

The First Match For The Schwab Trophy 1933

Background

Ely Culbertson had played three matches against English teams in 1930 and won them all. There was an idea that next contest should have International status. It became a reality when Charles Schwab, a steel magnate with great interest in bridge, was convinced by Ely Culbertson to donate a Trophy for a yearly international competition, to be regarded as a World Championship. He also suggested that an International Committee should be set up to handle the Championship, for which Ely Culbertson became chairman. The committee selected the two countries and the players among the 20 best players in the countries. The selected countries were USA and Britain. If Britain was the best selection is doubtful as there was no team trial with other European team for the representation of Europe. The intention by donator of the Schwab Trophy was that the match should be about the World Championship. As it was implemented it does not seem right to label it a World Championship, as Ely Culbertson did. He had his reason for doing so, it was a requirement from Charles Schwab and also would mean more publicity for him and his system. No other country than England was involved in the selection of a European team and there were other national teams that probably would manage better if a trial had been played for the European representation. Neither there were any trials in England. It's probably fairer to call the match, a match between Britain and USA for the Schwab Trophy. Some thinks that it shall be downgraded to a private match!

The first official World Championship was the IBL (forerunner to EBL and WBF) Championship conducted June 1937 in Budapest. It was in reality a European Championship with two USA teams taking part. It was won by Austria (Paul Stern and his "Wunderteam") by beating Culbertson's USA Team by 4,740 points in the 96-board final.

The Schwab Trophy

Before the Culbertson team left for England a reception was given by New York Mayor O'Brien at City Hall, where the splendid Schwab Trophy, commissioned from Cartier's, the Fifth Avenue jewelers, was handed over for safe-keeping to Culbertson to take it England. The cost of the Trophy was \$10 000 (Price 1933) and it was made of the expensive metal Platinum. The height was about 90 cm. If this is correct (source New York Times) the trophy on the picture below is not the Schwab Trophy as it is only about 50-60 cm in height. But Culbertson was in for a shock. The English insisted on a thirty per cent import duty for bringing valuable items such as this trophy into the country. Culbertson learnt about this only at the last minute. The English took the view logical, if not well-informed - that the trophy might stay in England. Despite vigorous lobbying and urgent protests by cable to England and wires to the State Department, the English customs refused to make an exception. Culbertson, much of his annoyance, was forced to leave the trophy in the USA and take a photograph of it with him to England instead!



Culbertson in the bar at the Crockford club in New York 1937, keeping a close watch of the Schwab Trophy?
It is probably the only official photo of the Trophy.

It is a mystery what happened to the trophy. Terence Reese commented laconically that “what became of the trophy is obscure” and I can find no certain reference as to its fate. Although the Official Encyclopedia of Bridge claims that it had been redonated to the World Bridge Federation by Culbertson’s heirs to be a trophy for the World Pairs Championship (first 1962) But the WBF have informed that there is no trophy for this event. As negative confirmation of this, there are no photographs of the winners with the trophy such as one would expect to see. The most likely answer is that the trophy was reclaimed by Schwab’s heirs. A letter written to Culbertson by Schwab in May 1933 makes it clear that the trophy was donated for international bridge competition between countries. That is, the trophy was not Culbertson’s personal property and should not have formed part of his estate: if it was not being used as Schwab intended, it should have reverted to his heirs (who is his “heirs”, he had no children). So, the Schwab Trophy’s fate is still unknown..

The American Team

Ely Culbertson – Captain



“Winner of Championship Events conducted by the American Bridge League and the American Whist League, including National Team of Four Events at both Contract and Auction, as well as Pair Events. His victories cover the period from his first entry into tournament Bridge down to the present time. With three players with whom he had never played before, he won the American Bridge League Team of Four event in 1930. All the members of the team have won the Vanderbilt Trophy for Team-of-Four play at Contract.

He was Captain of the American of the team which played in the first International Duplicate Contract Match in the world's history match in London in 1930.

His record as a player not only includes these Tournament Events, but he has been considered for years to be America's leading Rubber Contract player. He has met players of all degrees of skill and has had uniform success with all types of Bridge players as his partners.” – Ely Culbertson

The bizarre world of cards is a world of pure power politics where rewards and punishments are meted out immediately. – Ely Culbertson

“I must say that Ely Culbertson played better than ever before. It is sheer futility to pretend that Culbertson is not very learned man on contract bridge. He has his critics, who are probably influenced in their criticisms by the fact that whatever method or lack of method they preach does not show the same profit as that of Culbertson. Some have never considered Culbertson to be in the very high flight of players. He came very near to that in this match.” – Henry Beasley

Josephine Culbertson



“She is beyond question the greatest woman player in the world. She is the one woman who is conceded to be the peer of the strongest men at the Contract table. She is the only woman to have been a member of a team-of-four winning the Vanderbilt Cup. She is the only woman to have ever finished second for the Masters' Pair Event, played for the von Zedtwitz Gold Cup. She is the only woman to have been a member of a team which won the Challenge Contract team-of-four event of the American Bridge League. This occurred in 1930, just prior to the International Matches in London. The team of which she was a member with her husband and von Zedtwitz and Lightner successfully defended their possession of the Cup in a number of challenge matches against the strongest teams in New York.” – Ely Culbertson

Theodore Lightner



“Conceded to be one of the greatest players and greatest analysts of all time. Mr. Lightner has been a winner of the Vanderbilt Trophy, of the Challenge Team-of-Four, the Open Contract Pair and the von Zedtwitz Masters' Pair and runner-up in numerous events.” – Ely Culbertson

“Lightner was, as ever, very astute, slow in everything but missing very little” – Henry Beasley

After winning every major event in America - Spingold, Vanderbilt, Life Master Pairs - he was at the top once more as a REAL World Champion in the Bermuda Bowl 1953, where the Americans beat Sweden with 8260 points.

Michael Gottlieb



“Winner of the Vanderbilt Cup and the von Zedtwitz Masters' Pair Event. Mr. Gottlieb is universally recognized as a master player and his selection as a member of the team came almost as a matter of course.” – Ely Culbertson

“Gottlieb, of course, is a keen student of his opponents and plays accordingly.” – Henry Beasley

At the end of 1936, Gottlieb retired from competition to devote his time to business interest.

The British Team

Lt. Colonel Henry “Pops” Beasley – Captain



Beasley was gazetted to the Royal Artillery in 1896. He served in India, Burma and China, and took part in the Relief of Peking after the Boxer Rebellion. He served in the First World War on the staff of the Anzac Corps. He was three times mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). After the war he served in Germany on the Disarmament Commission. He was an interpreter in French, German and Hindustani.

He had played all forms of bridge from the days of bridge-whist and auction bridge. He wrote his first book on this game in 1906, *London Bridge*, which "started the bridge craze in all the fashionable clubs of that day". Like many of the early contract bridge players, he had been an expert auction bridge player in the 1920s. In domestic bridge he was a leading organizer. He had been a member of Almacks club since 1901, and later was a co-founder and Chairman of two leading London card clubs – Crockford's and the Hamilton Club. He was also a leading player in the 1930s, winning the Gold Cup in 1932, and playing in several international events. He was an author and bridge columnist, and the originator of a bidding system named after him.

In bidding, Beasley adopted many of Culbertson's ideas, but was displeased with the strong twos and their negative response of two no trumps. As a result, so he claimed, he was the inventor (in 1936) of the artificial strong two clubs opening bid with its negative response two

diamonds. However, it is fair to mention that others have also claimed authorship of this fruitful idea. In this case his ideas were better than Culbertson, 2 Clubs forcing became standard in all-natural systems!

"Pops was a brilliant player and a great psychologist. In his time, he won most of the major tournaments and he captained England on numerous occasions". - Ewart Kempson.

"He is a clever player of the cards, but is liable at times to allow himself to be bluffed by his opponents. He rarely makes psychic bids, and his original bids can therefore generally be relied upon. He is undoubtedly a first-class player in so far as his knowledge of the game, playing the cards, drawing inferences, etc., are concerned. His chief faults are his bridge temperament and the fact that at times he does not to trust his partner." - Ely Culbertson

Graham Mathieson

Graham Mathieson featured less than the others mainly because he fell through a glass roof on the Wednesday of the match and had to be rescued hanging on to an iron girder by one hand over a forty-foot drop!

"He has always been regarded as one of the finest players of the cards in London. He is, however, apt to vary and makes mistakes sometimes for which it is difficult to understand the reason. His temperament is good but his stamina is doubtful. He is usually inclined to overcall, but in this match his chief fault, curiously enough, was under-calling. " - Ely Culbertson

George Morris

He was a famous gambler at every card game, and an athlete. He had made a channel-swimming attempt and played marathon golf for big stakes!

"He has not played up to form in this Match. He has missed several games by under-bidding." - Ely Culbertson

"George Morris played too cautiously, allowing himself to be cramped by the knowledge that this was an international match and not an ordinary club game. Anybody who knows Morris, however, will hardly believe that he failed to push the bidding to its ultimate end." – Henry Beasley

Sir Guy Domville



H. Beasley's usual partner, was a popular society figure in London, debonair and accomplished at many sports. He was a motor-racing enthusiast and a keen and expert card player.

"He is a fine player of the cards, but is rather an erratic bidder. He has lately shown a tendency to indulge in psychic bidding, but his judgment as to when and where not to make a psychic bid is poor. At the beginning of this Match, he showed a disposition, if anything, to

overcall. He is a good partner and is always in sympathy with anyone he is playing with.” - Ely Culbertson

“I give it as my carefully considered opinion that the best all round player in the match was Sir Guy Domville. His bidding was sound and perhaps to him there is one special credit. He made the only really successful bluff bid. When he bid a diamond over one club on the ninth hand of the match, he undoubtedly saved a grand slam bid we scored that was bid in Room 2.” – Henry Beasley

Percy Tabbush

“His major fault is his inability to adapt himself to his partner's methods. He is slightly lacking in imagination. and seldom enterprising. His play of the cards is excellent, and he is a steady and reliable bidder. He can, however, be bluffed sometimes by his opponents.” - Ely Culbertson

Tabbush followed a course that is not common amongst bridge players: he joined a religious sect and turned his back on the “Devil's play thing”.

Lady Doris Rhodes



She was well-known both in her own right as a player and as the founder and organizer of the Lady Rhodes Bridge School in Tite Street, Chelsea

“Is undoubtedly the finest woman player in England. She thus occupies the pedestal corresponding to that occupied by Josephine Culbertson in America. Her strong points are keen psychology and the possession of an ideal Bridge temperament. Never rattled or ruffled, she is a perfect partner. Although chosen for the team, it was not considered advisable to break the cycle of partnerships on the English side, so she did not have a full opportunity to justify her inclusion.” - Ely Culbertson

Playing mostly with Rixi Marcus, she played in several European Women's Championship, winning in 1951 and 1952.

The Match

The match was staged in style at the Selfridge's 17-22 July, with the Electronic Display Board similar to the Bridgerama that became popular some 25 years later, commentary by expert players and even periscopes (to enable the players to be seen). The crowds of spectators seem more reminiscent of football than bridge, some 27,000 attended the event. There were a thousand spectators present at every session. There was even a score board set up in Oxford Street for passers-by, and a big crowd cheered every success for the home team. Several accidents happened during the match, except Mathieson (which is described later) Lady Mary Alice Montagu, official scorer, daughter of the 9th Duke of Manchester, fell off her chair and broke her arm!



At the table from left: Ely Culbertson, Doris Rhodes, Josephine Culbertson, Henry Beasley



At the table from left: Michael Gottlieb, George Morris, Theodore Lightner, Percy Tabbush



One of the periscopes at Selfridge's. Intent, what could be seen in the periscope, showing Henry Beasley and Theodore Lightner.

It was hoped that the event would become the bridge equivalent of tennis's Davis Cup. Although Schwab had been wealthy, years of extravagant living and the 1929 stock market crash had impoverished him, and it is difficult to see how he could have afforded what was by all accounts a magnificent platinum trophy. He died in 1939, having spent the last few years of his life living in a small apartment, and his estate was found to be insolvent to the not insubstantial tune of \$300,000.

The first day went spectacularly well for the English team and they ended the day 1,170 points up, but the Americans were not too despondent. Culbertson had told his team before the match to take it slowly and play themselves in until they got used to the conditions and the opposition. After all, it was a 300-board match and he was confident that his superior teamwork and bidding ability would see them through in the long run. In most of his major tournament matches he was behind on the first sessions.

His secret weapon, the 4/5 no trump convention, which this match was to put to the test and which resulted from his conclusion that tournament success frequently hinged on accurate slam bidding, had yet to be properly used.

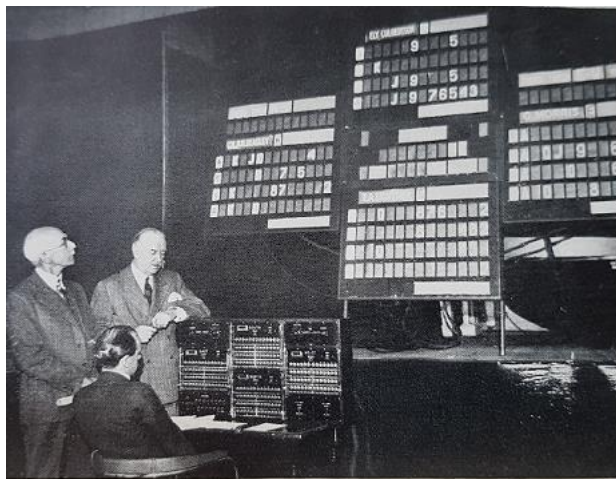
The second day of the match saw the English start off by almost doubling their lead, but gradually the Americans began to pull back and they ended the day only 1,440 points behind. It had been another blazing hot day in London and Culbertson claimed to have been more worried by his loss of five pounds in weight than the few hundred odd points at the table. Certainly, he seemed to have consumed a record amount of Vichy water, his favorite beverage, during the course of the day.

On the third day, Wednesday, 19 July, the score fluctuated first one way then another, but the tide was steadily turning in the Americans' favor. At the end of the day's play, they were only 320 points behind. On the Thursday they really surged ahead and were 640 points clear at the end of the day's play. They increased their lead over the next two days, from 9,150 points at the close of play on Friday night to 10,900 points ahead by the time the match ended on Saturday night.

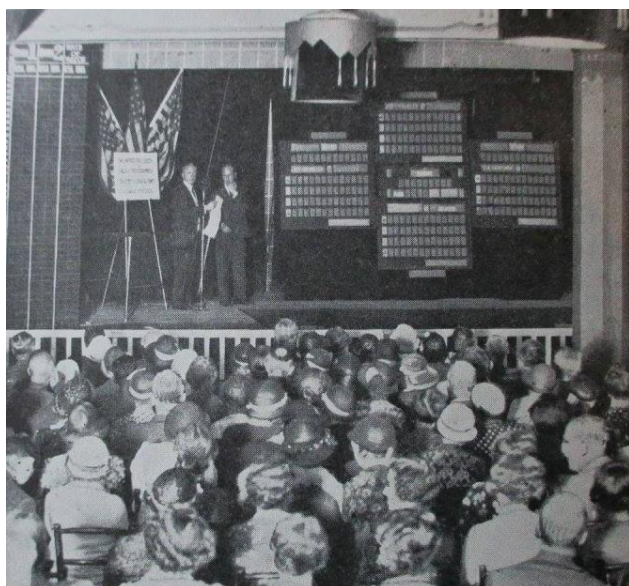
[Six problems from the match on Richard Pavlicek's page about the event.](#)

The Electric Display Board

“Not the least interesting feature of this remarkable Contest has been the success of my Electrical Display Board. It has long been one of my dreams to make Bridge a game that can be enjoyed as a spectacle and not merely an intellectual pastime to be enjoyed by the players alone. The fact that many thousands of Bridge enthusiasts have gathered in the vast auditorium at Selfridges during the progress of the Match satisfies me that my dream has come true. I visualize the day when the spectators will not merely follow the state of the score, the bidding and the play of the hands. as was possible on this occasion but will be able in addition, to see the 'players themselves, and observe even every significant gesture. “
– Ely Culbertson



Henry Beasley and C.G. Walsh examine the electric display board before the match.



The electric display board in action during the match.

Culbertson clearly had visions, but it would take about 80 years before his vision became reality with video recording of important tournaments.

The Match summed up

Ely Culbertson

Our success I attribute, in the main, to the fact that we played throughout without deviation, except for rare exceptions, what is acknowledged to be the Master Contract Bridge System of the world, the Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) System. My team-mates and I play this System with the precision of a machine, and the System thus played is unbeatable.

But the British team were also playing the Approach-Forcing System. Since I cannot and do not claim any marked superiority individually for the members of my team over the British team as Bridge players *pur et simple*, how then do I account for our comfortable and decisive victory? I can only account for it by saying that whilst the English team (in common with more than 90 per cent. of Contract Bridge players throughout the world) played Approach-Forcing Bidding, they did not play the Culbertson System in its entirety. The Culbertson System is designed to meet the requirements of novices, moderate players, experts and master players. It is the latter class of player with whom I am dealing here. Had the British team employed every particle of the assistance to be gained by the close and practical application of the tenets of my System, I am convinced that the final scores would have been closer. Their points were lost mainly by unsuccessful Slam bidding. By this I mean that in some cases Slams were bid which should not have been bid, and in other cases biddable Slams were not contracted for. In a great many of these cases, these bidding results could have been avoided by the use of my Four-Five No-Trump Convention, which was employed by us on very many occasions with almost unvarying success. On many occasions, too, we were enabled by its use and the precision of information which it gives, to contract for Slams that had to be abandoned by the British team owing to the lack of this precise knowledge. On other occasions, we were enabled to stop short of what would have been an unsuccessful Slam bid by reason of our knowledge conveyed by the use of this Convention, that a vital and essential card was missing. Percy Tabbush famously announced after the British debacle that he would adopt the 4-5 NT convention.

The tremendous lead piled by the Americans in this match is to a certain extent explainable by the extraordinary precision of their Slam inferences. It is impossible to win in Contract Bridge without knowing how to bid winning Slams and avoid bidding losing ones, but successful Slam bidding is also practically impossible without the 4 and 5 No Trump convention. There is almost unanimous agreement on this point and even advocates of other systems as, for instance, Captain Lindsay Mundy with his direct system or Mr. George Reith, with his variation of the one-over-one, have given up their own methods in Slam bidding in favor of the 4-5 No Trumps. I doubt if this convention can be successfully grafted upon any other but the approach forcing system.

It looks somewhat like a saddle on a cow. The 4-5 No Trump bid is a logical and integral part of the Culbertson system and has its roots in the earlier stages of the bidding. Still even when grafted upon a stunted system the convention is better than any of the old-fashioned and absurdly complicated cue bids, and may infuse some new life.

It was unfortunate for the British team that the decision of most of the slam hands fell to Morris and Tabbush. These two players, whom I rate among the best in England from the standpoint of sheer card-playing ability, are somewhat deficient in the theory of the game and particularly when they reach the Slam zone. *They are still addicted to the strong 2 Club bid which is a form of artificial Club bid tried and long ago rejected by the first 100 players of America*, including the chief protagonist of the 2 Club bid, David Bumstine.

As a result of the artificial 2 Club bid a number of the so-called intermediary 2 bids, which are neither fish nor fowl nor meat, are being injected. Their usual result is unduly to encourage Partner but politely to warn opponents not to commit suicide. These intermediate 2 bids upset the turn the beautiful structure of opening one bids and their responses, and the entire system of bids becomes a lop-sided affair. This is the reason that such splendid individual players as Morris and Tabbush are so frequently at the mercy of a wild guess in their bidding. The higher the bidding the wilder become their guesses, resulting in tremendous losses on Slam bids alone.

Henry Beasley

To be captain of the first England team that has played a serious international match against America is a great honor, and my only regret is that we did not win. I should have liked the pleasure of receiving the Schwab Trophy, though to do so I should probably have had to pay a lot of money in duty! Unfortunately, we lost, and it can be said with truth that, judging over the whole match of 300 boards, the Americans had one great advantage over us—they were our superiors in bidding big hands. Almost entirely we lost by missing slams that were bid and made by the opposition. The other point about the American team is that their pairs have perfect understanding.

I should like to defend myself, if defense is really needed, for my changing of the England team at various times. We had six players, and when we were slipping, I altered my team. Had we gone on losing and not changed the team I should have critics say, "Beasley had good players to call upon but he persisted in using a team that was losing points."

It was suggested that I looked nervous and worried about my team and even that I should collapse before the end of the week. I was never worried and I never gave up hope and I shall be perfectly happy to allow anybody the opportunity of going through the full list of hands and have my mistakes compared with those of the other players. It will be found, for instance, that in Room 1, where I spent most of the time—all, in fact, except about 20 hands—we bid every slam as North and South that were also bid by the Americans who were North and South Room 2, with one exception where we gained penalties. To counterbalance that we bid a slam that the Americans missed in Room 2.

There were many psychic bids. They did not succeed, and I am convinced that in modern contract bridge among good players the days of bluff bidding are nobody and generally bring a load of trouble.

A Slam bidding must of course play a great part in matches such as this, and of the deficit I can trace a loss of nearly 7 000 points in Room 2, caused by missing slams that were bid and made in Room 1 by East and West or because our East and West in Room 2 bid slams and did not get them.

At the risk of being accused of making personal excuses, though I think that when you read the various comments you will see I do not attempt to spare myself, I am going to point out that most of the big cards ran to East and West, and I can't think that Morris and Tabbush, who played in those positions for most of the match, showed their usual acumen in seeing chances to make big scores. As a rule this pair understand each other to perfection, but for some strange reason in this match they often let the bidding die in a most astounding fashion.

There were all sorts of criticisms about the team that played in this match and the unfortunate gentlemen who acted on committee received more abuse than praise. They were accused of being ordered by Mr. Culbertson to select certain players. I should like to see anybody ordering of those committee men to do anything.

There is one other side of the game that must be noted here. That was the public interest. Every day at both sessions there were vast crowds attending Selfridge's. They could not all see the play, but they had an unusual experience. They could see all the hands on an elaborate electric score board. They could see the bidding, the play of the hands and indulge in criticisms to their hearts' content-with the advantage of seeing all four hands at a time. I am told that often they did not agree with what we were doing inside the playing rooms, where, during the week, over 7,000 people watched the play. I cannot say that I am really surprised. During the week 27,000 people attended the match, either to see the play or watch the hand illustration board and listen to the lecturers.

I will end this with two short stories:

Not long ago I was up in Manchester conducting a small tournament in which a mother and her son were playing in partnership. During one of the games, I happened to glance at their score sheet and noticed the penalties recorded against them were mounting up to prodigious heights. Being somewhat curious, I approached the mother at the interval and asked her what system she played. " Well, she replied, we call it the one-over-one."

"And how does it work?" I enquired.

"Oh, it's quite simple," she explained." When I bid a suit my son has to take me out into a different suit. Then I show him another suit and he must respond again and so on."

" But when do you "stop?" I asked.

"Oh, beamed, doubled: we don't stop, *until one of us is doubled*!"

The other one is about two German players whom I met. They were brothers and not to disclose their identities I'll call them simply Hans and Fritz. Whatever their relative merits where I do not know, but they were always " going on each other and kept up this bickering and banter throughout the game. On one occasion they were drawn as partners and after Fritz had made what his brother considered an atrocious play, this is what I overheard: "Fritz, I always knew you were a bad player. And I know you're getting worse and worse, but to-night-you're time months ahead of your time."

And now, having played 42 hours of contract bridge in six days, I think I will go and play a rubber or two.

Other British opinions

The British team started well and was still leading after 150 of the scheduled 300 boards. However, a decline set in at this point and the Americans gained 5,960 points during the fourth day. There was no way back from here and the lead never fell below 5,000 for the rest of the match, the final margin being 10,900.

There were two reasons for the disastrous results on the fourth day. Firstly, the Americans got more of the close decisions right, bidding game when it could be made and staying out when it could not. It certainly didn't help that there were two occasions when the British allowed 3NT contracts to make which were down in top tricks (neither defense was completely trivial but one inclines to the view that both contracts should have been beaten). Secondly, Beasley decided to change the line-up. Up to and including board 164, he partnered Domville with Morris and Tabbush in the other Room. Perhaps he was concerned that the overnight lead of 320 had turned into a deficit of 970, or maybe he just thought that a change would do good. Whatever the reason, he partnered Mathieson for the rest of the day, continuing with Morris and Tabbush for another sixteen boards.

After board 180, with the deficit now up to 1,450, he decided to try Domville and Morris. There may have been good reasons for this (maybe Tabbush was tired), but the outcome was catastrophic: the new pair missed a pretty easy grand slam and then bid one with an ace

missing, Domville being the guilty party on both occasions. Finally, Domville had to find a lead against a slam and, with a choice of two plausible suits, chose the wrong one (most would have done the same). Between them, these three boards cost almost 4,200 points (diligent readers will recall that the bonus for a vulnerable grand slam was at this time 2,250).

The 4-5 No-trump convention Culbertson's 4-5 No-trump was the first slam convention invented. It was a far more sophisticated convention than Blackwood in that it both gave and requested information. In order to bid 4NT, a player had to possess either three aces or two aces and a king in a suit bid by the partnership. If he had three aces and a king in a bid suit, and was definitely interested in a grand slam, it was open to him to bid 5NT instead. In response to 4NT, 5NT showed two aces (or one ace and the king in every suit bid by the partnership), five of the lowest partnership bid suit was a sign-off and any other bid was natural and descriptive. In the light of the information given by the 4NT bid, the responder could of course jump direct to a slam. If the 4NT bidder bid 5NT on the next round, it guaranteed possession of all four aces. In the hands of expert practitioners, this was a very effective convention, one of its strongest features being that significant negative inferences were frequently available from the fact that it had not been used. Culbertson was very proud of the 4-5 No-trump and, in large part, attributed to it his victory. Others fell in with this line, including Herbert Phillips who opined that:

"The match was very largely won by the 4-5 No-trump convention."

Beasley also admitted that the Americans had done better on slam hands:

"The Americans were our superiors in bidding big hands. Almost entirely we lost by missing slams that were bid and made by the opposition."

Whilst it is true that the British team did badly on slam hands, this had very little to do with the opposing team's use of the 4-5 No-trump convention. To be sure, there were three hands where the use of the convention made it easy to reach the right contract, which in each case was missed by the British pair in the other Room, but there were three hands where the convention proved ineffective: whilst all of these instances could be explained by individual error, the fact remains that, in the hands of its users, the 4-5 No-trump did no better than break even. It is fair to say that, had the British been employing any form of slam convention, their bidding would have been significantly improved. Morris and Tabbush in particular seemed to have no other way of inviting a slam than to jump to the five level, leaving their hapless partner with the last guess.

Hubert Phillips, writing for the News Chronicle, was present throughout and put it down to three main factors: superior teamwork, the avoidance of unnecessary risks when vulnerable (and consequently being prepared to risk more when non-vulnerable) and the greater precision in slam-bidding. The record of play seems to confirm this. The American team, especially Culbertson and Lightner, did understand and play better as a partnership than their counterparts. Their years of tournament experience together and understanding of each other's system bidding stood out. The British were not always so fortunate.

The second match for the Schwab Trophy

The second and last Schwab Cup match took place 1934 and was arranged in somewhat of a hurry. In line with the aspiration that the Schwab Cup would become a quasi-Davis Cup for bridge, there had been announcements by BBW that "Several European countries have indicated their desire to enter teams" and that England would probably play Holland in the

first round of the European Zone. Whatever interest there may have been in other countries, none became officially involved and no matches took place in the European Zone. This can be no more than speculation, but it seems likely that the Dutch would have had reservations about playing against a team which was not authorized by the BBL (and another factor may have been the fact that neither 1933 team was officially accredited).

So, an English team, but with other players than in the first match, played for Europe also this time against an American team with Culbertson. The Americans won officially by 3,650, but no-one was under any illusions that this fairly reflected the respective merits of the two teams. It was a very close affair, one that could easily have gone the other way.

Indeed, the anonymous reporter in BM opined that: "Next year England will win the Schwab Cup. Taken all round, I consider they played on the whole the better Bridge." The BM writer could hardly have been more wrong. After the smoke had cleared following the 1934 match, the Schwab Cup was never contested again and rarely as much as mentioned.

The IBL decided in 1937 that the team winning the next European Championship would play for the Schwab Cup but, but it was never implemented and the event disappeared into history.

The recreation of the match

The program used for the play of the boards (NetBridgeVu) does only support modern scoring (IMP). Therefore, after each session the actual standing in the match are shown, based on the 1933 scoring. The complete record with all the boards is available in the file "1933 Scoring".

The differences between 1933 and modern scoring:

Totals points were used.

The big differences between using total points and IMPs is the relative scoring between games and slams or other high point result. The relative difference between a game and small slam in vulnerable using total scoring is 2,5 and using IMPs is 1,6. So the slams had a bigger impact on the result. A big swing on one board had more impact compared with modern scoring. This was also the reason for introducing IMP scoring, to reduce the impact of big swings.

Undertricks.

The penalties were much lighter which made sacrifices more profitable than today on some deals.

Not Vulnerable	50 (no difference)
Not Vulnerable doubled	100-150-200-350 etc.
Vulnerable not doubled	100-150-200-250 etc.
Vulnerable doubled	200-300-400-500 etc.

Redoubled undertricks scored twice as much as the same doubled undertricks. It was the same as today.

The bonus was 50 points for both doubled and redoubled contracts when they were made.

Part scores

There was no bonus of 50 points for making a part score, instead the score of the “tricks under the line” were doubled. The score for the overtrick were the same. This was a special agreement for the match. E.g. 2 Hearts + 2 was scored: $2 \times 30 \times 2 + 60 = 180$.

Honors

The honors were counted in the trump suit, 100 points for A-Q-J-10 and 150 Points for A-K-Q-J-T. Also 150 points with all four Aces in one hand in a No Trump contract.

The recreation is based on the official record with boards, bidding and lead for all 300 boards. The card plays are only available for 230 boards in the records. The plays for the other 70 boards have been recreated by using a computer bridge program, with the same lead and result as in the official records. The generated plays are what likely happened.

The interesting boards are commented by Ely Culbertson and Henry Beasley.

[Video with the match on this page.](#)

[The 1933 complete scoring from the match.](#)

An alternative to watch the video is to use a Bridge Movie program, BridgeVu, NetBridgeVu. or Handviewer (only online version available). The LIN files and the programs can be downloaded [here](#).

Sources

Beasley vs Culbertson by Henry Beasley

300 Bridge Hands, First World Championship The Schwab Trophy by Ely Culbertson

[Ely Culbertson - The Man Who Made Contract Bridge by John Clay](#)

[Tournament Bridge in England 1925-1945 by Richard Fleet](#)

[Contract Bridge Championships 1933 Revisited \(Bridge, issue 150\) by Shireen Mohandes](#)

[Henry Beasley - Wikipedia](#)

[Bridge photos from the 1930s - Facebook](#)

[Bridge Scoring](#)

Revision

21-01-01