14. Beating the Robots

By Ron Klinger

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

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

What would you do as South with:

| ۰ | J853 |
|---|------|
| ۷ | A3 |

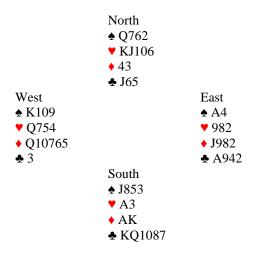
♦ AK

♣ KQ1087

In this situation, North's raise will be based on 4-card support and about 6-9 points. You have 17 HCP and you can count one more each for the doubletons. It is reasonable to take a shot at game.

One of the attractive options when you play on BBO (www.bridgebase.com) with robots is that you can choose to play deals that have been previously played in top-level tournaments. This arose in a USA National Open Teams Knockout:

East dealer : North-South vulnerable



Playing on BBO with a friend (North), I had the above problem and jumped to 44, all pass. Robot West led the 43 to the 44. Robot East returned the 44: king -49-46. There were still two top trumps to lose and so the result was one down, East-West +100.

We were in august company, namely:

| West | North | East | South |
|-----------|-------|-------|--------|
| Weinstein | Lee | Levin | Glubok |
| | | Pass | 1♣ |
| Pass | 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

Steve Weinstein (W) led \bigstar : three – jack – ace. Brian Glubok (S) played \checkmark 3 to \checkmark K and the \bigstar 2: four – jack – king. West switched to \bigstar 3: five – ace – eight. Bobby Levin (E) returned the \bigstar 2. West ruffed, East-West +100.

At the other table, Ralph Katz (S) did much better after 1♣ :1♥, 1♠ : 2♠. He jumped to 3NT!

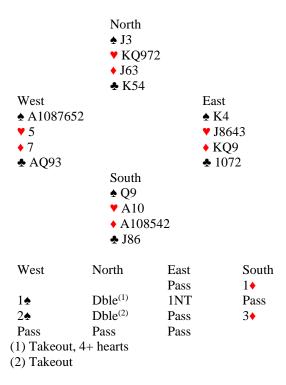
Everyone passed 3NT and Bob Hamman (W) led the $\diamond 6$: three – jack – ace. South knocked out the $\bigstar A$, won the diamond return and ran the clubs. When West let the hearts go, South made ten tricks, +630 and +12 Imps. Even if West had kept his hearts, $\checkmark A$ and the $\checkmark 3$ to the $\checkmark J$ would see 3NT make.

With neither side vulnerable, South deals and opens 1. What would you do as West with:

▲ A1087652
♥ 5
◆ 7
▲ AQ93

In this problem, Robot West overcalled 14.

South dealer : Nil vulnerable



The result was one down, East-West +50.

The deal originated in the 2007 Australian Open Teams Playoff and the East-West humans did better than the East-West BBO robots.

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------|---------------------------|------|-------|
| Hans | Lazer | Nunn | Gumby |
| | | Pass | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | 2 V ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♠! | Pass |
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| (1) Natural | l, not forcing | | |

North led the \bigstar J: four – nine – ace. West played the \bigstar 7: six – king – ace. South returned the \bigstar A, then \checkmark 10. West ruffed, crossed to the \bigstar K and pitched the \bigstar 3 on dummy's \blacklozenge Q. Next came the \bigstar 10: six – nine – king and West had ten tricks, +420.

At the other table, Peter Gill (S) opened 1, Murray Green (W) bid 4, Paul Gosney (N) doubled ('do what's right, partner'), all pass. North led $\forall K$ and switched to 4. West lost a heart, a diamond and a club, +590, +5 Imps.

No game was ever won by resigning. (Chess master, Savielli Tartakower)