

260. All fall down

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's problem:

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

♠ Q96
♥ 2
♦ Q109743
♣ J94

There was a time when this would have been a universal pass. Today it could / would qualify for a weak 2♦ opening, particularly given the vulnerability. As a weak 2♦ does not have overwhelming support – players prefer to use 2♦ as a multi, as Flannery or as various other openings, strong or weak – the choice becomes Pass or 3♦. With values dropping in all areas, why should the values for a pre-empt not also go the way of all flesh?

Today's deal comes from the semi-finals of the 2015 Bermuda Bowl (World Open Teams):

Board: 50: Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ A108542	
	♥ 108753	
	♦ 8	
	♣ Q	
West		East
♠ Q96		♠ K3
♥ 2		♥ KQJ964
♦ Q109743		♦ J
♣ J94		♣ K1075
	South	
	♠ J7	
	♥ A	
	♦ AK652	
	♣ A8632	

This was an unusual deal. There was a different suit contract at every table in the Open, Women's and Seniors' semi-finals and not one declarer was successful.

In the Open, the decisions were divided 2-2. Two Wests passed, two opened 3♦. If you open 3♦, make sure you have discussed the possibility of this hand falling within the parameters for a 3♦ opening at this vulnerability.

Sweden North-South, contract 3♣:

West	North	East	South
<i>W'dridge</i>	<i>Sylvan</i>	<i>Hurd</i>	<i>Wrangle</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♣ ⁽²⁾	All Pass	

(1) Minors

(2) Better minor!!

You would not envy Johan Sylvan's choice. He chose the stronger singleton and hoped he would not be doubled. The ♥Q lead was taken by the ace. South played ♦A, ♦K, discarding a spade. East ruffed. The ♥K was ruffed with the ♣2, over-ruffed. West returned the ♦9, ♣Q, ♣K. Are we having fun yet? The upshot – should that be downshot? – was four off, East-West +400.

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	♣ A8632	

USA2 North-South, contract 3♥ doubled:

West	North	East	South
<i>Upmark</i>	<i>Kranyak</i>	<i>Nystrom</i>	<i>Demuy</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♣	3♥	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Minors

You can gauge what Fredrik Nystrom was thinking: ‘They have a club fit. Partner will be short in clubs and so figures to have some hearts. With 6-4, bid more.’ That would often work out fine, but not this time. South doubled to show a good hand and North passed to show his pleasure at this turn of events and his relief at not having to play 3♣. It’s moments like these you want to hug the opponent who let you off the hook.

The ♦K won trick 1 and South switched to the ♠J: six – ace – king. North shifted to the ♣Q, king, ace. South returned the ♣6, ruffed. The ♠2 went to the ♠9 and the ♥2 to the king and ace. Back came the ♣2 and North ruffed again. Two down was the limit of the North-South pleasure, North-South +300, 12 Imps to USA2.

Poland North-South, contract 4♠:

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Maz’wicz</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

When it comes to pre-empts at favourable vulnerability, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Many play that a change of suit after a pre-empt is forcing and then again, some do not. Marcin Mazurkiewicz, North, thought East-West were on the con and, not prepared to be a victim of larceny, he balanced with 3♣. South had every reason to raise.

East led the ♥K, ace. The ♠7 went to the ace and declarer ruffed a heart with the ♠J. West over-ruffed and switched to the ♣4: queen – king – ace. North ruffed a club and played the ♠4. East won and took two heart winners, one down, East-West +100.

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♣ J94		♣ K1075
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	♥ A	
	♦ AK652	
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England North-South, contract 3♦:

West	North	East	South
<i>No'sadzki</i>	<i>Jason H.</i>	<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Justin H.</i>
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

When Michal Nowosadzki's 3♦ came to South, no doubt Justin Hackett wished that penalty doubles of pre-empt were still in vogue. North led the ♣Q, king, ace. South cashed the ♥A and returned the ♣3. North ruffed, cashed the ♠A and exited with the ♠8, taken by the king. Declarer played the ♥K, ruffed by South with the ♦5 and over-ruffed by West. The ♦3 went to the jack and king. West had another diamond to lose. That was two down, North-South +100 and 5 Imps to England.

In the Women's semi-finals, two Wests opened 3♦ and two Wests passed. Again there was a different suit contract at every table and no declarer was successful.
 Netherlands East-West: 3♦ : 3♥, 3NT : 4♥, all pass, four down, -200. USA2 East-West: Pass : Pass : 1♥ : 2NT (minors), Pass : 3♣, all pass. Lead: ♥K. Three down, -300, 11 Imps to USA2.
 England East-West: 3♦ : 3♥, all pass, three down, -150. France East-West passed throughout and England North-South bid 2♥ (majors) : 2NT (ask), 3♣ (minimum) : 3♠, 4♠, all pass, two light -200, 8 Imps to France.

In the Seniors' semi-finals, there was a different suit contract at each table, but only one West opened 3♦.

Poland North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	2♦
Pass	2♠	Dble	Rdbl
3♣	Pass	3♥	Dbl
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Passing 3♥ doubled with the North cards looks a good idea. North thought otherwise, two off, -200.

Sweden North-South: Pass : Pass : 1♥ : 2NT, Pass : 3♣, all pass, three light, -300, 3 Imps to Poland.

USA1 North-South: Pass : Pass : 3♥ : 4NT, Pass : 5♣, all pass. If you thought playing in 3♣ with a singleton trump was a hardship, imagine how Zia Mahmood felt in 5♣. The result was four down, -400.

At the other table, Bob Hamman (West for USA1) opened 3♦, all pass. The defence did not shine and West escaped for one down(!), only -50 but 10 Imps to USA2.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Teams: Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♦	Pass	3NT	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 43
♥ AK1084
♦ --
♣ K98432

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

A very good friend died when we couldn't remember his blood type. As he was dying, he kept insisting for us to 'be positive'. That was very thoughtful, but it's hard without him.

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.