

# 236. Withering heights

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♠	Dble	2♠	Pass
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ J532  
♥ K1082  
♦ KJ1097  
♣ --

The problem arose in the 2017 Spingold:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	♠ J532		
	♥ K1082		
	♦ KJ1097		
	♣ --		
♠ AQ1086		♠ K94	
♥ Q753		♥ 64	
♦ --		♦ A83	
♣ KJ32		♣ Q10875	
	♠ 7		
	♥ AJ9		
	♦ Q6542		
	♣ A964		

When the deal was replayed on BBO, Avi Kanetkar (N) bid 5♦ after the auction in the problem above. How could he find that bid with only 8 points? The bidding by East-West indicated they had at least an 8-card fit. That meant South would have one spade or none. North's negative double had shown four hearts. With 0-1 spade and four hearts, too, South would have bid 3♥ over 2♠. That meant South was 1-3 or shorter in the majors and therefore must have 5 diamonds and 4 clubs or be more extreme. What more is needed for 5♦?

Against 5♦, West led the ♣2, ruffed in dummy. South played the ♦J, winning, and the ♦9. East took the ♦A and returned a club, again ruffed in dummy. The ♦K drew East's last trump. What next?

When a player leads a low card against a trump contract, you might be able to place of some of the missing high cards. You know the player on lead does not have an honour-card sequence to lead or a suit headed by the A-K. With ♣K-Q-J, West would have led the ♣K and so the ♣2 lead marked East with the ♣Q or ♣K. With spades headed by A-K, West would have led the top spade. The ♣2 lead meant that East would have the ♠K at least.

When East turned up with the ♦A, too, South could reasonably expect East to have the ♠K, ♦A and ♣Q or better. With the ♥Q as well, East would have done more than just 2♠. With West void in diamonds, it meant that West was likely to have more heart length than East. South therefore continued with the ♥A and the ♥J, winning when West played low. That was 11 tricks, North-South +600.

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

What would you do as North after this auction:

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

(1) Good raise to 2♠

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ J532	
	♥ K1082	
	♦ KJ1097	
	♣ --	
West		East
♠ AQ1086		♠ K94
♥ Q753		♥ 64
♦ --		♦ A83
♣ KJ32		♣ Q10875
	South	
	♠ 7	
	♥ AJ9	
	♦ Q6542	
	♣ A964	

The deal arose in the 2017 Spingold (USA Knockout Open Teams) in the Round of 16 match between **FIREMAN** and **PIEDRA**. With **FIREMAN** North-South, after the auction above, 4♠ was passed out. North had the same information as Kanetkar. Here South would certainly have bid 2♥ with 4 hearts and all the above inferences were available. North led the ♦J: ace – two – ♥7. Declarer played ♠A, ♠K and the ♣5. South took the ♣A and after club ruff, ♥K, ♥A, club ruff, West was two down, N-S +100.

**PIEDRA** North-South:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♠	Dble	2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
3♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	5♦!	5♠	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Good raise to 2♠

(2) Trial bid, seeking help in clubs

North led the ♦10: three – two – ♠6. West played the ♣3: ♦J – ♣Q – ♣A. The defence continued with the ♣9, ruffed, heart to the ace, another club ruff and the ♥K. That took 5♠ doubled three down, North-South +500 and 9 Imps to **PIEDRA**.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

What would you do as South with:

West	North	East	South
2♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	4♠	?
(1) Weak, 5 spades, 5+ minor			

♠ --  
♥ A109854  
♦ KQ952  
♣ A2

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

*Life and beer are very similar. Chill for best results.*