108. Placing the cards

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East: North-South vulnerable

North

- **★** K103
- **♥** KO92
- ♦ K97
- **♣** 853

South

- **♠**9
- ♥ J87643
- ♦ Q5
- ♣ AK74

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	3 ♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♥ ⁽²⁾
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Limit raise with 4+ hearts
- (2) Based more on hope and shape than on points

West leads the \checkmark 10: king – ace – four. East returns the \spadesuit 7: nine – ace – three. West continues with the \spadesuit Q. Plan the play.

You have lost a heart and a spade and have a club loser and a diamond loser to come. How can you deal with that? You could take ♠K, discarding ♦5, and then play ♦7. If East has ♦A and ducks, you make the ♦Q without losing a diamond. The trouble is that East can beat you by rising with ♦A, This plan also fails if West has ♦A.

There is a better plan, known as a 'Morton's Fork'. If you lead low towards your $\bullet Q$ and East ducks with the $\bullet A$ or if you lead the $\bullet 5$ from hand and West ducks with the $\bullet A$, your honour wins and you can pitch your other diamond on the $\bullet K$. The first requirement then is not to play the $\bullet K$ on the $\bullet Q$. You play the $\bullet 10$ and ruff in hand. You can then draw the missing trump.

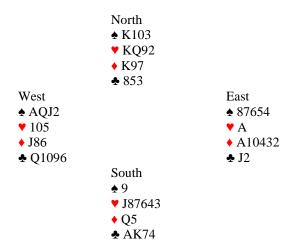
The second requirement is to decide whether the \bullet A is with East or West, since you need to lead through that opponent. If they play second-hand-high and rise with the \bullet A, you can unblock the \bullet Q later, cross to dummy with a trump and pitch two clubs, one on the \bullet K and one on the \bullet K. If the player with the \bullet A plays second-hand-low, your honour wins and the \bullet K allows you to pitch your second diamond from hand.

So, who has the ♠A? What do you know so far? East began with the ♠A and West with the ♠A and ♠Q. Given the ♠Q at trick 3, you can also place West with the ♠J. Either opponent can have the ♠J and ♠J. There is no certainty of course, but chances are that these honours are split rather than all in one hand.

On West's ♠Q, you duck in dummy, East plays ♠8 and you ruff in hand. When you play a low heart to dummy's ♥Q, West follows with the ♥5 and East discards the ♦2. East-West play high-encourage, low-discourage. What credence do you give to East's ♦2?

If the $\diamond 2$ is genuine, the $\diamond A$ will be with West. The defenders will signal honestly when they deem it necessary, but they are also not out to help you. You should view the $\diamond 2$ with a jaundiced eye.

Your best approach is to work with the information you have. East is a passed hand and has shown the ♥A. East could have the ♦A plus two out of the missing honours in the minor suits. With ♥A, ◆A and ♣Q, East still does not have enough to open. What about West? You have given West the ♠A, ♠Q, ♠J. If you add the ◆A and nothing more, then West has a pass. If you add a jack or two or the ♣Q, that would give West 12-13 points, a doubleton in hearts and very likely four spades. With five spades, West would definitely have overcalled 1♠ and with four spades, West would very likely have doubled. West did not do either. That places the ◆A with East.



This deal was a replay from the final of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open K-O Teams).

South was in $4\blacktriangledown$ after the auction given. West led the $\blacktriangledown10$, king, ace. East switched to the $\blacktriangle7$. West took the \blacktriangleA and returned the \blacktriangleQ (helpful): ten – eight – $\blacktriangledown4$. After $\blacktriangledown6$ to the $\blacktriangledown9$, East playing $\spadesuit2$, declarer continued with the $\spadesuit7$: four – queen – eight, followed by the $\blacktriangledown8$ to the \blacktriangledownQ and the \blacktriangleK , pitching the $\spadesuit5$. South could ruff the fourth club in dummy for ten tricks.

In the Spingold:

West	North	East	South
Sementa	Lindqvist	Bocchi	Brogeland
	_	Pass	Pass
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♥
3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♠	4♣
Pass	4♥	Dble	All Pass

(1) Strong spade raise (in context)

West led the Δ A and switched to the J: seven – ace – five. East switched to the J, but South had no trouble coming to ten tricks, +590.

At the other table:

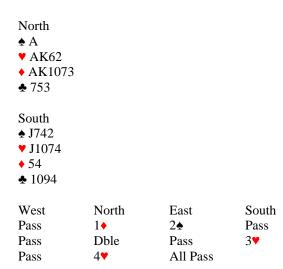
West	North	East	South
Diamond	Bilde	Platnick	Duboin
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2 ♣ ⁽¹⁾	2♥
Pass	2 ♠ ⁽²⁾	4♠	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Maximum pass + spade support
- (2) Strong heart raise

North led the ▼K. Declarer lost a spade, two clubs and a diamond, one off, −100, but +10 Imps.

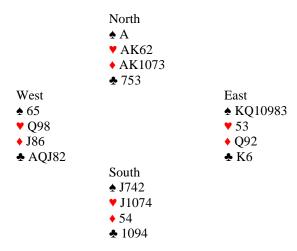
Of interest is the fact that in the Spingold, neither South opened even though the hand meets Marty Bergen's Rule of 20 (open in first or second seat if HCP + cards in the two long suits = 20+) or the extension, the Rule of 22 (open in first or second seat if total of HCP + cards in two long suits + quick tricks = 22+). Presumably both Souths downgraded the diamond holding.

Bd. 36: Dealer West: East-West vulnerable

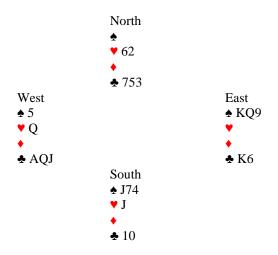


West leads the $\clubsuit 6$: ace – ten – two. You play $\spadesuit A$, $\spadesuit K$ and ruff the $\spadesuit 3$. Both opponents follow. How do you continue?

You have set up two winners in dummy. You might be tempted to play ♥A, ♥K and cash the diamond winners, pitching two clubs. That would work if the ♥Q came down doubleton, but it would not work on the actual deal:

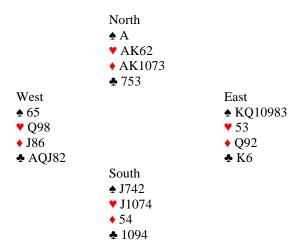


After the early play and $\forall A$, $\forall K$, this is the position:



When you play a club, West wins, plays ♥Q and South goes one down.

Dealer West: East-West vulnerable



The 4 contract is not very good. It needs favourable breaks in hearts (with the $\mathbf{V}Q$ onside) and in diamonds. There is also a point to be made about the auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

What strength do you expect from the 3♥ bid? With 4 hearts, South can be 0-6 points or so. With a good 6 or 7+ points, South could have made a negative double. After North's takeout double, some play 2NT as 'Lebensohl', asking opener to bid 3♣. The 2NT : 3♣, 3♥ shows a really weak hand and bidding 3♥ at once without travelling via 2NT shows reasonable values in context. Here, with 11 losers, South's actual hand would travel via 2NT, while an immediate 3♥ could be something like one of these:

♦ 8742	or	♦ 8742	or	♦ 874
♥ J1074		♥ QJ74		9 874
♦ 54		♦ Q5		♦ 54
♣ A94		♣ 1094		♣ KQ106

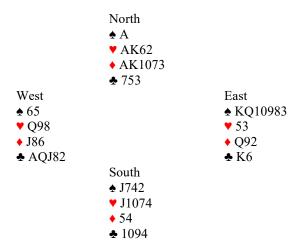
In the Spingold:

West	North	East	South
Platnick	Duboin	Diamond	Bilde
Pass	1♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	Pass	$2NT^{(1)}$
Pass	3 ♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Please bid 3♣.
- (2) My hand is too strong for 3♣. I have 4 hearts and 5+ diamonds.

East led the ΔK . Declarer played ΔA , ΔA , K, diamond, ruffed low, followed by the J: eight – two – three and 10: queen – ace – five for ten tricks, +420

Dealer West: East-West vulnerable



At the other table:

West	North	East	South
Bocchi	Brogeland	Sementa	Lindqvist
Pass	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♣	Dble	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

West led the Δ 6 to the Δ A. Declarer played Δ A, Δ K, diamond ruff and exited with a club. He later took the heart finesse for ten tricks, ± 170 but ± 6 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North: North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣	Pass	2 \(\big(2) \)
Pass	?		
(1) 15-17 p	ooints		
(2) No 4-ca	ard or 5-card m	najor	

- 3

What would you do as North with:

- **▲** 10985
- **♥** A82
- ♦ KJ532
- **♣** 10
- 2. With neither side vulnerable, East deals and passes. What would you do as South with:
 - **★** 10532
 - **♥** A84
 - ♦ A10
 - **♣** AK64

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

I don't like the fact that my chances of survival seem to be linked to the common sense of others.