

the second round of trumps, you win with dummy's ace. You continue with the king of clubs and a club ruff.

If West shows out, you will cash the king of clubs and ruff a club low. Again you will need to cash dummy's winners in spades and diamonds before you lead the nine of trumps. (If you fail to, East will defeat you if he can play a fourth club; that will reduce you to two trumps in hand and, as the only way back to your hand after cashing the spade and diamond winners is with a spade ruff, East will then make a long trump.)

## An Interview With Alex Smirnov

Our Fearless Reporter (aka Peter Gill) was despatched to interview Alex, a player who has created an incredible sequence of results in the last year and a half. Alex has been playing this week, as he did last year in the Youth Team.

**FR:** In the last 15 months, you've come second in the 2009 Reisinger, second in the 2010 NOT, third in the Cavendish Pairs, topped the datums at the Bermuda Bowl, third in the World Open pairs in Philadelphia and second in the 2010 Resinger. Which of these is the most memorable?

**Alex:** The two thirds at the Cavendish and World Pairs. The 2010 World Championship book will include the very last hand of the Pairs when we moved from fourth place to third.

**FR:** How do our events in Canberra compare with German events?

**Alex:** This is much larger and very enjoyable.

**FR:** And. compared to World events?

**Alex:** Good organization here in Australia, very good

**FR:** Any criticisms?

**Alex:** You need to fix up the NOT timetable. A late night finish on Friday means Saturday must start later than 9am. And there needs to be an adequate amount of time for lunch on Saturday, even if this means an 8.30 finish.

**FR:** You topped the datums at last week's Youth Teams, partnered by Gary Khemka, ahead of all the pairs in our national Youth Team. Who is Gary Khemka?

**Alex:** He's from India and has played bridge for about a year in Canberra.

**FR:** Any comments on Youth Week?

**Alex:** It's good fun – everyone is so friendly

**FR :** How old are you?

**Alex:** 28

**FR:** And you learnt bridge?

**Alex:** At age 5, playing rubber in St Petersburg, Russia

**FR:** And duplicate?

**Alex:** At age 9

**FR:** What do you do for a living?

**Alex:** I'm a professional bridge player and I have a bridge college in Lubeck teaching bridge. I have my own club so I also organise duplicates.

**FR:** In the last five years, you and Josef Piekarek have developed an excellent partnership in the German Open team. How did you get to be so good at such a young age?

**Alex:** I practised with Josef a lot. We both had to work at first, so we bid hands together on



BBO every night from 11.30pm to 2.00 am, 5 days a week for 3 years.

**FR:** Such dedication

**Alex:** Yes, you have to put the work in if you want to succeed. We also played against good opponents that helps you to improve.

**FR:** We Aussies think that we have a group of good young players with some prospects of winning a world youth championship. Do you agree?

**Alex:** Yes.

**FR:** What can be done to help their ambition?

**Alex:** They have to practise bidding a lot and maybe develop a better system, more agreements. Take some time each day to improve cardplay, reading books, play BridgeMaster.

**FR:** If the ABF offered to pay you to coach our young players, would you?

**Alex:** Yes, either here or on BBO

**FR:** Outside of bridge, your interests are?

**Alex:** Sport – running and swimming, every day if possible. Also music and movies.

**FR:** No relatives of chess or vodka fame?

**Alex:** No

**FR:** Thank you and good luck in the NOT. May all your redoubled contracts make.

**Alex:** He will make it!

(At the time of interview, Alex and Peter were watching Alex's teammate, Liam Milne, make 3♥xx. Liam's partner opened 2NT, pass and Liam bid 3♥ on

♠ J 8 4 3 2 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A K 8 7

Next hand doubles and partner redoubles. A pass and its your bid?

At another table, someone said that their partner wooed out. Liam is not a woose. +960

♠ J8432

♥ 63

♦ 73

♣ AK87

♠ 105

♥ 72

♦ J109642

♣ 1096

♠ Q97

♥ AQ854

♦ 5

♣ Q532

♠ AK6

♥ KJ109

♦ AKQ8

♣ J4

## Where The Wild Things Are



Some wild and woolly distributions in the hands for Saturday's NOT.

You hold

♠ - ♥ A Q J 10 3 ♦ J 2 ♣ A J 9 6 5 3

and rho opens 2♥!

Tony Nunn disregarded the advice about not bidding with length in the opponents' suit and overcalled 3♣. Sartaj Hans was there for Tony

