

2nd World University Bridge Championship

Istanbul, Turkey - October 31st to November 6th, 2004

Bridge in Istanbul

After the World University Chess Championship, the city of Istanbul stayed loyal to 'mind sports' and organised the second edition of the World University Bridge Championship.

The origin of the arrival of Bridge in the FISU programme dates back to 1992 when Bridge enthusiast, Lode Lambeets, attended the World University Chess Championship in Antwerp, Belgium. Impressed by this event, Mr Lambeets, contacted Paul Magerman (then President of the Bridge League of the European Community) whose son is now the FISU CT Chairman for Bridge, with a view to organising a Bridge competition at university level. FISU supported this project from the beginning and the first European Union University Bridge Championship was launched. After gaining the recognition of FISU, the first World University Bridge Championship was finally held in 2002 in Bruges. The event was held at the higher education college for tourism in the centre of the town of Bruges whose enchanting beauty charmed all the participants. Denmark took the first championship with a clear victory after a week of suspense.

15 countries travelled to the second edition in Istanbul, 2 more than to Bruges in 2002. According to Geert Magerman, our FISU technical chairman for Bridge 'the standard of play was excellent and the games of high quality.' " It must be noted that most of the players meet at numerous tournaments held at European level", he added. Indeed, the Istanbul tournament was hotly disputed and the ranking changed regularly over the 15 days of play.

A free tournament was organised before the official start of the competitions to allow the players to become acquainted with one another.

The Opening Ceremony of this second World University Bridge Championship took place in the auditorium of the Grand Cevahir Hotel in Istanbul and spectators turned out in great numbers. The university championship took place within the framework of the 12th Bridge Olympiad, one of the reasons the championship attracted such a large audience.

Mr Kemal Tamer, FISU Assessor and President of the Turkish University Sports Federation (TUSF) welcomed the participants. Then, José Damiani, President of the World Bridge Federation took the floor to thank the delegations for coming and to thank FISU for including Bridge in its programme. Finally, FISU Vice-President, Mr Hassan Chikh thanked TUSF for the warm welcome it extended to the participants and for its involvement in the activities of FISU. TUSF has organised three WUCs this year; sailing, chess and bridge. Furthermore, the Turkish federation will host the 23rd Universiade in Izmir next summer. After the three speeches, Mr Tamer officially opened the championship and the folk show began.

Immediately after the Opening Ceremony, the participants got down to serious business as three rounds were to be played that same day. The best players only really emerged to form a leading group after the sixth round. After eight rounds, the ranking remained the same. After



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Organizing Committee

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the eleventh round, Belgium headed the list, followed by Poland, USA and Italy.

Finally, the day before the fifteenth round, all seemed still possible as Belgium occupied first place with only one point ahead of Poland and twenty points ahead of Turkey who affirmed itself during the last few rounds and managed to climb up the ranking.

Gold for Poland

After an exciting last round, the Polish team finally become World University Champions. The Polish got the better of the Italians, while the Belgians (in first place up to this point) suffered a defeat to Chinese Taipei and were demoted to second place.

The United States of America took the bronze medal. You might be interested to learn that this team was composed of players from five different universities of the East and West coast. Ari Greenberg and Joon Pak are both students at Stanford, the former in computer science, the latter in physics. Noble Share and Charlie Garrard have already graduated in computer science, Noble at UVA and Charlie at the University of Carnegie Mellon. Finally, John Kranyak and Mark Glickman study at the universities of Columbia and Yale respectively.

We'll meet again at the third World University Bridge Championship to be held in Tianjin, China in 2006.