

210. Strange daze

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			4♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
4♠	5♥	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

What would you lead as West from:

- ♠ AK1043
- ♥ Q42
- ♦ 95
- ♣ QJ10

Make up your mind before reading on.

I would be surprised if your choice matched the card led. In fact, I would be surprised if you could guess West's choice of lead in four more guesses. Of course, that in itself is a big clue.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			4♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
4♠	?		

What would you do as North with:

- ♠ J87
- ♥ J7
- ♦ AQ32
- ♣ 9865

In this day and age, most top players follow the Rule of 3. Certainly, that is so when pre-empting at equal vulnerability. Some use the Rule of 3 at any vulnerability. That would be my choice. Others follow the Rule of 2 at unfavourable vulnerability and some use the Rule of 4 at favourable vulnerability.

If South is using the Rule of 3, then South should have 7 playing tricks, a 6-loser hand. A pre-emptive bidder normally does not have more than one defensive trick. As North has two hearts, it is certainly unlikely that South could produce 2 defensive tricks. With one defensive trick, possibly two, North expects 4♠ to make. Is it therefore a good idea to take the sacrifice in 5♥? It would be good if the opponents bid on to 5♠. Maybe you can beat that. However, if they double 5♥, you figure to make 9 tricks, -500 (+3 Imps) if the ♦A-Q contribute 2 tricks, but -800 (-5 Imps) if the diamonds yield only one trick. Recommended is to pass 4♠. With potential ruffing value, such as an outside singleton, 5♥ would become more attractive.

The second semi-final in the MontreALT, organized by bid72 and netbridge.online was between the seventh qualifier [SWEICE](#) (Sverrir Armannsson, Jon Baldursson, Olof Bergstrom, Bjorn Fallenius, Einar Gudjohnsen, Sigurbjorn Haraldsson, Birkir Jon Jonsson, Mats Nilslund) and eighth qualifier [RED DEVILS](#) (Geert Arts, Sam Bahbout, Philippe Caputo, Philippe Coenraets, Steven de Donder, Steve de Roos, Zvi Engel, Mike van der Vorst).

Board 13: Dealer South : Both vulnerable

<p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J87 ♥ J7 ♦ AQ32 ♣ 9865</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q965 ♥ 6 ♦ KJ84 ♣ A743</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ AK1043 ♥ Q42 ♦ 95 ♣ QJ10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 2 ♥ AK109853 ♦ 1076 ♣ K2</p>

This was the auction with **SWEICE** North-South:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	Dble ⁽¹⁾	3♥ ⁽²⁾	Dble ⁽³⁾
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) Minors
- (2) Strong spade raise, 4+ trumps
- (3) Strong hearts

Surprise, surprise. South actually does have two defensive tricks as the cards lie. However, North's diamonds are worth only one defensive trick. Declarer cannot even misguess the diamonds.

North led the ♥J. South won with the ♥K and, surprise, surprise, switched to the ♣2. No doubt South was hoping to find West with perhaps ♣Q-10-x and misguess by inserting the ♣10. If South switched instead to the ♠2, declarer might later play ♣A and a second club and with the ♣K coming down, there would be no guess.

Of course, West had no guess with the actual Q-J-10 holding. It went ♣2: ♣Q – five – three. Declarer played ♠A, ♠K, followed by the ♣J: six – four – king and so South made the ♣K anyway. After ♦6 to the ♦A, North returned the ♥7. Declarer ruffed with the ♠9, drew the last trump with the ♠Q and claimed 10 tricks for +620.

With **RED DEVILS** North-South, it went (as on the previous page):

West	North	East	South
			4♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
4♠	5♥	Pass	Pass
Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

West led the ♥Q. Did you pick that lead? How do you account for it? The matches were all played on BBO. I would be surprised if the ♥Q was anything but a misclick. After the last pass, BBO often re-sorts your hand before the opening lead. If you are too quick and aim at the card that was there a fraction of a second ago, it is easy enough to hit the wrong card, the card that has suddenly appeared at that spot. Be aware of this danger. If there were no UNDOs (highly likely), then the ♥Q lead would have to stand.

South captured the ♥Q and drew trumps. The ♦7 to the ♦Q lost. East switched to the ♠5. West won with the ♠K and shifted to the ♣Q. East won and returned a club, won by South's ♣K. South rattled off all the hearts. West threw all the spades, but East was not paying attention and came down to ♠Q and ♦J as the last two cards, while dummy had ♦A-3 and South ♦10-6. When the ♦A dropped the ♦J, South was only one down, -200 and 9 Imps to **RED DEVILS** who won the match by 53 Imps to 40.1. Had West led the normal ♠K or the ♣Q and the latter discarding had been accurate, South would have lost a spade, a heart, 2 diamonds and a club. That would have given East-West +800 and +5 Imps instead of -9. That would have meant a win to **SWEICE** by 45.1 to 44.

Board 13: Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ J87	
	♥ J7	
	♦ AQ32	
	♣ 9865	
West		East
♠ AK1043		♠ Q965
♥ Q42		♥ 6
♦ 95		♦ KJ84
♣ QJ10		♣ A743
	South	
	♠ 2	
	♥ AK109853	
	♦ 1076	
	♣ K2	

In the other semi-final, with **KOEPPEL** East-West:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	Dble ⁽¹⁾	3♥ ⁽²⁾	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Minors

(2) Strong spade raise, 4+ trumps

North led the ♥J. South won with the ♥K and, as North had shown the minors, switched to the ♣K. Declarer won with the ♣A, drew trumps in three rounds, cashed ♣Q, ♣J, and played the ♦5, two, king. South made ten tricks for +620.

GUPTA East-West:

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	Dble ⁽¹⁾	4♠	All Pass

(1) Minors

North led the ♥J. South won with the ♥K and switched to the ♠2: three – seven – nine. Declarer played the ♠5 to the ♠A and ran the ♠J to the ♠K. South returned the ♠2, won by the ♠10. Declarer ruffed the ♥4 with the ♠9 and played the ♠7 to the ♠Q. These cards remained, with West on lead:

	North	
	♠ J	
	♥	
	♦ AQ32	
	♣ 9	
West		East
♠ K104		♠ Q
♥ Q		♥
♦ 95		♦ KJ84
♣		♣ A
	South	
	♠	
	♥ A109	
	♦ 1076	
	♣	

West has lost a heart and a club. A diamond now will produce ten tricks, but West played the ♥Q. North discarded the ♣9 and dummy ruffed. A diamond would give North two diamond tricks and so West played the ♣A, discarding a diamond. North ruffed and cashed the ♦A for one down, +100 and 12 Imps to [KOEPPEL](#).

If West trusted North's double as showing the minors, at least 4-4, West would know North began with only two hearts as North had shown up with 3 spades. In addition, North would likely have raised hearts with three.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
4♠	5♣	Pass	3♣
?			Pass

What would you do as West with:

- ♠ AKJ8753
- ♥ Q1064
- ♦ 9
- ♣ 2

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

Language humour: A oxymoron walked into a bar and the silence was deafening.

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.
