

Cezary Balicki and Adam Żmudziński (interview)

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Laura Cecilia Porro, with the precious collaboration of **Marek Wójcicki**, realized for Neapolitan Club a short interview to the Polish bridge stars **Cezary Balicki** and **Adam Żmudziński**. Balicki has been partnering Żmudziński for over 20 years. They represented Poland in the last European Championships together with Narkiewicz & Buras, and Żak, who played with Zaremba. They ended up 5th, thus gaining the qualification to the next Bermuda Bowl (Bali 2013). In addition to the usual English version, in homage to our many readers from Poland, we publish also a Polish edition of the interview.



What was your best achievement and the worst defeat?

Defeat? There were so many of them over the years, I think we mostly tend to remember the most recent. This year Polish Premier Division when we lost to the eventual winners, our colleagues from the open team, Consus Kalisz team (Buras – Narkiewicz, Zaremba – Żak). We still remember the Bermuda Bowl final in Jokohama. Achievements? The most precious ones are probably Transnationals – from Bermuda and Sao Paulo, and also all the NABC trophies.

Norberto Bocchi has a very high opinion about your pair, but pointed out that you have been playing the same system for the past 20 years. Do you think it's an advantage or disadvantage?

Same system... If by saying same system you mean same base opening then it is the same system with one change – 2D Wilkosz had to be replaced with 2D Multi due to EBL and WBF system policy. But the system we play today is very different from the one we started with in the 80's. What's left is basically the openings and responses. All the further sequences, two-sided bidding is entirely different world. When we started playing together nobody in Poland had heard about agreements such as checkback, support double and many more. And today we're few steps ahead. Is it advantage or disadvantage? System, after so many years of playing it and working on it is tailor made for us.

What are the strongest points of your system? What do you dislike about it?

The strongest point and advantage is that over the years it assimilated a lot of agreements that come from practice and table play. Also this sort of evolution makes the changes and improvements in the system are made to fit our habits and the style of our system that we find most comfortable. What we don't like about it? Hmm, maybe just that it isn't Strong Pass.

Why did you decide to stop playing Strong Pass?

The answer is very simple... There were fewer and fewer events where we were allowed to play SSO and parallel work on two systems was not worth the effort.

Where do theimps come from? Bidding, declarer play or defense?

Undoubtedly most of the swings are generated in the bidding. In bridge at the highest level technical abilities of the players are comparable and a deal when you can outplay opponents in declarer play happens once every... well exactly, how many? 50? 100 boards? Where do we score the mostimps? Our strongest points are defence and competitive bidding. We also get a lot of points while declaring.

Which opening lead do you find more effective? Active or passive?

There is no one answer to this question. Choice of the opening lead should be based on the bidding. From the bidding one should work out whether the lead should be active or passive. In today's aggressive style of bidding I think active lead is more common.

Laura Cecilia Porro

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Jakie jest Wasze największe osiągnięcie i największa porażka?

Porażka – było ich wiele przez tyle lat, najbardziej pamięta się najświeższe – w tegorocznych play off polskiej ekstraklasy, gdzie ulegliśmy późniejszemu zwycięzcom, naszym kolegom z reprezentacji, drużynie Consus Kalisz (Buras – Narkiewicz, Zaremba – Żak). Do dzisiaj pamiętamy też przegrany finał Bermuda Bowl z Jokohamy. A osiągnięcia... Najcenniejsze to chyba zwycięstwa w Transnational – z Bermuda i Sao Paulo, no i wszystkie wygrane turnieje teamowe w NABC.

Bocchi ocenił Was bardzo wysoko, ale zaznaczył, że gracie tym samym systemem od wielu lat. Myślicie że to zaleta, czy wada?

Tym samym systemem... Jeżeli za system przyjąć bazę otwarcia, to tym samym, z jedną zmianą – 2k Wilkosza zmieniliśmy, ze względu na politykę systemową EBL i WBF na 2k Multi. Ale system, jakim gramy dzisiaj różni się od tego, którym zaczynaliśmy grać w latach osiemdziesiątych bardzo znacznie. Pozostały praktycznie tylko otwarcia i odpowiedzi. Ale już dalsze sekwencje, licytacja dwustronna – to zupełnie inny świat. Jak zaczynaliśmy grać razem, nikt w Polsce nie słyszał o ustaleniach typu checkback, kontra-fit, i wiele innych, A dzisiaj jesteśmy o kilka kroków dalej. Czy to zaleta, czy wada? System, po tylu latach gry nim i pracy nad nim jest jak skrojony specjalnie dla nas.

Jakie są według was zalety waszego systemu? Co się wam w nim nie podoba?

Główną zaletą jest to, że podczas wieloletniej gry tym systemem obrósł on w wiele uzgodnień, wynikających z praktyki. Ponadto tego typu ewolucja powoduje, że zmiany i uzupełnienia w systemie są robione pod nasze przyzwyczajenia, nawyki i dopasowują system do stylu, który nam „leży”. A co nam się w nim nie podoba? Mhm... Chyba tylko to, że nie jest to „silny pas”.

Dlaczego postanowiliście przestać grać silnym pasem?

Przyczyna jest prozaiczna... Zaczęło być coraz mniej imprez, gdzie można było grać SSO i równoległa praca nad dwoma systemami zaczęła być wysiłkiem

nieproporcjonalnym do efektów.

Skąd biorą się IMPy? Z licytacji, rozgrywki, czy obrony?

Niewątpliwie największe swingi generowane są w licytacji. W grze na najwyższym poziomie umiejętności techniczne graczy są porównywalne, rozdania, gdzie można wykazać się w rozgrywce zdarzają się raz na... właśnie, ile? 50? 100? rozdań, A gdzie my zdobywamy najwięcej punktów? Na pewno najsilniejsze strony naszej pary to gra w obronie i licytacja „w przepychu”. Wiele punktów przynosi nam także rozgrywka.

Jaki wist jest według was skuteczniejszy? Aktywny czy pasywny?

Nie ma chyba tutaj jednoznacznej odpowiedzi. Wybór pierwszego wistu powinien być dokonywany na podstawie oceny licytacji. I z niej należy wywnioskować, czy wistować aktywnie, czy pasywnie. Przy dzisiejszym, ofensywnym stylu licytacji, chyba częściej wistuje się atakująco.

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