

You're Not Obligated to Bid

by David Bird

David Bird is one of England's most popular bridge authors. He has written over thirty books on the game, some twenty of them in collaboration with the late Terence Reese. Best known for his humorous bridge fiction, his stories of the cantankerous Abbot and the bridge-playing monks of St Titus appear regularly in magazines around the world. David is bridge correspondent of the Mail on Sunday and the London Evening Standard.

Tournament play is a macho business, with most players regarding it as an affront if they give the opponents a free run. Suppose a vulnerable opponent opens a weak two hearts in front of you and, non-vulnerable, you hold:

North Deals
N-S Vul

N	♠	K J 10 8 6
W	♥	J
S	♦	Q J 9 3
E	♣	9 6 3

You should leap in there with two spades, of course.

Or should you? When the deal arose, the player to your left was the famous 'Rabbi' created by Australian maestro, Ron Klinger. The occasion was the 24th Israeli Congress in Tel Aviv.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

	♠	4		♠	K J 10 8 6
	♥	K 8 7 5 4 3	N	♥	J
	♦	10 7 6 2	W	♦	Q J 9 3
	♣	A 4	S	♣	9 6 3
♠	Q 9 7 3		E		
♥	10 9 6	W	♠	A 5 2	
♦	K 5	S	♥	A Q 2	
♣	10 8 7 2		♦	A 8 4	
			♣	K Q J 5	

West	North	East	South
	2 ♥	2 ♠	4 ♥
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	7 ♣!
All pass			

The Rabbi, sitting South, had no reason initially to think that any contract beyond game would be possible. When West bid four spades, though, it became a near certainty that North held at most one spade. The Rabbi came to life again with Roman Key-Card Blackwood, hearing a response that showed two 'aces', here the ace of clubs and the king of the agreed trump suit. He was about to bid six hearts when a strange thought occurred to him. If clubs were trumps, surely he could score four clubs, six hearts, two aces and a spade ruff!

He bid the grand slam in clubs, received a trump lead, and the play went without a hitch.

BOLS TIP: *When the opponents open the bidding you are not obligated to say anything. Anything you do say will be noted down and ... may be used in evidence against you.*