

141. Double development

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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

(1) 7-9 points, 4+ spades

(2) Shows exactly 2 spades

What would you do as East with:

♠ 3
♥ Q86
♦ AK10742
♣ K72

In an auction where your side bids to 4♥ via hearts bid and supported and the opponents then bid 4♠ with spades bid and supported, Matt Mullamphy of Sydney proposed an idea some years ago to help the side bidding hearts to judge whether to defend or whether to bid to 5♥. The player immediately after the 4♠ bidder indicates the spade length by (a) doubling with exactly two spades or (b) passing with 0-1 or 3+ spades. The deadly holding for bidding 5♥ is often two spades opposite two spades. Where next player passes 4♠, the partner can usually tell – no guarantees – whether it is 0-1 spade or 3+ spades, based on the number of spades held.

Today's deals feature two deals where this concept occurred.

2017 Gold Coast Teams: Round 9

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ1092	
	♥ K105	
	♦ 963	
	♣ 54	
West		East
♠ K6		♠ 3
♥ A9432		♥ Q86
♦ QJ8		♦ AK10742
♣ QJ3		♣ K72
	South	
	♠ Q8754	
	♥ J7	
	♦ 5	
	♣ A10986	

East knows that West has exactly two spades. Therefore North-South have ten spades between them. That strongly suggests bidding 5♥. That does not underwrite success, but usually it will be the better decision. On the actual layout, 4♠ might be defeated. The defence can take a diamond and a club. The hand might come down to declarer picking the heart position. If South plays West for the ♥A, 4♠ will succeed.

To give declarer a problem, West will need to lead a low heart before South sets up the clubs. Suppose West leads the ♦Q and plays a second diamond. South ruffs, plays ♠8 and lets it run when West plays low. After ♠A, South ducks a club. If West does not play a low heart now, South can play ♣A, ruff a club, cross to the ♠Q and cash two clubs, discarding two hearts from dummy. Ten tricks, North-South +790. Even if West does switch to a low heart, declarer might well put up the king. West's failure to lead a heart suggests holding the ♥A.

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	♦ 963	
	♣ 54	
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	♠ Q8754	
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West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	1♠
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(1) 7-9 points, 4+ spades

(2) Shows exactly 2 spades

Meanwhile, if East sacrifices in 5♥ and West is allowed to play there, doubled or undoubled, what will happen? If North leads the ♠A, that sets up West's ♠K. The defence can then always come to a spade, a heart and a club.

How about if North leads the ♣5 and South ducks? West can play ♥A and a second heart. North wins, continues with the ♣4, South wins and gives North a club ruff. That is three tricks for the defence and the ♠A takes 5♥ two down, N-S +500 if 5♥ is doubled, +200 if undoubled. That is still better for East-West than -790 in 4♠ doubled.

Incidentally, if East is going to remove West's double of 4♠, East should bid 5♦, offering West a choice of contracts. There is a very good case for West passing 5♦. There is no club ruff available for North-South in 5♦ and East-West will be -100 in 5♦ undoubled or -200 if doubled.

There is an even better reason for East's bidding 5♥. The whole deal could look like this:

	North	
	♠ AKJ102	
	♥ 1052	
	♦ 963	
	♣ 54	
West		East
♠ 96		♠ 3
♥ AK943		♥ Q86
♦ QJ8		♦ AK10742
♣ QJ3		♣ K72
	South	
	♠ Q8754	
	♥ J7	
	♦ 5	
	♣ A10986	

'Oh,' you might say, 'now 4♠ doubled is two down, losing two hearts, a diamond and a club. That's +500 for East-West.' Indeed, it is, but you should also notice that now 5♥ and 5♦ are both unbeatable for +650 / +600 or more if doubled. It is unlucky for East-West that West had three worthless points with the ♠K under the ♠A.

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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	♠ AJ1092	
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West		East
♠ K6		♠ 3
♥ A9432		♥ Q86
♦ QJ8		♦ AK10742
♣ QJ3		♣ K72
	South	
	♠ Q8754	
	♥ J7	
	♦ 5	
	♣ A10986	

The main results on this deal from the 2017 Gold Coast Congress were 3NT West x 51: +690, +660, +630 x 3, +600 x 19, -100 x 27; 4♥ West x 59: +680, +650 x 11, +620 x 37 -100 x 8, -200 x 2; 5♥ West x 20: 650, -100 x 14, -200 x 5; 5♥ West, doubled x 2: -200, -500; 5♦ East: -100 x 17; 4♠ +620 x 11; 4♠ doubled -200 x 12, +790 x 26, +990 x 1.

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) 4+ hearts, 0-5 points

(2) Exactly 2 spades

What would you do as West with:

♠ A543
 ♥ AQJ82
 ♦ A942
 ♣ --

You have four spades and partner has two?? The opponents are sacrificing with only seven trumps, a likely 5-2 fit? This looks like a really good time to play for penalties. Note that if East had passed, you would have a good reason to bid 5♥. Partner would have a singleton or a void in spades and 4+ trumps. Partner might have as little as this:

x	or	--
K x x x		x x x x
x x x x		K x x x
x x x x		x x x x x

You would have good chances of making 5♥. Of course, there are other holdings for partner where 5♥ is not so great, but once you learn that partner has two spades, any temptation to bid 5♥ is eliminated.

2017 Autumn National Open Teams: Round 1

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

	North		
	♠ J7		
	♥ 1043		
	♦ KQ875		
	♣ A107		
West		East	
♠ A543		♠ 108	
♥ AQJ82		♥ 9765	
♦ A942		♦ 1063	
♣ --		♣ QJ83	
	South		
	♠ KQ962		
	♥ K		
	♦ J		
	♣ K96542		

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

(1) 4+ hearts, 0-5 points

(2) Exactly 2 spades

You might not like South's 3♠ bid, but that is what happened. No doubt North expected South to have at least six spades. Some play non-leaping Michaels where a bid of 4♣ by South over East's 3♥ would show 5+ clubs and 5+ spades. That would not have a happy ending either.

Note that in 5♥ you always lose a spade and two diamonds. Even 4♥ can be defeated. You need to deal with the fourth round of diamonds. If you attempt to ruff spades in dummy, North can ruff with the ♥10 on the third spade and play a trump, followed by another trump when in with a top diamond.

Against 4♠ doubled, you do very well indeed if you start with the ♥A and continue with a top heart, ruffed by South. If South plays the ♦J, you take the ♦A and your last top heart. If South ruffs, you now have more trumps than South.

Results: 4♥ doubled +590; 4♥ x 20: +450 x 3, +420 x 7, -50 x 10; 5♥ +450 x 1, -50 x 2; 5♥ doubled -300 x 2; 4♠ doubled +690 (don't ask); 4♠ -150 x 2; 5♣ doubled -500 x 2, -300 x 1; 5♣ -100 x 4, -150 x 1.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT ⁽¹⁾	2♦ ⁽²⁾	3♦ ⁽³⁾	Pass
4♥	4♠	?	3♣

(1) 15-17 points

(2) Spades and another suit

(3) Transfer to hearts

What would you do as East with:

♠ 9
♥ AJ875
♦ J97542
♣ K

2. Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♣ ⁽¹⁾
4♥	4♠	2♣ ⁽²⁾	2♣
		?	

(1) Artificial, 12+ points balanced or long clubs or 17+ points

(2) Strong raise to 2♥

(3) 5 spades, 17+ points

What would you do as East with:

♠ J86
♥ A10975
♦ QJ2
♣ J4

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

The location of your letterbox shows you how far away from your house you can be in a dressing gown before you start looking like a mental patient.