

259. Be careful what you ask for

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

North
♠ AK10543
♥ K4
♦ A7
♣ J72

South
♠ Q
♥ Q2
♦ KQJ863
♣ AQ94

South is in 6♦ with no opposition bidding. West leads the ♥J: four – ace – two and East returns the ♥3, won by the king. How would you plan the play?

Make your plan before reading further.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣ ⁽²⁾
	?		

(1) Non-minimum, balanced or semi-balanced

(2) Cue-bid

What would you do as West with:

♠ 9762
♥ J108
♦ 942
♣ K103

Would you double 4♣ to request a club lead?

The deal arose in the semi-finals of the 2015 World Teams.

Board 68: Dealer North : Both vulnerable Bermuda Bowl (World Open Teams), England North-South:

North	East
♠ AK10543	♠ J8
♥ K4	♥ A97653
♦ A7	♦ 105
♣ J72	♣ 865

West	East
♠ 9762	♠ J8
♥ J108	♥ A97653
♦ 942	♦ 105
♣ K103	♣ 865

South
♠ Q
♥ Q2
♦ KQJ863
♣ AQ94

Tony Forrester (N) – Andrew Robson (S) began 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 3♣, 3♦ : 3♥ (fourth-suit), 3NT : 4♦ and ended in 6♦, with no bidding by East-West.

West's heart lead went to the ace and dummy won the heart return. Declarer finessed the ♣Q and was one down, E-W +100.

With Poland North-South, the auction began as above up to 4♣. Expecting North to end in spades, West doubled 4♣ for a club lead. It went Pass : Pass to South, who redoubled to show first-round club control. North bid 4♦ and South ended in 6♦.

West led ♥J, four, ace. Dummy won the heart return. Warned against tackling clubs, declarer cashed the ♠Q, ♦K, ♦A and played ♠A, ♠K, ♠10, pitching three clubs. Then came ♣2 to the ♣A, the ♦Q to draw the last trump and South had 12 tricks via a very lucky spade / diamond position, +1370, 16 Imps to Poland.

Board 68: Dealer North : Both vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ AK10543</p> <p>♥ K4</p> <p>♦ A7</p> <p>♣ J72</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ J8</p> <p>♥ A97653</p> <p>♦ 105</p> <p>♣ 865</p>
<p>West</p> <p>♠ 9762</p> <p>♥ J108</p> <p>♦ 942</p> <p>♣ K103</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ Q</p> <p>♥ Q2</p> <p>♦ KQJ863</p> <p>♣ AQ94</p>

The same swing occurred in Sweden vs USA2. With USA2 North-South, it too began 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 3♣, 3♦ : 3♥ (fourth-suit), 3NT : 4♦ and ended in 6♦ by South, with East-West passing throughout. West also led the ♥J, four, ace, and dummy won the heart return. With no bidding by East-West to deflect him, John Kranyak (S) played the ♣J and let it run when East followed low. The club finesse lost and South was one down at trick 3.

With Sweden North-South, it went 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 2NT (forcing), 3♠ : 4♣ : (Double), Pass : Redouble (1st-round club control), 4♦ : 6♦, all pass. After the same start, heart to ace, heart to king, Frederic Wrang (S) played ♦K, ♠Q, ♦A, ♠A, ♠K, ♠10, discarding three clubs, club to ♣A and ♦Q for 12 tricks, +1370 and 16 Imps to Sweden.

As you have seen, there can be a down-side to lead-directing doubles. You might end up on lead, the lead might not defeat the contract or, worst of all, the double might direct declarer away from a natural but losing line into an inferior but successful line. Kranyak might have switched to the winning line when the ♣J was not covered, but it is hard to fault him, since the alternative line needs so many things to go right. Playing for discards on the spades requires spades to be 4-2, the spade jack to fall and the hand short in spades also to be short in diamonds, not a favourite by a long way. Still, if spades turn out to be 3-3, the club finesse is still available. If you adopt the club finesse line and the king is onside, you still need to deal with a club loser if East began with more than two clubs.

Venice Cup (World Women's Teams), France North-South:

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Dble	Pass
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) Fourth-suit

East led the ♥6, taken by the ♥Q. Declarer played ♠Q, ♦A, ♠A and made all the tricks, North-South +720.

With England North-South, it began 1♠ : 2♦, 3♠ : 4♣, 4♦ and ended in 6♦ by South (Nicola Smith). After heart to the ace, heart to the king, South adopted the winning line: ♠Q, ♦K, ♦A, spades, +1370, 12 Imps to England.

In Netherlands vs USA2, the auction began the same way at both tables: 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 3♣ and ended in 3NT. Both declarers made all the tricks, +720, after a heart lead, no swing.

D'Orsi Trophy (World Seniors' Teams). Poland North-South bid 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 2NT, 3♥ : (Double) : Pass, 3NT : 4♣, all pass. East led the ♣5, ace. After ♠Q, diamond to the ace, ♠A, ♠K, ♠10, North made 13 tricks for +710. I confess that the merit of South's 2NT rebid rather than 3♣ escapes me.

With Sweden North-South, it went 1♠ : 2♦, 3NT : 4♦, 4♥ (cue) : (Double) : 4NT, 5♥ (2 key cards, no ♦Q) : 6♦, all pass. After ♥J to ♥A, heart to the ♥K, Sven-Ake Bjerregard (S) played ♠Q, ♦K, ♦A, spades for 12 tricks, +1370 and 12 Imps to Sweden.

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♦ A7	
♣ J72	
West	East
♠ 9762	♠ J8
♥ J108	♥ A97653
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South	
♠ Q	
♥ Q2	
♦ KQJ863	
♣ AQ94	

In the other semi-final for the Seniors' Teams, Zia Mahmood (N) – Michael Rosenberg (S), playing for USA1, bid 1♠ : 2♦, 2♠ : 3♣, 3♦ : 3♥ (stopper ask), 3NT, all pass. East led the ♥6. North made all the tricks, North-South +720.

At the other table, Doug Simson (N) for USA2 opened 1♣ (artificial, strong), East bid 1♥, Kate Aker (S) 2♦ and it ended in 6NT by North. East led the ♣6. North made all the tricks, +1520 and 13 Imps to USA2.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Playing teams, you are the dealer, not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. What do you do with:

♠ Q96
♥ 2
♦ Q109743
♣ J94

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

I try to avoid things that make me fat . . . like mirrors, photographs and scales.

A great gift: <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.
