

158. Bad, bad, bad

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

(a)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you lead as West from:

♠ K106532
♥ K75
♦ 7
♣ 854

Make up your mind for that question before moving on to the next one:

(b)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you do lead as West this time?

Make up your mind for that question before moving on to the third question:

(c)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you do now as West in this auction?

This deal comes from the 2017 Spingold (USA Knock-Out Open Teams). It arose in the first session of the Round of 16 match between the [MITTELMAN](#) and [NICKELL](#):

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

		North		
		♠ Q		
		♥ A103		
		♦ A96543		
		♣ J96		
West			East	
♠ K106532			♠ J987	
♥ K75			♥ QJ9	
♦ 7			♦ J10	
♣ 854			♣ AQ32	
		South		
		♠ A4		
		♥ 8642		
		♦ KQ82		
		♣ K107		

The problems on page 1 arose when the deal was replayed in a session on BBO.

(a)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you lead as West?

Auction (a) did not occur. If it had, West has no clear-cut lead. A low spade gives South the ninth trick at once with the ♠Q and declarer can make ten tricks easily enough and eleven with some daring. If West leads a heart, South needs to take the ♥A and play a club at trick 2 or cash the diamonds first and then play a club for nine tricks. If West leads a club, East can take the ♣A and switch to a spade, but South takes the ♠A and has nine tricks or ten if prepared to finesse against East's ♠Q.

(b)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you lead now as West?

Auction (b) did not occur. If it had, West would lead a spade. To beat 3NT, West must lead ♠K. That is unlikely to cost. If East has ♠Q-x-x and South ♠A-x-x, South would duck spades twice whether West led ♠K or a low spade. If South has ♠A-Q or dummy has ♠Q-x and South ♠A-x, it makes no difference which spade you lead.

This was yesterday's first problem:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What would you do now as East with:

♠ J987
♥ QJ9
♦ J10
♣ AQ32

A raise to 3♠ is reasonable. It cuts out a 3♥ bid and indicates a lead against 3NT. East actually bid 4♠.

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

		North		
		♠ Q		
		♥ A103		
		♦ A96543		
		♣ J96		
West			East	
♠ K106532			♠ J987	
♥ K75			♥ QJ9	
♦ 7			♦ J10	
♣ 854			♣ AQ32	
		South		
		♠ A4		
		♥ 8642		
		♦ KQ82		
		♣ K107		

That brings us to:

(c)

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

(1) Weak, 6+ spades, 0-7points

What should West do now?

Answer: West should pass. East's bold/foolhardy 4♠ bid has pushed North-South into 5♦. It is usually unwise to bid 5-over-5 if you are not the stronger side. You can consider 1♣ : Pass : 2♠, a weak jump-shift, as a pre-emptive bid and a pre-emptor is expected not to bid again unless forced to or invited to by partner.

South had erred by bidding 5♦. South should have doubled 4♠. Had West passed 5♦, any lead by East will allow the defence to come to two hearts and a club. However, West bid 5♠ : Pass : Pass : Double, all pass.

North led ♦A: ten – two (discouraging) – seven and switched to ♣J, taken by ♣A. Declarer played the ♠7: four . . . two . . . queen. West thus lost 2 spades, a heart, a diamond and 2 clubs, four down, –800. West could have saved a trick by rising with ♠K, but that would have looked silly if North had ♠A bare and South had ♠Q-4 or if South had ♠A-Q-4. No, the real damage was the 5♠ bid and going –800 when you would be +100 defending 5♦.

Incidentally, note that West has 8 losers and East has 8 losers. $8 + 8 = 16$ and $24 - 16 = 8$ tricks expected for East-West if spades are trumps.

In the Spingold:

West <i>Rodwell</i>	North <i>Del'Monte</i>	East <i>Meckstroth</i>	South <i>Bercuson</i>	East led the ♦10. Declarer lost the expected two hearts and one club, North-South +130
		1♦	Pass	
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass	
3♠	Pass	Pass	4♦	End
West <i>Zatorski</i>	North <i>Katz</i>	East <i>Pachtmann</i>	South <i>Nickell</i>	North led the ♣6. Declarer took the ♣A and played ♠7-four-king-queen. The result was two down, North-South +100 but 1 Imp to MITTELMAN.
		Pass	1♦	
1♠	2♠ ⁽¹⁾	2NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	
3♥ ⁽³⁾	4♦	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Limit raise or stronger for diamonds

(2) Strong spade raise (3) Long-suit trial bid

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
3♠	4♥	Pass	?

What would you do as East with:

♠ K109
♥ 973
♦ 86
♣ A9653

This comment appeared on page 1 of Daily Column 104: The Perils Of Pre-empts: 'Unless you can defeat a slam that the opponent might reach, there seems little benefit in raising a pre-empt with a modest balanced hand. It simply helps the opponents judge their fit.'

If you adhere to that suggestion you would pass 4♥. You have one trick with the ♣A. Your side may or may not have a spade trick. Partner has not promised you a defensive trick outside spades.

East ought to pass, but that did not happen. East bid 4♠, South 5♥ and North 6♥, all pass. This was the deal:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ --	
	♥ KQ104	
	♦ AKJ1097	
	♣ QJ7	
West		East
♠ AQJ7432		♠ K109
♥ 8		♥ 973
♦ 542		♦ 86
♣ 108		♣ A9653
	South	
	♠ 865	
	♥ AJ652	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ K42	

As you can see, 6♥ is unbeatable, North-South +980. North's 6♥ was not free of risk. West might have had a singleton club and ♣A and club ruff would have beaten 6♥. As South might have much less for the 1♥ response, North could not do more than 4♥ over 3♠. When South could bid 5♥, North placed South with good values.

This was yesterday's second problem:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
3♠	4♥	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 865
♥ AJ652
♦ Q3
♣ K42

I am betting that in this auction, South would have passed 4♥ and West's 3♠ would have done its job.

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

North	
♠ --	
♥ KQ104	
♦ AKJ1097	
♣ QJ7	
West	East
♠ AQJ7432	♠ K109
♥ 8	♥ 973
♦ 542	♦ 86
♣ 108	♣ A9653
South	
♠ 865	
♥ AJ652	
♦ Q3	
♣ K42	

(Directions changed for convenience)

In the Spingold:

West	North	East	South
<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Bercuson</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Del'Monte</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
3♠	4♥	4♠	5♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♠A, ruffed. Declarer played ♥K, ♥10 to the ♥J, ruffed another spade, crossed to the ♦Q, drew the last trump and had 13 tricks, +510.

West	North	East	South
<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>	<i>Katz</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♥
3♠	4♥	4♠	5♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	5♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

(1) Cue-bid, control in clubs and effectively a slam try

(2) Cue-bid, control in diamonds

West led the ♠A. Declarer ruffed and drew trumps, 12 tricks +980, +10 Imps.

With Eric Rodwell and Piotr Zatorski both bidding 4♠ over 4♥, I may have to eat my words and retract my comments at the top of the previous page about the undesirability of that 4♠ bid. No, I won't. I still think that in the long run 4♠ with one defensive trick is a losing proposition and is more likely to help the opponents than your side.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

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

What would you do now as South with:

♠ AK
♥ AKJ743
♦ 6
♣ Q965

2. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ J632
♥ Q87
♦ J6
♣ 9873

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

Becoming vegan would be a big missed steak.