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VIENNA READY FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH

Everything is ready in **VIENNA** for the **16th European Youth Championships** which get under way on Thursday 16 July 1998 at the magnificent **Wiener Rathaus** (Vienna City Hall).

For the following 10 days, Vienna will be the centre of interest of European bridge, as it is well known

The Championships consist of two series: the **Juniors** (for players born in 1973 or later) and the **Schools** (for players born in 1978 or later). Both series are open to all member countries of the *European Bridge League*. Each country may participate in the Championships represented by its national team in either or both series.

The format of the Championships is a simple round robin in each series, which brings each team face to face with every other team. Matches are played over 20 boards.

Participating teams have a European title and a prestigious trophy at stake: the **David Pigot Cup**, awarded to the first team of the **Junior** series, and the **José Damiani Trophy**, given to the winner of the **Schools** series.

In addition, the **Junior** series acts as Europe's qualifier for next year's

that many of the open world's talents start their careers by shining in Junior bridge competitions.

It is expected that, when the curtain falls on Sunday 26 July, not only Europe's best young players will be known, but another example will have been set of good ethics and proper conduct.

World Junior Team Championship.

This is a competition between teams representing the seven geographical zones of the *World Bridge Federation*. Europe takes part with the first **four** teams of the **Junior** series.

At the time of writing, 24 European countries had entered their teams in the **Junior** series, while 12 did so in the **Schools** series.

The battle for the European crown is always unpredictable when it comes to young players. Talent may develop so fast in a 2-year interval that any foretelling is close to pure guess.

However, all countries who have performed well in the past will be competing in Vienna. In the **Juniors**, the field is inevitably dominated by **Norway**, the reigning European Junior champions, and **Denmark** who won the World Junior Championship

last year. In the **Schools**, the situation is very unclear, but **Germany** will try to retain the title they won in 1996 strongly challenged by **Great Britain**, **France**, **Italy**, **Israel**, **Poland** and the Scandinavians.

The Championships' programme, arranged by the Austrian organizers, is not restricted to bridge, but includes a number of social functions and a wonderful daily visit to Viennese cultural and recreational attractions.

It is revealing of the importance governing bodies attach to Junior bridge that the tournament will be attended by such top-level personalities as the President of the *World Bridge Federation* **José Damiani** and the President of the *European Bridge League* **Bill Pencharz**. Technically, as well as from the point of view of personnel, the tournament will be second to none.

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

- AUSTRIA
- BELARUS
- CROATIA
- CZECH REPUBLIC
- DENMARK
- FINLAND
- FRANCE
- GERMANY
- GREAT BRITAIN
- GREECE
- HUNGARY
- ICELAND
- ISRAEL
- ITALY
- NETHERLANDS
- NORWAY
- POLAND
- PORTUGAL
- RUSSIA
- SPAIN
- SWEDEN
- TURKEY
- UKRAINE
- YUGOSLAVIA

JUNIOR TRIATHLON IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

For the first time ever, a Junior event has been included in the programme of the World Championships, held every even-numbered non-leap year.

The **Junior Triathlon** consists of a **teams** competition, followed by a **pairs** tournament and an **individual** event. The winner of the competition will be the player who has scored better in all three events combined. However, each tourna-

ment will also count separately, with prizes and rankings for the top competitors. The Junior Triathlon is a **transnational** event in the sense that teammates and partners may represent different countries.

The Junior Triathlon will take place in Lille, France, from Monday to Friday, August 24-28. The World Bridge Federation has taken every possible measure to make the tournament as

attractive as possible to young players. Juniors can take advantage of very cheap student accommodation arranged by the organizers. There will be no entry fee for the Triathlon sessions, while Juniors who wish to stay on and play in the World Open Pairs will only be charged half the entry fees.

Entries to the **Junior Triathlon** are made exclusively through the National Federations.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL '98

NO PROBLEM FOR NORWAY



This year, the 6th **Hero International Youth Bridge Festival** was held in 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands, January 4-12, mainly sponsored by **Hero**.

The event started as a four-day tournament in 1992 with 7 teams competing, but it has now grown to an eight-day event with as many as 21 junior teams taking part. Also, at the beginning the tournament involved European teams only, but this year **USA**, **Canada** and **Indonesia** were added to provide a more global character.

The technical standard of the tournament is quite high but what really strikes is how the whole event is organized.

The Juniors stay in the homes of local bridge players, called **guest parents**. The event starts with a welcome tournament in which both **juniors** and the **guest parents** take part. After the end of the session every **guest parent** picks up his juniors and takes them to what is going to be home for both during the coming week. How is it like when they arrive? One **guest parent** talked about it:

'I told them that they had two loaves of bread, brown and white, some croissants, sausage-sandwiches, cheese, ham eggs, orange juice, milk and fruit. The youngsters sat

down and after twenty minutes the initial hesitation had vanished. That is what I like: good eaters'.

Jan Rijnaarts, the local organizer, managed to find 22 co-sponsors to cover expenses, besides **Hero**, the main sponsor. Practically, the teams had no financial obligations since, instead of paying entry fees, they were given 1,000 Dutch Guilders for their travel expenses!

The main tournament was a 4-day round robin, followed by semifinals, final and 3rd place playoff for the top four teams, and a Swiss tournament for the rest. Playing conditions in 's-Hertogenbosch's **Hogenschool** were excellent.

Norway had no difficulty to win the competition. **Christer KRISTOFFERSEN**, **Boye BROGELAND**, **Øyvind SAUR** and **Thomas CHARLSEN** - the nucleus of the team which won the 1996 **Junior European** and was second in the 1997 **World Junior Championships** - won easily the round robin, their semifinal against **Ireland** and the final against **Netherlands A**. **Portugal** came third, beating **Ireland** in the playoff.

Norway is the only team that has won the event twice; the other winners being **Germany** (1993), **Denmark** (1994), **Russia** (1996) and **Italy** (1997).

Thanassis Matziaris



Winners **NORWAY**: Christer KRISTOFFERSEN, Boye BROGELAND, Øyvind SAUR, Thomas CHARLSEN, npc Sten BJERTNES and their guest parents

FINAL	
NORWAY	121
NETHERLANDS A	40
3rd PLACE PLAYOFF	
IRELAND	61
PORTUGAL	114

1st SEMIFINAL	
NORWAY	69
IRELAND	22
2nd SEMIFINAL	
NETHERLANDS A	59
PORTUGAL	38

ROUND ROBIN		
1	NORWAY	401
2	IRELAND	360
3	NETHERLANDS A	358
4	PORTUGAL	356
5	ICELAND	348
6	RUSSIA	348
7	GREAT BRITAIN	343
8	AUSTRIA	341
9	USA	334
10	CZECH REPUBLIC	333
11	ITALY	325
12	FINLAND	323
13	POLAND	307
14	GERMANY	299
15	SWEDEN	296
16	TURKEY	293
17	CANADA	281
18	GREECE	261
19	NETHERLANDS B	247
20	HUNGARY	245
21	INDONESIA	229

EUROPEAN JUNIORS READY FOR CAMP IN AMERICA

Some 20 European Juniors, experienced in Bridge Camps, from more than a dozen countries, are getting ready for taking part in the Junior Camp organized this summer by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL).

The Camp will be held in St. John's Northwestern Military Academy, Delafield, Wisconsin, 3-9

August 1998. About 100 Juniors are expected to participate, including the European delegation. Following 'Florida '96', this is the second time that European Juniors are subsidized by the EBL in order to help in the development of the Camp idea across the Atlantic.

Since their introduction in 1976, Junior Camps

have contributed tremendously in the popularization of bridge among young people. The idea was later exported to the world, and Camps held in Europe in odd-numbered years now attract participants from five continents. The ACBL organizes Camps in even-numbered years, right after the North American Nationals, with increasing appeal to American and Canadian youngsters.

POLISH JUNIORS WIN PRE-OLYMPIC EVENT



Pre-Olympic winners **POLAND**: Eliza Janczewska (not available), Jacek Piontke, Tomasz Pilch, Tomasz Przyjemski, Krzysztof Warzocha, Marcin Zaremba

Under the patronage of the EBL and the **Polish Olympic Committee**, the **Polish Bridge Union (PBU)** organized a Pre-Olympic tournament for young players in Warsaw, May 1-3.

The patronage allowed the official use of the five Olympic circles for the first time in a bridge tournament. This helped PBU to obtain important sponsors, including **ZUS** (Poland's main state insurance company), the **Energy Bank** and the 4-star **Forum Hotel**, where the event took place under excellent accommodation conditions.

12 Junior teams took part in the 2-day event, including the national teams of the **Czech Republic**, **Denmark**, **Germany**, **Russia** and several **Polish** teams.

After a round robin, **Poland II** beat **Denmark** in one semifinal and **Russia** prevailed over **Mazovia** (Poland) in the other. In the final, the **Polish** team scored a narrow victory over **Russia** (69-65), while **Denmark** took the bronze beating **Mazovia** heavily.

On the last day, a single-session invitational tournament took place for 80 pairs. Apart from top Polish players (including **Gawrys-Lesniewski**, **Kowalski-Romanski**, **Kwiecien-Pszczola**) and all Juniors, there were also representatives of the world of business and politics, as, for example, EBL President **Bill Pencharz** who partnered parliamentarian **Piotr Zak**, a spokesman of the ruling **AWS** party.

Despite the presence of so many prominent players, however, the tournament was won by a Junior pair: **Linas Kardelis** and **Andrius Michailowas** of Lithuania.

The 3-day event was a positive demonstration of how well can bridge fit into the Olympic family.

Radek Kielbasinski

SUMMER JUNIOR CAMP IN ENGLAND

The **English Bridge Union (EBU)** organizes a **Summer Bridge Camp** for young people aged 14-24. The event will take place at **Harrow School**, a beautiful and ancient school on the outskirts of London, during the week 2-9 August 1998.

This is the first event in a series that the EBU wishes to establish. The new camp aims to give young players a real boost along the path which leads from school bridge to top-level junior competition. At the same time, it offers a great week of bridge, sport, fun and games, as well as the chance of making lots of new friends from many different places.

There will be coaching, tuition and informal visits from many top English players and teachers, play sessions with prizes every day, and plenty of time to enjoy the recreational and leisure facilities of the school.

A special feature is the inclusion of a brand new one-day **Junior Pairs Championship**, open to non-campers as well as those attending the full week. The tournament will be held on Saturday 8 August.

The organizers from the English Bridge Union are Ladies Internationals **Sandra Penfold** and **Chris Duckworth**, both of whom will be at the camp throughout. So will the resident Tournament Director and Tutor, **Mike Amos**.

Former Junior internationals **Jon Cooke**, **Danny Davies** and **Abbey Walker** expect to be able to visit the camp. **Brian Senior** is planning to fill one of the guest spots - and **David Burn** has agreed to fill another. **Sandra Landy**, current European Champion and former World Champion will pay a visit to the camp.

The organizers hope to make the camp a truly international one, and for this reason they would welcome players from all over Europe or even further, if the Juniors can make it. The long history of Junior Camps in Europe has shown that campers really benefit from the experience of playing against people from other countries, as well as developing international friendships which can last a lifetime.

For further information, enquiries and entries, please contact:

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SHIVAM SHAH

THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST BRIDGE PLAYER?

Hardly 6 years old, Shival Shah of Great Britain takes part in bridge tournaments and has already accumulated 100 Master Points. A genius? A phenomenal talent? Only time will show. However, his claim on the title of the world's youngest bridge player cannot be easily challenged.

Shivam Shah was born on 27 August 1992. His father, **Nalin Shah**, started teaching him bridge when he was about 4½ years, but at that time he had already mastered some less complex card games with bridge-like concepts (e.g. trick winning, trumps and notrumps, etc.).

The *Oshwal Bridge Club* in Herts, England, holds two duplicates a week. Experienced players prefer the Wednesday tournaments, but a number of them also play on Fridays which are devoted to the less experienced. There are more than a dozen young players, aged under 18, who have learned the game recently and compete on Fridays. Shivam is by far the youngest although there is also a 9-year old and a few 11- and 12-year olds.

Shivam Shah started taking part in the weekly duplicates in December 1997 when he was a mere 5 years and 3 months old. At the beginning he required some help, but since January he has been playing holding the cards properly without using a card-holder.

Shivam usually partners his father, **Nalin Shah**. Playing together, **Shivam** earned his first Master Points in January 1998, and since then he managed to accumulate nearly 100 MPs. **Nalin Shah** reports:

'On 8 April, Shivam and I took part in the Wednesday session of the BBL Simultaneous, playing against the top players of our club. One of them was our oldest member, Mr Z. Khimasia who is over 85 years old. Thus the age span between the competitors that evening was no less than 80 years - a record, I would imagine.

Shivam and I scored nearly 50%, a superb result. One week later we got 55% and finished fourth in a 25-pairs field.'

Shivam Shah showed fascination with cards right from the age of 2. At 2½ he could line up the cards in a sequence starting from ♣2 to ♣A, followed by ♦2, etc., up to the ♠A.

Shivam was able to read when he was 3. At that time, he was introduced to chess and within a few months he could play a whole game, though at a very basic level.

At 4 he learned whist and his interest in chess started to wane. However, the transition from whist to bridge was more difficult than one would expect, mainly because of the extra dimension of the auction. Six months later, **Shivam** had learned the rules of bidding and could add up high card points.

In December 1997, **Shivam** already knew sufficient basic *Acol* to play in the club's Friday duplicates for non-experienced players. He was initiated in the normal Wednesday game in April, and now he is preparing to play in the Middlesex under-19 Pairs.

Shivam Shah in bridge action and enjoying his trophy in the hands of proud father Nalin Shah.

