

Daily Bulletin

2017 Youth NABC

Editor: Brent Manley

Young players not afraid to ‘play up’



Jacob Freeman, left, and Martin Zhao at the table in the Wernher Open Pairs.

New bridge players are often told to “play up” – that is, enter events where the competition is tougher – if they want to get better. Just how many aspiring players act on that advice is unknown, but two participants in the 10th Youth NABC in Toronto put the admonition into practice, with good results.

Jacob Freeman, 16, of Toronto, and Martin Zhao, 13, of Richmond Hill ON, entered the Wernher Open Pairs, which began on Wednesday, and made it to the final on Thursday, the first day of the Youth Tournament. Considering how they did in the Wernher, they didn’t mind missing that day.

It was the first time the two had played together, and entering the tougher field was a last-minute decision.

They were influenced to give the Wernher a try in part because of advice from Nader Hanna, who coaches young players in the area, and from other experts. “Everyone told us we might get killed,” said Zhao, “but you learn more than in other games. It’s

a better field and we thought it was better to try new things.”

The two days in the Wernher opened the young players’ eyes. “You learn bridge from a new angle,” said Freeman. “It’s a different style of game and we learned a lot from the experience. We also developed a lot as a partnership.”

Said Zhao, “It was fun to play against the expert pairs. It’s a good place to learn.”

The Wernher was Freeman’s second shot at playing up at this tournament. Earlier in the week, he and Bo Han Zhu found themselves leading the field after the first day of play in the Young 0–2500 Life Master Pairs. The two finished 10th overall.



A'rina Black and Martha Johnson-Jackson

First in Strat B, Friday Morning Cardrhook Pairs

Tyler Mu and Daren Liu

Second-third in Strat C, Friday Afternoon Cardrhook Pairs



Two directors still eligible for Youth NABC

Many of the players at this year’s Youth NABC have been more or less regulars since the inaugural YNABC in 2008. Victor Lamoureux and Albena-Maria Vassileva are two of them, earning masterpoints and trophies over the years with and against their peers. The two arrived at the 2017 YNABC with bridge accomplishments most of the others don’t have. They are directors.

Lamoureux, 19, is an ACBL TD, having taken the director course three years ago at the Summer NABC in Las Vegas. He has been directing games at the bridge club in his home town – Halifax NS – since then, and was working at the NABC in Toronto before taking time off to play in his last Youth NABC (he will be too old next year).

Lamoureux has always been interested in the laws and how the games are run. As an 8-year-old playing at the Halifax Bridge Studio, he often volunteered to enter scores in the computer. He took the step toward learning the trade while looking for a part-time job. He has worked for ACBL at the Can-At Regional in Halifax and at a few local sectionals. At this tournament, he worked from the first Thursday through Wednesday of this week.

“I really enjoyed it,” he says. “I felt really welcomed, and they’ve made sure to teach me things they thought I didn’t know. They have made me feel like part of a team.”

After working with Lamoureux, TD Scott Humphrey praised the new TD. “He’s very eager to learn, and he gets to rulings really fast. It’s a pleasure to work with him.”



Victor Lamoureux

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Florida Junior Bridge, one of ACBL’s most successful youth bridge programs, has also been a major supporter of the Youth NABC. This year, the District 9 program sent 32 players, shown here, to the 10th Youth NABC.

