

2024 IBPA Awards

**Awards covering the period
January 2023 to December 2023**



Presented at the IBPA Annual General Meeting

Online via Zoom, 15 December 2024

Brad Coles, Editor IBPA Bulletin



MASTERPOINT PRESS
THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER

Ray Lee Master Point Press IBPA Book of the Year

Bridge: A Love Story by Zia Mahmood

Bridge: A Love Story is the compelling memoir of Zia Mahmood and his passion for the greatest game ever invented.

Zia unlocks his personal bridge vault to share the secrets to his remarkable and enduring success for over 50 years. Fast-paced, irreverent, humorous and instructive, this book is for all levels, from beginner to super-expert.

Join him as he travels the world playing mega high-stakes games in exclusive clubs as well as under the spotlight at international tournaments.

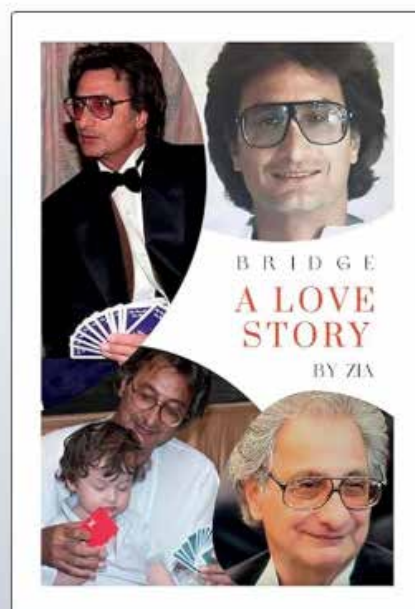
Who does Zia believe is the greatest player in the world?

Why is bridge "sexy"?

How did the rampant cheating scandals wreak havoc on the game?

If you enjoyed Zia's best seller, Bridge My Way which Omar Sharif called "Simply the best bridge book ever written," you won't be able to put this down.

Zia is one of a kind and so is his story.



Other shortlisted candidates:

David Bird – Twelve Important Lessons on Declarer Play

Ghassan Ghanem – Romancing the Defense

Mike Lawrence – Insights on Bridge, Vol. 3

Barnet Shenkin – Heroes, Icons & Scandals

Peter Weichsel – Bridge's First Hippie, Book 1

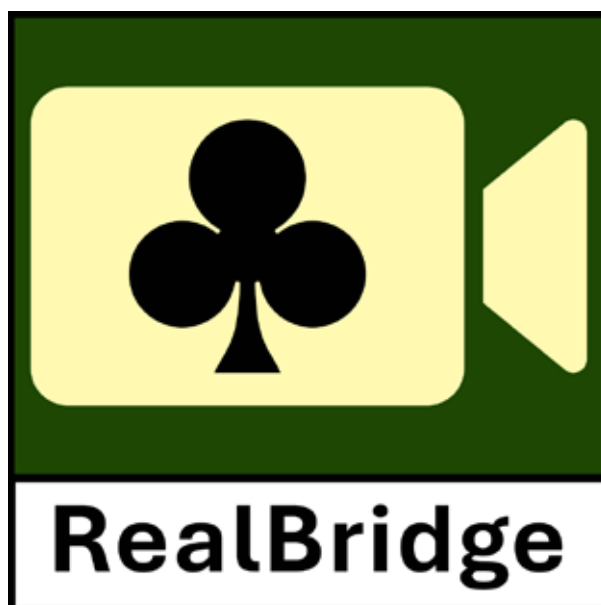
IBPA Personalities of the Year

RealBridge:

Andy Bowles (Operations Director)

Graham Hazel (CEO and CTO)

Shireen Mohandes (Commercial Director)



LOCKDOWN PROJECT

In April 2020, Graham Hazel, an English bridge player and software developer, found himself at home with children to teach and a day job, with some time on his hands. Like many, he was trying to play more online bridge, and finding that it was okay, but not quite like the real thing. What do you do when the software doesn't do what you want? If you're Graham, you write your own. Two months later, he had the core of what you see at the table today – an interface for playing bridge, with built-in audio and video. He showed it to Shireen Mohandes and she was instantly smitten.

A LONG HOT SUMMER

They spent the summer designing and building the rest of the system, testing exhaustively on different types of hardware, and spreading the word about the new platform. When everyone else in the UK was gingerly edging out of lockdown, they were still at home, staring at a screen with twelve RealBridge windows open, adding features and testing. RealBridge wanted a platform that was good for everybody, so they consulted everybody: players, tournament directors, teachers, club owners, and major-event organisers. Everybody had ideas: mostly good; some challenging; others impractical.

A group of about 30 people from around the world rallied round and joined in the testing sessions for which RealBridge offers their thanks. Clubs in England, Norway, Germany, Australia and India started running games on the beta version. National bridge organisations got interested, starting with the English Bridge Union and the USBF. Both of these organisations were very supportive, and started running events on RealBridge

LAUNCH

In November 2020 RealBridge launched the platform commercially. By now there was a solid core of clubs and teachers using the platform and had been used successfully for two national events and one (nervous) international one.

THE FIRST FEW YEARS

Four years on, and RealBridge has been adopted by more than 500 clubs and teachers, about 35 NBOs, several zonal organisations, and the World Bridge Federation.

On the technological side, RealBridge has added a lot of useful functionality for teaching, high-level bridge, everyday club bridge, and vugraph.

Their objective is that everybody in the world to be able to play on RealBridge, and they want every event played on RealBridge to be a success. To that end they used to tell people “If we’re awake we’ll answer the phone,” but that has morphed into just, “We’ll answer the phone.”

Not all of what RealBridge does is commercial – all of the team are bridge players, and they care about bridge. They offer the platform to run free international junior events, and organise games that bring together people from different countries (including the famous or infamous “Up Over versus Down Under” competition, where players from the UK and Ireland took on players from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in an 800-player extravaganza). If someone runs an online fundraiser for junior bridge, you’ll probably find them in the background helping out with the technical side. They also sponsor other bridge technology developers, by helping them with IT resources and financial support.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Online bridge will never replace face-to-face bridge, but it doesn’t have to be a poor relation. RealBridge is determined to be a big part of the future of bridge. RealBridge is there for a small club to run their three-table pairs without having to go out in the cold, for the WBF to run championship events with teams from all over the world, and for everything in between. They are continuously working on new features.

WHO HAS HELPED TO SHAPE REALBRIDGE?

RealBridge has had huge amounts of advice and support from players, directors and organisers at every level. Amongst NBOs and major event-organisers, RealBridge’s greatest helpers have been Jan Martel at the USBF, the EBU led by Gordon Rainsford, Marianne Harding from Norway, Pierre Schmidt from France, Sukrit Vijayakar’s Bridge from Home team in India, Sus Vang from Denmark, Linnea Edlund from Sweden, Gary Barwick and Matt McManus in Australia, and many others.

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

Finally, RealBridge was featured on the TV news in the UK: In 2021 Bessie Hyder, from the North of England, had her 106th birthday. She celebrated in style, by eating some cake, then joining a game on RealBridge.

Justin Lall Play Award

Sponsored by the Lall Family and Bob Hamman

Winner: Justin Mill (Australia)
 Journalist: Nick Jacob (Australia)

Article: One in a million play

Event: 2023 National Open Teams

Source: IBPA Bulletin 697, February 2023, page 4

Justin Mill is one of Australia's finest talents. His partner, Rodrigo Garcia da Rosa of Uruguay, is one of Argentina's best players. People who know the two young stars have been excited to see what they can produce as a partnership. Take this board, where Justin found a beautiful line of play in the quarter-finals of the 2023 National Open Teams in Australia.

Board 41. Dealer North. East-West vulnerable.

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

West	North	East	South
Butts	Mill	Courtney	Garcia da Rosa
	1♠	4♣	4NT ¹
Pass	5♠ ²	Pass	5NT ³
Pass	6♦ ⁴	Pass	6♥ ⁵
Pass	7♠	All Pass	

1. RKC for spades.
2. Two keycards and the queen of spades.
3. Confirming all keycards.
4. King of diamonds, denying the king of hearts.
5. Last train.

Lead: king of clubs. Justin and Rodrigo brushed aside Michael Courtney's preempt to breeze into the grand slam. The contract was excellent. Trumps breaking 2-1 would allow declarer to draw trumps and claim on a crossruff. Three trumps in East would allow declarer to draw trumps and establish the 13th trick in hearts. Hence, Justin played a small trump towards dummy's ace.

East's club discard posed a problem for declarer. Had East held seven clubs – which looked a near-certainty on the auction – declarer would have been unable to trump a club low on the table without being overruffed. Hearts 4-3 would still provide the thirteen trick, so Justin turned his attention to that suit. A heart to the ace was followed by a diamond to the ace. The heart king was

cashed for a club discard, but West's club discard on the third round of hearts showed that this suit would not break either.

Justin trumped the heart low and took stock. East was now marked to be 0=5=2=6. Joan Butts' spade jack would prevent a full crossruff, so Justin set about pruning East's idle cards for an exquisite ending.

The diamond king was cashed before declarer trumped his third diamond on the table. Justin now finessed the spade ten to reach the following ending:

	♠ Q 9		
	♥ —		
	♦ —		
	♣ 9 6		
♠ J		♠ —	
♥ —		♥ Q 7	
♦ Q J 10		♦ —	
♣ —		♣ Q J	
	♠ K 8		
	♥ J 10		
	♦ —		
	♣ —		

When declarer continued with the spade queen from hand, East was caught in declarer's entry shifting squeeze. A heart discard would allow declarer to overtake the spade with dummy's king, a heart would be trumped to fell East's queen, and dummy could be reached with a club ruff to cash the good heart for trick 13. A club discard fared no better. Declarer could duck the spade in dummy, remaining in hand to trump East's last club. Now a heart ruff to hand allowed declarer to win trick 13 with that precious club.

"Ah, an over-under squeeze," mused Michael. "That's what they used to call this in 1935." With opponents failing to reach grand slam at the other table, Justin's one-in-a-million play was rewarded with +1510 and 11 IMPs.

Other shortlisted candidates:

Bulletin	Player	Author
697	Ferit Tavlan	Bernhard Kaiser
698	Marcello Dadon	Jérôme Rombaut
698	Monica Cuzzi	Maurizio di Sacco
701	Hu - Lu	Jian-Jian Wang
702	James Coutts	Ron Klingner
704	Christian Bakke	Marc Smith

The Juan-Carlos Ventin Bidding Award (honouring Pablo Lambardi)

Winners: Linlin Hu and Yinghao (Dunga) Liu (China)

Journalist: Jian-Jian Wang (USA)

Article: The one and only

Event: 2023 Chinese National Club Championship

Source: IBPA Bulletin 701, June 2023, page 5

When watching a tournament, it is always delightful to see players achieving the best result with an outstanding bid or play, sometimes both. The following deal is from the recent Chinese National Club Championship.

Round 3. Board 12. Dealer West. NS vulnerable.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>		<i>Hu</i>	
1♣ ¹	Pass	1NT ²	Pass
3♦ ³	Pass	3♠ ⁴	Pass
3NT ⁵	Pass	4♦ ⁶	Pass
4NT ⁷	Pass	6♥ ⁸	All Pass

1. 16+ any shape.
2. 12+ balanced.
3. 16-17 balanced with four-card major.
4. Four hearts.
5. Four spades.
6. Four diamonds.
7. Denies four diamonds.
8. Great four-card suit, offering choice of slams.

It was a deal with East-West holding 32 HCP, but no eight-card fit in any suit. Linlin Hu and Yinghao (Dunga) Liu, representing ORG Club, demonstrated their slam bidding skills.

Liu upgraded his 15-count because of the nice middle-card combinations. Then Hu tried to locate a fit in red suits. When that effort didn't pay off, he made the most important bid in the whole auction – 6♥ as a choice of slam. With good three-card support and doubleton diamonds, Liu decided that was the best spot to land. Among 16 pairs of competitors in this top-flight tournament, Hu - Liu were the only pair to choose hearts

as trumps. All other 15 pairs played notrump, with ten pairs gaining overtricks in 3NT or 4NT while five pairs went minus in 6NT.

South led a trump against 6♥, and it was up to Hu to bring the contract home. Hu won the jack of hearts in dummy, followed by cashing the king-queen of diamonds and the heart eight to hand. After ruffing the third diamond, Hu came back to hand with the ace of spades and drew trumps. If hearts broke 3-3, a simple play of the spade three to dummy's nine would secure the contract, as North would be endplayed after winning the trick. However, when South showed four hearts, Hu had to clear trumps. Because South had nine cards in the red suits, Hu believed it was time to give up the simple finesse in clubs, and went for the strip-squeeze instead. When Hu played the ace of diamonds, North was hopelessly looking at dummy's last four cards: ♠K10 and ♣AQ. He could not afford to leave his spade queen or club king unguarded, which would give declarer two tricks in that suit. However, keeping two cards in both suits was no better. Hu played the spade king and exited to North's queen, allowing the club ace-queen to become the slam-going winners.

An excellent performance in the bidding and the play!

Other shortlisted candidates:

Bulletin	Players	Author
698	Lin - Huang	John Carruthers
700	Steinberg - Hudson	John Carruthers
702	Lauria - Versace	David Bird
703	A Gong - N Gong	N Gong - Casanova
706	Martel - Fleisher	Brad Coles



Linlin Hu (2nd from left) and Yinghao Liu (right)

Gidwani Award For Best Defence

Winner: Yinghao (Dunga) Liu (China)

Journalist: Jian-Jian Wang (USA)

Article: One-two punch

Event: 19th Asian Games

Source: IBPA Bulletin 706, November 2023, page 4

The 2022 Asian Games, officially the 19th Asian Games, were held from 23 September to 8 October 2023 in Hangzhou, China. Since 2018, bridge has been among the mind sports with full medal status at this second-largest multi-sport event after the Olympic Games.

Here is a brilliant defence executed by the bronze medalist Yinghao (Dunga) Liu of the China Open Team, in the early round-robin match against the final gold medal winner, Hong Kong, China.

Round 11. Board 14. Dealer East. None vulnerable.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Liu</i>	<i>Sze</i>	<i>Hu</i>	<i>Chiu</i>
		Pass	1♣ ¹
1♦	Double ²	2♦	Double ³
2♠	Double	3♦	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

1. 2+ clubs.
2. 4+ hearts.
3. Takeout.

The contract is played from the correct side, as a spade lead from East would easily set it. With West on lead, to give the defense any chance a diamond underlead away from the ace of diamonds is required, and that is exactly what Dunga did. First hurdle cleared!

Hu won his king, and duly shifted to the five of spades. Chiu's ten was taken by Dunga's jack. Now, it was time for some serious thought. Based on the bidding and play so far, Dunga was able to correctly deduce the actual layout, but was there a way to beat 4♥? Even the expert tournament commentators were unable to figure it out

when looking at all four hands, until Dunga put the six of spades on the table.

At the first glance, this seemed to solve declarer's problem in spades, but a closer look reveals that it was actually a big trouble-maker. The bridge between the declarer and dummy was broken! Declarer could no longer set up the clubs and clear trumps at the same time.

In reality, declarer took dummy's nine, and ruffed a diamond back before drawing trumps. When he tried the king of clubs from dummy next, Dunga could score his ace along with two diamond winners for two down.

It took two marvelous moves by Dunga to defeat this solid contract: an underlead to his partner first, then a free finesse for the declarer next. A candidate for next year's best defense award?

In the other room declarer had no trouble taking 11 tricks:

West	North	East	South
<i>Mak</i>	<i>Liu Jing</i>	<i>Lai</i>	<i>Zhuang</i>
		Pass	1NT
Double	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Zhuang started with an offshape 1NT and was transferred to hearts, while West's double of 1NT showed a four-card major and 5+ minor.

The defense here was straightforward: Mak started with the ace of diamonds and another diamond. Zhuang ruffed in hand and played a club. Mak grabbed the club ace, which was the last trick for the defense. Having set up the club suit, Zhuang claimed 11 tricks seconds later.

Other shortlisted candidates:

Bulletin	Players	Author
697	Michał Kwiecień	Artur Wasiak
700	Greg Humphreys	Jenni Carmichael
700	Beatty - Stewart	Paul Segueineau
704	Brink - Drijver	David Stern
705	Irene Baroni	Mark Horton
706	Cai Yang	Jerry Li

Nick Nickell Award Junior Hand Of The Year

Winners: Tomas Popowsky & Francisco Guerra (Argentina)

Journalist: Carlos Pellegrini (Argentina)

Article: Nice switch, but...

Event: 18th World Youth Teams Championships

Source: IBPA Bulletin 703, August 2023, page 3

Carlos Pellegrini, coach of Argentina's U26 team, provided this deal from his team's match against England.

Board 7. Dealer South. Both sides vulnerable.

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Popowsky</i>	<i>Hutton</i>	<i>Feintuch</i>	<i>Sanderson</i>
			Pass
1♥	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

West	North	East	South
<i>Winter</i>	<i>Etchepareborda</i>	<i>Anoyrkatis</i>	<i>Guerra</i>
			Pass
1♥	Double	3♥	3♠
4♥	4♠	All Pass	

Both Wests opened 1♥.

For England, Aaron Hutton overcalled 1NT and Liam Sanderson transferred to spades then showed his diamonds, and the partnership were soon in 4♠.

Clara Feintuch led a heart and Tomas Popowsky won the king and switched to the six of diamonds, a nice play. Hutton put up the ace and Feintuch ruffed – and the contract was doomed, all thanks to that nice low diamond switch. There simply hadn't been enough EW bidding for declarer to be sure of the diamond layout.

At the other table, Baltazar Etchepareborda, for Argentina, doubled the opening bid and Sam Anoyrkatis added to the list of manic preemptive bids we have seen in the last ten days with a jump to 3♥ on his three small. 3♥ did not prove to be sufficient to silence South, Francisco Guerra, who competed with 3♠ and was raised to game by Etchepareborda.

Daniel Winter led the king of hearts and, on seeing dummy and partner's count card, also made the same nice switch to the six of diamonds – but Guerra made an even nicer play, when he called for a low card from dummy! Anoyrkatis got his ruff, but there was just one club to come and declarer was home with his vulnerable game. Very well played.

Other shortlisted candidates:

Bulletin	Player	Author
699	Nicolas Evenstad	Knut Kjærnsrød
703	Anders Brogeland	Brian Senior
704	Benjamin Kristensen	Brian Senior
704	Olivia Schireson	Brian Senior
706	Yao Tianle	Jerry Li



Ramiro Nuñez, Francisco Guerra, Tomas Popowsky, npc Esteban Pugliese, Clara Feintuch, Baltazar Etchepareborda, Santiago Semberoiz

2024 IBPA Awards Jury

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Barry Rigal

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John Carruthers

Brad Coles

Peter Fredin

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Jan Van Cleef

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