

66. Trying times

By Ron Klinger

Today's deals arose in a bridge match on BBO. The problem hands were similar with a 3-suited or almost 3-suited hand with a void in diamonds.

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1♦ ⁽²⁾	1♠
Pass ⁽³⁾	2♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	?

(1) 4+ clubs, not balanced or any balanced hand outside the no-trump ranges

(2) 4+ hearts

(3) Denies three hearts

(4) Good raise to 2♠

What would you do as South with:

♠ QJ852
♥ A832
♦ --
♣ K952

You have only 10 HCP, but the shape is good. You could simply sign off in 2♠ or you could try for game. If you elect to try for game, what would you choose? Any one of 3♠, 3♣ or, if available, 3♦, short-suit trial, is possible.

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K103	
	♥ 5	
	♦ A932	
	♣ Q10874	
West		East
♠ A76		♠ 94
♥ K9		♥ QJ10764
♦ Q10654		♦ KJ87
♣ A63		♣ J
	South	
	♠ QJ852	
	♥ A832	
	♦ --	
	♣ K952	

At one table, after the auction above, one South bid 3♣, a trial bid, showing 3+ clubs, inviting game and seeking help in clubs. West passed and North jumped to 4♠, all pass.

West led the ♦4: ace – seven – ♥2. The ♠10 went to the ♠A. West switched to the ♣A and played another club. East ruffed and switched to a heart. South took the ♥A, ruffed a heart with the ♠K, drew trumps and ditched the last heart on dummy's fifth club, ten tricks, +420.

At the other table, South bid 2♠ over North's 2♥ (good raise) but it did not end there. It went Pass : Pass : 2NT by East (pick a suit) : Pass, 3♦, all pass. As East had responded 1♦, East was declarer.

South led the ♠Q, taken by the ♠A. Declarer played ♦4: two – jack – ♠2 and the ♥4: two – king – five. Then came ♦5: three – eight – ♣2 and ♥10: three – nine – ♦9. North cashed the ♦A and the ♠K, followed by the ♠3. East ruffed with the ♦K, but with South still holding the ♥A, East lost two clubs at the end, –100 but +8 Imps.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A75432
♥ K962
♦ --
♣ AK2

You have only 14 HCP, but again your shape is promising. Partner has 6-9 points, but they could be in the right place. You can expect only two spades in dummy, but given the preference of 2♠ over 2♥, there is some chance that dummy will turn up with a doubleton heart. Opposite, say, ♠K-x, ♥A-x, there is a good chance for game. Similarly, opposite ♠x-x, ♥A-x and ♣Q-x-x, you need little more than a 3-2 spade break to make game.

You could, of course, pass 2♠. If you are going to make a try for game, what will you choose? Any one of 3♠, 3♣ (shape-showing) or, if available, 3♦ as a short-suit trial bid.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 98	
	♥ J73	
	♦ KQJ82	
	♣ 1097	
West		East
♠ QJ		♠ K106
♥ AQ4		♥ 1085
♦ 10953		♦ A764
♣ J854		♣ Q63
	South	
	♠ A75432	
	♥ K962	
	♦ --	
	♣ AK2	

At one table, South bid 3♣ and North signed off in 3♠, all pass. With total wastage in diamonds and three hearts rather than two, the North hand was not close to what South needed.

West led the ♠Q. South won and returned a spade. East overtook the ♠J and switched to the ♣3: two – jack – seven. Declarer lost 2 spades, 2 hearts and a club, one light, –100.

At the other table, after the same auction, South passed 2♠ and made eight tricks, +110 and +5 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQ
♥ J6
♦ AK1098642
♣ J

What would you do with the same hand if the bidding had started:

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	?

2. West dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	?	

(1) Fourth-suit, forcing to game

(2) Inviting slam

What would you do as East with:

♠ 4
♥ 104
♦ AKJ9542
♣ A103

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

As it's likely to be the highlight of my day, for maximum effect I'm delaying my trip to the supermarket to buy groceries.