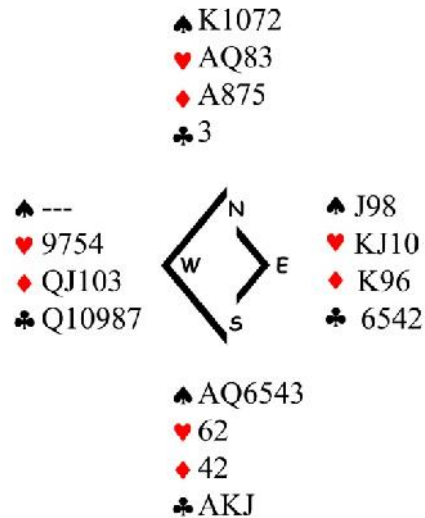


140. Splinter Bid

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W	N	E	S
P	4♣		1♠
	All Pass		4♠

--North South Vulnerable--

Splinter:

This is a double jump shift over partner's major opening. Three spades over one heart and four-level new suits are splinter bids. It shows a hand with four card support, an good opening of 13 plus points and a singleton or void in the suit bid.

A more advanced bid would be limiting the above 13 plus range to 13 to 15 points. With 15 plus, one would take further action if partner signed off in four of the major. However, it is much better to investigate slam at lower levels.

People may use lower point ranges and these are called mini-splinters. If a bid of four clubs over one spade is a splinter (singleton or void) with opening points then a bid of three clubs is a splinter with limit raise points.

Jacoby two notrump takes care of the hands that are not in the proper point range. For now, a splinter bid shows 13 plus and mini-splinters are not used.

One is not obligated to bid Jacoby two notrump or a splinter bid. Although it is nice to show partner support right away, it may be better to see if partner has support for a suit of yours. With points, it is always best to eat up the bidding room slowly.

As we saw in a previous column, the power of bidding a splinter or a singleton after Jacoby two notrump is that a slam needs only 27 high card points when partner's singleton is not opposite any wasted honours. With xxx or Axxx opposite a singleton, the deck is now just 34 points. Subtract 7 points ($40-7=33$) and slam becomes 27 points.

The bidding:

South opens his 14 points in his six-card major, spades. North shows the hand described above by bidding four clubs. South has 8 points in clubs of which four (the king and jack) are definitely wasted. The opponents may grab their tricks before South gets a pitch or two on clubs. South, disappointed, signs off in four spades which North passes. Any hand with AKJ opposite the singleton will do just fine at the game level.

The Lead:

West has a natural lead of the queen of diamonds. He had the same hand in the last column and did not lead a diamond because opponent's singleton was a diamond. This time it is clearly the best lead and not just the best of bad leads.

The play:

South wins the opening lead and draws trump in three rounds. He loses the heart king and a diamond to make five spades for +650.

Notes:

-Splinter bids and Jacoby two notrump show four-card support. With only three trump support, one can bid a new suit at the two level and then bid game in partner's major.

-All the bridge columns may be viewed at <http://watsongallery.ca>.