55. The bid and the beautiful

By Ron Klinger

After 24 boards in the 36-board final of the Alt Invitational, held in April and organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online), **De Botton** (Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski) led **Street** (Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski) by 52 Imps to 29. **DE BOTTON** won Session 3 by 25-10 and the match by 77-39.

With South the dealer, neither side vulnerable, and with the opponents passing throughout, how would you and partner bid these cards:

North

- **♦**8
- **♥** AJ98
- ♦ A6
- ♣ KQ8763

South

- **▲** A9643
- **♥** KQ1063
- ♦ 102
- **♣** A

This auction is reasonable:

North	South
	1♠
2♣	2♥
3♥ ⁽¹⁾	3 ♠ -cue-bid
4NT	5 ♣ ⁽²⁾
5 ♦ ⁽³⁾	5NT ⁽⁴⁾
7♥	Pass

- (1) Forcing, stronger than 4♥
- (2) 0 or 3 key cards
- (3) Do you have the ♥Q?
- (4) Yes, but no outside kings.

See *A Good Game of Modern Bridge* for modern slam bidding techniques.

STREET North-South:

North	South
	1♠
2♣	2♥
3 ♥ ⁽¹⁾	3NT ⁽²⁾
4♣ ⁽³⁾	4 ♠ ⁽⁴⁾
4NT	5 \(\) (5)
5 ♠ ⁽⁶⁾	6 ♣ ⁽⁷⁾
7♥	Pass

- (1) Forcing, stronger than 4♥
- (2) Mild slam interest
- (3) Cue-bid, strong slam interest
- (4) Cue-bid
- (5) 0 or 3 key cards
- (6) Do you have ♥Q?
- (7) Yes

This one is a bit better:

North	South 1♠
2♣	2♥
3♥ ⁽¹⁾	4♣ ⁽²⁾
4 ♠ ⁽³⁾	$4NT^{(4)}$
5 ♣ ⁽⁵⁾	5 ♥ ⁽⁶⁾
7*	Pacc

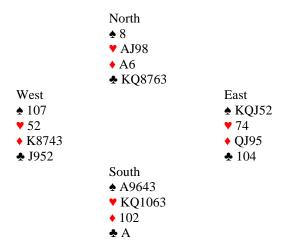
- (1) Forcing, stronger than 4♥
- (2) Control in spades and in clubs
- (3) Asking for key cards for hearts
- (4) 0 or 3 key cards
- (5) Do you have the ♥Q?
- (6) Yes. (5♦ would be 'No'.)

DE BOTTON North-South:

North	South
	1♠
$2NT^{(1)}$	3♥
4 ♦ ⁽²⁾	4NT
5 ♥ ⁽³⁾	5NT ⁽⁴⁾
7♥	Pass

- (1) Strong hand, shows clubs
- (2) Cue-bid, agreeing hearts
- (3) Two key cards, no ♥Q
- (4) No key cards are missing

Dealer South: Nil vulnerable



With trumps 2-2 and clubs 4-2, there was nothing to the play. Both Wests led a trump. The easy line is to win the heart, cash the ♣A, cross to dummy with a trump and lead a low club, ruffing. Then claim 13 tricks.

2. With South the dealer, only East-West vulnerable, and with the opponents passing throughout, how would you and partner bid these cards:

North

- **♦** AJ87
- **v** 1076
- ♦ A962
- **♣** A6

South

- **★** K93
- **♥** Q
- ♦ KQ1053
- **♣** KJ95

This is sensible:

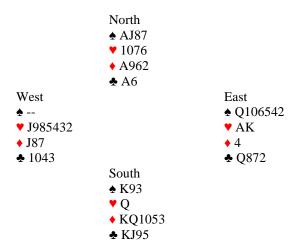
North	South	
	1♦	
1♠	2♠	
$2NT^{(1)}$	3♣	
5 ♦	Pass	

- (1) How many spades do you have?
- (2) 3 spades, 4 clubs and 5 diamonds

With a minimum, unbalanced opening, it is preferable to raise to 2♠ at once, even with just three trumps. With a weak hand, 6-9 (10) points, responder passes and hopefully succeeds. If responder has prospects for game, responder asks with 2NT. Bidding 3♠ (weak) or 4♠ (stronger) show four trumps. Any other bid shows only three spades. South's 3♣ denies four spades and shows the shape of the hand. Since South is marked with a minimum opening and shortage in hearts, North jumps to 5♠, clearly the best spot on the hand.

If you bid 1 • : 1 •, 2 • and responder bids 2 • or 3 • next, you are showing more than your hand is worth by giving delayed spade support now.

South dealer: East-West vulnerable



STREET North-South:

DE BOTTON North-South:

North	South	North	South
	1♦		1♦
1♠	2♠	1♠	2♠
$2NT^{(1)}$	3 ♠ ⁽²⁾	$2NT^{(1)}$	3♣ ⁽²⁾
5♦	Pass	5♦	Pass
(1) Asking	for spade length	(1) Asking fo	or spade length
(2) 5 + dian	nonds, 3 spades only	(2) 3 spades,	5+ diamonds, 4 clubs

Note: Both Souths raised to 2♠. The play was identical at both tables. West led a heart. East won and returned a spade, ♠9 from South. West ruffed and brought back a heart. South ruffed and drew trumps, +400, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer: East-West vulnerable

North

- **♠** Q5
- **♥** AQJ
- ♦ J109764
- **♣** 72

South

- **♠** KJ73
- **y** 98
- ♦ AK32
- **♣** A94

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

- (1) For takeout
- 1. West leads the ♣5: two king four
- 2. East returns the ♣J: nine six seven
- 3. East plays the ♣10: ace queen ♥J
- 4. South plays the ◆A: eight four five
- 5. South plays the \star K: queen six \forall 7 (playing high-encourage)

How would you continue as South?

2. South dealer: Nil vulnerable

North

- **♠** J102
- **♥** A4
- ♦ A1098
- **♣** J1064

South

- **♠** AKQ863
- **y** 93
- **♦** 54
- ♣ K85

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♥	3 ♥ ⁽¹⁾	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Limit or st	ronger spade	raise	
1. West leads the ◆K: ace – seven - four			
2. ♦ J			
3. ♠2 to ♠K, all follow			
4. ♦5: jack – eight – three			
5. West switches to the ♥K: ace – two – three			
6. ♦9: six – ♥9 – ♦Q			
7. West continues with the ♥6: four – queen – ♠A			
8. South plays ♠6: ♥7 – ♠10 – ♥5			

Which club should West play from hand?

9. ♦10: - ₹10 - ♣5 - ♣2

10. **♣**J: two . . .

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

It is unbecoming for young men to utter maxims (Aristotle)