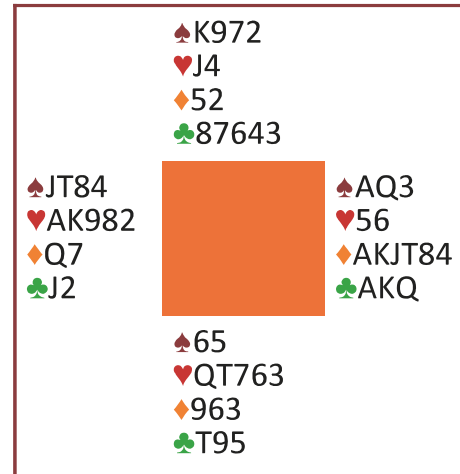




both matches in the three-way, then defeated Berk (151-100), Kompa (150-112) and Wei (154-147) to win the title.

The final ended in dramatic fashion, with Wei leading by 7 IMPs coming into the final board. East-West for Dhir stopped in the cold 6NT, but Wei climbed all the way to 7♦. Declarer (West) won the ♦2 lead and played 11 winners: 6♦, 3♣, and then 2♥, coming down to ♠J ♥9 in his hand and ♠AQ in the dummy. North discarded a ♥ on the run of the diamonds, giving declarer a complete count of the hand when North later showed out in hearts: South had a ♠ and the ♥T left and North had 2♠.

We can see that a ♠ finesse takes the last 2 tricks, but declarer (perhaps feeling he needed a swing result or just going for the more glamorous line or perhaps there was some table feel that indicated South was being squeezed) played for South to have been squeezed in the major suits, therefore forced to bare the ♠K to keep his boss heart, played a ♠ to the Ace. Note that the spade finesse is the clear percentage play because when North discards a heart, at trick 11, it is known that North started with 4 spades to south's 2. When the King did not drop, declarer was down 1 for 14 IMPs to the Dhir team. The final score: 154-147. Dhir was ecstatic at the result: "I still have PTSD when I think that we're going to China!"



The qualification is the third for both players. Jeng previously represented the US in 2010 and 2012. Jeng's other accomplishments include making Life Master at age 9 and being elected the 2017 ACBL King of Bridge. A lesser known story is that during these early years, Jeng called the ACBL to return masterpoints won with another partner to keep the same masterpoint total as his brother Andrew!

Dhir previously represented the US in 2012 (his "first year in the big leagues") and in 2014. Dhir also plays sometimes with professional clients. Both players are products of the **Atlanta Junior Bridge** Program, Jeng mentored by **Patty Tucker** and Dhir by **Carolyn Eckert** ("I owe my life to her!").

For China, both teams added a sixth player as well as additional USBF mentors.

The Jeng team (mentored by Sylvia Shi) added player Stella Wan and partnership coach Daniel Korbel for the Jeng-Youngquist partnership.

The Dhir team (mentored by David Caprera) added player Yinchen Yin and partnership coach Ralph Katz for the Dhir-Zhu partnership.

Both teams' next stop is the World Youth Bridge Team Championships, August 8-18, 2018, which will be broadcast live on [bridgebase.com](http://bridgebase.com). Bring home the gold, guys!