

92. Two suits or one?

By Ron Klinger

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AJ653
♥ Q
♦ --
♣ AJ106432

Before going further, consider this problem:

North
♠ K107
♥ J94
♦ AJ109763
♣ --

South
♠ AJ653
♥ Q
♦ --
♣ AJ106432

You have reached 4♠, no East-West bidding. West leads ♥8. East wins ♥A and plays ♥K. Plan the play.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K107	
	♥ J94	
	♦ AJ109763	
	♣ --	
West		East
♠ Q94		♠ 82
♥ 108632		♥ AK75
♦ 84		♦ KQ52
♣ K85		♣ Q97
	South	
	♠ AJ653	
	♥ Q	
	♦ --	
	♣ AJ106432	

On BBO against robots East-West, the auction was:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♦8: ace – five – ♥Q. South played ♠K, ♠A, ♣A and ♣4. East won and switched to the ♥K. South ruffed and played a third club. When both missing honours fell, South had ten tricks, +130.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K107	
	♥ J94	
	♦ AJ109763	
	♣ --	
West		East
♠ Q94		♠ 82
♥ 108632		♥ AK75
♦ 84		♦ KQ52
♣ K85		♣ Q97
	South	
	♠ AJ653	
	♥ Q	
	♦ --	
	♣ AJ106432	

Notice that North-South missed their spade fit. In general, it is preferable to show a 2-suiter than a 1-suiter. The problem is that in standard methods, there is no convenient way to show spades + clubs after a 1♦ opening. A 2♣ overcall (Michaels) shows the majors and (1♦) : 2NT shows hearts and clubs. It certainly does not appeal to overcall 1♠, a 5-card suit ahead of a 7-card suit.

Methods do exist, but there is a cost involved. You can play (1♦) : 2♦ = hearts + spades (the next two touching suits), (1♦) : 2♥ = spades + clubs (the next two touching suits) and 2NT = hearts + clubs (NT = Non-Touching suits). The tradeoff is being able to show all your 2-suiters vs the loss of the weak jump-overcall in the cheapest suit. You and your partner(s) have to decide whether the price is right.

Playing this approach, it could go Pass : Pass : 1♦ : 2♥, Pass : 4♠, all pass. Whether you make 4♠ is another question.

This was yesterday's first problem:

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ K107
♥ J94
♦ AJ109763
♣ --

As you have seen on the previous page, North chose to pass. Maybe North figured the hand was too weak for a 1♦ opening and that a 3♦ opening did not appeal with such potentially good support for either major. That was not the case when the deal (Board 12) originally arose in the quarter-finals, segment 3, of the 2019 Spingold (USA K-O Open Teams) match between [VERBEEK](#) and [ZIMMERMANN](#). One North chose a 3♦ opening, the other a 1♦ opening.

West dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K107	
	♥ J94	
	♦ AJ109763	
	♣ --	
West		East
♠ Q94		♠ 82
♥ 108632		♥ AK75
♦ 84		♦ KQ52
♣ K85		♣ Q97
	South	
	♠ AJ653	
	♥ Q	
	♦ --	
	♣ AJ106432	

West	North	East	South
<i>Molenaar</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Verbeek</i>	<i>Martens</i>
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

East led ♥A: queen – eight (discouraging) – four. East switched to the ♠8: three – four – ten. North played ♦A, followed by ♦J. East took the ♦Q and shifted to the ♣7. North took the ♣A, pitching the ♥9, ruffed a club and played the ♦10, king. North lost two hearts and two diamonds, but he had nine tricks, North-South +110. Notice that as a result of the 3♦ opening, North-South missed their spade fit. At the other table, the spade fit was found:

West	North	East	South
<i>Kukowski</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Nab</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Once North opens 1♦, that seems an eminently sensible auction. Alas, the play did not live up to the bidding. West led the ♥8: four – ace – queen. East continued with the ♥K. South ruffed, played ♣A and ruffed a club (good), followed by the ♦A and a diamond ruff (not good). Then came club ruff, ♠K, ♦7 – ♦Q – ♠J – ♠Q. A heart from West put dummy on lead. Declarer had taken eight tricks and could score the ♠A for his ninth, but that was the end of it, one down, –100 and 5 Imps to [ZIMMERMANN](#).

The 4♠ contract is certainly reasonable and given reasonable breaks, it was possible to collect ten tricks after ♥8 to the ♥A and the ♥K ruffed. South should plan to set up the clubs and hope for a 3-2 spade break. If the spades are 3-2, South will be all right if clubs are 3-3 or 4-2 with an opponent holding ♣Q-x or ♣K-x. After ruffing the ♥K, South plays ♣A and ruffs a club, plays ♠K and a spade to the ace and a third club. With the 3-3 break, South loses a spade, a heart and a club. After ruffing the club in dummy, South could cash ♥J and ♦A before playing ♠K and ♠10 to the ♠A.

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AJ
 ♥ A73
 ♦ A10542
 ♣ J97

Before dealing with that problem, try this one:

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

North
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ A73
 ♦ A10542
 ♣ J97

South
 ♠ K854
 ♥ J64
 ♦ Q
 ♣ AQ1062

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

East leads ♥2: jack – king . . . ?. Plan the play. As a diamond switch can hurt, you take the ♥A. What next?

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

North
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ A73
 ♦ A10542
 ♣ J97

West
 ♠ Q972
 ♥ K1085
 ♦ 86
 ♣ K85

East
 ♠ 1063
 ♥ Q92
 ♦ KJ973
 ♣ 43

South
 ♠ K854
 ♥ J64
 ♦ Q
 ♣ AQ1062

These were yesterday's questions:

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AJ
 ♥ A73
 ♦ A10542
 ♣ J97

Suppose you have chosen to open 1♦ and partner responds 2♣. What would you do now as North?

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ	
	♥ A73	
	♦ A10542	
	♣ J97	
West		East
♠ Q972		♠ 1063
♥ K1085		♥ Q92
♦ 86		♦ KJ973
♣ K85		♣ 43
	South	
	♠ K854	
	♥ J64	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AQ1062	

On BBO versus robots, it went this way:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Minimum, balanced

West led the ♦8, ace. South ruffed a diamond, finessed the ♠J, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a diamond with the ♣10, which won, cashed ♠K, pitching a heart, and played the ♠8: queen – ♥7 – ♣3. East switched to the ♣4: six – king – seven. West returned the ♣8: nine – ♦K – ♣Q. South was left with ♠A ♥J-6-4. Dummy had ♥A, ♦10-5, ♣J. South could score only the ♥A and two trump tricks. That was one down, losing the spade ruff, the ♠K and a trick at the end.

The place you want to be is 3NT, not that there is any certainty there. South felt obliged to show both suits in case North-South had a fit in either black suit and 4♠, 6♠, 5♣, 6♣ might be possible. North felt obliged to show club support over 3♠ in case South was angling for 6♣. How might North-South have done better?

(a) North might have opened 1NT. North has 14 HCP plus a decent 5-card suit. Upgrading to 15-17 would not be outrageous. (North has 22 Banzai Points, where a 1NT opening is 22-25 BPs, for those who use that approach for balanced hands.)

(b) After 1♦ : 2♣, North might have rebid 2♦. With the 2NT rebid showing a minimum balanced hand and 2♦ showing a minimum hand with 5+ diamonds, there is no huge advantage in rebidding 2NT. Apart from ♠A-J, there is no great advantage in North being declarer in no-trumps. If 2♣ is game-forcing, there is even a stronger case for 2♦ by North, since game will be reached anyway and it allows a cheaper rebid for South. If 2♣ is not game-forcing and South is going to pass 2♦, South would also pass 2NT. The auction could have gone 1♦ : 2♣, 2♦ : 2♠, 2NT : 3NT, all pass.

(c) South might have responded 1♠. It might then go 1♦ : 1♠, 1NT : 3NT, all pass, or 1♦ : 1♠, 1NT : 2NT, 3NT, all pass.

You can allocate the blame between North and South.

On Board 14 above, in the [VERBEEK](#) vs [ZIMMERMANN](#) Spingold quarter-final, session 3, Martens (N) – Helness (S) bid 1NT : 3♦ (shortage), 3NT, all pass. East led the ♦3, won by the ♦Q. What a good time it would have been to lead the ♦K. Declarer made 4 clubs, 2 diamonds, 2 spades and 1 heart, +400.

At the other table, Nab (N) – Drijver (S) bid 1♦ : 1♠, 1NT : 3NT, all pass. East led the ♥2: jack – king – ace. The ♣J won trick 2 and the ♣9 went to the ♠K. West returned the ♥5 to the ♥Q, overtook the ♥9 and cashed the ♥8. West switched to the ♦8, low, king, and that was one down, –50, and 10 Imps to [ZIMMERMANN](#).

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ	
	♥ A73	
	♦ A10542	
	♣ J97	
West		East
♠ Q972		♠ 1063
♥ K1085		♥ Q92
♦ 86		♦ KJ973
♣ K85		♣ 43
	South	
	♠ K854	
	♥ J64	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AQ1062	

After East leads the ♥2 against 3NT: jack – king – ace. North can see that if the club finesse works and East has ♣K-x or ♣K-x-x, 3NT will make. As against, that, if the club finesse loses, North has only eight tricks. If North is prepared to play for clubs 3-2 either way, with the ♣K onside or not, North can combine chances.

Take ♥A and play ♣7 to ♣10. If that holds, finesse the ♠J. When that wins, cash ♠A, and revert to clubs. If the ♣10 loses to the ♣K and they cash three hearts (hearts figure to be 4-3 from the ♥2 lead), discard a diamond from hand and a spade from dummy. Take the diamond switch with ♦A, play ♣9 to ♣Q, finesse ♠J, cash ♠A, play ♣J, to ♣A and you have nine tricks.

This line works on the actual layout and whenever West has the ♠Q and clubs are 3-2. It loses if clubs are 4-1 (a 28% chance) compared with a 50% chance of the ♣K being offside.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : Both vulnerable

	North		
	♠ A10853		
	♥ K9		
	♦ 543		
	♣ 965		
West			
♠ Q642			
♥ A1053			
♦ 2			
♣ J1072			
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT ⁽³⁾	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 15-17 points

(2) Transfer to spades

(3) Inviting game

Trick 1: ♣2 – five – eight – ace

Trick 2: ♥6 – three – king – four

Trick 3: ♠3 – nine – jack . . . How would you defend?

2. What contract would you like to be in on the East-West cards? How would you (a) bid it? (b) play it?

West	East
♠ AJ3	♠ KQ84
♥ Q7	♥ A1064
♦ AK95	♦ 8
♣ KJ95	♣ A842

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

I miss those days when I sneezed and they said, 'Bless you'. Now they say, 'Get outta here.'