

90. Dealing with voids

By Ron Klinger

West	North	East	South
		Pass	?

What is your opening bid and what is your plan of bidding as South with:

♠ K5
 ♥ --
 ♦ AKQJ107
 ♣ KQ1087

You have a solid suit in diamonds and figure to have no trump losers if diamonds are trumps. If partner can provide the ♠A and ♣A, you have excellent chances for a grand slam. If partner has one of the black aces, 6♦ will often be a good prospect. If partner has no black ace, you do not want to be any higher than 5♦.

Some play a 4NT opening as specific ace Blackwood. That would not be of use here, since a bid of 5♥ (the ♥A only) takes you beyond your safety level.

If you are prepared to give up The Gambling 3NT – and why not? – you can adopt the **KABEL** 3NT, which asks for specific aces at a more convenient level.

Basic version: 3NT : 4♣ = no ace, 4♦/4♥/4♠/4NT = that ace (4NT = ♣A), 5♣ = ♣A + ♦A, 5♦ = ♦A + ♥A, 5♥ = ♥A + ♠A, 5♠ = ♠A + ♣A and 5NT = two Non-Touching aces. This method is suitable when all you need to do is to locate two critical cards.

Here is the full deal, which arose during a teams' match on BBO.

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ	
	♥ AJ98652	
	♦ 63	
	♣ J3	
West		East
♠ 10432		♠ A9876
♥ K1043		♥ Q7
♦ 542		♦ 98
♣ A2		♣ 9654
	South	
	♠ K5	
	♥ --	
	♦ AKQJ107	
	♣ KQ1087	

Using the above method, it would go South 3NT, North 4♥ (♥A only), South 5♦, all pass.

More complex versions of the Kabel 3NT are possible. The advantage of this one is that you can use it when missing three critical cards. 3NT : 4♣ = 0 or 1 ace, 4♦ = ♦A + ♥A or ♠A; 4♥ = ♥A + ♠A, 4♠ = ♠A + ♣A, 4NT = ♥A + ♣A, 5♣ = ♣A + ♦A, 5♦/5♥/5♠/5NT = 3 aces excluding the ace in the suit bid (5NT = 3 aces, no ♣A).

After 3NT : 4♣, 4♦ asks and then 4♥ = no ace and 4♠ / 4NT (♥A) / 5♣ / 5♦ = that ace. For the above deal, the auction went 3NT : 4♣, 4♦ : 4NT (♥A), 5♦, all pass. Notice that if the ♥A were the ♠A or the ♣A, North-South would reach 6♦.

You can find more details of the Kabel 3NT in *A good Game of Modern Bridge*.

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ	
	♥ AJ98652	
	♦ 63	
	♣ J3	
West		East
♠ 10432		♠ A9876
♥ K1043		♥ Q7
♦ 542		♦ 98
♣ A2		♣ 9654
	South	
	♠ K5	
	♥ --	
	♦ AKQJ107	
	♣ KQ1087	

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Same contract same result, 11 tricks, no swing. Note that North-South here would miss 6♦ if North had the ♠A or the ♣A. You replace North's ♠J, ♥A, ♥J with random low cards, South's 1♦ might be passed out with 5♦ cold.

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♦	1♠
3♦	3♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQJ108
♥ KJ972
♦ --
♣ 1095

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North <i>Jessica Brake</i> ♠ K952 ♥ AQ5 ♦ 43 ♣ KQ73	
West ♠ 743 ♥ 1043 ♦ AQ972 ♣ J4		East ♠ 6 ♥ 86 ♦ KJ10865 ♣ A862
	South <i>Susan Humphries</i> ♠ AQJ108 ♥ KJ972 ♦ -- ♣ 1095	

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

- (1) Cue bid, slam interest, denies club control
 (2) A useful void somewhere

As South's 4♦ had denied club control, North's 4NT asking for key cards promised control in hearts and clubs. From the auction and South's 6♣, North could deduce that the void was in diamonds. As the ♣A was missing, North naturally settled for 6♣.

South won the heart lead in hand, drew trumps, cashed ♥A, ♥Q, ruffed a diamond, pitched two clubs from dummy on the ♥K, ♥J, gave up a club and had 12 tricks, +980.

The deal comes the **BLASS** vs **SPECTOR** semi-final of the 2019 Spingold. Neither North-South pair reached 6♣ then.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Wooldridge</i>	<i>Nowosadzki</i>	<i>Hurd</i>
	1NT	Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦ ⁽²⁾
Dble	3♠	5♦	Pass ⁽³⁾
Pass	5♥	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Transfer to spades
 (2) Transfer to hearts
 (3) Forcing

Lead: ♣A. 12 tricks, N-S +480.

West	North	East	South
<i>Demuy</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Brink</i>
	1♣	1♦	2NT ⁽¹⁾
3♦	4♣	All Pass	

- (1) Artificial, both majors

Lead: ♦10. 12 tricks, N-S +480, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?	Pass	1♠

What would you do as North with:

♠ 9842
♥ K1086
♦ AK976
♣ --

2. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ --
♥ Q965
♦ AQ874
♣ KQJ10

South
♠ AK72
♥ K8732
♦ 92
♣ A4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) One or four key cards for hearts

You might not like the auction, but that is not your concern. West leads the ♦3. Plan the play.

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

Wife to husband: Perhaps you could self-isolate in the kitchen and stack the dishwasher?