

140. A matter of preference

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

North
 ♠ KJ109
 ♥ Q632
 ♦ 1083
 ♣ 42

East
 ♠ A532
 ♥ J5
 ♦ 97642
 ♣ Q5

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(a) Partner leads ♦K, then ♦A. Which diamonds do you play as East?

If your primary signaling method on partner's lead of a high card is attitude, you would play the ♦2 (not interested in diamonds) if playing standard signals or the ♦9 (not keen on diamonds) if playing 'reverse attitude'. When partner continues with the ♦A, partner is showing you precisely ♦A-K doubleton. What partner now needs to know from you is the location of your entry. It is in spades, the high suit, therefore you should signal with a high card to tell partner to play the high suit. If you played the ♦2 on the first diamond, play the ♦9 now (highest-card, high suit). If you played the ♦9 on the first diamond, play the ♦7 now.

If you give count primarily (exactly why partner would want to know your count here is unclear) and played the ♦2 first (natural count, showing an odd number), play the ♦9 (highest-card, high suit) at trick 2. If you played the ♦9 on the first round (reverse count, showing an odd number), play the ♦7 now. The full deal:

	North	
	♠ KJ109	
	♥ Q632	
	♦ 1083	
	♣ 42	
West		East
♠ 864		♠ A532
♥ 74		♥ J5
♦ AK		♦ 97642
♣ J108763		♣ Q5
	South	
	♠ Q7	
	♥ AK1098	
	♦ QJ5	
	♣ AK9	

On any other defence, 4♥ makes.

(b) Which diamonds would you play as East if you held:

♠ 6532
 ♥ J5
 ♦ 97642
 ♣ AQ

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North		
	♠ KJ109		
	♥ Q632		
	♦ 1083		
	♣ 42		
West		East	
♠ 874		♠ 6532	
♥ 74		♥ J5	
♦ AK		♦ 97642	
♣ J108653		♣ AQ	
	South		
	♠ AQ		
	♥ AK1098		
	♦ QJ5		
	♣ K97		

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner leads ♦K, then ♦A. Which diamonds do you play as East?

If your primary signaling method on partner's lead of a high card is attitude, you would play the ♦2 at trick 1 if playing standard signals and the ♦4 on trick 2 (lowest-card, low suit) to ask for a club switch. If playing 'reverse attitude', play ♦9 at trick 1 and ♦2 (suit-preference) at trick 2 to ask for a club.

If you give count primarily and played the ♦2 first (natural count), play the ♦4 at trick 2. If you played the ♦9 on the first round (reverse count), play the ♦2 now.

(c) What about if your hand as East was:

♠ 8532
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ 97642
 ♣ 75

This was the East holding in yesterday's Daily Column where the theme was signaling in the trump suit (high-low to show an odd number and a desire to ruff). This is a tricky position, since your entry is in the trump suit and suit-preference signals are expected to exclude the trump suit. Whatever you do, partner might mis-read the position. If you played 2 or 9 initially as discouraging, then perhaps the 6 next is best. Likewise, if you played the 2 or 9 first as count.

	North	
	♠ 874	
	♥ KQJ6	
	♦ J8	
	♣ K1054	
West		East
♠ QJ1092		♠ AK
♥ 873		♥ 9542
♦ A6		♦ 1097543
♣ 832		♣ 9
	South	
	♠ 653	
	♥ A10	
	♦ KQ2	
	♣ AQJ76	

Answer to (c): If partner brings back anything but a diamond, 3NT makes. In this context, hearts is the highest suit and clubs is the lowest suit. What does that make diamonds? The easiest way to think about it is that diamonds is the second-highest suit. Since you play the ♠J, highest, for the highest suit, you can play the ♠10, the second-highest, to ask for the second-highest suit.

When I use this example in a bridge class, some students want to play the ♠9 to ask for a diamond. I explain that you are lucky here that your spade holding allows you to ask for hearts (♠J), diamonds (♠10) or clubs (♠2). The ♠9 would be ambiguous. You might have led the ♠Q from ♠Q-J-10-9 only and now the ♠9 is the lowest spade. You would also have led the ♠Q from ♠Q-J-9-5-2. As declarer began with ♠10-6-3, you cannot afford to play the ♠J as that would make South's ♠10 high. The ♠9 would now be asking for the high suit, but be forgiving if partner cannot decipher the ♠9. You will not always have an ideal holding to produce an accurate signal. Make the most of those situations where cards to allow you to paint a perfect picture for partner.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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

(1) 7-9 points, 4+ spades

(2) Shows exactly 2 spades

What would you do as East with:

♠ 3
♥ Q86
♦ AK10742
♣ K72

2. Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) 4+ hearts, 0-5 points

(2) Exactly 2 spades

What would you do as West with:

♠ A543
♥ AQJ82
♦ A942
♣ --

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

Whatever hits the fan will not be distributed evenly.