

51. High there

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, Thiibo Sprinkhuizen |
| Zhao | Zhao Chen, Liu Jing, Bauke Muller, Ricco van Prooijen, Louk Verhees, Simon de Wijs |

With one round to go, the scores were:

1. **BLASS** 88.13
2. **DE BOTTON** 77.53
3. **STREET** 75.33
4. **TEAM NL** 58.47
5. **MELTZER** 56.33
6. **ZHAO** 47.43
7. **HUNGARY** 41.06
8. **MILNER** 37.72

Scores in Round 7: **STREET** beat **BLASS** 53-46 (11.68-8.32) **MILNER** beat **DE BOTTON** 89-48 (17.25-2.75) **MELTZER** beat **HUNGARY** 67-53 (13.15-6.85) and **ZHAO** beat **TEAM NL** 35-27 (11.90-8.10). That enabled **MELTZER** to make the final four for the semis.

After the qualifying rounds, the scores were:

1. **BLASS** 94.45
2. **STREET** 87.01
3. **DE BOTTON** 80.28
4. **MELTZER** 69.48
5. **TEAM NL** 66.57
6. **ZHAO** 59.33
7. **MILNER** 59.33
8. **HUNGARY** 47.91

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | ? | | 4♠ |

What would you do as North with:

♠ --
♥ AQJ3
♦ AKJ102
♣ AQ92

Next question:

North
♠ --
♥ AQJ3
♦ AKJ102
♣ AQ92

South
♠ AK109763
♥ K1094
♦ 64
♣ --

You have landed in 7♥ by South. West leads a low club. Suppose you play ♣A, discarding a spade. How would you continue?

Round 7 : Board 3

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

| | | |
|----------|------------|--------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ -- | |
| | ♥ AQJ3 | |
| | ♦ AKJ102 | |
| | ♣ AQ92 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ Q82 | | ♠ J54 |
| ♥ 6 | | ♥ 8752 |
| ♦ 853 | | ♦ Q97 |
| ♣ KJ7654 | | ♣ 1083 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ AK109763 | |
| | ♥ K1094 | |
| | ♦ 64 | |
| | ♣ -- | |

The small slam in spades is respectable. It makes if spades are 3-3 (36%) or if spades are 4-2 and the honours are split (24%), total chance: 60%. It helps if you know your partner's tendencies in opening at the 4-level. Vulnerable against not, partner should have at least a 7-trick hand and often partner will have 8 playing tricks. North has 4 top winners. Opposite an 8-trick hand, that should be enough for slam. Opposite 7 tricks, North has excellent potential to set up an extra trick or more, especially in diamonds.

How good are partner spades? That is the real question. You do not want to be in 6♠ opposite K-J-8-7-6-4-3-2. One option is to bid 5♠, asking partner to bid six with good spades. Another option is to trust partner to have good spades and simply blast 6♠. The best choice is to bid 4NT to ask for key cards, since a grand slam is possible. After all, partner could have ♠A-K-Q-J-x-x-x-x when you want to be in 7♠. If you bid 4NT and hear 5♣ (two key cards and the ♠Q), you can bid 5NT. This cannot be asking for kings, since a 4♣ pre-empt which already has ♠A-K-Q will not have an outside king. The 5NT bid here should be asking partner for something more in the trump suit. With ♠A-K-Q-x-x-x-x-x or even ♠A-K-Q-J-x-x-x, partner can reasonably bid 7♠.

BLASS North-South: North passed 4♠. West led the ♥6. South won and played ♠A, ♠K, ♠10, for 12 tricks +680.
STREET North-South: 4♠ : 4NT, 5♥ (two key cards, no ♠Q) : 6♠, all pass. North expected South to have either 8 spades or 7 spades and good intermediates such as the actual hand or ♠A-K-J-10-x-x-x. West led the ♦3, ace. South ruffed the ♣2 and played ♠A, ♠K, ♠10, 12 tricks. North-South +1430 and 13 Imps to **STREET**.

ZHAO North-South: 4♠ : 5♠, 6♠, all pass. Lead: ♣7: two – eight – ♠3. North-South +1430.

TEAM NL North-South: 4♠ : 4NT, 5♥ (two key cards, no ♠Q) : 6♠, all pass. Lead ♣7: nine – ten – ♠3. North-South 1430. No swing.

| | | |
|----------|------------|--------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ -- | |
| | ♥ AQJ3 | |
| | ♦ AKJ102 | |
| | ♣ AQ92 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ Q82 | | ♠ J54 |
| ♥ 6 | | ♥ 8752 |
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| | South | |
| | ♠ AK109763 | |
| | ♥ K1094 | |
| | ♦ 64 | |
| | ♣ -- | |

A 4♠ opening is not for everyone. At the other 4 tables, South opened 1♠. With MELTZER North-South:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| North | South |
| | 1♠ |
| 2♦ | 2♥ |
| 3♥ ⁽¹⁾ | 4♣ ⁽²⁾ |
| 4♦ ⁽²⁾ | 4♠ ⁽²⁾ |
| 5♣ ⁽²⁾ | 5♦ ⁽²⁾ |
| 5♥ | 6♣ ⁽²⁾ |
| 6♥ | Pass |
| (1) Forcing | |
| (2) Cue-bid | |

West led the ♣7: nine – ten – ♥4. South played the ♦6: eight – jack – queen. East returned a diamond, won by the ♦10. After ♥3 to ♥9, South played ♥K, ♠A, ♠K, discarding two clubs from dummy. South then drew trumps and had 12 tricks, +1430.

At the other table, with HUNGARY North-South:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| North | South |
| | 1♠ |
| 2♦ | 2♥ |
| 3♥ ⁽¹⁾ | 3♠ |
| 3NT ⁽²⁾ | 5♣ ⁽³⁾ |
| 5♦ ⁽⁴⁾ | 5♥ ⁽⁵⁾ |
| 7♥ ⁽⁶⁾ | Pass |
| (1) Forcing | |
| (2) Seeking more information | |
| (3) Void in clubs | |
| (4) Cue-bid | |
| (5) I have done enough. | |
| (6) Now I have, too. | |

West led the ♣7: ace – three – ♠3. Declarer played the ♥3 to the ♥10, cashed the ♠A and ruffed the ♠6 with the ♥A. Next came the ♥Q, overtaken with the ♥K. That would have been fine if trumps were 3-2. As it was, declarer could no longer draw trumps. He finessed the ♦J, losing. Back came a club, ruffed. South cashed the ♠K and then played diamonds. The result was two down, East-West +200 and 17 Imps to MELTZER.

Able to ruff spades high in dummy, South could have made life easier for himself without great risk. After ♣A and ♥3 to ♥10. Play ♠A, ♠K and a third spade, ruffing with the ♥J. When all follow, cash ♥A and overtake the ♥Q with the ♥K. The ♥10 draws South's last trump and South can claim the rest. If spades are 4-2, you can still survive if hearts are 3-2. Ruff a club with the ♥4, ruff the fourth spade with the ♥A and overtake the ♥Q. The ♥10 will then draw the last trump (assuming hearts are 3-2).

| | | |
|----------|------------|--------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ -- | |
| | ♥ AQJ3 | |
| | ♦ AKJ102 | |
| | ♣ AQ92 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ Q82 | | ♠ J54 |
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| | South | |
| | ♠ AK109763 | |
| | ♥ K1094 | |
| | ♦ 64 | |
| | ♣ -- | |

MILNER North-South: 1♠ : 2♦, 2♥ : 3♥, 5♣ (club void, Exclusion Key-Card Blackwood) : 7♥, all pass. North did not bother replying to 5♣ to show key cards. He figured he had enough for a grand slam opposite an opening hand with slam interest and a club void.

West led the ♣7, taken by the ace. Declarer ruffed a club – that was not a clever idea. Next came ♠A, ♠K and the ♠6, ruffed. West was home now if trumps had been 3-2, but with the 4-1 trump break (a 28% chance), the club ruff at trick 2 proved fatal. After ♥A and heart to the ♥10, declarer had a trump in each hand, but East had two trumps. Declarer finished two down –200.

DE BOTTON North -South: 1♠ : (3♣ West) : 3♦, 3♥ : 7♥, all pass. A very macho 7♥ bid and South justified North's confidence and showed how easy it was to make all the tricks. West led the ♥6. South won with the ♥10 and played ♠A, ♠K spade ruff with the ♥Q. Then came ♥A, ♥J to the ♥K, ♥9 and declarer claimed all the tricks, +2210 and 20 Imps to **DE BOTTON**.

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|------|--------------------|------|-------|
| | | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2NT ⁽¹⁾ | 3♣ | ? |

(1) Game-force, 4+ hearts

What would you do as South with:

♠ K964
♥ KQ843
♦ AKQ7
♣ --

Once you have agreed on a trump suit, a jump in a new suit beyond game is played by many as Exclusion Key-Card Blackwood. It almost invariably shows a void in the jumped-suit and asks partner for key cards outside that suit. That is definitely a sensible choice with the above hand.

STREET North-South:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|
| | | Pass | 1♥ |
| Pass | 2NT ⁽¹⁾ | 3♣ | 5♣ ⁽²⁾ |
| Pass | 5♥ ⁽³⁾ | Pass | 6♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

- (1) Game-force, 4+ hearts
(2) Exclusion Key-Card Blackwood
(3) One key card /ace outside clubs

The full deal:

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ Q32 | |
| | ♥ A1092 | |
| | ♦ J5 | |
| | ♣ A764 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 1085 | | ♠ AJ7 |
| ♥ J76 | | ♥ 5 |
| ♦ 10843 | | ♦ 962 |
| ♣ Q32 | | ♣ KJ10985 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ K964 | |
| | ♥ KQ843 | |
| | ♦ AKQ7 | |
| | ♣ -- | |

The play in 6♥ proved easy enough: ditch a spade on the ♣A, draw trumps, run diamonds, pitching spades from dummy and give up a spade. [STREET](#) +1430.

At the other table, South cue-bid 4♣ over 3♣. That did not work out well. North cue-bid 5♣ and South could not tell whether North had a major suit ace. South bid 5♥, all pass. North-South +680, 13 Imps to [STREET](#).

[TEAM NL](#) reached 6♥, +1430, after East opened 2♣, 10-15 points, 5+ clubs. At the other table, [ZHAO](#) South opened with a strong 1♣, North showed 8+ points, balanced. They stopped in 4♥, 13 Imps to [TEAM NL](#).

[MELTZER](#) North-South used 5♣ Exclusion KCB to reach 6♥. [HUNGARY](#) also reached 6♥, no swing.

[MILNER](#) reached 6♥ via an artificial auction. With [DE BOTTON](#) North-South it went East 3♣ : South Double : West : Pass : North 4♥, East Pass : South 6♥, all pass. No swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. South dealer : Both vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------------|-------|------|-------------------|
| | | | 2♣ ⁽¹⁾ |
| 3♦ ⁽²⁾ | 3♠ | 5♦ | 5♥ |
| Pass | ? | | |

(1) Artificial, usually forcing to game

(2) Weak

What would you do as North with:

♠ AK108764
♥ Q
♦ 2
♣ Q1073

2. South dealer : Nil vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | | | 1♣ |
| Pass | 1♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ ⁽²⁾ | Pass | ? |

(1) 4+ diamonds, 6+ points

(2) 4 hearts, 5+ diamonds, 12+ points

What would you do as South with:

♠ AK32
♥ A1054
♦ 6
♣ AKQ3

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

If you should expect the unexpected, doesn't that make the unexpected expected?