Online Contract Bridge League

OCBL JOURNAL

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SELIGMAN WON THE DECEMBER CUP!

Martin Seligman

Eric Rodwell

Michal Kwiecien

Wlodzimierz Starkowski

Team SELIGMAN, with M. Seligman, E. Rodwell, M. Kwiecien and W. Starkowski, won the OCBL December Cup!

In the Final, they faced team GREENBERG, with Greenberg T., Tokay M., Vallet E. and Bedouet P.

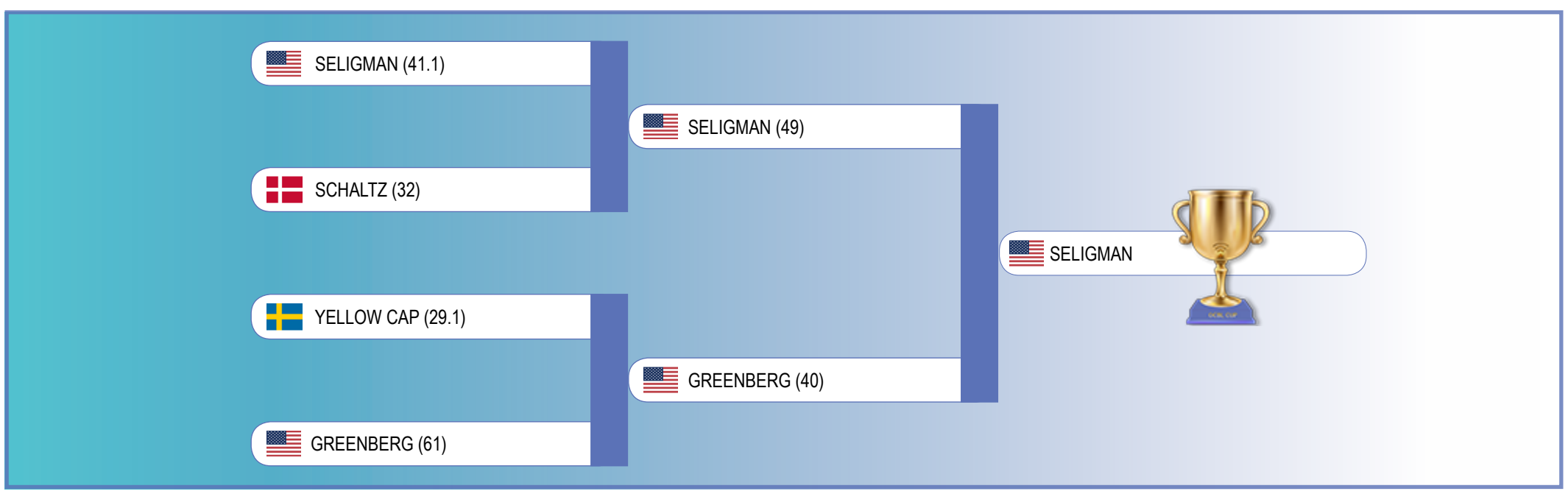
The match ended 49 - 40 for Seligman

In the Final for the third place, team SCHALTZ (Schaltz P., Schaltz D., Schaltz M., Christiansen S., Sejr Nicolajsen J., Rasmussen H., Bilde L., Verhaegen M., Lund Madsen C., Lipman L., Aagaard T., Schultz S.) faced team YELLOW CAP (Nilsland M., Abragi A., Nilsson A., Andersson A., Hansson E., Wiberg E., Asplund Sivelind F., Gustafsson K., Hallqvist L., Nordqvist M., Nilsmark T., Heed M., Johansson Y., Mann C.). The match ended 71 - 22 for team SCHALTZ.

We wish a Merry Christmas to all of our friends!
We'll see you on December 27 at the ALT-OCBL Grand Final!

December Cup
Final Ranking

1	Seligman
2	Greenberg
3	Schaltz
4	Yellow Cap
5	Peanuts
6	Fredin
7	New Amateurs
8	Netbridge
9	Harris
10	Scotland



ALT - OCBL GRAND FINAL

27 - 29 December, 2022

Reserved to the top 16 teams of the ALT OCBL Ranking

12 Rounds x 10 Boards

Tuesday, 27 December
R1 - R4
CET 16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30
EST 10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30

Wednesday, 28 December
R5 - R8
CET 16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30
EST 10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30

Thursday, 29 December
SF/F
CET 16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30
EST 10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30

Info and pre-registration: WWW.OCBL.ORG

Bridge NEWS

The 2022 IBPA Awards

On the 10th December 2022, the annual IBPA (International Bridge Press Association) Awards were announced.

The award-winners for this year were:

2022 IBPA Personalities of the Year:
Anshul Bhatt (India) & Christian Lahrmann (Denmark)

The Alan Truscott Memorial Award:
Marek Malysa (Poland)

2022 Master Point Press IBPA Book of the Year:
Bridge with Another Perfect Partner by John Carruthers (Canada)

2022 Justin Lall Memorial Declarer Play of the Year:
Terry Brown (Australia)

2022 Gidwani Family Trust Defence of the Year:
Boye Brogeland (Norway)

2022 Yeh Bros. Best Bid Deal of the Year:
Alex Gipson/Paul Gipson (Scotland)

2022 Richard Freeman Junior Deal of the Year:
Ben Norton (England)

The 2022 IBPA Awards Jury consisted of:

Michael Byrne (England)
Jan van Cleeff (Netherlands)
Peter Fredin (Sweden)
Gilad Ofir (Israel)
Barry Rigal (USA)
Jian-Jian Wang (USA)
Marek Wojcicki (Poland)

ETC 2023 – STRASBOURG

From the European Bridge League Website

The European Transnational Championships will be organized in Strasbourg, France from June 3 until June 17, 2023, in co-operation with the French Bridge Federation.

The venue will be the Parc des Expositions, a new convention centre that is situated next to the Hilton Hotel.

https://www.strasbourg-events.com/fr/le-parc-des-expositions

It is located 2 kilometres from the historic centre of Strasbourg and perfectly reachable by foot or tram (every 5 minutes).

Strasbourg offers many hotels, restaurants, bars and terraces in all classes and sizes. Although Strasbourg has a small airport, located at the French/German border, many European players will be able to travel by car/train. From international airports in Paris, Frankfurt and Zürich, fast train connections are available. In this beautiful city, centrally located in Europe, we hope we will be able to organize one of the biggest tournaments in our history.

Detailed event schedule will follow shortly.

ALT - OCBL GRAND FINAL

27 - 29 December, 2022

	CET	EDT
12 Rounds x 10 boards		
Tuesday, 27 December R1 - R4	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30
Wednesday, 28 December R5 - R8	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30
Thursday, 29 December SF/F	16.00 - 17.30 - 19.00 - 20.30	10.00 - 11.30 - 13.00 - 14.30

Rounds 7, 8, Semifinals & Final

by Brian Senior

Round 7

This slam deal was the highlight or, for some, the lowlight, of Round Seven.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

One pair, Rodwell and Seligman, stayed out of slam, chalking up +460 without putting too much thought into the hand. The rest bid uncontested to either 6NT or, in two cases, 6♢. How did they fare?

For PEANUTS, Setton declared 6♢ on the lead of the jack of hearts. She won in hand with the king and cashed three rounds of diamonds, discovering the four-two split when Nicolajsen discarded the eight of spades.

Now the winning line is to unblock the top spades then give up the fourth diamond. When the queen of spades is cashed West is squeezed and a club finesse brings home the rest of the tricks.

Setton did indeed cash the top spades at tricks five and six, but she then came to hand with the ♣K and cashed the queen of spades before taking the club finesse and attempting to cash the ♣A. Christiansen ruffed the third club and returned a heart, and there were no communications for a squeeze so Setton had to lose a heart at the end; –50.

For SCHALTZ, Aagaard and Schultz had the shortest of all the 10 auctions, 1NT – 6NT, and Aagaard received the lead of the eight of spades to dummy's dummy's king. He led the three of diamonds to the jack and queen then played king of clubs and a club to the jack. When that held he led a low heart to the eight, nine and ten, won the spade return and cashed the ace and king of diamonds – no luck there. Aagaard continued with the ace of clubs, the king of hearts, and the queen of spades, but was left with a losing heart at the end, so –50 and a flat board.

For SCOTLAND, Bennett played it on the lead of the four of diamonds to the nine and ace. He made the rather odd-looking play of a club to the nine at trick two. That held the trick, which was good news, so Bennett continued by ducking a heart to West's jack. Verhoeve returned a second diamond to the ten and queen, and Bennett cashed the top spades, cashed the king of clubs, then followed with the ♢K and ♣A. He played ace and another heart to the king next, cashed the queen of spades, and had to concede a second heart at the end; down one for –50.

For NETBRIDGE, Gast received a spade lead. She won with the king and led a low heart to the eight, nine and ten. Back came a second spade. Gast won in dummy and tested the hearts, seeing Valentine discard a spade on the third round as she won the king. Three rounds of diamonds came next, O'Brien, West, pitching a club. Gast cashed the king of clubs, followed by the queen of spades, on which O'Brien had to throw a second club. Gast seemed to be in a winning position now, but sadly she had miscounted the spades, and attempted to cash her ♠6. Valentine won the ♠10 and ♢J, and the contract was down two for –100 and 2 IMPs to SCOTLAND.

That was a pity, because Gast seemed to have been on the right lines when she ducked a heart at trick three. That leaves declarer with a fourth-card threat in every suit – usually requiring the club to be onside if both red suits fail to break evenly, it just becomes a matter of which squeeze to play for.

For NEW AMATEURS, A-T Lo was in 6♢, on the lead of the eight of spades. He won the spade and played king of clubs, a club to the jack, then ruffed the nine of clubs as Clementsson discarded a spade. Next, Lo cashed the ace and queen of diamonds, followed by the king of spades, the king of diamonds, and the king of hearts. Finally, he cashed the queen of spades, ruffed his last spade, and cashed the ace of hearts. Clementsson had the ten of diamonds for the last trick, but LO had won the first 12 for +920.

For FREDIN, Benett was in 6NT on a low heart lead to the three, queen and king. Benett played a second heart at trick two, ducking to the eight. He won Chechelashvili's spade return with the ace, cashed the ace of hearts, seeing Chechelashvili discard a spade, then cashed the king of spades and tested the diamonds. Falk discarded a club on the third diamond, so Benett crossed to hand with the ♣K to cash the ♠Q, and that squeezed Falk out of a second club. At trick 11, a club to the jack scored, and cashing the ace brought down the queen, leaving the ♣9 to win trick 13; +990 and 2 IMPs to FREDIN.

For YELLOW CAP, Nilsson received the lead of the jack of hearts from Starkowski. That went to the eight and ace, and Nilsson played king of clubs and a club to the jack, followed by a heart to the queen and king. Alert readers will have spotted that this left the nine and seven as equals against West's ten, and Nilsson duly played a third heart to set up a twelfth trick; +990 and 11 IMPs to YELLOW CAP, as they were comparing with –460.

For HARRIS, Igoe got a spade lead to dummy's ace. He led a heart to the eight, nine and jack, won the spade return, and cashed three rounds of diamonds followed by the two top hearts. The queen of spades now squeezed West, Vallet, and king of clubs and a club to the jack brought in four club tricks and 12 in all; +990.For GREENBERG, the team captain received the popular spade lead. He too ducked a heart at trick two and won the spade continuation. He tested hearts then diamonds, and the same squeeze as we saw at the other table brought in 12 tricks for +990 and a flat board.

Best, as well as most successful, play, is surely to duck a heart early, as did both declarers in that last match, enabling declarer to test each suit in turn, and leave clubs until the end to ensure the communications to operate a successful squeeze.

Round 8

Round Eight featured another slam, or near-slam, deal.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

New Amateurs v Scotland

West	North	East	South
O'Brien	*Cole*	*Valentine*	*A-T Lo*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♢	Pass	4♡	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Falk	*Smith*	*Chechelashv.*	*Bennett*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♢	Pass	2♡	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

For SCOTLAND, O'Brien made a four-level transfer then left Valentine to declare the heart game. Valentine won the diamond lead and took a losing spade finesse. Back came a second diamond, so he won, ruffed the third diamond, then played ace of spades and ruffed a spade with the jack. When that all passed off peacefully he could draw trumps then cross to the ace of clubs to cash a spade for a club discard; 12 tricks for +480.

For NEW AMATEURS, Falk made a two-level transfer then raised the completion to game. Bennett too led a diamond, Chechelashvili winning and taking the spade finesse. When that lost and a diamond came back, he won and played ace and another spade, ruffing low, and could draw trumps and claim 12 tricks for +480 and a push board.

Netbridge v Harris

West	North	East	South
Harris	*de Haas*	*Malhasyan*	*Been*
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Verhoeve	*Tiholov*	*la Haye*	*M Gold*
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

In this match both Easts opened 1♠ and the 2♡ response saw West become declarer in the heart game.

De Haas led the king of clubs, which Harris won with the ace. He played ace and another rheart to the jack followed by three rounds

of diamonds. De Haas could ruff in fornt of dummy with the ♡10, cash the queen of clubs, then lead a spade through. Harris put up the ace and had 10 tricks for +420.

Tiholov too led the ♣K, Verhoeve winning the ace and cashing the ace of hearts before playing three rounds of diamonds. I'm not sure of the benefit of cashing the ace of hearts at trick two, as opposed to an honour from hand, and here it cost Verhoeve his overtrick, as once again North could ruff in front of dummy and cash the club, holding him to 10 tricks for +420 and no swing.

SELIGMAN v FREDIN

West	North	East	South
Becklen	*Starkowski*	*Benett*	*Kwiecien*
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♢	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Fredin*	*Rodwell*	*Clemmensson*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♢	Pass	2♡	Pass
4♡	All Pass		

Rodwell opened 1NT and Seligman put him in the heart game via a two-level transfer. Rodwell won the diamond lead and cashed the king of hearts before playing two more rounds of diamonds. Fredin ruffed in with the ten, but Rodwell could over-ruff and draw trumps before taking the spade finesse. That lost, and a club return from Clemmensson left Rodwell with a club to lose at the end; 11 tricks for +450.

Benett opened 1♠, raised hearts, and when he next went past game to cuebid his spade control also implying the missing club control, Becklen asked for key-cards then bid the small slam. Starkowski led the king of clubs to dummy's ace. Becklen cashed the king and queen of trumps, then cashed the ace of diamonds before leading a spade to the queen and king. Kwiecien played jack and another club, so Becklen ruffed with the ♠7 and played two more diamonds, ruffing with dummy's ♡A as Starkowski divested himself of a spade. When Becklen next played ace and another spade, Starkowski could over-ruff for down two, –100, and 11 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Greenberg v Peanuts

West	North	East	South
Lorenzini	*Tokay*	*Bessis*	*Greenberg*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♢	Pass	2♡	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♢	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	5NT	Pass
6♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Franceschetti*	*Bedouet*	*Robert*
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♡	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♢	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Presumably there was some systemic reason why it was right for Bedouet to rebid the spades rather than show heart support, but surely his subsequent 4♣ and 4♠ calls should have been cuebids for hearts? Anyway, Vallet passed 4♠, against which Robert led a diamond. Bedouet won that and led a club to the queen and ace, followed by three rounds of diamonds. Franceschetti ruffed the third round low and Bedouet over-ruffed, took his club ruff, then played ace and another spade. There were two spade losers, but that was all; 10 tricks for +420.

Bessis opened 1NT and Lorenzini transferred then continued with an artificial 2NT rebid. On finding a heart fit, Lorenzini cuebid, and Bessis, with the other three aces, took control and bid the small slam. Greenberg missed the club lead, instead leading a diamond. Bessis won the ace and took an immediate spade finesse, giving himself the possibility to set up an extra trick even on a four-two break in the suit. The ♠Q lost to the king and back came a trump. Bessis won the nine and played ace and another spade, ruffing high. The even spade split meant that he could now draw trumps and claim 12 tricks for +980 and 11 IMPs to PEANUTS.

Schaltz v Yellow Cap

West	North	East	South
Nilsland	*Verhaegen*	*Nordqvist*	*Schaltz*
–	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♢	Pass	2♡	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♢	Pass
6♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Nicolajsen	*Sandin*	*Christiansen*	*Abragi*
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♢	Pass	4♠	Dble
Pass	Pass	Rdbl	Pass
5♢	Pass	5♡	All Pass

Christiansen opened 1♠ then showed heart support and was willing to go past game to show his black-suit controls. However, while he was perfectly prepared to do his duty by redoubling when the spade cuebid was doubled, thereby confirming first-round control, he was not prepared to bid slam if his partner could not do so on his own, so signed off in 5♡. Sandin led the king of clubs to dummy's ace and Nicolajsen cashed the king and jack of hearts then played three rounds of diamonds, ruffing with the ace. Nicolajsen came off dummy with a club, but Abragi could win the jack and push a diamond through, and that promoted a trick for the ten of hearts. With the losing spade finesse to come, that was down one for –50.

When Nordqvist opened 1NT, Nilsland transferred then blasted 4NT and, on finding his partner with three key-cards, bid the small slam. Schaltz led a diamond. Nordqvist won that and drew trumps in three rounds before taking the spade finesse. That lost, and now a club return would have taken the side entry to hand out prematurely and defeated the slam. But Schaltz returned the ten of spades, so Nordqvist could win the ace and take a spade ruff. The three-three split meant that he could then come to hand with the ace of clubs to cash the established spades; 12 somewhat fortunate tricks for +980 and 14 IMPs to YELLOW CAP.

Semifinals

Not for the first time in an OCBL event, SELIGMAN had topped the qualifying rankings, and would have an 8.1 IMP carry-over advantage in their 2 x 10-board semi-final against SCHALTZ. In the other semi-final, second-placed qualifier, YELLOW CAP, would have a 4.1 IMP carry-over against GREENBERG.

The action started on Board 1, when three out of four N/S pairs bid to a hopeless slam.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

Seligman v Schaltz

West	North	East	South
Nicolajsen	*Rodwell*	*Christiansen*	*Seligman*
–	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*D Schaltz*	*Kwiecien*	*P Schaltz*
–	1♠	Pass	2NT
Dble	3♣	3♡	Pass
Pass	3♠	4♡	4NT
5♡	Dble	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Dorthe Schaltz opened 1♠, 9-13 and possibly four cards with a longer minor. Two No Trump was at least invitational with four spades and 3♣ and Peter Schaltz's pass over the opposing 3♡ both showed maximums. Four No Trump asked, with the double of 5♡ showing an even number of key-cards. It appears that someone had been over-optimistic, but I wouldn't presume to know their methods well enough to suggest who, because 6♠ was hopeless after a heart lead to dummy's ace; down one for –50. It isn't clear how much effect the E/W bidding had on the N/S auction.

Seligman/Rodwell were allowed a free run. Rodwell showed a minimum with his artificial 3♣ rebid so it was easy for Seligman to sign-off in game for +450 and 11 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Mann*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♢	Pass	2♡
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♢
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♡	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♢
Pass	4♡	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♡	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

Hansson's 2♣ response was a GF relay, 2♢ showed 11-13 with at most three hearts, and further relays discovered that Mann had five spades and four clubs, then that he was 5-1-3-4. Four Diamonds showed a good hand for spades, 4♡ was a cuebid, and Hansson asked about key-cards then bid the small slam; down one for –50.

Greenberg's 2♣ response was GF, maybe natural but also maybe, as here, just a relay. Three Clubs was natural, 3♠ set trumps, and 3NT showed a minimum. However, when Tokay admitted to a heart control, Greenberg used Key-card then bid the slam; –50.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

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

Seligman v Schaltz

West	North	East	South
Nicolajsen	*Rodwell*	*Christiansen*	*Seligman*
Starkowski	*D Schaltz*	*Kwiecien*	*P Schaltz*
–	1♠	Dble	2♠
3♡	Pass	4♡	All Pass

When Starkowski bid 3♡ freely over the spade raise, it was an easy matter for Kwiecien to raise to the heart game. Dorthe led her singleton club. Starkowski won in hand with the jack and led a diamond to the king and ace. Peter gave Dorthe her club ruff, but that was with the ♡Q, so solved declarer's only remaining problem on the hand. Dorthe returned the ♠Q, but Starkowski knew where the ace was so put up the king and soon had 10 tricks for +420.

An identical auction saw Nicolajsen also declare 4♡ on a singleton club lead. He won the ace and played king then ten of hearts, losing to the queen. Back came ace and another spade, and there was a second spade and the ace of diamonds to be lost, for down one and –50; 10 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Mann*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	1♠	1NT	Pass
2♢	Pass	2♡	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	1♠	Dble	Pass
2♡	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Bedouet made a heavy 1NT overcall then accepted the heart transfer. He came to 10 tricks for an inadequate looking +170.

Asplund-Sivelind doubled the 1♠ opening then showed a hand too good for an initial 1NT overcall by going on with 2NT over the 2♡ response. Nordqvist raised that to game, and Asplund-Sivelind got hearts right so had 10 tricks for +430 and 6 IMPs to YELLOW CAPS.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Mann*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	–	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♢	Pass	3♡	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	–	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♡	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Asplund-Sivelind used simple Stayman then invited game, and Nordqvist accepted. Bedouet used Puppet, so declarer had shown four hearts and dummy four spades when they reached 3NT.

Tokay led the eight of clubs to the six, ten and king. Nordqvist crossed to dummy by playing the ♠J to the ace to run the queen of diamonds. That lost to the king, and Tokay led a second club to the queen and ace. Greenberg cashed the ♣J then switched to a spade. Nordqvist won the king but had only eight tricks before Greenberg got in with a heart and put Tokay in with a spade to cash out the spades; down one for –100.

Mann too led a club, Vallet playing dummy's queen and losing to the ace. Back came the jack of clubs to his king, and Vallet too played the jack of spades. However, Mann covered with the queen. Vallet won the ace and took the diamond finesse, losing to the king, and the clubs were cleared. But now North no longer had an entry to the long clubs. Hansson won the third club and returned the queen of hearts, hoping to find his partner with the jack, and Vallet could win and knock-out the ♡K to come to 10 tricks for +630 and 12 IMPs to GREENBERG.

Seligman v Schaltz

West	North	East	South
Nicolajsen	*Rodwell*	*Christiansen*	*Seligman*
–	–	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♡	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*D Schaltz*	*Kwiecien*	*P Schaltz*
–	–	Pass	1NT
Dble	3♣	Dble	Pass
3♢	All Pass		

Christiansen used simple Stayman then invited game, accepted by Nicolajsen. A club to the queen and ace and a second club to the king put Nicolajsen on lead and under pressure. He led the jack of spades to the ace then ran the queen of diamonds, losing to the king. Clubs were cleared, and Nicolajsen cashed the ♠K and the diamonds, then played ace and another heart, and the defence had the last two tricks for down one and –100.

The Schaltz mini-NT worked out poorly for them as Starkowski doubled, Dorthe jumped pre-emptively to 3♣, and Kwiecien made a take-out double then passed the 3♢ response. Starkowski lost a club, a heart, and a diamond, so had 10 tricks for +130 and 6 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

On Board 7, Starkowski/Kwiecien bid to a bad game which was down two for –200, while Nicolajsen/Christiansen stopped safely in 2♠+1 for +140 and 8 IMPs to SCHALTZ.

After 2♡ – Dble – ?, Dorthe raised to 3♡ at Game All, while Rodwell passed, holding:

♠ K 10 9
♡ A 6
♢ 9 5 2
♣ Q 9 6 5 4

The raise added momentum to the auction, as Kwiecien refused to be shut out with five low spades, a queen and an ace, and Starkowski could hardly not raise to game on his 17-count.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

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

Seligman v Schaltz

West	North	East	South
Nicolajsen	*Rodwell*	*Christiansen*	*Seligman*
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♢	Pass	2♢	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*D Schaltz*	*Kwiecien*	*P Schaltz*
–	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♡	Pass	3♡
Pass	4♡	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

This time the Schaltz 10-13 NT worked out very well for them. Peter used Stayman then invited game, and Dorthe went on to game, Starkowski making a gambling double of the final contract. This proved not to be the time for such a gamble as, with the cards all lying beautifully for N/S, and dummy turning up with an extra trump, there was just one trick in each black suit to be lost; 11 tricks for +690.

In the other room, there were three passes to Nicolajsen, who would have done well to pass the board out on the actual lay-out. However, he did have 14 HCP, so opened 1♢ and was raised to 2♢, a dubious choice on that East hand, even if the bid only promised 6-9 HCP and three or more diamonds. The cards that lay well for N/S in 4♡ doubled of course lay just as badly for their team-mates in 2♢. Nicolajsen was down three for –300 and must have been quite pleased to find that this was worth +9 IMPs to the SCHALTZ team.

The first half ended with SELIGMAN up by 36.1-27, and GREENBERG by 18-11.1.

Second Half

All the action seemed to come from the YELLOW CAP v GREENBERG match, starting with Board 1.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	Pass	Pass	1♢
1♡	Dble	Rdbl	1NT
Dble	Pass	2♡	Pass
Pass	2NT	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	Pass	Pass	1♢
1NT	Dble	All Pass	

Greenberg opened 1♢ in third seat, Nordqvist opted for a 1NT overcall rather than 1♡ on the weak five-card suit, and everyone stuck it out when Tokay doubled. Tokay led the four of clubs to dummy's jack, and Nordqvist led the nine of hearts to the ten and king then a second heart, ducked to the jack. The defence cleared the clubs, so Nordqvist in turn set up his two long hearts. A low diamond to the king and ace put Tokay in to cash two club winners, after which there were the queen and jack of diamonds. The contract was down two for –300.

Vallet preferred the 1♡ overcall and he showed his extra strength by doubling 1NT at his next turn. Bedouet, who had redoubled at his previous turn merely to show a high heart honour, took that out to 2♡. This would have been beaten quite easily, but Wiberg judged to compete with 2NT on the North cards and that was the end of the auction. Vallet led a heart to the queen and ace and Hansson led a spade to the queen and a second spade to the king and ace. Vallet got out passively with a spade, so Hansson won the jack and cashed the long spade, but was now in the wrong hand, so tried a low club which ran round to the queen. Now Vallet cleared the hearts, and Hansson led a club towards the king. Vallet took the ♣A and two hearts and the contract was down one for –50 and 8 IMPs to GREENBERG.

Meanwhile, Nicolajsen was down one in 1NT doubled by West, while Rodwell was down four in 3♢ as East for –200 in the other room. That was a huge opportunity missed by SCHALTZ, who had to be content with a 3 IMP pick-up.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	–	1♡	2NT
4♡	5♢	5♡	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	–	1♡	2NT
4♡	5♢	5♡	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

The trouble with these auctions is that, often, nobody is quite sure who is doing the sacrificing, and who is bidding to make. Hence, Bedouet got out undoubled in 5♡. He ruffed the ace of diamond slead, got the hearts right – of course – and had to lose two clubs and one spade, so was down one for –50.

But, after an identical auction as far as 5♡, Tokay did double on the North cards, and then Asplund-Sivelind got careless, leading a heart to the king but leading a spade up without drawing the remaining trumps. He is rather young, so we can forgive him the occasional lapse, I think. Tokay pounced on the spade and led his singleton club through, and three rounds of those saw him collect a ruff for down two; –300 and 6 IMPs to GREENBERG.

In the other match, Christiansen was down one in 5♠ doubled, while Dorthe was down one in 5♢ in the other room, conceding –100 and 5 IMPs to SELIGMAN.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	–	–	2♣
Pass	2♢	Dble	Rdbl
Pass	2♡	Pass	4♡
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♢
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	–	–	1♢
Pass	1♡	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♡	All Pass	

Greenberg's jump rebid of 2♠ was described as the 'cheapest reverse'. Tokay raised, and Greenberg made a try for slam but, when Tokay bid only 4♡ over 4♣, settled for the safe game. There was a diamond to be lost and the spade was offside, so Tokay had two losers; +450.

Hansson opened a strong and artificial 2♣, options in which included a standard 2NT opening, as here. Though he made the weakest possible heart raise by jumping to game over 2♡, Wiberg was not discouraged, looking at 11 HCP and a chunky four-card side-suit. He asked for key-cards then invited Seven, before signing off in 6♡. Alas, there were those two losers so the slam was down one for –50 and 11 IMPs to GREENBERG.

Two Diamonds redoubled would have been fun – unless you were a defender, of course.

This one was flat in 4♡+1 for +450 to N/S in the other match.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
3♢	Dble	3NT	4♡
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
3♢	Dble	Rdbl	3♡
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

Both Wests opened 3♢ and both Norths doubled.

Bedouet now bid 3NT, which had nine top tricks and the other two suits securely stopped. However, Hansson bid 4♡ as South, suspecting that there would be a lot of diamond tricks for his opponents if he left them in 3NT. Bedouet doubled 4♡ and that ended the auction. Vallet cashed the king of diamonds then switched to a club to dummy's ace. Hansson led a heart to the ace followed by a spade to the jack and ace. Bedouet set up his club trick and Hansson ducked a spade to Bedouet's ten. Bedouet cashed his club winner then got out with a diamond and waited to collect two trump tricks for down three and –800.

Rather than bid 3NT, Asplund-Sivelind redoubled to show strength, and now Greenberg could bid just 3♡ with the South hand. Asplund-Sivelind could have tried 3NT still, but opted to see what was available on defence, his double concluding the auction. Nordqvist cashed the ace of diamonds and, reading his partner's queen as asking for a spade switch, duly did so. Asplund-Sivelind won the ♠K and switched back to diamonds, ruffed in dummy. Greenberg ducked a spade to the ten, and back came the queen of clubs to dummy's ace. A spade, ruffed with the six, was followed by a low heart, ducked to the ten. That endplayed East, who got out with his third diamond. Greenberg ruffed in hand, pitching the ♣10 from dummy, then led a club to the king, ruffed a spade, then led a club and discarded the

by now winning spade on it. Asplund-Sivelind won the ♣J and returned the jack of hearts to declarer's bare ace, so the king of hearts won the last trick and the contract was down two for –500 but 7 IMPs to GREENBERG. It could have been more, as Greenberg was getting out for down one had he ruffed the club at trick 11.

Both Easts played 3NT, making with one overtrick, for a flat board at +630 in SELIGMAN v SCHALTZ.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
–	–	Pass	1♢
Pass	1♡	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
–	–	Pass	1♢
Pass	1♡	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Down 0-32 on the set, Hansson/Wiberg blasted the slam without having any idea how good it would prove to be. It wasn't good, but it did at least have some play. Vallet's low club lead didn't do Hansson any harm. That went to the nine and jack, and he played ace then ruffed a diamond, led a spade to the queen, which was allowed to hold, then ruffed another diamond. King of clubs and another club to the ace was ruffed by Vallet, who had pitched a club on the third diamond, and he returned the queen of hearts to the king, ace and ruff. The king of diamonds was ruffed with the ace and the nine of spades returned to dummy's king. Hansson ruffed a heart, cashed the eight of clubs, and gave up a diamond at the end; down two for –100.

As the cards lay, the best shot would have been to trust the opening lead to be from a three-card suit, and cash the five top minor-suit tricks then crossruff the red suits, but that looks as though it falls a trick short as West discards hearts on the diamonds and can over-ruff and play back another trump just in time for the defence.

Tpkay's slightly conservative simple raise to 2♠ meant that there was no danger of his pair getting too high. Greenberg jumped to the spade game and that was that. Again a club lead went to the nine and jack. Greenberg led a spade to the king followed by ace, king and a third diamond, ruffed with the seven and over-ruffed with the ten. A heart ruff was followed by a club to the king and a second heart ruff. Greenberg cashed the ace of clubs and continued with the thirteenth club. Nordqvist ruffed with the nine and cashed the ♠A, and Greenberg had to lose a heart at the end; 10 tricks for +420 and 11 IMPs to GREENBERG.

SCHALTS picked up an IMP for 4♠+1 for +450 against –420, in the other match.

Board 7 saw both E/Ws down one in a sub-par heart slam in YELLOW CAP v GREENBERG,

Board 8 was another borderline slam hand.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

	♠ Q 9 8 6 5 3 2 ♡ 4 ♢ 6 3 ♣ J 9 6	
♠ K ♡ A Q 8 6 ♢ K 10 ♣ A K 10 8 5 4		♠ A 7 ♡ J 10 9 3 2 ♢ Q J 7 5 4 ♣ 3
	♠ J 10 4 ♡ K 7 5 ♢ A 90 8 2 ♣ Q 7 2	

Yellow Cap v Greenberg

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Wiberg*	*Bedouet*	*Hansson*
1♣	3♠	Dble	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♡	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Nordqvist	*Tokay*	*A-Sivelind*	*Greenberg*
1♣	Pass	1♡	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♢	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♡	All Pass

Given the luxury of an uncontested auction, Nordqvist and Asplund-Siveling blasted into the small slam and, when the hearts behaved as required, were amply rewarded; +980.

Vallet and Bedouet were not so fortunate, as Wiberg overcalled 3♠ and was very tough to get to slam with any confidence. Anyway, it did require a trump finesse plus a little more, so the only reason to worry about missing it would be the result; +450 and 11 IMPs to YELLOW CAP.

It didn't really matter, merely adding a little respectability to the final score, as GREENBERG won comfortably by 61-29.1 IMPs.

Meanwhile despite some lively deals, the other match concluded with a set score of 5-5, meaing that SELIGAMN would contest the final with GREENBERG.

Finals

So the final would be between GREENBERG and SELIGMAN, 2 x 10-board sets to decide the OCBL December Cup 2022 champions.

The teams exchanged small swings on two partscore deals to give SELIGMAN a 4-3 lead, then came another partscore deal on which they added to that lead.

Board 4. Dealer West. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dble	1♠	2♡	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Dble	1♠	2♡	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
–	–	1♢	1♡
Pass	1♠	2♣	3♠
3NT	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Tokay*	*Kwiecien*	*Greenberg*
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	

Vallet doubled Seligman's 1♢ opening and Bedouet competed with 2♡ over Rodwell's 1♠. Seligman's pass denied three spades, so when 2♡ came round to Rodwell and he wanted to compete, it was natural to hope to find his partner with club support. Vallet led a heart against 3♣, so Seligman could win the bare king and play a club to the king and ace, win the diamond return with the ace, and discard dummy's diamond loser on the ace of hearts. Next, he ran the ten of spades to the king, won the club return in hand and led a second spade up. Vallet won the ace but Seligman could ruff out the spades and had 10 tricks for +130.

Starkowski did not double in the other room. Tokay responded 1♠ then took 1NT out into 2♠. Kwiecien led the king of diamonds. Tokay won the ace and led a heart to his king then a club to the king and ace. Starkowski led a second diamond, to his partner's queen, and Kwiecien played a third round, forcing Tokay to ruff. A club to the ten was ruffed by Starkowski, who returned a heart into dummy's ace-jack. Tokay pitched a club, won the ♡J, and led the ten of spades round to Kwiecien's king. A club ruff with the ♠J was the fifth defensive trick, and there was still the ace of spades to come; down one for –100 and 6 IMPs to SELIGMAN, who led by 10-3.

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
–	–	1♢	1♡
Pass	1♠	2♣	3♠
3NT	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Tokay*	*Kwiecien*	*Greenberg*
–	–	1♢	1♡
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♢	All Pass		

Starkowski gave up on any idea of collecting a penalty from 1♡ doubled, bidding a conservative 1NT with the West cards. He then gave preference to 2♢ and that ended the auction. Greenberg led the king of hearts, Kwiecien winning the ace and leading a diamond to his queen then cashing the ♢A before leading a spade to the queen and ace. He had to lose one trick in each suit so had nine winners for +110.

Vallet did look for a penalty, passing over the 1♠ overcall. He got a penalty, but not the one he was looking for. Rodwell bid 1♠ on the North cards and Seligman raised to 3♠. That bullied Vallet into bidding 3NT, a contract which would have been comfortably defeated by a low spade lead, but Rodwell competed with 4♠, which

Vallet doubled on the way out. Bedouet led the king of clubs, which Rodwell won in dummy. He led the jack of diamonds and ran it, losing to the queen, and Bedouet cashed the ten of clubs to show his holding in the suit, then continued with the jack. That was ruffed and over-ruffed, a diamond led to the ace, and another club ruffed and over-ruffed. The ace of hearts made it down three for –500 and 9 IMPs to GREENBERG, who took the lead by 13-10.

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ A J 3
♡ K Q 6 4 2
♢ 8 7
♣ J 10 7

♠ 10 9 7 5 4
♡ J 9 3
♢ A K 9 5 4
♣ –

♠ K Q 8
♡ A 5
♢ Q 10 6
♣ A K Q 9 5

♠ 6 2
♡ 10 8 7
♢ J 3 2
♣ 8 6 4 3 2

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
–	1♡	Dble	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Starkowski	*Tokay*	*Kwiecien*	*Greenberg*
–	1♡	Dble	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♡	Pass
6♢	Pass	6♠	All Pass

Vallet responded 4♠ to the take-out doubled and played in game, where he made 11 tricks for +650.

Starkowski responded with an invitational 3♠, and played in slam. When Kwiecien cuebid 4♡, Starkowski accepted the invitation to slam and suggested an alternative trump suit to his rather anaemic spades. Kwiecein went back to 6♠, and that was that. Tokay led the king of hearts. Starkowski won the ace and took two heart pitches on the ace and king of clubs, then he sat and thought for a while, before leading the ten of diamonds to his ace, followed by a spade to the king. Next he ruffed a heart and led a second spade up, and Tokay could win the ace and force Starkowski to ruff a heart, but with both red suits behaving as required, Starkowski was home, ruffing the heart, drawing the outstanding trump, and cashing out the diamonds; +1430 and 13 IMPs to SELIGMAN. They were back in the lead by 23-17

Slam could be made on Board 10 but it was well sub-par and neither E/W pair bid it. There was no swing so the half-time score remained at SELIGMAN 23 GREENBERG 17.

Second Half

There was a lively start to the second half.

Board 1. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ K 9 8 7 3
♡ K 9 7 2
♢ 6
♣ A 6 3

♠ 4
♡ J 10 6 5 4
♢ A 9 8 3 2
♣ Q 9

♠ 10
♡ 8 3
♢ K Q J 10 7
♣ K J 8 4 2

♠ A Q J 6 5 2
♡ A Q
♢ 5 4
♣ 10 7 5

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Rodwell*	*Bedouet*	*Seligman*
–	1♠	Dble	Pass
5♢	Dble	Pass	5♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
–	1♠	2NT	3♢
5♢	Dble	All Pass	

Bedouet's 2NT overcall showed the minors, and 3♢ was invitational or better in spades. Though Starkowski doubled 5♢ to try to discourage his partner from bidding on, Kwiecien had an exceptional hand and over-ruled him, accepting the push to 5♠. After a diamond lead, overtaken, and club switch, there was one discard on the king of hearts, leaving one club loser, so just made for +450.

The auction from the other room proved to be identical except that Greenberg accepted his partner's decision to defend. There were four top losers but no more; down two for –500 but 4 IMPs to SELIGMAN, who led by 27-17.

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 10 9 8 6 2
♡ Q J 8 2
♢ 10
♣ 9 7 5

♠ A Q J 4 3
♡ K 10 4
♢ K
♣ J 10 6 2

♠ K
♡ A 7 6
♢ A 7 5 4 3
♣ A K Q 3

♠ 7 5
♡ 9 5 3
♢ Q J 9 8 6 2
♣ 8 4

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Starkowski*	*Bedouet*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	2NT	Pass
3♡	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♢	Pass
4♡	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	5NT	Pass
7♣	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
–	–	2NT	Pass
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
6NT	All Pass		

Bedouet opened 2NT then denied holding three spades in response to the transfer. He was delighted to be able to cuebid in response to Vallet's second suit and, on seeing the heart cuebid, took control, first asking for key-cards, then saying that all the key-cards were present and inviting either Seven or for Vallet to show his kings. To be bidding this way, Bedouet had to have all the top clubs and the king of spades, so Vallet jumped to 7♣ and, with spades five-two, that was very much the spot to be in; +1440.

Rodwell too opened 2NT with the singleton king. Seligman transferred to spades, Rodwell did as requested, and Seligman just jumped to 6NT; +990 but 10 IMPs to GREENBERG, levelling the match at 27 apiece.

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ Q 8 6
♡ Q 5
♢ Q J 5
♣ A J 6 4 3

♠ A 9 5 4 3
♡ 7 6 2
♢ A 3 2
♣ Q 2

♠ J 10 7 2
♡ A J 4
♢ 8 7 4
♣ K 8 7

♠ K
♡ K 10 9 8 3
♢ K 10 9 6
♣ 10 9 5

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Starkowski*	*Bedouet*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♡
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♡
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♡
1♠	Pass	2♠	All Pass

Starkowski opened a Polish Club in third seat then rebid 12NT, weak, and Kwiecien took it out into hearts. Vallet led the queen of clubs, Kwiecien winning the ace and playing the queen of hearts. Bedouet won the ace and played king and another club to deal his partner a ruff, Vallet cashed both his aces then played a second diamond. Kwiecien won in dummy and finessed in hearts, so had eight tricks for +110.

In the other room, Seligman won the board for his side when he found a 1♠ overcall on the West hand. That enabled Rodwell to raise to 2♠, ending the auction. Tokay tried the lead of the five of hearts from Q5 doubleton, but when Seligman played low from dummy all that achieved was to fool Greenberg, who won the king then return the ten to the queen and ace. Two rounds of spades saw Tokay on lead but with no way to get to his hand quick;y enough to collect his heart ruff. Seligman lost two diamonds and one club, but had eight tricks for another +110 to SELIGMAN, and 6 IMPs to regain the lead at 33-27.

Board 4 was a flat game, so no swing, but there was a swing on Board 5, albeit a modest one.

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ A J 7 5
♡ 8 6
♢ 10 8 5 4 2
♣ 8 5

♠ K 10 6 4
♡ K 3
♢ K J
♣ 10 9 7 4 3

♠ Q
♡ Q 10 9 7 4 2
♢ A Q 7 6 3
♣ J

♠ 9 8 3 2
♡ A J 5
♢ 9
♣ A K Q 6 2

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Starkowski*	*Bedouet*	*Kwiecien*
–	Pass	1♡	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
–	Pass	1♡	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♡	Pass
3♡	Pass	4♡	All Pass

Bedouet took an extreme position, really trading on the vulnerability, when he opened 1♡ then reopened with double rather than introduce his second suit. He was right, as it turned out, with his bare jack of clubs being worth a full trick to the defence. Vallet led the king of hearts, which was ducked, and a second heart to the queen and ace. Kwiecien tried a low spade to the seven, losing to the bare queen, and the ten of hearts saw the jack ruffed with the nine in front of dummy to return a low spade. Kwiecien got that one wrong, putting up the ace, and that was ruffed with the bare jack.

Ace and another diamond came next, Kwiecien ruffing and cashing a top club before leading a spade towards the jack. He had to lose to the king of spades and ten of clubs, so was down two for –500.

Rodwell too opened the East hand with 1♡ but Greenberg did not overcall. Rodwell repeated his hearts rather than introduce the diamonds, and when Seligman invited game he accepted. Greenberg led out two top clubs, Rodwell ruffing the second and leading a heart to the king followed by a low spade off the table. Now his suppression of the diamonds reaped rich dividends, as how could he have a singleton spade on this auction? Well, Tokay is a sadder and, maybe, wiser man, than before this board. The ♠Q scored the trick and Rodwell cashed the queen of hearts and was home with 10 tricks for +420 but 2 IMPs to GREENBERG; 29-33

Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ Q J 7 5 4
♡ A 6 3 2
◇ A K 8
♣ 8

♠ A 9 8 6
♡ Q J 10 4
◇ 10 9
♣ Q J 9

♠ 10 3
♡ 7 5
◇ Q 7 6 4 3
♣ K 10 6 3

♠ K 2
♡ K 9 8
◇ J 5 2
♣ A 7 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Starkowski*	*Bedouet*	*Kwiecien*
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2◇	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2◇	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Kwiecien opened a Polish club and rebid a weak NT. Starkowski checked back for a spade fit then raised the 2NT response to game. Vallet led the queen of hearts, Kwiecien winning the ace and leading a spade to the king and ace. Vallet tried the queen of clubs now, and continued with the jack when Kwiecien ducked. When he again ducked, Vallet switched his attention to hearts, leading the jack to declarer's king. Kwiecien played three rounds of spades, but Vallet won the last of those and had the ten of hearts to cash for the setting trick; down one for –50.

Tokay too used GF checkback over the weak 1NT rebid. Greenberg showed the long clubs but, of course, they were of no interest to Tokay, who had only been checking for a spade fit. Seligman led the queen of hearts and Greenberg too won in dummy to lead a spade to the king and ace. Seligman continued with the ten of hearts, Greenberg winning the ace and playing three more rounds of spades. Seligman won the fourth spade and returned a diamond, but Greenberg could win, cash the long spade, and set up a heart for his ninth trick; +400 and 10 IMPs to GREENBERG, who led again at 39-33.

GREENBERG picked up an overtrick IMP on Board 7, but Board 8 swung the match once again, and for the final, decisive, time.

Board 8. Dealer West. None Vul.

♠ A K Q 10 9
♡ K 9 7 6 4 3
◇ 2
♣ Q

♠ 8 7 5 3
♡ 8
◇ Q J 10 8 7 3
♣ 5 3

♠ J 2
♡ Q J 5 2
◇ 6 5
♣ A J 10 8 2

♠ 6 4
♡ A 10
◇ A K 9 4
♣ K 9 7 6 4

West	North	East	South
Vallet	*Starkowski*	*Bedouet*	*Kwiecien*
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♡	Pass	2NT
Pass	3◇	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♡	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Seligman	*Tokay*	*Rodwell*	*Greenberg*
Pass	1♡	Pass	2♣
2◇	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	Pass	4◇
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♡
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Starkowski opened 1♠ then rebid 2♡, and at his third call 3◇ showed the fifth heart. When Kwiecien suggested 3NT, he went back to hearts because of the sixth card, and played there. On a diamond lead, the club loser went away and there were just two trumps to be lost; +450.

Tokay opened his longer suit, reversed into spades, then showed the fifth spade and hence the sixth heart. He chose to play slam in spades as it was likely that an almost certain heart loser could be disposed of via a ruff. Rodwell led his partner's suit, a diamond, to dummy, so the club loser went away. Now ace and another heart saw Tokay's hopes dashed as Seligman ruffed and led a diamond through. That led to an over-ruff, and there was still a heart to come; down two for –100 and 11 IMPs to SELIGMAN, who were back in the lead with only two boards to play at 44-40.

SELIGMAN picked up two small swings on the last two deals to consolidate their lead, and they were the OCBL December 2022 champions, having snatched the title at the end, defeating GREENBERG by 49-40. Congratulations to them.

May I thank all the teams who have entertained us all throughout this year of OCBL tournaments, and hope to see you again in 2023. For now, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

OCBL DECEMBER CUP - Swiss

ROUND 9

New Amateurs	5.2 VPs 3 IMPs	14.8 VPs 18 IMPs	Peanuts
Fredin	15.05 VPs 34 IMPs	4.95 VPs 18 IMPs	Netbridge
Harris	4.71 VPs 0 IMPs	15.29 VPs 17 IMPs	Scotland

ROUND 10

Peanuts	19.86 VPs 48 IMPs	0.14 VPs 2 IMPs	Harris
Fredin	19.1 VPs 55 IMPs	0.9 VPs 16 IMPs	Scotland
New Amateurs	12.51 VPs 44 IMPs	7.49 VPs 37 IMPs	Netbridge

ROUND 11

Peanuts	15.05 VPs 30 IMPs	4.95 VPs 14 IMPs	Fredin
New Amateurs	4.71 VPs 8 IMPs	15.29 VPs 25 IMPs	Harris
Netbridge	3.22 VPs 7 IMPs	16.78 VPs 31 IMPs	Scotland

ROUND 12

Peanuts	20 VPs 63 IMPs	0 VPs 12 IMPs	Scotland
Fredin	9.23 VPs 24 IMPs	10.77 VPs 26 IMPs	New Amateurs
Harris	4.48 VPs 18 IMPs	15.52 VPs 36 IMPs	Netbridge