

194. Bridge is an easy game

By Ron Klinger

North
♠ AQJ82
♥ KJ105
♦ K3
♣ 98

South
♠ 5
♥ 64
♦ QJ109864
♣ AKQ

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

(1) Natural and forcing

(2) Cue bid

(3) Cue bid, but 4♦ would have been a serious slam try

West leads the ♥7 (thirds and fifths). Plan the play.

Today's deal comes from the Round 9 match between Australia II (Renee Cooper – Ben Thompson, Andy Braithwaite – Arjuna De Livera, Matt Mullamphy – Ian Thomson – Ron Klinger) and New Zealand II (Ashley Bach – Michael Cornell, Matthew Brown – Michael Whibley, Peter Newell – Martin Reid, Jonathon Westoby) in the Yeh Cup Online Open Teams, held in August and organized by the Taiwan Contract Bridge League.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		

(1) Natural and forcing

What would you do as North with:

♠ AQJ82
♥ KJ105
♦ K3
♣ 98

This problem and the one at the top of the page did not seem to be worthy of a bridge column except that a very strong pair went minus on the deal and maybe it can help others to avoid these slips.

Board 1: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AQJ82	
	♥ KJ105	
	♦ K3	
	♣ 98	
West		East
♠ 1076		♠ K943
♥ Q873		♥ A92
♦ --		♦ A752
♣ J105432		♣ 76
	South	
	♠ 5	
	♥ 64	
	♦ QJ109864	
	♣ AKQ	

	North	East	South
West	<i>Cooper</i>	<i>Cornell</i>	<i>Thompson</i>
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Natural and forcing

This looks like a perfectly normal sequence. West led the ♣J: eight – seven – king. After ♦4 to the king and ace, East returned the ♣6. South won and played the ♥4: three – jack – ace. East returned a diamond and South claimed 11 tricks, North-South +460.

	North	East	South
West	<i>Whibley</i>	<i>Thomson</i>	<i>Brown</i>
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣ ⁽²⁾
Pass	4♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Natural and forcing

(2) Cue bid

(3) Cue bid, mild slam interest as 4♦ would have been a serious slam try

North's 3♦ rebid looks like 3-card support and thus a 5-4-3-1 pattern or perhaps 5-4-4-0. Colour me wrong if you think 3♦ is the best action for North, but with nothing special in terms of extra shape, there seems no strong reason to choose anything other than 3NT for North's third bid.

If South did take North to have 3-4 diamonds and hence club shortage, South might still have bid 3NT over 3♦. South had the clubs very well stopped and if North had 3 diamonds, the missing diamonds would split 2-1 almost 80% of the time. The risk of being cut off from the South hand was not huge.

Still, 5♦ was an acceptable contract. Essentially it depends on picking the hearts. When West led the ♥7, the natural inclination is to play the ♥J or ♥10 from dummy. In general, players are reluctant to lead a low card from an ace-high suit against a trump contract. There are serious risks if you do that. It can be done in the right situation, particularly when dummy has made a cue-bid in that suit, but there is still significant risk.

Had South played the ♥J or ♥10, 5♦ would have made and the deal would have been consigned to oblivion. However, South played West to have underled the ♥A and rose with dummy's ♥K. East won with the ♥A and returned the ♥2 to West's ♥Q. The ♦A was the third trick for the defence, East-West +100 and 11 Imps to Australia II, who won the match by 18 Imps to 1.

The only justification for playing West to have led away from the ♥A and therefore rising with the ♥K is that you are right. If playing the ♥K was wrong, you have no comeback when your team-mates raise their eyebrows.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ KJ8754
♥ J84
♦ J72
♣ 7

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

It is worth remembering that if the world didn't suck, we would all fall off.

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.