

361. The old switcheroo

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

East
♠ A8
♥ QJ1092
♦ Q9632
♣ 5

South
♠ J762
♥ K63
♦ --
♣ 1098632

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

(1) At least 5-5 in the minors

North leads the ♣A, five from dummy . . . Which club do you play as South? Does it matter?

Basic signaling is based on attitude. Your card indicates to partner whether you want the suit continued or not. Standard attitude is high-encouraging, low discouraging. Recommended is reverse attitude: low-like, high-hate.

When partner leads an ace and dummy turns up with a singleton in that suit as well as plenty of trumps, it makes no sense to give an attitude signal for the singleton suit. Much more useful then is a suit-preference signal, asking partner to shift to another suit. A suit-preference signal is a high card to ask for the higher suit, lowest card for the lower suit, with the trump suit excluded. If you cannot stand a switch to either suit, try to play a middling card.

Here South should play the ♣2 to ask for a diamond switch.

This was yesterday's question:

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West	North	East	South
		2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
4♥	?		

(1) Weak, 5 hearts, 4+ minor

What would you do as North with:

♠ 1093
♥ --
♦ A10874
♣ AKQJ7

With a void in the opposition suit and a 5-loser, North should certainly compete. The basic choices are Double (for takeout), 5♣, 5♦ or 4NT to show a 2-suiter, usually the minors. If you are going to bid a suit, you would choose 5♣ rather than 5♦. Whenever it is possible to show two suits with one bid, that is usually more attractive than simply bidding one of your suits. That puts 4NT ahead of 5♣ or 5♦.

There is a case for doubling for takeout. Firstly, partner might be able to pass for penalties. Partner can have 3-4 hearts easily enough. Partner might also have a moderate hand with 5-6 spades, but a hand which was too weak to compete over 2♥. Partner will now bid 4♠ and that could be your best choice.

The trouble with Double is that if partner does bid 4♠, you cannot tell whether that is a 4-card suit or a longer suit. If it is only a 4-card suit, 4♠ is unlikely to play well. The opponents have given you a tough choice. That is the purpose behind the jump to 4♥. To make you guess. You do not know whether West is strong or weak.

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<p>North ♠ 1093 ♥ -- ♦ A10874 ♣ AKQJ7</p>	<p>West ♠ KQ54 ♥ A8754 ♦ KJ5 ♣ 4</p>	<p>East ♠ A8 ♥ QJ1092 ♦ Q9632 ♣ 5</p>
<p>South ♠ J762 ♥ K63 ♦ -- ♣ 1098632</p>		

The deal arose in a club pairs' duplicate. Three East-West pairs were able to buy the contract in 4♥ by East. One of those came from 2♥ East, 4♥ West, all pass. Two scored an equal top for making 12 ricks after South led the ♠2. East won with the ♠A and could ditch the club loser after ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q. The heart finesse succeeded and East lost only one trick, the ♦A. The other East in 4♥ made 10 tricks after club lead to North and a switch to the ♦A and another diamond. That gave East-West 62%. One East was in 5♥ and made 11 tricks after the ♣10 lead, but no diamond switch. East-West +450 scored 74%.

Three North-South pairs bid to 6♣ and were doubled. One declarer went two down, East-West +300, an average score. East led the ♠A and the defence collected three spade tricks. The others were one down, -100 but North-South +68%. One received the ♣4 lead, the other the ♥A lead.

Two Wests played in 5♥. Both Norths led the ♣A, switched to the ♦A and gave South a diamond ruff. One West held it to one down, -50, by taking the heart finesse, North-South +86%. At the other table, West won trick 4 and cashed the ♥A. That went two down, North-South +100 and a top score.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

<p>North ♠ 762 ♥ 10864 ♦ 1093 ♣ KQ5</p>	<p>South ♠ A94 ♥ AQJ732 ♦ 8 ♣ A76</p>
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West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	2♠	4♥
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

West leads the ♦A, ♦K. Plan the play.

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

I have a chicken-proof lawn. It's impeccable.