

25. Heart-Rending Tales

By Ron Klinger

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	Pass
Pass	4♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♥
Pass	5♥	Pass	4♥
			?

(1) Strong hand

What would you do as South with:

♠ K1065
♥ J1065
♦ 62
♣ 854

Today's deals come from a teams' match in March, 2020.

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AQ92	
	♥ AK87	
	♦ AQ7	
	♣ AK	
West		East
♠ J7		♠ 843
♥ 93		♥ Q42
♦ KJ8543		♦ 109
♣ Q106		♣ J9732
	South	
	♠ K1065	
	♥ J1065	
	♦ 62	
	♣ 854	

At one table, after the auction above, South passed. With the ♦K and the ♥Q both where expected on the auction, declarer made 12 tricks, +480. West led the ♠J. South won and cashed ♥A, ♥K.

One way to look at this type of situation is, 'What have I promised? Is my hand better than that?'. South promised nothing with the 3♥ bid and nothing more with the 4♥ bid. North is prepared to play at the 5-level opposite, say:

♠ 1065
♥ J1065
♦ 62
♣ 8543

If North is prepared to play in 5♥ opposite that, is the actual hand sufficiently stronger to justify 6♥?

At the other table, it went the same way up to 4♥. North then bid 4NT : South 5♦ (no key cards), North 6♦ : South 6♥, all pass. Declarer made 12 tricks, +980, +11 Imps. North might have found South with a yarborough.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

North

♠ A54

♥ QJ54

♦ 8752

♣ 102

East

♠ K732

♥ 72

♦ J106

♣ 9876

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

North

Pass

2NT⁽²⁾

3♠⁽³⁾

5♥

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2♣⁽¹⁾

3♥

4♥

6♥

(1) Artificial, game-force

(2) 5-8 balanced

(3) Cue-bid in support of hearts

West leads the ♠J: four – king – six. What do you play at trick 2?

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

North

♠ A54

♥ QJ54

♦ 8752

♣ 102

West

♠ J1098

♥ 10

♦ 943

♣ AQ543

East

♠ K732

♥ 72

♦ J106

♣ 9876

South

♠ Q6

♥ AK9863

♦ AKQ

♣ KJ

After the auction above, East won trick 1 with the ♠K and returned a spade. South won, drew trumps, cashed ♦A, ♦K, ♦Q, crossed to the ♥J and cashed the ♠A and ♦8, discarding the ♣J and ♣K for +980.

As the lead marked South with the ♠Q, East needs to switch at trick 2. Should the shift be to a diamond or to a club? If declarer has a diamond loser, it is unlikely to vanish, but a club loser might vanish if dummy's diamonds give South a discard (imagine South has ♣K-Q or ♣K bare in a 3-6-3-1 pattern). If the slam can be defeated, a club at trick 2 looks to be your best chance.

		North		
		♠ A54		
		♥ QJ54		
		♦ 8752		
		♣ 102		
West			East	
♠ J1098			♠ K732	
♥ 10			♥ 72	
♦ 943			♦ J106	
♣ AQ543			♣ 9876	
		South		
		♠ Q6		
		♥ AK9863		
		♦ AKQ		
		♣ KJ		

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾
Dble ⁽²⁾	Rdbl ⁽³⁾	2♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

- (1) Artificial, game-force
(2) Shows clubs
(3) 5-8 points
(4) A psyche (bluff bid)

East led the ♣6 and the defence took the first four tricks. It was only the blockage in clubs that prevented the defence from taking five tricks. That was +600 for North-South but -13 Imps. If East had switched to a club at trick 2 at the other table, it would have been +13 Imps.

Incidentally, after the auction above, South should remove 3NT to 4♥. North figures to have a stopper in hearts and whether it is ♥Q-x-x or ♥J-x-x-x, 4♥ is where you want to be. East bid 2♥ on the basis of the vulnerability. If 2♥ had been doubled, East would run to 3♣. If that is doubled it should cost 500 at most.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. South dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠ ⁽¹⁾	2♥	1♣
Pass	?		Dble ⁽²⁾

(1) 4+ diamonds, denies 4 spades

(2) For takeout

What would you do as North with:

♠ K109
♥ J75
♦ 10972
♣ A53

2. West dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Dble ⁽¹⁾	?

(1) Negative double, 6+ points, 4+ hearts

What would you do as South with:

♠ 5
♥ K654
♦ 8
♣ AJ108743

Suppose the auction had been:

West	North	East	South
1♦	2♠ ⁽¹⁾	Dble ⁽²⁾	?

(1) 6+ spades, 11-14 points

(2) Negative double, 6+ points, 4+ hearts

What would you do with the same South hand?

(Answers tomorrow)

Why not discuss the problems by phone with your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

*There once as an old Grand Life Master,
Who wouldn't play cards any faster.
He said, "Oh, I know
Why I play too slow.
That's how I prevent a disaster."
(ACBL Bulletin, March 2020)*