

147. High society

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	5♥	Pass
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ 9842
♥ AK8
♦ A10984
♣ 5

Today's deals arose in a teams' match on BBO last June.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North		East
	♠ K5		♠ AQJ63
	♥ Q932		♥ --
	♦ 75		♦ Q6
	♣ QJ643		♣ AK10972
West		South	
♠ 9842		♠ 107	
♥ AK8		♥ J107654	
♦ A10984		♦ KJ32	
♣ 5		♣ 8	

This was yesterday's first question:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ AQJ63
♥ --
♦ Q6
♣ AK10972

A popular choice would be 4♥, as long as that is a splinter, or perhaps a 3♥ splinter. Avi Kanetkar of Sydney was East and felt he could not get his hand across with just a splinter. With thoughts of a grand slam dancing before him if partner had just the right cards, he jumped to 5♥. A jump beyond game is played by many as showing a void in the suit bid, agreeing the previously bid suit as trumps and asking for key cards outside the void. This was not safe with the East hand – you could be off two diamonds – but East was prepared to risk it.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K5	
	♥ Q932	
	♦ 75	
	♣ QJ643	
West		East
♠ 9842		♠ AQJ63
♥ AK8		♥ --
♦ A10984		♦ Q6
♣ 5		♣ AK10972
	South	
	♠ 107	
	♥ J107654	
	♦ KJ32	
	♣ 8	

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	5♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
5NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	6♠	All Pass

(1) Exclusion Key Card Blackwood, asking for key cards for spades, but excluding hearts

(2) One key card (the ♦A) for spades outside hearts

You can see what East was thinking. If West could produce a hand such as:

♠ K842
 ♥ 987
 ♦ A743
 ♣ 65

That would be enough for 7♠ if clubs behaved and, of course, West could have a better hand.

North led the ♦7 – six – jack – ace. West played the ♥A, ditching the ♦Q and finessed the ♠Q, winning. Then came ♣A and ♣2. Had the opponents followed to that, West would play a trump to the ace, ruff another low club and claim 12 tricks. However, it went ♣2: ♥5 – ♠4 – ♣3, followed by ♥K, discarding ♣7 and the ♥8 ruffed. Next came the ♣9: ♦2 – ♠8 – ♣4 and a diamond ruff in dummy. These cards remained:

	North	
	♠ K	
	♥ Q	
	♦	
	♣ QJ	
West		East
♠ 9		♠ AJ
♥		♥ --
♦ 1098		♦
♣		♣ K10
	South	
	♠ 10	
	♥ 107	
	♦ K	
	♣	

West continued with the ♣10 from dummy. South ruffed with the ♠10 and declarer claimed the last three tricks for +1430. Had South discarded, West would ruff the ♣10, ruff a diamond, play the ♠A and make 13 tricks.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K5	
	♥ Q932	
	♦ 75	
	♣ QJ643	
West		East
♠ 9842		♠ AQJ63
♥ AK8		♥ --
♦ A10984		♦ Q6
♣ 5		♣ AK10972
	South	
	♠ 107	
	♥ J107654	
	♦ KJ32	
	♣ 8	

At the other table it went:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	2♥
Dble ⁽¹⁾	4♥	6♠	All Pass

The jump to 6♠ by George Smolanko of Adelaide was also not safe, but it was also successful. Perth's Ron Cooper (S) led the ♦3 – nice try. That would have caused East a touch of anxiety until dummy's diamonds appeared. East played ♦A and ♥A, ditching the ♦Q, and finessed the ♠Q. Then came the ♣A and the ♣2. South ruffed with the ♠10 and played the ♦K. East ruffed, cashed the ♠A to eliminate the ♠K and claimed 12 tricks, +1430, no swing.

Note: South's weak-jump overcall with six hearts headed by the jack would not be everyone's choice when vulnerable.

This was yesterday's second question:

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♦	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AKQ1076
♥ 4
♦ --
♣ KJ5432

South's sequence so far 1♠ first and 3♣ next promises no more than 5+ spades and 4+ clubs. You can expect North to have four clubs for the raise to 4♣. This looks like a good moment to jump to 5♦, a jump beyond game in your agreed suit and so Exclusion Key Card Blackwood, asking for key cards for clubs outside of diamonds.

Had South done that, North would have bid 5NT, two key cards outside diamonds (the ♥A and ♣A), no ♣Q. Given North-South had 10 trumps, it is an 89% chance, on South's hand, that there will not be a trump loser.

That is not what happened. South bid 4♦ (cue-bid), North bid 4♥ (cue-bid) and South jumped to 6♣, all pass.

This was the full deal:

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 4	
	♥ AK872	
	♦ 762	
	♣ A1076	
West		East
♠ J95		♠ 832
♥ 1095		♥ QJ63
♦ AKJ543		♦ Q1098
♣ Q		♣ 98
	South	
	♠ AKQ1076	
	♥ 4	
	♦ --	
	♣ KJ5432	

There was nothing to the play in 6♣. South made 13 tricks, +940.

At the other table, Ron Cooper (North) and Sydney's Bruce Neill (South) had a complex, artificial relay auction. There are few pairs playing relay methods these days. They are a lot of work memorizing the sequences and the answers. The relay approach has one player asking and the other player answering and showing the exact hand pattern and the location of the controls. This style is not for everyone, certainly not for club players, but it is impressive when it works. This was their auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1♥ ⁽²⁾
2♦	Pass ⁽³⁾	Pass	Dble ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	3♦ ⁽⁵⁾	Dble	Pass ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	Rdbl ⁽⁶⁾	Pass	3♥ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	4♦ ⁽⁷⁾	Pass	4♥ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	5♣ ⁽⁸⁾	Pass	7♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) 10-14 points, 4+ hearts, could have a long suit elsewhere
- (2) Relay, game-invitational values or stronger
- (3) Not 4 spades
- (4) Relay, tell me more.
- (5) 5+ hearts, 4 clubs, short in spades
- (6) Exactly 1-5-3-4
- (7) 5 controls (A = 2, K = 1)
- (8) Ace or king in hearts, ace or king in clubs, no ♦A, no ♦K

Notice how the relays located North's exact shape and the location of the controls. It was a tradesmanlike auction. East led the ♦10, ruffed in dummy. Declarer played the ♣2, queen, ace, and the ♣6, ten, king, and claimed all the tricks, +1440 and +11 Imps.

What relay bidders need is plenty of bidding space. When competing against a relay pair you need to bid as much as you dare as quickly as possible. East-West missed two opportunities. East might have raised 2♦ to 3♦, even though the hand is underweight for the raise. Partner needs to be prepared for that against a relay pair. East's double of 3♦ also gave North-South more bidding space. It allowed South to double as a relay and North to redouble to give the reply. At other vulnerabilities, East might jump to 4♦ pre-emptively to cut out the relays.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

North

♠ 86

♥ 6

♦ AK762

♣ QJ973

East

♠ KJ2

♥ A1094

♦ QJ843

♣ 8

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

(1) At least 5-5 in the majors

(2) Fit-showing-jump, 5+ diamonds, 5+ clubs

(3) Bid your longer major.

(4) Cue-bid, inviting slam

West leads the ♥K. Plan the defence for East.

2. Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ K1062

♥ 75

♦ AK76

♣ 1064

East

♠ J985

♥ J98

♦ J98

♣ J98

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

(1) Stopper in diamonds

West leads the ♥4: five – jack – king. Declarer plays the ♦3: five – ace – eight and the ♣4 from dummy. Which club will you play if you play (a) natural count? (b) reverse count? Can you foresee the problem?

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

Of course, size matters. No one wants a small glass of wine.