149. Two tales of 6NT

By Ron Klinger
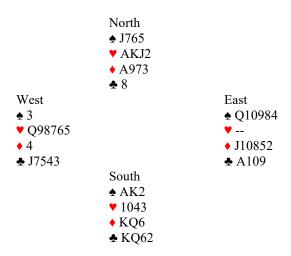
Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

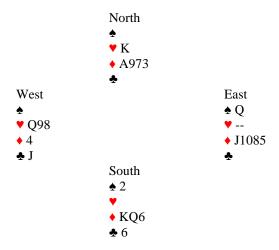| West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	?

What would you do now as South with:

- ♠ AK2
- ♥ 1043
- ♦ KQ6
- ♣ KQ62

The deal arose on BBO with Nabil Edgtton of Sydney in the South seat and robots occupying the other positions. South's 2♣ showed 4+ clubs and was forcing to game. North's 2♥ reverse showed 16+ points. After 3♠, Edgtton jumped to 6NT, all pass. The expectation was that North would have four hearts and 5+ diamonds. That hope was dashed when West led the ♥7 and dummy appeared:

```
                 North
                 ♠ J765
                 ♥ AKJ2
                 ♦ A973
                 ♣ 8
West                              East
♠ 3                              ♠ Q10984
♥ Q98765                         ♥ --
♦ 4                              ♦ J10852
♣ J7543                          ♣ A109
                 South
                 ♠ AK2
                 ♥ 1043
                 ♦ KQ6
                 ♣ KQ62
```
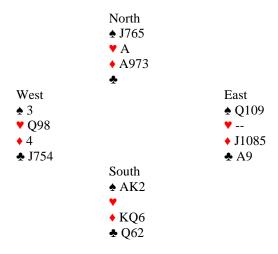
Not only did dummy not have 5+ diamonds, but dummy was also deficient in points by at least two points and preferably three. Suggested rebid for North is 2NT over 2♣ to show a minimum opening hand.

Trick 1 went ♥7: two – ♠4 – ♥10. South finessed the ♥J, East discarded the ♦2. Declarer then played the ♣8 from dummy. If East takes the ♣A and returns a club, say, East will soon be squeezed in spades and diamonds. South cashes the ♣K, ♣Q, ♠A, ♠K and plays over to the ♥A. These cards remain:

```
                    North
                    ♠
                    ♥ K
                    ♦ A973
                    ♣
West                                East
♠                                   ♠ Q
♥ Q98                               ♥ --
♦ 4                                 ♦ J1085
♣ J                                 ♣
                    South
                    ♠ 2
                    ♥
                    ♦ KQ6
                    ♣ 6
```

Declarer plays the ♥K and discards the ♣6. East is finished. If East discards the ♠Q, South's ♠2 is high. If East lets another diamond go, declarer collects four diamond tricks.

So, East should play low when the ♣8 comes from dummy, but that merely delays the evil moment. South wins with the ♣K and crosses to the ♥A. These cards remain:

```
                    North
                    ♠ J765
                    ♥ A
                    ♦ A973
                    ♣
West                                East
♠ 3                                 ♠ Q109
♥ Q98                               ♥ --
♦ 4                                 ♦ J1085
♣ J754                              ♣ A9
                    South
                    ♠ AK2
                    ♥
                    ♦ KQ6
                    ♣ Q62
```

What is East to do when the ♥A is played? A spade discard gives South four spade tricks and the fourth spade squeezes East again. Likewise, if East throws a diamond, the fourth diamond squeezes East again. When East discards the ♣9, baring the ♣A, South plays, say, a diamond to hand and a low club, discarding a spade from dummy and dropping East's ♣A. East returns the ♦J. South wins in hand and cashes the ♣Q. Whether East discards a spade or a diamond, South makes the rest of the tricks.

The results on BBO were 3NT +600 x 4, 39.3%, +630 x 4, 75%, +660 x 1 92.9% and a sole beacon at the top was Edgtton's 6NT +1440, 100%.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

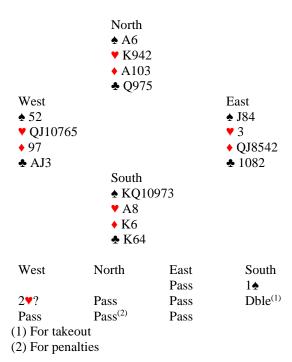| West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ 52
♥ QJ10765
♦ 97
♣ AJ3

This deal arose in a teams' match on BBO:

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

```
                    North
                    ♠ A6
                    ♥ K942
                    ♦ A103
                    ♣ Q975
West                                East
♠ 52                                ♠ J84
♥ QJ10765                           ♥ 3
♦ 97                                ♦ QJ8542
♣ AJ3                               ♣ 1082
                    South
                    ♠ KQ10973
                    ♥ A8
                    ♦ K6
                    ♣ K64
```

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♥?	Pass	Pass	Dble[(1)]
Pass	Pass[(2)]	Pass	

(1) For takeout
(2) For penalties

Partner is a passed hand, you are vulnerable against not and you elect to bid 2♥ on a semi-balanced 8-count when the expectation for 2♥ here is a strong 10 points or better. The kindest description for the 2♥ bid would be 'unwise'.

Nazife Bashar (N) led the ♠A and ♠6. Kinga Moses (S) won trick 2 with the ♠Q and continued with the ♠K. West discarded the ♦7 from hand and North threw the ♦3. South switched to the ♥8: queen – king – three and North returned the ♣5: two – king – ace. West played the ♥10: two – ♦2 – ♥A and South reverted to the ♠10, ruffed with the ♥5 and over-ruffed with the ♥9. North cashed the ♣Q and West's ♣J won the next round of clubs. West's ♥J drew North's last trump, but West still had a diamond to lose. West had an 8-loser hand and had eight losers. Declarer lost 3 spades, 3 hearts, a diamond and a club, three down, North-South +800.
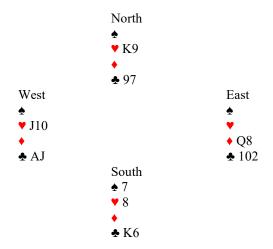
The likely result at the other table would be 4♠, making ten tricks, but that's not what happened. With Ron Cooper (N) and Bruce Neill (S), the artificial relay auction went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣[(1)]
1♥	2♦[(2)]	Pass	2♥[(3)]
Pass	3♦[(4)]	Pass	3♠[(5)]
Pass	4♦[(6)]	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Artificial, 15+ points
(2) Balanced hand with 4 hearts
(3) Relay: 'Tell me more.'
(4) Exactly 2-4-3-4
(5) How many controls do you have?
(6) Five (A = 2, K = 1)

The 6NT contract is not so great. You have ten tricks on top when spades behave and can set up another trick in clubs. Most of the time you will lose two club tricks. Neill played the hand to make the most of the specific layout of the cards.

He won the ♥Q lead with the ace and played the ♣4: three – queen – eight. Then came five rounds of spades and the ♦A and the ♦K. These cards remained:

```
                    North
                    ♠
                    ♥ K9
                    ♦
                    ♣ 97
West                              East
♠                                ♠
♥ J10                            ♥
♦                                ♦ Q8
♣ AJ                             ♣ 102
                    South
                    ♠ 7
                    ♥ 8
                    ♦
                    ♣ K6
```

Now the ♠7 squeezed West. If West had discarded the ♣J, South would have discarded the ♥9 from dummy and played the ♣6 next. That would have dropped the ♣A and South would have made the last two tricks. Instead, West pitched the ♥10 and so South threw a club from dummy and made his eleventh trick with the ♥K and his twelfth with the ♥9. That scored +990 for North-South and was worth +5 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	?

What would you do now as South with:

♠ 64
♥ QJ
♦ AK73
♣ AQJ43

2. Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT[1]
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) 12-14 points

What would you lead as West from:

♠ A95
♥ 62
♦ J10543
♣ 1063

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

Pavlov walks into the bar. The phone rings. "Damn," he says, "I forgot to feed the dog."