

53. Tales of no-trumps

By Ron Klinger

The 36-board final of the Alt Invitational, held in April and organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online) was between:

De Botton Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski

and

Street Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski

North dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ K9863
♥ J432
♦ Q9
♣ 83

When opener rebids 1NT to show a minimum, balanced hand, if you have about 6-10 points and a 5-4 pattern with the 4-card suit lower-ranking, it will usually be better to show the 4-card suit and see preference for one of your suits. This is particular so with 6-8 points. A trump contract at the 2-level will play better than 1NT most of the time, even if it is a 7-card trump fit.

Board 1: North dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A52	
	♥ K976	
	♦ K86	
	♣ A95	
West		East
♠ QJ7		♠ 104
♥ 1085		♥ AQ
♦ AJ7		♦ 105432
♣ KQ107		♣ J642
	South	
	♠ K9863	
	♥ J432	
	♦ Q9	
	♣ 83	

After the auction above. South for **DE BOTTON** passed and 1NT became the contract. East led the ♦3: queen – ace – six. West returned the ♦J, winning, and the ♦7: king – five – ♣8. North played ♠A and ducked a spade to West, who switched to the ♥8, low, queen. East cashed diamonds and switched to a club. Declarer made four spades and a club, two down, East-West +100. You can see how much better it would be to rebid 2♥ after 1NT. North would pass here, but if North's pattern was 3-3-3-4, North would remove 2♥ to 2♠.

At the other table, it went 1♣ : 2♥ (6-9 points, both majors), all pass. West led the ♥5: six – queen – two. East switched to the ♣4: three – ten – five. Back came the ♣K, ace. Declarer played the ♥7, taken by the ♥A. East shifted to the ♦5: nine – ace – six. West reverted to the ♣Q. South ruffed, drew the missing trump, cashed the ♦Q and had eight tricks: 2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, ♣A and a club ruff, +110 and +5 Imps.

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT

(1) 5 hearts

What would you lead as West from:

♠ AK73
♥ 965
♦ 532
♣ Q96

Hearts and spade have been bid. You can dismiss a heart lead, but a spade lead is not out of the question. On the other hand, a spade lead might help declarer and will certainly not bring you in 7 tricks. A club could work. Partner might have K-J-10-x or K-J-x-x and the clubs are 3-3 or A-K-x-x and club are 3-3, but a club lead also has high risk. It gives declarer 3 tricks if declarer has ♣A-K-J or ♣A-K-x opposite J-x-x and 4 tricks if declarer has A-K-x- and dummy has J-10-x-x. It gives declarer 2 tricks if declarer has A-10-x and dummy J-x-x.

A diamond lead has least risk. It might not establish winners, but it is less likely to cost. Whatever honours partner has, you are leading towards them. If declarer has ♦A-Q, partner's ♦K was doomed anyway. None of the leads comes with a guarantee of success. You just work on the lead that either had the greatest likelihood of success or the least likely to do damage. You and partner need to decide whether you would lead the ♦3, middle-up-down, or the ♦5 (top-of-nothing as an attitude lead: not interested in diamonds).

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q854	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ Q106	
	♣ J1072	
West		East
♠ AK73		♠ J2
♥ 965		♥ A108
♦ 532		♦ KJ984
♣ Q96		♣ A83
	South	
	♠ 1096	
	♥ KJ742	
	♦ A7	
	♣ K54	

DE BOTTON North – South: **STREET's** West led the ♣6: two – ace – five. The ♠J went to the queen. Declarer knocked out the ♥A and had four hearts, a spade, a diamond and a club, +90.

As it happens, a diamond lead works extremely well.: ♦3: ten – jack . . . If South wins and plays on hearts, West can play ♥9, ♥6, ♥5, highest each time to show the entry in spades. After ♠J to the ♠K, West continues diamonds and the defence take 4 diamonds, 2 spades, a heart and a club, two down.

If South ducks at trick 1 (not likely), East can switch to the ♠8 (high = not wanting a club return). If South plays the ♣K (unlikely), South knocks out the ♥A and make six tricks, one light. If South ducks the ♠8, West wins and plays a second diamond. The defenders take 4 diamonds, 2 clubs, 2 spades and a heart, three down.

At the other table, it went 1♥ : Pass : 1♠ : Double (takeout), Rdbl (3 spades) : Pass : 1NT, all pass. East led the ♦4: seven – two – six. Declarer knocked out the ♥A and East played another low diamond. Declarer made four hearts and two diamonds. The defenders had the rest, one light, East-West +50, 4 Imps to **DE BOTTON**.

DE BOTTON won Session 1 by 28-11.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ AK6
♥ KQ10
♦ A82
♣ AK63

South
♠ QJ975
♥ A
♦ KJ73
♣ J98

Would you rather be in 7♠, 7NT or 6♠ / 6NT?

How would you play 7♠ on the ♥4 lead or 7NT on the ♠3 lead?

2. North dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ KJ84
♥ --
♦ Q7
♣ QJ107543

Suppose you have chosen 4♣ as South. West bids 4♥, Pass : Pass : back to you. What now?

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

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends. (Martin Luther King Jr., (1929-1968))