

39. King's row

By Ron Klinger

South dealer : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ QJ65
♥ KQ732
♦ AQJ
♣ 7

South
♠ K
♥ A
♦ 5432
♣ J1098643

South opened 3♣ – not everyone's cup of tea with such poor clubs – and everyone passed. West led the ♠4: five – ace – king and East switched to the ♣A and the ♣2. West won with the ♣Q and cashed the ♣K. East discarded the ♦10, high-encouraging. West switched to the ♦8. Plan the play.

You cannot always trust the signaling from the opponents. They are not there to help you. You have lost four tricks and need to make the rest. If the ♦K is with West, that would be easy, but if it is with East, you are one down if you finesse.

Is there any other chance?

	North	
	♠ QJ65	
	♥ KQ732	
	♦ AQJ	
	♣ 7	
West		East
♠ 742		♠ A10983
♥ J854		♥ 1096
♦ 986		♦ K107
♣ KQ5		♣ A2
	South	
	♠ K	
	♥ A	
	♦ 5432	
	♣ J1098643	

It is a nuisance that the hearts are blocked, but you can do something about that. Take the ♦A, cash the ♠Q and discard the ♥A. Now you can play ♠J, ♥K, ♥Q, discarding three diamonds and making 3♣.

East dealer : North-South vulnerable

North

♠ 3
♥ 98754
♦ J875
♣ Q92

South

♠ A954
♥ Q
♦ AK10964
♣ A4

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Dble
1♠	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♠	3♦	3♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ♥3: four – king – queen. East switches to the ♦2. Plan the play.

You have lost a heart and are bound to lose a club. You want to ruff three spades in dummy, but you have problems in communication. Suppose you play ♠A, spade ruff, heart ruff, spade ruff, club to the ace, spade ruff. You are now in dummy and need to come to hand to draw the last trump. Given that East opened 1♥, then bid clubs and ultimately raised spades, it is highly likely that East began with the ♦2 singleton and West with ♦Q3. The whole deal might well be like this:

	North	
	♠ 3	
	♥ 98754	
	♦ J875	
	♣ Q92	
West		East
♠ QJ10862		♠ K7
♥ 32		♥ AKJ106
♦ Q3		♦ 2
♣ 1083		♣ KJ765
	South	
	♠ A954	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AK10964	
	♣ A4	

After ♥K from East and ♦2, taken by the ace, if you play ♠A, spade ruff, heart ruff, spade ruff, club to the ace, spade ruff, this will be the position:

	North	
	♠	
	♥ 987	
	♦	
	♣ Q9	
West		East
♠ QJ		♠
♥		♥ AJ6
♦ Q		♦
♣ 108		♣ KJ
	South	
	♠	
	♥	
	♦ K1096	
	♣ 4	

If you play a heart from dummy, West will score a trick with the ♦Q. If you play a club, East wins and a heart from East will again promote West's ♦Q into the setting trick.

How can you overcome this? The problem and full deal comes from *Polish Bridge* magazine.

	North	
	♠ 3	
	♥ 98754	
	♦ J875	
	♣ Q92	
West		East
♠ QJ10862		♠ K7
♥ 32		♥ AKJ106
♦ Q3		♦ 2
♣ 1083		♣ KJ765
	South	
	♠ A954	
	♥ Q	
	♦ AK10964	
	♣ A4	

On the probability that West began with ♦Q-3 and East has the ♣K, this is the answer. After ♥3 to ♥K, ♦2, taken by the ace, you play ♠A and ruff a spade. Continue with the ♣Q. East covers with the king and you play the ♣4. You hope that East will be unable to produce the ♦Q next. If East plays a heart, you ruff, ruff a spade, cross to the ♣A, ruff your last spade, ruff a club, draw the last trump and claim eleven tricks.

Problem for Tomorrow:

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2NT (20-22)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 64
 ♥ 985
 ♦ KJ1063
 ♣ J93

Why not discuss the problem by phone with your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them. (Mark Twain (1835-1910))