243. Hard reconciliation

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
?			

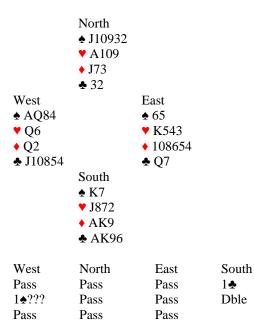
What would you do as West with:

▲ AQ84
♥ Q6
♦ O2

♣ J10654

This deal arose in the 2019 Vanderbilt (USA Knock-Out Open Teams):

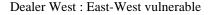
Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

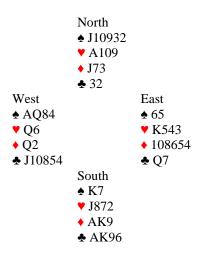


East-West have been world champions. That is so hard to reconcile with West's 1 overcall. Why should West have passed?

- 1. You have only four spades and partner will expect five.
- 2. The spade quality is reasonable, but not great.
- 3. Partner could not find a third-seat opening, a very strong sign that you should tread warily.
- 4. You are vulnerable vs not vulnerable. I don't get the 14 overcall, I just don't.

Anyway, the 1 \ddagger overcall received its just deserts. North led the \bigstar 3. South won with the \bigstar K and shifted to the \bigstar K, winning and the \bigstar 7, taken by the ace. After \bigstar 5: two – queen – ace, South switched to the \forall 8 (high-hate): queen – ace – three. North returned the \forall 10, taken by the \forall K. Declarer played the \forall 4: jack – \bigstar 8 – \forall 9. Declarer made one more trick, the \bigstar Q, a total of four tricks (three spades and the \forall K. That was three down, North-South +800. Who says you cannot collect sizable penalties at the 1-level?





At the other table:

West	North	East	South			
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♣ ⁽¹⁾			
Pass	1 ⁽²⁾	Pass	$1NT^{(3)}$			
Pass	2 ♥ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	2♠			
Pass	3NT ⁽⁵⁾	All Pass				
(1) Artificial, 16+ HCP						
(2) Artificial, negative, 0-7 points						
(3) 16-19 points						
(4) Transfer to spades						
(5) Choice of contracts, 3NT or 4♠						

West led the $\bigstar10$: two – seven – king. South played the \bigstar K: ace (ducking is an option) – two – five. West continued with $\bigstar5$: three – queen – ace. South: $\bigstar7$: queen – three – six. West $\bigstar4$: nine – $\bigstar4$ – $\heartsuit7$. Then came $\bigstar10$: $\heartsuit3$ – $\heartsuit8$ – $\bigstar8$ and \bigstarJ : $\heartsuit4$ – $\heartsuit2?$ – $\bigstar4$. Declarer played the $\bigstar3$: five – ace – two and the \clubsuitJ : six – nine – king. When East returned the $\bigstar6$, South played low. West won with the $\diamondsuit0$ and cashed the \bigstarJ , one down, East-West +50 and +13 Imps. There were ways to make 3NT, of course. Playing the $\bigstar K$ would have worked and finessing again in hearts would have made ten tricks.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	$1NT^{(1)}$
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
(1) 11-14	points		

What would you lead as West from:

▲ J
♥ A975
♦ KJ976
▲ J87

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

If you boil a funny bone, it becomes a laughing stock. That's humerus.