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## **BRIDGE; ORGANIZING AN EVENT FOR THE RECORD BOOKS**

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LEAD: In another week it seems likely that bridge will hold the world record, and so earn a place in the Guinness Book of Records, for the greatest number of participants in a single competitive event. The Epson Worldwide Bridge Contest, which attracted 66,000 players when it was initiated almost a year ago, is expected to reach a six-figure participation.

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Play next Saturday is expected to be in 81 countries, 11 more than a year ago, and will be approximately simultaneous: 11 A.M. in California, 2 P.M. in New York and 7 P.M. in Paris, headquarters of the event. Those interested in taking part - with a chance to achieve world ranking in 3 1/2 hours - may call Linda Bell at the American Contract Bridge League (901-332-5586) for information about the nearest of the estimated 500 participating clubs in North America.

The Epson sponsors have offered a long list of prizes in two categories: One depends on the world and zonal standings; and the other is for the best-played hands selected from press reports of the event.

Contestants will receive a booklet giving all the hands, with analyses by Omar Sharif wearing his bridge-expert hat. An unusual feature of the event, which proved popular last year, will be the predetermined match-point scoring. After each deal players discover how many points out of a possible 100 they have earned, based on results

in some long-forgotten event. A player who bids and makes six hearts on a given deal will receive the same score whether he is in Bombay, Boston or Buenos Aires.

The man who promoted this idea, first in Europe and then in this Epson event, is Jose Damiani, president of the French Bridge Federation. He plays regularly with a group of Paris experts who have won many world titles. The diagramed deal, on which he sat South, helped him to win a major event, the French Inter-Club Championship. He had a close decision when his one-spade opening received a one no-trump response. Three spades or four spades? He chose the more ambitious course on the basis of the internal strength of the spade suit. That proved to be the key factor. There was no way to avoid loss of two spade tricks and a heart trick, and there was a considerable danger of losing a third trump trick. He won the opening club lead, crossed to dummy in hearts and led the spade seven. When East followed with the five, the moment of truth arrived.

If the trumps split evenly, the declarer loses two tricks by any plausible play. He must do what he can to provide for 4-2 splits. The decision is easy if South's three small trumps are trivial: Put up the king, and if this wins follow with a small card. This play gains when there is a doubleton ace with East or a doubleton queen with West.

But does the eight make a difference? Suppose there is a doubleton nine? That can indeed have an impact. Damiani refused to be distracted by the eight treating it as a red herring. He put up the king and continued with a low card to make his game. Was he right?

Once the king won, his play was due to gain in the obvious situations: doubleton ace with East, doubleton queen with West. It was due to lose, as against the jack continuation, if West began with a doubleton nine. But there is a less obvious situation: Perhaps East has a doubleton nine, and West has cleverly refused to win with A Q x x. In general, one should assume that the opponents are playing normally, not cleverly. So South should write off the chance of the doubleton nine on his right, and Damiani's play was well planned.

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