300. Cover story

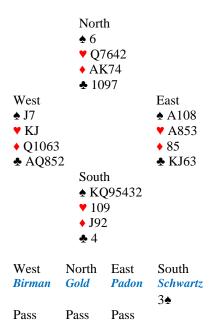
By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

	∳ (♥ (♦ <i>P</i>	orth 5 Q7642 AK74 1097				
West						
▲ J7						
♥ KJ						
◆ Q1063						
♣ AQ852						
West	North	East	South 3♠			
Pass	Pass	Pass	74			

You, West, lead the \diamond 3: four – eight – nine. South plays the \bigstar K: seven – six – ace. East returns the \diamond 5: jack – queen – ace. Next comes the \bigstar 10 from dummy : jack – four . . . Which club do you play as West? (*Answer later*)

The deal arose in the quarter-final match between SCHWARTZ and TULIN in the 2017 Spingold (USA Knockout Open Teams).



West led the $\forall K$, followed by the $\forall J$: four – five – ten. Next came the A and the A and the A: nine – king – 2. South crossed to the A and played the 6: eight – queen – seven and the 3: jack – 4 – 10. Declarer lost two spades, 2 hearts, a club and a diamond at the end, two down, East-West +100.

At the other table, Louk Verhees (S) opened $4 \pm$. That certainly surprised me. With 7 losers, 6 playing tricks, the South hand fits a $3 \pm$ opening at nil vulnerable. West led the 43: four – five – nine. After 4Q to the 4A, East played the 4K, 4A and the 3 to the 4K. Hoping East had started with a singleton diamond, West switched to the 4Q, taken by the 4A. Declarer lost two spades, two hearts and a club, two down, East-West +100, no swing.

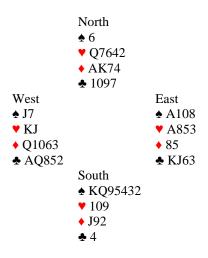
This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North ▲ 6 ♥ Q76 ◆ AK7 ♣ 109 ⁷	'4				
	Eas	•			
 ▲ A108 ♥ A853 					
♦ 85					
♣ KJ63					
West	North	East	South 3♠		
Pass	Pass	Pass	~		

West leads the $\diamond 3$: four – eight – nine. South plays the $\diamond K$: seven – six – ace. East returns the $\diamond 5$: jack – queen – ace. Next comes the $\diamond 10$ from dummy. Which club do you play as East?

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable



When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, South opened 34, all pass. This is how the play went:

- 1. West led the \diamond 3: four eight nine.
- 2. South played the $\bigstar K$: seven six ace.
- 3. East returned the \blacklozenge 5: jack queen ace.
- 4. Next came the \bigstar 10 from dummy : jack four two.
- 5. East played the \bigstar 3. South ruffed with the \bigstar 2.
- 6. The ♠K won.
- 7. South continued with the 4: 4: -4 10.
- 8. East persevered with ♣6, ruffed by South.

At this stage, West had \bullet 10-6, dummy \bullet K-7 and South \bullet 2. South could have finessed the \bullet 7, but in practice played two more spades. West discard the diamonds. South played \bullet K, \bullet 7, discarding a heart. South thus made nine tricks, +140, losing two spades, a heart and a club.

There were several opportunities to do better, much better. (1) Why did East cover the $\bigstar 10$ (T4)? East wanted a diamond ruff and should play low. It was wildly unlikely that South had $\bigstar A-Q-x$. (2) Why didn't West overtake the $\bigstar J$ with the $\bigstar Q$ and give East a diamond ruff? It was obvious that the missing diamond was with South, otherwise South would have taken a discard on the $\bigstar K$ rather than play the $\bigstar 10$ from dummy. Both East and West should have known that South had a third diamond. (3) When East was in with the $\bigstar 10$, East could have played the $\checkmark A$ and the next heart would defeat the contract.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West North East South $1 \blacklozenge 1 \blacklozenge Pass 2NT^{(1)}$ Pass $3 \blacklozenge Dble^{(2)}$? (1) Natural, strong (2) Penalties

What would you do as South with:

★ -▼ J62
♦ AKJ742
★ K1073

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

Maxine: Household hint: Stop dusting and you can use your coffee table as a message board. (John Wagner)