

72. Big numbers

By Ron Klinger

The third Alt-Invitational, organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online), was held in the second half of April. 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)
Bridge Scanner	Konrad Araszkiwicz, 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

The **BLASS** team had played in the previous two Alt-Invitationals. **DE BOTTON** and **STREET** had played in Alt-Invitational 2, with **DE BOTTON** winning and **STREET** the losing finalist. The other teams were in their first Alt-Invitational, although some of the individuals had competed previously in other teams.

East dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		3♥	Dble
4♥	Dble	Pass	4♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	7♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 7
♥ Q108
♦ Q73
♣ J96532

When you have made up your mind for the above question, suppose you have landed in 7♠ with North declarer. East leads the ♠2. Plan the play.

North
♠ KJ643
♥ A54
♦ --
♣ AQ1074

South
♠ AQ108
♥ 3
♦ A109854
♣ K8

Round 1: Board 7

East dealer : Both vulnerable

	North ♠ KJ643 ♥ A54 ♦ -- ♣ AQ1074	
West ♠ 7 ♥ Q108 ♦ Q73 ♣ J96532		East ♠ 952 ♥ KJ9762 ♦ KJ62 ♣ --
	South ♠ AQ108 ♥ 3 ♦ A109854 ♣ K8	

RUSSIA North-South:

West	North	East	South
		3♥	Dble
4♥	Dble	Pass	4♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	7♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	Rdbl ⁽¹⁾	Pass	7NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Expressing doubt re 7♠ doubled

Up to 7♠, this was the auction for today's opening lead problem. East's double asks for an unusual lead, not hearts, a suit bid by East-West and not a trump. East's double is usually based on a void and so West would have led a club. That takes 7♠ doubled down at once for East-West +200.

South ran to 7NT, all pass. East led the ♠2. Declarer could make five spades, a heart, a diamond and four clubs via ♣K and finesse the ♠10. That was two down, -200 after all.

BLASS North-South:

West	North	East	South
		2♥	3♦
4♥	Dble	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

West led ♣3: four - ♠2 - ♣8. Declarer had the rest, 4♠ doubled with two overtricks, +1190, 16 Imps to **BLASS**.

With **GUPTA** North-South, East opened 2♦ (multi), West bid 2♥ (Pass or correct) and North came in with 2♠. East-West did not bid again and North ended in 7♠. East led the ♠2, taken by the ♠10. North ruffed a diamond, crossed to the ♠Q, ruffed a diamond and played the ♣4. East ruffed and that was one down, East-West +100. That was unlucky, to be sure.

BRIDGE SCANNER North-South

West	North	East	South
		2♥	3♦
4♥	Dble	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♠	Dble	All Pass

West led ♣6. East ruffed. South had the rest, making 6♠ doubled, +1660 and 18 Imps to **BRIDGE SCANNER**.

East dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ KJ643	
	♥ A54	
	♦ --	
	♣ AQ1074	
West		East
♠ 7		♠ 952
♥ Q108		♥ KJ9762
♦ Q73		♦ KJ62
♣ J96532		♣ --
	South	
	♠ AQ108	
	♥ 3	
	♦ A109854	
	♣ K8	

Like **GUPTA**, with **STREET** North-South, East opened 2♦ (multi), West bid 2♥ (Pass or correct) and North came in with 2♠. East-West did not bid again and North ended in 7♠. East led the ♠2, taken by the ♠Q. North continued with the ♠A, followed by the ♠K. East ruffed, one down, East-West +100.

At the other table, **DONNER** North-South, it went 2♦ multi: 3♦ South : Pass : 3NT North, all pass. East led the ♥7. North ducked West's ♥Q and won the heart return. North cashed five spades. West discarded three clubs and so North made 12 tricks, +690 and 13 Imps to **DONNER**.

DE BOTTON North-South:

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

(1) Very strong hand

East led the ♥9. North made 12 tricks, +1430.

ROSENTHAL North-South:

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

(1) Weak two in hearts or in spades

(2) Lead-directing

(3) 0 or 3 key cards for spades

(4) Thinking West had long diamonds

North was the only one to make 13 tricks in spades, but he did have help from the enemy via East's 4♣, asking for a club lead, not ideal if you end up on lead. East led the ♠2, ace. Declarer played ♥A, heart ruff, ♠10 to ♠J, heart ruff, diamond ruff, ♠K to draw East's last trump, ♣4 to the king, followed by ♦A discarding the ♣7 and finessing the ♠10, 13 tricks, +2210 and 13 Imps to **ROSENTHAL**.

With both vulnerable, West opens 2NT. East bids 3♦, transfer to hearts. What would you do as South with:

♠ 753
♥ Q
♦ AKQ1095
♣ 973

Bd. 10: West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K86	
	♥ 10432	
	♦ 82	
	♣ Q642	
West		East
♠ AQJ9		♠ 1042
♥ A86		♥ KJ975
♦ J3		♦ 764
♣ AKJ8		♣ 105
	South	
	♠ 753	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AKQ1095	
	♣ 973	

BLASS North-South:

West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	Dble
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Transfer to hearts

Presumably South's double of 3NT asked for a diamond lead, the first suit bid by dummy. I would not want to test partner unless this is a clear agreement. How much easier to double 3♦ to ask for a diamond lead, unless that has some other meaning. At a lower level, after 1NT : Pass : 2♦ (transfer), many pairs play Double shows diamonds and 2♥ is for takeout.

North led ♦8. South won with the ♦Q, cashed ♦A and returned ♦9. West ruffed with the ♥A and played ♥8: two – five – queen. Declarer finessed the ♥7 later but could not avoid a spade loser. One down, N-S +100.

With **RUSSIA** North-South, West opened 1♣ (which Banzai point-counters A= 5, K = 4 . . . 10 = 1 would approve – see *Better Balanced Bidding*). It went 1♣ : Pass 1♦ (4+ hearts) : 3♦, Double : Pass 4♥, all pass. The play followed a similar path for one down, N-S +100, no swing.

BRIDGE SCANNER North-South: 2NT : Pass : 3♦ (hearts) : Double, Redouble (shows 3+ hearts) : Pass : 4♦ (transfer to hearts) : Pass : 4♥, all pass. After the usual start, West ruffed the third diamond with the ♥8. North over-ruffed and returned a trump. The usual one light, N-S +100.

GUPTA North-South: 1♣ (artificial, strong) : Pass : 1♦ (negative) : 2♦, Double : Pass : 2♥, all pass. Declarer made nine tricks, +140, 6 Imps to **BRIDGE SCANNER**.

STREET North-South: 2NT : Pass : 3♦ (hearts) : Double, 3♥ (very sensible) : Pass : 4♥, all pass. One down via the common route, N-S +100.

DONNER North-South:

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

(1) Transfer to hearts

It is hard to see the appeal of 4♦, when doubling the artificial 3♦ comes at no cost. Maybe North-South had some other purpose for the double of 3♦ (but do not let my partners find out what it is). West began with the ♣A (East encouraged), the ♠A (East discouraged), the ♣K and the ♣J: queen – ♦4 – ♣9. The ♥5 went to the ace and declarer still had a spade to lose, three down, East-West +800 and +14 Imps.

If you thought +14, +16 or +18 Imps was good, there is still a treat for you. The pièce de résistance on this deal occurred in the **DE BOTTON** vs **ROSENTHAL** match.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K86	
	♥ 10432	
	♦ 82	
	♣ Q642	
West		East
♠ AQJ9		♠ 1042
♥ A86		♥ KJ975
♦ J3		♦ 764
♣ AKJ8		♣ 105
	South	
	♠ 753	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AKQ1095	
	♣ 973	

ROSENTHAL North-South:

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

(1) Strong hand

(2) Negative

West began with ♣A, ♣K, ♣J, queen, ruffed. Declarer finished two down, East-West +200.

DE BOTTON North-South:

West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Dble
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Transfer to hearts

You can see from this auction how imperative it is to have absolutely, undeniably clear-cut agreements in this area. West wanted East to play in hearts to protect a possible ♦K-x or ♦A-Q-x in the East hand. East thought West had very strong diamonds. It is usually not a good outcome for one side when both sides play in the same contract at the 3-level, especially if doubles or redoubles abound.

South began with ♦K, ♦Q, ♦9. Declarer lost a spade, a club and six diamond tricks, four down, North-South +2200 and 20 Imps to DE BOTTON.

Round 1 results:

	Imps	VIPs
Street - Donner	49 - 36	12.95 - 7.05
De Botton - Rosenthal	58 - 41	13.72 - 6.28
Bridge Scanner - Gupta	66 - 46	14.26 - 5.74
Blass - Russia	80 - 31	18.09 - 1.91

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ J6
♥ AK10
♦ 109864
♣ A108

West
♠ AK105
♥ 732
♦ J3
♣ J652

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) 11+ points, balanced hand, no 4-card major

West leads the ♠A: six – four – two. You play natural count at trick 1. What would you play at trick 2?

2. North dealer : North-South vulnerable

North
♠ 1094
♥ Q43
♦ AQ4
♣ KQJ5

West
♠ Q3
♥ AKJ85
♦ 109
♣ A1032

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

(1) Support double shows three spades

West leads the ♥A: three – two – nine. East's two is reverse count, showing an even number. What would you play at trick 2?

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

Quarantine Day 5: Went to this restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.