

283. When to avoid negative thoughts

By Ron Klinger

In the Europe-China Pro Bridge Challenge held on BBO in April-May 2020, Europe was represented by Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland and China also had four teams. There were four rounds of qualifying matches after which Poland was leading with 116 Imps, followed by China, PD Times on 47 Imps. Those teams proceeded to the 16-board final, won by Poland by 25-23.

This problem, yesterday's question, arose in the final:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ K107
♥ K10975
♦ 104
♣ A75

Decide on your answer before reading further:

These were the East-West hands:

West	East
♠ K107	♠ A
♥ K10975	♥ J42
♦ 104	♦ AK7532
♣ A75	♣ J108

West is in 4♥ after the auction started as above and North bid 3♠ over West's bid. North leads the ♠5. Plan the play.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 9543	
	♥ AQ	
	♦ 986	
	♣ K943	
West		East
♠ K107		♠ A
♥ K10975		♥ J42
♦ 104		♦ AK7532
♣ A75		♣ J108
	South	
	♠ QJ862	
	♥ 863	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ Q62	

With Poland East-West:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
Dble ⁽¹⁾	2♦ ⁽²⁾	2NT ⁽³⁾	Pass
3♣ ⁽⁴⁾	3♠	Pass ⁽⁵⁾	All Pass

- (1) 4+ hearts
- (2) Good raise to 2♠
- (3) Strong OR weak and prepared to compete
- (4) Prefers clubs to diamonds
- (5) The weak variety

It looks as though 3♣ should be two down (diamond to ♦K, ♦A and another diamond can give the defence three spade tricks and the ♣A to come), but South finished only one down.

With 10 points as a passed hand and a 5-card heart suit, I do not see the advantage of a negative double by West over 1♠. The hand looks ideal for a 2♥ response. That is what happened at the other table:

China, PD Times East-West:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♥	3♠	4♥	All Pass

North led the ♠5, taken by the ♠A. Declarer played the ♥2: six – ten – queen. North switched to the ♦8, trying to negate the value of dummy's diamonds. Declarer cashed ♦A, ♦K, ruffed a diamond and exited with the ♥9. North had to win this and declarer made the rest of the tricks easily, 11 tricks, +650 and +11 Imps.

Suppose hearts had been 3-2 and the ♥9 won the second round of trumps (so that the ♥A is still out). With dummy's diamonds established, declarer would then ruff the ♠10 in dummy and play a winning diamond, discarding a club. Declarer would make ten tricks, losing only two hearts and one club.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ 1075
♥ 32
♦ AKQJ4
♣ 763

West
♠ K62
♥ 9865
♦ 2
♣ Q10852

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Good raise to 3♠

1. West leads the ♦2: ace – three – five.
2. Declarer plays dummy's ♠10: eight – two – king.

What do you play next as West?

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

If life is a journey, for many of us it has become a journey between the fridge and the computer.