



David Bird

NETHERLANDS VS INDIA

JUNIORS – ROUND 17

A spirited fight-back

The Netherlands Juniors were in 2nd place as this match started. India were in 15th position. How would the match unfold?

Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bose</i>	<i>M. de Leon</i>	<i>Kar</i>	<i>Sprinkhuizen</i>
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
		6♥	All Pass

India reached the par contract of 6♥ with a straightforward auction, using two ace-or-king control-bids and Roman Key Card Blackwood. Declarer would need to do something with his potential spade loser and might be assisted if a ruffing finesse in diamonds became apparent.

South led the ♦6 and North won with the king, which was helpful to the declarer. If North had won with the ace, it would have been possible that South had led the unbid suit from such as ♦K-9-6. When East's ♦Q fell, North returned a low diamond and declarer ruffed.

There had been no reason to suspect an underlead of the ♦A from South, particularly with the strong hand on his right. Declarer still had the entries to take a ruffing finesse in diamonds, but he preferred to play on spades, misguessed and went one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Schols</i>	<i>Kushari</i>	<i>Westerbeek</i>	<i>Roys</i>
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
		6♥	All Pass

Again the ♦6 was led and North, misguidedly as I see it, won with the king rather than with the ace. Declarer was not tested when North then switched to a spade, and a trick or two later declarer claimed 980 for a 14-imp swing.

Sadly for India, this swing was duplicated on the very next board:

Board 3. Dealer South. E/W Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bose</i>	<i>M. de Leon</i>	<i>Kar</i>	<i>Sprinkhuizen</i>
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

Mendes de Leon invoked Puppet Stayman, found no major-suit fit and eventually raised to 6NT. Declarer had 10 tricks on top. If an early finesse of the ♦J succeeded, he would have the chance of finding a major 3-3 or various squeezes.



Bose chose the commendably safe lead of the ♣5, won by declarer, and the ♦J was successfully finessed. Sprinkhuizen unblocked the ♦K, reached his hand with the ♠K and continued with the queen and ace of spades. When the suit did not break 3-3, he exited with the ♠6 to rectify the count for a possible red-suit squeeze. On East's club return to the king, West would have been squeezed if he had started with four hearts and four diamonds. As it was, the hearts broke 3-3 and declarer had his 990.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Schols	Kushari	Westerbeek	Roys
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	6♦
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

The 2♥ rebid was Kokish (hearts or strong balanced). Puppet Stayman again led to 6NT.

Somehow, West struck a lead of the ♥10. East contributed the jack, and declarer won with the king. A diamond finesse succeeded. Declarer then cashed the ♦K, crossed to the ♥Q and tested the spades. After cashing the ♦A and the top clubs, he finessed the ♥8 to go one down.

It was a strange mirror of the previous deal. On Board 2, the ♦6 (if North had then played the ace) would have given declarer a choice of plays in diamonds. On this board, the unorthodox lead of the ♥10, backed by East doing well to show his ♥J, offered declarer a losing option in that suit. (Editor's note: Yes, the jack was an imaginative play. But surely it was preferable to play first the seven, then the jack. Would he have really played the jack from jack-seven doubleton?)

The Netherlands led India by 30-0 after just three boards. Could India possibly recover, against a team in second position? Yes, they could!

On Board 5, North held ♠762 ♥K9872 ♦AQ9 ♣J8. Mendes de Leon passed and heard East open a weak 2♥, and South double for take-out. What action would you take? He decided to pass and the contract was made, when South led the ♣10 from ♠AQJ4 ♥4 ♦K10874 ♣K109. This ran to declarer's ♣AQ65 and was the only lead to let the doubled contract succeed.

That was 7 imps to India when three notrumps went down by two tricks in the other room.

Board 8. Dealer West. Neither Vul.

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

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bose	M. de Leon	Kar	Sprinkhuizen
Pass	1♦	1♠	Dble
Reble	2♦	2♠	3♦
Pass	Pass	3♠	Dble
All Pass			

West made a Rosenkranz redouble, showing a doubleton ace or king of spades. Did South have his double of 3♠? You will be the judge.

Sprinkhuizen led the ♠8, which prevented a club ruff in the dummy. Declarer won with dummy's king and drew trumps in two further rounds. He then led a heart to the ten and ace. North only 'safe return' was a heart to partner's queen. South could not play a heart or a club, and returned the ♦J to the king and North's ace. Now North was truly endplayed. He led a club to South's ace, and declarer could claim the balance without having to resort to a finesse of the ♣10. That was plus 530.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Schols	Kushari	Westerbeek	Roys
Pass	1♦	3♠	Dble
Pass	4♦	All Pass	

Kushari won the heart lead in dummy and led the ♦J, running it when West played low. A finesse of the ♦Q was followed by the ♦A, the ♥A and a club to the ace. The ♥Q permitted a discard of the ♠4. Declarer then claimed the contract for the loss of two clubs and the ♦K. It was another 12 imps to India.



Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

♠ K 9 8 5 2
 ♥ 8 3
 ♦ K 8 7 2
 ♣ 9 2

♠ A Q J 10 6 3
 ♥ K 4
 ♦ 5
 ♣ Q 8 4 3



♠ 7
 ♥ A Q 10 9
 ♦ J 10 4
 ♣ A K 10 7 6

♠ 4
 ♥ J 7 6 5 2
 ♦ A Q 9 6 3
 ♣ J 3

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bose</i>	<i>M. de Leon</i>	<i>Kar</i>	<i>Sprinkhuizen</i>
1♠	Pass	2♣	2♦
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Dble	5♦	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

West made a splinter bid to agree clubs and East was soon in a small slam. South cashed the ♦A and switched to a heart, allowing an early claim. Without this switch, declarer would have been able to discover the spade situation in time to take a ruffing finesse in that suit. That was plus 920.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Schols</i>	<i>Kushari</i>	<i>Westerbeek</i>	<i>Roys</i>
1♠	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	All Pass

East never heard about the diamond control opposite, and West did not like to bid further. It was 11 imps to India to complete a 44-2 recovery in 8 boards. Well played, indeed!

India eventually won the match by 44-43, 10.33-9.67 in VPs.