

78. What's the problem

By Ron Klinger

Today's deals are from Round 6 of Alt-Invitational III, organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online). These were the teams:

Blass	Josef Blass, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Jacek Kalita, Michael Nowosadski, Jacek Pszczola (Pepsi)
Bridge Scanner	Konrad Araszkievicz, Krzysztof Kotorowicz, Wojciech Olanski, Vytautas Vainikonis, Erikas Vainikonis, Andrei Arlovich, Mirhail Krasnoselskii, Georgy Matushko
De Botton	Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski
Donner	Gary Donner, Cecilia Rimstedt, Frederik Nystrom, Johan Upmark, Marion Michielsen, Per Ola Cullin,
Gupta	Naren Gupta, Bauke Muller, Simon de Wijs, Huub Bertens, Cedric Lorenzini, Thomas Bessis
Street	Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski
Team Rosenthal	Andrew Rosenthal, Aaron Silverstein, Chris Willenken, Jan Jansma, Boye Brogeland, Espen Lindquist
Team Russia	Andrey Gromov, Anna Gulevich, Vadim Kholomeev, Yury Khuppenen, Yury Khokhlov, Alexander Dubinin

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♥ ⁽¹⁾	4♠ ⁽²⁾	4♥	?

(1) Weak two
(2) Leaping Michaels, 5+ spades, 5 + clubs

What would you do as South with:

♠ A1052
♥ 987
♦ AJ8
♣ 1073

You might think this is too simple. "What's the problem?" A bid of 4♠ seems obvious, but one South thought this would not do the hand justice. Here is the full deal:

Bd. 15: East dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ 6	♠ KJ987	♠ Q43	♠ A1052
♥ AQ1042	♥ 3	♥ KJ65	♥ 987
♦ Q109765	♦ K4	♦ 32	♦ AJ8
♣ Q	♣ AK984	♣ J652	♣ 1073

After the auction above, South bid 5♠, asking North to bid 6♠ if holding control in hearts. North had a singleton heart and so bid 6♠. The ♥A was led, followed by a diamond switch. Declarer picked up the ♠Q, but that was no guarantee, but could not avoid a club loser. The result was one down, -50.

	North	
	♠ KJ987	
	♥ 3	
	♦ K4	
	♣ AK984	
West		East
♠ 6		♠ Q43
♥ AQ1042		♥ KJ65
♦ Q109765		♦ 32
♣ Q		♣ J652
	South	
	♠ A1052	
	♥ 987	
	♦ AJ8	
	♣ 1073	

The South hand provides two tricks. For slam to be reasonable, North needs to provide ten winners. That is possible, but not very likely. North needs ♠KQ, ♦K and ♣AKQ or some equivalent. Suppose North does not have heart control and passes 5♠. That is not a safe spot. Give North the same black suit holdings and ♥x-x ♦K or ♥x-x and 6 spades, 5 clubs. You still lose 2 hearts and a club. That club holding should be a concern.

The recommended approach after a pre-empt or a weak two or a similar opening is to play partner for two winners. North has a 5-loser hand. Two winners will reduce the losers to three. South has just the two winners that North needs, but no more. Bid 4♠ and accept that sometimes you will miss a slam.

At the other table, [BRIDGE SCANNER](#) North-South played in 4♠, +420 and +12 Imps.

With [GUPTA](#) North-South, it also began Pass : Pass : 2♥ : 4♣ and stopped in 4♠, 11 tricks, +450. At the other table, [BLASS](#) North-South, it went Pass : Pass : 1♥ : 1♠, 3♥ : Double (takeout with support) : 4♥ : 4♠, all pass, 11 tricks, +450, no swing.

In [BONNER](#) vs [ROSENTHAL](#), both tables began Pass : Pass : 1♥ : 2♥ Michaels, spades and a minor, 3♥ and ended in 4♠, +420 at each table, no swing.

In [RUSSIA](#) vs [STREET](#), both auctions began Pass : Pass : 1♥ : 2♥ (spades + minor), 3♥ : 4♠. At one table this was passed out and declarer made ten tricks, +420. At the other table, West bid 5♥, North doubled, all pass. Vulnerable against not, West's 5♥ might be seen as extreme or highly optimistic facing a simple raise. More likely, West was hoping North-South would take the 5♠ save, given the vulnerability.

Against 5♥ doubled, North led the ♣A and switched to the ♠7. South took the ♠A and returned a club, ruffed. West gave up two diamonds and cross-ruffed diamonds and the black suits for three down, -800, and 8 Imps to [STREET](#).

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

North	
♠ K109	
♥ KJ84	
♦ AQJ10	
♣ K3	
	East
	♠ 83
	♥ Q103
	♦ K9852
	♣ QJ7

South opens 1NT (15-17 points). North bids 2♣, Stayman. South bids 2♦, no major. North jumps to 6NT, all pass. West leads the ♠7: nine – three – queen. South plays the ♦4: three – jack . . . which card do you play?

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K109	
	♥ KJ84	
	♦ AQJ10	
	♣ K3	
West		East
♠ J7642		♠ 83
♥ 752		♥ Q103
♦ 73		♦ K9852
♣ 985		♣ QJ7
	South	
	♠ AQ5	
	♥ A96	
	♦ 64	
	♣ A10642	

After West led the ♠7 (to disguise the spade holding) against 6NT. South won and took the diamond finesse. Again, you can reasonably ask, 'What's the problem?' Take the ♦K and return a diamond or a spade. In practice, East thought it was a good idea to duck and played the ♦5, no doubt smoothly.

He soon learned it was not such a good idea. South continued with the ♣K and the ♣3, queen from East, ducked by South. East returned a spade, taken by the ♠K. Declarer cashed the ♠A, ♥K, ♥A, ♣A, ♣10, leaving this:

	North	
	♠	
	♥ J	
	♦ AQ	
	♣	
West		East
♠ J		♠
♥ 5		♥ Q
♦ 7		♦ K2
♣		♣
	South	
	♠	
	♥ 9	
	♦ 6	
	♣ 6	

When South played the ♣6 and discarded the ♥J, East threw the ♥Q. South's ♥9 was now high and South had 12 tricks. In the end position, East could have pitched the ♦2 and South would have had to guess whether to finesse in diamonds or not.

However, why give yourself this headache? The situation for East should have been clear at trick 1. Count the points. South has 15 (or maybe an upgraded 14), dummy has 17, total 32 (31). East has 8 HCP. That leaves no points for West (or maybe one jack). There is zero benefit in ducking the diamond. It is not as though you might cause declarer to use up a vital entry to hand. South has plenty of entries to repeat the diamond finesse.

Anyway, the result was South made 12 tricks, +990, and East will have few happy memories of this session. At the other table, South was in 4NT after North invited slam, +460 and 11 Imps to [DE BOTTON](#).

[BLASS](#) 4NT +460 and +11 Imps vs [BRIDGE SCANNER](#) 6NT -50.

[DONNER](#) 3NT +460 vs [ROSENTHAL](#) 4NT +460, flat board.

[STREET](#) 3NT +460 vs [RUSSIA](#) 3NT +460, flat board.

Round 6 Results:

	Imps	Victory Points
Donner - Rosenthal	53 - 64	7.46 - 12.54
Street - Russia	37 - 29	11.90 - 8.10
De Botton – Bridge Scanner	70 - 55	12.54 - 7.46
Gupta - Blass	24 - 54	4.17 - 15.83

Standings after Round 6:

1. Blass	101.84
2. Russia	71.93
3. Street	67.15
4. Gupta	57.82
5. Donner	54.77
6. Bridge Scanner	50.12
7. De Botton	45.49
8. Rosenthal	30.88

With one round to go, only **BLASS** was secure for the semi-finals and, in theory, only **ROSENTHAL** had no chance.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. With both sides vulnerable, Partner opens 2NT. Pass on your right. What would do with:

♠ KJ7
♥ 2
♦ K982
♣ Q9865

2. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	3♠
?			?

(1) 10+ points, 4+ diamonds

What would you do as West with:

♠ A
♥ K7
♦ K10654
♣ AKJ74

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

Ran out of toilet rolls, so have been reduced to replacing them with lettuce leaves. I really feel that is just the tip of the iceberg.