

298. Bidding according to the three bears

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		2♠ ⁽¹⁾	Dble
3♠	?		

(1) 6 spades, 5-10 points

What would you do as North with:

♠ AK83
♥ QJ108654
♦ 4
♣ J

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		2♠ ⁽¹⁾	?

(1) 6 spades, 5-10 points

What would you do as South with:

♠ --
♥ K7
♦ AKQ108532
♣ A104

The deal comes from the quarter-final match between [SCHWARTZ](#) and [TULIN](#) in the 2017 Spingold (US Knock-out Open Teams)

Board 32: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK83	
	♥ QJ108654	
	♦ 4	
	♣ J	
West		East
♠ J94		♠ Q107652
♥ A9		♥ 32
♦ J7		♦ 96
♣ Q87532		♣ K96
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ K7	
	♦ AKQ108532	
	♣ A104	

This was not enough:

West	North	East	South
<i>Schwartz</i>	<i>Birman</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Padon</i>
		2♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♠4 (normal) and South made twelve tricks easily, +620.

Board 32: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK83	
	♥ QJ108654	
	♦ 4	
	♣ J	
West		East
♠ J94		♠ Q107652
♥ A9		♥ 32
♦ J7		♦ 96
♣ Q87532		♣ K96
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ K7	
	♦ AKQ108532	
	♣ A104	

This was too much:

	West	North	East	South	
	<i>Verhees</i>	<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Prooijen</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	West led the ♥A: four – three – king to take 7♦ one off for +100 and +12 Imps.
			2♠	Dble	
	3♠	4NT	Pass	7♦	Would North's 4NT be Blackwood for you and partner?
	Pass	Pass	Pass		Some would play 4NT as pick a minor.

You can see what North was thinking. After South's takeout double, North can see a slam in hearts if partner can provide three key cards and 7♥ if South has the four missing key cards. North's 4NT would be fine as Key Card Blackwood if it simultaneously set hearts as trumps. In fact, as the cards lie, 6♥ would have been a fine slam. What should North do over 3♠? A tough question. What would 4♠ have meant?

When the deal was replayed in a BBO game, with Susan Humphries South and Jessica Brake North, members of Australia's current Women's Team, this turned out to be just right:

West	North	East	South
		2♠	3♠!
4♠	Dble	Pass	6♦!
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South's 3♠ asked for a stopper in spades for 3NT. Had it gone 2♠ : 3♠ : Pass : 3NT, Pass, I am confident that South with a 3-loser hand would still have tried for slam, possibly via 5♦ next.

West led the ♠4. South pitched her club losers on the ♠A, ♠K, drew trumps and had 12 tricks, +1370.

It is true that a trump lead by West defeats 6♦ (as long as West ducks if South plays the ♥K or rises with the ♥A if South plays the ♥7), but why should West find a trump lead on this auction? A spade is the normal start. Some might choose the ♥A and others might opt for a club. A trump lead looks the least likely choice.

Problem for Tomorrow:

You are the dealer with both sides vulnerable. What do you do with:

♠ Q3
♥ J94
♦ AK98754
♣ 9

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

Maxine: I believe that everything happens for a reason. Usually the reason is that somebody screwed up. (John Wagner)