

# 142. More on the Mullamphy Double vs Non-Double

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) 15-17 points

(2) Spades and another suit

(3) Transfer to hearts

What would you do as East with:

♠ 9  
♥ AJ875  
♦ J97542  
♣ K

If you read yesterday's Daily Column, you will be aware of the concept of the Mullamphy Double of 4♣. If not, here it is again: In an auction where your side bids to 4♥ via hearts bid and supported and the opponents then bid 4♣ with spades bid and supported, Matt Mullamphy of Sydney proposed an idea some years ago to help the side bidding hearts to judge whether to defend or whether to bid to 5♥. The player immediately after the 4♣ bidder indicates the spade length by (a) doubling with exactly two spades or (b) passing with 0-1 or 3+ spades. The deadly holding for bidding 5♥ is often two spades opposite two spades. Where next player passes 4♣, the partner can usually tell – no guarantees – whether it is 0-1 spade or 3+ spades, based on the number of spades partner holds.

Today's deals feature two more deals where this concept would have helped. This arose in a Butler Trials:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ KQ6	♠ AJ732	♠ 9	♠ 10854
♥ K1093	♥ 2	♥ AJ875	♥ Q64
♦ K1063	♦ 8	♦ J97542	♦ AQ
♣ A6	♣ J107542	♣ K	♣ Q983

After the auction above, East bid 5♥, all pass. North led the ♠A and switched to the ♦8. South took the ♦A and, appreciating that North would have cashed the ♣A if North had it, South returned the ♦Q. North ruffed and that was one down when declarer played a low heart to the ♥A later and picked up South's ♥Q.

It is irritating to go one down when your side has the balance of power and you could have gone plus if you had defended against 4♣. Playing the Mullamphy Double East would pass 4♣. West would know that East began with a singleton spade, not three spades. With that strength in spades, wasted in 5♥, West would double 4♣. The defence should be able to take a heart, two clubs and a spade. That would be +100 (the East-West datum) for a flat board instead of -4 Imps for -50. After a heart lead there is a defence to take 4♣ doubled two off.

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ732	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 8	
	♣ J107542	
West		East
♠ KQ6		♠ 9
♥ K1093		♥ AJ875
♦ K1063		♦ J97542
♣ A6		♣ K
	South	
	♠ 10854	
	♥ Q64	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ Q983	

Results: Open: 4♠ doubled -100 (♠9 lead) x 1; 4♥ +420 x 1, -50 x 1; 5♥ -50 x 3; 5♦ +400 x 1; 6♥ -50 x 1.  
Women: 4♥ +450 x 1, +420 x 1; 5♥ doubled -100 x 1; 5♥ -50 x 1; 3NT West -50 x 1.  
Seniors: 4♥ -50 x 1; 5♥ -50 x 7; 4♠ -100 x 1; 5♠ -200 x 1.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
1♥	Pass	2♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	2♠ <sup>(3)</sup>
4♥	4♠	?	

(1) Artificial, 12+ points balanced or long clubs or 17+ points

(2) Strong raise to 2♥

(3) 5 spades, 17+ points

What would you do as East with:

♠ J86  
♥ A10975  
♦ QJ2  
♣ J4

	North	
	♠ 1053	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 87653	
	♣ 10973	
West		East
♠ K7		♠ J86
♥ KJ842		♥ A10975
♦ 109		♦ QJ2
♣ AK52		♣ J4
	South	
	♠ AQ942	
	♥ Q6	
	♦ AK4	
	♣ Q86	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
1♥	Pass	2♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	2♠ <sup>(3)</sup>
4♥	4♠	?	

(1) Artificial, 12+ points balanced or long clubs or 17+ points

(2) Strong raise to 2♥

(3) 5 spades, 17+ points

The deal arose in the finals of the 2016 World Bridge Games. In the final of the World Mixed Teams, after the auction above, East bid 5♥, all pass. North led a spade. South took ♠A, ♦A, ♦K, North-South +100.

Had East-West been playing the Mullamphy Double of 4♠ (showing exactly two spades), East would have passed 4♠. With South showing a strong hand, West could be confident of scoring the ♠K and probably the ♣A, ♣K. In addition, East had shown a strong raise to 2♥. That could also provide a trick or two. West might double 4♠ or pass it out, but West would never be going to 5♥. It is so much better to go plus than minus.

Suppose West had doubled 4♠, all pass. West would start with ♣A, ♣K. East would show the doubleton and West would continue with the ♣5, suit-preference for hearts. East would ruff. Now what? If East cashes the ♥A, West will still come to the ♠K and that is two off, +500. If East interprets the ♣5 correctly, East could play a low heart. West will win and play the ♣2: ten – ♠J – ♣Q. South has already lost four tricks and is going to lose a spade and a diamond. That is three down, East-West +800.

At the other table, West played in 4♥. With hearts 2-1 and the ♠A onside, West had no problems making ten tricks, East-West +620. With North-South +100 versus 5♥ at the other table, that was a gain of 12 Imps. Had East-West in the auction above used the Mullamphy Double, they could have been +5 Imps instead of -12.

In the Open final, Norway East-West played 3♥ +170, Netherlands 4♥ +620 and +10 Imps. In the Women's final between FRANCE and USA, both sides were in 4♥ +620, no swing. It was the same in the Seniors' final, also between FRANCE and USA.

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

North  
♠ J9432  
♥ J  
♦ AJ8  
♣ K743

South  
♠ Q1065  
♥ 93  
♦ K107  
♣ AQJ6

West	North	East	South
	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Dble <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) For takeout

West leads the ♣10. Plan the play.

2. Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North  
♠ 32  
♥ 1087  
♦ AKJ9876  
♣ 4

East  
♠ QJ84  
♥ AKJ93  
♦ 53  
♣ 92

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦ <sup>(1)</sup>	1♥	Dble <sup>(2)</sup>
2♥	3♦	Pass	3♥ <sup>(3)</sup>
Dble	Pass <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Buoyed by optimism and the vulnerability

(2) Exactly 4 spades

(3) Strong hand, asking for a heart stopper

(4) No heart stopper

West leads the ♥5 (third and fifths): seven – king – four. What would you play as East at trick 2?

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

*Mr. and Mrs. Poole, don't name your son Cecil.*