

355. Level crossing

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	3♠
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ 8
♥ A8653
♦ 4
♣ AQJ532

At the vulnerability, you can expect South to have a sound pre-empt. Your choice

This was yesterday's problem: You are vulnerable versus not vulnerable. The dealer on your right passes. What would you do with:

♠ KQ97653
♥ 7
♦ J87
♣ K9

You have 9 HCP. That indicates a hand not strong enough for a 1♠ opening. You have a long, good spade suit. That suggests a pre-emptive opening. You have 6 losers, which translates into 7 playing tricks. That would usually suggest a 4♣ opening. Against that, the vulnerability is unfavourable and the spade suit is good but not excellent. Interchange the ♦J and ♣3 and you have a stronger case for 4♣.

An opening bid of 4♣ leaves little room for the opponents to do much other than double and that could prove expensive at this vulnerability. The recommended start is 3♣.

As for today's problem, there would be a reasonable case for raising to 4♣ if you had a doubleton trump. As it is, if partner plays a diamond to try for a diamond ruff, a trump switch from a defender will put paid to that. There is a fair chance that partner has a singleton or maybe even a void in clubs. A heart lead would then leave you with providing partner with two tricks at most and the 3♣ level would be quite high enough.

As it happens, partner has an excellent holding in clubs with ♣K-9 giving you a solid side-suit. Even so, 3♣ proved too high. The deal arose in a pairs' game on BBO.

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 8	
	♥ A8653	
	♦ 4	
	♣ AQJ532	
West		East
♠ J1042		♠ A
♥ KJ		♥ Q10942
♦ AK95		♦ Q10632
♣ 1084		♣ 76
	South	
	♠ KQ97653	
	♥ 7	
	♦ J87	
	♣ K9	

Eleven Souths opened 3♣. No one opened 4♣. Three Souths chose 1♣. One South opened 2♣ (conservative) and one South passed (super conservative).

As the cards lie, the defenders can come to two spades and three diamonds, holding declarer to eight tricks. If declarer is allowed to ruff a diamond, South is likely to lose three trump tricks and two diamonds.

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ 8</p> <p>♥ A8653</p> <p>♦ 4</p> <p>♣ AQJ532</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ A</p> <p>♥ Q10942</p> <p>♦ Q10632</p> <p>♣ 76</p>
<p>West</p> <p>♠ J1042</p> <p>♥ KJ</p> <p>♦ AK95</p> <p>♣ 1084</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ KQ97653</p> <p>♥ 7</p> <p>♦ J87</p> <p>♣ K9</p>

Where South opened 2♣, it went:

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♦K and switched to the ♥K, taken by the ♥A. South ruffed a heart, ruffed a diamond and played another heart, ruffed with the ♠5 and over-ruffed with the ♠10. West cashed the ♦A and shifted to the ♣4: two – six – nine. South played the ♠Q, won by East, and West's remaining ♠J-4 was another trick for East-West. South was thus –200 for 16.7%.

At two tables, where South opened 1♠, it went 1♠ : 2♣, 2♠ : 3♥, 3♠ : 4♣, all pass and North-South –200. There is a case for South bidding 4♥ over 3♣ to show the 5-6 pattern. South might pass or give preference to 5♣. Neither has a happy ending.

At the other table where South opened 1♠, North (playing 2-over-1 game-force) responded 1NT (forcing). South rebid 3♣ (quite an overbid) and North raised to 4♣, North-South –200. How do you like North's description of the 1-5-1-6 pattern?

This was the auction where South passed initially:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♦	2NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Hearts + clubs, at least 5-5

The result was one down, North-South, –100 but 66.7%.

At the other tables, South opened 3♣. This was passed out seven times, North-South –100. At the other tables where South opened 3♣, North raised to 4♣, North-South, –200. It is true that the 4-1 spade break was unlucky, but had spades been 3-2, 4♣ might be one off, North-South, –100, but then 3♣ would be +140.

Top score for North-South occurred when East went on a frolic of his / her own in this auction:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	3♣
Pass	4♣	5♥??	All Pass

East finished three light, the only positive score for North-South.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

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

What would you do as North with:

♠ 7
♥ K10986
♦ K96
♣ 9654

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

Perfectionist, n: Someone who wants to go from point A to point A+.