

395. Braveheart

By Ron Klinger

With only East-West vulnerable, East deals and opens 1NT, 13-15 points. What would you do as South with:

♠ J953
♥ AQ109
♦ AJ54
♣ J

Make your decision before reading further. This was the full deal:

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK7	
	♥ 542	
	♦ Q72	
	♣ 7653	
West		East
♠ 842		♠ Q106
♥ J863		♥ K7
♦ 98		♦ K1063
♣ K942		♣ AQ108
	South	
	♠ J953	
	♥ AQ109	
	♦ AJ54	
	♣ J	

When the deal arose in a quarter-final match in the 2020 Spingold (USA Knock-out Open Teams), both East-West pairs were playing a strong 1♣ system and a 13-15 1NT opening. Both Easts opened 1NT and both Souths bid 2♦, takeout for the majors. The expectation here is normally at least 5-4 in the majors, but the South players were prepared to take the risk, partly because of the vulnerability and partly because chances were strong that they would not end up as declarer.

Both Norths bid 2♠, stronger major, all pass. East has no attractive lead and at one table, Eric Rodwell (E) decided to limit ruffs by declarer. He led the ♠6, dummy's ♠9 winning. Declarer played the ♦4 to the ♦Q and ♦K. East reverted to the ♠10. North won and finessed the ♥9, losing to the ♥J. After ♦9 to the ♦J, North played a spade to hand and a heart, king, ace. North made 4 spades, 3 hearts and 2 diamonds, 9 tricks +140.

At the other table, East led the ♦6: four – eight – queen. Declarer finessed the ♥Q and played the ♠J: king – three – eight. West shifted to the ♦9, taken by the ♦J. Then came the ♥A, followed by the ♥10: jack – five – ♣10. West switched to the ♠2, ace. Declarer ruffed a club and played the ♦A, West ruffed and played a heart. North discarded a club and East ruffed with the ♠10. East brought back the ♦K. West ruffed with the ♠8, over-ruffed with the ♠K, which made East's ♠Q high. North made 8 tricks, +110, but –1 Imp.

Yesterday's question: With only East-West vulnerable, East opens 1♦. What do you do with the South hand?

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, South chose 1♥, even though that normally shows a 5+ suit. Tip: A 1-level overcall is acceptable with a 4-card suit, provided that the suit contains three honours, preferably K-J-10-x or better, as a lead indicator. North raised to 2♥, all pass. Partner's raising with three trumps is the risk you run by overcalling with a 4-card suit.

West led the ♦9, which ran to the ♦J. South exited with the ♠J, won by East, who continued with the ♠A. South ruffed, crossed to the ♠A and ruffed another club. South made 2 spades, 4 hearts and 2 diamonds, +110.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ J54
♥ A965
♦ A932
♣ 63

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

Start every day with a smile . . . and get it over with. (W. C. Fields)