## 95. Agreements

## By Ron Klinger

East dealer: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	<b>3♣</b> <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	3♥
Pass	?		

(1) Fourth-suit, forcing to game

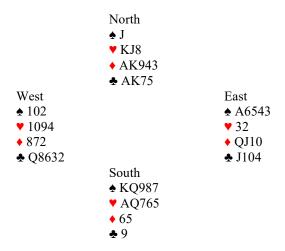
What would you do now as North with:

- ↓ J▼ KJ8◆ AK943◆ AK75
- Partner has shown 5+ spades and 5+ hearts. You have decent support for hearts, control in every outside suit and a 5-loser hand. As partner should have a 7-loser hand at worst, you have enough to look for slam. 5 losers + 7 losers = 12 losers; 24-12=12 tricks are likely. See *The Modern Losing Trick Count*. Given the 5-5 shape, partner's hand is likely to have fewer than 7 losers.

The simplest approach is to ask for ace/key cards with 4NT. The general agreement is that this agrees the last-bid suit as trumps. If you want to agree spades, bid 3\(\Delta\) strong or 4\(\Delta\) weaker.

In reply to 4NT, South bids  $5 \blacklozenge$ , one key card for hearts. What next?

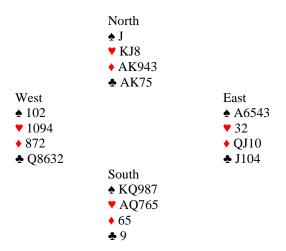
East dealer: Both vulnerable



The deal comes from the England vs USA2 match in final of the 2013 Venice Cup (World Women's Teams). Both North-South pairs had effectively the same auction. Over 5♦, one North bid 6♥, all pass. The other bid 5♥, all pass. As you can see the play in 6♥ is trivial with the ♠10 dropping on the second round of spades and no bad breaks elsewhere.

The problem for North is that there is no way to ask safely for the  $\P Q$  after  $S \P A$  without going beyond  $S \P A$ . Swap South's  $\P A$  for the  $\P A$  or the  $\P A$  and now  $S \P A$  is not so flash. Most bidding does not come with guarantees. You take your chances and hope you are right.

A useful agreement after 3♥ would be for 3♠ to agree spades and 4♠ to agree hearts. After 4♠, South signs off in 4♥. Now North can use 4♠ RKCB, receive a 5♠ reply (one key card) and then use 5♠ to ask for the ♥Q.



Some experts use  $4 \triangleq$  as Roman Key Card Blackwood when hearts are agreed as trumps. That was not available here. Most would take a  $4 \triangleq$  bid over  $3 \checkmark$  as a sign-off in spades.

In reply to 4NT, some play  $5 \blacklozenge = 1$  or 4 key cards and  $5 \clubsuit = 0$  or 3. Others prefer  $5 \blacklozenge = 0$  or 3 and  $5 \clubsuit = 1$  or 4. Having  $5 \clubsuit$  as 1 or 4 would have worked here, since North could then bid  $5 \spadesuit$  to ask for the trump queen.

In the final of the Bermuda Bowl (World Open Teams), Italy and Monaco both bid to 6♥. In the final of the d'Orsi Trophy (World Seniors' Teams), both USA2 and Germany bid to 6♥.

East dealer: North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
1♥	2 <b>▼</b> <sup>(1)</sup>	3♥	?

(1) 10+ points, limit raise or better in clubs

What would you do as South with:

- ♠ AKQ3
- **v** 10
- **106**
- **♣** QJ7642

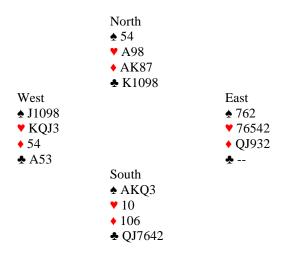
You could bid 3♠ to show your values there. Maybe partner can then bid 3NT. Other choices include Pass, 4♠, 4♥ (cue) and 5♠. It is useful to have agreements for each of these actions. I am no fan of 3♠. Partner could bid 3NT with a stopper in hearts and, say, ♠K-x-x-x or longer and 3NT might fail miserably.

You have found a good trump fit. You have 5 losers. For a minimum limit raise, about 10-12 points, you can expect partner to have 8 losers. 5 losers + 8 losers = 13 losers. Using the LTC formula, 24-13 = 11 tricks are likely. That entitles you to bid  $5 \clubsuit$ .

You and partner should have agreements about opener's actions here. My partners and I play this way: Pass = no interest in competing further;  $5\clubsuit = a$  minimum opening with club length and shortage in the suit bid by the opponents, here hearts;  $4\clubsuit = extra$  values, forcing, but 2+ losers in hearts;  $4\blacktriangledown = strong$  hand, length in clubs and shortage in hearts (replace the •10 with the •K or •A in the hand above). A 4• bid over  $3\blacktriangledown$  should be a cue-bid (diamond control) and seeking control in hearts.

Nothing is going to work all of the time, but you should find some use for your possible actions over 3♥.

East dealer: North-South vulnerable



With robots East-West and humans North-South on BBO it went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♥	<b>2</b> ♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	3♥	5 <b>♣</b> <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	<b>5</b> ♥ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Limit raise plus for clubs
- (2) Minimum opening, 5+ clubs, 0-1 heart
- (3) Cue-bid

There is nothing to the play. Play trumps, ruff a spade later in dummy.

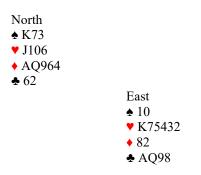
In a teams' match on BBO, East-West at one table passed throughout and North-South bid 1♣: 1♠, 1♠: 3NT, all pass. A heart lead would have put paid to 3NT, but East led a spade and North made 11 tricks, +660. Chalk one up for leading the unbid suit.

At the other table, South opened 2 4 (10-15 points, 5+ clubs). West doubled and North jumped to 5 4 (a tad hasty, perhaps), all pass. South made 12 tricks, +620 but -1 Imp.

Question: What is orange and sounds like a parrot? Answer next page.

## **Problems for Tomorrow:**

1. Dealer South: Both vulnerable



West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	1 <b>♠</b> 3 <b>♦</b>
Pass	4♠	All Pass	<b>3</b> •

West leads the ♣J: two . . . Plan your defence.

2. Dealer East: North-South vulnerable

North

- **♠** AQ82
- **y** 5
- **♦** 864
- ♣ AK863

South

- **★** K974
- ♥ AQ876
- ♦ AKQ
- **♣** Q

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	<b>4</b> ♦ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	5 <b>♣</b> <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	6 <b>♠</b>
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Cue-bid			

The  $4 \blacklozenge$  cue would not have been my choice over  $3 \spadesuit$  (4NT seems a good idea), but the auction is as reported. West leads the  $\blacklozenge$ J. Plan the play.

Answer to What is orange and sounds like a parrot? A carrot