

ROY HUGHES



CANADA'S



BRIDGE WARRIORS:

ERIC MURRAY and SAMI KEHELA



FOREWORD BY BOB HAMMAN

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CONTENTS



Foreword by Bob Hamman	v
Author's Preface	vii
Prologue: Toronto, 2001	3
PART I: Bermuda Bowl Quest	9
<i>Chapter 1: San Francisco Trials</i>	11
<i>Chapter 2: ... and Tribulations</i>	33
<i>Chapter 3: The Final Day</i>	49
<i>Chapter 4: North America's Team</i>	59
<i>Chapter 5: St. Vincent, 1966</i>	71
<i>Chapter 6: Frustration in Italy</i>	93
<i>Chapter 7: Pittsburgh Trials, 1966</i>	111
<i>Chapter 8: Miami Bermuda Bowl, 1967</i>	129
<i>Chapter 9: The Finals vs. Italy</i>	149
PART II: The True North Strong and Free	169
<i>Chapter 10: Playing for Canada</i>	171
<i>Chapter 11: Team Canada and the Spingold Trophy</i>	185
<i>Chapter 12: Deauville, 1968</i>	201
<i>Chapter 13: Middle Years</i>	209
<i>Chapter 14: Later Years</i>	221
PART III: Potpourri	247
<i>Chapter 15: Tournament of Champions</i>	249
<i>Chapter 16: Portland Vanderbilt</i>	255
<i>Chapter 17: Hands from Around the World</i>	261
PART IV: Rematch	285
<i>Chapter 18: Canadian Aces</i>	287
<i>Chapter 19: Venice Bermuda Bowl</i>	301
<i>Chapter 20: The Last Try</i>	331
Epilogue	327
Postscript	330
Appendix: Tournament Record	332
Index of Players	334

FOREWORD

BY BOB HAMMAN



There is very little about Eric and Sami that has not already been said. At one stage they had played every board that Canada had played in six consecutive World Bridge Olympiads. I was fortunate to have them as teammates in Bermuda Bowls in 1966 and 1974. I was unlucky enough to have them as opponents in many final or semifinal matches in Vanderbilts and Spingolds over more years than I wish to admit. Whether they beat you or you were lucky enough to be ahead when the official rules said the match was over, you were certain to have some bruises and wounds (psychological only) that required healing. You never really beat Murray and Kehela; you were just temporarily ahead of them.

Bob Hamman
September, 2006

AUTHOR'S PREFACE



I acknowledge with profound gratitude the two subjects of this book, Mr. Eric Murray and Mr. Sami Kehela, who gave so unstintingly of their time, telling me the most vibrant, fascinating, sometimes hilarious stories about the great bridge players and battles of the 1960s and 1970s. It was a great joy to me; I can only hope to convey a small part of their wit and color to the reader.

I thank Suzanne Hocking and Ray Lee of Master Point Press for their usual excellent support. I am also grateful for the assistance from Tim Bourke, John Carruthers, Tom Dawson, Bruce Gowdy, Eric Kokish, Paul Lavings and Richard Oshlag. The deals presented in this book come from numerous sources; I should mention in particular publications of the American Contract Bridge League and the Canadian Bridge Federation, the *Bridge World*, and the private scrapbooks of Eric Murray and Sami Kehela. Many of the deals feature spectacular card play, and the reader is invited to play along with Murray and Kehela, card by card. Others are just the background for stories and insights into what I found to be a remarkable time in the history of bridge.

Roy Hughes
Toronto
December, 2006

CANADA'S



BRIDGE WARRIORS:

ERIC MURRAY and SAMI KEHELA



PROLOGUE

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2001



The Royal York Hotel, as it was known when built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1920s and is still known by Toronto's stubborn citizenry, lies on the north side of Front Street directly across from Union Station. For the better part of a century it has served the needs of well-to-do travelers, from royalty, presidents and prime ministers to the Calgary football fans who tethered their horses in its posh lobby when visiting for the annual Grey Cup. When the Royal York opened in 1929, it was the tallest building in the British Empire. Though now dwarfed by the skyscrapers of Toronto's financial district, its tan stone exterior and graceful lines still make it an impressive building.

For many years, the Royal York Hotel has been associated with excellence in Canadian contract bridge. Every Easter, thousands have competed there for the Canadian Bridge Championships. When the American Contract Bridge League first held a national championships in Canada, it was at the Royal York.

Tonight, bridge players from all over the world are assembled there to pay tribute to the best in the game. For tonight, in the Canadian Room, is the ACBL Hall of Fame dinner. This year's event is a special one for Canadian bridge players. Two of their own, Eric Murray and Sami Kehela, are to receive the von Zedtwitz award for outstanding contributions to bridge and become the first Canadians to be inducted into the ACBL Hall of Fame.

They certainly have the credentials. As partners, Murray and Kehela represented North America in the Bermuda Bowl three times, taking the silver medal each time. In an accomplishment unique among all the world's players, they represented their country as a partnership in every one of the first six World Team Olympiads, from Turin in 1960 to Valkenburg in 1980. Together they won the Life Master Men's Pairs, the Life Master Pairs, the Vanderbilt, and the Spingold Trophy three times. Other honors, won together and separately, are too numerous to mention.

It is a tradition that inductees to the Hall of Fame be introduced by a presenter. The Master of Ceremonies, as always David Ezekiel of Bermuda, recognized Eric Kokish, who then introduced his long-time friend, colleague and teammate, Sami Kehela. The room burst into applause. Kehela, in his sixties now but still trim, and looking more relaxed than in his playing days, took the podium. After thanking all for attending, Kehela described his early days in bridge, at Berkeley and in London. Then it was time to talk about his co-inductee:

Eric enjoyed a reputation for being a difficult partner. And did he ever enjoy it. At first, when I took his contributions to the auction at face value, our scorecard was littered with penalties. Put plain, any correlation between his bids and his values was purely coincidental. What to do? I came up with a solution: I would put my trust in the opponents' judgment and mentally assign all delinquencies to my partner. This worked reasonably well, but there was the odd mishap.

I well remember a hand from a late round of the 1964 Spingold, here in Toronto. Both sides were vulnerable and Eric opened the bidding in third seat. I should point out that when two initial passes came around to him, Eric considered the situation forcing. The opponents staggered into game and falling from grace, I doubled. What could I have been thinking of with only three aces? Shortly thereafter I was ruefully entering 790 points in the opponents' column. In the replay my hand opened the bidding, and after receiving a response, also doubled the final contract. This time, however, the responder took another look at his Yarborough and ran. He went for 1100. Now most players' reaction to this happy outcome would have been a mixture of relief and embarrassment — not Eric — for whom the word “chutpah” was invented. He hawked the hand around for days, citing his “splendid judgment”.

After the laughter died down, Sami closed on a more serious note:

Over the years, after three Bermuda Bowls and several Olympic events, my greatest regret of course is not having won a world title. In fact I dare say that we probably hold the unenviable record for most defeats at that level of competition. And needless to say, we know the Italian national anthem by heart.

It has been said of some players that they excel when a hundred IMPs in front or a hundred behind. Eric was not like that. He was at his best when the chips were down, bringing to the table any amount of courage, and a fierce will to win.

Thank you, Eric, and thank you all for attending.

The master of ceremonies recognized John Carruthers, who took the podium and began by explaining how he came to be recruited for his current task. “When Eric

asked me to introduce him at this presentation, he did so with his usual grace and diplomacy. He said to me, ‘All my friends are dead, so would you do this for me?’” John entertained the audience with stories of Eric’s exploits, in law as well as bridge, and concluded by saying:

Murray also has a third skill, after litigation and bridge. It is his ability as a raconteur and we are about to experience it. With all due respect to the great bridge players I’ve played with and against, I’d like to present to you the best bridge player I’ve ever seen, a true Canadian icon, Eric Rutherford Murray.

Eric Murray, the evening’s last speaker, came up to the podium. Tall, fair with ruddy good looks, still imposing in his early seventies, he shook hands with Carruthers, took the microphone and thanked all for attending. The assembly was then treated to Murray at his outrageous, wittiest best. He lampooned everyone, starting with Larry Cohen, who in his capacity as Hall of Fame chairman had called Eric to tell him about his induction.

“He wrote a book about some kind of law,” noted Murray, Queen’s Counsel. “Somewhere it says to be aggressive at the three-level whenever you have eighteen trumps. Must have been a typographical error. Larry lives in Florida; maybe he had something to do with the election down there.”

Murray went on to poke fun at his partner and co-inductee, opponents, friends, the master of ceremonies, and all with wit and aplomb that had the audience in tears from laughing. When he was done, they applauded for the last time and then set off to return to what they like to do best: play bridge.



One winter day early in 2006, I was sitting with Ray Lee, my publisher, discussing possible projects. Ray has been consistently supportive of my writing endeavors, while wistfully aware that I did not seem naturally inclined to choose topics that held out good prospects for financial success. My first book, an abstruse theoretical look at bidding aimed squarely at a tiny portion of the expert market, was a case in point. So he was pleasantly surprised when, having asked me if I was considering undertaking another book, I proposed a biography of Murray and Kehela. “That’s been number one on my wish list for years. I think it’s a great idea, if we could get them to go along with it.”

It seemed to me that writing the story of Canada’s greatest bridge partnership was an obvious project; I had always wondered why no one had done it. Ray told me he had had some preliminary discussions with John Carruthers, so I called John (J.C.) and asked him first, was he writing such a book, and if not, what did he think about it as a project?

“It’s a book that should be written,” he agreed. “And I’d love to be the one to write it, but I just can’t right now. Why don’t you?”

I could think of several reasons not to: hundreds of hours spent alone at the keyboard, loss of time for family and other pursuits, frustration with the difficulties of writing. But I felt it would be good for bridge, particularly Canadian bridge, for the story of Murray and Kehela to be told, and perhaps I could have some fun telling it. I decided that I would ask the two protagonists if they would be willing to see a book written, and if they would lend their assistance. If they said yes, I would go ahead with the project.

I knew both of my potential subjects personally, mostly as opponents but also as occasional teammates. It could not be said that I knew either of them well. John gave me some phone numbers for Murray; for Kehela I went to the phone book, where there were two entries. Having dealt with the wrong one, I got Sami on the second try. I described what I had in mind and waited for his reaction. “But who would be interested in such a book?” he wanted to know. “Surely we are yesterday’s men. We haven’t played seriously for almost twenty years.”

Sami was concerned that I, along with everyone else involved in the project, would lose money. I told him about my conversations with Ray, who seemed to be in a good position to judge the risks and act accordingly. I then tried to assure him that my own livelihood was not at stake. “Have you spoken with Eric?” he asked. When I told him no, he said, “If you can get Eric to go along, I will, too.”

J.C. had given me four numbers for Murray. Two were business numbers; Eric maintains an active law practice. A third was for the country property where he spends his weekends. As it was a weeknight, I dialed the last number on the list, a Toronto residence.

“Hello?”

“Hello, Eric, this is Roy Hughes speaking.”

“Who?”

I knew I had found my quarry — Murray’s voice was unmistakable — I just had to speak louder. We established who I was and what I was hoping to do. Eric wanted to know if I had broached the subject with Sami; when I told him I had, he said, “If it’s all right with Sami, it’s all right with me.” I decided to take this as assent. I phoned Sami right back, not wanting to give him any time to develop second thoughts, and told him of my success with Eric. Sami had an offer for me. “I have a few things that might be of use to you,” he said. “Some scrapbooks I’ve been keeping over the years. Would you like to see them?” I said yes, very much, and we set an appointment for a few days later.

It turns out that Sami lives just a short drive away. The apartment he shares with his wife of eleven years, Anita, is elegant. Engaging paintings adorn the walls, and sculptures sit discreetly on fine tables. Humphrey Bogart peers down from a poster of *Casablanca*. A classic Mason and Risch grand piano (“it belongs to my wife,” Sami explained later) stands by the window. We sit and talk over coffee. Sami passes me

his scrapbooks, impressing on me the need to take care of them. Actually, he put it like this. “If anything should happen to these,” he said, “your life will not be worth much.”

Sami was interested in what sort of book I had in mind. I told him, frankly, that I didn’t yet have a clear mental image. I wanted it to be of interest to bridge players, with lots of deals and other bridge material, but also biographical information, anecdotes, reflections on the game. I asked Sami what he thought would make a good beginning. There was so much to cover, all the Bermuda Bowls, the Olympiads — the partnership spanned at least thirty years. I wanted a focus, a crucial point where the stakes were high and the tension palpable.

“Perhaps you want the pairs trials in San Francisco,” said Sami. “They were certainly dramatic. There were many pairs in contention, right down to the very last hand. There was this one deal that decided everything...”

PART I



BERMUDA BOWL QUEST

SAN FRANCISCO TRIALS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1965



San Francisco, California

♠ A Q 9 3
♥ K 5 3
♦ K
♣ A K J 9 8

♠ 10 8 2
♥ A Q J
♦ A Q 10 8
♣ 10 7 3

Contract: Six notrump

Opening lead: ♥10

Plan the play.

For the next six days, the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco was to be the scene of all-out bridge war. Eighteen pairs, the elite of North America's millions of bridge players, would spend their next week in furious pursuit of a single objective. For the three pairs that finished on top at the end of play would have won the right to represent North America in the 1966 Bermuda Bowl, the emblem of world bridge supremacy.

The Contestants

All eighteen pairs entertained hopes of placing in the top three; realistically, the chances were greater for some than others. A handicapper might look to the final standings of the previous year's International Team Trials, held in Dallas, Texas. The top three pairs from that event had represented North America in the 1965 World Championships in Buenos Aires.

Placing first in the trials had been Howard Schenken and Peter Leventritt. Schenken was a bridge legend. As a member of the Four Aces, he won the first World Championship, a U.S. victory over the European Champions, France, in 1935. Six world team championships appearances, a winner three times; ten-time winner of the Spingold Trophy, for the premier knockout of the Summer Nationals; ten-time winner of the Vanderbilt trophy, for the premier knockout of the Spring Nationals; five-time winner of the Life Master Pairs. (He was the hands-down winner of a poll taken of experts which had asked, "If you were playing for money or your life, whom would you choose as your partner?") Partner Peter Leventritt had an impressive record of his own, including, amongst many other accomplishments, winning the Spingold twice, the Vanderbilt twice, and representing the U.S. four times in World Championships as a player, and once as nonplaying captain.

Second in last year's trials, behind Schenken and Leventritt, were Ivan Erdos and Kelsey Petterson. Erdos was born in Budapest, escaped to England before the war and later emigrated to the United States, settling in Los Angeles. He was a noted player, writer and teacher. (He went on to win the World Mixed Pairs in 1966 with Mary Jane Farrell, before dying prematurely in 1967.) His partner, Kelsey Petterson, was an attorney and leading West Coast player.

Third place in the last trials had gone to B.J. Becker and Dorothy Hayden. Becker was one of the world's great players. He had won the Spingold six times, had been on the victorious U.S. teams in the 1951 and 1953 Bermuda Bowls, and was widely known for his newspaper columns and books. Becker and Hayden had started their partnership on the flight home from the 1960 Olympiad in Turin. They were consistent high finishers in North American tournaments.

Of the three pairs that had represented North America in Buenos Aires, Schenken-Leventritt had to be reckoned the favorites. Captain John Gerber had used them as the anchor pair for the North American side, putting them in for every board of the critical match against Italy. Becker and Hayden had the next most action, playing five of the nine sets against Italy and all but one set of the key match against Great Britain. Erdos and Petterson had been used more sparingly. Erdos's playing credentials were impeccable; his partner, though a very fine player, was considered slightly below front rank and there was speculation that there was a financial arrangement between them.

The members of last year's International Team were automatically eligible for this year's trials. The other route to qualification was through high placing in national

events of the last two years. Veterans Sam Stayman and Victor Mitchell qualified for this year's event by winning the Life Master Pairs the previous summer. Finishing just out of the money in last year's trials, they too had to be considered among the favorites. Another pair with considerable international experience was George Rapée and partner Boris Koytchou. Rapée had won three Bermuda Bowls representing the U.S.; Koytchou had represented France three times in the European Championships before emigrating to the United States.

Robert Hamman had won the International Team Trials in 1963 playing with Don Krauss, qualifying to represent the U.S. in the 1964 Olympiad, where they finished second to Italy. He and Krauss narrowly missed qualifying in the last trials, finishing fourth. In this year's trials Hamman was playing with veteran international Lew Mathe. A relatively new partnership, they had qualified for the trials by winning the 1964 Blue Ribbon Pairs. Mathe had international experience dating back to a 1954 Bermuda Bowl win.

The four Canadians, Eric Murray, Sami Kehela, Percy ("Shorty") Sheardown and Bruce Elliott qualified for this year's trials by winning the 1965 Spingold in Chicago. That was the second of back-to-back Spingold wins for the foursome. In the previous trials they had finished sixth and eighth; they would be looking to break into the top three this time around.

Norman Kay and Edgar Kaplan had lost the finals of the 1965 Spingold to the Canadians, but the second-place finish was good enough for trials qualification. They had also finished second in the 1965 Vanderbilt, with Robert Jordan and Arthur Robinson, who had represented North America in the 1963 Bermuda Bowl and the United States in the 1964 Olympiad.

The 1965 Vanderbilt had been won by the legendary Oswald Jacoby and his son Jim, Ira Rubin, Phil Feldesman, Dr. John Fisher and Albert Weiss. They were all in attendance, but in a new line-up. Rubin had played with Oswald Jacoby to start the Vanderbilt, but by the time the finals came around the team was rearranged. Ira Rubin renewed his partnership with Feldesman, which had been in hiatus since a very strong run in 1961-62. Oswald Jacoby would play with Weiss, while Jim continued with Fisher.

An all-Texas team had won the 1964 Open Teams (now the Reisinger). John Gerber would play with Paul Hodge, and Mervin Key with Dr. Harold Rockaway. Two other pairs were perhaps long shots, in that they had qualified through matchpoint successes and didn't have the team play credentials of the favorites. Edward Rosen, John Wachter, Gunther Polak and Robert Sharp had made their reputations with consistent results in Midwest tournaments. Sharp had recently moved to Miami Beach.

The pairs were organized into groups of friends (and in the Jacoby's case, family) who would by design meet each other in early rounds. The reason given was that "close friends would not be placed in the uncomfortable situation of knocking one another out of contention in the late rounds." Another interpretation might be to prevent any suspicion that an out-of-contention player might improperly assist a

friend near the end. Numbers were then drawn by lot. This is what the player board looked like:

1. Edgar Kaplan, New York City — Norman Kay, Philadelphia
2. John Gerber, Houston — Paul Hodge, Abilene, Texas
3. Samuel Stayman — Victor Mitchell, New York City
4. Eric Murray — Sami Kehela, Toronto
5. Mervin Key — Dr. Harold Rockaway, Houston
6. Percy Sheardown — Bruce Elliott, Toronto
7. John Wachter, Milwaukee — Ed Rosen, Chicago
8. George Rapée — Boris Koytchou, New York City
9. Howard Schenken — Peter Leventritt, New York City
10. Robert Jordan — Arthur Robinson, Philadelphia
11. Gunther Polak, Chicago — Robert Sharp, Miami Beach
12. B. Jay Becker, NYC — Mrs. Dorothy Hayden, Hastings, N.Y.
13. Oswald Jacoby, Dallas — Albert Weiss, Chicago
14. Lew Mathe, Los Angeles — Robert Hamman, Van Nuys, Calif.
15. Philip Feldesman, NYC — Ira Rubin, Paramus, N.J.
16. Ivan Erdos, Los Angeles — Kelsey Petterson, Bellflower, Calif.
17. Alvin Roth — Tobias Stone, New York City
18. James Jacoby — Dr. John Fisher, Dallas

The Format

The trials was to be run as a complete round robin. Since there were eighteen pairs, there would be seventeen rounds, three a day with starting times of 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 9:15 p.m. Each round consisted of a single match of twenty boards against one of the other pairs. The boards were duplicated: everybody played the same deals. The scoring was on the 'Butler' method. Each board was first scored in the standard way for duplicate, with a bonus of 500 for a vulnerable game, 300 for a nonvulnerable game, 50 for a partscore. Since each board was to be played nine times, there were nine such scores. A 'datum' score was arrived at by removing the highest and lowest North-South scores¹ and averaging the remaining seven to the nearest ten points. Each pair's result was then compared with that datum, with the difference converted to International Match Points, or IMPs. After the twenty boards of each match, the result in IMPs was converted to victory points. Sixty victory points (VP) were available each match. A tie would result in a score of 30-30. The first 20 IMPs of a winning margin were worth one VP each; each IMP beyond 20 was worth one half a VP, to a maximum of 60.

1. Frequently done in IMP pair games, to reduce the effect of wild results on the field's scores.

Day 1: Saturday, November 13, 1:00 p.m.
Round 1: Murray-Kehela vs. Sheardown-Elliott

Murray and Kehela's first match was against their compatriots Sheardown and Elliott, a result of the policy of fratricidal early-round pairings. Kehela permitted himself a memory of the last year's trials, in Dallas. There, too, they had been paired against their Canadian teammates in the first round. On the first board, Kehela opened one club on this black two-suiter:

♠ K Q 8 6 5 2 ♥ K ♦ — ♣ K Q J 9 4 3

He later introduced spades at the three-level and caught Murray with:

♠ — ♥ 10 9 7 5 3 ♦ Q J 10 9 8 5 4 ♣ 8

The partnership wound up in four diamonds doubled, set 1100. They would certainly have to make a better start this year. Sixth had been a respectable finish, but no one remembers who came sixth. First would be best, of course, but finishing in the top three was what counted.

This match would feature natural bridge, as both pairs employed simple, old-fashioned methods: four-card majors, 16-18 one notrump openings and relatively few gadgets. The first board was a potential swing, as a slam in diamonds required little more than the king of trumps onside, and would have succeeded as the cards lay. However, all nine pairs bid to a sensible three notrump and made it with differing numbers of overtricks. And so the tournament was underway. The all-Canadian match was tight. After seven boards, Sheardown and Elliott led by a slim 2 IMPs when Kehela, in fourth chair, held

♠ A 9 ♥ A K ♦ A Q 10 7 3 2 ♣ 9 8 3

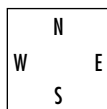
With neither side vulnerable, Sheardown opened the bidding on his left with one club. Murray passed and Elliott raised to two clubs. Kehela bid three diamonds, a strong jump overcall. After a pass from Sheardown, Murray bid three spades and Elliott passed. Now Kehela faced a decision. What would you have bid, in his place?

The game prospects are not particularly good. Murray, who was unable to find a nonvulnerable overcall of the opening one club bid, is unlikely to have very good spades. On the other hand, there is a big reward for bidding and making a game. Kehela settled on four spades. Everybody passed and this was the deal:

Dealer West
Neither vul.
Board 8

♠ J 8 7 6 5 3
♥ Q 8 6
♦ K 6
♣ 6 4

♠ K Q
♥ 10 5 3 2
♦ J 5 4
♣ A Q 5 2



♠ 10 4 2
♥ J 9 7 4
♦ 9 8
♣ K J 10 7

♠ A 9
♥ A K
♦ A Q 10 7 3 2
♣ 9 8 3

The fortunate lie of the spade suit allowed Murray to take ten tricks. The result sheet looked like this (Murray and Kehela are #4):

NS	EW	CONTRACT		NS SCORE	NS IMPS
10	1	4♠	N	+420	+4
18	17	2NT	N	+180	-3
15	13	3♠	N	+170	-3
2	5	4♠	N	+420	+4
9	8	4♠	N	+420	+4
3	7	2♠	N	+170	-3
4	6	4♠	N	+420	+4
16	12	2♠	N	+170	-3
11	14	3♦	S	+150	-4

To compute the datum, the lowest NS score, +150, is removed, as well as one of the highest, +420. The remaining seven are averaged and rounded to the nearest ten, giving +280. So Murray-Kehela's +420 was worth $420-280=140$ points, which converts to a win of 4 IMPs.

(You, the reader, are presented with many bridge questions in this book. Please note that a great many of them are *not fair*. They are from real life, and real life does not always reward virtue and punish transgressions. If you bid four spades on this last deal, your luck is in and you can give yourself 4 IMPs. You also win IMPs if you found the imaginative call of three notrump, with no club stopper but a fair chance of finding them 4-4. I'll just have to take your word for it that you would have had the nerve to bid it playing with Eric Murray. Four diamonds and pass are also possible calls, but as the cards lie they result in a missed game.)

Sheardown struck back in a big way two boards later, when Murray held:

♠ A 10 6 5 4 3 ♥ Q 6 ♦ K J 9 6 ♣ K

Kehela passed as dealer, both sides vulnerable, and Sheardown opened three hearts. Murray faced an awkward decision: overcalling could lead to a disaster, and game opposite a passed hand looked unlikely. In addition, partner might be able to reopen with a suitable hand. In any event, Murray passed, and Elliott raised to four hearts. No one had anything to say to this, and the full deal was:¹

Dealer East	♠ Q 7										
Both vul.	♥ A 10 4										
Board 10	♦ 8 7										
	♣ A J 7 5 4 3										
♠ A 10 6 5 4 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 9 8 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 6		♥ 8									
♦ K J 9 6		♦ A Q 10 4 3									
♣ K		♣ 9 8 6									
	♠ J										
	♥ K J 9 7 5 3 2										
	♦ 5 2										
	♣ Q 10 2										

With trumps 2-1 and the club king onside, Sheardown scooted away with ten tricks. Every single other East-West pair made a game in spades, and the swing to Sheardown-Elliott was the largest allowed under the scoring: 14 IMPs. Armchair quarterbacks have a field day with deals like this one. Shouldn't West overcall, with 13 points? (point-counters, ignoring the danger of bidding three spades and the unlikelihood of making game opposite a passing partner) Couldn't East double four hearts with his short hearts? (modern activists) Or, if West doesn't overcall, perhaps he should back in with four spades when it transpires that North-South have a fit? (geniuses) Or, even, couldn't East open his promising hand? (light action, losing-trick count aficionados) Critics often sum up in frustration by saying that *someone* should have taken a call. But the truth of the matter is that just because all of these various actions are conceivable doesn't make any one of them correct. It is fine to say that somebody should have done something, but sometimes the primary cause of an adverse swing is bad luck. The South hand was a little weak in playing strength to open at the three-level, vulnerable, in 1965, and only one or two other players did so. Two Souths passed, and the rest opened a weak two bid. Perhaps Sheardown would have as well, had he been playing them, but he and Elliott played strong twos.

Board 12 posed a number of challenges for Kehela. With only his side vulnerable, Murray opened one club in second chair, and Elliott overcalled one diamond. Kehela held

♠ A J 10 4 3 ♥ A K 7 5 ♦ K 2 ♣ 10 3

1. For this deal, Murray sat West. There were frequent direction changes throughout each round, so that a pair's results were not all compared with the same competitors.

and bid one spade. Sheardown raised to three diamonds, weak. (Both Canadian pairs, thoroughly modern, played weak jump raises of overcalls.) Murray raised to three spades. Kehela cuebid four hearts, and continued with Blackwood over Murray's signoff. Elliott tested out his friends' preparedness by interjecting a five diamond call, but Murray passed to show one ace¹ and Kehela continued to six spades.

Dealer West	♠ K 7 6
N-S vul.	♥ Q 9
Board 12	♦ J 5
	♣ A K J 7 4 2

Opening lead: ♦ 3

♠ A J 10 4 3
♥ A K 7 5
♦ K 2
♣ 10 3

Elliott took his partner's lead with the ace and returned another diamond. Kehela took that with the king and led a low spade on which Sheardown played the queen. That is a fortunate turn of events. How do you plan the rest of the play?

At this point, there are eleven tricks on top. A twelfth could come from a club finesse, or from ruffing out the clubs, if they are 3-2. Normally the latter would be the better play, but here West has shown up with a singleton spade. Might he not be likely to hold four clubs?

If he does, it won't matter. West is marked with four diamonds and one spade, so if he has four clubs he will also have four hearts. He can throw diamonds on the second and third rounds of trump, but will have to throw a heart on the fourth. Then declarer tries to ruff out the clubs. That fails, but his fourth heart is good for the slam-going trick. And if West happened to start with five clubs, East would have made a Lightner double of six spades, calling for an unusual lead. Kehela drew trumps, established the clubs with a ruff, and returned to dummy via the queen of hearts. Making the slam was worth 11 IMPs. West's hand was:

♠ Q ♥ J 10 8 6 4 2 ♦ 10 8 6 3 ♣ 6 5

There were no more large swings, and at the end of the closely contested match, Murray-Kehela had won by 10 IMPs, which converted to a 40-20 win in VPs. Several pairs had big wins, and Murray and Kehela lay tied for seventh after the first round.

1. I asked Eric if he and Sami played any conventional responses to Blackwood after interference, like perhaps the popular DOPI (Double with zero, pass with one). "Play it? I invented it! I remember talking to Easley (Blackwood) about it. He didn't like the idea — what if you wanted to make a penalty double? I told him: I double! So what if it shows no ace!" (The *Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* is silent on the inventor of DOPI.)

COLONIAL ACOL

Notrump Bidding

1NT 16-18.

Nonforcing Stayman

Murray 2♦ (demands response in longer major)

3 of a minor preemptive

Gerber

Flint

General

Four-card majors

2♣: strong, forcing (2♦ negative)

2♦: Roman, 3-suiter, 17+

2♥, 2♠: Acol, forcing one round

Limit raises

Swiss 4♣, 4♦

Drury

DOPI, DEPO

Preemptive jump raises of overcalls

Strong jump overcalls

Ripstra/1NT (2♣, 2♦ for majors, longer minor)

Leads

A from A-K

Q from A-K-Q

Murray and Kehela dubbed their methods 'Colonial Acol', the references being to England's national methods (from the Acol bridge club, named after the street on which it stood) and to Canada's historical status as a colony of Great Britain. In bridge terms, the methods are a blend of the American strong notrump with English-style Culbertson tendencies: four-card majors, light openings based on playing strength and acceptable honor-count, many bids limited and nonforcing.

An opening bid of 1NT shows 16-18 and is permissible with a five-card major. In response 2♣ is nonforcing Stayman (opener may pass at his third turn). A response of 2♦ is Murray, asking opener to take a preference between the majors. A jump to three of a minor is preemptive.

Four-card majors are opened freely (Murray would open on 10xxx; Kehela preferred to have a little better). One heart is frequently the choice with four hearts and

five diamonds. With three four-card suits, open the suit below the singleton unless the singleton is clubs, in which case open 1♥. Occasionally a hand is opened 1♣ on a three-card suit, usually for preparedness: because a rebid of 2NT by opener over responder's two-over-one shows extra values, 1♣ might be chosen on a minimum 4-3-3-3 with any four-card suit, even diamonds. With 5-5 in the black suits, open 1♣.

As in Acol, there are many limit bids, bids which show the full value of the hand and allow partner to pass with a minimum. A direct raise of an opening bid to three is a limit raise, invitational. (With a game force and four-card support for opener's major, responder may use 'Swiss', an artificial jump to four of a minor.) After a one-over-one by responder and a simple rebid by opener, a second round jump by responder in notrump or any of the partnership's suits is limited and nonforcing. If opener has rebid in a new suit, a bid of the fourth suit by responder is completely artificial and is forcing to game. A two-over-one by responder does not promise a rebid, even in a sequence like 1♥-2♣-2♦. (This was later changed so that a two-over-one was forcing to two of opener's suit.)

Some other sequences follow mainstream North American lines: a jump preference after a two-over-one is forcing, as is a jump response of two notrump. A response of three notrump shows about a strong one notrump opening.

These basic methods changed a little, but not a lot, over the years. Negative doubles were added. The opening two diamonds went back to Acol and then on to become the Multi. Jump overcalls became preemptive when not vulnerable.

I was able to get a few hands from the San Francisco Trials from Sami's scrapbooks. Copies of the *Bridge World* and ACBL *Bulletins* provided a few more details, but to unearth the real story I needed complete hand records. Where could I get them? Who would have records of pairs trials from forty years ago?

A perusal of the ACBL website yielded the e-mail address of Richard Oshlag at the head office. He was director of computer operations, and I wondered if he might have knowledge of 1960s hand records. I e-mailed a plea for help.

North American Bidding circa 1965

Bridge in the mid-sixties was nearing the end of its age of innocence. The new ideas, popularized by writers like Edgar Kaplan and Alvin Roth, were gaining adherents, but the majority of both experts and non-experts still played old-fashioned, simple bridge: strong notrumps, four-card majors. Negative doubles were avant-garde; Jacoby transfers stood out as new science. Blackwood asked for aces — and there were only four.

If the bidding in these trials seems old-fashioned, the defensive agreements will look archaic. Everyone plays fourth-best leads. A high-low is encouraging or shows an even number of cards. There is little variance other than what to lead from a king or three small.

Saturday, November 13, 4:30 p.m.
 Round 2: Murray-Kehela vs. Schenken-Leventritt

The one pair playing an “artificial” system was Murray and Kehela’s second-round opponents, Schenken and Leventritt. Schenken was both a great card player and a great bidding theorist. In his Bermuda Bowl appearances he had had first-hand experience contending with the Italian bidding systems. The one whose structure he liked best was Neapolitan Club, which used a strong one club opening, with other suit bids limited to at most 16 HCP. He was not, however, as enamored of canapé as were the Italians, so he simplified things somewhat and came up with the Schenken Club.

After seven low-scoring boards, Murray held:

♠ A K Q 8 ♥ 6 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A K J 8 6 3

With no one vulnerable, he opened one club. After a pass from Schenken, Kehela raised to three clubs, limit, and Leventritt entered with a takeout double. Murray leapt to four notrump, Blackwood, and after receiving a one-ace reply, bid six clubs. This left Schenken with a difficult guess on opening lead. He held

♠ 9 6 ♥ K J 10 9 5 2 ♦ 9 6 4 3 ♣ 5

and not unreasonably led a spade. The full deal was:

Dealer West
 Neither vul.
 Board 8

<p>♠ A K Q 8 ♥ 6 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A K J 8 6 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A K 7 5 ♣ Q 10 9 4 2</p>
N					
W E					
S					
	<p>♠ J 10 5 3 2 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ 7</p>				

Kehela’s hand was eminently suitable, at least on a spade lead, and Murray-Kehela chalked up 11 IMPs. That was typical Murray. He could have bid three spades as part of a scientific sequence to determine if Kehela held the right cards for slam. Instead, he chose a rough, practical bid that left the opponents with a big problem, and this time they got it wrong. The rest of the match was much more placid, and Murray-Kehela went on to win 42-18.



The Jewish community in Baghdad, where Sami R. Kehela was born in 1934, dates from the eighth century. The late 1930s and early 1940s were perilous times for the Jews in the pro-Axis political climate. The Kehela family escaped to India when he was seven, just before the Rashid Ali insurrection in 1941, known as the *Farhood*. The family settled in Bombay (now Mumbai).

I asked Sami where he learned English. “In India,” he told me. “People often have trouble placing my accent. It’s a mix of Iraqi, Indian and English. When I was ten I went to Bishop’s High School, the English-language boarding school in Pune (formerly Poona — about 120 km east of Bombay). It was very English; our final exams were administered by Cambridge. I played cricket and soccer — I usually played wicketkeeper in cricket and goalkeeper in soccer. I also swam — I was not too bad at the backstroke — and played table tennis.” I asked him about other games, like chess. “No,” said Sami. “No mind games. No time for that.”

We chatted for a while about table tennis. Sami doesn’t like the spin-producing, foam rubber paddles in use today. “Have you seen Eddie Kantar play?” he asked me. “Eddie can beat people playing with a book.” I looked skeptical. “Really, he’ll do it on a bet. And he can sit in a chair and beat people, too.”

Boarding school was where his name came to be misspelled ‘Sammy’. “People had enough trouble with ‘Kehela’. I didn’t want to trouble them about my first name, too. So I just went along, wanting to fit in. ‘Sami’ is correct; it is a common name in the Middle East.¹ When I got older, I decided it was silly not to have my name spelled correctly.”

When it was time to go to university the choice was Berkeley. “I had plans to go to Cambridge,” Sami said, “but in those days you had to be eighteen to get in — I couldn’t wait for that.” So in 1951 Kehela boarded a cargo ship bound for America. En route he fell into the habit of watching a bridge game frequented by the captain. (And just who was steering the ship, I wonder.) “I didn’t know bridge,” Sami told me, “but I was familiar with Solo, a game with tricks, trumps and bidding, so I was able to follow what was happening.” His bridge education continued through his years at Berkeley. There he met Ron Von der Porten, who would later be on the 1962 North American team that employed Kehela as coach. Students met in the common room and played for a twentieth of a cent a point. Reconciliation was at the end of month, when the checks came in. “I could make a couple of dollars a day that way.” Sami recalled. “Two dollars went a long way back then, when you were a student.” Early books were Watson’s *Play of the Hand at Contract Bridge* and Reese on *Play*.

1. I have left the spelling uncorrected in quotations. - RH

“Watson was the undergraduate text,” Kehela explained. “When you graduated from that, you went on to Reese.”

Kehela worked for Adlai Stevenson’s run for the presidency in 1952. “It seemed clear to me that he was the right man for the job. He was so articulate, so compelling in his speech. I cried when he lost. When he lost again, in 1956, it didn’t hit me nearly so hard. I guess I was inured to the reality of American politics.”

Kehela left Berkeley in 1955. After a brief sojourn in Jamaica, where the family had a scrap metal business, he went on to London, England. Kehela frequented the New Acol club, and later Lederer’s, where he often sat behind Adam Meredith. “I couldn’t afford to play for stakes — I didn’t have any money — so I watched Meredith. Meredith would play all night, drinking cognac, until the doctor forbade it — then he switched to Beaujolais.”

Lederer’s occasionally featured a “coffeehouse”. Four of the up-and-coming younger players would sit down to play, while the established generation would watch, each equipped with a gong. When one of the learned kibitzers disagreed with a bid or play, he rang the gong and replaced the young miscreant. Thereupon play resumed. The incoming experts were also subject to being “gonged”; presumably that had to be done more circumspectly. On one occasion, Terence Reese rang the gong and took his place in the game. After an hour or so had elapsed, with Reese still in, he announced that he had better take himself out. “I never make a mistake,” he explained.

In 1956 Kehela was invited to take part in the British trials. This was a multi-stage affair. For the first round, the British Bridge League appointed six captains and invited them to form teams. Meredith was one of the captains and he recruited Kehela to play with Norman Squire. Their first match was against four world champions: Reese, Schapiro, Dodds and Konstam. Kehela recalls some of the gamesmanship of Reese and Schapiro. “They treated the match almost disdainfully, as though they shouldn’t have to compete. Reese would say ‘Boris, are you keeping score?’, things like that.” Meredith’s team won that first match, although the Reese team recovered to lead after the complete round robin. Konstam wrote a newspaper column on the international trials, which said in part:

Terence Reese’s team won, but it was desperately close and Alan Truscott’s and Joel Tarlo’s teams, who finished second and third in a photo-finish, deserve equal credit. Two young players in particular impressed me, Julian Beale (Truscott’s team) and S. Kehela (Meredith’s team).

Kehela set out for Canada in 1957, first trying Montreal, which he found not to his liking, and then settling in Toronto. I asked Sami how it came about that he and Eric played together. I had read that a mutual acquaintance had set them up. “It

could have been like that,” Sami replied. “I don’t know. You’d have to ask Eric. He can give you lots of stories, and hands, too. I don’t remember hands very well — Eric is much better.”

Saturday, November 13, 9:15 p.m.
 Round 3: Murray-Kehela vs. Feldesman-Rubin

There were a number of 6-6’s in the tournament. On board 13, Feldesman picked up as dealer, both vulnerable:

♠ A Q 6 5 3 2 ♥ 5 ♦ — ♣ K 9 7 6 5 2

He chose to pass. With Murray and Kehela remaining silent, Rubin and Feldesman bid as follows: one heart, two spades, three hearts, three spades. When Rubin now bid hearts a third time, Feldesman let it go and the partnership rested in four hearts. The full deal was:

Dealer North Both vul. Board 13	♠ A Q 6 5 3 2 ♥ 5 ♦ — ♣ K 9 7 6 5 2	♠ 9 8 4 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ K Q J 10 4 3 ♣ 8			
♠ K J ♥ A 8 ♦ 9 8 7 6 2 ♣ J 10 4 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 10 7 ♥ K J 10 9 4 3 2 ♦ A 5 ♣ A Q				

Rapée was the only other contestant not to open the bidding on the North hand. The rest, counting honor tricks and playing strength, deemed it an opening bid. The question then becomes, which suit? With 5-5 in the black suits, the expert community was divided: some always bid one club, others always one spade, and still others bid one or the other depending on overall strength or relative strength of the two suits. Should the same principles apply with 6-6? As it turned out, the only player to open one club was Erdos, whose sequence was:

Erdos

1♣

1♠

3♠

5♣

Petterson

1♥

3♥

4♣

pass

Writing in the *Bridge World*, John Lowenthal admired the one club opening, but thought that one more bid of spades might have completed the picture perfectly.

At the end of the match, Murray-Kehela had won by 19 IMPs, 49-11. After one day's play they lay second, behind Jordan and Robinson. The standings after the first day's play were:

Jordan-Robinson	157½
Murray-Kehela	131
Key-Rockaway	124½
Mathe-Hamman	121
J. Jacoby-Fisher	115
Roth-Stone	108
Becker-Hayden	99½

Day 2: Sunday, November 14, 1:00 p.m.

Round 4: Murray-Kehela vs. Stayman-Mitchell

Writing up his partner's convention in the 1945 *Bridge World* worked very well for Sam Stayman. If it weren't for that article, bidding two clubs to ask for a major suit might have been known as Rapée or perhaps Marx. Murray tried the same trick with another two club convention, writing it up in the *Bridge World* in 1957, but it has steadfastly remained *Drury*.

Stayman didn't really need authorship of the two club convention in order to secure his reputation. He started winning major events in 1942 with the Spingold and Vanderbilt, and was on the winning team in the first three Bermuda Bowls. He and Vic Mitchell were on the team that won the 1959 Spingold (by one IMP) and thereby qualified for the first World Bridge Olympiad.

Murray and Kehela won by 5 IMPs, their fourth straight win, 35-25 in VP. Mathe-Hamman took over first from Jordan-Robinson by blitzing Key-Rockaway, pushing Murray-Kehela back to third.

Sunday, November 14, 4:30 p.m.
Round 5: Murray-Kehela vs. Mathe-Hamman

Next up were the leaders: Lew Mathe, the colorful, outspoken Bermuda Bowl champion, playing with Bob Hamman, the up-and-coming Californian expert still in his twenties. The match got off to an exciting start when Hamman had to decide how to play six spades, after an uncontested auction, on this layout:

Dealer North	♠ K Q 7
Neither vul.	♥ K 8 2
Board 1	♦ K
	♣ A K Q 8 7 5
	♠ A 10 9 5 3
	♥ A 10 4
	♦ 8 7 5 3
	♣ 6

Kehela led the ace of diamonds and continued with another diamond at Trick 2, East following as dummy ruffed with the seven. Think about how you would play it before reading on.

Hamman cashed one high trump in dummy and then played ace of clubs and ruffed a club. When everyone followed, he continued with a trump to dummy. When both followed, he crossed back to the ace of hearts to draw the jack of trumps and claim.

If West had shown out on the second trump, declarer would have started to run the clubs. If East ruffs at any point, South can overruff, draw trump and make twelve tricks in the form of five trumps, four clubs, two hearts and a diamond ruff. Suppose instead East discards hearts. South discards his two losing diamonds and a heart, coming to this ending:

♠ —
♥ K 8 2
♦ —
♣ 7
♠ A 10
♥ A 10
♦ —
♣ —

Now declarer has to hope that East still has a heart left. He cashes the king of hearts from dummy and plays the last club, trapping East's trumps.

If clubs had proven to be 5-1, with no overruff (the first club ruff should be with the nine or ten if East has followed), then declarer needs trumps 3-2. He draws a second round, ruffs another club, and draws trump. Making six spades was worth 7 IMPs to Mathe-Hamman.

Then it was Kehela's turn to play a delicate slam:

Dealer East	♠ A K Q
N-S vul.	♥ K J 9 2
Board 2	♦ Q 10 8 6 5
	♣ 7
	♠ J 5
	♥ Q 8 7 3
	♦ A K 9
	♣ A J 6 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Mathe</i>	<i>Murray</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Kehela</i>
		pass	1♣
pass	1♦	pass	1♥
2♣	2♠	pass	3NT
pass	4NT	pass	5♥
pass	6♥	all pass	

Opening lead: ♣K

The Colonial Acol range for one notrump is 16-18, which explains Kehela's one club opening. He won the first trick with the ace of clubs and led a trump to the jack, gathering low cards. What would you do now?

The two questions are: who might have started with four hearts, and what can be done about it. If West started with four, the normal way to pick up the suit would be to lead low to the queen, leaving the jack-nine over his ten. That wouldn't work here, though, as West can take the queen with the ace and establish another trick by leading the queen of clubs. If we knew for sure that West had the remaining hearts, we could try coming to hand and running the eight of hearts, but that is impractical.

So we should turn our attention to the case where East has the remaining hearts. This is certainly possible, for it would be normal for a player of Hamman's caliber to hold off the first round. So perhaps the king of hearts should be led from the dummy at Trick 3. Kehela considered that, but saw a further danger. Mathe had bid two clubs in a very exposed position. To bid the opponents' suit, after they have bid three suits — surely there is a real possibility that he has seven clubs. In that case, if East has third ten of hearts, leading the king of trumps from dummy will fail as West wins the ace and gives his partner a club ruff with the ten.

Kehela's solution was to cross to hand on a diamond and play the second round of trumps from hand. This was successful. In fact, any reasonable play would have worked, for Mathe had an astonishingly ordinary hand:

♠ 10 8 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ J 7 2 ♣ K Q 8 4 3

Kehela's line ran the small risk that East might have held three small trumps and a singleton diamond. That's possible, but on some of those hands East might have raised to three clubs. Then Murray held

♠ K 9 8 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 9 8 6 4 ♣ Q 4

Kehela dealt and opened one notrump and Mathe overcalled two hearts, vulnerable against not; Murray competed with two spades. Hamman raised to three hearts. Kehela bid three spades and Mathe bid four hearts. What would you do?

Surely four spades rates to be no more than three down; the question is whether the opponents can make four hearts despite our preponderance of strength. Murray elected to believe the vulnerable opposing bidding, and took the save in four spades. He had two other things he had going for him: on a really good day four spades might make, and there is also the chance that the opponents will continue to five hearts. This was the deal:

Dealer South
E-W vul.
Board 3

	♠ K 9 8 4 3										
	♥ 2										
	♦ 10 9 8 6 4										
	♣ Q 4										
♠ 7 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q J 8 6 4 3		♥ 10 9 5									
♦ A 5 3		♦ K J									
♣ 5		♣ K 9 7 6 3									
	♠ A Q 6										
	♥ K 7										
	♦ Q 7 2										
	♣ A J 10 8 2										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Mathe</i>	<i>Murray</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Kehela</i>
2♥	2♠	3♥	1NT
4♥	4♠	dbl	all pass

Murray took nine tricks on the lead of the ten of hearts. Allowing Mathe to play four hearts would have been a disaster, as he has an easy ten tricks. Murray-Kehela's -100 was worth 3 IMPs.

After a pair of quiet boards, Murray and Kehela faced a bidding challenge:

Dealer East	♠ K Q J 10 6										
E-W vul.	♥ 9 7 2										
Board 6	♦ 7 5 2										
	♣ 10 9										
♠ 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 5 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 4		♥ K 6									
♦ A Q 10 6 3		♦ K 8 4									
♣ K 7 4 3 2		♣ Q J 6 5									
	♠ 9 8 7										
	♥ Q J 10 8 5 3										
	♦ J 9										
	♣ A 8										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Kehela</i>	<i>Mathe</i>	<i>Murray</i>	<i>Hamman</i>
2♥	2♠	1♣	1♥
3♦	pass	3NT	pass
4♣	pass	4♦	pass
4♥	pass	4♠	pass
5♠	dbl	pass	pass
6♣	all pass		

Kehela's initial cuebid suggested club support. After then showing diamonds, he made the good decision to go beyond three notrump. The slam was reached after an exchange of cuebids.

The play was straightforward. In a rather good display of bidding by the field, seven pairs bid the excellent 26-point slam. Two North-South pairs saved in six hearts, down six doubled for 1100.¹ Murray-Kehela picked up 5 IMPs.

1. Under the scoring table at the time. In 1993 the scoring table was changed from the old 100, 300, 500, 700, 900 scheme for nonvulnerable, doubled undertricks to today's 100, 300, 500, 800, 1100. It is a bit of a sore spot with the author, who feels that this was a needless change to the game, spoiling the continuity of its history and having the effect of making many deals, such as this one, less interesting.

Murray and Kehela lost those 5 IMPs right back when a reasonable four hearts was defeated by horrible splits. Then Mathe had an interesting hand to play (rotated for convenience):

Dealer East	♠ J 10 9
Neither vul.	♥ Q 8
Board 8	♦ A 8 5
	♣ Q J 7 6 3
	♠ A Q 8
	♥ A 10 9
	♦ Q 10 9 4 2
	♣ A 9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Murray</i>	<i>Hamman</i>	<i>Kehela</i>	<i>Mathe</i>
pass	3NT	pass	1NT
		all pass	

Opening lead: ♣4

Mathe played low from dummy, taking East's eight with the nine. How would you play?

Mathe decided that he had to go after diamonds. He didn't want to release the ace immediately, since it might be needed later as an entry for a major suit finesse, or to get to a club trick. So he led the nine of diamonds and passed it to East's jack. Back came the four of spades. Mathe inserted the queen in an attempt to build a dummy entry, should the spade king be offside. West won the king of spades and exited with a small club to declarer's ace, East pitching a spade. Having arranged for both hands to have spade entries, he now led a low diamond and inserted the eight, East pitching a heart. So East started with eleven major-suit cards. The position was now:

♠ J 10
♥ Q 8
♦ A
♣ Q J 7
♠ A 8
♥ A 10 9
♦ Q 10 4
♣ —

Counting tricks, declarer has two spades, two diamonds, two clubs and the ace of hearts, for seven. There is the potential to build a trick in both diamonds and clubs, but if declarer does that, he cannot afford to lose a heart, which would be the defense's fifth trick. So one idea is to cash the ace of diamonds and play the queen of clubs, pitching a heart. If, upon winning the king of clubs, West plays a spade, then win the ace in hand and knock out the king of diamonds for nine tricks. If instead West plays a heart, declarer will need to make a winning guess, if there is one.

Mathe tried another line, leading the queen of hearts from dummy. This lost to the king, and a diamond came back to the ace. There was no point trying a heart finesse now, so Mathe knocked out the king of clubs for one down. The East hand was:

♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ 7 6 5 4 3 ♦ J ♣ 8

To me, this seems like a most unlucky hand for declarer. The diamond play, losing to the singleton jack, was well reasoned, as was the finesse of the queen of spades, losing to the singleton king. The position after the eight of diamonds holds is extremely complicated. The reader is welcome to try to figure out the best line.

A few hands later, Mathe doubled Kehela in three spades for 500 on a partscore deal, winning 10 IMPs. Two hands later, Hamman held

♠ 2 ♥ A Q 6 3 ♦ Q 8 7 6 4 ♣ Q 7 2

and passed as dealer. Kehela, on his left, opened one club. Mathe jumped to two spades, intermediate, and Murray raised to three clubs. And Hamman *doubled*, for penalty. Everyone passed, and this was the layout:

Dealer South N-S vul. Board 15	♠ A 10 9 7 6 4 ♥ J 5 ♦ A 9 3 2 ♣ A	♠ 8 5 ♥ 9 8 7 2 ♦ K 10 ♣ J 9 8 5 3									
♠ K Q J 3 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ K 10 6 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 2 ♥ A Q 6 3 ♦ Q 8 7 6 4 ♣ Q 7 2										

Mathe, figuring that his partner might well be short in spades, led ace and another. Hamman ruffed and returned a diamond to the ace. Mathe led a third spade. Kehela

ruffed in dummy, was overruffed, and finished three down. That was 500, and 7 IMPs to Mathe. A string of quieter boards followed, and then on the last board Mathe-Hamman stayed out of a close game, giving Murray-Kehela 8 IMPs for a dead tie. So they gained no ground on Mathe-Hamman, but didn't lose any either, and remained in third. Jordan-Robinson won a close match against Schenken-Leventritt to hold onto second.

Sunday, November 14, 9:15 p.m.

Round 6: Murray-Kehela vs. Polak-Sharp

Gunther Polak was a private investigator from Chicago; Robert Sharp worked in real estate in Miami Beach. They had qualified by virtue of a second-place finish in the 1964 Blue Ribbon Pairs combined with a third in the 1965 Life Master Pairs.

Murray and Kehela had a huge round, getting most of the small pickups and two large ones. On board 7, Polak-Sharp were the only pair to bid a roughly even money slam, which failed. Then on board 13, Murray-Kehela bid a vulnerable five clubs off two diamonds and one or two trumps, but got a heart lead, and away went the diamonds. The IMP score was 48-6, a blitz. They still gained no ground on Hamman, who blitzed Wachter-Rosen, but their undefeated record was good enough for a solid second.

Standings after Day 2:

1. Mathe-Hamman	271
2. Murray-Kehela	256
3. Jordan-Robinson	207
4. J. Jacoby-Fisher	206½
5. Roth-Stone	201
6. Gerber-Hodge	189½
7. Stayman-Mitchell	189½
8. Becker-Hayden	188½

GENERAL INTEREST

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...



“You never really beat Murray and Kehela — you were just temporarily ahead of them.” Bob Hamman, many times world champion

Eric Murray and Sami Kehela, despite very different personalities, were the most successful bridge pair Canada has ever produced. There were times when they were considered the best pair in the world. The closer and harder the match, the tougher they became. And they never gave up.

This book, for the first time, tells the story of more than 30 years of triumphs, near-triumphs and might-have-beens. This was bridge in a different era, an era when Canadians had to to beat out the top U.S. players in grueling North American pairs trials. Perhaps the bidding was less sophisticated than it is today, but as the deals in this book will confirm, the standard of card play was every bit as good.



ROY HUGHES lives in Toronto, Canada. His first two books, *Building a Bidding System* and *Card by Card* were both shortlisted for the International Bridge Book of the Year award.



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