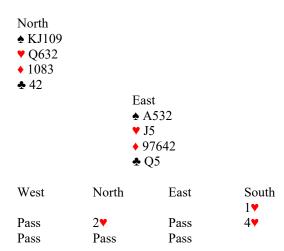
140. A matter of preference

By Ron Klinger

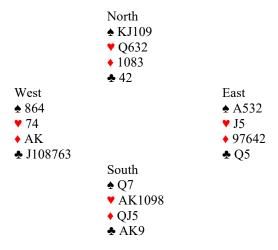
Dealer South: East-West vulnerable



(a) Partner leads ♦K, then ♦A. Which diamonds do you play as East?

If your primary signaling method on partner's lead of a high card is attitude, you would play the \$2 (not interested in diamonds) if playing standard signals or the \$9 (not keen on diamonds) if playing 'reverse attitude'. When partner continues with the \$A\$, partner is showing you precisely \$A\$-K doubleton. What partner now needs to know from you is the location of your entry. It is in spades, the high suit, therefore you should signal with a high card to tell partner to play the high suit. If you played the \$2 on the first diamond, play the \$9 now (highest-card, high suit). If you played the \$9 on the first diamond, play the \$7 now.

If you give count primarily (exactly why partner would want to know your count here is unclear) and played the \$\dagger2\$ first (natural count, showing an odd number), play the \$\dagger9\$ (highest-card, high suit) at trick 2. If you played the \$\dagger9\$ on the first round (reverse count, showing an odd number), play the \$\dagger7\$ now. The full deal:

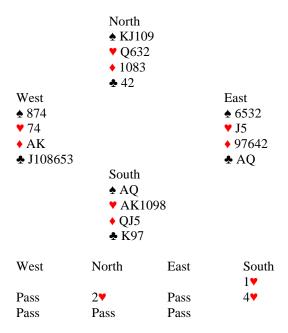


On any other defence, 4♥ makes.

(b) Which diamonds would you play as East if you held:

♠ 6532♥ J5♦ 97642♠ AQ

Dealer South: East-West vulnerable



Partner leads ♦K, then ♦A. Which diamonds do you play as East?

If your primary signaling method on partner's lead of a high card is attitude, you would play the \$2 at trick 1 if playing standard signals and the \$4 on trick 2 (lowest-card, low suit) to ask for a club switch. If playing 'reverse attitude', play \$9 at trick 1 and \$2 (suit-preference) at trick 2 to ask for a club.

If you give count primarily and played the $\diamond 2$ first (natural count), play the $\diamond 4$ at trick 2. If you played the $\diamond 9$ on the first round (reverse count), play the $\diamond 2$ now.

(c) What about if your hand as East was:

- **★** 8532
- **♥** KJ
- **♦** 97642
- **♣** 75

This was the East holding in yesterday's Daily Column where the theme was signaling in the trump suit (highlow to show an odd number and a desire to ruff). This is a tricky position, since your entry is in the trump suit and suit-preference signals are expected to exclude the trump suit. Whatever you do, partner might mis-read the position. If you played 2 or 9 initially as discouraging, then perhaps the 6 next is best. Likewise, if you played the 2 or 9 first as count.

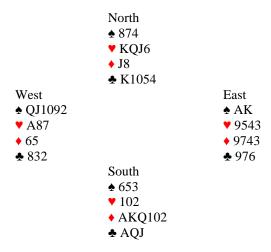
Dealer South: East-West vulnerable

		North ♠ 874 ♥ KQJ6 ♦ J8 ♣ K1054	
West ♠ QJ1092 ♥ A87			
♦ 65 ♣ 832			
West	North	East	South 1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(a) You lead the ♠Q and partner takes the ♠A. Partner continues with the ♠K. Which spade do you play as West?

If partner has a third spade, then it does not matter which spade you play. Partner will continue with the third spade. However, if partner's card play is accurate, you can expect partner to have started with A-K doubleton. With \triangle A-K-x, the standard play is king first (a defender wins with the cheapest card possible), then the ace, then the low one. The play in abnormal order ace-then-king either shows A-K doubleton or, if partner continues the suit, then it is a suit-preference signal for the high suit.

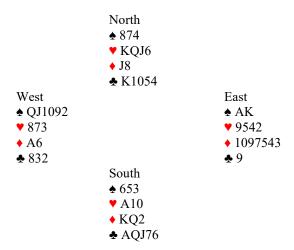
As you need not be worried if partner does have a third spade, you need to focus on the problem of partner having started with just two spades. If so, what does partner need to know? Your outside entry. Where is it? In hearts, the highest suit outside spades. How do you tell partner you want a heart next? Play the highest spade you can afford, that is, the ΔJ . The full deal:



After ♠A, ♠K, the natural inclination is for East to switch to a diamond. If that happens, South makes 3NT. If West signals accurately and East interprets the message correctly and returns a heart, you take 3NT two down.

What if your hand as West was:

For (b), you want a club, so on the second spade, play the ♠2, lowest card for the lowest suit, clubs. Highest card for the highest suit, lowest card for the lowest suit. Easy enough. What if you want a diamond switch, as in (c)?



Answer to (c): If partner brings back anything but a diamond, 3NT makes. In this context, hearts is the highest suit and clubs is the lowest suit. What does that make diamonds? The easiest way to think about it is that diamonds is the second-highest suit. Since you play the ♠I, highest, for the highest suit, you can play the ♠10, the second-highest, to ask for the second-highest suit.

When I use this example in a bridge class, some students want to play the ♠9 to ask for a diamond. I explain that you are lucky here that your spade holding allows you to ask for hearts (♠J), diamonds (♠10) or clubs (♠2). The ♠9 would be ambiguous. You might have led the ♠Q from ♠Q-J-10-9 only and now the ♠9 is the lowest spade. You would also have led the ♠Q from ♠Q-J-9-5-2. As declarer began with ♠10-6-3, you cannot afford to play the ♣J as that would make South's ♠10 high. The ♠9 would now be asking for the high suit, but be forgiving if partner cannot decipher the ♠9. You will not always have an ideal holding to produce an accurate signal. Make the most of those situations where cards to allow you to paint a perfect picture for partner.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North: Both vulnerable

West North East South Pass **1**♦ 1♠ $2NT^{(1)}$ 2**y 4**♥ 4♠ $Dble^{(2)}$? Pass (1) 7-9 points, 4+ spades

- (2) Shows exactly 2 spades

What would you do as East with:

- **♠** 3
- **♥** Q86
- ♦ AK10742
- **♣** K72
- 2. Dealer West: Nil vulnerable

West North East South **3**♥⁽¹⁾ 1♥ Pass 3♠ Dble(2) **4** 4♠ Pass

- (1) 4+ hearts, 0-5 points
- (2) Exactly 2 spades

What would you do as West with:

- **♠** A543
- ♥ AOJ82
- ♦ A942
- <u>--</u>

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

Whatever hits the fan will not be distributed evenly.