5 from his partner, a significant suit-preference signal warning against a club continuation.

Playing a spade would have been pointless, so North's choice was between a club and a diamond. Upmark gave it a long consideration before putting the ♦3 on the table. The Swedes found the killing defence, and Michel had to concede a heart, a spade and three diamond tricks for -100 and a push.

(For the record, Deep Finesse points out many winning options in Four Spades but almost all of them involve not playing two rounds of trumps early, relying on a heart break instead of a trump break. Almost everyone who brought home the spade game benefited from a defensive error.)

On the next board France broke the scoreless tie with two overtrick IMPs, and they added six more when Sweden failed to bid a game which depended on little more than a finesse.



Fredrik Nyström, Sweden
Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
| ♠ 8 7 ♥ K 3 ♦ A J 10 7 3 ♣ Q 8 5 4 | <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ K 10 4 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ K 9 6 3 | |
| ♠ Q J 9 6 5 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ 7 2 | | ♠ A 3 ♥ Q J 10 9 6 4 ♦ 9 8 ♣ A J 10 | |
| West <i>Bertheau</i> | North <i>Levy</i> | East <i>Cullin</i> | South <i>Volcker</i> |
| Pass Pass Pass All Pass | INT 2♠ 3♥ | Pass Pass Pass | 1♥ 2♥ 2NT 4♥ |

Levy invited a game in hearts, and with two aces and a good trump sequence Volcker considered his hand good enough despite the minimal point count. Nothing much happened in the play. Bertheau's club lead (the seven, playing third and fifth) was covered by the queen, king and ace, so Volcker merely had to draw trumps, but he would have finessed clubs anyway; N/S +420.

(Had East ducked the club king at trick one, best defence would have been for West to win his heart ace and shift to a diamond, for East to win and play back a spade, giving declarer some losing options.)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| West <i>M. Bessis</i> | North <i>Upmark</i> | East <i>T. Bessis</i> | South <i>Nyström</i> |
| Pass 2♠ | Pass 3♥ | Pass Dble All Pass | 2♥ Pass |

The Swedish 2♥ opening showed 10-13 HCP with 6+ hearts. North had a very useful 10-count but Upmark didn't consider this hand worthy of an invitation. Thomas Bessis's reopening double gave him a second chance, but Upmark stuck to his principles. His 3♥ call was merely competitive, and Sweden had to settle for a disappointing +170.

There followed some uneventful laydown games, and the match seemed destined to be a low-scoring one, when France extended their lead with a useful partscore swing.

Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| ♠ 9 8 6 2 ♥ K 10 9 6 5 ♦ A 6 4 ♣ 10 | <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60px; height: 60px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ K 7 5 3 ♥ 7 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ K J 8 5 2 | |
| | | ♠ A J ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ A 9 7 3 | |
| West <i>Bertheau</i> | North <i>Levy</i> | East <i>Cullin</i> | South <i>Volcker</i> |
| All Pass | All Pass | All Pass | INT |

Bertheau led an unfortunate ♥6, taken by declarer's ♥8. Volcker switched to diamonds. With no better option in sight, Cullin won the ♦K and continued the suit. Upon winning the ♦A, West had no good defence available. He continued a spade, allowing declarer to score two spades, three hearts, two diamonds and a club; N/S +120.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| West <i>M. Bessis</i> | North <i>Upmark</i> | East <i>T. Bessis</i> | South <i>Nyström</i> |
| Pass 2♦ | Pass Pass | Dble 2♠ | INT Pass All Pass |

Thomas reopened with a double showing a four-card major plus a 5+ card minor. The French reached an excellent 2♠ contract. Upmark could have done better had he competed to 2NT, but then his partner might not have interpreted this bid as natural. The play was not hard. After a diamond lead declarer played a heart towards the ♥K, ran the ♣10 and continued on crossruff lines, finally emerging with eight tricks; E/W +110 and 6 more IMPs to France.

In the following deal France showed that when one defends well there is no need to save aggressively.

Board 28. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| | ♠ A 10 9 | | |
| | ♥ 10 2 | | |
| | ♦ Q 8 4 | | |
| | ♣ A J 7 6 5 | | |
| ♠ 7 5 2 | N | ♠ K J 8 6 4 | |
| ♥ J 7 5 3 | W | ♥ K Q 4 | |
| ♦ 10 6 5 3 | E | ♦ A K 9 2 | |
| ♣ 10 4 | S | ♣ 2 | |
| | ♠ Q 3 | | |
| | ♥ A 9 8 6 | | |
| | ♦ J 7 | | |
| | ♣ K Q 9 8 3 | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Bertheau | Levy | Cullin | Volcker |
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| Pass | INT | 2♦ | Dble |
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | 2NT |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | Pass |
| 4♦ | Dble | All Pass | |

The French play sound opening bids, so Volcker could afford an invitation to game despite Levy being a passed hand. Probably he upgraded his hand due to the fact that after North's INT, his doubleton queen of spades practically serves as a second stopper.

Bertheau believed that his hand would not contribute much to the defence against 3NT, and reckoned that a 4♦ save would not be too expensive. Cullin lost the obvious five tricks for -300.

| West | North | East | South |
|-----------|--------|-----------|---------|
| M. Bessis | Upmark | T. Bessis | Nyström |
| Pass | 1♣ | 1♠ | Dble |
| Pass | INT | Dble | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | Dble |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3♠ |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

After Upmark opened the North hand, one could not expect the Swedes to stop short of game. At this table East didn't mention his diamonds, so a save was not really an option.

Declarer has eight easy tricks, but for the ninth he needs a little bit of cooperation from the defence. A spade lead would have been good enough, but Thomas chose the ♦A. Michel signalled standard count with the ♦6, and Thomas switched to the ♥K. Upmark ducked and East continued with the ♥Q, taken by dummy's ♥A.

At this point there was no winning line. If declarer develops a second heart trick, West wins and plays a spade before declarer has time to develop a diamond trick. Upmark tried a diamond, and now East had to win the ♦K and continue the suit. Thomas, who already knew the count, found this defence instantly; France +100 and 9 IMPs.

This increased France's lead to 23-3, and it became a rout when Nyström/Upmark produced two unfortunate results (one hesitates to say errors but...) in the last four boards.

Board 29. Dealer North. All Vul.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| | ♠ K 8 6 2 | | |
| | ♥ A 9 7 | | |
| | ♦ 3 | | |
| | ♣ J 7 4 3 2 | | |
| ♠ A 7 3 | N | ♠ J 9 4 | |
| ♥ 8 2 | W | ♥ 6 3 | |
| ♦ Q 9 5 | E | ♦ A 10 8 7 4 | |
| ♣ K Q 9 6 5 | S | ♣ A 10 8 | |
| | ♠ Q 10 5 | | |
| | ♥ K Q J 10 5 4 | | |
| | ♦ K J 6 2 | | |
| | ♣ - | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|-----------|--------|-----------|---------|
| M. Bessis | Upmark | T. Bessis | Nyström |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2♣ | Pass | 4♥ |
| All Pass | | | |

A routine game was reached after a simple Drury sequence. With spades behaving it seemed that nothing could go wrong for declarer. The ♣K lead was ruffed. Declarer played the ♦J taken by West's ♦Q, and Michel continued with another club. This tempted Nyström into a losing crossruff line. He ruffed all three of his diamond losers, using club ruffs as a means of transportation, but on the fourth rounds of clubs Thomas discarded a spade. When declarer finally attacked spades, Michel won his ♠A and continued with the ♣Q on which East discarded his last spade. Thus declarer lost control, making nine trump tricks but no other tricks at all. Sweden was the only team in the Open championship to go minus with the N/S cards.



Frédéric Volcker, France

Board 31. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Bertheau | Levy | Cullin | Volcker |
| 1♠ | Dble | 2♠ | 1♣ |
| Pass | 5♣ | All Pass | 3♦ |

This was simple and efficient bidding by the French pair. Volcker showed a strong minor-suited hand. Levy saw no slam prospects and signed off immediately in 5♣. By the way, this pair uses a game forcing 2♦ opening and a semi-forcing 2♣ opening which South could have used with a better hand. The play was trivial: West cashed his aces and declarer claimed the rest.

| West | North | East | South |
|-----------|--------|-----------|----------|
| M. Bessis | Upmark | T. Bessis | Nyström |
| 1♠ | Dble | Pass | 2♦ |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3♠ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4♣ |
| Pass | 4♦ | Pass | 4♥ |
| Pass | 4♠ | Pass | 4NT |
| Pass | 5♦ | Pass | 5♠ |
| Pass | 5NT | Dble | Pass |
| Pass | 6♣ | Dble | All Pass |

Perhaps out of frustration, the Swedish pair was pressing too hard, cuebidding all over the place despite lacking real slam values. When Nyström, having already bypassed 5♣, discovered the bitter truth that two aces were missing, he tried to sign off in 5NT, but Thomas Bessis had had enough of this nonsense and doubled. After long thought Upmark retreated to the hopeless 6♣, avoiding the ignominy of going down three in 5NT doubled.

France won 48-10, moving to the top of their group. As for Sweden, it was a match to forget, but there are still plenty of matches in which to make amends.

You can replay all the deals from this match at:
[BBO France v. Sweden 05](#)

Killing Lead

By Brian Senior

Opening leads are, perhaps, the most difficult part of the game, so I am always impressed by anyone who finds a good one. What do you think of this effort by Apolinary Kowalski for the Polish Senior team in its Round 5 match against England?

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

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

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Kowalski | Price | Romanski | Simpson |
| 2♦ | 1♦ | Pass | 1♠ |
| | 4♠ | All Pass | |

Kowalski showed his two-suiter by cuebidding 2♦ but, with no support for either suit from his partner, wasn't that keen on either as his opening lead. Of course, despite the double fit, Jacek Romanski had simply not been prepared to be bullied into bidding at the five level by David Price's leap to 4♠.

But Kowalski had available to him a very attractive deceptive lead through dummy's side suit. He led the four of diamonds! Quite apart from the fact that it was almost impossible for Colin Simpson to play for the actual diamond position after this lead, even had he done so by finessing he would still have been defeated as Kowalski had established a diamond ruff for his partner while defensive communications were still intact – East can win the queen of spades and put West in with a club to get his ruff for down one. In practice, of course, Simpson rose with dummy's ace at trick one and hoped to bring in the trumps without loss. His best efforts eventually led to down two for –100.

Note that, on the most popular lead of a low heart into the ace-queen, careful play sees declarer home with ten tricks, though the choice of play at trick three (diamond finesse or a spade to the jack), is a tough one. What declarer could not afford would be to cash the top spades at trick three and four.