155. The right strain and the right level

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♥	Dble
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

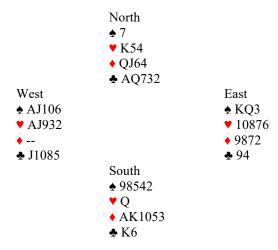
♣ 7 **♥** K54 **♦** QJ64 **♣** AQ732

You have a strong hand and can support either minor. Which minor should you choose? How high should you bid? How about 3NT? Can you ask partner to choose a minor?

In the first semi-final in The Major Alt, organized by bid72 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online), GOLDBERG (Connie Goldberg – Hua Poon, Vesa Fagerlund – Kauko Koistinen, Arttu Karhulahti – Clas Nyberg, USA) chose LAVAZZA (Dennis Bilde, Norberto Bocchi, Philippe Cronier, Massimiliano Di Franco, Giorgio Duboin, Agustin Madala, Andrea Manno, Antonio Sementa, Italy). LAVAZZA won by 85-21.1

In the problem above, you probably have only one stopper in hearts. After a heart lead, you would need to run another eight tricks at once. That is not very likely. You are better off to head for game in a minor. Your best bet is 4NT, asking partner to bid the longer minor.

Board 4: Dealer West: Both vulnerable



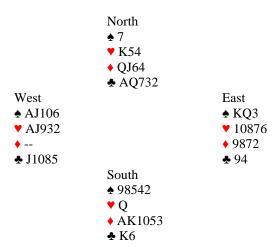
I was mistaken. After a heart lead, you can make 3NT if West takes the ♥A and returns a heart. Given the poor quality of South's spades, West might take ♥A and switch to ♠6. The defence can then take four spade tricks.

GOLDBERG North-South:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
(1) Mixed	raise, 4+ hearts	s, 6-9 points	

North led the ♠7. West lost a heart, two clubs and suffered a spade ruff, one light, North-South +100.

Board 4: Dealer West: Both vulnerable



After the problem auction on page 1, Giorgio Duboin (North for LAVAZZA) bid 4NT (minors). Philippe Cronier (S) bid 5♦, all pass. West led the ▼A, followed by the ▼3: king – seven – ★2. After ◆4: two – ace – ▼2, South played ★K and the ★6 to the ★A. Then came the ★Q: ♦7 – ♦10 – ★10 and the ★9: six – seven – queen. East could now have defeated 5♦ with a trump return, but played the ▼10 instead. South ruffed with the ◆3, ruffed a spade with dummy's ♦6 and played a club. If East, with ◆9-8 left, ruffs, South over-ruffs and plays a diamond to dummy, draws East's last trump and dummy's fifth club is a winner. In practice, East discarded the ★K. South ruffed cheaply, ruffed a spade, ruffed the last club and had 11 tricks, North-South +600.

After ♥A and a second heart, taken by the ♥K, South can make 5♦ legitimately by playing ♦Q or ♦J and then a spade or not touching trumps yet and just playing a spade or ruffing a heart and then playing a spade.

In the other semi-final:

BIANCHI North-South:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	3♥	Dble ⁽¹⁾
Pass	4NT ⁽²⁾	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Tolroon	4		

(1) Takeout

(2) Minors

West led the \P A and switched to the \P J: two – four – king. South needed to play a spade or a club to dummy, but cashed the \P A (a reasonable move). Then came the \P 2: six – seven – queen. East returned the \P 7 to cut down dummy's ruffing potential. Declarer won in dummy, cashed the \P K, \P A and played the \P Q, \P 8, \P 10. After spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, declarer played dummy's fifth club. East ruffed. South over-ruffed and was left with the \P 9, losing to West's \P A, one down, East-West +100.

GUPTA North-South:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	3 ♣ ⁽¹⁾	3♦
4♥	5♦	Dble	All Pass
(1) 4+ hear	ts, 6-9 points		

West led the \P A and the \P 9, taken by the \P K. East's double was a warning that trumps might not be breaking. Declarer might have played a spade next in order to ruff spades in dummy, using the \P K and the heart ruff as entries, since the auction marked East with 3+ spades. South would then be able to score three spade ruffs in dummy, the \P K and five trumps in hand.

Instead, South played the 4 to the A and then played the 9: six – seven – queen. East played the 7 and declarer was a trick short, just as at the other table, East-West +200, 3 Imps to BIANCHI.

Dealer West: Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
2♠	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

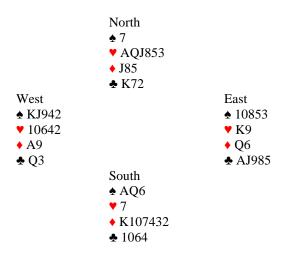
- **▲** 10853
- **♥** K9
- **♦** Q6
- ♣ AJ985

Suppose that the bidding had been:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	?	

What would you do this time as East?

Board 20: Dealer West: Both vulnerable



This was yesterday's second question, part 1:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
9			

What would you do as West with:

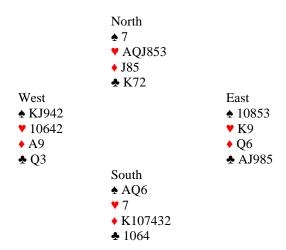
- **♦** KJ942
- **v** 10642
- **♦** A9
- **♣** Q3

GOLDBERG North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2 🕶	All Pass	

West was not tempted to bid over 1NT or balance with $2 \triangleq$ after $2 \checkmark$: Pass: Pass. Declarer took East's \triangleq 5 lead with the \triangleq A and finessed the \checkmark Q. East won and returned the \triangleq 10: queen - king - \checkmark 3. Declarer cashed \checkmark A, \checkmark J and played the \bullet J: six - two - nine and the \bullet 5: queen - king - ace. West switched to the \triangleq Q, king, ace. The defence took 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs, but North had 8 tricks, +110.

Board 20: West: Both vulnerable



At the other table, with LAVAZZA North-South:

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

West's 2♠ was a big decision, especially with 4 hearts. North might easily have had a strong hand with 4 spades. Still, that does not compare with East's jump-raise to 4♠. Had East forgotten that West was a passed hand?

North led the $\$ 5: queen – king – ace. Declarer played the $\$ Q, king, ace and the $\$ 3. South rose with the $\$ A and switched to the $\$ 7. North took the $\$ A and returned the $\$ Q, suit-preference for diamonds. South ruffed dummy's $\$ K and shifted to the $\$ 7: nine – jack – six. North returned the $\$ 3, ruffed by South with the $\$ Q. That was five tricks for the defence, taking $\$ 4\(\)\$ doubled two down, North-South +500 and 9 Imps to LAVAZZA.

East does have good spade support, but also has 8 losers. West, a passed hand, figures to have more than 7 losers. For the $2 \triangleq$ bid, you can place West with about 10-12 points and 8 losers. Applying the Losing Trick Count formula would have prevented this East-West debacle: 8 + 8 = 16 and 24 - 16 = 8 tricks expected.

In the other semi-final

BIANCHI North-South:

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

East's 3♥ showed a strong spade raise. It should have been at least an ace better than the actual East hand. When I saw this auction, I had to check again that West was indeed a passed hand. The play began with the same way as the previous table: ◆5 lead: queen – king – ace, ♣Q: king – ace – six and the ♠3. Here South ducked the ♠3 and collected only one heart ruff later, North-South +100.

GUPTA North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass!	Pass

Finally, a sensible East. West's 2♠ is still risky – North could still have four spades – but not as risky as 2♠ at once over 1NT. The defence was identical – card for card - to the LAVAZZA North-South defence above. West made 8 tricks, +110 and 5 Imps to BIANCHI.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

North

- **★** 74
- **♥** A65
- ♦ KJ10973
- **♣** 73

South

- **♠** AQ
- **♥** KQJ108
- ♦ Q42
- **♣** K92

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	2♠	2NT
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♥4: five – two – eight. What do you play at trick 2?

Suppose you play the ◆2: six . . . Which diamond do you play from dummy?

Dummy's card wins the trick. How would you continue?

2. Dealer South: East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

- **♠** A63
- **♥** K92
- ♦ K10852
- **♣** 106

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

It's bad to keep things bottled up. Drink more wine.