

## THE BUFFETT CUP

Paul Hackett writes from a European Prospective.

What makes the Buffett Cup one of the most exciting tournaments in the world? There are many ingredients. Europe v USA always fires the imagination. The formula, similar in some ways to the Ryder Cup of Golf. The gathering of some of the great players in the world, selected not only on the basis of their bridge ability, but also equally as the players who enhance our wonderful game with the calm and impeccable behavior at the table.

Let me introduce my team:

**Sabine Auken from Germany and Marion Michielsen from The Netherlands.**

Ranked the no 1 female player in the World, Sabine has teamed up with 23-year-old Marion, a great young talent who is a regular member of the Dutch ladies team. Sabine has two world medals and six European titles, together with countless trophies around the world. Marion has already two European titles behind her and is an exciting prospect, and I feel sure she will add substantially to that total.

**Michel and Thomas Bessis from France.**

They were in the winning team that won the Transnationals in Shanghai. Michel has two European Championships under his belt, while Thomas recently won the European Junior pairs championship. Still 24 years old he appears to be a potential star of the future.

**Boye Brogeland and Espen Lindqvist from Norway.**

A young and exciting pair who recently won the European Championship. Boye was also in the current Bermuda Bowl championship team. Espen has made the transition from Junior to Open Bridge in the last year with spectacular results.

**Tom Hanlon and Hugh McGann from Ireland.**

They were members of the Irish team who surprised many of us with a silver medal in the last European Championships. Tom is a professional poker player with whom I recently had the pleasure of partnering in the Las Vegas Nations. The week before he had reached the final table in the Omaha and picked up a useful price in the big Poker event. Hugh, a specialist in tropical diseases, is one of only two players on the team who do not rely on cards for their living.

### **Tor Helness and Jan Petter Svendsen from Norway.**

Norway is rich in bridge talent and Tor is a member of the Rmuda Bowl Championship team. He partners Jan Petter regularly on the Rune Hauge team, which has won several worldwide tournaments.

### **Michal Kwieckien and Jarek Pszczola from Poland**

Affectionately known as “Kwiksave and Pepsi” they were partners in the Polish team that won the European Championship. Pepsi has crossed the ocean to earn his fortune in the new world, while Michal is still working in Poland.

As you can see this is a vibrant and invigorating team  
But what about the people behind the scene?

Beth Reid from Louisville is the harnessing force behind the gathering of local volunteers.

Bill Rosenbaum is in charge of operations and appears to be doing a great job.

The USA committee who has organized the financing is Bob Hamman, Bob Blanchard, Roy Welland and Bill Rosenbaum.

Sol Weinstein is the Chief Tournament director.

Patrick Jourdain is doing the Bulletin

Rodney Lighton is making the changes on the website (initially he does several sites including mine [www.bridgewiththehacketts.com](http://www.bridgewiththehacketts.com)) and Jonathan Davis who devised the site.

Fred Gittleman, who ensures that all six tables are always on BBO.

And not least one of the most amazing ladies I have come across, Donna Compton. Her tireless efforts to deal with all the details and to ensure everything is in place has my utmost admiration. Thank you Donna.

I was asked why no Italians. Here is part of the article John Carruthers wrote in the IBPA bulletin.

“Conspicuous by their absence from the European Team are the Italians. How could Hackett have ignored Lauria-Versace, Duboin-Sementa, Fantoni-Nunes and Bocchi-Madala in his selection? The answer is that he did not. Hackett wanted at least one, and possibly two, of the aforementioned Italian pairs in his lineup for the second edition of the Buffett Cup.

The reason given for their unavailability is a clash with a First Division weekend for the Italian Bridge Federation. Since the Buffett Cup dates are known at least three years in advance (the four days preceding the Ryder Cup), one would have thought arrangements could have been made that would have allowed at least one of the Italian pairs into the 2008 European team. The Buffett Cup attracts extra and valuable publicity for bridge because of its association with the Ryder Cup, benefiting all bridge organizations.

The European Bridge League suggested at one point that they take over the organization from Paul Hackett, who initiated the inaugural one in Dublin, and were rebuffed. We trust this is not the reason that the Italian pairs are unavailable as it would be petty for any bridge authority not to cooperate with this venture.

Additionally and regrettably, Paul Hackett reports that he had a television deal on target with a major European network until the absence of the Italians caused them to back down. If so, bridge has indeed suffered badly from their unavailability.

We wish Hackett, Compton and both teams continued success and are certain they will rise above these difficulties in the future. All the top Italian players have assured the organizers they will be available next time, come what may. Let's hope so.

The dates of the Buffett Cup in 2010 are Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> September to Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September at a hotel near Cardiff with our own IBPA President as secretary of the Local Organizing Committee. So the WBF.FIGB, and other bridge organizations cannot say that they have not been given plenty of warning. All bridge authorities should put those dates in their calendar NOW and make sure their leading players are available if needed. And let's hope also that the network's executives have not been permanently soured by the idea of bridge on television".

I hope you will all log in at some time to follow the fortunes of my superb European team.

BBO starts on Monday at 10.45 Louisville time (afternoon in Europe).

I am proud of my team and we fully intend to bring the Buffett Cup (to which Warren Buffett kindly gave his name) back to Europe.