

23. Behind the 8-Ball

By Ron Klinger

With only North-South vulnerable, North deals and passes. What do you do as East with:

♠ AJ1098543
♥ --
♦ K95
♣ 87

The first two deals today come from the 2018 Victor Champion Cup.

Match 2: Board 15

North dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q76	
	♥ A1094	
	♦ J64	
	♣ 543	
West		East
♠ K		♠ AJ1098543
♥ KQJ8753		♥ --
♦ 732		♦ K95
♣ 62		♣ 87
	South	
	♠ 2	
	♥ 62	
	♦ AQ108	
	♣ AKQJ109	

East has six losers, hence seven playing tricks. Adding three makes a 4♠ opening the normal choice. South has a 4-loser hand. After a pre-empt, it usually pays to play partner for two defensive tricks. That means 5♣ is the recommended choice. In the BBO match, it went Pass : 4♠, 5♣, all pass at both tables. Whether West led the ♥K (ace, ruffed) or the ♠K and then the ♥K, the result was two light, no swing.

With neither side vulnerable, what do you do as dealer with:

♠ AK1087654
♥ J
♦ J
♣ 743

Match 6 : Board 27

South dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North ♠ 9 ♥ Q10832 ♦ A4 ♣ AQ1092	
West ♠ J32 ♥ AK75 ♦ Q762 ♣ K8		East ♠ Q ♥ 964 ♦ K109853 ♣ J65
	South ♠ AK1087654 ♥ J ♦ J ♣ 743	

Again, you have a 6-loser hand and so 7-playing tricks, making a 4♣ opening the preferred action. On BBO, both Souths opened 4♠, all pass. South loses a spade, a heart and a club, but has ten tricks, +420.

The next two deals arose in the final of the 2018 Autumn National Open Teams:

Bd. 9: North dealer : E-W vulnerable

	North ♠ Q64 ♥ 107542 ♦ J85 ♣ A4	
West ♠ 8 ♥ A63 ♦ Q ♣ KQJ98652		East ♠ 9752 ♥ KQJ9 ♦ 10632 ♣ 10
	South ♠ AKJ103 ♥ 8 ♦ AK974 ♣ 73	

West	North	East	South
<i>Williams</i>	<i>Braithwaite</i>	<i>Mullamphy</i>	<i>De Livera</i>
	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	2♠
3♣	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Majors

West	North	East	South
<i>Brown</i>	<i>Haffer</i>	<i>Buchen</i>	<i>Markey</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
4♣	4♠	All Pass	

De Livera won the ♣K lead, played ♦5 to ♦A, drew trumps and made 11 tricks, +450. Markey won the ♣K lead, drew trumps and led a low diamond, ten tricks, +420, -1 Imp. Unfavourable vulnerability causes players to hold back a little in the bidding (with good reason). There was an opportunity for the rare vulnerable sacrifice against the non-vulnerable game. If West can find a 5♣ bid, that is only one down, -200 if doubled for +6 Imps.

How would you bid these East-West hands?

Bd. 52: West dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	East
♠ A82	♠ K5
♥ AKJ8	♥ 97
♦ AJ63	♦ 10
♣ 53	♣ AKQJ8742

Justin Williams (W) – Matt Mullamphy (E) bid 1NT (15-17) : 2♠ (transfer to clubs), 3♣ : 4♣, 4♥ (0 or 3 key cards for clubs) : 4NT, 5♣ : 7♣, +1440. Terry Brown (W) – Peter Buchen (E) bid 1NT : 3♣ (strong), 3NT : 4♣, 4♥ (0 or 3 key cards), 7NT, +1520, +2 Imps. East just needs to find 3 aces and 1 king to bid 7NT.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. South dealer : North-South vulnerable

North	East
♠ Q4	♠ 1073
♥ K53	♥ A64
♦ QJ107	♦ 9654
♣ QJ96	♣ 432

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dble
1♠	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Dble	Pass
Pass	4♣	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

West leads the ♠A: four – ten (discouraging) – five. West switches to the ♥J: three from dummy. Which heart would you play as East?

2. West dealer : Nil vulnerable

North	East
♠ AJ93	♠ Q2
♥ A3	♥ J109652
♦ 96542	♦ J3
♣ A3	♣ 1087

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♠6: three – queen – king. South returned the ♠5: four – jack – two and played the ♦2: three – seven – ten. West switched to the ♥Q, ace from dummy. Which heart would you play as East?

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

*We all know the story of Chase
Who played at a maddening pace
But the slowness proved minor
To the sin much sublimer
The trumping of his partner's ace.
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