

World Bridge Championships  
Philadelphia, 2010  
Open Pairs Final

Part I

***In Karl Gohl's memory. Karl, I always enjoyed playing together. Neil***

After 5 qualifying and 5 semi-final sessions Karl Gohl and I made it to the finals of the Worlds Pairs Championship held in Philadelphia, October 2010. 250 pairs started playing the qualifying with about 130 advancing to the semis. In the semis 50 odd pairs dropped in from the Rosenblum to make it a 182 pairs, of which only 49 qualified for the finals. We were the only Canadians in the final.

Qualifying Sessions

We started off with a 46% game in the 1<sup>st</sup> qualifying, but our scores continued to improve every session, and we qualified 109th.

Here is a hand from the 3<sup>rd</sup> qualifying in which I was very impressed with our bidding, until I saw dummy!

E-W Vulnerable, I held ♠K8 ♥Q732 ♦KQJ432 ♣A as North and bid 1♦. The bidding continued:

West	Kimelman	East	Gohl
-	1♦	Double	Redouble
Pass	Pass	1♥	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	?		

In our system a bid of 2♦ denies two hearts – partner not interested in hearing me double 1♥. His 2NT showed a heart stopper, thus he had to have a stiff A♥. With this reasoning I asked for key cards and bid 6♦. The full deal:

	♠ K8	
	♥ Q732	
	♦ KQJ432	
	♣ A	
♠ 9653		♠ J1074
♥ J106		♥ K854

♦ 8	♦ A6
♣ 108763	♣ KQJ
	♠ AQ2
	♥ A9
	♦ 10975
	♣ 9542

I was unhappy when I saw dummy, but only on the inside ☺. I won the ♣K lead with ace, and played a small diamond towards dummy. East did well to go up with the ace, and play another club (otherwise I can partially strip the hand and endplay him, to lead away from the ♥K). He did 'less well' when he didn't cover the Q♥ after I had ruffed the club return and pulled his trump.

### The Semis

In the semis we were very consistent. The 1<sup>st</sup> session was our worst, 50.76%, good for 86<sup>th</sup> place. We moved up every session, 79<sup>th</sup>, 57<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and finally 45<sup>th</sup>. We averaged 52.14% during the five sessions. Considering ourselves IMP players, I was surprised how many matchpoints we generated – lots! Here was a big swing hand from the 3<sup>rd</sup> semi, that didn't go our way, but was especially bitter: Karl held, Vul. vs. not: ♠KJ62 ♥AK2 ♦J ♣AQ963 and heard:

West	Kimelman	East	Gohl
-	1NT <sup>1</sup>	3♦	4♣
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

<sup>1</sup>12-14.

East led the K♦ out of turn. We were late and Karl quickly forbid a diamond lead. It could have been right, but it wasn't. I held ♠Q97 ♥QJ6 ♦A86 ♣K1052. West led the A♠ and gave his partner a spade ruff! Ouch! The adage, 'A person who doesn't know whose lead it is probably doesn't know the right lead either' proved true once again.

### The Final

With the medal winners dropping in from the Rosenblum the field consisted of 72 of the strongest pairs in the world. There was no carryover. Each pair played each other once, 2 boards. All boards were played simultaneously, avoiding many ethical issues, as well as allowing barometer scoring. After every four boards each pair was provided with a recap

of these boards. This recap showed the hands, who played whom, the score of each pair, their matchpoints and the up-to-date standings in the event. Nice!!

Unfortunately, Karl caught a bad cold the night before the Final started. Despite this we had a good start, and were 16<sup>th</sup> after 4 boards (can we stop now?) This is partially due to the following hand, where I had a tough decision (hands rotated), vul vs. not:

♠Q843 ♥J32 ♦AJ10984 ♣Void

West	North	East	South
Li	Gohl	Tong	Kimelman

-	1NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	2♠	?

<sup>1</sup>12-14

I considered doubling, but chose to bid 3♦ as my spade spots were poor, the opponents were not vulnerable, and they were marked with at least a seven card heart fit. The full deal:

	♠ 107	
	♥ A7	
	♦ 7532	
	♣ AK984	
♠ 65		♠ AKJ92
♥ K10854		♥ Q96
♦ Q		♦ K6
♣ Q10532		♣ J76
	♠ Q843	
	♥ J32	
	♦ AJ10984	
	♣ Void	

3♦ making 4 was worth 53 matchpoints (70 top), beating all the pairs defending against two of a major, down one.

Will our good play, luck, and Karl's health hold?

To be continued.....

