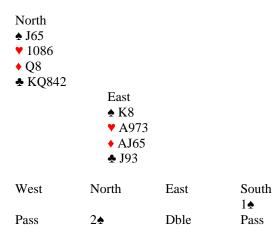
19. Hang 'em High

By Ron Klinger

South dealer: Nil vulnerable



West leads the ♥J: six from dummy. Which heart do you play as East?

Pass

Pass

Today's deals arose in the 2018 Victor Champion Cup Open Teams in Melbourne.

3♠

Round 1: Board 14

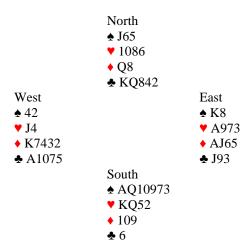
3♦

Pass

South dealer: Nil vulnerable

Pass

Pass



Third-hand-high is a good guide, but that is all it is, a 'guide'. It is not an absolute. You have to judge each situation on its merits. With the $\blacktriangledown 10$ in dummy, you know as East that West's lead is either $\blacktriangledown J$ -x or $\blacktriangledown J$ singleton. If it is a singleton, you can take the $\blacktriangledown A$, give partner a heart ruff with the $\blacktriangledown 9$ (suit-preference for diamonds), regain the lead with the $\blacktriangledown A$ and give partner another heart ruff.

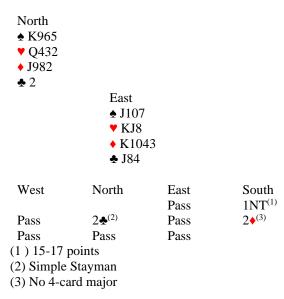
However, playing the ♥A here would not work. If you play ♥A and then ♥9, dummy wins with the ♥10. Declarer can now finesse the ♠Q, cash ♠A and make nine tricks.

How do you judge whether to take the ♥A or whether to play partner for ♥J-x and duck at trick 1? Ask yourself, 'If partner's ♥J is a singleton, how many hearts does declarer have?'. That would give declarer five hearts, possible, but not likely. Why? Because with 5+ spades and 5 hearts, South might have tried for game.

In practice, East played the ♥3, low-like, on the ♥J. South won and returned the ♣6. What should West do? Second-hand low is another good guide, but again, it is just a guide. If West plays low, dummy wins and declarer takes the spade finesse to make ten tricks. At the table, West rose with the ♣A and continued with the ♥4. East took the ace, cashed the ♦A and then gave West a heart ruff. West cashed the ♦K for one down.

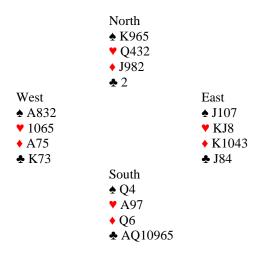
Datum: N-S +120. Results: $4 \spadesuit$ on the \forall J lead: +420 x 9, +450 x 3, -100 x 6, -50 x 2; $3 \spadesuit$, \forall J lead: +140 x 6, +170 x 7, -100 x 3, -50 x 10.

East dealer: Nil vulnerable



West leads the ◆5, two from dummy. Which diamond would you play as East?

East dealer: Nil vulnerable



You are in a third-hand high problem again. In situations similar to this, one often inserts the ten, but given dummy's ◆9-8, that is not a good idea here. The only time playing the ◆10 works is if partner has led the ◆5 from A-Q-5. That will not be the case and so you should play low. Declarer might have ◆A-Q doubleton. If you play the ◆10, you make one trump trick. Play low and you make two.

On the actual layout, if East plays the \bullet 10, declarer makes two trump tricks. When East played low, the \bullet 6 won. Declarer continued with the \bullet Q, ace from West and the defence had three trump tricks. South finished two down, East-West +100.

Datum: E-W 20. Results: $2 \bullet$ on the $\bullet 5$ lead: -150×1 , $-100 \times 5 -50 \times 1$, $+90 \times 1$.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♠
Pass	7♠	Dble	?

What would you do as South with:

- **♠** A9
- **v** 854
- ♦ A2
- ♣ AKQJ103
- 2. North dealer: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♣
2♠	7♥	Pass	Pass
7♠	Pass	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

- **7** --
- **♥** KJ
- ◆ AKQJ1098
- **♣** AQ32

Why not discuss the problems by phone with your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

A rookie had very few bubs For his bidding produced many flubs The lad was a layman And didn't know Stayman Was dummy sometimes in two clubs. (ACBL Bulletin, March 2020)