150. Exotica

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West: East-West vulnerable

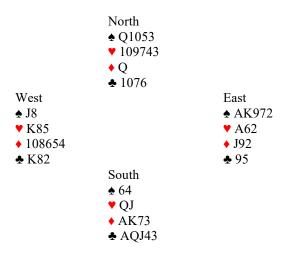
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	?

What would you do now as South with:

- **♠** 64
- **♥** QJ
- ♦ AK73
- ♣ AQJ43

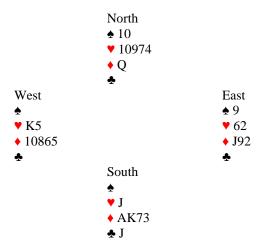
You have a strong hand with 17 HCP, although you could take a point off for the Q-J doubleton. If you double and partner bids 1♥ or 2♥ you can remove that to clubs. If partner responds 1NT, you are worth 2NT. On the other hand, you are within range for a 2♣ overcall, which is certainly reasonable. At the table South did bid 2♣ and it went Pass: Pass.

Here is the full deal:



West led the ΔJ : queen – king – four. East switched to the $\Delta 5$: three – king – six. West returned the $\Delta 2$: seven – nine – queen. South would have liked to ruff a diamond in dummy, but after $\Delta 3$ to the $\Delta 4$, South had no quick entry to hand to ruff the $\Delta 4$.

South played the ♣4 to the ♣10, leaving this position, with dummy to play:



Declarer played the ♠10 and ditched the ♥J. What was West to discard? If West threw a diamond, declarer would cash the ♠Q, ruff a heart and ♠A, ♠K and ♠7 would give South the last three tricks. In practice, West pitched the ♥5. Declarer ruffed the ♥4, dropping West's ♥K. The ♠3 to the ♠Q put the lead in dummy to cash ♥10, ♥9, ♥7. It was unexpected at the beginning of the deal, that South would make only one trick in diamonds.

The deal comes from a game on BBO (Bridge Base Online) and was sent to me by Allan Richardson of Queensland. The declarer was Hany Dagher of Egypt.

Dealer South: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	$1NT^{(1)}$
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
(1) 12-14 1	ooints		

What would you lead as West from:

(a)

- **♦** 43
- **y** 54
- **♦** 9642
- ♣ KQ832

(b)

- **♠** Q6
- **♥** K5
- **♦** 10873
- ♣ J10432

The conclusions reached by David Bird and Taf Anthias in Chapter 1 of *Winning Notrump Leads* include: 'On average after an auction of 1NT: 3NT, the defenders hold 7.2 cards between them in each major suit. Declarer and dummy hold only 5.8. This creates a significant bias towards major-suit opening leads.'

For (a) at teams, the percentages for 'Beats contract' were 4: 10.2%, 5: 10.3%, 6/4/2 6.3%, K: 10.1% and 3: 6.6%. Thus there was little to choose between a doubleton major and top of the 5-card club suit.

For (b), where the major suit doubletons became strong: ♠Q: 14.3%, ♥K: 14.6%, ♦3: 11%; ♣3: 11.7%.

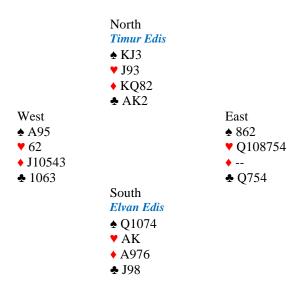
Yesterday's second problem, with both sides vulnerable, East the dealer and South opening 1NT (12-14 points) and North raising to 3NT was 'What would you lead as West from:

- **♠** A95
- **9** 62
- ♦ J10543
- **♣** 1063

The Bird-Anthias analysis might persuade you to lead the ♥6 or the ♠5. The actual lead was the ♦4.

This deal also comes from Allan Richardson, who spotted it on BBO from a match between a United Arab Emirates Team (who played in 3NT – see below) and a USA Team (who played in 6♠, down two).

Dealer East: Both vulnerable

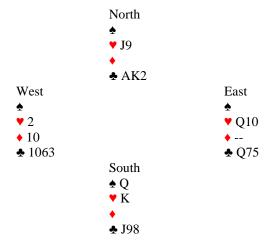


South has no trouble making 3NT, of course. Note that a heart lead happens to be best for the defence. A spade lead does not advance the defence's cause, but it also does no damage. The •4 lead, on the other hand, gave South a cheap trick with the •9.

South can always adopt a safety play in diamonds to guard against West's holding five diamonds by playing the ◆A first. Suppose West leads the ♥6. South wins with the ♥A and cashes the ◆A, discovering the bad news. South can play the ◆6 next, jack, king, but the only way back to hand to pick up West's ◆10 would be via a heart to South's ♥K. To leave the heart suit wide open would be unpalatable for South.

In fact, if West leads a heart, South would not tackle diamonds, but would set about the spades. Spade to the king, ΔJ ducked and a third spade. Now West plays another heart and the safety play in diamonds is no longer available.

After winning trick 1 with the ◆9, South knocked out the ◆A. She now had 11 tricks via 4 diamonds, 3 spades, 2 clubs and 2 hearts. In fact, declarer came to 12 tricks via a criss-cross squeeze, a very rare creature, especially in a no-trumps contract. West won the third round of spades and switched to the ♥6. South won and played off the three diamond winners, ending hand. This was the position, with South to play:



South played the ΔQ and discarded dummy's $\Delta 2$. What could East do? If East throws the 10, South cashes the K and dummy is high. In practice, East pitched the 5. Now South, played A, K, crossed to the K and the M was South's 12th trick for +690 and +13 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South: East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		
(1) 3+ club	s, seeking help	in clubs	

What would you do as North with:

- **★** 754
- **y** 96
- ♦ AKQ8
- **♣** 8743
- 2. Dealer West: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2 (1)	Pass	2 ♥ ⁽²⁾	?
(1) Weak t	wo in hearts or	in spades	

- (2) Pass or correct

What would you do as South with:

- **♠** Q
- ♥ AQ98643
- ♦ AQ64
- ♣ K

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

I might wake up and go running. I might wake up and win the lottery. The odds are about the same.