

58. Trans-Tasman Tests

By Ron Klinger

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?	Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass

(1) Weak two in hearts

What would you do as West with:

♠ K109872
♥ K8
♦ A3
♣ KQ2

The deal arose in Session 3 of a match on BBO between the Australian Open Team (Nabil Edgton – Andy Hung, Peter Gill – Sartaj Hans, Michael Courtney – Paul Wyr) and the New Zealand Open Team (Ashley Bach – Michael Cornell, Nick Jacob – Geo Tislevoll, Peter Newell – Martin Reid).

Bd. 9: North dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A3	
	♥ 1095	
	♦ Q875	
	♣ J965	
West		East
♠ K109872		♠ J4
♥ K8		♥ QJ7632
♦ A3		♦ 2
♣ KQ2		♣ A1084
	South	
	♠ Q65	
	♥ A4	
	♦ KJ10964	
	♣ 73	

West	North	East	South
<i>Jacob</i>	<i>Gill</i>	<i>Tislevoll</i>	<i>Hans</i>
2♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opposite a weak 2♥, West is worth 4♥. Some play 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ all as weak twos. Others plays 2♦ as a multi, a weak two in hearts or in spades, with 2♥ and 2♠ usually showing 5 cards in the major and either 4+ in a minor or 5+ in a minor. If playing those methods, East should open 2♦ en route to showing the weak two in hearts. It poses a dilemma for West when holding two cards in opener's major if 2♥ and 2♠ can be a 5-card suit or a 6-card suit. If one is to allow 2♥ to be 5 or 6 hearts and a 4+ minor, then either 2♠ needs to be forcing or West needs to bid 2NT to ask for opener's major suit-length: then 3♣/3♦ can be 5 hearts, 4+ clubs / diamonds and 3♥/3♠ can be 6 hearts, 4+ clubs / 6 hearts, 4+ diamonds.

In the event, West bid 2♠, apparently not forcing, and everyone passed. West won the ♦7 lead, ruffed the ♦3 with the ♠J and played the ♠4: six – ten – ace. Declarer lost two spades, and a heart, ten tricks, East-West +170.

	North	
	♠ A3	
	♥ 1095	
	♦ Q875	
	♣ J965	
West		East
♠ K109872		♠ J4
♥ K8		♥ QJ7632
♦ A3		♦ 2
♣ KQ2		♣ A1084
	South	
	♠ Q65	
	♥ A4	
	♦ KJ10964	
	♣ 73	

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Hung</i>	<i>Newell</i>	<i>Edgton</i>	<i>Reid</i>
	Pass	2♥	3♦
4♥!	5♦	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

West is worth 4♥ whether South bids 3♦ or passes. West has support for a 6-card heart suit and has five losers. You can add a loser for holding only two trumps, so six losers. A weak two will normally have 7 or 8 losers. Apply the Losing Trick Count formula: If East has 8 losers, 8 + 6 (West's losers) = 14 and 24 - 14 = ten tricks are probable. Here East makes 11 tricks by playing South for the ♠Q or 10 tricks if East loses two spades. North-South therefore did well to sacrifice in 5♦ doubled, as long as the penalty is -500 or less.

West led the ♥K. South won and played the ♦J., South lost a spade, a heart, a diamond and two clubs, -500. In theory that should have been a pick-up, but because East-West at the other table scored only 170, that was 8 Imps to Australia.

Australia won Session 3 by 36-4.

East dealer : Both vulnerable

North
 ♠ J86
 ♥ 9743
 ♦ K742
 ♣ A7

South
 ♠ K10
 ♥ AK6
 ♦ J10853
 ♣ QJ4

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ ⁽¹⁾
1♣	Dble	Pass	1NT
Dble	Pass	2♣	Pass
Pass	Dble ⁽²⁾	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Natural or balanced
- (2) Primarily for takeout

West leads the ♦6. Which diamond do you play from dummy?

Session 4: Board 4

East dealer : Both vulnerable

	North ♠ J86 ♥ 9743 ♦ K742 ♣ A7	
West ♠ AQ543 ♥ J8 ♦ AQ6 ♣ K108		East ♠ 972 ♥ Q1052 ♦ 9 ♣ 96532
	South ♠ K10 ♥ AK6 ♦ J10853 ♣ QJ4	

West	North	East	South
<i>Bach</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Cornell</i>	<i>Gill</i>
		Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾
Dble ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♣ ⁽³⁾	Pass
Pass	Dble ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 14-16 points

(2) Penalties

(3) Clubs and another suit

(4) For takeout

South won the ♥J lead and played the ♦10. West rose with the ♦A, essentially telegraphing the ♦Q as well. With ♦A-x or ♦A-x-x, West would play low. West could tell that playing for a heart ruff was futile. South had 14-16 points, dummy had 8 HCP and West had 16. That left at most 2 HCP for East.

At trick 3, West continued with ♥8: nine – ten – king. Recognizing that he could afford to lose to the ♦Q, South played ♦J: six – king – ♣6 and ♠6: seven – ten – queen. West cashed the ♦Q, the ♠A and exited with a spade to dummy's ♠J. South discarded ♥6, ruffed a heart and played ♣Q, king, ace, for nine tricks, North-South +110.

If one has decided to lead a trump from A-Q-x, a common ploy was to start with the ace. If dummy turned up with the trump king, one continued with the low trump. Declarer, not expecting you to have led from A-Q-x, would place East with Q-x and rise with dummy's king. That would give you two trump tricks, whereas on some other lead, declarer might finesse you for the trump queen.

Having led the trump ace, if the king is not in dummy, you switch to some other suit and await to collect your ♦Q later. One advantage of leading the ♦A is that dummy is revealed. Then if the trump king is with declarer, the sight of dummy might help you with your switch at trick 2.

Leading the trump ace from A-Q-x is not risk-free. It could become part of dinner conversation if partner's singleton king falls under you ace. Leading the ace would also cost you a trick if the trump layout is like this:

	North (dummy) 9873	
West (you) AQ6		East (partner) J10
	South K542	

The defenders have three trump tricks, but if West leads the ace, East-West have only two tricks.

	North	
	♠ J86	
	♥ 9743	
	♦ K742	
	♣ A7	
West		East
♠ AQ543		♠ 972
♥ J8		♥ Q1052
♦ AQ6		♦ 9
♣ K108		♣ 96532
	South	
	♠ K10	
	♥ AK6	
	♦ J10853	
	♣ QJ4	

West	North	East	South
<i>Courtney</i>	<i>Reid</i>	<i>Wyer</i>	<i>Newell</i>
		Pass	1♣ ⁽¹⁾
1♠	Dble	Pass	1NT
Dble	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dble ⁽²⁾	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Natural or balanced

(2) Primarily for takeout

Michael Courtney produced a new wrinkle on this situation. He led the ♦6. This avoided crashing a singleton king with partner and it also misled declarer. Thinking West would not ever lead away from the ♦Q, but could lead low from ♦A-x or A-x-x, South rose with the ♦K. Now West had two certain diamond tricks which he otherwise might not have had.

After the ♦K held, declarer played a second diamond. West took the ♦Q and the ♦A, East discarding ♣2 and ♣2. West switched to the ♥J: three – queen!? – ace. To declarer it looked as though West had started with hearts headed by the J-10. South could have set up a spade trick, as South did at the other table. Instead, South played the ♣Q, king, ace and the ♥4: two – six – eight! Declarer won the ♣10 return, cashed the ♥K, but still had two spade losers, one down and 5 Imps to Australia. New Zealand won Session 4 by 32-12.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. With only East-West vulnerable, South deals and opens 1NT (15-17). North bids 3NT, all pass. What do you lead from:

♠ 742
♥ K84
♦ 10976
♣ 1053

2. South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2♦ ⁽¹⁾	2♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Weak two in hearts or in spades

(2) Equivalent to a takeout double of 2♥

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 965
♥ AK10743
♦ Q7
♣ J3

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

If you don't have a sense of humour, you probably don't have any sense at all.