

138. Tales about clubs

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾

(1) 5+ hearts

What would you do as West with:

♠ QJ6
♥ 965
♦ AJ
♣ KQ1043

Suppose you have chosen to double. The auction continues:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Dble	2NT ⁽²⁾	4♥	Pass
?			

(1) 5+ hearts
(2) Maximum pass, 4+ hearts

What do you do now?

The deal arose in Session 3 of the 2016 Spingold Final (USA K-O Open Teams) between [FLEISHER](#) and [ZIMMERMANN](#).

	North	
	♠ A853	
	♥ Q1032	
	♦ 1094	
	♣ A9	
West		East
♠ QJ6		♠ K742
♥ 965		♥ --
♦ AJ		♦ KQ765
♣ KQ1043		♣ J652
	South	
	♠ 109	
	♥ AKJ874	
	♦ 832	
	♣ 87	

After South opened in third seat, the normal action for West is an overcall of 2♣. The drawbacks for the double are the lack of four spades when you are doubling with minimum strength, the length in hearts and the lack of support for diamonds. Had West overcalled 2♣, East-West would almost certainly have reached 5♣.

After North bid 2NT, strong heart raise, and East bid 4♥, pick a game (what else could it mean?), it surprised me that a player as great as Geir Helgemo chose 4♠, all pass. It was clear on the auction that East would have a void or a singleton in hearts and no more than four spades. With five spades, East would have bid 4♠ over 2NT. It was also clear that repeated heart leads would shorten East's trump length and a 4-2 split in spades, the most likely division of six missing cards, would wreak havoc on the 4♠ game. A better choice would have been 5♣.

Bd. 35: Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

	North ♠ A853 ♥ Q1032 ♦ 1094 ♣ A9	
West ♠ QJ6 ♥ 965 ♦ AJ ♣ KQ1043		East ♠ K742 ♥ -- ♦ KQ765 ♣ J652
	South ♠ 109 ♥ AKJ874 ♦ 832 ♣ 87	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Dble	2NT ⁽²⁾	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) 5+ hearts

(2) Maximum pass, 4+ hearts

Joe Grue (N) led the ♣A, followed by the ♣9, taken by the ♣J. After ♦5 to the ♦A, West played the ♠J: five – two – nine and the ♠6. North rose with the ♠A and switched to the ♥2, ruffed with the ♠7. Next came the ♠K. Had spades been 3-3, West would have made the rest of the tricks. With the 4-2 split. Declarer and dummy were now out of trumps, while North had a trump left. The best that declarer could do was cash two more diamonds. West made 2 spades, a heart ruff, a club and 3 diamonds, three light, North-South +150.

This was yesterday's first problem:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ K742
 ♥ --
 ♦ KQ765
 ♣ J652

The East hand has only 9 HCP, but it has good shape and the vulnerability is favourable. For those who want to bid with the slightest excuse, a 1♦ opening presents itself. That is what happened at the other table:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	1♥
1♠ ⁽¹⁾	2NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	3♥
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Balanced hand, no heart stopper, not 4 spades

(2) Maximum pass, 4+ hearts

I suspect that West intended the double as takeout or more likely, 'do what's right'. East might have bid 4♣, but perhaps thinking West had length in hearts, East opted to pass. Unless West's double was clearly for penalties or 1♠ did not deny strength in hearts, that was a big position for East to take.

Bd. 35: Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A853	
	♥ Q1032	
	♦ 1094	
	♣ A9	
West		East
♠ QJ6		♠ K742
♥ 965		♥ --
♦ AJ		♦ KQ765
♣ KQ1043		♣ J652
	South	
	♠ 109	
	♥ AKJ874	
	♦ 832	
	♣ 87	

West led the ♥5. South drew trumps ending in dummy and played the ♠3: two – ten – jack. West switched to the ♣K, ace. The defence came to 1 spade, 3 diamonds and a 1 club, one down, East-West +200 and 8 Imps to **FLEISHER**. East-West were very lucky that South's pattern was 2-6-3-2. Had it been 2-6-2-3, 3♥ doubled would have made.

This was the auction when the deal was replayed in a BBO game:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	1♥
2♣	2NT ⁽¹⁾	3♣ ⁽²⁾	3♥
5♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Maximum pass, 4+ hearts

(2) Always give support to partner when you can, even with a weak (sub-minimum opening)

North led the ♥2, ruffed. Then came ♦5 to ♦A, heart ruff, ♦6 to ♦J, heart ruff, ♠J to the ♣A and West made 11 tricks, East-West +400.

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

	North		
	♠ K32		
	♥ K86		
	♦ J984		
	♣ QJ6		
West			
♠ A9864			
♥ 103			
♦ 532			
♣ K83			
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 5+ hearts

(2) Maximum pass, heart support

West leads the ♦3: four – king – six. East switches to the ♠Q: ♠5 from South. Do you take the ♠A or do you duck? If you do take the ♠A, what do you play at trick 3?

This deal arose later in the same match:

Bd. 40: Dealer West : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K32	
	♥ K86	
	♦ J984	
	♣ QJ6	
West		East
♠ A9864		♠ QJ107
♥ 103		♥ 94
♦ 532		♦ AK107
♣ K83		♣ 1042
	South	
	♠ 5	
	♥ AQJ752	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ A975	

When the deal was replayed in a BBO game, West led the ♦3 against South's 4♥. East won with the ♦K and switched to the ♠Q. West won and returned a spade. South played low in dummy, ruffed in hand, cashed ♥A, ♥Q, ♥K, ♠K, discarding ♦Q. Declarer had a club loser, but lost only three tricks in all, North-South +620.

East could have defeated 4♥ with a club switch at trick 2 or ♦K, ♦A and then a spade switch. West could have defeated 4♥ after taking the ♠A and continuing with the ♦5. You can allocate the blame between East and West.

In the 2016 Spingold:

West	North	East	South
<i>Helness</i>	<i>Moss</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>	<i>Grue</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 5+ hearts

(2) Maximum pass, heart support

West led the ♦2 (thirds and fifths): four – king – six. East cashed the ♦A: queen – three – eight and switched to the ♠7. East took the ♠A and returned the ♠4, taken by the ♠K, South discarding a club. After drawing trumps ending in dummy, South could pitch another club on the ♦J, but when the ♦10 did not drop and the club finesse lost, South was one down, East-West +100.

West	North	East	South
<i>Welland</i>	<i>Martens</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Multon</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦ ⁽¹⁾	1♥
Dble ⁽²⁾	2♥	2♠	3♣ ⁽³⁾
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) Lead directing with third-in-hand light opening

(2) 4+ spades

(3) Inviting game, seeking help in clubs

West led the ♦2 (thirds and fifths): four – king – six. East switched to the ♣4: five – king – six. West returned the ♣8. Declarer could not escape a spade loser later as well as a second diamond loser, one light, East-West +100, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North		
	♠ 109		
	♥ J98		
	♦ 8		
	♣ AKQJ953		
West			
♠ 82			
♥ A53			
♦ 976542			
♣ 84			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	4♠	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

You, West, lead the ♠8: nine – jack – ace. South plays the ♥K. Plan the defence.

2. Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North		
	♠ QJ109		
	♥ Q632		
	♦ 1083		
	♣ 42		
	East		
	♠ 8532		
	♥ KJ		
	♦ 97642		
	♣ 75		
West	North	East	South
2♣	2♥	All Pass	1♥

West leads the ♦K, followed by the ♦A, South following with the ♦J and ♦Q. West switches to the ♥7: two – jack – ace. South returns the ♥10: four – three – king. What do you play now?

What would you play at trick 5 if trick 3 had been ♥4: two – jack – ace and trick 5: ♥10 – seven – three – king?

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

Seniors' behaviour: You still haven't learned to act your age and hope you never will.