

## 228. Spy vs Spy

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

North  
♠ A32  
♥ Q752  
♦ Q10973  
♣ A

South  
♠ KJ1098  
♥ AK  
♦ AK6  
♣ QJ6

West	North	East	South
<i>Igla</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Piedra</i>	<i>Platnick</i>
		Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	7♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Artificial, 16+ points

(2) 5+ diamonds, 11+ points

(3) Two key cards, no ♠Q

Do you agree with South's actions in the above auction? Against 7♠, West leads the ♥3. Plan the play.

Today's deal come from Session 2 of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams), the quarter-final match between **DIAMOND** and **PIEDRA**.

The auction above is fine up to 3♠. South then chose 4NT. That worked out all right when North showed two key cards, the ♠A and the ♣A, but what if North had shown only one key card? Might you not lose the ♣A and ♣K at tricks 1 and 2? After 3♠, the first priority should be to check that North has control in clubs. Given North has 11+ points, it is very likely that North does have club control, but it is not sure. It is conceivable that the two hands are like this:

North  
♠ AQ2  
♥ Q5  
♦ QJ10973  
♣ 83

South  
♠ KJ1098  
♥ AK  
♦ AK6  
♣ QJ6

Now if you bid 4NT and find one key card, will you sign off in 5♠ or bid 6♠. If you bid 6♠, all will be well if they do not lead a club – you make 13 tricks. If they do lead a club, you go one down.

On the other hand, if you bid 5♠, all pass, you could miss an easy 6♠ opposite either of these hands

♠ AQ2  
♥ QJ52  
♦ QJ973  
♣ 3

♠ AQ2  
♥ J5  
♦ QJ973  
♣ K83

How can South find out about club control? Using standard methods, it might go this way:

North	West	North	East	South
♠ A32			Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
♥ Q752	Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♣
♦ Q10973	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦ <sup>(3)</sup>
♣ A	Pass	5♣ <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	5NT <sup>(5)</sup>
	Pass	6♣ <sup>(6)</sup>	Pass	6♣
South	Pass	Pass	Pass	
♠ KJ1098	(1) Artificial, 16+ points			
♥ AK	(2) 5+ diamonds, 11+ points			
♦ AK6	(3) Cue-bid first-round or second-round diamond control			
♣ QJ6	(4) First-round club control			
	(5) Asking for the trump holding			
	(6) One top honour in trumps			

If you have adopted the methods from *A Good Game of Modern Bridge*, as suggested in ABF Daily Column #225, the auction would go this way:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT <sup>(3)</sup>
Pass	4♣ <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	4NT <sup>(5)</sup>
Pass	5♥ <sup>(6)</sup>	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Artificial, 16+ points
- (2) 5+ diamonds, 11+ points
- (3) Asking for club control
- (4) Shows club control, denies diamond control
- (5) Asking for key cards
- (6) Two key cards, no ♠Q

After the actual auction, it was unusual for South to bid the grand slam with the ♠Q missing. If North has four spades the odds are a bit under 60% of avoiding a trump loser. If North has three spades, the odds are just a bit above 50% (you pick up ♠Q-x-x or ♠Q-x-x-x with East and the bare ♠Q with West), but those odds are below those recommended for a grand slam at teams. Why do you think South bid 7♣ knowing the ♠Q was missing?

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	7♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Artificial, 16+ points
- (2) 5+ diamonds, 11+ points
- (3) Two key cards, no ♠Q

What would you lead as West from:

- ♠ 76
- ♥ 943
- ♦ J854
- ♣ K742

If you did tackle that problem yesterday, what was your choice?

Bd 24: Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A32	
	♥ Q752	
	♦ Q10973	
	♣ A	
West		East
♠ 76		♠ Q54
♥ 943		♥ J1086
♦ J854		♦ 2
♣ K742		♣ 109853
	South	
	♠ KJ1098	
	♥ AK	
	♦ AK6	
	♣ QJ6	

When opponents bid a grand slam, the safest lead is often a trump. With such solid spades, Brian Platnick (S) cunningly bid 7♠ in the expectation that West would lead a trump and solve that problem at trick 1. Had West led a spade, South would have made 7♠.

Bartłomiej Iгла (W) of Switzerland had been there before. With a minor suit lead too risky, West led the ♥3: two – ten – ace. What now for South?

The normal way to play the spades is ace first and then finesse the jack. That wins if the ♠Q is singleton or if East began with ♠Q-x-x or with ♠Q-x-x-x. In the last case the ♠J would win and West shows out. Declarer crosses to the ♣A and repeats the spade finesse. On the actual layout, ♠A and a spade to the jack would have worked.

However, South considered the ramifications of the lead. Why had West not led a trump, the most common lead against a grand slam? South became convinced that the failure to lead a spade meant that West held the ♠Q. South therefore played the ♠J at trick 2: six – two – queen. One down! Hoist by his own petard, one might think. East-West +50.

At the other table, Frederic Pollack (S) opened 2NT. Kamel Fergani (N) inquired, found North with 5 spades and set spades as trumps. North asked with 4NT, found South with two key cards, no ♠Q and bid 6♠. West led the ♠6 and South made 13 tricks, +1010 and 14 Imps to [PIEDRA](#).

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 5-12 points, forcing

(2) 10-12 points

What would you lead as West from:

♠ Q103  
♥ J875  
♦ Q83  
♣ Q32

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

*Grammar humour: A misplaced phrase walks into a bar owned by a man with a glass eye named Ralph.*