392. Penalties shout out

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer North: North-South vulnerable

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West North East South
Pass Pass 1♠
Pass 2♠(1) Pass 4♠
?
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(1) Drury, maximum pass and spade support

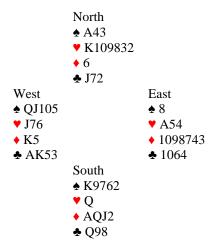
What would you do as West with:

- **♦** QJ105
- **♥** J76
- ♦ K5
- ♣ AK53

I have often advocated restraint when considering a penalty double against opponents who have bid a game or a slam at unfavourable vulnerability. If they lack the high-card values for their contract, they will almost always have good, unbalanced shape as compensation. Here, however, they could easily have 25-26 HCP, but have wandered into a bad break. You can be confident of two spade tricks and you have the possibility of two club tricks. Even if one of the club winners is ruffed, the •K might be a winner. Maybe partner has club length and you might produce a forcing defence.

The deal arose on BBO:

Dealer North: North-South vulnerable



This time North-South were living beyond their means at unfavourable vulnerability. For 2♣, North would be expected to have 10-11 HCP. Here North chose 2♣ because of the unbalanced shape and the fact that North had an 8-loser hand.

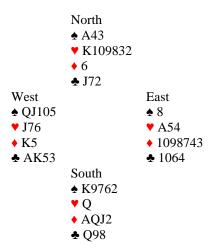
At three tables it went:

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West North East South
Pass Pass 1♠

1NT 2♠ All Pass
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One declarer made 8 tricks, +110, +7.13 Imps, and two made 9 tricks, +7.93 Imps. At one table, the auction was Pass: Pass: $1 \ge 1$: Pass, $2 \le 1$, all pass. Declarer went one down -100, but +2.87 imps. At 8 tables, South was in $4 \le 1$ undoubled, commonly after the auction at the top of the page, where $4 \le 1$ was passed out. At 3 tables, South was one off, -100 but +2.87 Imps. Five were two light, -200 and +0.53 Imps.

Dealer North-North-South vulnerable



At the remaining four tables, after the auction at the top of page 1, West doubled 4 - 1, all pass. At one table the play went A - 1, club won by South. The Q - 1 went to the ace and East switched to the A - 1: ace A - 1: ace A - 1: Declarer continued with A - 1; A - 1: At was two down, A - 1: That was two down, A - 1: The two down down, A - 1: That was two down down down down.

At the other three tables, South went three off, –800, giving East-West 10.47 Imps. The play followed a similar path, but declarer lost a diamond trick as well.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South: East-West vulnerable

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West North East South

1NT – 15-17 points

Pass 2♣ Pass 2♠ – No 4-card or 5 card major

Pass 3♠¹¹ Pass 4♥

Pass Pass Pass

(1) Smolen, showing 4 spades, 5 hearts and forcing to game
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What would you lead as West from:

- **♦** QJ1075
- **♥** A9
- ♦ AJ97
- **♣** 54

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

If anyone out there knows how to fix broken hinges, my door is always open.