

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⁾ Pass 3♥⁽²⁾

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.

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

North

♠ QJ106

♥ 9765

♦ A

♣ AJ96

West

♠ K875

♥ KQ2

♦ K96

♣ Q73

East

♠ A2

♥ 84

♦ J108532

♣ 542

South

♠ 943

♥ AJ103

♦ Q74

♣ K108

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 ♦6 to the ace and the ♥5 to the ♥Q, West switched to the ♣Q. Had East wanted a club switch, East would have played the lowest diamond at trick 1, in this case the ♦2. Declarer took the ♣A and repeated the heart finesse. West won and now switched to the ♠5. East won and returned the ♠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.

*'From a jack to a king', written and recorded by Ned Miller, 1963. Also recorded by Slim Whitman, Elvis Presley and Ricky Van Shelton.

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♣ AJ96	
West	East
♠ K875	♠ A2
♥ KQ2	♥ 84
♦ K96	♦ J108532
♣ Q73	♣ 542
South	
♠ 943	
♥ AJ103	
♦ Q74	
♣ K108	

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

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dble ⁽¹⁾	Rdble	3♦	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) For takeout

South led the ♣8: three – jack – two. North cashed the ♣A and the ♣9 went to the ♣K. The ♠9 went to the ace and the ♦J ran to the ♦A. Declarer still the ♥A to lose. That was one down, North-South +100, but –1 Imp. Had 3♥ 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
♥	1064
♦	K93
♣	AQ4

(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.