

49. Diamonds pure and diamonds flawed

By Ron Klinger

The Alt Invitational, held in April, was organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online). There were eight teams, playing a round-robin, followed by semi-finals and a final. These were the teams:

Blass	Josef Blass, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Jacek Kalita, Michael Nowosadski, Jacek Pszczola (Pepsi)
De Botton	Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski
Hungary	Miklos Dumbovich, Gal Hegedus, Csaba Szabo, Balasz Szegedi, Gabor Winkler
Upmark	Peter Bertheau, Per Ola Cullin, Simon Hult, Marion Michielsen, Fredrik Nyström, Mikael Rimstedt, Ola Rimstedt, Johan Upmark
Meltzer	Rose Meltzer, Nikolay Demirev, Bartosz Chmurski, Piotr Nawrocki, Piotr Tuczynski, Piotr Wiankowski
Milner	Reese Milner, Hemant Lall, Sabine Auken, Roy Welland
Street	Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski
Team NL	Maarten Schollaardt, Merijn Groenenboom, Danny Molenaar, Tim Verbeek, Joris van Lankveld, Berend van den Bos, Bart Nab, Bob Drijver, Guy Mendes de Leon, Thibo Sprinkhuizen
Zhao	Zhao Chen, Liu Jing, Bauke Muller, Ricco van Prooijen, Louk Verhees, Simon de Wijs

Day 3, Round 5: **BLASS** beat **MELTZER** 51-16 (16.51-3.49) **HUNGARY** beat **ZHAO** by 65-43 (14.60-5.40) **STREET** beat **MILNER** by 74-53 (14.43-5.57), **DE BOTTON** beat **TEAM NL** by 73-39 (16.38-3.62)

Ranking after Round 5:

1. **BLASS** 73.59
2. **DE BOTTON** 70.07
3. **STREET** 59.94
4. **TEAM NL** 50.80
5. **MELTZER** 44.00
6. **ZHAO** 42.82
7. **HUNGARY** 33.39
8. **MILNER** 25.39

South dealer : North-South vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 7
♥ AK65
♦ AK87654
♣ Q

Suppose the bidding proceeds:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	?

What now?

Round 5 : Board 16

South dealer : North-South vulnerable.

	North ♠ K98653 ♥ J2 ♦ J ♣ 9652	
West ♠ AQ2 ♥ 983 ♦ 1092 ♣ A1083	East ♠ J104 ♥ Q1074 ♦ Q3 ♣ KJ74	
	South ♠ 7 ♥ AK65 ♦ AK87654 ♣ Q	

Even though the ♣Q might be worthless, South with a 4-loser hand is entitled to reverse with a 2♥ rebid. North then has a natural, non-forcing 2♠ rebid. Some play 2♠ in this sequence as forcing. That approach does not appeal and would certainly give North a headache with that hand.

The results ranged from 2♦ South to 5♦ South. Here are some of the sequences.

BLASS North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♥ : 2♠, 3♦, all pass. That seems eminently reasonable. South has shown a strong hand with 4 hearts and 6+ diamonds. If North cannot find another bid after that, 3♦ is high enough. West led the ♣A and switched to the ♦2: jack – queen – ace. South cashed the ♦K, followed by the ♠7. West took the ♠A and reverted to clubs. East's ♣K was ruffed by South, who played a third diamond: ten – ♠6 – ♥4??.

South had bid hearts. A basic principle in defensive discarding is keep length with dummy and keep length with declarer.

	North (dummy) AK63		North (dummy) K63
West J109	East 8542	West 109	East J862
	South Q7		South AQ74

In each case, South, declarer has only three tricks in this suit. If East discards a card in the suit, declarer now has four tricks.

Since South is known from the auction to have four hearts, East should also keep four hearts. East could easily afford to discard a club. West returned a heart. South ruffed and played the ♥5 to the jack and queen. Later, after ♥A, ♥K, the ♥6 was declarer's ninth trick, North-South +110.

MELTZER North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♥ : 2♠, 3♣ (fourth-suit forcing) : 3♦, 3♥ : 4♦, all pass. When North could not muster anything better than 3♦ over 3♣, South might have called it a day. South's 3♥ was one last try for game and South gave it away after 4♦. West led the ♦2 and declarer lost a diamond, a spade, a club and two hearts, East-West +200 and 7 Imps to **BLASS**.

ZHAO North-South: 1♣ (artificial, strong) : 1♦ (negative), 2♦ (5+ diamonds, 16-18 points) : 2♠, 3♦, all pass. East led the ♥4, ducked to the ♥J. North cashed ♥A, ♥K and ruffed dummy's fourth heart with the ♦J. North lost a spade, a diamond and a club, 10 tricks, +130.

HUNGARY North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♥ : 2♠, 3♣ : 3♠, 4♦, all pass. West led the ♦2. Declarer lost the usual five tricks, -200 and 8 Imps to **ZHAO**.

	North	
	♠ K98653	
	♥ J2	
	♦ J	
	♣ 9652	
West		East
♠ AQ2		♠ J104
♥ 983		♥ Q1074
♦ 1092		♦ Q3
♣ A1083		♣ KJ74
	South	
	♠ 7	
	♥ AK65	
	♦ AK87654	
	♣ Q	

DE BOTTON North-South: 1♦ : 2♠ (weak jump-shift). East led the ♥7. Declarer played ♥A, ♥K, heart ruff, ♦A, ♦K, heart ruff and came to eight tricks, +110. **TEAM NL** North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♥ : 2♠, 3♦, all pass. West led the ♦2 and declarer lost the usual five tricks for -100 and 5 Imps to **DE BOTTON**.

MILNER North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♦, all pass. Lead: ♥3: jack – queen – ace. Declarer played ♥K, heart ruff and so made nine tricks, +110. Contrast South's action here with that by South in the **STREET** auction below.

STREET North-South: 1♦ : 1♠, 2♥ : 2♠, 4♦ : 4♠, 5♣ : 5♦, all pass. Lead: ♦10. Declarer lost a diamond, a spade, a club and two hearts, three light, -300 and 9 Imps to **MILNER**.

Vulnerable vs not vul, West opens 2♣, weak. What would you do as North with:

♠ A63
♥ A10854
♦ A
♣ QJ83

There were three different choices by the North players. Every action has a flaw. Which is the least flawed? The quality for the heart suit is poor for a 3♥ bid. The trouble with a takeout double is that North has five hearts rather than four and also has a singleton in diamonds. Still, the worst might not happen. My preference is for 2NT, despite the singleton diamond. The shape is a little off, but the strength is right and one should be permitted to have five hearts here. Partner can find out with a 3♣ inquiry, as after a 2NT opening.

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A63	
	♥ A10854	
	♦ A	
	♣ QJ83	
West		East
♠ J108754		♠ KQ92
♥ 9		♥ QJ76
♦ K9642		♦ --
♣ 7		♣ K10642
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ K32	
	♦ QJ108753	
	♣ A95	

MILNER North-South: 2♠ : 2NT : 4♠ : 5♦, all pass. West led ♠J. South ruffed, crossed to the ♦A and played the ♣Q: four – five – seven and the ♣J: king – ace – ♦2. West switched to the ♥9: ten – jack – king. The ♦Q went to the ♦K and West returned the ♠4, taken by ♠A, South pitching ♥2. South ruffed the ♠6 and cashed ♦J, ♦10, drawing West's last trumps. This was the position:

	North	
	♠	
	♥ A10	
	♦	
	♣8	
West		East
♠ 1087		♠
♥		♥ Q7
♦		♦
♣7		♣10
	South	
	♠	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 8	
	♣ 9	

South played the ♦8, discarding the ♣8 from dummy. East was squeezed and whether he threw the ♣10 or the ♥7, declarer made the last two tricks.

	North	
	♠ A63	
	♥ A10854	
	♦ A	
	♣ QJ83	
West		East
♠ J108754		♠ KQ92
♥ 9		♥ QJ76
♦ K9642		♦ --
♣ 7		♣ K10642
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ K32	
	♦ QJ108753	
	♣ A95	

At the other table, **STREET** North-South: 2♠ : Double : 4♠ : 6♦, all pass. West led the ♥9: ten – jack – king. South returned the ♥2, ruffed with the ♦2. West shifted to the ♣7, the ♣Q winning. After ♦A, spade ruff, South played the ♦Q, king. South could pitch a club on the ♠A, ruff a spade and draw trumps, one down, East-West +50 and 10 Imps to **MILNER**.

DE BOTTON North-South: 2♠ : 3♥ : 4♠ : 6♥, all pass. Two down, East-West +100.
TEAM NL North-South:

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

(1) Strong hand

(2) Pick a slam

South was one down, –100, no swing.

HUNGARY North-South: 2♠ : 3♥ : 4♠ : 4♦, Double, all pass. Declarer ruffed the spade lead, crossed to the ♦A, back to the ♥K and played the ♦Q. The result was 11 tricks, North-South +550.

ZHAO North-South: 2♠ : 3♥ : 4♠ : 5♥, Pass : Pass : 5♠, Double, all pass. What would you lead as North?

It was an unusual decision for East to bid 5♠ when holding such good defence in hearts. North led the ♦A, ruffed. After ♥J, king, South returned the ♦10: king – ♠3 – ♣9. Declarer lost a spade, a heart, a club and, able to ruff only two more diamonds in dummy, eventually a diamond, North-South +500, but 2 Imps to **HUNGARY**.

	North	
	♠ A63	
	♥ A10854	
	♦ A	
	♣ QJ83	
West		East
♠ J108754		♠ KQ92
♥ 9		♥ QJ76
♦ K9642		♦ --
♣ 7		♣ K10642
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ K32	
	♦ QJ108753	
	♣ A95	

BLASS North-South:

West	North	East	South
2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♣ ⁽²⁾	5♦
Pass	Pass	5♥ ⁽³⁾	Dble
5♠	Dble	All Pass	

- (1) Weak two in hearts or in spades
(2) Transfer me to your major.
(3) Pass or correct

With North strong in hearts and clubs and partner bidding diamonds, one might lead ♠A and another spade against 5♠ doubled. North led the ♦A, as did the **ZHAO** North (previous page). West ruffed in dummy and played the ♥6: two – nine – ten. Now North played ♠A and a second spade. West was three down, North-South +800.

MELTZER North-South: 2♠ : Double : 4♠ : 6♦, Double : 6♥ : Double, all pass. East led the ♠K, ruffed. A diamond to the ♦A was ruffed. East continued with the ♠9, ruffed. After ♥K cashed and ♦Q: four – ♣3 – ♥J, East played the ♠Q. North won with the ♠A and the ♥A drew East's ♥Q. Then came ♣Q, king, ace, but declarer still had a club loser. North lost two hearts and a club, two light, East-West +500, 15 Imps to **BLASS**.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. With neither side vulnerable, South opens 1NT (13-15 or 14-17). West shows a 1-suiter (via Double or via an artificial 2♦). What would you do as North with:

♠ --
♥ A98
♦ KQ1098
♣ 108743

2. South dealer North-South vulnerable

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

What would you do as North with:

♠ 109
♥ 83
♦ A74
♣ AKQJ43

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

Why do 'slow down' and 'slow up' mean the same thing?