

# 120. The modern era

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			3♣
Dble <sup>(1)</sup>	?		

(1) For takeout

What would you do as North with:

♠ 963  
♥ A1073  
♦ Q32  
♣ K106

In general, it is not a good idea to sacrifice with a balanced hand and it is even worse with a 4-3-3-3 pattern, because that shape always has one extra loser than the same values in a 4-4-3-2 pattern. It is true that the vulnerability is favourable and that you are forcing the opponents to take their guess one level higher and you have removed the 4♣ cue-bid from their arsenal. Still, bidding 4♣ with 9 ½ losers is taking on considerable risk. Sometimes your best choice is to pass and just hope that partner's pre-empt has done enough to harm the opposition's auction.

The deal arose in the 36-board final of Alt-Invitational V between [DE BOTTON](#) (Janet de Botton, Thomas Charlsen, Jason Hackett, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Alexander Hydes, Artur Malinowski) and [GUPTA](#) (Naren Gupta, Bauke Muller, Cedric Lorenzini, Huub Bertens, Thomas Bessis, Curtis Cheek).

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 963	
	♥ A1073	
	♦ Q32	
	♣ K106	
West		East
♠ AQJ10		♠ K72
♥ KQ64		♥ J952
♦ AK5		♦ J1096
♣ 74		♣ QJ
	South	
	♠ 854	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 874	
	♣ A98532	

After 3♣ : Double, [GUPTA's](#) North bid 4♣: Pass: Pass, Double by West, all pass. West led the ♦A and switched to the ♥K. Declarer took the ♥A, cashed ♣K, ♣A and played the ♦7. South could not escape three spade losers and that was two down. You might say, 'Well, look at that awful 3♣ opening by South', but you can swap two of South's low clubs for East's ♠Q-J. Now 3♣ is reasonable, if not great, but 4♣ doubled is still -300.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North		
	♠ 963		
	♥ A1073		
	♦ Q32		
	♣ K106		
West		East	
♠ AQJ10		♠ K72	
♥ KQ64		♥ J952	
♦ AK5		♦ J1096	
♣ 74		♣ QJ	
	South		
	♠ 854		
	♥ 8		
	♦ 874		
	♣ A98532		

DE BOTTON North-South:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Dble
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

North led the ♣6. South won and returned the ♣2 to the ♣K. North switched to the ♠3. Declarer played the ♥K, winning, the ♥Q, winning, and the ♥4. North took the ♥A and returned the ♥10 to dummy's ♥J. West could have settled for one down by cashing out, but naturally West was hoping for the ♦Q to be with South. West cashed ♦A, ♠A and crossed to the ♠K. Then came the ♦J: eight- five – queen. North cashed the ♣10 for two down, North-South +200, 11 Imps to DE BOTTON. Note that South had done well by not discarding any diamonds on the play of the hearts. That lured West into the losing finesse.

The result was another good reason for not bidding 4♣ after 3♣ : Double. North-South can defeat any game bid by East-West.

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	2NT <sup>(2)</sup>	?

(1) Weak two, 6 spades, 6-10 points  
 (2) Strong inquiry

What would you do as South with:

♠ Q73  
 ♥ KQ7642  
 ♦ J962  
 ♣ --

Board 10: Dealer West : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 954	
	♥ 53	
	♦ K73	
	♣ K9732	
West		East
♠ AKJ1082		♠ 6
♥ 98		♥ AJ10
♦ 10		♦ AQ854
♣ J1064		♣ AQ85
	South	
	♠ Q73	
	♥ KQ7642	
	♦ J962	
	♣ --	

There is no question that players in the modern era bid too much. Most of the time it works out all right. The opposition simply sweep it aside and bid on to their own contract. From time to time, the overbidder has to pay the piper. That's what happened here:

DE BOTTON North-South:

West	North	East	South
2♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	2NT <sup>(2)</sup>	3♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	All Pass

(1) Weak two, 6 spades, 6-10 points

(2) Strong inquiry

After a weak two, all doubles by partner are almost universally played for penalties. The defence was ruthless. West led the ♠A and switched to the ♦10: three – queen – six. East cashed the ♦A and continued with the ♦8 (suit-preference for spades). West ruffed, cashed the ♠K and gave East a spade ruff. East reverted to diamonds. West ruffed the ♦J and dummy could not over-ruff. Declarer still had the ♥A to lose and that was four down doubled for –1100.

The expectation for an overcall at the 3-level is a strong suit (South had that), a sound opening hand (South was at least 6 points short of that) and about 5-6 losers. Given that the ♠Q is also certainly useless in a heart contract, you would give South three losers in spades and seven losers in all. Indeed, the huge warning sign against South bidding is the length in spades. South possibly placed East with spade length for the 2NT bid, but that is a case of master-minding the situation.

GUPTA North-South:

West	North	East	South
3♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	4♠	All Pass

(1) Some treat a 6-4 pattern as equivalent to holding a 7-card suit.

North led the ♦3: queen – two – ten. Declarer played ♠A, ♠K, ♠J. South won and returned the ♦6. West ruffed and played the ♣4: three – queen – ♥7. That created a club loser and West made 11 tricks, +650, but –10 Imps. Had West started the clubs by leading the jack, declarer could have made twelve tricks.

GUPTA won the final by 70-50 [46-23, 20-16, 4-11].

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. With neither side vulnerable, what do you do as dealer with:

♠ 8  
♥ QJ9532  
♦ A10842  
♣ 5

If you have chosen to open with a weak 2♥, the auction goes:

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♣
?			

What now?

2. Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 85  
♥ AQ9  
♦ Q10876543  
♣ --

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

*There is an old story, probably apocryphal, about Omar Sharif who was South in this auction:*

*Dealer East : East-West vulnerable*

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	2♣
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♥	4♣
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

*After South goes four down doubled, -800, his partner says, “Omar, why did you keep bidding and bidding?”*

*“But I was not vulnerable.”*

*“But Omar, not vulnerable does not mean invulnerable.”*