

271. Block magic

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North

♠ 98
♥ QJ10
♦ AK532
♣ 764

South

♠ QJ7
♥ AK
♦ J1096
♣ KQJ8

West	North	East	South
Pass		Pass	1NT(15-17 points)
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the ♠5 (fourth-highest): eight – ace – seven. East returns the ♠4: queen – two – nine. Plan the play.

West's ♠5 lead, fourth-highest, followed by the ♠2 at trick 2, shows West began with five spades originally. If West began with K-10-6-5-2 and East with A-4-3, it will not matter where the ♠A lies. If you try to set up club tricks, the ♠A will win and you will lose three more spades for one down.

You have three hearts (by unblocking ♥A, ♥K before tackling the diamonds). If you can make five diamond tricks, you have 5 diamonds, 3 hearts and the spade trick already won. All will be well if the ♦Q is singleton, but can you see the snag if diamonds are 2-2?

You cannot afford to play ♦A, ♦K and hope diamonds to be 2-2. If you play ♥A, ♥K, ♦A, ♦K and diamonds are 2-2, you can cash the ♥Q, but you have no way of returning to dummy for the fifth diamond. The third and fourth diamond will be won in your own hand. That gives you a spade, 3 hearts and 4 diamonds, one trick short.

Can you see a way to overcome this?

North		North	
♠ 98		♠ 98	
♥ QJ10		♥ QJ10	
♦ AK532		♦ AK532	
♣ 764		♣ 764	
West	East	West	East
♠ K10652	♠ A43	♠ K10652	♠ A43
♥ 973	♥ 86542	♥ 973	♥ 86542
♦ Q4	♦ 87	♦ Q74	♦ 8
♣ 1052	♣ A93	♣ 105	♣ A932
South		South	
♠ QJ7		♠ QJ7	
♥ AK		♥ AK	
♦ J1096		♦ J1096	
♣ KQJ8		♣ KQJ8	

The solution is to play West for the ♦Q, a 50% chance. If West does have the ♦Q, it will not matter if West has one, two, three or four diamonds. Lead the ♦J. If West covers with the ♦Q, win in dummy, return to the ♦10, cash the ♦9 and overtake the ♦6. If West plays low, let the ♦J run. If it wins, continue with the ♦10. If covered, win ♦A, ♦9 and play ♦6 to ♦K. If not covered, let the ♦10 run. If it wins, cash ♦A, ♦K and the fifth diamond.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West: Both vulnerable

North

♦ KJ
♥ A1083
♦ 954
♣ AKJ10

South

♦ 843
♥ QJ962
♦ 1063
♣ Q5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	All Pass	

1. West leads ♦K: four – two (low-like) – six.
2. West continues with the ♦Q: five – seven – six.
3. West plays the ♦J: nine – eight – ten.
4. West switches to the ♣2.

Which spade do you play from dummy?

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

My bridge partner thinks I'm crazy, but I am not the one who chose to play opposite me.

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.