

187. Missed by that much

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North
♠ A2
♥ 10853
♦ Q8764
♣ AJ

West
♠ 765
♥ KQ972
♦ K952
♣ 4

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♦ ⁽³⁾
Pass	2♠ ⁽⁴⁾	Dble ⁽⁵⁾	2NT ⁽⁶⁾
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) 14-16

(2) Asking for a 5-card major

(3) No 5-card major

(4) Forcing, shows 4 hearts, fewer than 4 spades

(5) Spades

(6) Minimum, spade stopper, not 4 hearts

West leads ♠5: two – nine – jack. South plays the ♦3. What would you play as West?

With 5 boards to go in the final of the 2020 North America Online Bridge Championship, [LEVINE](#) (Mike Levine – Eddie Wold, Geir Helgemo – Tor Helness, Jeff Meckstroth – Eric Rodwell) led [KOLESNIK](#) (Finn Kolesnik age 16 – Jacob Freeman age 19, Bob Hamman – Peter Weichsel, Bart Bramley – Kit Woolsey) by 112 Imps to 85. On the next two deals each side scored 1 Imp: 113-86. Then [KOLESNIK](#) picked up 5 Imps on a part-score deal: 113-91.

The above problem arose on the penultimate deal:

Board 55: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North
♠ A2
♥ 10853
♦ Q8764
♣ AJ

West
♠ 765
♥ KQ972
♦ K952
♣ 4

East
♠ K10984
♥ J
♦ J10
♣ Q9863

South
♠ QJ3
♥ A64
♦ A3
♣ K10752

After the auction above, Rodwell (W) led the ♠5: two – nine – jack. Bramley (S) played ♦3: five – queen – ten, followed by the ♣A and the ♣J: queen – king – ♥2. South cashed the ♦A and crossed to the ♠A. South knew East had started with 5 clubs and could also place East with 5+ spades for the double of 2♠. When South played the ♥3: jack – ace – seven, South was confident that East had started with a 5-1-2-5 pattern.

This was now the position (*see next page*).

<p>North</p> <p>♠</p> <p>♥ 1085</p> <p>♦ 876</p> <p>♣</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ Q</p> <p>♥ 64</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣ 1075</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ K104</p> <p>♥</p> <p>♦</p> <p>♣ 983</p>	<p>West</p> <p>♠ 7</p> <p>♥ KQ9</p> <p>♦ K9</p> <p>♣</p>	<p>South exited with the ♠Q. East won and cashed ♠10, ♠4, South discarding ♥4 and ♥6. When East then played the ♣9, South contributed the ♣5. East was left with ♣8-3 and South ♣10-7 East played a club and South won the last two tricks. South made 2 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs, 9 tricks, +600. Very nicely played.</p>
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Board 55: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ A2</p> <p>♥ 10853</p> <p>♦ Q8764</p> <p>♣ AJ</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ QJ3</p> <p>♥ A64</p> <p>♦ A3</p> <p>♣ K10752</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ K10984</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦ J10</p> <p>♣ Q9863</p>	<p>West</p> <p>♠ 765</p> <p>♥ KQ972</p> <p>♦ K952</p> <p>♣ 4</p>
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After ♠5: two – nine – jack and the ♦3 from South, West needed to rise with the ♦K to defeat 3NT. The difference is that the defenders now have a trick. After ♦K, West plays another spade, taken by the ♠A. If declarer now plays ♦A, ♣A, ♦Q, ♣J – queen – king and the ♥A, East has ♠K-10-4 and ♣9-8. If South exits with the ♠Q, East takes three spades and a club trick will be the fifth trick for the defence.

At the other table:

<p>West</p> <p><i>Hamman</i></p> <p>1♥</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>(1) Denies 4+ spades</p>	<p>North</p> <p><i>Helness</i></p> <p>1♠⁽¹⁾</p> <p>3NT</p>	<p>East</p> <p><i>Weichsel</i></p> <p>Pass</p> <p>Pass</p> <p>Dble</p>	<p>South</p> <p><i>Helgemo</i></p> <p>1♣</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>All Pass</p>	<p>Partnerships have rules for the lead requested by a double of 3NT. Many play that it asks for the lead of the suit bid by the opening leader. That does not make much sense here. If East had decent hearts and the values to double 3NT after a mere overcall, East would have supported hearts over 1♠. If not the suit bid by the opening leader, the consensus is usually the first bid suit by dummy. That is normally a natural bid. What if the first suit bid</p>
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by dummy is artificial, as it was here? Is partner asking for a spade lead? Why then didn't partner double the artificial 1♠? It will repay partnerships to ensure their agreements are watertight in this area

East-West were on the same wavelength, as West did lead a spade, the ♠7 to deny a spade honour: two – four – jack. South did not touch diamonds. The ♣2 went to the ace, followed by the ♣J: queen – king – ♥2 (low-like). South now knew that East had started with 5 clubs, presumably 5 spades, only 1 heart, as West figured to have 5 hearts for the 1♥ overcall. That left East with two diamonds. South hoped those diamonds included the king.

Declarer played the ♠3 to the ace, the ♥3 to the ace and exited with the ♠Q to East's ♠K. East cashed two more spades and switched to the ♦J: three – king – eight. The defence had already taken four tricks. West cashed the ♥K and ♥Q for two down, East-West +500 and 15 Imps to **KOLESNIK**. One board to go and **LEVINE** led by 113 Imps to 106. See tomorrow's column for the last deal.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♣	Pass	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A
♥ A104
♦ QJ108543
♣ KJ

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

What are you vacating when you go on a vacation?

New book: *The Power of Pass* (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.