

90. Dealing with voids

By Ron Klinger

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass | ? |

What is your opening bid and what is your plan of bidding as South with:

♠ K5
♥ --
♦ AKQJ107
♣ KQ1087

You have a solid suit in diamonds and figure to have no trump losers if diamonds are trumps. If partner can provide the ♠A and ♣A, you have excellent chances for a grand slam. If partner has one of the black aces, 6♦ will often be a good prospect. If partner has no black ace, you do not want to be any higher than 5♦.

Some play a 4NT opening as specific ace Blackwood. That would not be of use here, since a bid of 5♥ (the ♥A only) takes you beyond your safety level.

If you are prepared to give up The Gambling 3NT – and why not? – you can adopt the **KABEL** 3NT, which asks for specific aces at a more convenient level.

Basic version: 3NT : 4♣ = no ace, 4♦/4♥/4♠/4NT = that ace (4NT = ♣A), 5♣ = ♣A + ♦A, 5♦ = ♦A + ♥A, 5♥ = ♥A + ♠A, 5♠ = ♠A + ♣A and 5NT = two Non-Touching aces. This method is suitable when all you need to do is to locate two critical cards.

Here is the full deal, which arose during a teams' match on BBO.

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

| | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ QJ | |
| | ♥ AJ98652 | |
| | ♦ 63 | |
| | ♣ J3 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 10432 | | ♠ A9876 |
| ♥ K1043 | | ♥ Q7 |
| ♦ 542 | | ♦ 98 |
| ♣ A2 | | ♣ 9654 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ K5 | |
| | ♥ -- | |
| | ♦ AKQJ107 | |
| | ♣ KQ1087 | |

Using the above method, it would go South 3NT, North 4♥ (♥A only), South 5♦, all pass.

More complex versions of the Kabel 3NT are possible. The advantage of this one is that you can use it when missing three critical cards. 3NT : 4♣ = 0 or 1 ace, 4♦ = ♦A + ♥A or ♠A; 4♥ = ♥A + ♠A, 4♠ = ♠A + ♣A, 4NT = ♥A + ♣A, 5♣ = ♣A + ♦A, 5♦/5♥/5♠/5NT = 3 aces excluding the ace in the suit bid (5NT = 3 aces, no ♣A).

After 3NT : 4♣, 4♦ asks and then 4♥ = no ace and 4♠ / 4NT (♥A) / 5♣ / 5♦ = that ace. For the above deal, the auction went 3NT : 4♣, 4♦ : 4NT (♥A), 5♦, all pass. Notice that if the ♥A were the ♠A or the ♣A, North-South would reach 6♦.

You can find more details of the Kabel 3NT in *A good Game of Modern Bridge*.

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

| | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ QJ | |
| | ♥ AJ98652 | |
| | ♦ 63 | |
| | ♣ J3 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 10432 | | ♠ A9876 |
| ♥ K1043 | | ♥ Q7 |
| ♦ 542 | | ♦ 98 |
| ♣ A2 | | ♣ 9654 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ K5 | |
| | ♥ -- | |
| | ♦ AKQJ107 | |
| | ♣ KQ1087 | |

At the other table:

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass | 1♦ |
| Pass | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣ |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 5♣ |
| Pass | 5♦ | All Pass | |

Same contract same result, 11 tricks, no swing. Note that North-South here would miss 6♦ if North had the ♠A or the ♣A. You replace North's ♠J, ♥A, ♥J with random low cards, South's 1♦ might be passed out with 5♦ cold.

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♣ | 1♦ | 1♠ |
| 3♦ | 3♠ | Pass | ? |

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQJ108
♥ KJ972
♦ --
♣ 1095

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| | North <i>Jessica Brake</i> | |
| | ♠ K952 | |
| | ♥ AQ5 | |
| | ♦ 43 | |
| | ♣ KQ73 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 743 | | ♠ 6 |
| ♥ 1043 | | ♥ 86 |
| ♦ AQ972 | | ♦ KJ10865 |
| ♣ J4 | | ♣ A862 |
| | South <i>Susan Humphries</i> | |
| | ♠ AQJ108 | |
| | ♥ KJ972 | |
| | ♦ -- | |
| | ♣ 1095 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|--------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♣ | 1♦ | 1♠ |
| 3♦ | 3♠ | Pass | 4♦! ⁽¹⁾ |
| Pass | 4NT | Pass | 6♣ ⁽²⁾ |
| Pass | 6♣ | All Pass | |

- (1) Cue bid, slam interest, denies club control
(2) A useful void somewhere

As South's 4♦ had denied club control, North's 4NT asking for key cards promised control in hearts and clubs. From the auction and South's 6♣, North could deduce that the void was in diamonds. As the ♣A was missing, North naturally settled for 6♣.

South won the heart lead in hand, drew trumps, cashed ♥A, ♥Q, ruffed a diamond, pitched two clubs from dummy on the ♥K, ♥J, gave up a club and had 12 tricks, +980.

The deal comes the **BLASS** vs **SPECTOR** semi-final of the 2019 Spingold. Neither North-South pair reached 6♣ then.

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Kalita</i> | <i>Wooldridge</i> | <i>Nowosadzki</i> | <i>Hurd</i> |
| | 1NT | Pass | 2♥ ⁽¹⁾ |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 3♦ ⁽²⁾ |
| Dble | 3♠ | 5♦ | Pass ⁽³⁾ |
| Pass | 5♥ | Pass | 5♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

- (1) Transfer to spades
(2) Transfer to hearts
(3) Forcing

Lead: ♣A. 12 tricks, N-S +480.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>Demuy</i> | <i>Drijver</i> | <i>Kranyak</i> | <i>Brink</i> |
| | 1♣ | 1♦ | 2NT ⁽¹⁾ |
| 3♦ | 4♣ | All Pass | |

- (1) Artificial, both majors

Lead: ♦10. 12 tricks, N-S +480, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : North-South vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | ? | Pass | 1♠ |

What would you do as North with:

♠ 9842
♥ K1086
♦ AK976
♣ --

2. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ --
♥ Q965
♦ AQ874
♣ KQJ10

South
♠ AK72
♥ K8732
♦ 92
♣ A4

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♦ | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 4♥ | Pass | 4NT |
| Pass | 5♦ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | 6♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) One or four key cards for hearts

You might not like the auction, but that is not your concern. West leads the ♦3. Plan the play.

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Wife to husband: Perhaps you could self-isolate in the kitchen and stack the dishwasher?