Online Contract Bridge League

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PEANUTS AGAIN!

H. Setton

T. Bessis

P. Franceschetti

C. Lorenzini

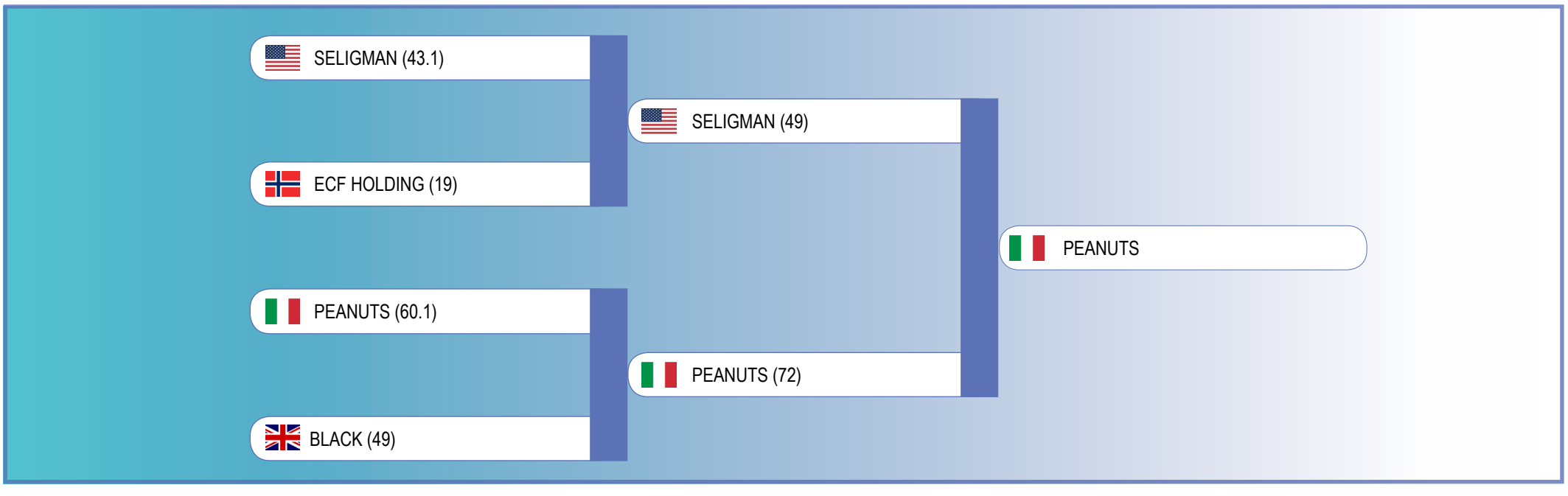
Q. Robert

HALLOWEEN CUP
5th PLACE SWISS

1	Friends	120.02
2	Greenberg	116.07
3	Scorway	113.99
4	Fredin	113.5
5	New Amateurs	112.92
6	Yellow Cap	109.44
7	Harris	104.62
8	Netbridge	76.93

Team PEANUTS won the HALLOWEEN CUP!
They had won the October Cup just 3 weeks ago, so this is their second victory in a row in OCBL events.

In the Final, PEANUTS: (Lorenzini C., Setton H., Franceschetti P., Robert Q., Bessis T.) faced SELIGMAN (Seligman M., Kwiecien M., Pszczola J., Starkowski W.). The match ended 72-49 IMPs for PEANUTS.
Team BLACK (Black A., McIntosh A., Gold D., Paske T., Hult S., Hallberg G.) won the match for the 3rd place.



Online Contract Bridge League

OCBL
UPCOMING EVENTS

MON - TUE SWISS
21 - 22 November, 2022

10 Rounds x 8 boards

	CEST	EDT
Monday, 21 November	16.00 - 17.15 - 18.30 - 19.45 - 21.00	10.00 - 11.15 - 12.30 - 13.45 - 15.00
Tuesday, 22 November	16.00 - 17.15 - 18.30 - 19.45 - 21.00	10.00 - 11.15 - 12.30 - 13.45 - 15.00

DECEMBER CUP
13 - 15 December, 2022

12 Rounds x 10 boards

	CEST	EDT
Tuesday, 13 December R1 - R4	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30
Wednesday, 14 December R5 - R8	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30
Thursday, 15 December R9 - R12 & SF/F	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

https://www.ocbl.org/registration/

Rounds 7 & 8

by Brian Senior

Round 7

There were two deals in Round 7 on which a string of declarers were defeated in their major-suit game while just one was successful. Was that brilliant play, inaccurate defence, or a combination of the two?

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

	♠ 8 ♡ K J 8 4 3 ♢ 9 7 4 2 ♣ A K 4	
♠ Q 10 ♡ A 9 7 5 2 ♢ A 3 ♣ J 9 7 2		♠ A K 6 5 4 2 ♡ Q 6 ♢ Q 10 5 ♣ Q 8
	♠ J 9 7 3 ♡ 10 ♢ K J 8 6 ♣ 10 6 5 3	

Seligman v Friends

West	North	East	South
Sheng	*Starkowski*	*Wang*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	–	Pass
1♡	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♢	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Mou*	*Pszczola*	*Han*
–	–	–	Oass
1♡	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♢	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Shen opened 1♡ then rebid 1NT. Two Diamonds was game-forcing checkback, and 2♡ denied three spades. However, when Wang now rebid his spades, Sheng was happy to show support in context of his previous bidding. Wang offered a choice of games and Sheng chose 4♠. Kwiecien led the six of clubs, Starkowski winning the ace and king then switching to a diamond for the ten, jack and ace. Wang played a second diamond, the queen losing to the king, and back came a club. He won the ♣J, pitching the losing heart from hand, then played ace then ruffed a heart and suffered an over-ruff. Back came the ten of clubs, which Starkowski ruffed with the bare eight to force declarer's ace. Wang ruffed his diamond loser then cashed the queen of spades but, forced to ruff a heart back to hand, was over-ruffed so was down two for –200.

Seligman opened 1♡ and rebid 2♣. This was Gazzilli, either natural or any 16+ hand. Two Diamonds was game-forcing relay and 2♡ showed natural clubs with fewer than 16 HCP. Pszczola rebid his spades then raised himself to game when Seligman showed spade support. Han led the eight of diamonds, which Pszczola ran round to his ten. He played the eight of clubs and ran it, losing to the king, and Mou returned a diamond to dummy's ace. Pszczola played a second club, his queen losing to the ace, and now Mou returned the king of hearts to dummy's ace. Pszczola played the ten of spades to his ace and a second spade to the queen. The jack of clubs took care of the diamond loser and, though a heart to the queen was ruffed, that was with Han's natural trump trick, so the contract was just made for +620 and 13 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

The opening lead of a diamond gave Pszczola a chance, and after that his play of the ♣8 at trick two was the key to his success. At the point where Mou returned the king of hearts, he could not afford to lead a black suit, as either would have picked up his partner's holding, so his alternative was to return a diamond. But Pszczola could have ruffed that, cashed the ♠Q, then the ♣J for a heart discard. From here there is only one trump to be lost so the contract is made.

Of the nine Easts who declared 4♠, three received a club lead and five a heart; only Pszczola had the benefit of a diamond lead.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

	♠ J 8 5 3 ♡ 6 4 ♢ 9 ♣ Q J 10 7 6 3	
♠ K 10 9 6 4 ♡ K ♢ A K 6 5 4 2 ♣ A		♠ Q 2 ♡ A J 10 9 5 3 ♢ 10 3 ♣ 5 4 2
	♠ A 7 ♡ Q 8 7 2 ♢ Q J 8 7 ♣ K 9 8	

Black v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Hallberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hult*
–	–	2♡	Pass
2♠(i)	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

(i) Forcing

West	North	East	South
Black	*Tokay*	*Gold*	*Greenberg*
–	–	2♡	Pass
2NT(i)	Pass	3♡(ii)	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

(i) Asking
(ii) Minimum

Both Easts opened a weak 2♡ and became declarer in the heart game.

Hult led the queen of diamonds, Bedouet winning dummy's ace and cashing the king of hearts before leading a spade to the queen and ace. Hult continued with a second diamond, the jack, which was covered by the king and ruffed by Hallberg, who returned a club to dummy's bare ace. Bedouet ruffed a diamond to get to hand, cashed the ace of hearts, then led a spade to the king and ruffed a spade. Hult discarded and now Bedouet could only take one more trump trick while losing two clubs plus the ♡Q for down two and –200.

Greenberg too led the queen of diamonds and Gold won it with the ace then led a spade to the queen and ace. Greenberg did not give his partner a diamond ruff, instead returning a club to the bare ace. Gold now tried to cash the king of diamonds, but Tokay ruffed and returned his remaining trump to the bare king. Gold ruffed a diamond and played ace then jack of hearts, Greenberg winning and playing king and another club. Gold was down two for –200 and no swing.

Peanuts v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
N Evenstad	*Franceschetti*	*S Evenstad*	*Setton*
–	–	2♢	Pass
3♢	Pass	3♡	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♢	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Lie*	*Bessis*	*Hoyland*
–	–	2♡	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

Stian Evenstad opened with a multi and Nicolai Evenstad responded with a natural and forcing 3♢ then showed his second suit when Stian repeated the hearts. Stian admitted to some diamond tolerance, but was then happy to play the heart game when Nicolai suggested that as an option. Setton led the eight of clubs, the unbid suit, to dummy's ace. Stian led a spade to the queen and ace, won the heart return in dummy, and played king and another spade, ruffing low and being over-ruffed. Setton played king and another club to Franceschetti, who switched to his diamond. Stian won that and ruffed a spade, again being over-ruffed. Setton gave her partner a diamond ruff, and that was down three for –300.

Bessis opened with a natural weak two bid and Lorenzini simply raised to game rather than look for a better spot. Hoyland led the queen of diamonds to dummy's ace, and Bessis led a spade to his queen. Hoyland won that and played the jack of diamonds to the king and ruff, and now came the critical point in the hand – Lie returned his remaining trump to dummy's king. Bessis ruffed a diamond then played ace and jack of hearts. Hoyland won that and it didn't matter which black suit he returned. In either case, Bessis would win in dummy and ruff a diamond, setting up two winners in the dummy. He could then draw the outstanding trump and cross to dummy's remaining black-suit winner to take two club discards on the diamonds; +620 and 14 IMPs to PEANUTS.

Four Hearts would have been defeated had North played a club back instead of a heart after collecting his diamond ruff. Declarer would then not have the necessary entries to both establish and cash the diamonds.

Round 8

Just one pair reached the top spot on this deal from Round Eight, with nearly half the field playing the excellent grand slam in game.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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

New Amateurs v Yello Cap

West	North	East	South
Nilsmark	*Chechelash.*	*Anderson*	*Lo*
–	–	3♢	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Rigal	*Sivelind*	*Baseggio*	*Nilsland*
–	–	2♢	Dble
3♢	4♠	All Pass	

Anderson's wafer-thin pre-empt gave his opponents an impossible problem. Lo overcalled 3NT, Chechelashvili converted to 4♠, and that was that; +650.

Baseggio also pre-empted, though a level lower, and this, combined with Rigal's simple raise, also caused serious problems for his opponents. When Sivelind jumped to 4♠, all Nilsland could do was to pass and hope for the best; +650 and no swing.

Seligman v Fredin

West	North	East	South
Fredin	*Pszczola*	*Apteker*	*Seligman*
–	–	Pass	1♢
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♡
Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Fick*	*Kwiecien*	*Stephens*
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♢	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Seligman opened 1♢, reversed into hearts, then jumped to 3NT. Had he chosen to open 1♣, things might have been very different, but none of this looked very promising to Pszczola, who passed; +630.

Stephens opened 2NT, completed the transfer, then cuebid in support of his partner's second suit. When Fick was willing to cuebid what looked to be a second-round heart control, Stephens asked for key-cards then bid the small slam on finding his partner with none; +1390 and 13 IMPs to FREDIN.

Friends v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
N Evenstad	*Mou*	*S Evenstad*	*Han*
–	–	Pass	1♣
Dble	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Sheng	*Eide*	*Wang*	*Hoyland*
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♢
Pass	2♡	Pass	3♡
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

Han opened a strong club (16+), made two asking bids then, knowing that he was facing a black two-suiter but seeing communication issues because of the singleton spade, settled for 3NT; +630.

Hoyland opened 1♣, reversed into diamonds, then made a natural raise to 3♡. Eide set clubs as trumps, cuebid at his next turn, then said that he had no key-cards. Hoyland could not know about the diamond void so settled for 6♣; +1390 and 13 IMPs to ECF HOLDING.

Black v Scorway

West	North	East	South
Saur	*Gold*	*Kvangraven*	*Black*
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Hult	*Shenkin*	*Hallberg*	*Levinson*
–	–	Pass	2♢
Pass	2♡	Pass	3♡
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

Black opened 2NT, denied three spades by rebidding 3NT, then jumped to the small slam when Gold introduced his clubs; +1390.

Levinson opened a multi, weak with one major or 17+ three-suiter. Two Hearts was pass or correct, 3♡ showed 1-4-4-4, and 3♠ asked for range/controls, with the 4♣ response showing 17-20. Shenkin signed off in game; +640 but 13 IMPs to BLACK.

Greenberg v Netbridge

West	North	East	South
Gaillard	*Tokay*	*V d Hoek*	*Greenberg*
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*V d Starre*	*Bedouet*	*Huber*
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♢
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

Greenberg opened 2NT then completed the transfer and, when Tokay now showed his second suit, Greenberg raised to game, Tokay going on to slam; +1390.

Huber too opened 2NT then completed the transfer. However, when Van der Starre now introduced his clubs, Huber cuebid twice before Van der Starre used Key-card and signed off in 6♣ on finding that one was missing; +1390 and no swing.

Peanuts v Harris

West	North	East	South
Harris	*Franceschetti*	*Igoe*	*Robert*
–	–	2♢	Dble
3♢	4♢	Pass	4♡
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Tiholov*	*Bessis*	*Malhasyan*
–	–	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	7♣
All Pass			

Igoe became the third East to open with a pre-empt, thinking that 2♢ was plenty high enough. Robert doubled, Harris raised to 3♢, and Franceschetti cuebid then converted the 4♡ response to 4♠ to suggest spades and clubs. That sounded good to Robert, who had substantial extra values, and he jumped to the club slam; +1390.

And finally, at the twelfth time of asking, we come to the successful N/S pair who bid the cold grand. Malhasyan opened 2NT then rebid 3NT to deny three-card spade support. When Tiholov showed his club suit, Malhasyan cuebid, then asked for key-cards when Tiholov showed a heart control. Six Clubs was described as showing an odd number of key-cards plus a void, and that saw Malhasyan jump to Seven; +2140 and 13 IMPs to HARRIS.

Semifinals

SELIGMAN headed the Swiss qualifying rankings so would go into their 2 x 10-board semi-final against fourth-placed ECF HOLDING with an 8.1 IMP carry-over advantage. PEANUTS were ranked second at the end of the Swiss, and would face third-placed BLACK in the other semi-final, PEANUTS having a 4.1 IMP carry-over.

N/S had a cold spade slam on Board 1 but none of our four pairs got close to bidding it, and few would do as it required that responder's ♢QJ109 provided the twelfth trick facing ♢AKx; flat in both matches at +480. Board 2 saw all four E/Ws bid to a thin and always beatable heart game, which was indeed defeated at all four tables, so another push board.

Board 3 saw Bessis in a tricky partscore.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

	♠ Q 6 5 3 ♡ K J 2 ♢ A 7 ♣ J 10 6 2	
♠ 4 ♡ A Q 9 6 5 ♢ K 8 5 2 ♣ 8 7 4		♠ A K J 2 ♡ 10 4 ♢ Q 9 6 3 ♣ Q 5 3
	♠ 10 9 8 7 ♡ 8 7 3 ♢ J 10 4 ♣ A K 9	

Peanuts v Black

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	*Franceschetti*	*McIntosh*	*Setton*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	Pass	1♢	Pass
1♡	Dble	Pass	1♠
2♢	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Hallberg*	*Bessis*	*Hult*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Dble	2♠	3♢	All Pass

There were three passes to McIntosh, who opened 1♢ in fourth seat and soon found himself at the helm in 2♢, against which Setton led out the ace and king of clubs followed by a third club. McIntosh won the ♣Q and ran the ten of hearts to Franceschetti's jack. Back came a spade. McIntosh rose with the ace and led a heart to the ace followed by a low diamond to his queen. He continued with king and another spade, ruffing, then a heart, which he ruffed low. He ruffed the fourth spade now, then ruffed a heart and was over-ruffed, and the ace of diamonds won the last trick. McIntosh, however, had already taken eight tricks so was home for +90.

Hallberg opened the North hand in third seat, leading to a more competitive auction. That saw Bessis declaring a level higher than McIntosh, in 3♢. Hult cashed the ace of clubs but then switched to the ten of spades. Bessis won that and cashed the other two spade winners to get rid of dummy's club losers. Next, he ran the ten of hearts, losing to the jack, ruffed the club return in dummy, and played ace then ruffed a heart. A spade ruff brought Bessis up to seven tricks, and now he played a winning heart and, when Hallberg discarded a club, did likewise. Hult ruffed and returned the ten of diamonds to the king and ace, and back came the ten of clubs. Bessis ruffed with the nine and, when Hult had to follow suit, the nine scored and he had nine tricks for +110 and 1 IMP to PEANUTS.

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Dble	2♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♡
Dble	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Fasting responded with a 1♡ transfer to Lie's 1♣ opening, and Eide doubled to show five or more hearts. Lie's 1♠ showed three- or four-card support, and his correction of 1NT to 2♠ confirmed four. Pszczola led the ten of hearts and Seligman defended well when he ducked to preserve defensive communications. Lie won the ♡J and crossed to the ace of clubs to lead a spade up. When Lie ran the ♠7, Pszczola won with a falsecard king, and led a second heart. Seligman won that and gave his partner a heart ruff. Pszczola returned a diamond for the king and ace, and Liw had to lose two more spade plus a diamond, so was down one for –50.

Starkowski too opened the North hand and, though Eide doubled the 1♠ response to show interest in the red suits, Thoresen was not interested in competing, so Eide found himself on lead against 2♠. Eide led a club to the queen and ace, and Kwiecien led the seven of spades, running it to Thoresen's jack. Thoresen played a low diamond to the jack, king and ace, and Kwiecien led a diamond back to Thoresen's queen. She She got out with a third diamond, Kwiecien winning the ten and playing a spade. Thoresen won that and led the ten of hearts, Eide winning the ace and playing a fourth diamond. Kwiecien ruffed that in hand and played another spade and, though Thoresen could win that, she had no winning card to lead, so Kwiecien won the last four tricks with one spade, one heart, and two clubs; +110 and 4 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

	♠ A Q J 8 3 ♡ A J 9 6 ♢ 6 3 ♣ 9 3	
♠ 9 7 2 ♡ 10 8 ♢ 4 2 ♣ A Q J 10 8 5		♠ 6 5 4 ♡ K Q 7 5 4 ♢ K J 5 ♣ K 6
	♠ K 10 ♡ 3 2 ♢ A Q 10 9 8 7 ♣ 7 4 2	

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
Pass	1♠	2♡	Dble
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♢
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
Pass	1♠	2♡	Dble
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

Eide passed the West hand so Starkowski opened 1♠ and Thoresen overcalled 2♡. Kwiecien now doubled then bid his diamonds in the classic manner with a long suit that wasn't worth an initial forcing 3♢ bid. Starkowski left him to play there and Eide led the ten of hearts. Kwiecien won the ♡A and led a diamond to the queen, cashed the ♢A, and played on spades. Thoresen did not ruff the fourth spade, on the slim possibility that her partner might have a trump with which to ruff, so Kwiecien got to play all five spades and could discard three of his four side-suit losers, making 11 tricks for +150.

Seligman also passed as dealer but, when his opponents stopped in 2♠, competed to 3♣ and was left to play there as Fasting judged not to introduce his diamonds at any stage. Lie led a diamond anyway, Fasting winning the queen and ace then switching to the king of spades. The ten of spades came next, so Lie won and played a third spade winner, permitting Fasting to dispose of a low heart. Ace and another heart now presented him with a ruff and the contract was down three for –300 and 4 IMPs to ECF HOLDING.

Peanuts v Black

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	*Franceschetti*	*McIntosh*	*Setton*
3♣	Dble	Pass	3♢
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Hallberg*	*Bessis*	*Hult*
3♣	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Both Wests opened with a 3♣ pre-empt and both Norths took action – but different actions.

Franceschetti made a take-out double and Setton responded with a cautious 3♢ and was left to play there. Bertheau led a trump to the king and ace, Setton cashing the ♢Q then playing on spades. She got two of her club losers away as McIntosh couldn't ruff until the third round, after which there was just one club to cash and Setton had 11 tricks for +150.

Hallberg preferred the 3♠ overcall and Hult raised to game. Bessis led the king of clubs. Lorenzini overtook, cashed the jack of clubs, then switched to the eight of hearts. Hallberg won the ace of hearts, led a diamond to the eight and, when that held, drew trumps and took a second diamond finesse, claiming 11 tricks for +650 and 11 IMPs to BLACK.

Everyone handled this next deal without too much difficulty.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

	♠ J ♡ A K J 9 7 6 ♢ K Q J 8 5 ♣ 7	
♠ K Q 10 6 4 ♡ 10 4 3 ♢ A 9 6 ♣ Q 10		♠ A 8 7 3 2 ♡ 5 2 ♢ 7 2 ♣ J 6 5 2
	♠ 9 5 ♡ Q 8 ♢ 10 4 3 ♣ A K 9 8 4 3	

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
1♠	2♠	4♠	Pass
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♢	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
1♠	3♣	3♠	5♢
All Pass			

Starkowski made a Michaels Cuebid then, when the bidding had reached 4♠ when it got back to him, bid 4NT then converted the 5♣ response to 5♢, to show a hand with extra offence and longer hearts than diamonds. Kwiecien left him to play in 5♢, and there were just the two aces to be lost after a spade lead; +400.

Lie overcalled 3♣, showing the red suits, and Pszczola raised only to 3♠. Fasting, however, jumped to 5♢ anyway, and played there for +400 and a flat board.

Peanuts v Black

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	*Franceschetti*	*McIntosh*	*Setton*
1♠	2♡	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♢	Pass	5♡
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Hallberg*	*Bessis*	*Hult*
1♠	2♡	4♠	Dble
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♢	Pass	5♡
All Pass			

BLACK picked up 7 IMPs on Board 9, when Hallberg/Hult bid a spade game that was missed at the other table, chalking up +450 against +170, but the set was far from over, with Board 10 providing a major swing in both matches.

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

	♠ A 4 ♡ K Q 9 3 2 ◇ Q 8 5 3 ♣ K 4	
♠ 5 3 ♡ A J 6 ◇ A J 6 ♣ A 107 3 2		♠ K 10 9 8 7 6 ♡ 8 7 4 ◇ K 7 4 ♣ J
	♠ Q J 2 ♡ 10 5 ◇ 10 9 2 ♣ Q 9 8 6 5	

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	2◇	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
–	–	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	All Pass

Pszczola opened a natural weak two bid then showed a minimum in response to Seligman's enquiry. Fasting led a club, which Pszczola ducked, losing to the king on his right. Lie switched to the queen of hearts, which was ducked. In an awkward position, Lie now switched to a low diamond round to dummy's jack. Pszczola led a spade to the ten, losing to the queen, and back came a heart. He won that with dummy's ace, took a heart pitch on the ace of clubs, then led a second spade up. That lost to the ace on his right and a heart through promoted the ♠J as the setting trick; down one for –100.

Of course, the contract would have been made had Pszczola led to the king on the first round of spades, though that is not the percentage play in the suit in isolation.

Thoresen opened a multi then did as requested over Eide's pass or correct response. Eide's quiet bidding tempted Starkowski to balance with 3♡, and there the matter rested. Thoresen led the jack of clubs, Eide winning the ace and returning a suit-preference ♣2 for his partner to ruff. Thoresen duly returned a low diamond to the ace and Eide played another club. Starkowski discarded his spade loser on this trick, so Thoresen got a second ruff, and she then played king and another diamond to Starkowski's queen. Eide won the ♡Q with the ace and returned a spade, so Starkowski was stuck in hand and had to pay king and another heart. Eide's ♡J was the third undertrick, so the contract was down three for –300 and 9 IMPs to ECF HOLDING.

SELIGMAN's carry-over advantage had almost vanished, and they led by only 13.1-13 at the half-way point in the match.

Peanuts v Black

West	North	East	South
Bertheau	*Franceschetti*	*McIntosh*	*Setton*
–	–	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Hallberg*	*Bessis*	*Hult*
–	–	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♡	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

McIntosh opened a natural weak 2♠ and Bertheau passed it round to Fraceschetti, who balanced with 3♡ and played there. McIntosh led his singleton club, so Bertheau won the ace and returned the ♣2. McIntosh ruffed and returned a low diamond, Bertheau winning and switching to a spade. Franceschetti rose with the ace and played the king of hearts. Bertheau won the ace and led a third club, and McIntosh ruffed as Franceschetti discarded his spade loser. McIntosh cashed the king of diamonds then tried the king of spades. Declarer ruffed that but then had to play hearts from hand, so was down three for –300.

Bessis too opened a natural weak two bid, but Lorenzini tried for game but then passed the minimum-showing 3♠ rebid. And now Hallberg came in with 4♡, perhaps wondering how genuine Lorenzini's game try ha dbeen. Very serious, said Lorenzini, as he doubled 4♡. As usual, the defence started with a club to the ace, a low club back for a ruff, and a diamond to the ace. Lorenzini opted for a third club and Hallberg discarded his spade loser, so Bessis got a second ruff, and returned a spade to the now bare ace. Hallberg played the king of hearts, which Lorenzini won to return a spade. Hallberg ruffed that and played the queen of diamonds, but Bessis won the king and played a diamond straight back to his partner's jack. Endplayed, Lorenzini got out with a club, enabling Hallberg to discard the thirteenth diamond and win in dummy, and he could lead the ten of hearts at trick 12 and pick up Lorenzini's jack. However, that was still down four for –1100 and 13 IMPs to PEANUTS, and this match too reached the half with the difference down to just 0.1 IMP, at 19.1-19 in favour of PEANUTS.

Second Half

BLACK picked up a couple of IMPs on Board 1, then came this huge swing:

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ 5 ♡ 10 7 6 3 ◇ Q J 2 ♣ A K J 3 2	
♠ A J 10 6 2 ♡ J 9 5 ◇ 9 5 ♣ Q 10 8		♠ Q 9 8 3 ♡ K Q 4 2 ◇ A 6 ♣ 9 7 4
	♠ K 7 4 ♡ A 8 ◇ K 10 8 7 4 3 ♣ 6 5	

Black v Peanuts

West	North	East	South
Hult	*Franceschetti*	*Hallberg*	*Robert*
–	–	Pass	Pass
2♠	Dble	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*McIntosh*	*Bessis*	*Bertheau*
–	–	1♣	1◇
1♡	2♣	2♠	3◇
3♠	4♣	Pass	4◇
All Pass			

Bessis opened the East hand with 1♣ and Lorenzini responded with a transfer to spades. The French pair competed to 3♠, over which McIntosh in turn competed to 4♣, converted to 4◇ by Bertheau. A heart lead went to the queen and cuck, and Bessis continued with the king of hearts to Bertheau's ace. Bertheau led a club to the ace followed by a spade to the king and ace, and back came the jack of hearts, which Bertheau ruffed. He ruffed a spade now, then played the jack of diamonds. Bessis won the ace and returned hi last heart and Bertheau ruffed with the ten then ruffed his last spade, King and another club now saw Lorenzini, who had discarded a club on the fourth heart, over-ruffing with the nine to beat the contract by a trick; –50.

The action in the other room made the outcome in 4◇ almost irrelevant. Here, Hallberg did not open as dealer, but Hult did open in third seat, with a weak 2♠ bid. Franceschetti doubled and Hallberg stayed silent to see what would happen. When Robert jumped to 3NT, Hallberg doubled, and that concluded the auction. Hult led the jack of hearts. Robert won the ace and played a diamond, and Hallberg won the ace and played the queen of spades through. The defence came to five spade tricks, two hearts, and the ace of diamonds, for down four and –110; 14 IMPs to BLACK.

BLACK picked up another 5 IMPs on the next deal to lead the set by 21-0, but then came the PEANUTS fightback.

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	Pass	1◇
Pass	1♡	Pass	2◇
Pass	3♠	Pass	5◇
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
–	–	1♣	1◇
1♠	2♣	2♠	3◇
3♠	5◇	All Pass	

Pszczola opened the East hand with 1♣ and Fasting overcalled 1◇. E/W found the spade fit but, when Fasting repeated his diamonds, Lie liked his hand enough to raise to game. Seligman led the eight of clubs against 5◇, Fasting rising with the ace and leading a spade to the king and ace. Now Seligman tried a heart for the queen and ace. To succeed, Fasting had to take the club finesse now to get rid of his heart loser, but that seemed a remote chance, particularly after the club lead. He ruffed a spade, played ace of clubs then ruffed a club with the eight, and ruffed the last spade. He was left with a heart loser to go with the ace of diamonds, so was down one for –100.

Thoresen did not open the East hand and, when Eide chose not to overcall either, N/S had the auction to themselves. Kwiecien opened as South and when he repeated his long diamonds, Starkowski splintered in support, and Kwiecien jumped to the diamond game. Eide led a trump, Thoresen winning the ace and switching to the king of hearts. Kwiecien won the ace and took the club finesse, after which he had 11 easy tricks for +600 and 12 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

Black v Peanuts

West	North	East	South
Hult	*Franceschetti*	*Hallberg*	*Robert*
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♢	Pass
3♡	Pass	5♢	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*McIntosh*	*Bessis*	*Bertheau*
1♣	Pass	1♢	Pass
1♡	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♢	Pass
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♢	Pass	4♡	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♢	All Pass

When Hult opened a weak NT, Hallberg showed his diamonds, but was then discouraged when Hult showed wasted heart strength, so just bid the diamond game.

Lorenzini opened 1♣, rebid hearts, showed some spade length/strength by bidding 1NT, then showed heart strength. When Bessis went past 3NT, Lorenzini co-operated with a waiting 4♢ then a club cuebid, and Bessis bid the small slam. Bertheau led a small heart, so Bessis put in the queen and, when itheld, had two doscards for his spades. He won the ♡Q, ruffed a low heart, then led a diamond to the king and a diamond back to the queen and ace, and had 12 tricks for +1370 and 13 IMPs to PEANUTS.

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
1♣	Pass	1♢	Pass
1♡	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
1♣	Pass	1♢	Pass
1♡	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♢	Pass
3♢	Pass	6♢	All Pass

After identical starts, Thoresen raised to 3NT at her third turn while Pszczola went more slowly, showing extra diamond length. When Seligman admitted to some diamond support, Pszczola jumped to slam.

Eide made 12 tricks in 3NT for +690.

Fasting led a low club against 6♢, Pszczola putting in the nine and Lie falsecarding with the queen. Pszczola was not fooled; he won the ♣A, cashed the ace of diamonds and led a second round to the king. When the queen appeared, he led the jack of spades and ran it, won the club return with the king, and tooka spade pitch on the ace of hearts. A second spade finesse was successful, and he had 12 tricks for +1370 and 12 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ A K 9 6
♡ A
♢ A J 10 8
♣ A 6 5 3

♠ J 10 7 5
♡ 8 4 3
♢ 9 6 5
♣ Q 10 9

♠ Q 3 2
♡ 10 7 6
♢ Q 7
♣ K J 8 7 4

♠ 8 4
♡ K Q J 9 5 2
♢ K 4 3 2
♣ 2

Black v Peanuts

West	North	East	South
Hult	*Franceschetti*	*Hallberg*	*Robert*
–	–	Pass	3♡
Pass	4♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*McIntosh*	*Bessis*	*Bertheau*
–	–	Pass	4♡
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♢	Pass	6♢
Pass	7♡	All Pass	

Robert opened 3♡ and Franceschetti simply raised to game. Robert got the diamond wrong so ade only 12 tricks for +480. They must have been concerned that missing the cold slam might cost them the match.

Far from it! Bertheau opened the South hand with 4♡ and Mcintosh asked for key cards then for the queen of trumps. Six Diamonds, saying, yes, I have the ♡Q and also the ♢K, was just perfect for McIntosh. He bid 7♡ thinking it might be cold but would at worst be on a diamond guess, and it was just that – on a diamond guess. Lorenzini led a trump. Bertheau won the bare ace and came to hand by playing ace and another club and ruffing. He drew trumps and, with no real clues, continued with ♢K and a diamond to the ten, so was down one for –50 and 11 IMPs to PEANUTS, when bidding the small slam would have meant 11 IMPs to BLACK. I know the feeling – it's happened to me recently, and it's a sickening feeling.

Seligman v ECF Holding

West	North	East	South
Eide	*Starkowski*	*Thoresen*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	Pass	4♡
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♡
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♢
Pass	6♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Lie*	*Pszczola*	*Fasting*
–	–	Pass	2♡
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♢	Pass	3♠
Pass	6♢	All Pass	

Fasting opened 2♡ then showed a four-card minor. Three Diamonds asked and 3♠ showed four diamonds, so Lie simply blasted 6♢. Li won the spade lead, cashed the ace of hearts and, needing to preserve entries to dummy, next led the ten of diamonds and ran it. That meant all 13 tricks for +1390.

Kwiecien opened 4♡, showed one key-card plus the trump queen, then showed either the ♢K or the other two side-suit kings, and Starkowski settled for the small slam. Kwiecien got the diamond wrong so had 12 tricks for +980 and 1 IMP to SELIGMAN.

SELIGMAN had won the second half by 30-6 to win by 43.1-19. A high-scoring second half had gone 41-30 in favour of PEANUTS, who won the other semi-final by 60.1-49.

The Final

So it was to be SELIGMAN v PEANUTS in the final of the OCBL Halloween Cup, the match being played over 2 x 10-board sessions, and with SELIGMAN owning the tiebreaker, should one be required.

We had to wait no time at all for the first major swing, which came on Board 1.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ A Q 7 4
♡ Q 3
♢ Q 9 8 7 3
♣ 8 4

♠ J 9 6 2
♡ A 10 8 5
♢ J 6
♣ K 9 5

♠ K 10
♡ K J 9 6 2
♢ A 4
♣ Q J 7 2

♠ 8 5 3
♡ 7 4
♢ K 10 5 2
♣ A 10 6 3

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Pszczola*	*Bessis*	*Seligman*
–	Pass	1♡	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♡	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Franceschetti*	*Kwiecien*	*Setton*
–	Pass	1♡	Pass
3♢	Pass	4♡	All Pass

Both Wests made invitational raises in their different ways, and both Easts accepted.

Seligman led the five of diamonds against Bessis, who ducked Pszczola's queen. Pszczola switched to the eight of clubs to the seven, ten and king. Bessis led a heart to the king then a heart back to the ten, losing to the queen. He had to lose a trick in each black suit so was down one for –50.

Setton led a spade, Franceschetti winning the ace and switching to a diamond. Kwiecien won the ♢A, cashed the ♡K, then cashed the ♠K. After a heart to the ace and queen, he could take the ruffing spade finesse to create a parking place for the spade loser, and had 11 tricks for +450 and 11 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 2 was a flat partscore deal but Board 3 was a lively affair.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A 10 6 4 2
♡ K 8 5 4
♢ J 10 6
♣ 8

♠ K 5
♡ Q 10 7 6 3
♢ A 7
♣ K 10 7 5

♠ Q J 9 7 3
♡ –
♢ 8
♣ A Q J 9 4 3 2

♠ 8
♡ A J 9 2
♢ K Q 9 5 4 3 2
♣ 6

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Pszczola*	*Bessis*	*Seligman*
–	–	–	1♢
1♡	1♠	2♣	2♢
2NT	4♢	5♣	5♢
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Franceschetti*	*Kwiecien*	*Setton*
–	–	–	1♢
1♡	1♠	2♣	2♢
3♣	3♢	5♣	5♢
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Lorenzini led the seven of clubs, Bessis winning the ace and switching to the three of spades to the king and ace. Seligman ruffed a spade low then led the queen of diamonds. Lorenzini won the diamond and returned a heart, but it was too late to give his partner a ruff. However, it cost nothing, as Seligman would surely have played hearts for one loser if left to himself; down one for –100.

Starkowski led the king of clubs, collecting the two from Kwiecien, and switched to the six of hearts. Kwiecien ruffed and returned the queen of spades. Setton won the ace and played a diamond, and had to lose to the ♢A and also a heart at the end, so was down two for –300 and 5 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 8 6 3
♡ 7 3
♢ A J 10 8
♣ K 8 6 5

♠ A Q 10 9 5 4 2 — ♠ K 7
♡ K Q 6 — ♡ A J
♢ 5 — ♢ K 9 7 4
♣ A 7 — ♣ J 9 4 3 2

♠ J
♡ 10 9 8 5 4 2
♢ Q 6 3 2
♣ Q 10

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Pszczola*	*Bessis*	*Seligman*
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♢	Pass
4♡	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♡	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Franceschetti*	*Kwiecien*	*Setton*
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Starkowski rebid 3♠ and Kwiecien raised him to game. Franceschetti's club lead set up a second defensive trick and held the contract to 11 tricks for +650.

Lorenzini had a gadget to show a strong spade hand, rebidding an artificial 3♡. This had the advantage that Bessis could agree spades at the three level for a possible slam hunt and, after an exchange of cuebids, Lorenzini asked for key-cards then bid the small slam. The opening lead was crucial here; a club would beat the contract, setting up the defensive club winner before declarer could set up his diamond trick for the club discard. Anything else… Pszczola led a trump, so Lorenzini could win and draw trumps then lead a diamond towards the king, and had his twelfth trick; +1430 and 13 IMPs to PEANUTS.

Board 5 saw both N/Ss playing in a horrible heart game, in which trumps were five-one and a side-suit, which was, of course, on lead, seven-nil (♣AK108542 facing a void). Both were down three for –300 and a push board.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ –
♡ J 10 8 5 4 2
♢ Q J 7 6
♣ 8 6 3

♠ Q 10 8 5 3 — ♠ K J 4 2
♡ A 9 6 — ♡ Q 7
♢ 10 — ♢ A 2
♣ Q J 7 4 — ♣ K 10 9 5 2

♠ A 9 7 6
♡ K 3
♢ K 9 8 5 4 3
♣ A

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Pszczola*	*Bessis*	*Seligman*
–	–	1♣	1♢
1♡	4♢	4♠	5♢
5♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Franceschetti*	*Kwiecien*	*Setton*
–	–	2♣	2♢
Dble	5♢	Dble	All Pass

Kwiecien opened a Precision-style 2♣ and Setton overcalled 2♢. When Starkowski made a negative double, Franceschetti leapt to 5♢, which Kwiecien doubled to conclude the auction. Starkowski led the queen of clubs. Setton won her bare ace and ruffed a spade then led the jack of hearts and ran it. That was the only problem on the hand, and she soon had 11 tricks for +550.

Bessis opened at the one level, so the diamond overcall was also at the one level. One Heart showed four or more spades, and Bssis was not prepared to be shut out of showing his spade support by the pre-emptive diamond raise, so bid 4♠, and that persuaded Lorenzini to go on the 5♠ over 5♢. Seligman added a double to complete the auction. Seligman led a diamond to the ten, jack and ace. Bessis played the jack of spades, which Seligman ducked, and followed up with a low spade. This time Seligman won the ace and tried the three of hearts. That was not a success. Bessis ran the heart to his queen, cashed the ace of hearts, and ruffed the last heart with the ♠K. He could now draw trumps and knockout the ace of clubs, so had 11 tricks for +850 and a massive 16 IMPs to PEANUTS. Passive defence, leaving declarer to open up hearts himself, would have beaten the contract.

PEANUTS picked up 5 IMPs for a better partscore on Board 7, to lead by 34-16.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ K J 7 3
♡ K 4 3
♢ Q 7
♣ J 8 3 2

♠ 9 5 — ♠ A 4
♡ J 5 — ♡ A Q 8 7
♢ J 10 8 6 3 2 — ♢ A 5 4
♣ A Q 9 — ♣ K 7 5 4

♠ Q 10 8 6 2
♡ 10 9 6 2
♢ K 9
♣ 10 6

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Pszczola*	*Bessis*	*Seligman*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Franceschetti*	*Kwiecien*	*Setton*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♡	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Kwiecien opened 1NT and Starkowski used Stayman, the 2♡ response showing four hearts but denying four spades. Starkowski now invited game and Kwiecien accepted. Setton led a spade to the king and ace. Kwiecien played ace and another diamond and Setton was in with four spades to cash to defeat the contract – but she didn't know that declarer didn't start with ♠AJx. With that in mind she tried a heart lead, hoping to put partner in to lead a spade through. The heart went to the jack, king and ace, and Kwiecien was home, eventually coming to 12 tricks for +690.

Seligman too led a spade to the king and ace. Bessis crossed to the ace of clubs to play the jack of hearts, which was covered by the king and ace. Next, he crossed to the queen of clubs to lead the jack of diamonds to the ace, then played a second diamond. Seligman won that and played queen and another spade, and the defence took four of those to beat the contract by one trick; –100 and 13 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

There was no swing on the final board of the set, an E/W partscore, so the score going into the second half would be 34-29 in favour of PEANUTS.

Second Half

So ten boards remained in the 2022 OCBL Halloween Cup, and PEANUTS led SELIGMAN going into the second session of the final, but only by a partscore swing.

The second half began with a series of partscore deals, leaving SELIGMAN ahead by 35-34 with seven boards to play. Then the cards started to liven up.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ Q 10 5 4 2
♡ Q 5
♢ J 10 4
♣ J 9 5

♠ J 7 — ♠ A 9 8 6
♡ J 7 2 — ♡ 10 8 6 4 3
♢ K 9 6 5 3 — ♢ 8 7
♣ 8 7 4 — ♣ 10 6

♠ K 3
♡ A K 9
♢ A Q 2
♣ A K Q 3 2

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Starkowski*	*Bessis*	*Kwiecien*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♢	Pass	2♢
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♡	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Franceschetti*	*Pszczola*	*Robert*
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♢	Pass	2♡
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♢
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Robert opened a strong and artificial 2♣

then went through a Kokish sequence to show 24+ balanced. Fraceschetti used Stayman then signed off in 3NT, where the losing diamond finesse meant 11 tricks for +660.

Kwiecien opened a Polish club, the 1♢ response usually but not always a negative. Two Diamonds showed any gem-force, 2♠ was any 4-7, and 3♡ showed spades. When Kwiecien signed off in 3NT, Starkowski invited slam and Kwiecien accepted. And as the cards lay, Kwiecien could have made it, though it would have been a major gamble to do so, because Lorenzini led a diamond away from the king. Kwiecien won the jack but did not, of course, know the position of the king. He led a spade to the king, which scored, and now a second spade would have meant 12 tricks. In practice, however, he now played ace and another club to the jack then took the diamond finesse and was down one for –100 and 13 IMPs to PEANUTS, who led by 47-35.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Starkowski*	*Bessis*	*Kwiecien*
–	2♡	5♢	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Franceschetti*	*Pszczola*	*Robert*
–	Pass	1♢	Dble
1♡	4♣	5♢	All Pass

Pszczola opened 1♢ on the East hand and didn't worry about his spades, as even if Seligman had four spades there was a very good chance that the hand belonged in diamonds. With spades four-one offside, how right that was. Robert led the king of clubs. Pszczola won the ace and laid down the ace of diamonds, and the fall of the king meant that he had 11 tricks despite the unfriendly spade layout; +400.

The auction at the other table was even shorter. Starkowski opened 2♡, hearts and a minor, and Bessis overcalled 5♢ and played there. He was allowed to make an overtrick for +420 and 1 IMP to PEANUTS, whose lead crept up to 48-35.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Starkowski*	*Bessis*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♢	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♡
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Franceschetti*	*Pszczola*	*Robert*
–	–	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♢	Pass	3♡
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Robert/Franceschetti had a simple natural auction to 6♠, Robert going on with Key-card once Franceschetti showed spade support. Seligman led a club. Robert won the ace, took a heart ruff, then played ace and another spade. That lost to the king, but he could ruff the club return, draw the outstanding trump, and cash the ♡A and five diamonds to bring his total to 12; +980.

Kwiecien opened a Polish club and Starkowski responded 1♢, usually negative but occasionally invitational with a minor-based hand. One Spade could have been three cards in a weak NT type, and now the jump to 3♣ showed around 9-11 with both minors. Three Hearts was natural and confirmed real spades and a 17+ hand. Starkowski liked his hand much more now, with queen to three spades, a ruffing value, and a source of tricks. He showed spade support, then just jumped to slam over Kwiecien's sign-off. Alas, for the Poles, Lorenzini found the killing lead, a diamond. Kwiecien won the king and took a heart ruff then ran the queen of spades. Lorenzini won the spade and played a second diamond, cutting declarer off from the diamond winners. Kwiecien tried to cash a third diamond, but Lorenzini ruffed that and played back his last trump, and Kwiecien was left with heart losers. The contract was down three for –150 and 15 IMPs to PEANUTS, who led by 63-35.

Was that the match? Well, maybe not, because SELIGMAN struck back on the very next deal.

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.

	♠ A K Q J 10 3 ♡ A ♢ K J 7 ♣ Q 7 5	
♠ 8 7 2 ♡ 2 ♢ A Q 10 6 2 ♣ 9 8 6 3		♠ 5 ♡ K J 10 8 5 4 3 ♢ 9 8 4 3 ♣ 4
	♠ 9 6 4 ♡ Q 9 7 6 ♢ 5 ♣ A K J 10 2	

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Starkowski*	*Bessis*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	3♡	3NT
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Franceschetti*	*Pszczola*	*Robert*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♠	3♡	4♠
All Pass			

When Robert jumped to 4♠ over the weak jump overcall, Franceschetti had a lot to spare, but his partner was a passed hand and had not made a more descriptive raise – understandably from Robert's perspective looking at three low spades and the wasted ♡Q. Franceschetti judged to pass 4♠ and the cold slam was missed; +680.

At the other table, Starkowski opened a Polish club and, when Kwiecien could bid 3NT facing what could still have been a weak NT, Starkowski jumped to slam; +1430 and 13 IMPs to SELIGMAN, closing to 48-63.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

	♠ 9 8 5 4 ♡ 10 5 ♢ Q 3 ♣ K J 10 7 6	
♠ A Q 2 ♡ A Q 7 6 ♢ A K J 10 7 ♣ A		♠ K J 10 3 ♡ K 2 ♢ 8 6 4 2 ♣ 8 4 3
	♠ 7 6 ♡ J 9 8 4 3 ♢ 9 5 ♣ Q 9 5 2	

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Starkowski*	*Bessis*	*Kwiecien*
2♣	Pass	2♢	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♡	Pass	4NT	Pass
6♢	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Franceschetti*	*Pszczola*	*Robert*
2♣	Pass	2♢	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♢	Pass	3♡	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Whatever hopes SELIGMAN had of snatching the match back at the death were squashed when yet another slam hand saw them get on the wrong end of a major swing.

There were some powerful hands in this set, and Seligman picked up another rone here. He opened 2♣, strong and artificial and rebid 2NT, showing 22+. Pszczola used Puppet Stayman then settled for 3NT on failing to find a major-suit fit. Seligman seemed to have a bit to spare for his sequence. After a club lead, Seligman made all 13 tricks for +520.

Lorenzini followed a Kokish sequence to show 24+ balanced, showed four hearts in response to Stayman, the accepted Bessis's slam invitation, jumping to 6♢ to suggest a possibly better contract than 6NT. As it happened, diamonds came in so Bessis had all 13 tricks for +940 and 9 IMPs to PEANUTS, but 6♢ is indeed a way better slam than 6NT, as it can survive having a diamond loser, while 6NT will be doomed on a club lead if diamonds do not come in.

It was 72-48 now with just two boards to play, and there was no scope in them for a last gasp comeback by SELIGMAN. They picked up an overtrick IMP on Board 9, but the last board was flat, making the final score 72-49. The 2023 OCBL Halloween Cup champions are PEANUTS. Congratulations to them.

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21 - 22 November, 2022

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SWISS

10 Rounds x 8 Boards

MONDAY					TUESDAY				
Round 1:	16.00	CET	10.00	EDT	Round 6:	16.00	CET	10.00	EDT
Round 2:	17.15	CET	11.15	EDT	Round 7:	17.15	CET	11.15	EDT
Round 3:	18.30	CET	12.30	EDT	Round 8:	18.30	CET	12.30	EDT
Round 4:	19.45	CET	13.45	EDT	Round 9:	19.45	CET	13.45	EDT
Round 5:	21.00	CET	15.00	EDT	Round 10:	21.00	CET	15.00	EDT

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