

300. Cover story

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ 6
♥ Q7642
♦ AK74
♣ 1097

West
♠ J7
♥ KJ
♦ Q1063
♣ AQ852

West	North	East	South
			3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You, West, lead the ♦3: four – eight – nine. South plays the ♠K: seven – six – ace. East returns the ♦5: jack – queen – ace. Next comes the ♣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 Knock-out Open Teams).

North
♠ 6
♥ Q7642
♦ AK74
♣ 1097

West
♠ J7
♥ KJ
♦ Q1063
♣ AQ852

East
♠ A108
♥ A853
♦ 85
♣ KJ63

South
♠ KQ95432
♥ 109
♦ J92
♣ 4

West	North	East	South
<i>Birman</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Padon</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
			3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the ♥K, followed by the ♥J: four – five – ten. Next came the ♣A and the ♣8: 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♠. That certainly surprised me. With 7 losers, 6 playing tricks, the South hand fits a 3♠ opening at nil vulnerable. West led the ♦3: four – five – nine. After ♠Q to the ♠A, East played the ♣K, ♥A and the ♥3 to the ♥K. Hoping East had started with a singleton diamond, West switched to the ♦Q, taken by the ♦A. 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
♥ Q7642
♦ AK74
♣ 1097

East

♠ A108
♥ A853
♦ 85
♣ KJ63

West North East South

3♠

Pass Pass Pass

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

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North

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West

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♥ KJ
♦ Q1063
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♠ KQ95432
♥ 109
♦ J92
♣ 4

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, South opened 3♠, all pass. This is how the play went:

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

At this stage, West had ♦10-6, dummy ♦K-7 and South ♦2. South could have finessed the ♦7, but in practice played two more spades. West discard the diamonds. South played ♦K, ♦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 ♣10 (T4)? East wanted a diamond ruff and should play low. It was wildly unlikely that South had ♣A-Q-x. (2) Why didn't West overtake the ♣J with the ♣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 ♦K rather than play the ♣10 from dummy. Both East and West should have known that South had a third diamond. (3) When East was in with the ♠10, East could have played the ♥A and the next heart would defeat the contract.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♠	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)