

171. Heightened experience

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|-------------|---------------------|------|-------|
| 3♦ | Dble ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | Pass |
| (1) Takeout | | ? | |

What would you do as East with:

♠ 32
♥ 63
♦ Q32
♣ A109865

Today's deal is from the quarter-final match between [NICKELL](#) (Nick Nickell – Ralph Katz, Eric Greco – Geoff Hampson, Robert Levin – Steve Weinstein) and [TULIN](#) (Stan Tulin – David Bahkshi, Alon Birman – Dror Padon, Cornelis Van Prooijen – Louk Verhees) in the North America Online Bridge Championships.

This was yesterday's question:

| West | North | East | South |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 3♦ | Dble ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | 4NT | 4♦ | 4♠ |
| Pass | 6♠ | Pass | 5♥ ⁽²⁾ |
| (1) Takeout | | All Pass | |
| (2) Two key cards, no ♠Q | | | |

What would you lead as West with:

♠ 7
♥ QJ98
♦ J987654
♣ 7

In Chapter 14 *Leading against a small slam* in the excellent *Winning Suit Contract Leads*, David Bird and Taf Anthias had this to say: 'A side-suit singleton is a splendid lead against a suit slam – everyone knows that!'

Well, maybe not everyone. Levin (W) probably felt that the ♣7 lead did not appeal, because he had only one trump. However, the lead he chose did not prove effective.

Bd. 36: Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

| | | | | |
|-----------|--|----------|-----------|--|
| | | North | | |
| | | ♠ AQJ84 | | |
| | | ♥ K105 | | |
| | | ♦ A | | |
| | | ♣ KQJ2 | | |
| West | | | East | |
| ♠ 7 | | | ♠ 32 | |
| ♥ QJ98 | | | ♥ 63 | |
| ♦ J987654 | | | ♦ Q32 | |
| ♣ 7 | | | ♣ A109865 | |
| | | South | | |
| | | ♠ K10965 | | |
| | | ♥ A742 | | |
| | | ♦ K10 | | |
| | | ♣ 43 | | |

As you can see, the ♣7 lead against 6♠ has instant success: ♣A at trick 1 and a club ruff at trick 2 (you hope). Levin chose the ♥Q: five – three – ace. One of the things you hate to see when you lead from a sequence such as Q-J-x or longer is dummy appearing with A-10-x or K-10-x and declarer winning with the other top honour. Here 6♠ was cold on any lead but a club. Birman (S) drew trumps, cashed the ♦A, came to hand with a trump, ditched dummy's ♥10 on the ♦K and claimed 12 tricks, +980.

You are certainly entitled to sheet home the blame to West for the non-club lead, but East could have helped. As East chose to raise to 4♦, it would not have cost East to bid 4♣ instead. As a passed hand, this would be a lead-directing bid coupled with support for diamonds. Had East bid 4♣ and South 4♠, it is very likely that North, with clubs strongly held, would still proceed with 4NT : 5♥, 6♠. East's 4♣ bid showed the ♣A but it did not promise such club length as well.

At the other table:

| West | North | East | South |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| <i>Van Prooijen</i> | <i>Greco</i> | <i>Verhees</i> | <i>Hampson</i> |
| | | Pass | 1♠ |
| 3♦ | 4♠ ⁽¹⁾ | Dble ⁽²⁾ | 4♠ |
| Pass | 5♣ | Pass | 5♦ |
| Pass | 6NT | All Pass | |

(1) Strong spade raise

(2) Lead-directing

After this auction, West would certainly have led the ♠7 if South had ended in 6♠. Against 6NT, East led the ♦2: ten – jack – ace. The ♠K was taken by the ♣A and East continued with the ♦3: king – ♦4 – ♠4. Declarer played the ♥2: queen – king – three, crossed to the ♥A and ran the spades, but as there was no squeeze, North made only 5 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and 2 clubs, 11 tricks, one light, East-West +50 and 14 Imps to **TULIN**.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | | | 1♣ ⁽¹⁾ |
| Pass | 1♦ ⁽²⁾ | Dble ⁽³⁾ | 1♥ ⁽⁴⁾ |
| 2♥ | 3♣ ⁽⁵⁾ | 4♥ | ? |

(1) Artificial, strong

(2) Artificial, negative 0-8 points

(3) Majors

(4) Artificial, 18+ points

(5) 6-8 points, 5+ clubs

What would you do as South with:

♠ AJ65

♥ --

♦ AKJ7543

♣ A10

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

The saddest thing about betrayal is that it never comes from your enemies.

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| New book: <i>The Power of Pass</i> (by Harold Schogger and Ron Klinger). \$A25.00 Available from Suzie Klinger, post free until 2021: email suzie@ronklingerbridge.com or telephone 0411 229 705. |
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