253. From a jack to a king*

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North: Nil vulnerable

```
North
 ♦ QJ106
 9765
 A
 ♣ AJ96
           East
           ♠ A2
           94
           ♦ J108532
           ♣ 542
 West North East
                      South
        2^{(1)}
                      3(2)
                Pass
 Pass
        Pass
                Pass
(1) 3-suiter, short diamonds or 4-3-1-5/3-4-1-5
(2) To play
```

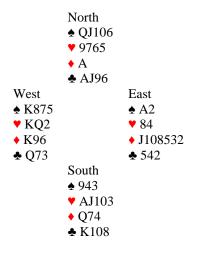
West leads the ♦6, ace from dummy. Which diamond would you play as East?

In a trump contract, when partner's lead hits dummy's singleton and there is no third-hand-high requirement, it is often useful to give a suit-preference signal. It will rarely be attractive to have the suit continued, since dummy will ruff. If dummy has plenty of trumps, then a suit-preference signal will almost always be more useful than encourage / discourage or a count signal.

Here you have only 5 HCP. South does not figure to be strong if wanting to play in 3♥ and not interested in game. Therefore, West figures to have some useful values. West might have the ♠K and ♥A. If so, you might be able to score a spade ruff. To signal for a spade switch, play the ♠J, high card for high suit.

The deal arose in a teams' match on BBO.

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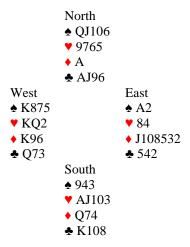
Yesterday's problem was a defensive problem for West to solve. After the auction given and the ◆6 lead: ace – jack – four, South plays the ♥5: four – jack – queen. What now? If West takes the ◆J as suit-preference for spades, West would switch to the ♠5. That is not easy, looking at the Q-J-10-6 in dummy, but if you trust your partner, it would go ♠5 to the ♠A, then ♠2 to the ♠K and East ruffs the third spade. That is four tricks for the defence and West's remaining trump winner will take 3♥ one down.

That is not what happened in practice. After $\bullet 6$ to the ace and the $\blacktriangledown 5$ to the $\blacktriangledown Q$, West switched to the $\clubsuit Q$. Had East wanted a club switch, East would have played the lowest diamond at trick 1, in this case the $\bullet 2$. Declarer took the $\clubsuit A$ and repeated the heart finesse. West won and now switched to the $\spadesuit 5$. East won and returned the $\spadesuit 2$. Declarer lost 2 spades and 2 hearts, but had 9 tricks for +140.

In a trump contract, when dummy has a singleton and third-hand-high does not apply, giving partner a suit-preference signal is a good idea.

^{*&#}x27;From a jack to a king', written and recorded by Ned Miller, 1963. Also recorded by Slim Whitman, Elvis Presley and Ricky Van Shelton.

Dealer North: Nil vulnerable



At the other table, the auction proceeded along standard lines:

```
West
           North
                    East
                           South
           1.
                    Pass
                           1♥
 Pass
           2y
                    Pass
                           Pass
 Dble<sup>(1)</sup>
           Rdble
                    3♦
                           Dble
 Pass
           Pass
                    Pass
(1) For takeout
```

South led the $\clubsuit 8$: three – jack – two. North cashed the $\clubsuit A$ and the $\clubsuit 9$ went to the $\clubsuit K$. The $\clubsuit 9$ went to the ace and the $\spadesuit J$ ran to the $\spadesuit A$. Declarer still the $\blacktriangledown A$ to lose. That was one down, North-South +100, but –1 Imp. Had $3 \blacktriangledown$ been defeated at the other table, North-South would have had +4 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South: Nil vulnerable

```
North
 ★ 102
 ♥ J982
 ♦ AJ1062
 ♣ K6
             East

♠ AJ63

             v 1064
             ♦ K93
             ♣ AQ4
 West North East
                            South
                            1NT^{(1)}
         2♣<sup>(2)</sup>
 Pass
                 Pass
                            2
 Pass
        4♥
                 All Pass
(1) 15-17
(2) Simple Stayman
```

West leads the ♠4. Plan the defence for East.

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

A few puns make me numb, but maths puns make me number.

A great gift: *The Power of Pass* (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.