

52. High drama

By Ron Klinger

In the semi-finals of the Alt Invitational, held in April and organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online), the semifinalists in finishing order from the qualify stage were:

Blass	Josef Blass, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Jacek Kalita, Michael Nowosadski, Jacek Pszczola (Pepsi)
Street De Botton	Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski, Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski
Meltzer	Rose Meltzer, Nikolay Demirev, Bartosz Chmurski, Piotr Nawrocki, Piotr Tuczynski, Piotr Wiankowski

BLASS chose to play DE BOTTON for the semi-finals.

South dealer : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Artificial, usually forcing to game

(2) Weak

What would you do as North with:

♠ AK108764
♥ Q
♦ 2
♣ Q1073

DE BOTTON North-South:

Bd. 13: South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ J9	♠ AK108764	♠ Q53	♠ 2
♥ 9432	♥ Q	♥ 65	♥ AKJ1087
♦ QJ10543	♦ 2	♦ AK9876	♦ --
♣ 6	♣ Q1073	♣ 94	♣ AKJ852

As the cards lie, North-South can make 6♠, 7♣ or 7♥. However, 6♠ would not be so good if East held ♠Q-J-3-2 or Q-9-3-2 or J-9-3-2. After the auction above, Charlsen (N) bid 5NT(!), pick a slam. South bid 6♣ all pass. South won the diamond lead and had 13 tricks, +1390. At the other table, it began 2♣ : South, 2♦ West. North-South reached 7♣ and East-West saved in 7♦, doubled by South. Declarer lost two spades, two hearts and a club for five down, -1400 and a flat board. As 7♣ is cold for +2140, it was an excellent sacrifice and 6♦ doubled, -1100, would be a good sacrifice against 6♣.

	North	
	♠ AK108764	
	♥ Q	
	♦ 2	
	♣ Q1073	
West		East
♠ J9		♠ Q53
♥ 9432		♥ 65
♦ QJ10543		♦ AK9876
♣ 6		♣ 94
	South	
	♠ 2	
	♥ AKJ1087	
	♦ --	
	♣ AKJ852	

Not everyone opens 2♣ with the South cards. In the other semi-final, both Souths opened 1♥. Although they had only 3 losers, both Souths figured that with only 16 HCP and extreme shape, 1♥ was unlikely to be passed out.

STREET North-South:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1♠	2♦	5♣!
6♦	7♣!	All Pass	

South's 6♣ would have shown not just extreme shape and an excellent hand, but also a void in diamonds. West led the ♦Q and South claimed 13 tricks, +2140.

MELTZER North-South:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1♠	2♦	4♣
5♦	5♠	Pass	6♣
Pass	7♣!	Pass	Pass
7♦!	Dble	All Pass	

Declarer lost the obvious five tricks, -1400, but +12 Imps.

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

	North	
	♠ 85	
	♥ KQ63	
	♦ AQJ1053	
	♣ 2	
West		East
♠ J10		♠ Q9764
♥ 82		♥ J97
♦ K72		♦ 984
♣ 1098764		♣ J5
	South	
	♠ AK32	
	♥ A1054	
	♦ 6	
	♣ AKQ3	

After the auction given, **DE BOTTON's** South jumped to 4NT, asking. With controls in every suit, that is a sensible choice. If you cue bid 3♠ and hear a 4♣ (shortage cue) or 4♦ cue, you are going to bid 4NT next anyway. If your cue-bidding will not give you useful information, you might as well just ask for key cards.

In reply to 4NT, North bid 5♠, two key cards plus the ♥Q. With the ♦A and ♥K, ♥Q opposite, South jumped to 7♥.

This is not a great grand slam. Trumps 4-1 would be a problem and South needs to set up the diamonds. A low diamond lead might give South a headache. West led the ♠J. South won and played ♦A, diamond ruff, ♥A, ♥K and the ♦Q: nine . . . Ultimately South ruffed and was rewarded when the ♦K fell, North-South +1510.

BLASS North-South began with a strong 1♣ and 7♥ was reached, but North removed that to 7NT, played by South. 7NT required the ♦K to be singleton or doubleton with West. Result: one off, -100 and 17 Imps to **DE BOTTON**, who won the match by 42-3.

STREET North-South:

West	North	East	South
			2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	4♠ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4NT ⁽³⁾
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

- (1) Not recommended
- (2) 6+ diamonds, slam try
- (3) Not interested

Some open 2NT, 20-22 points, with a singleton king or ace. That is not my cup of tea, but opening 2NT with a worthless singleton holds even less appeal. Declarer lost a trick to the ♦K, but made the rest, +920.

MELTZER North-South:

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

- (1) Artificial, strong hand
- (2) Shows 5+ diamonds, 8+ points
- (3) Cue-bid, hearts agreed
- (4) Two key cards + the ♥Q

Lead: ♦8: six – two – queen. Declarer ruffed a diamond, crossed to the ♥K and ruffed a third diamond with the ♥10 for 13 tricks, +1510 and +11 Imps to **MELTZER**. **STREET** won the match by 52-37

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. North dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ K9863
♥ J432
♦ Q9
♣ 83

2. South dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 5 hearts

What would you lead as West from:

♠ AK73
♥ 965
♦ 532
♣ Q96

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

Give me chastity and continence, but not yet. (Saint Augustine, 354-430)