

Brazilian Junior Deal of the Year



Winner: **Thomas Bessis (France)** Journalist: Brian Senior (England)

Over several years of Youth tournaments I have found Thomas Bessis to be a rich source of top-quality play and defensive hands. Here in Poiana Brasov, Thomas left it until the final match, against England, for his finest effort.

Board 9. Dealer North. EW Vul.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| ♠ A Q 6 4 3 ♥ J 9 5 3 2 ♦ Q 10 4 ♣ — | <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div> | ♠ J 9 ♥ K Q 8 7 6 ♦ 9 8 7 2 ♣ 10 3 |
| ♠ 5 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ A K 5 3 ♣ A 7 6 4 2 | ♠ K 10 8 7 ♥ 10 ♦ J 6 ♣ K Q J 9 8 5 | |

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|--------|---------|-------|
| Bessis | Atthey | Volcker | Owen |
| | 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 NT |
| Pass | 3 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

Chris Owen's two no trump response was an invitational or better spade raise and John Atthey's three hearts a length-showing game try, accepted by Owen who, of course, was always planning to go on to game. It looks as though four spades is destined to make, courtesy of the ruffing club finesse, but... Frederic Volcker led the eight of diamonds, second from three or more small cards, and Bessis won the king and cashed the ace, Atthey falsecarding with the queen as Volcker dropped the two, confirming two or four cards — clearly four on the auction. Bessis switched to the seven of clubs and, not surprisingly, declarer was taken in. Atthey ruffed low and gave up a heart, Bessis winning the ace and

returning a diamond to declarer's ten. Atthey ruffed a heart, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, being relieved to see that Bessis could not over-ruff, and ruffed another club. But Volcker could over-ruff and that was two down.

How could Bessis possibly find the brilliant underlead? His partner would surely have led a singleton club rather than four small diamonds so was marked with either two clubs or a void. Once declarer was known to have three diamonds, plus heart length because of the auction, it had to be he and not Volcker who had the club void. As the French North-South pair had played in four clubs down one for minus 50 in the other room, Bessis' fine defence turned a 10-IMP loss into a 2-IMP gain.