

177. One trick over the line, dear team-mates, one trick over the line.

By Ron Klinger

The second semi-final match in the 2020 North America Online Bridge Championship was between [LEVINE](#) (Mike Levine – Eddie Wold, Geir Helgemo – Tor Helness, Jeff Meckstroth – Eric Rodwell) and [TULIN](#) (Stan Tulin – David Bahkshi, Alon Birman – Dror Padon, Cornelis Van Prooijen – Louk Verhees).

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQ10982
♥ K642
♦ 107
♣ 7

The options seem to be 1♠, a weak jump-overcall of 2♠ or, given the vulnerability, a pre-emptive 3♠. Your choice?

Since I am not a fan of weak jump-overcalls and try to persuade partners to exclude them from our system, I would not find the 2♠ bid. Is there some urgency to pre-empt the opponents? There is no evidence yet that they have a game available, so 3♠ does not appeal. If we should be sacrificing in 4♠, a simple overcall of 1♠ should find that. My vote goes to 1♠, but neither South chose that.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ J763
♥ A10
♦ QJ8
♣ Q643

South
♠ AQ10982
♥ K642
♦ 107
♣ 7

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West leads the ♦A: eight – two (not encouraging) – seven. West switches to the ♥8: ace – nine (encouraging) – six. Plan the play.

Board 19: Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

		North		
		♠ J763		
		♥ A10		
		♦ QJ8		
		♣ Q643		
West			East	
♠ K			♠ 54	
♥ 85			♥ QJ973	
♦ AK953			♦ 642	
♣ K9852			♣ AJ10	
		South		
		♠ AQ10982		
		♥ K642		
		♦ 107		
		♣ 7		

At one table it went:

West	North	East	South
<i>Bahkshi</i>	<i>Wold</i>	<i>Tulin</i>	<i>Levine</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	2♠
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

North chose to raise the pre-empt to shut out East-West. After West passed 2♠, chances are that 2♠ would have won the contract. Maybe not. East might have made a takeout double. West led the ♦A and switched to the ♥8: ace – three – two. After ♦Q to ♦K, West switched to the ♣2: three – ten – seven. East played the ♣A, ruffed. South played ♥K and the ♥4. When West ruffed with the ♠K, South claimed 9 tricks, +140.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Van Prooijen</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Verhees</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

These pre-empts would be great if partner did not raise the level of pre-emption. West led the ♦A and switched to the ♥8, taken by the ace. Next came ♠J: five – two – king. West continued with the ♦K and the ♣2 to the ♣A. That was one down, –50, and 5 Imps to LEVINE.

Double dummy, South can make 4♠ by playing the ♠A at trick 3. That is seriously anti-percentage if you consider just the spade suit. Playing the ♠J and letting it run wins if East holds ♠K-5, ♠K-4 or ♠K-5-4. Playing the ♠A wins only against the bare ♠K with West. Finessing spades covers three of the relevant cases. Playing the ♠A wins only against one case.

Is there other evidence to consider? North-South have 19 HCP and so East-West have 21. West opened and East responded. The missing points could be divided 12-9, 13-8, 14-7, maybe 15-6 or 11-10 (especially as East-West play a strong club system). You can place West with ♦A, ♦K for the lead and East with ♥Q, ♥J for the ♥8 switch and East's encouraging ♥9. If West had ♣A, ♣K, might West have tried a top club at trick 2? Once you place East with ♥Q, ♥J plus the ♣A or ♣K, the odds for West having the ♠K are improving, but probably not enough to sway you against the finesse.

West did well not to bid 3♣ over 2♠. That would have put West into the 13-15-point range. Now there is a stronger case to place West with the ♠K.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A9
♥ 108764
♦ A
♣ KQJ98

Suppose you are playing Precision, a strong 1♣ system, where your opening bid is limited to 10-15 points. Would that change your answer?

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

Instead of a sign that says, 'Do Not Disturb', there needs to be a sign for some bridge players. That sign should read, 'Already Disturbed. Proceed With Caution'.

New book: <i>The Power of Pass</i> (by Harold Schogger and Ron Klinger). \$A25.00 Available from Suzie Klinger, post free until 2021: email suzie@ronklingerbridge.com or telephone 0411 229 705.
