

114.

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ K1095
♥ 109
♦ 6532
♣ K32

South
♠ AJ
♥ AKQJ43
♦ Q10
♣ Q64

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You are not required to agree with South's bidding, but that is what happened. West leads the ♣J: two – nine – queen. Plan the play

One hope is that East began with ♣A-9 doubleton and West with J-10-8-7-5 and on the next round of clubs you play low in dummy and hope the ace drops from East. It's a plan, but it's not a great plan.

Another choice is to play ♠A and ♠K. This works quickly if the ♠Q drops under the ♠A (you draw trumps, cash spades and make 11 tricks). If the ♠Q falls doubleton, you play ♥10, ♥9, ♠10 and hope the hand short in spades has two hearts at most. If the ♠Q has not dropped, you ruff the third spade. If the queen drops, play ♥10, ♥9 and dummy's spade winner. You hope that the hand which began with ♠Q-x-x has no more than two hearts.

You hope the full deal is something like this:

	North	
	♠ K1095	
	♥ 109	
	♦ 6532	
	♣ K32	
West		East
♠ Q87		♠ 6432
♥ 87		♥ 652
♦ AJ74		♦ K98
♣ J1075		♣ A98
	South	
	♠ AJ	
	♥ AKQJ43	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ Q64	

Do you have a better plan?

This is the full deal, which arose on a game on BBO.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K1095	
	♥ 109	
	♦ 6532	
	♣ K32	
West		East
♠ Q8762		♠ 43
♥ 872		♥ 65
♦ A74		♦ KJ98
♣ J5		♣ A10987
	South	
	♠ AJ	
	♥ AKQJ43	
	♦ Q10	
	♣ Q64	

The winning line after taking the ♣Q at trick 1 is ♠A and ♠J and let the ♠J run. When that wins, play ♥10, ♥9 and the ♠K. This works on the actual layout and whenever spades are 4-3 with the ♠Q with West.

Point of interest: Did you notice which club East played at trick one? When signaling high to encourage, one normally signals with the highest of equal cards. Here that would be the ♣10, but if East plays the ♣10, declarer will know that West's ♣J is singleton or top from a doubleton. East therefore hid the ♣10 from declarer's eyes.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ --
♥ 109642
♦ K52
♣ 109876

The textbooks say you should have 6 points to respond. Here you have only three. People will not point you out in the street if you choose to pass. On the other hand, you have secondary support for diamonds. If partner has 5+ diamonds, then your 3-card support plus the void in spades boosts the value of your hand. With support for partner, we add shortage points: void = 5, singleton = 3 and doubleton = 1. That is not to say, of course, that you should be supporting diamonds. If you choose to respond, your bid should be 1♥.

There are other reasons to bid 1♥. You have excellent shape. If partner has a hand beyond minimum strength and heart support, game could be possible. Suppose partner has:

♠ 984
♥ AK53
♦ AQJ64
♣ A

You would be very happy to be in 4♥ opposite that.

Another reason to bid 1♥ is to make it harder for East-West to compete. They are sure to have at least an 8-card spade fit and probably have a 9-card or 10-card spade fit. There is no guarantee of safety in bidding, but passing does not guarantee you glory either.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

North
 ♠ AK108
 ♥ QJ85
 ♦ Q1064
 ♣ A

South
 ♠ --
 ♥ 109642
 ♦ K52
 ♣ 109876

At one table it went:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♠3. Plan the play. Suppose you take the ♠A and discard the ♦2. What next?

The deal arose on BBO with robots East-West at every table and also North at some tables.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK108	
	♥ QJ85	
	♦ Q1064	
	♣ A	
West		East
♠ 95432		♠ QJ76
♥ A		♥ K73
♦ J7		♦ A983
♣ KJ543		♣ Q2
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ 109642	
	♦ K52	
	♣ 109876	

At one table, robot North's 1♦ was passed out, North-South +70, N-S +0.27 Imps. At five tables human South passed 1♦, robot West bid 1♠, robot North passed, robot East bid 3♦, strong raise to 3♠, West bid 3♠, all pass. The same contract was reached with one human North, where it began Pass : Pass : 1♦ : Pass, Pass : 1♠, Double : 3♦, Pass : 3♠, all pass. Each North led the ♣A and switched to the ♥Q. West won and played a spade. West lost a club, two spades and incurred a club ruff at some point, but had nine tricks, +140, East-West +4.53 Imps.

At four tables with South the only human, it went Pass : Pass : 1♦ : Pass, 1♥ : Pass : 3♥, all pass. Three Souths made ten tricks, +170 (+2.67 Imps). One made nine tricks, +140 (+2.13 Imps). One human North opened 1NT, human South bid 2♦, transfer to hearts, North bid 3♥, all pass, ten tricks, +170 (+2.67 Imps). At four tables, South reached 4♥, twice with South the only human via Pass : Pass : 1♦ : 1♥, Pass : 3♥ : Pass : 4♥, once with human North, robot South via the same auction and once via the auction at the top of the page (Pass : 1♦, 1♥ : 4♥, all pass). One human South and the robot South went one down, -100 (-3.18 Imps).

Where the human South was in 4♥ after Pass : 1♦, 1♥ : 3♥, 4♥, all pass, West led the ♠3: eight – jack – ♥2. South crossed to the ♣A and played the ♦4: nine – king – seven. Then came club ruff, ♠A, ♠K, pitching diamonds, diamond ruff and ultimately 10 tricks, +620 (+10.87 Imps).

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK108	
	♥ QJ85	
	♦ Q1064	
	♣ A	
West		East
♠ 95432		♠ QJ76
♥ A		♥ K73
♦ J7		♦ A983
♣ KJ543		♣ Q2
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ 109642	
	♦ K52	
	♣ 109876	

At the last table, humans North and South, South was in 4♥ after Pass : 1♦, 1♥ : 4♥, all pass. Robot West led the ♠3: ace – seven – ♦2. Then came the ♣A and the ♦4: nine – king – seven. South ruffed a club in dummy, cashed the ♠K, discarding ♦5, ruffed a diamond and ruffed a club, also making ten tricks, +620 (+10.87 Imps).

Both declarers in 4♥ played a variation of the Morton's Fork. When the ♦4 is led from dummy, if East takes the ♦A, South has two diamond winners with the ♦K and ♦Q and three in practice when the ♦J comes down. When East played low on the ♦4, South won and East never came to a diamond trick.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

	North		
	♠ KJ754		
	♥ 102		
	♦ K983		
	♣ 105		
West			
♠ Q9			
♥ K76			
♦ Q106			
♣ AQ863			
West	North	East	South
	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2NT ⁽²⁾
Pass	3♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) 5-card weak-two in hearts or in spades
- (2) Strong inquiry
- (3) 5 spades + 4 diamonds or 4 clubs

- 1. West leads the ♦6: eight – jack – ace.
- 2. South plays ♠2: nine – jack – ace.
- 3. East returns the ♦4: five – ten – king.
- 4. Declarer plays the ♠K: ten – eight – queen.
- 5. Declarer plays the ♣5: two – king – ace.

What would you play as West at trick 6? Make your own decision if possible, but if you need it, here is a clue. Check what happened on tricks 1 and 3.

2. Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ 2
♥ K9875
♦ J42
♣ A732

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

*A priest, a rabbit and a minister walk into a bar.
The barman asks the rabbit, "What'll ya have?"
The rabbit replies, "I dunno. I am only here because of Autocorrect."*