

143. Cutting remarks

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

North
♠ J9432
♥ J
♦ AJ8
♣ K743

South
♠ Q1065
♥ 93
♦ K107
♣ AQJ6

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

(1) For takeout

West leads the ♣10. Plan the play.

Today's deals come courtesy of Sartaj Hans of Sydney. This one arose in the 2020 South-West Pacific Teams, held in Canberra in January.

Round 11: Board 16

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

	North		East
	<i>Michael Whibley</i>		<i>Peter Gill</i>
	♠ J9432		♠ 7
	♥ J		♥ AKQ8762
	♦ AJ8		♦ 94
	♣ K743		♣ 952
West		South	
<i>Sartaj Hans</i>		<i>Matthew Brown</i>	
♠ AK8		♠ Q1065	
♥ 1054		♥ 93	
♦ Q6532		♦ K107	
♣ 108		♣ AQJ6	

After West leads ♣10 against South's 4♠, you can see what happens if declarer plays a trump next. West wins and returns the ♣8. West wins the next spade and plays a heart. East wins and the club return allows West to ruff to take 4♠ one down. Brown obviated that possibility by winning the club lead and playing a heart at once! That move, known as a Scissors Coup, cut the communication between West and East and the threat of a club ruff was eliminated. It would not have worked if East had started with ♠K singleton and West with ♠A-8-7, but then nothing would have worked. In any event, given the 4♥ opening, East was unlikely to hold the ♠A or the ♠K.

South later knocked out the ♠A, ♠K and drew West's last trump. As East had opened 4♥, South also played West for the ♦Q, ten tricks, +620 and +11 Imps. At the other table, East was -100 in 5♥ doubled.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ 32

♥ 1087

♦ AKJ9876

♣ 4

East

♠ QJ84

♥ AKJ93

♦ 53

♣ 92

West

Pass

2♥

Dble

Pass

North

1♦⁽¹⁾

3♦

Pass⁽⁴⁾

Pass

East

1♥

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

Dble⁽²⁾

3♥⁽³⁾

6♣

(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?

This deal arose on BBO:

North

Sartaj Hans

♠ 32

♥ 1087

♦ AKJ9876

♣ 4

West

Tony Nunn

♠ K107

♥ Q652

♦ Q104

♣ 763

East

Paul Dalley

♠ QJ84

♥ AKJ93

♦ 53

♣ 92

South

Sophie Ashton

♠ A965

♥ 4

♦ 2

♣ AKQJ1085

After East wins trick 1, you can see what will happen if East switches to a spade or a club or plays another heart. South wins, draws trumps and finesses the ♦J. When that works and diamonds are 3-2, South pitches the spade losers on the diamond winners. Of course, if the diamond finesse lost, South would be four down, but the risk is worth taking for the chance to make the slam and in practice that would have worked.

East put paid to that possibility by switching to a diamond at trick 2!! South had shown four spades, turned up with a heart and figured to have very long clubs. East judged the layout to be exactly as it was. Perhaps South even had the ♦Q bare. Declarer won in dummy and discarded a spade on the next diamond winner. East ruffed the next top diamond. South over-ruffed but was stuck with two spade losers at the end for two down.

You might be wondering about North's 1♦ opening. North considered the hand too strong for a 3♦ opening at favourable vulnerability and 4♦ cut out 3NT as an option. One option was to pass. North-South play a strong 1♣ system and North judged that the shape and diamond length were adequate compensation for a couple of points.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

North
 ♠ J10952
 ♥ KJ
 ♦ KJ94
 ♣ 92

South
 ♠ Q7
 ♥ A108
 ♦ Q8765
 ♣ AK4

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Transfer to spades

1. West leads the ♣6: nine – queen – ace.
2. You play the ♦5: two – king – ten.
3. You play the ♦J: ♥4 – ♦6 – ♦A.
4. West returns the ♣J: two – ten – four.
5. West then plays the ♣8: ♠2 – ♥3 – ♣A.

How would you continue?

2. Teams: Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♦
1♠	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass.....			

What would you lead as West from:

♠ AQ754
 ♥ Q7
 ♦ AK93
 ♣ 92

- (a) If 2NT is passed out?
- (b) If North raises to 3NT?

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

When my wife jumped into our bed and suddenly found out that I had just replaced it with a trampoline, she hit the roof.