

# 386. To be shut out or not to be shut out

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	4♣
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ AQ742  
♥ Q42  
♦ A6542  
♣ --

This was yesterday's question:

With both sides vulnerable, East deals and passes. What would you do as South with:

♠ 6  
♥ 8  
♦ K108  
♣ KQ1098642

You have 5 losers and hence 8 playing tricks. You are much too good to open 3♣, of course. The question is whether to open 4♣ or 5♣.

Using the modern standard of adding three tricks to your playing tricks, almost regardless of vulnerability, that would bring you to 11 tricks and so a 5♣ opening bid. You might do that at favourable vulnerability, but it is less appealing at equal vulnerability or vulnerable versus not. The reason is that if the opponents hold the balance of power, it almost always means that you will be doubled for penalties. You have not left the opposition room to do much else. If you open 4♣, the opponents might choose the wrong spot or bid too high or stay too low. If a sacrifice in clubs is the order of the day, partner has the opportunity to do so.

The deal arose in the quarter-final match between [FLEISHER](#) and [LAVAZZA](#) in the 2016 Vanderbilt (USA Knockout Open Teams):

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K8	
	♥ KJ63	
	♦ QJ97	
	♣ J73	
West		East
♠ AQ742		♠ J10953
♥ Q42		♥ A10975
♦ A6542		♦ 3
♣ --		♣ A5
	South	
	♠ 6	
	♥ 8	
	♦ K108	
	♣ KQ1098642	

With [LAVAZZA](#) East-West:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	4♣
Dble <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	5♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) For takeout

(2) Slam interest

(3) Not diamonds, pick a major

After a 3♣ opening, some play 4♦ as Leaping Michaels, 5+ diamonds and a 5+ major. There is a case for playing 4♦ over 4♣ as non-leaping Michaels the same way.

North led the ♣3: ace – two – ♥2. Declarer played the ♥4 to the ace and the ♥5. South ruffed and declarer claimed 11 tricks, cashing the ♠A when in at trick 4 and cross-ruffing after that.

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K8	
	♥ KJ63	
	♦ QJ97	
	♣ J73	
West		East
♠ AQ742		♠ J10953
♥ Q42		♥ A10975
♦ A6542		♦ 3
♣ --		♣ A5
	South	
	♠ 6	
	♥ 8	
	♦ K108	
	♣ KQ1098642	

With **FLEISHER** East-West, East opened the bidding. If you have a weak opening to show the majors, fine. If not, most would choose to pass as East. With both majors there is usually a good chance to show that holding later in the auction.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	4♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
5♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) The case for bidding 4♣ and not 5♣ is stronger after East has opened.

(2) Slam interest, club control

South led the ♥8: two – jack – ace. East cashed the ♣A, discarding a heart, and played a heart to the queen and king. The rest was easy for 11 tricks, with East losing a spade trick. East-West +650, no swing.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, it went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

In answer to today's question on page 1, West should do something. It is true that West has only 12 HCP and partner is a passed hand, but you cannot let fear govern your decisions. Ideal would be that 4♦ non-leaping Michaels convention, but lacking that, make a takeout double. That is not safe, but you were not thinking of safety when you chose to play bridge. It is a risk, but a risk worth taking. West has 5½ losers and the club void is also a plus.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Dble	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 108764  
♥ J6  
♦ J84  
♣ AK10

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

*Do you know why you cannot trust an atom? It is because they make up everything.*