## 376. Upswing

## By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West North East South  $1 \checkmark -5 + \text{ hearts}$ Pass  $4 \bigstar^{(1)}$  Pass ? (1) 4+ hearts, 0-1 club, sufficient high-card strength for game

What would you do as South with:

- ▲ KJ7
  ♥ AK765
  ♦ K2
- ♣ A105

Make up your mind before reading further.

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West North East South  $1 \checkmark - 5 +$  hearts Pass ?

What would you do as North with:

▲ AQ102
♥ 9843
♦ A874
♣ 2

You have 10 HCP, 4-card support for opener's major and a singleton club with a 7-loser hand. You are much too strong to bid  $1^{\diamond}$ :  $4^{\diamond}$ , which can be based on a significantly less strength. Because of the singleton, you are also too good for a natural  $1^{\diamond}$ :  $3^{\diamond}$  limit raise. Partner might pass that and game could be easy.

Some pairs play that a splinter bid will usually have about 11-14 HCP. If better, bid  $1 \checkmark / 1 \bigstar : 2NT$ , the Jacoby 2NT, showing 4+ support and forcing to game. With a good 10 count (your A-Q and A are primary values), a splinter is acceptable.

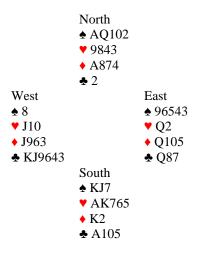
The splinter makes North's rebid easy. With a singleton or void in clubs opposite there are no clubs losers. Partner could have A, Q-x-x-x and A, making  $\Phi$  easy. As you have control in both non-trump suits outside clubs, you can bid 4NT, Key-Card Blackwood. On the actual hand, partner bids  $\Phi$ , two key cards and no  $\P$  and so you simply bid  $\Phi$ . It would be a challenge to bid  $\P$  if partner held:

- **▲** AQ62
- ♥ QJ32
- ♦ A864
- **♣** 2

or something similar. It is very hard if you bid 4NT and hear  $5 \triangleq$  (two key cards and the  $\P$ Q). There is no convenient way to locate the  $\clubsuit$ Q in partner's hand. Some play  $4 \clubsuit$  as the Key-Card Blackwood, when hearts is the agreed suit. This is much better and would enable you to find  $7\P$  opposite the ideal hand above. In reply to  $4\clubsuit$  KCB, North would bid  $5\P$ , two key cards + the  $\P$ Q. Now South can bid  $5\clubsuit$ , asking about the spade suit. In reply, partner bids  $6\clubsuit$  (I have the  $\clubsuit$ Q) and South bids  $7\P$ . In reply to the  $5\clubsuit$  Ask, the first step, 5NT, would say, 'I do not have the  $\clubsuit$ Q' and South would settle for  $6\P$ . It is good to have methods to cope with problem hands.

This was the full deal, which arose in a game on BBO:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable



As you can see,  $6^{\checkmark}$  is an easy make and with trumps 2-2, 13 tricks are there. There were 11 pairs in  $4^{\checkmark}$ . All but one made all the tricks, but -2.8 Imps. One was in  $5^{\checkmark}$ , +510, for the same score. Four pairs made it to  $6^{\checkmark}$ . One made 12 tricks, +980, +7.9 Imps. The others made all the tricks, +8.9 Imps.

At pairs, one should play  $\checkmark$ A,  $\checkmark$ K. At teams or Imps, there is a case for a safety play in hearts: low heart from dummy: two – low from hand. This guards against East having all four trumps. Playing the ace gives you an overtrick when hearts are 2-2 (a 42% chance). Over 100 deals, there will be no difference on 48 deals when trumps are 3-1. On 42 deals, playing the  $\checkmark$ A or  $\checkmark$ K first give you an overtrick, +1 Imp, total +42 Imps. On 5 deals, where West has all four trumps, you are one off whatever you do. On 5 deals where East has 4 trumps, the safety play allows you to make  $6\checkmark$  (low from dummy, two, five wins the trick). Playing  $\checkmark$ A or  $\checkmark$ K sees you go one down and lose 11 Imps. Times 5 that is +55 Imps for the safety play vs +42 Imps for playing for hearts 2-2.

Auctions by North-South:

- 1. 1♥ : 2♥ (ugh!), 4♥, all pass.
- 2. 1NT (South is too strong for 1NT whether it is 15-17 or 16-18) : 2♣, 2♥ : 4♥, all pass.
- 3. 1♥ : 3♥, 4♥, all pass.
- 4. 1♥ : 4♥ (North is too strong for a 4♥ raise), all pass.
- 5.  $1 \checkmark$ :  $1 \bigstar$  (not recommended), 2NT :  $3 \checkmark$ ,  $4 \checkmark$ , all pass.
- 6. 1♥ : 2♦, 3NT : 4♥, 4NT : 5♥ (2 key cards, no ♥Q), 6♥, all pass.
- 7. 1♥ : 2NT, 3♥ : 4♥, 4NT : 5♥, 6♥, all pass.
- 8. 1♥ : 2NT, 6♥, all pass. South could be missing 7♥ with that rebid.
- 9.  $1 \\ \checkmark$  :  $4 \\ \bigstar$ ,  $4 \\ \text{NT}$  :  $5 \\ \checkmark$ ,  $6 \\ \checkmark$ , all pass. That is the auction I like.

## **Problem for Tomorrow:**

With both sides vulnerable, there are two passes to you. What would you do with:

▲ Q93
♥ -◆ AK98754
▲ O32

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

Went for a walk because I want to stay healthy. Took along a bar of chocolate, because let's be honest here.