

392. Penalties shout out

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

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

(1) Drury, maximum pass and spade support

What would you do as West with:

♠ QJ105
♥ J76
♦ K5
♣ AK53

I have often advocated restraint when considering a penalty double against opponents who have bid a game or a slam at unfavourable vulnerability. If they lack the high-card values for their contract, they will almost always have good, unbalanced shape as compensation. Here, however, they could easily have 25-26 HCP, but have wandered into a bad break. You can be confident of two spade tricks and you have the possibility of two club tricks. Even if one of the club winners is ruffed, the ♦K might be a winner. Maybe partner has club length and you might produce a forcing defence.

The deal arose on BBO:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A43	
	♥ K109832	
	♦ 6	
	♣ J72	
West		East
♠ QJ105		♠ 8
♥ J76		♥ A54
♦ K5		♦ 1098743
♣ AK53		♣ 1064
	South	
	♠ K9762	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AQJ2	
	♣ Q98	

This time North-South were living beyond their means at unfavourable vulnerability. For 2♣, North would be expected to have 10-11 HCP. Here North chose 2♣ because of the unbalanced shape and the fact that North had an 8-loser hand.

At three tables it went:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
1NT	2♣	All Pass	

One declarer made 8 tricks, +110, +7.13 Imps, and two made 9 tricks, +7.93 Imps. At one table, the auction was Pass : Pass : 1♠ : Pass, 2♣, all pass. Declarer went one down -100, but +2.87 imps. At 8 tables, South was in 4♣ undoubled, commonly after the auction at the top of the page, where 4♣ was passed out. At 3 tables, South was one off, -100 but +2.87 Imps. Five were two light, -200 and +0.53 Imps.

Dealer North-North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A43	
	♥ K109832	
	♦ 6	
	♣ J72	
West		East
♠ QJ105		♠ 8
♥ J76		♥ A54
♦ K5		♦ 1098743
♣ AK53		♣ 1064
	South	
	♠ K9762	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AQJ2	
	♣ Q98	

At the remaining four tables, after the auction at the top of page 1, West doubled 4♠, all pass. At one table the play went ♣K, ♣A, club won by South. The ♥Q went to the ace and East switched to the ♦3: ace – five – six. Declarer continued with ♠K; ♠A; ♥K, pitching ♦2; heart ruff; ♦Q – king – ruffed; ♥10, discarding ♦J. That was two down, –500, 5.73 Imps to East-West.

At the other three tables, South went three off, –800, giving East-West 10.47 Imps. The play followed a similar path, but declarer lost a diamond trick as well.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1NT – 15-17 points
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦ – No 4-card or 5 card major
Pass	3♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Smolen, showing 4 spades, 5 hearts and forcing to game

What would you lead as West from:

♠ QJ1075
♥ A9
♦ AJ97
♣ 54

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

If anyone out there knows how to fix broken hinges, my door is always open.