

# Open Teams Round 9

By Ron Tacchi



## France vs. Estonia



At the end of the third day we were approaching the halfway point of the first stage of the Open Teams. In their group France were lying second to Norway whilst Estonia were clinging on to the important ninth spot which would just see them through to the final round robin. France were represented in the Open Room by the father and son Bessis pairing with Alain Levy and Frederic Volcker in the Closed Room. Facing them from Estonia were Tiit Laanemae and Maksim Karpov in the Open Room and Olavi Oja and Jaanus Maripuu in the other.

It was a match of missed opportunities; it was as though both teams had not really woken up, perhaps a hint of fatigue is already creeping in

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vul.

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



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
Rdbl	1♣	1♠	Dble
3♠	INT	2♠	Pass
	All Pass		

Here East/West just got a level higher than in the Closed Room. Declarer won the club lead with the ace and played another round discarding his losing diamond and ruffed the club continuation. He now led the ♥4 from hand and inexplicably played the ♥3 from dummy. There was now no way to make the contract and was one off; -50.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
INT	1♦	1♠	Dble
	Pass	2♠	All Pass

At this table declarer won the club lead with the ace and

came back to hand with a diamond and immediately led a small heart towards the queen which was taken by the king. North now continued with a small heart and declarer played the ace and so was held to his contract, but 4 IMPs to France

Board 18 was a flat 3NT +1.

Board 19. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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



Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
Pass	INT	All Pass	Pass

On a club lead Thomas tried to make his contract by playing a small diamond to the king, which held and then a small spade to the king in his hand but West popped up with his ace and cashed out. Thus declarer was two down, but he risked the extra undertrick in return for the chance of making his contract.



Thomas Bessis, France

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
Pass	4♥	All Pass	2♣*

South had a special club in his bag and was obviously determined to use it. The system notes for an opening 2♣ states 5-10 points 5+4+ Majors (possibly 4-4 Non Vul.) I like gadgets as much as the next person but frequently they get abused and that leads to results like 4♥ three down, he was lucky it wasn't worse than 2 IMPs.

Board 20 was a spade partial and Estonia made an additional trick and so gained an IMP.



**Maksim Karpov, Estonia**

Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 6 4 2		♠ 10	
♥ J 5		♥ Q 10 3	
♦ Q 10 8 5		♦ J 9 7 6 2	
♣ Q 9 7 6		♣ A K 5 4	
♠ A K Q 8 7 5	<b>N</b>	♠ 4 2	♠ Q J 6 3
♥ A K 7 4 2	<b>W</b>	♥ 10 9 6	♥ A 8 4
♦ 4	<b>E</b>	♦ A 6 3	♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ J	<b>S</b>	♣ K Q 10 9 3	♣ 7 2
		♠ A K 10 9 8	
		♥ 5 3 2	
		♦ K 9 8	
		♣ A 4	

Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 6 4 2		♠ 10	
♥ J 5		♥ Q 10 3	
♦ Q 10 8 5		♦ J 9 7 6 2	
♣ Q 9 7 6		♣ A K 5 4	
♠ A K Q 8 7 5	<b>N</b>	♠ 4 2	♠ Q J 6 3
♥ A K 7 4 2	<b>W</b>	♥ 10 9 6	♥ A 8 4
♦ 4	<b>E</b>	♦ A 6 3	♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ J	<b>S</b>	♣ K Q 10 9 3	♣ 7 2
		♠ A K 10 9 8	
		♥ 5 3 2	
		♦ K 9 8	
		♣ A 4	

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♥	All Pass

Laanemae's 2♦ was a game force and the club response showed that ace. West then bid out his shape and when Karpov raised hearts I was mentally working out the odds of the slam, in fact they were zero as West could not find it in himself to bid one more.

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Levy's 2♣ opener was strong but not gameforcing, apparently the 4♦ bid shows precisely 6♠ and 5♥ and when East chose his suit that was the end of the bidding.

Only eight out of the other 34 Open Pairs failed to bid a slam and also 70% of the 26 Senior Pairs bid a slam, though to be fair that included the Polish Seniors who managed to play in 6♣ which was not a success.

Open Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Thomas received the lead of a diamond taken by the ace in West's hand. He continued the suit, and declarer won in hand and played a small spade and when East did not split his honours he successfully tried the eight which held the trick. He now switched to hearts and even though the ace was offside the kind split saw declarer home with three spades, three hearts, two diamonds and a club.

Closed Room

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The lead and continuation was the same as the Open Room, but when declarer led a small Spade, he played the king and there was now no way back for declarer. He finished one down and 10 IMPs to France to lead 16-1.

From my limited knowledge of statistics the double finesse is a better option than playing off AK, I have no doubt I will get a torrent of email telling me I am wrong, but I checked my sums and I think I am right.

Board 23 was yet another spade partial and another overtrick IMP to France.

Board 24. Dealer West. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
5♣	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

After his father's double Thomas tanked, for so long in fact that the Reverend Wilbert Awdry had time to write another story entitled 'Thomas gets stuck on the bridge'. He emerged from his reveries with a bid of 5NT. There will be others more proficient than I who will discuss the various merits of the bid but the contract failed due to the 4-1 split in spades, however, that cannot be seen as unlucky if West has eight or nine clubs.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
5♣	All Pass		



Tiit Laanemae, Estonia

Here South was more timid and West was allowed to play and peacefully go one off. So after all the excitement Estonia gained three IMPs.

Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
	1♥	2♥	Pass
2♠	All Pass		

It seemed very timid for South not to risk supporting hearts on his hand. True, he knows the hearts are unlikely to split kindly but at least the honours will be relatively well placed. West had no problems bringing the contract home for +110.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
	1♥	2♥*	Pass
2♠	3♦	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

This time it was North who was aggressive with his 3♦ bid, and could you make a case for bidding 4♥ with the South hand having passed the first time? Declarer quickly wrapped up ten tricks for a gain of 7 IMPs.

Board 26 was an unexciting push in 4♥ +1.

Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	2♥

Call me old-fashioned ('you're old-fashioned') but if you are going to open grotty eleven counts then on this auction partner surely can only bid 3♥ not four. The contract was hopeless and was three down for -150.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
1♥	Pass	2♣	1♦*
Pass	Dble	All Pass	Pass

South's opening 1♦ was 11-14 balanced or 4-4-4-1 or a five-card minor. West with his magnificent hand (are you sensing irony?) intervened with 1♥. East tried 2♣ which was passed round to North who produced a red card which South was happy to convert to penalties. The contract was fated to go down but defence and declarer tried unsuccessfully to avert the contract being one off. So 6 IMPs to Estonia and now the contest was stalled at 17 IMPs apiece.

Boards 28 and 29 were pushes.

Board 30. Dealer East. None Vul.

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

Open and Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
Dble	All Pass	4♥	4♠

The sequence was the same at both tables. I tried to find how many times the East hand was opened 4♥ but unfortunately the data was not readily available but given that half the contracts were below the level of 4♥ then it was not a unanimous decision, but as usual it acted as a

transfer to 4♠ to which West was happy to give the red card treatment. I was surprised at the Estonian's opening bid and almost flabbergasted when the French East bid likewise. Generally speaking, the French are much more serré about pre-empts, if I were to do that at my club a fleet of ambulances would be required to take away the faint-hearted.

Board 31 was yet another spade partial and this time Estonia gained the overtrick IMP which turned out to be the decisive score.

Board 32. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Laanemae	Bessis T.	Karpov	Bessis M.
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Who is to blame here for not reaching an excellent slam. My money is on the 3♠ bidder. Partner has already forced to game with his 2♣ bid. Why don't we go slowly and discover more about his hand; a simple rebid of 2♦ or 2♠ will allow South to show his spade support and now we can investigate slam possibilities.

69% of the remaining Open teams reached the slam - a good position for them to be in.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levy	Maripuu	Volcker	Oja
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Perhaps tired after sixteen boards and wanting to get things over, but a chance missed of a 11 IMP pick-up. However Estonia won the match by the narrowest of margins 10.31-9.69 VPs

You can replay all the deals from this match at:

[BBO France v Estonia](#)