

290. Length and height

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
4♥	4♠	Pass	1♦
?			Pass

What would you do as West with:

♠ KQ
♥ KQJ107532
♦ --
♣ 643

Do you agree with West's 4♥ bid?

Today's deal arose in the 3rd European Winter Games, 29 February – March 8, 2020.

Round 13: Board 5

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ J7653	
	♥ A9	
	♦ KQ94	
	♣ 75	
West		East
♠ KQ		♠ 109842
♥ KQJ107532		♥ 64
♦ --		♦ 872
♣ 643		♣ A102
	South	
	♠ A	
	♥ 8	
	♦ AJ10653	
	♣ KQJ98	

At one table:

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

(1) Pick a slam

Declarer lost a spade, a heart and two clubs, three down, –500, an excellent save against 6♦, which is unbeatable. Still, West could have achieved a better result by passing out 4♠. The point of a pre-empt is to hope that you have forced the opponents to guess and that they have guessed badly. West has no idea what North-South might or might not make. If you are going to bid 4♥ – and that is another question – then you should let sleeping dogs lie.

On the normal ♥6 lead, 4♠ would be a couple off. North takes the ♥A, plays the ♠A and run diamonds or knocks out the ♣A. It is true that –500 in 6♥ doubled is better than –1370 defending 6♦, but +200 in 4♠ is heaps better than –500.

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Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

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	♥ A9	
	♦ KQ94	
	♣ 75	
West		East
♠ KQ		♠ 109842
♥ KQJ107532		♥ 64
♦ --		♦ 872
♣ 643		♣ A102
	South	
	♠ A	
	♥ 8	
	♦ AJ10653	
	♣ KQJ98	

You cannot expect East to double 4♠. East can see one spade trick and one club trick. Opposite a normal 4♥ preempt, 4♠ might make easily, possibly with an overtrick. One expects a pre-emptive bidder to have no more than one defensive trick.

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♦
4♥	?		

What would you do as North with:

- ♠ J7653
- ♥ A9
- ♦ KQ94
- ♣ 75

There is not much that can be said in favour of North's choice of 4♠ with such a poor 5-card suit. A better choice would be 5♦. Better still was North's action at the other table:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
4♥	Dble ⁽¹⁾	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

(1) For takeout

Note North's choice. If South bid 4♠ in reply to North's double, fine. If South had bid 5♣, North had an easy correction to 5♦. With a 4-loser hand facing a likely 7-loser hand or better, South was certainly worth 6♣. There were no problems in 6♦, North-South +1370 and +15 Imps.

Note also that West did not save against 6♦, even though the save is cheap. That makes one wonder about the original choice of 4♥ over 1♦. With eight playing tricks at favourable vulnerability, the West hand has far too much playing strength. If you bid 4♥ and want to bid again later, then you should not start with 4♥. Rather choose 1♥ and see where the opponents intend to play. You can always sacrifice later if that seems the right decision. It might start 1♦ : 1♥ : 1♠ : Pass, 2♣ . . . and who knows what will happen after that?

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Transfer to hearts

What would you do as South with:

- ♠ A954
- ♥ A54
- ♦ K974
- ♣ A8

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

In response to your request, I have just been diagnosed with NCD: No Can Do.