

222. The old guide

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North		
	♠ 4		
	♥ KQ976		
	♦ Q94		
	♣ A753		
West			
♠ K5			
♥ 105			
♦ AK532			
♣ KQ62			
West	North	East	South
			4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the ♦K: four – seven – six. What next?

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

Board 54: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North		
	♠ 4		
	♥ KQ976		
	♦ Q94		
	♣ A753		
West		East	
♠ K5		♠ 72	
♥ 105		♥ A832	
♦ AK532		♦ J1087	
♣ KQ62		♣ 1084	
	South		
	♠ AQJ109863		
	♥ J4		
	♦ 6		
	♣ J9		

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, the auction also went 4♠ : Pass : Pass : Pass. West led the ♦A: four – jack (discouraging) – six. West switched to the ♣K, taken by the ace. The ♠4 went to the queen and king. West cashed ♣Q, followed by the ♦K ruffed. South could not avoid a heart loser, one down, East-West +100.

In the Spingold:

West	North	East	South
<i>Levin</i>	<i>Hanlon</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Amoils</i>
			4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♦K: four – seven – six and switched to the ♣K, ace. The spade finesse lost and West cashed the ♣Q. East later collected the ♥A, one down, East-West +100.

Board 54: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 4	
	♥ KQ976	
	♦ Q94	
	♣ A753	
West		East
♠ K5		♠ 72
♥ 105		♥ A832
♦ AK532		♦ J1087
♣ KQ62		♣ 1084
	South	
	♠ AQJ109863	
	♥ J4	
	♦ 6	
	♣ J9	

The deal would not have been of any great interest, except for what happened at the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Zatorski</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♠

West led the ♦K: four – seven – six and continued with the ♦A. South ruffed and played ♠A and ♠9. West won and switched to the ♣K. Too late. Declarer took the ♣A and pitched a club on the ♦Q. South lost a spade a heart and a diamond and had ten tricks.

What went wrong? When partner leads an ace or a king against a trump contract and dummy has Q-x-x, third hand usually give count or reverse count. Also many play that an ace lead in a trump contract asks for attitude and a king lead asks for count.

Playing reverse count, East's ♦7 would show two or four diamonds. If it is four, then West should switch to the ♣K. However, if it is two, then West may need to give East a diamond ruff. The position is not clear for West. The whole hand might have been like this:

	North	
	♠ 4	
	♥ KQ976	
	♦ Q94	
	♣ A753	
West		East
♠ K5		♠ 7
♥ 105		♥ AJ8432
♦ AK532		♦ 107
♣ KQ62		♣ J1084
	South	
	♠ AQJ1098632	
	♥ --	
	♦ J86	
	♣ 9	

Here, if it goes ♦K and ♠K switch, declarer takes the ♣A and plays ♠A and another spade, making 10 tricks, +420. If West continues with ♦A and gives East a diamond ruff, 4♠ is defeated.

The answer is that West did not really want count on the hand, since East's count signal might be ambiguous. If West leads the ♦A (as West did in the replay on page 1), East gives a discouraging signal and West has an easy switch to the ♣K. With a doubleton diamond, East would encourage and receive the diamond ruff. That's not so difficult, is it?

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQJ109863
♥ J4
♦ 6
♣ J9

You will have noticed that each South opened 4♠. Two Souths went one down and the third South should have also gone one down.

The modern style with pre-empting is the Rule of 3: Count your playing tricks and add three to determine your bid (without opening beyond game level). South has eight spades with one potential loser, so seven playing tricks. Add three brings you to ten tricks, hence the 4♠ opening.

The old style was the Rule of 3 and 2: add 3 to your playing tricks when not vulnerable, add 2 when vulnerable and open accordingly. If one followed the old guide here, South opens 3♠ and the contract just makes.

Some modern players play the Rule of 4 at favourable vulnerability, the Rule of 3 at equal vulnerability and the Rule of 2 at unfavourable vulnerability. That would also have worked here.

No doubt you and your partners have discussed and decided which of these approaches you have adopted.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♣
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ J
♥ AQ107543
♦ --
♣ AQ1052

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

Grammar humour: Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.

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.
