

80. Two problems with A-K doubleton

By Ron Klinger

The leading teams at the end of the Round-Robin of Alt-Invitational III, organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online) were:

1. Blass	107.41
2. Street	81.58
3. Russia	80.94
4. Gupta	75.18

These were their personnel:

Blass	Josef Blass, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver, Jacek Kalita, Michael Nowosadski, Jacek Pszczola (Pepsi)
Street	Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski
Russia	Andrey Gromov, Anna Gulevich, Vadim Kholomeev, Yury Khuppenen, Yury Khokhlov, Alexander Dubinin
Gupta	Naren Gupta, Bauke Muller, Simon de Wijs, Huub Bertens, Cedric Lorenzini, Thomas Bessis

For the 24-board semi-finals, **BLASS** chose **RUSSIA**. **BLASS** had a 10.1 Imps carry-forward, but **RUSSIA** prevailed by 49-29.1. In the other semi-final, **STREET** had a 6.1 Imp carry-forward, but **GUPTA** won 51-40.1.

North dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♦
2♠	Pass	3♠	?

What would you do as South with:

- ♠ AK
- ♥ 9
- ♦ A6543
- ♣ KQ1063

This is a very tough question. As partner opened 1♥, 3NT is an option. However, if a trump fit exists, slam is a decent chance, as you have only a 4-loser hand. Partner probably does not have 4 diamonds – failure to bid 3♦ – but partner could have 4 clubs. Make your choice, 3NT or 4♣?

Bd. 21: North dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 1074	
	♥ AQJ54	
	♦ 98	
	♣ A42	
West		East
♠ J98653		♠ Q2
♥ --		♥ K1087632
♦ KQJ107		♦ 2
♣ 97		♣ J85
	South	
	♠ AK	
	♥ 9	
	♦ A6543	
	♣ KQ1063	

I fancied the 4♣ bid and that is what **STREET's** North-South bid. North gave false-preference to 4♦ and South rebid 5♣, all pass. West led the ♠6: four – queen - ace. South won and played the ♥9. West ruffed and reverted to the ♠9. South won and played ♦A and ♦3. West won and continued diamonds. South ruffed with the ♣A, ruffed a spade, cashed the ♣K and ruffed a diamond in dummy. East over-ruffed and South went two off, –200.

At the other three tables, West showed a 5+/5+ 2-suiter. With **GUPTA** North-South:

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

(1) Intended as spades and diamonds

(2) Just in case 2NT was for the minors

West led the ♦K and ♦Q, both winning, and the ♦J, taken by the ♦A. East discarded two hearts. South played the ♥9 to the to the ♥Q and ♥K and had ten tricks, +630, 13 Imps to **GUPTA**.

The auctions in the other semi-final:

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾
2♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♠	Pass/2NT
3♠	Pass	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Forcing to game

(2) Michaels, spades and a minor

Both Souths made ten tricks, +630, no swing.

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣	4♣
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

What would you lead as West from:

♠ A83
♥ AK
♦ QJ8754
♣ Q10

Bd. 22: West dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 10652	
	♥ 10853	
	♦ AK2	
	♣ 42	
West		East
♠ A83		♠ KQJ7
♥ AK		♥ Q642
♦ QJ8754		♦ 1096
♣ Q10		♣ 86
	South	
	♠ 94	
	♥ J97	
	♦ 3	
	♣ AKJ9753	

After the auction above, with **GUPTA** North-South, West led the ♥A against 4♣ doubled. Then came ♠A, ♥K, and ♠8, won by East. Thinking West had started with a doubleton spade, East played a third spade. South ruffed with the ♣J, cashed ♠A, ♠K, ♦A, ♦K, discarding the heart loser. How would you allocate the blame for this defence?

Most experts lead the ace from suits such as A-K-x, A-K-x-x or longer. If so, it is important to distinguish the holding of specifically A-K doubleton to let partner know you can ruff the third round. The blame should fall 100% on West if East-West do lead the ace from A-K-x or longer. This is how the defence should go: ♥K lead; ♥A next showing the doubleton; ♠A; spade to East; East now cashes the ♥Q. That gives the defence the first five tricks. When West discards a spade on the ♥Q, East can play a spade or a heart. This will promote West's ♣Q for three down and +500 instead of that measly 100.

At the other table, with **STREET** North-South, it went 1NT : Pass : 2♣ : 3♣, 3♦, all pass. Declarer lost two clubs and two diamonds, but had 9 tricks, +110 and a flat board.

In the other semi-final, the auctions were 1NT : Pass : 2♣ : 3♣, 3♦, all pass, and 1NT : Pass : 2♣ : 3♣, Pass : Pass : Double, Pass : 3♦, all pass. Both declarers made 9 tricks, +110, no swing.

Point of interest: All four Wests opened 1NT and not 1♦. Maybe they thought the diamonds were not good enough for 1♦ : 1X, 3♦.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. With only East-West vulnerable, West passes and North opens 1♠. Pass on your right. What do you do with:

♠ --
♥ K1052
♦ J2
♣ QJ106532

2. With only North-South vulnerable, South opens 1NT, 15-17, in third seat. Pass on your right. What would you do as North with:

♠ 985
♥ A
♦ 98653
♣ KQ52

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

Isolation is hard. I swear my fridge just said, "What the hell do you want now?"