

180. Paradise lost

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ 103
♥ Q7
♦ AQ752
♣ Q1082

South
♠ A2
♥ AK84
♦ 843
♣ K963

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------------------|---------------------|-------|
| | Pass | Pass | 1♣ |
| Pass | 1♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Dble ⁽²⁾ | 1NT |
| 2♥ | 3NT | Pass | Pass |
| Dble | Pass | Pass | Pass |

(1) No 4+ major

(2) Shows spades

West leads the ♠K: three – four – two and switches to the ♥J: queen – six (discouraging) – four. South plays the ♣2: seven – king – ace. West reverts to the ♠Q: ten – five – ace. How would you continue? Make up your mind before reading on.

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| | Pass | ? | |

What would you do as East with:

♠ J97654
♥ 6532
♦ KJ
♣ 7

The deal comes from the semi-final match in the 2020 North America Online Bridge Championship between [LEVINE](#) (Mike Levine – Eddie Wold, Geir Helgemo – Tor Helness, Jeff Meckstroth – Eric Rodwell) and [TULIN](#) (Stan Tulin – David Bakhshi, Alon Birman – Dror Padon, Cornelis Van Prooijen – Louk Verhees).

Board 50: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

| | | | | | |
|--------|---------|----------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| | North | West | North | East | South |
| | ♠ 103 | <i>Verhees</i> | <i>Helness</i> | <i>V.Prooijen</i> | <i>Helgemo</i> |
| | ♥ Q7 | | Pass | 2♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Dble ⁽²⁾ |
| | ♦ AQ752 | 3♣ | Dble ⁽³⁾ | Pass | 3NT |
| | ♣ Q1082 | Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| West | | East | (1) This is not everyone's idea of a weak two | | |
| ♠ KQ8 | | ♠ J97654 | (2) Takeout | | |
| ♥ J109 | | ♥ 6532 | (3) Takeout, for the minors | | |
| ♦ 1096 | | ♦ KJ | | | |
| ♣ AJ54 | | ♣ 7 | West led the ♠K, ducked, and the ♠Q, taken by the ace. | | |
| | South | | South played the ♣3. West grabbed the ♣A and continued | | |
| | ♠ A2 | | With the ♠8. Declarer lost 5 spades and the ♣A, two down, | | |
| | ♥ AK84 | | East-West +100. | | |
| | ♦ 843 | | | | |
| | ♣ K963 | | | | |

At the other table:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| <i>M'stroth</i> | <i>Padon</i> | <i>Rodwell</i> | <i>Birman</i> |
| | Pass | Pass! | 1♣ |
| Pass | 1♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Dble ⁽²⁾ | 1NT |
| 2♥ ⁽³⁾ | 3NT | Pass | Pass |
| Dble | Pass | Pass | Pass |

(1) No 4+ major

(2) Shows spades

(3) Was this a psyche? A good spade raise? Not known.

West led the ♠K: three – four – two and switched to the ♥J. (Did West now think that East's double of 1♠ was takeout and included hearts? More likely West thought South might have the ♦K and then East should have the ♥K.) Declarer won with the ♥Q and played the ♣2: seven – king – ace. West reverted to spades with the ♠Q: ten – five – ace. What next?

The layout is lucky for South and West's defence has been kind. If South now plays the ♣9 and lets it run if West plays low, South will make three clubs, the ♠A, four hearts (with the J-10-9 of hearts coming down, South's ♥8 becomes high) and the ♦A, nine tricks, +550.

Instead, South did a strange thing. At trick 5, South finessed the ♦Q. East won and cashed four spades to take 3NT three down, East-West +500 and 12 Imps to [LEVINE](#).

The diamond finesse was curious in a number of ways. Once the ♠A had been dislodged, declarer cannot set up the diamonds for four tricks without losing a diamond trick. Even if the diamond finesse had succeeded, South could count on only one spade, three or four hearts, two diamonds and a club. That is seven tricks and declarer still needs one or two extra club tricks. Since you need the club finesse anyway, you might as well take it after winning with the ♠A.

Another curious aspect to the diamond finesse was this: South has seen West turn up with the ♠K, ♠Q and ♣A. Would East have doubled 1♠ to show a spade suit with a hand that consisted of three jacks at best? Was it more likely that East's double was based on a hand with two or three jacks or one that had spades plus the ♦K? Maybe you would need to know East's competitive style and degree of aggression to make a fair decision.

[LEVINE](#) won Session 3 by 36-26. [TULIN](#) won Session 4 by 50-35, but [LEVINE](#) won the match by 139-115.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------------|-------------------|------|-------|
| | Pass | 1♥ | 2♦ |
| 2♠ ⁽¹⁾ | 3♥ ⁽²⁾ | ? | |

(1) Natural, not forcing
(2) Strong diamond raise

What would you do as East with:

♠ J5
♥ KQJ104
♦ 83
♣ A763

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

This Officer can be likened to a small puppy. He runs around excitedly, leaving little messes for other people to clean up. (British Military Staff Appraisal)

New book: *The Power of Pass* (by Harold Schogger and Ron Klinger). \$A25.00 Available from Suzie Klinger, post free until 2021: email suzie@ronklingerbridge.com or telephone 0411 229 705.