

216. Not best in the bidding or the play

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

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

(1) 18-19 balanced

(2) 5 spades

What would you do as South with:

♠ A104
♥ Q1095
♦ KJ2
♣ AKJ

Partner has shown 5 spades and it is normal to show support when you have three trumps. It is true that you have a 4-3-3-3 pattern, which makes no-trumps attractive, but you do not know partner's intentions. Perhaps North is interested in a slam. If you deny spade support by bidding 3NT, you might end in the wrong slam and maybe even the wrong game. It is more important to be in the right game than for the strong hand to be declarer.

Once you have decided to support spades, how should you go about it? A popular approach is to raise to 4♣ with minimum values and to cue-bid (here, that would be 4♣) with a good hand for spades. Given you have 18 points and no ruffing value in a 7-loser hand, this is definitely a minimum and you should bid 4♣.

There were 14 teams in [ALT MIXED III](#), an online event organized by bid72 and netbridge.online and held on BBO. After a 10-round Swiss of 14-board matches, the leader was [BARNESLEY](#) (USA: Catherine Draper, Alexander Hydes, Diana Nettleton, Andrew Woodcock). For the quarter-finals, they chose the seventh qualifier [ZORLU](#) (Turkey: Asli Acar, Sedat Aluf, Tuna Aluf, Ilker Ayaz, Namik Kokten, Sirma Sanus, Nafiz Zorlu), but lost by 41.1 to 60.

Fourth after the qualifying were [BYRNES](#) (USA: Dori Byrnes, Ida Gronkvist, Adam Grossack, John Kranyak, Sandra Rimstedt, Max Rotaru, Jenny Wolpert). In the quarter-finals, they lost to the fifth qualifier [MAGIC CREATURES](#) (USA: Michael Barel, Nancy Katz, Dana Tal, Noga Tal, Chris Willenken, Yaniv Zack, Migry Zur Campanile), by 63.1 to 92.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

What would you do as South with:

West	North	East	South	
			1♣	♠ A104
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾	♥ Q1095
Pass	3♦ ⁽²⁾	Dble	3♥	♦ KJ2
Pass	3♠ ⁽³⁾	Pass	?	♣ AKJ

(1) 18-19 balanced

(2) Artificial, checkback

(3) 5 spades

For the same reasons as for the problem at the top after 1♣ : 1♠, 2NT : 3♠, South should raise to 4♣ here. In the semi-final match between [MAGIC CREATURES](#) and [ZORLU](#), North-South for ZORLU did bid 1♣ : 1♠, 2NT : 3♠, 4♣, all pass. At the other table, after the auction just above. South bid 3NT, all pass.

Board 18: Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ QJ632
♥ A62
♦ 8
♣ Q864

South
♠ A104
♥ Q1095
♦ KJ2
♣ AKJ

After the auction on page 1 to 3NT by South, where East had doubled 3♦, West led the ♦3: eight – queen – king. How would you plan the play?

You have made one trick and have four club tricks available, plus the ♥A and the ♠A, total 7 tricks. You need two more. The location of the ♦A is not known. East might have played the ♦Q from length headed by A-Q or West might have led the ♦3 from A-x-x or similar.

Here is the full deal:

	North	
	♠ QJ632	
	♥ A62	
	♦ 8	
	♣ Q864	
West		East
♠ 97		♠ K85
♥ J43		♥ K87
♦ A643		♦ Q10975
♣ 10953		♣ 72
	South	
	♠ A104	
	♥ Q1095	
	♦ KJ2	
	♣ AKJ	

Where South raised 3♠ to 4♠, North had little trouble after the ♣7 lead, taken by the ♣A. North played the ♥5 to the ♥A and ran the ♠J, followed by the ♠2: eight – ten – seven and the ♠A. Then came the ♦2. Had West played low, East would win and switch to the low heart. If declarer mis-guesses, declarer loses 2 hearts, but still has 10 tricks, +420. At the table, West rose with the ♦A on the ♦2 and played a heart to East's king. North made 11 tricks for +450.

At the other table, after ♦3 lead: eight – queen – king against South's 3NT, South cashed ♣A, ♣K and overtook ♣J with the ♣Q. That put paid to four club tricks. Then came the ♠2: five – ten – seven, followed by ♠A and ♠4 to the ♠Q and ♠K. East switched to the ♦10, jack, ace. West cashed the club winner and reverted to diamonds. Thus, South lost a spade, a club and 4 diamonds, two off, –100, 11 Imps to [ZORLU. MAGIC CREATURES](#) won the first half by 49.1-3, but – never give up – [ZORLU](#) won Set 2 by 63-7 and the match by 66 Imps to 56.1.

No doubt, South expected East to have started with A-Q in diamonds. If so, the line taken would probably have worked (not if West had ♥K-J and East switches to a heart when in with the ♠K). Still, if you think East has the ♦A, you might as well play ♣A, ♣K, ♣J and then ♠A and ♠10. That would not have worked as the cards lay. The defence would come to a spade and four diamonds.

The way home after winning with the ♦K at trick 1 was ♣A, ♣K, ♣J, heart to the ace, ♣Q, ♠Q and another spade finesse. Declarer makes 4 clubs, a diamond, a heart and 3 spades. This line does not come with guarantees, but it is better than the line chosen.

Board 18: Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ632	
	♥ A62	
	♦ 8	
	♣ Q864	
West		East
♠ 97		♠ K85
♥ J43		♥ K87
♦ A643		♦ Q10975
♣ 10953		♣ 72
	South	
	♠ A104	
	♥ Q1095	
	♦ KJ2	
	♣ AKJ	

The board was flat in the other match. Both tables reached 4♠ and both Norths made ten tricks, +420.

At one table it went:

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

(1) 18-19 balanced

(2) transfer, 3-card heart support

(3) 3-4-3-3 pattern

East led the ♦10: jack – ace. West returned the ♦3: ♥2 – ♦8 – ♦K. Declarer played the ♠A and the ♠10.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) 18-19 balanced

The play to the first four tricks was the same.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

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

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as North with:

♠ KQ83
♥ AQ
♦ Q
♣ AKJ852

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

Definition humour: Hyperbole totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.

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.