

# 100. Double or quits

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	?		Pass

What would you do as North with:

♠ 54  
♥ K986  
♦ KQ4  
♣ A1084

There is a theory that says if partner is a passed hand, you should not compete with a minimum balanced hand. I think that is fine except when your hand has a strong suit worth an overcall or when the hand fits the parameters for a takeout double (opening points, short in their suit, support or tolerance for the unbid suits). On that basis, the hand above qualifies for a takeout double. It is true that things could go sour – no one has promised you eternal happiness at the bridge table – but why shouldn't partner have an average to average+ hand (here about 8-11 points) and your side might have a viable part-score?

The deal comes from a match on BBO:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

	North		
	♠ 54		
	♥ K986		
	♦ KQ4		
	♣ A1084		
West		East	
♠ AQJ732		♠ 86	
♥ A10		♥ Q5432	
♦ 10873		♦ AJ2	
♣ 3		♣ 976	
	South		
	♠ K109		
	♥ J7		
	♦ 965		
	♣ KQJ52		

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

North led the ♦K, ace. Declarer finessed the ♠Q, cashed the ♠A and made nine tricks, +140, losing one trick in each suit.

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 54	
	♥ K986	
	♦ KQ4	
	♣ A1084	
West		East
♠ AQJ732		♠ 86
♥ A10		♥ Q5432
♦ 10873		♦ AJ2
♣ 3		♣ 976
	South	
	♠ K109	
	♥ J7	
	♦ 965	
	♣ KQJ52	

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♠	Dble!	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You can put me down for a 1NT response on the East cards, but the auction is what actually happened.

West led the ♦7: king – ace – five. East switched to the ♠8: ten – jack – four. Another diamond now would beat 3♣, but West cashed the ♠A and continued with the ♠Q, suit-preference for hearts. Declarer ruffed with the ♣10, crossed to the ♣K and played the ♥7. West took the ♥A and returned the ♥10, taken by the ♥K. Then came the ♣A, followed by the ♥9, queen, ruffed with the ♣J. The ♣Q drew the last trump and after a diamond to the ♦Q, the ♥8 allowed South to ditch the diamond loser, nine tricks, +110 and +6 Imps.

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ K6  
♥ AKQ7  
♦ 10875  
♣ AQ6

There is a school of thought that says, ‘It doesn’t pay to double a strong 1NT with a very strong hand, because partner will be very weak and will run from the double. Better to pass and just defend.’ Others believe that a penalty double of 1NT comes up so rarely that you are better off to use the double to show a different hand type (say, a minor-major hand with minor longer).

Others believe that a penalty double of a strong 1NT might produce penalties and might also lead to a contract your way. At one table, North passed 1NT. At the other table North doubled. It continued like this:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Dble	Rdbl <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

(1) Puppet to 2♣, Start of a rescue operation.

What now?

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K6	
	♥ AKQ7	
	♦ 10875	
	♣ AQ6	
West		East
♠ AQ7		♠ J9853
♥ 85		♥ 42
♦ AQ953		♦ --
♣ K53		♣ J109874
	South	
	♠ 1042	
	♥ J10963	
	♦ KJ62	
	♣ 2	

At one table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
2♠	Dble <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	3♥
3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Transfer to spades

(2) For takeout

North led the ♥K: two – jack – five and the ♥7: four – nine – eight. South switched to the ♣2: five – queen – four. North cashed the ♣A and gave South a club ruff. West still had to lose to the ♠K. That was two down, North-South +100.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Dble	Rdbl <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Puppet to 2♣, Start of a rescue operation.

South's 2♥ was not forcing, but North figured South must have some values, else South would have bid 2♥ at once over the redouble to show length, but no strength.

The defence can beat 4♥ via ♦A lead, diamond ruff, ♠A and another diamond ruff, but why would West find that lead? West led the ♣3. South took the ♣A, drew trumps with ♥A, ♥K and played the ♦4 to the jack and queen. South was able to hold the losers to two diamonds and a spade, ten tricks, +420 and +8 Imps. Note that North's double of 1NT allowed South to compete.

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	3♣	1♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥

What would you lead as West from:

♠ Q962  
♥ 1075  
♦ AQJ2  
♣ Q7

2. With neither side vulnerable, South opens 2NT, 20-22 balanced. What would you do as West with:

♠ J109863  
♥ 7  
♦ --  
♣ 1098432

Suppose instead that the opening had been 1♣, artificial, strong. What would you do then?

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

*With nail salons, waxing centres and tanning places closed, things can get ugly very quickly.*