

211. Heart failure

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
4♠	?		3♣

What would you do as North with:

♠ 64
♥ AJ53
♦ AKJ64
♣ 109

The deal comes from the final in the MontreALT, organized by bid72 and netbridge.online between the top qualifier, [GUPTA](#) (Thomas Bessis, Simon de Wijs, Nareng Gupta, Cedric Lorenzini, Zia Mahmood, Bauke Muller) 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).

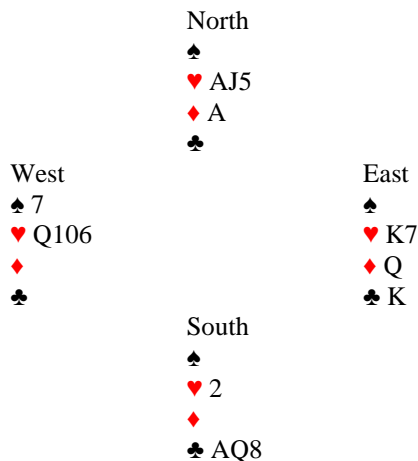
Board 13: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 64	
	♥ AJ53	
	♦ AKJ64	
	♣ 109	
West		East
♠ AKJ8753		♠ 109
♥ Q1064		♥ K97
♦ 9		♦ Q10732
♣ 2		♣ K63
	South	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ 82	
	♦ 85	
	♣ AQJ8754	

After the auction above, with [GUPTA](#) East-West, 4♠ was passed out. That looks like the best move for North. North has three winners for South. In the modern style, players who pre-empt are usually three tricks short of their bid. Thus, the expectation for the 3♣ opening is 6 tricks. Add North's 3 tricks and the total is 9 tricks. If you bid 5♣, the expected result is two down. Even if South has 7 playing tricks, given the vulnerability, 5♣ would be one down.

Meanwhile, you also have 3 defensive tricks against 4♠. You might have an extra trick in hearts or in diamonds (maybe South can ruff the third diamond) and perhaps South can contribute a trick. A double of 4♠ is more attractive than a bid of 5♣.

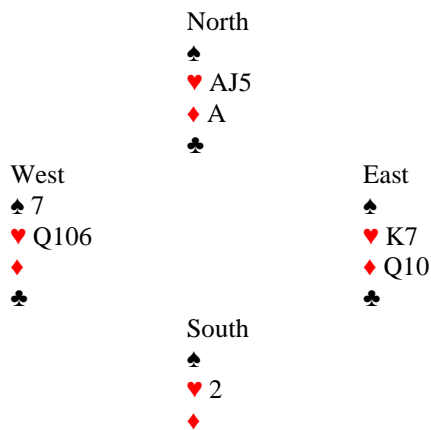
North led the ♦K and switched to the ♣10, winning and the ♣9: six – jack – ♠3. Declarer drew trumps with ♠A, ♠K, and played off two more rounds of trumps. North threw two diamonds and South two clubs. West continued with the ♥4: three – nine – eight. After declarer ruffed a diamond to hand, these cards remained:



Declarer continued with the ♥6, intending to finesse the ♥7, but North was having none of that. North popped up with the ♥A. If declarer unblocked the ♥K from dummy, North's ♥J would take a trick later. When declarer played low in dummy, the hearts were blocked. North played the ♦A. West ruffed, crossed to the ♥K, but the thirteenth trick was the ♣K, taken by South's ♣A. That was one down, North-South +50.

This was not West's finest effort. Given the 3♣ opening, West was always going to play North for length in hearts and hence the ♥J. There was no benefit in playing two more rounds of trumps after the ♠A, ♠K. If West had played no more trumps or one more trump, West would have survived. If West had two trumps left in the diagram above, then after ruffing North's ♦ and ♥6, ace, West could play ♥K, ruff back to hand and cash the ♥Q for ten tricks and +420.

After the ♦K opening lead, West also knew North had the ♦A. Given the 3♣ opening at unfavourable vulnerability, West could also place South with seven clubs. Retaining the ♣K in dummy was futile. After ♠A, ♠K, West could afford to play two more rounds of trumps, but needed to discard the ♣K rather than bare the ♦Q. This would have been the position:



West plays the ♥6. If West plays low, West finesses the ♥7 and plays the ♥K, ten tricks. If North rises with the ♥A on the ♥6, North is endplayed. If North cashes ♦A, dummy is high. If North plays a heart, declarer plays ♥K, diamond ruff, ♥Q.

South's ♥8 under the ♥9 was also not a great idea. Suppose South had played the ♥2 instead, leaving South with the ♥8 in the diagram immediately above. Now, after ruffing a diamond to hand at trick 9, West would need to lead the ♥10 to succeed.

As 4♠ can be made, it looks as though my assessment to pass 4♠ with the North hand was ill-judged. GUPTA's North had the opposite view and bid 5♣. It went Pass : Pass to West. This was yesterday's problem:

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

Board 13: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 64	
	♥ AJ53	
	♦ AKJ64	
	♣ 109	
West		East
♠ AKJ8753		♠ 109
♥ Q1064		♥ K97
♦ 9		♦ Q10732
♣ 2		♣ K63
	South	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ 82	
	♦ 85	
	♣ AQJ8754	

With RED DEVILS East-West:

West	North	East	South
4♠	5♣	Pass	3♣
5♥	Dble	5♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

I suspect that North's bid of 5♣ was chosen not so much as expecting to make, but to provoke a sacrifice by the opponents at favourable vulnerability. And it worked!

A new suit introduced as natural at the 4-level is expected to be a 5-card suit. How much more so for a new suit at the 5-level. For the 5♥ bid, I would have expected West to be 7-5 or at least 6-5. With 5-5 in the majors, West could have bid 4♣ Michaels over 3♣.

North led ♦K against 5♠ doubled. Also expecting West to have five hearts, North switched to ♥A and a second heart. West won, drew trumps and had a club loser later, one down, North-South +100 and 2 Imps to GUPTA.

West could have doubled 5♣ rather than commit to the 5-level. Given the North-South bidding, this double could not have been based on trumps tricks. It is what might be called a 'do what's right' double. With length in hearts, East would bid 5♥. With no significant defence and spade tolerance East would bid 5♠ – and might have done that with the actual hand. With defensive prospects, East would pass for penalties. East might have done that (E-W +200), but it is a close decision. If East passes, South is just one down, thanks to the ♣K inside.

GUPTA won the final by 99.1-66.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?			2♦ ⁽¹⁾

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

What would you do as West with:

♠ AQJ109
♥ J10765
♦ 8
♣ J10

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

Punctuation humour: Two quotation marks walk into a "bar".

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.
