

34. Moves in High Places

By Ron Klinger

1. West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Dble ⁽²⁾	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♦	Pass
Pass	5♠	Pass	Pass
6♦	?		

(1) At least 5-5 in spades and clubs

(2) 6+ points, 4+ hearts

What would you do as North with:

♠ AK852
♥ 942
♦ --
♣ AKJ43

If you choose to double, it goes Pass : Pass : Pass. Your lead?

The deal arose in a teams' match in early April:

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ Q10	♠ AK852	♠ J7	♠ 9643
♥ KJ1075	♥ 942	♥ AQ83	♥ 6
♦ AKQ972	♦ --	♦ J10853	♦ 64
♣ --	♣ AKJ43	♣ 108	♣ Q97652

At one table, after the auction above, North, with A-K in two suits doubled 6♦. As South had jumped in spades, it looked like one of the opponents, probably West for the 6♦ bid, might well be void in spades. North therefore led the ♣A. Disaster. West ruffed, drew two rounds of trumps and ran the hearts, pitching one spade from dummy. West had 12 tricks, 6♦ doubled bid and made, +1090. Had North started with two rounds of spades, 6♦ doubled would have been one off.

Letting them make 6♦ doubled was not even the worst of it. North-South are cold for 6♠ played by South. Looking at three rag hearts, it is not easy for North to bid 6♠, but it would have worked. Now East-West need to bid 7♥ or 7♦, one or two down doubled, the par result.

Another option for North was to pass 6♦. As North had bid to 5♠ vulnerable against not vulnerable, North's pass is / should be forcing. When 6♦ comes to South, would South (a) Pass, even though the situation is forcing? (b) Double 6♦ and now North has to find the right lead, or (c) bid 6♠?

The cost in allowing 6♦ doubled to make turned out to be only 3 Imps. This is what happened at the other table:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Dble ⁽¹⁾	3♠
4♥	4♠	6♥	All Pass

(1) 6+ points, 4+ hearts

North led the ♣K and so 6♥ also made for +980, but -3 Imps.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

North
♠ K72
♥ 954
♦ 93
♣ K9876

South
♠ AQ106
♥ AKQ87
♦ A8
♣ A5

You open 2♣ (artificial, game-forcing) in fourth seat as South and, with no opposition bidding, you end in 6♥. West leads the ♦J. Plan the play.

The natural play is to take the ♦A and draw trumps. If trumps are 3-2, you need to deal with the spade suit. If you start with ♠A and ♠K, maybe the ♠J has dropped. If not, you then have a choice to finesse the ♠10 or play the ♠Q and hope spades were originally 3-3.

Of course, tackling spades after drawing trumps is not your best move. There is no rush for the spades. Try the clubs first. Maybe the whole deal is like this:

	North	
	♠ K72	
	♥ 954	
	♦ 93	
	♣ K9876	
West		East
♠ J984		♠ 53
♥ 63		♥ J102
♦ J1076		♦ KQ542
♣ Q43		♣ J102
	South	
	♠ AQ106	
	♥ AKQ87	
	♦ A8	
	♣ A5	

If you win the ♦A, draw trumps and play spades, you go one down. Instead, after ♦A and ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q, you should play ♣A, ♣K and ruff a club. When they are 3-3, you make 13 tricks, crossing to the ♠K and pitching the ♦8 and the ♠10 on dummy's club winners.

Suppose you adopt that line and after ♦A, everyone follows low on the ♥A, but when you play ♥K, West discards a diamond. What now?

You now have a trump loser and cannot afford a diamond loser. How might you hope to cope with that?

This is the layout you need:

	North	
	♠ K72	
	♥ 954	
	♦ 93	
	♣ K9876	
West		East
♠ 95		♠ J843
♥ 6		♥ J1032
♦ J10765		♦ KQ42
♣ Q10432		♣ J
	South	
	♠ AQ106	
	♥ AKQ87	
	♦ A8	
	♣ A5	

After ♠A, ♥A, ♥K, you have a heart loser and you need to eliminate the diamond loser. You cannot afford spades to be 3-3. If they are 3-3, you can pitch dummy's diamond on the 13th spade. East ruffs and returns the other heart and you still have a diamond loser. To succeed when hearts are as above, you need East to have four spades. After ♠A, ♥A, ♥K, you play ♠A, ♠6 to the ♠K, finesse the ♠10, cash the ♠Q and pitch dummy's ♦9, ruff the ♦8 and play a club. You lose only the heart trick.

In a teams' match on BBO, declarer played it exactly like that, but this was the actual deal:

	North	
	♠ K72	
	♥ 954	
	♦ 93	
	♣ K9876	
West		East
♠ J54		♠ 983
♥ 2		♥ J1063
♦ J1075		♦ KQ642
♣ Q10432		♣ J
	South	
	♠ AQ106	
	♥ AKQ87	
	♦ A8	
	♣ A5	

After ♠A, ♥A, ♥K, ♠A, ♠K, ♠7: nine – ten – jack, West played a diamond and South was two down, –200, losing a spade, a diamond and a heart. Frustratingly, 6♥ can be made via a significantly inferior line: win ♦A, cash one heart and then play ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q and the ♠10, pitching dummy's ♦9. East can ruff, but South can ruff the diamond loser and come to 12 tricks.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North			
	♠ K532			
	♥ KJ104			
	♦ 973			
	♣ 54			
	South			
	♠ AQ1096			
	♥ 8			
	♦ AK8			
	♣ J1073			
West	North	East	South	
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	
2♥	3♠	Pass	4♠	
Pass	Pass	Pass		

West leads the ♦J. Plan the play.

2. East dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♦	4♠	5♣
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ 94
♥ A104
♦ A754
♣ 9762

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

*Money brings some happiness. But after a certain point, it just brings more money.
(Neil Simon in a Newsweek interview, 1970).*