90. Dealing with voids

By Ron Klinger

West North East South

What is your opening bid and what is your plan of bidding as South with:

- **♦** K5
- **Y** --
- ♦ AKQJ107
- ♣ KQ1087

You have a solid suit in diamonds and figure to have no trump losers if diamonds are trumps. If partner can provide the A and A, you have excellent chances for a grand slam. If partner has one of the black aces, A will often be a good prospect. If partner has no black ace, you do not want to be any higher than A.

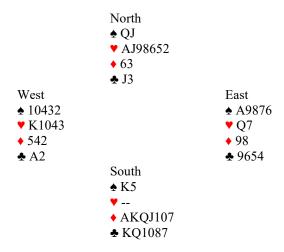
Some play a 4NT opening as specific ace Blackwood. That would not be of use here, since a bid of 5♥ (the ♥A only) takes you beyond your safety level.

If you are prepared to give up The Gambling 3NT – and why not? – you can adopt the **KABEL** 3NT, which asks for specific aces at a more convenient level.

Basic version: 3NT : 4 = no ace, 4 / 4 / 4 / 4NT = that ace (4NT = A), 5 = A + A, 5 = A + A and 5NT = two Non-Touching aces. This method is suitable when all you need to do is to locate two critical cards.

Here is the full deal, which arose during a teams' match on BBO.

East dealer: Nil vulnerable



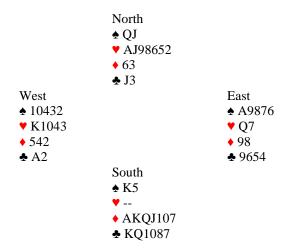
Using the above method, it would go South 3NT, North 4♥ (♥A only), South 5♦, all pass.

More complex versions of the Kabel 3NT are possible. The advantage of this one is that you can use it when missing three critical cards. 3NT: $4 \triangleq 0$ or 1 ace, $4 \triangleq 4 + 4$ or $4 \triangleq 4$ or $4 \approx 4$ or

After 3NT : $4\clubsuit$, $4\spadesuit$ asks and then $4\blacktriangledown =$ no ace and $4\spadesuit / 4$ NT $(\blacktriangledown A) / 5\spadesuit / 5\spadesuit =$ that ace. For the above deal, the auction went 3NT : $4\clubsuit$, $4\spadesuit$: 4NT $(\blacktriangledown A)$, $5\spadesuit$, all pass. Notice that if the $\blacktriangledown A$ were the $\spadesuit A$ or the $\clubsuit A$, North-South would reach $6\spadesuit$.

You can find more details of the Kabel 3NT in A good Game of Modern Bridge.

East dealer: Nil vulnerable



At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Same contract same result, 11 tricks, no swing. Note that North-South here would miss 6♦ if North had the ♠A or the ♣A. You replace North's ♠J, ♥A, ♥J with random low cards, South's 1♦ might be passed out with 5♦ cold.

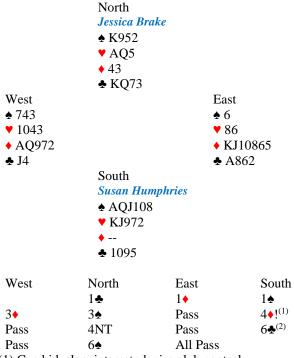
North dealer: East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♦	1♠
3♦	3♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

- **♠** AQJ108
- **♥** KJ972
- **♦** ---
- **♣** 1095

North dealer: East-West vulnerable



- (1) Cue bid, slam interest, denies club control
- (2) A useful void somewhere

As South's 44 had denied club control, North's 4NT asking for key cards promised control in hearts and clubs. From the auction and South's 64, North could deduce that the void was in diamonds. As the A was missing, North naturally settled for 6♠.

South won the heart lead in hand, drew trumps, cashed ♥A, ♥Q, ruffed a diamond, pitched two clubs from dummy on the ♥K, ♥J, gave up a club and had 12 tricks, +980.

The deal comes the BLASS vs SPECTOR semi-final of the 2019 Spingold. Neither North-South pair reached 6♣ then.

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Wooldridge	Nowosadzki	Hurd
	1NT	Pass	$2^{(1)}$
Pass	2♠	Pass	3 ♦ ⁽²⁾
Dble	3♠	5♦	Pass ⁽³⁾
Pass	5♥	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Transfer	to spades		
(2) Transfer	to hearts		
(3) Forcing			
Lead: ♣A. 1	2 tricks, N-S +480).	

West	North	East	South
Demuy	Drijver	Kranyak	Brink
	1♣	1♦	$2NT^{(1)}$
3♦	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Artificial, both majors

Lead: ◆10. 12 tricks, N-S +480, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer: North-South vulnerable

West North East South Pass ?

What would you do as North with:

- **◆** 9842
- ♥ K1086
- ♦ AK976
- **.** . .
- 2. West dealer: East-West vulnerable

North

- **^** --
- **V** Q965
- ♦ AQ874
- ♣ KQJ10

South

- **♠** AK72
- **♥** K8732
- **♦** 92
- ♣ A4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5 ♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) One or four key cards for hearts

You might not like the auction, but that is not your concern. West leads the ◆3. Plan the play.

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

Wife to husband: Perhaps you could self-isolate in the kitchen and stack the dishwasher?