266. Path to success

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East: East-West vulnerable

```
North
 ♦ J103
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ J976
 ♣ AK108
 South
 AQ9854
 ♥ K85
 ♦ A1043
 -- 🎝
 West
        North
                East
                        South
                 Pass
                        1 🌲
 Pass
         2♣
                 Pass
                        2
        3 \spadesuit^{(1)}
 Pass
                 Pass
                        4♠
 Pass
        Pass
                 Pass
(1) Inviting game
```

West leads the ♥6: nine – ace – five. East switches to the ♦Q: ace – two (low-like) – six. Plan the play.

You have lost a heart. You might lose a spade and you should not lose more than one diamond. Is there any danger?

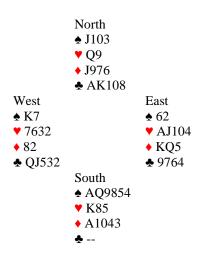
It looks as though there could be the threat of a diamond ruff. If East has switched to the \mathbf{Q} singleton or top from a doubleton. The normal way to play the spades to avoid a spade loser would be to cross to the \mathbf{Q} and run the \mathbf{Q} for a finesse. That would be the thing to do if you needed to avoid a spade loser.

Here you can afford a spade loser. If you lose a spade, a heart and only one diamond, you will have made 4♠. The danger is losing a spade, a heart, a diamond to the ♦K and a diamond ruff. How can you deal with that?

One option is ΔA and a second spade. That works if the ΔK is singleton or if spades are 2-2. It will not work if, say, East began with ΔK -x-x and ΔC -x. Can you do better?

This was the full deal from the final of a Sydney teams' event.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable



After \checkmark 6, nine, ace and \checkmark Q (deceptive) taken by the ace, South crossed to the \checkmark Q and played the \checkmark J: two – four – king. West returned the \checkmark 8 to the \checkmark K. East continued with \checkmark 5 and West ruffed. That was the fourth trick for the defence and South was one down, East-West +50.

There was an easy way to succeed after taking the \bullet A. Cross to the \triangledown Q and play \clubsuit A, \clubsuit K, discarding two diamonds. Then play the \spadesuit J and take the spade finesse. You lose 1 spade, 1 heart and 1 diamond, but you make ten tricks comfortably.

East could have played ♥10 on dummy's ♥9 at trick 1, but that presents no problems. South wins and returns a heart to ♥Q and ♥A. South wins the diamond switch with the ♦A, ruffs a heart, cashes ♣A, ♣K, pitching two diamonds and finesses in spades.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

```
North
          ♦ J103
          ♥ Q9
          ♦ J976
          ♣ AK108
West
                     East
★ K7
                     ★ 62
7632
                     ♥ AJ104
♦ 82
                     ♦ KQ5
♣ QJ532
                     ♣ 9764
         South
          ♦ AQ9854
          ♥ K85
          ♦ A1043
```

At the other table:

West North East South
Pass
$$1 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet}$$
Pass $2NT^{(1)}$ Pass $4 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet}^{(2)}$
Pass $4 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet}$ All Pass

(1) Spade raise
(2) Club shortage

West led the ΔQ : ace – four – $\Delta 3$. South discarded the $\Delta 4$ on the ΔK and played the Q. East took $\Delta 4$ and switched to the $\Delta 2$: four – king – three. Declarer could play K and ruff a heart in dummy for ten tricks, +420 and +10 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South: Both vulnerable

North

- **★** KJ10874
- **y** 93
- ♦ Q53
- **♣** 93

South

- **♠** A53
- ♥ AQJ8
- **♦** 109
- ♣ KJ105

```
West North East South 1NT Dble<sup>(1)</sup> 2\checkmark^{(2)} 3\spadesuit^{(3)} 3\spadesuit Pass 4\spadesuit All Pass
```

- (1) Hearts and a minor
- (2) Transfer to spades
- (3) Pass or correct

West leads the A: three – four (reverse count) – nine. West switches to the 4: three – ace – five. East returns the 4. Plan the play.

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

Break-in At The Apple Store. Police Looking For iWitnesses.

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.