

62. How did two grand go missing?

By Ron Klinger

A businessman tells his friend that his company is looking for a new accountant. His friend asks, "Didn't your company hire a new accountant a few weeks ago?" The businessman replies, "That's the accountant we're looking for."

South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	?

(1) Natural, game-forcing

What would you do as South with:

♠ AK643
♥ A86
♦ 96
♣ AK3

What would you expect from North's sequence? Typical would be three trumps, 4-5 diamonds and 13+ points. It could be 4+ trumps, but 1♠ : 2NT (Jacoby) would have catered for that. A typical hand for North might be:

QJ7 J52 AKQ32 75 or QJ7 Q742 AK53 Q5

In either case, it would be reasonable to reach 6♠, a good contract opposite the first hand and marginal opposite the second. Given North has 13+ points and South has 18-19, one could reasonably play 4♠ as forcing.

	North	
	♠ QJ10987	
	♥ 73	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ Q2	
West		East
♠ 2		♠ 5
♥ KQ1094		♥ J52
♦ J107		♦ Q8543
♣ 9654		♣ J1087
	South	
	♠ AK643	
	♥ A86	
	♦ 96	
	♣ AK3	

This was yesterday's question:

South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ QJ10987
♥ 73
♦ AK2
♣ Q2

South dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ10987	
	♥ 73	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ Q2	
West		East
♠ 2		♠ 5
♥ KQ1094		♥ J52
♦ J107		♦ Q8543
♣ 9654		♣ J1087
	South	
	♠ AK643	
	♥ A86	
	♦ 96	
	♣ AK3	

With 2NT available to show a game-forcing hand with 4+ spades, you might wonder about North's choice of a 2♦ response. With the opponents short in spades, North thought there could be a sacrifice against 4♣ and bid 2♦ to suggest a diamond lead just in case. The plan was to rebid 4♠ over 2♠ or reach 4♠ via fourth suit if opener rebid 2♥. The North-South auction was found wanting when 1♠ : 2♦, 3NT : 4♠ was passed out.

You might consider how you and partner would bid the North-South hands and allocate the blame between North and South for the actual auction when 7♠ is unbeatable. Maybe you do not reach 7♠, but 6♠ can definitely be achieved.

Results: 7♠ +2210 x 2, +12.9 Imps; 6♠ +1460 x 11, +0.9; 6NT +1440, +0.1; 4♠ +710 -11.7; 5♠ +710 -11.7; 4NT +690 -11.9. The two auctions to 7♠ were identical with human South and robot North: 1♠ : 2NT (4+ spades, game-force) : 3♠ (balanced, non-minimum), 4NT : 5♦ (1 or 4), 5NT : 6♣ (♣K), 7♠, all pass.

South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?		1♥

What would you do as North with:

♠ A8763
♥ K754
♦ AJ83
♣ --

There are various options. You could bid 2NT (Jacoby), game-force with 4+ hearts, but it will be very hard to reveal the club void later. You could bid 1♠, planning to show the heart support later, depending on how the auction goes. Another choice is a 4♣ splinter, showing club shortage, 4+ hearts and the high-card values for game. A popular range for such a splinter is 11-14 HCP.

Some prefer to use a splinter such as 4♣ here as guaranteeing a singleton club. Others like it to show a void in clubs. Others use it to show either a singleton or a void in clubs. Showing specifically a club void is preferable to showing specifically a singleton, even though the void holding is less frequent. The singleton holding can be included in the 2NT Jacoby Convention.

If you play 1♥ : 4♣ can be a singleton or a void, it can be useful to find out which it is. George Smolanko of Adelaide came up with this idea, which he called *Scroll*: After a splinter, the cheapest non-trump bid asks for clarification. The Step 1 (cheapest bid) = minimum, Step 2 = extras + singleton, Steps 3-6 = extra + void, in order 0 / 3 key cards, 1 or 4 key cards, 2 with no trump queen and 2 + trump queen. In my partnerships, we play these steps if the splinter is below the 4-level and eliminate Step 1 if the splinter is at the 4-level. Also, 3NT is used to ask for clarification if 3♠ is the splinter agreeing hearts, but not if 3♣ is a splinter agreeing a minor suit.

South dealer : Both vulnerable

	North ♠ A9732 ♥ K875 ♦ AJ63 ♣ --	
West ♠ QJ5 ♥ 3 ♦ K104 ♣ K87652		East ♠ 104 ♥ J9 ♦ Q98752 ♣ Q94
	South ♠ K86 ♥ AQ10642 ♦ -- ♣ AJ103	

This was one of the auctions:

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

(1) Fourth-suit forcing to game

South's sequence showed a better-than-minimum opening with a 3-5-1-4 or a 3-6-0-4 pattern. After 3♠, North had no convenient way to make a forcing bid which would agree hearts as trumps. He therefore blasted 6♥. With the actual layout, 13 tricks are easy: draw trumps, discard a spade on the ♦A, cash ♠K, ♠A and ruff a spade.

Only one pair reached 7♥. The majority were in 6♥.

Using *Scroll*, it could go this way:

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

(1) 0-1 club, 11+ points, 4+ hearts

(2) *Scroll* inquiry

(3) Void and 0 or 3 key cards

South then knows North has the ♠A, ♥K-x-x-x or longer and the ♦A. South knows that the ♦A will provide a parking spot for the spade loser and can hope to ruff three clubs losers in dummy if North has nothing else useful.

It might be a tougher task to reach 7♥ if South foregoes the use of *Scroll*. It might go this way:

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

(1) Splinter

(2) Exclusion Key-Card Blackwood

(3) Two key cards outside diamonds, no ♥Q

(4) Last train, asking partner to bid 7 with anything extra and useful

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?	Pass	3♠

What would you do as North with:

♠ 10
♥ A874
♦ KQJ8
♣ A1095

2. North dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?	1♣	Pass	1♥

What would you do as West with:

♠ 10864
♥ K8
♦ KJ8765
♣ 8

After you have made up your mind, the auction continues:

West	North	East	South
2♦	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I am not selling the 2♦ overcall, just reporting. What would you lead from that West hand against 3NT?

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

2020: My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I pee it cleans the toilet.