

275. Return of the magnificent seven

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North
 ♠ Q96
 ♥ AKQ
 ♦ AJ9843
 ♣ 6

South
 ♠ AKJ872
 ♥ 63
 ♦ Q
 ♣ A832

Today's deal comes from the 2020 Slava Cup.

See yesterday's column for details.

South has reached 7♠, with East-West passing throughout. West leads the ♣K. You have a straightforward plan: Take the ♣A, ruff a club, spade to hand, ruff a club, ♦A, ruff a diamond, draw trumps and ditch last club loser on dummy's third heart winner. Good plan, but there is a hitch. You take the ♣A and ruff a club with the ♠9, but when you play the ♠6 from dummy East plays the three, you win with the ♠A and West discards a heart. How do you continue?

This was the actual auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1♠ ⁽²⁾
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦ ⁽³⁾
Pass	4♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠ ⁽⁵⁾	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♥ ⁽⁶⁾	Pass	7♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Artificial, strong hand
- (2) 5+ spades, forcing to game
- (3) Cue, club control + diamond control
- (4) Heart control
- (5) Two key cards + the ♠Q
- (6) ♥K, no minor suit king

This would be a plausible natural auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♣ ⁽²⁾
Pass	3♠.....		

(1) A reverse, but safe. If South supports hearts, South must have 5+ spades and North can then revert to spades.

(2) Fourth-suit forcing
 The rest of the auction can proceed as with the auction on the left. For more information on slam bidding, such as the 4♦ bid showing control in clubs and in diamonds, see [A Good Game of Modern Bridge](#).

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q96	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ AJ9843	
	♣ 6	
West		East
♠ --		♠ 10543
♥ 10854		♥ J972
♦ 107652		♦ K
♣ KQ104		♣ J975
	South	
	♠ AKJ872	
	♥ 63	
	♦ Q	
	♣ A832	

West led the ♣K, ace. Then came club ruff with the ♠9, ♠6 to ♠A, bringing the bad news of the 4-0 trump split. One club loser could go on the third heart, but South still had to deal with the other club loser. One option was to take the diamond finesse. If West had the ♦K, declarer would have a second winner in diamonds to ditch a club. South led the ♦Q. When West played low without a flicker, South changed plans and went up with the ♦A. When the ♦K dropped, South cashed the ♠Q, ruffed a low diamond, drew trumps and claimed 13 tricks, discarding one club on the ♦J and one on the ♥Q. Had the ♦K not dropped under the ♦A, declarer would have cashed the ♠Q, ruffed a diamond, drawn trumps, crossed to the ♥A and ruffed another diamond. As long as the ♦K dropped in three rounds, South would have 13 tricks. 7♠ +1510 was worth +6 Imps against the datum.

The event was won by Terje Aa – Allan Livgard (Norway) with Russian pairs second, third and fourth.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

North

♠ 10643

♥ K1087

♦ KJ92

♣ 2

South

♠ A

♥ A65

♦ A4

♣ AQJ6543

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Intended as natural and a reverse and prepared to revert to hearts if North supported diamonds.

After 1♣ : 1♥, what is South to do? The hand is too strong for a 3♣ rebid, which would be non-forcing. South decided to bid 2♦, supposedly natural, strong and forcing. When North rebid 4♦, South had had enough and jumped to 6♣. This was an unfamiliar partnership. Unsure of what was going on, North let 6♣ go.

West leads the ♠8. Plan the play.

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

We are who we are. The approval of others is not required.