

294. On the level

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♣ | ? | |

What would you do as East with:

♠ AQJ98
♥ 64
♦ 97
♣ 10943

Today's deal comes from the final of the 2020 Australian Mixed Team Selection.

I think most players would choose 1♣ for East in the problem above. That would be my choice. At one table, as West had passed already, East bid 2♠, a weak jump-overcall. This is usually based on a 6-card suit, but as partner is a passed hand, partner is unlikely to push you too high.

Board 11: Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

| | | |
|---------|----------|---------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ 754 | |
| | ♥ AKQ3 | |
| | ♦ 862 | |
| | ♣ KQ6 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ K6 | | ♠ AQJ98 |
| ♥ J9872 | | ♥ 64 |
| ♦ Q54 | | ♦ 97 |
| ♣ 852 | | ♣ 10943 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ 1032 | |
| | ♥ 105 | |
| | ♦ AKJ103 | |
| | ♣ AJ7 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♣ | 2♠ | 3♦ |
| Pass | 3♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | 4♣ ⁽²⁾ |
| Pass | 4♦ | Pass | 5♦ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) Asking for a stopper in spades

(2) No spade stopper, potential support if North has club length

West led the ♠K. East overtook with the ♠A, cashed ♠Q and ♠J and played a fourth spade (in case West began with ♦Q-x). South ruffed with the ♦J. West over-ruffed and South was two down, East-West +100.

At the other table, North opened 1♦ (playing a strong 1♣ system). East overcalled 1♠ and South doubled (takeout, any shape). North rebid 1NT (balanced hand) and South rebid 2♦ (forcing). North bid 2♠ (asks for a spade stopper). South bid 3♦, all pass. It is impressive when a partnership has a combined total of 27 points and stays out of game and that is the right decision. It certainly was the winning decision here. There are only eight tricks in 3NT and 5♦ is two light. Note: North has 7 losers, South 8 losers; 7 + 8 = 15, 24 - 15 = 9 tricks expected if North-South play diamonds.

East led the ♠A, followed by the ♠Q. West won and switched to the ♥7. North can make 10 tricks (♥A, ♦A, ♦K, ♥K, ♥Q, discarding a spade), but played ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q: ♦7 - ♦10, and made nine tricks, +110, +5 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

You, East, hold:

♠ J10986532

♥ 3

♦ 72

♣ 94

What would you do if North opened (a) 1♦? (b) 1NT (11-14)?

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

The secret to happiness is a good sense of humour and a short memory (but not that short that you forget which suit is trumps).