

125. Cliff-hanger

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ 53
♥ AQJ107632
♦ 6
♣ 105

Back a while now, one would count one's playing tricks for a pre-empt and add three if not vulnerable, two if vulnerable. Nowadays the popular expert approach is to add three to your playing tricks at any vulnerability. Some adjust it for specific vulnerabilities: add four at favourable, three at equal and two at unfavourable. You and partner should come to an agreement of what is expected for a pre-empt.

Suppose you have agreed to add two at unfavourable vulnerability and you have opened 3♥ as East. Then:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	?	

What would you do as East now with:

♠ 53
♥ AQJ107632
♦ 6
♣ 105

After a 3-level pre-empt, almost every pair plays that a new suit below game is forcing. The question is what are your options? A simple approach is to repeat your suit without support for partner or raise partner's suit with support. Enthusiastic pairs would not be satisfied with just that. You can expect West here to have 6+ spades. This is one possible approach for East:

- bid of another suit = three trumps and shortage in that suit
- 3NT = shortage in partner's suit
- rebid of pre-empt suit = doubleton in partner's suit and no shortage
- Raise of partner's suit = doubleton and shortage somewhere.

On that basis East would bid 4♠. Other rebidding methods exist, of course.

The 36-board final of Alt-Mixed II was between [PEPSI](#) (Filipowicz Dominic, Gromov Andrei, Gulevich Anna, Kazmucha Danuta, Pszczola Jacek, Sakr May) and [RED SEA](#) (Baldysz Cathy, Birman David, Birman Daniela, Grzejdzia Igor, Grzejdzia Sabina, Janiszewski Przemek, Poplilov Lilo, Poplilov Matilda), who had come clearly first and second in the qualifying rounds. [PEPSI](#), who had a 0.1 Imp carry-forward, won Session 1 by 30-21 and Session 2 by 46-40 to lead by 76.1-61 with 12 boards to go. In Set 3, [PEPSI](#) extended the lead to 82-62 with four boards to go. Then came Board 33:

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 102	
	♥ K94	
	♦ Q954	
	♣ 9643	
West		East
♠ AKQJ8		♠ 53
♥ --		♥ AQJ107632
♦ AKJ107		♦ 6
♣ KQJ		♣ 105
	South	
	♠ 9764	
	♥ 85	
	♦ 832	
	♣ A872	

RED SEA East-West:

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

(1) Spade support, short in diamonds

North led the ♣6. South took the ♣A and switched to the ♠4. Igor Grzejdziaak (W) won, cashed the ♦A and played the ♦J: four – ♥2 – ♦2. He ruffed the ♦7, came to hand with a club, drew trumps and had 12 tricks for +1430.

PEPSI East-West:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Perhaps the auction was natural. If not, maybe 4♠ was an ask for key cards, based on hearts as trumps and 4NT showed one. South led the ♣A. East later lost a trick to the ♥K and made 11 tricks, +650 but –13 Imps. PEPSI led by 82.1-75.

Try this problem:

South dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ J752
♥ A72
♦ 73
♣ QJ98

There is a natural temptation to compete in order to try to push them higher, but there are significant warning signs. (1) Partner could not open the bidding. (2) Partner took no action over 1♥. (3) You have only 8 HCP and so your maximum combined total is 19 HCP and might easily be less. Hard as it is, you should pass.

This was the second last deal:

South dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North ♠ A986 ♥ J53 ♦ 102 ♣ AK76	
West ♠ Q43 ♥ Q94 ♦ KQJ86 ♣ 104	East ♠ J752 ♥ A72 ♦ 73 ♣ QJ98	
	South ♠ K10 ♥ K1086 ♦ A954 ♣ 532	

After the problem auction at the bottom of the previous page, East doubled for takeout. That turned out to be a bad idea:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Rdbl
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Another downside to the takeout double by East is the lack of support for diamonds. Sure enough, West bid the suit East did not want to hear. West has 10 HCP and a very good 5-card suit and still it turned ugly.

North led the ♥3: two – king – four. South returned the ♥6. West won with the ♥Q and played the ♣4: king – eight – five (odd number, playing reverse count). North continued with the ♥J to the ♥A to knock out the entry to the clubs. Declarer played the ♣Q: three – ten – ace.

North now could count South for four hearts, three clubs and presumably four diamonds and hence two spades. In addition, South's play in clubs, ♣5-then-♣3 from a holding of 5-3-2 was the highest card each time, hence suit-preference for spades. North switched to the ♠6. South won with the ♠K, returned the ♠10 to the ♠A and ruffed the third round of spades.

That reduced South to ♦A-9-5, but South now popped the 13th heart on the table. Whether West trumped high or low, the defence collected two more trump tricks. That was three down doubled, North-South, +500.

At the other table:

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

(1) Support double, exactly three hearts

South could have left the double in for penalties, but chose to bid 2♥. West led the ♦K, ace. Declarer was able to score two spades and a spade ruff, two clubs, one diamond and two heart tricks, eight tricks in all, +110, but 9 Imps to [RED SEA](#). With one board to go, [RED SEA](#) led by 84-82.1.

(To be continued tomorrow)

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♦	2♥
5♦	5♥	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	?	

What would you do now as East with:

♠ K3
♥ Q54
♦ AKQ542
♣ 94

2. Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) 5+ clubs, 11-15 points

(2) Artificial, 5+ hearts

What would you lead as West from:

♠ J652
♥ QJ1086
♦ --
♣ AQ109

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

I may be schizophrenic, but at least I have each other.