

# 221. Counting losers

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♦	4♠	?	2♠ <sup>(1)</sup>

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

What would you do as East with:

♠ 76  
♥ AQJ4  
♦ 1086  
♣ 10953

Today's deal comes from Session 4 of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) Round of 16 match between MITTELMAN and NICKELL.

Board 52: Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ84	
	♥ K865	
	♦ J9	
	♣ AQJ	
West		East
♠ 5		♠ 76
♥ 92		♥ AQJ4
♦ AK7532		♦ 1086
♣ K864		♣ 10953
	South	
	♠ KQ10932	
	♥ 1073	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ 72	

When the deal came up as a replay in a game on BBO, everything seemed more or less straight forward:

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♠	All Pass	2♠

West led the ♦K: nine – ten – (odd number) – four. West switched to the ♥9: king – ace – three. East cashed the ♥Q and continued with the ♥J. West ruffed and cashed the ♦A. That was two down, East-West +200.

Almost the same thing happened at one table in the Spingold:

West	North	East	South
Weinstein	Amoils	Levin	Hanlon
3♦	4♠	All Pass	2♠

West began with the ♦A, ♦K and switched to the ♥9, king, ace. East cashed ♥Q, ♥J, two off, East-West +200.

What do you think of West's 3♦ overcall? Yes, it does have 6 losers, good playing strength, but it looks to be under-weight in high-card strength. Expectation is the equivalent of a sound 1-opening, so maybe an ace extra.

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♠ 5		♠ 76
♥ 92		♥ AQJ4
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	South	
	♠ KQ10932	
	♥ 1073	
	♦ Q4	
	♣ 72	

Since the same 3♦ was produced at the other table, who am I to quibble?

West	North	East	South
<i>P'mann</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
			2♠
3♦	4♠	Dble	Pass
4NT <sup>(1)</sup>	Dble	5♦	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

(1) Minors, diamonds longer

While I prefer the pass over 2♠ rather than 3♦, I can live with 3♦. As for East's double, what did it mean? If it was for penalties, West should be passing. If it was for takeout or 'do what's right', as it appears from the composition of East's hand, East was living beyond his means. East has 7 HCP and can expect about 14-17 from West. Why should we expect to make a contract at the 5-level with a combined count of 21-24 points?

East has 9 losers. West's 3♦ is typically a 6-loser hand, as it was. Apply the Losing Trick Count, 9 losers + 6 losers = 15 and 24 - 15 = 9 tricks expected. So, if we bid to the 5-level here we can expect to go two down. Conclusion: East should have passed 4♠.

Against 5♦ doubled, North led the ♠A and continued with the ♠J. West ruffed, drew trumps and finessed the ♥Q. Declarer continued with the ♣3: two - eight - jack. North returned a heart, won by the jack. This eliminated any squeeze possibilities. Declarer discarded a club on the ♥A, but lost two more clubs. West finished with nine tricks - no surprise there - two light, North-South +500 and 12 Imps to **NICKELL**.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQJ109863  
 ♥ J4  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ J9

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

*Sweet bids are just like these.  
 Who am I to disagree?*

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 <a href="mailto:suzie@ronklingerbridge.com">suzie@ronklingerbridge.com</a> or telephone 0411 229 705.
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