100. Double or quits

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South: Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1▲	9		

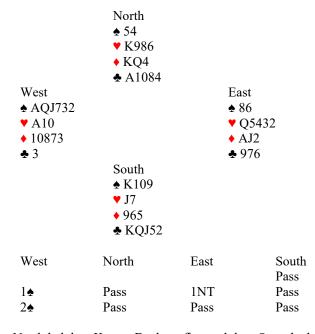
What would you do as North with:

- **★** 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?

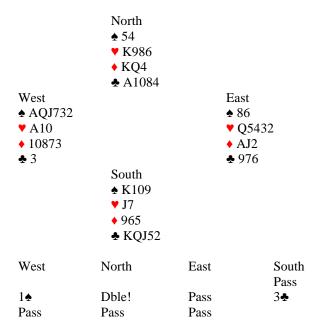
The deal comes from a match on BBO:

Dealer South: Nil vulnerable



North 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



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

West led the \bigstar 7: king – ace – five. East switched to the \bigstar 8: ten – jack – four. Another diamond now would beat $3 \bigstar$, but West cashed the \bigstar A and continued with the \bigstar Q, suit-preference for hearts. Declarer ruffed with the \bigstar 10, crossed to the \bigstar K and played the \blacktriangledown 7. West took the \blacktriangledown A and returned the \blacktriangledown 10, taken by the \blacktriangledown K. Then came the \bigstar A, followed by the \blacktriangledown 9, queen, ruffed with the \bigstar J. The \bigstar Q drew the last trump and after a diamond to the \bigstar Q, the \blacktriangledown 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	9			

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).

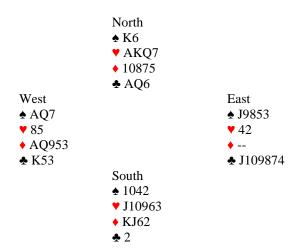
Others believe that a penalty double of a strong 1NT might produce penalties and might also lead to a contract your way. At one table, North passed 1NT. At the other table North doubled. It continued like this:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Dble	$Rdbl^{(1)}$	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

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

What now?

Dealer East: Nil vulnerable



At one table:

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

- (1) Transfer to spades
- (2) For takeout

North led the ∇K : two – jack – five and the $\nabla 7$: four – nine – eight. South switched to the $\Delta 2$: five – queen – four. North cashed the ΔA and gave South a club ruff. West still had to lose to the ΔK . That was two down, North-South +100.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Dble	$Rdbl^{(1)}$	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
			1♥
Pass	2♥	3♣	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

- **♦** Q962
- **v** 1075
- ♦ AQJ2
- **♣** Q7
- 2. With neither side vulnerable, South opens 2NT, 20-22 balanced. What would you do as West with:
- **♦** J109863
- **v** 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.