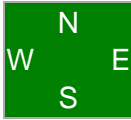


A TALE OF TWO “SHORT” KINGS

Partner and I have a kind of agreement that we do not treat singleton aces or kings as singletons. They tend to lead partner astray as to the strength or otherwise of their own holding in the said suit. So, Board 1 this week put this theory to the test...and we did not come out smelling of roses!

<u>Board 1</u>		♠ A K J 7 5 4	West	North	East	South
North Deals		♥ K		1 ♠	Pass	2 NT
None Vul		♦ A 9 6 5	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣
		♣ 10 4	Dbl	Pass	Pass	4 ♦
♠ Q		♠ 6 2	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 ♠
♥ 4 3		♥ Q J 10 6 5	Pass	5 ♦	Pass	5 ♥
♦ Q J 10 8 4		♦ 7 3 2	Pass	6 ♠	All pass	
♣ K J 8 7 5		♣ 9 3 2	Pass			
		♠ 10 9 8 3				
	♥ A 9 8 7 2					
	♦ K					
	♣ A Q 6					

This board should have given me the opportunity to tell “honourable” lies twice, maybe three times!

The above was the sequence we had where 2NT was a Jacoby game-force bid with spade support. 3♠ showed an above average hand with no shortage (“lie” number one!). Notice up to this point, South had passed up the opportunity to show a singleton diamond and North likewise with a singleton heart.

When West doubled partner’s 4♣ cue-bid (first or second round control), I had the opportunity for lie number 2. My pass indicated I had slam interest but that I did **not** have a control in clubs. This was in fact true but if partner’s control was the ace, and partner held the ♥A, then we had total club control!

That was my objective for the rest of the bidding: to see if partner held the ♥A. After my 5♦ cue-bid, I discovered he did..wonderful.

6♠ was clearly make-able, unless partner held just the ♣K, though if that were the case, would he not sign off after the double of 4♣?

All this talk of scoring 12 tricks was fine but it totally ignored the fact we could make 13. One of the problems of Jacoby is that opener knows little of the shape of their partner's hand, other than four+ card trump support. How nice it would have been here to know South has a singleton diamond, any singleton, the king, the 10, the 2!

In fact, reaching the grand should have been easy. After partner's 4♦ cue, wheel out key card. The 5♥ response is good news. Now, ask for kings and ideally specific kings (5NT) at the same time committing "lie number 3" pretending you have the ♠Q. It's no lie. You do. It is in the shape of your sixth trump!

Partner's reply is 6♦ and now your 6♥ asks if he has any extra as yet unshown. The singleton diamond comes to light and he reaches for the 7♠ card. While bidding the grand was harder than making it, it should not have been too hard, with or without the helpful double along the way and whether or not each hand owned up to holding a singleton.



It would have nice to have told "three lies" too! In the event, only Michael and Vivien Cornell bid to 7 while all bar 4 others in the 16 table field made it to 6♠. How do you value those singleton kings?

Richard Solomon