

Bulletin Number 1 Congress 2026

Congress 2026 was held at the Kelvin Grove center from 12-19 April. Twenty-three teams entered and 58 pairs. There have been an unprecedented high turnout from international teams, making this one of the strongest National Congresses ever. We wish our international guests a wonderful stay in Capetown.

The teams were run as an initial qualifying Swiss event of 7 rounds. This divided the field into 3 sections of 8, 8 and 7 teams who went on to play a full round robin.

At the end of the round robin the results were as follows

Championship Section

T#	Team	S. 01		S. 02		S. 03		S. 04		S. 05		S. 06		S. 07		Total		PEN.	R
		IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P		
1	Calvet Comp	47	19.18	16	14.42	27	16.55	26	16.38	-15	5.81	20	15.26	29	16.88	150	104.48		1
3	Beauchamp	26	16.38	-1	9.67	37	18.04	-26	3.62	5	11.58	9	12.71	18	14.85	68	86.85		2
5	Stabell	10	12.97	7	12.16	-37	1.96	10	12.97	19	15.06	-20	4.74	3	10.97	-8	70.83		3
6	Munich Plus	-47	0.82	26	16.38	-7	7.84	-1	9.67	21	15.46	-9	7.29	-3	9.03	-20	66.49		4
7	Apteker	5	11.58	-26	3.62	-27	3.45	-10	7.03	-5	8.42	46	19.08	5	11.58	-12	64.26	0.50	5
4	Eber	-5	8.42	-16	5.58	7	12.16	-8	7.56	-19	4.94	25	16.21	-18	5.15	-34	60.02		6
8	Gossip	-26	3.62	-7	7.84	-7	7.84	1	10.33	15	14.19	-25	3.79	-5	8.42	-54	56.03		7
2	Keet	-10	7.03	1	10.33	7	12.16	8	12.44	-21	4.54	-46	0.92	-29	3.12	-90	50.54		8

Interestingly only 1 team reaching the final round robin was comprised of all South African players. The two top teams will go on to play a head to head final of 64 boards that will be completed on 16 April

The two leading teams are

Calvet comp: Alejandro Bianchedi Margie Cole Ida Gronkvist Andrea Manno Antonio Palma

Beauchamp: David Beauchamp Sophia Ashton Julian Foster Jenna Gibbons

These 2 two teams will go onto playing a 64 board knockout match over the next 2 days that can be watched on BBO VuGraph.

Congress Section

T#	Team	S. 01		S. 02		S. 03		S. 04		S. 05		S. 06		S. 07		Total		PEN.	R
		IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P		
1	Donde	-22	4.34	47	19.18	10	12.97	38	18.17	39	18.29	35	17.77	-9	7.29	138	98.01		1
2	Balderson	12	13.48	-28	3.28	-18	5.15	8	12.44	31	17.19	2	10.66	9	12.71	16	74.91		2
6	Chemaly	22	15.66	7	12.16	1	10.33	-11	6.77	-31	2.81	0	10	22	15.66	10	73.39		3
8	Bradley	36	17.91	10	12.97	18	14.85	11	13.23	-39	1.71	-18	5.15	-20	4.74	-2	70.56		4
7	Verhoog	-3	9.03	-7	7.84	-10	7.03	22	15.66	-16	5.58	-2	9.34	20	15.26	4	69.74		5
4	Van Niekerk	3	10.97	-47	0.82	-1	9.67	-8	7.56	-11	6.77	18	14.85	21	15.46	-25	66.10		6
3	Nestoridis	-36	2.09	28	16.72	-3	9.03	-38	1.83	16	14.42	0	10	-21	4.54	-54	58.63		7
5	Hewitt	-12	6.52	-10	7.03	3	10.97	-22	4.34	11	13.23	-35	2.23	-22	4.34	-87	48.66		8

The congress section was won by the Donde team comprising Bernard Donde, Natalie Hoff, Simon Cope and Richard Bowly. Second were Peta Balderson, Di Rosslee, Jennifer Foaden and Renee Kenny

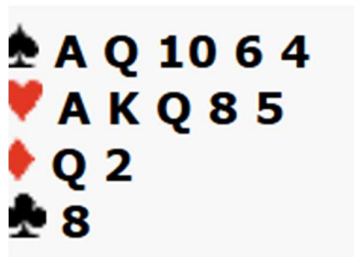
Plate section

T#	Team	S. 01		S. 02		S. 03		S. 04		S. 05		S. 06		S. 07		Total		PEN.	R
		IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P	IMP	V'P		
5	Burman	13	13.72	0	12	-5	8.42	113	20	41	18.53	-1	9.67	34	17.63	195	99.97		1
3	Izerel	0	12	3	10.97	5	11.58	22	15.66	30	17.04	11	13.23	-1	9.67	70	90.15		2
6	Shapiro	0	10	76	20	70	20	0	12	21	15.46	-11	6.77	-34	2.37	122	86.60		3
2	Ward	-13	6.28	-3	9.03	0	12	14	13.96	-21	4.54	26	16.38	22	15.66	25	77.85		4
4	Zimet	78	20	41	18.53	-70	0	-14	6.04	-41	1.47	0	12	1	10.33	-5	68.37		5
1	Goosen	0	10	-41	1.47	34	17.63	-22	4.34	0	12	1	10.33	-22	4.34	-50	60.11		6
7	Ingersent	-78	0	-76	0	-34	2.37	-113	0	-30	2.96	-26	3.62	0	12	-357	20.95		7

The plate section was won by the Burman team, Saul Burman, Andrew Cruise, Kathryn Herz and Eckard Boehlke. Second were the Izerel team, Sharon Izerel, Diana Balkin, Maureen Narunsky and Michael Alexander.

Well done to all these teams.

The following hand was quite instructive in the final round of the round robin

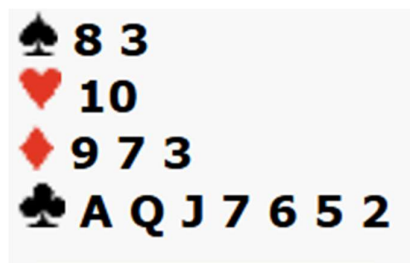


All vulnerable with you sitting South the bidding goes as follows

South	West	North	East
1S	P	1NT	P
2H	P	3C	P
?			

What do you bid?

This is an old theme but I was surprised to see that only 1 pair passed 3C and were rewarded with +130. All the other pairs continued bidding and landed in some number of spades going down. The theme I am referring to is that when partner shows a long suit and has a weak hand, you must play in his suit. Partner's hand was the following



His hand was only making tricks if we play in clubs. It is highly unlikely that 4H or 4S will be on even if partner has 3H. When the bidding goes like this, I like to picture partner with a good 6 card suit and nothing else. This should tell you to pass 3C.

Another example of this principle

♠ A K 6 4
♥ - -
♦ A K 6 2
♣ K J 8 4 3

E/W vulnerable your partner opens 3H. What would you bid

Again just picture a good heart suit with little else outside and it will be clear that 3NT will be hopeless. Only playing in hearts gives you any chance to make a game contract. It is clear to bid 4H even though you have a void

The hand opposite was

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

I can't say I approve of the 3H opening as this looks like an opening hand to me but nevertheless, it is correct to play in hearts.

Slam hand

♠	A 7 2
♥	A K 9
♦	A Q 10 7 6 5
♣	7

None vul the bidding proceeds as follows with you sitting North

South	West	North	East
1S	P	2D*	P
3D	P	?	

2D was game forcing. What is your plan?

I think you need to agree spades so get maximum information for slam bidding and therefore the bidding should proceed

South	West	North	East
1S	P	2D*	P
3D	P	3S	P
4S	P	4NT	P
5C**	P	5D***	P
6C****	P	6D	

** 1 or 4 key cards

*** queen ask

**** I have the queen and the club king

Even though you have agreed spade and diamonds, 6D tells partner that you think diamonds will play better than spade. It should not be a third-round control

ask. A good rule to have is that you cannot ask for controls in a suit agreed by the partnership at the 6 level. Only 5 pairs got to 6D and 6 pairs got to 6S. Those getting to 6S were a little unlucky when spades broke 4-1 and there was a spade and a club loser. 6D was laydown and 1 pair even made all 13 tricks when the opening leader did not find a club lead. The full hand was

Dir: South
Vul: None

♠ A 7 2
♥ A K 9
♦ A Q 10 7 6 5
♣ 7

Optimum
6N S 12

♠ 5
♥ Q 8 4 2
♦ 8 3
♣ A Q 6 5 3 2

W	NORTH	E
E	11	S
S	SOUTH	T

♠ J 10 8 4
♥ J 7 5 3
♦ 4 2
♣ J 8 4

	17	
8		3
	12	

♠ K Q 9 6 3
♥ 10 6
♦ K J 9
♣ K 10 9

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	6	2	5	5
S	1	6	2	6	6
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

♠ A 9
 ♥ A Q 7 6
 ♦ K J 9 6
 ♣ K Q 8



♠ K Q 10 8 6 4 2
 ♥ - -
 ♦ 10 3 2
 ♣ 10 6 5

South	West	North	East
	2D multi	D	2H
2S	P	3NT	P
4S	All pass		

You reach 4S after West has opened a multi showing 6H and a weak hand. You get the 7D lead which you strongly suspect is a singleton. How should you false card so that opponents do not find their ruff.

One idea is to play low from dummy and drop the 10 when East wins the trick with the queen. This will only work against unsophisticated defenders as they will know that the 10 cannot be a singleton as partner would not lead the 7 from 732. Against stronger defenders I think it might be better to play the 3, leaving open the possibility that partner has led a doubleton and East has to look elsewhere for 2 more defensive tricks. On this hand, East should realize that the only hope to beat the contract is to play for partner to have a singleton diamond.

Opening Lead Problem

♠	K	Q	J
♥	10	9	6
♦	A	J	7 6 5
♣	3	2	

You hear the following bidding

South	West	North	East
1H	P	1S	P
3H	P`	3S	P
4S	P	P	P

What do you lead?

It looks obvious to lead the KS but luckily my teammate, Simon Cope, found the brilliant opening lead of the AD. He reasoned that he has 3 tricks and needs to find a 4th. The diamond lead is unlikely to cost as if partner does not have the KD, it will most likely appear in the dummy. This earned our side a swing on the following layout when it was obvious for East to switch to a club after cashing the AD. 4 defenders found the killing AD lead.

Dlr: South
Vul: E/W

♠ A 10 9 8 7 6 5
 ♥ 8 2
 ♦ 10 2
 ♣ 10 5

Optimum
4S S 10

♠ 3
 ♥ Q 4
 ♦ Q 9 8 3
 ♣ K J 9 8 6 4

WEST NORTH EAST
 SOUTH
19

♠ K Q J
 ♥ 10 9 6
 ♦ A J 7 6 5
 ♣ 3 2

	4	
8		11
	17	

♠ 4 2
 ♥ A K J 7 5 3
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ A Q 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	3	4	3
S	-	-	3	4	3
E	-	2	-	-	-
W	-	2	-	-	-

Declarer can still make the contract double dummy by winning the AC and drawing 1 round of trumps and then playing on hearts but there were too many other chances of maybe the club finesse being on or spades breaking 2-2 to take this line. In our room, East led the KS and there were no problems as it was now clear that spades were not breaking and there were 2 spade losers.

The Fourth Trump



You open 1S and partner bids

- a. 2S
- b. 3S weak
- c. 3C 6-9 4 card support
- d. 3D 10-11 4 card support

What would you bid in each of scenarios

- a. Possibly worth a game try looking for help in clubs
- b. Bid 4S. This makes if partner has spades KXXX and doubleton club or Jack of clubs. If it does not make, you can be sure that your opponents can make something.
- c. An easy 4 Spade bid
- d. An easy 4 Spade bid

The value of the 4th trump in partner's hand cannot be overexpressed. Try to always get that across and always prefer to make the bid showing the 4th trump rather than a simple raise.

The hand opposite was



4S was laydown and easy to get to as long as partner shows the 4th trump

Here is another example

♠ 10 5 3
♥ K 8 7 4
♦ 4 2
♣ K J 9 8

If partner opens 1H, choose to show this as either 4-7 weak with support or 8+ weak with support. Don't ever bid 2H with this hand. On this example it did not matter what you bid, partner would go onto 4H on the hand below but he would be a lot more confident that it was making if you showed the 4th trump

♠ A K J
♥ A 10 6 5 2
♦ K Q J 7
♣ 6

Note that the club values in the weak hand were completely wasted and 4H would have been a good contract opposite a 3 count (KH) **but with 4 trumps**.

With you bid not-vulnerable versus vulnerable the bidding goes as follows. What do you bid with the diagramed hand?

South	West	North	East
		P	P
1C	1S	2H	P
P	?		



Conditions superficially look ideal to compete. We are not vul vs vul. I have a 2 suited hand. Why not try to push opponents to a higher level?

The reasons not to bid are

- Our opponents have not found a fit yet. South is likely to want to raise hearts with 3 or more trumps
- Most of our points are in opponent's suits, hearts and clubs. This means that most of their points are in our suits which means we will not be able to make much.

If you bid 3D, you will get doubled there and in 3S for -800 (4 down)

The full hand

Dlr: North
Vul: N/S

♠ K J 5
♥ J 5 4 3 2
♦ A J 9 4
♣ 3

Optimum
2N N 8

♠ Q 8 4 3 2
♥ A K
♦ Q 10 6 5 3
♣ Q

	NORTH	
W	21	E
S		T
	SOUTH	

♠ 7 6
♥ Q 10 9 7
♦ 8 7
♣ A 9 6 5 2

	10	
13		6
	11	

♠ A 10 9
♥ 8 6
♦ K 2
♣ K J 10 8 7 4

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	3	1	2	2	2
S	3	1	2	2	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-