

By Steve Moese

The Grand National Teams is the oldest grass-roots competition in the ACBL NABC. District teams compete and the winner qualifies for the Summer NABC, this year in Toronto Canada. The Goyal Team (Arun Goyal, Rachna Goyal, Matt Cory, Brad Bartle, Mike Ma and Steve Moese) struggled through the 6-round Swiss Team elimination on Saturday. Our 3-2-1 record and 63 Victory Points were enough to qualify by 1 V. P. for the 4th and final place in Sunday's knockout elimination. We wanted to make the most of our good fortune. We won the morning session to play the final round. Here are a few hands from the finals:

Mike	Steve	Comments
♠KJxx ♥Ax ♦AKJx ♣AKx	♠AQ10xx ♥x ♦Qxx ♣Qxxx	2♥-Dbl-4♥-4♠-P-P. We missed 6♠. (We refined our high level auction approach that led to success later). 4♠ making 6 was a push . In IMPs, one can bid 4♠ with AQTxx and nothing else (2-way bid). Mike could not be sure I had a singleton ♥. On retrospect, 5♠ would have been a better choice by me.
♠10xxx ♥Jxxx ♦K ♣AKJx	♠Qxx ♥AKxx ♦AQxx ♣10x	We played 3N making. They played 4♥ down. +10 IMPs . Mike showed a 4414 pattern with a weak opening hand. While the 4-4 ♥ fit tempts, wasted ♦ values indicate 3N is a better contract. ♠s split 3-3 so defense was helpless. A 4 th best ♣ lead presented an overtrick.
♠10xxx ♥J9xxx ♦10xxx ♣-	♠AQ ♥A10x ♦AK9xx ♣K10x	2N-P-3♣-P-3♦-P-3♠ (<i>Smolen</i>)-P-4♥-All Pass. We played 4♥ +5 they played 3♥ +5. +12 IMPs . Not playing Puppet Stayman helps. Smolen shows a 4 card major and 5 or more in the other major. Mike valued his playing strength from distribution accurately. 9 losers opposite 4 or 5 losers will make a 10 trick game. Chances of an 8 card fit in 1 of 3 suits exceed 85%.
♠KJxx ♥x ♦Kxxx ♣10xxx	♠AQxx ♥- ♦QJ ♣AKQ9xxx	1 st hand of 2 nd half of the final... We bid and made 6♠. +13 IMPs . North Deals and opens 1♥-2C-2♥-P-4♥-Dbl-4♠-P-5♥-P-5N(Pick a slam)-P-6♠. At IMPs we should have chosen 6♠, the safer slam. The S holding made a 4-1 trump split a lesser risk, but a ♣ ruff a greater one. In ♠s there are no spade or ♣ risks!
♠QJTxx ♥xx ♦Ax ♣AKTx	♠987 ♥AJx ♦KQxxx ♣9xx	Mike opens 1♠-2♠ (<i>Michaels??</i>)-Dbl-2N-3♣-4♥-4♠(??)-P-P-Dbl, 4♠ made 4 +790 (but 4♥x their way would yield +1100) +13 IMPs . North had ♦ singleton and 5 ♠s to the AK (5314, not a Michaels hand) and never played ♥ when he won the ♠. He came back a ♣ and Mike read the situation. He dropped the ♣Jx from South, then used the ♣9 to set up the ♣10. North could set Mike (switching to ♥, ducking ♠). We should double 4♥. Mike would have led a ♥ and that would be that. ♠s and ♣ will break badly.
♠Qx ♥KQx ♦KJxxx ♣AK	♠AKxxx ♥AJxx ♦xx ♣xx	Both teams got to 6NT. Opponents went down 2 more than we did. +3 IMPs the hard way. It's difficult to stop at 3N (actually 4N) even after seeing all the hands. Bidding should have gone 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2N - 3N - 4N. But would you stop with ♠AK and ♥AJ? What if you have the ♠J also?

When the dust and snow cleared Sunday Night, the Goyal Team qualified for the GNTs.

Special congratulations to our teammates Matt Cory and Brad Bartle. In Louisville (March 2011) they amassed a 7th place overall in the Red Ribbon Pairs and 2nd Place Overall in the North American Pairs, to which Matt (and another partner) added a 25th place overall finish in the Lebar Imp Pairs. **Well done!**