

1st WORLD UNIVERSITY BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIP

Bruges, Belgium - August 4th to 13th, 2002



The organizers of the first World University Bridge Championship got off to a great start by hosting the competition in the lovely town of Bruges.

The origin of the Championship dates back to 1992, when **Lode Lambeets** (currently Chairman of the FISU technical committee for bridge) attended the World University Chess Championship in Antwerp. He was enthusiastic about the organization of the meet, so he contacted **Paul Magerman** (who was the president of the European Community Bridge League at that time) to set up a bridge championship at university

level. From the beginning of the adventure, FISU offered its backing, so that the first European Union Bridge Championship was organized quite quickly. In 2000, the championship went worldwide – the first edition took place in the context of the "Bridge Olympiades". After gaining recognition from FISU, the first World University Bridge Championship could finally take place in Bruges

Perfect Organization

Hosted in the premises of the **Higher Institute for Tourism (Spermalie)** in the heart of Bruges, participants were all enchanted by the beauty of the city. **Bruges**, also referred to as "**Venice of the north**", was named **European cultural capital** for **2002** by **UNESCO** and the **Council of Europe**. It offers visitors a host of historical and architectural gems. As is traditional in World University Championships, one day was devoted to visiting the town.



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Thirteen teams made the trip for this first edition including the United States and Chinese Taipei. The team from the Netherlands was among the favourites since the Dutch had already won four titles in recent university championships in bridge. Denmark, the winner in 1994 and 1998, came close behind, while Germany, Italy and Great Britain followed. It should be noted that many players present in Bruges were not novices—they had already competed in previous championships.



FINAL RANKING

1. DENMARK
2. ITALY
3. THE NETHERLANDS
4. POLAND
5. GERMANY
6. ESTONIA
7. CHINESE TAIPEI
8. BELGIUM
9. GREAT BRITAIN
10. USA
11. FRANCE
12. YUGOSLAVIA
13. TURKEY



PARTICIPATION

1. BEL - 6
2. DEN - 4
3. EST - 4
4. FRA - 8
5. GBR - 6
6. GER - 7
7. ITA - 5
8. NED - 5
9. POL - 8
10. TPE - 8





After only three rounds, the favourites began to pull ahead. The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Estonia soon took the leading rank. But Denmark quickly widened the gap and grasped the first place in front of the Netherlands and Poland. Then a long, drawn-out battle ensued—nothing had been settled even after the ninth round.

On the contrary, between the five top teams, respectively Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Italy and Germany, the differences were dwindling. Everything depended on the last rounds. Denmark played with systematic excellence that gave it an unchallenged first. Italy fought its way to second place after the Dutch team went through a slump and finally took the bronze medal in front of Poland and Germany.

11. TUR - 4
12. USA - 7
13. YUG - 4

TOTAL: 76

A Close-Knit Team

After the last gruelling rounds, the Danish team broke out in a jubilant triumph. This very close-knit team relies on the long experience of **Anders Hagen**. At 28, Anders is well versed in tournaments. He began in Palermo in 1997 and missed only the 1999 edition when he preferred to take part in the Junior World Championships being held in Florida at the same time. He has become a well respected Bridge teacher, but still finds time to spend on his construction engineering studies. **Kasper Konow**, also 28, had the advantage of Anders' instruction. This history student at the University of Copenhagen never misses a chance to talk tactics with Anders. **Gregers Bjanarson** (27) is a math and economics student. For the captain of the team this year, Bruges was his fourth championship. He played with Anders before on two occasions (in 1997 and 1998) and once with Kasper in 2000. Finally, the youngest team member, **Michael Askgaard**, is studying mathematics and chemistry. He played his first tournament in Weimar in 1999, when his team signed Denmark's worst results ever. No doubt that's why he was so concentrated this year, as he realized that the least slip up could have been fatal to the future of his team.



This superb championship closed with a formal ceremony in the magnificent **Gothic stateroom** at Bruges town hall.