

## 330. Better decisions were available

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
<i>Bianchedi</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Madala</i>	<i>Stamatov</i>
			2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>

2NT<sup>(2)</sup>      6♥      All Pass

(1) 4-10 points, both majors, 5+/4+ either way

(2) Natural, in theory 15-18 points, balanced

What would you lead now as West with

♠ Q1098  
♥ AQ8  
♦ AQ743  
♣ 10

What do you imagine the North hand looks like to justify the jump to 6♥, given what you are holding?

*(Answer to both questions later)*

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
<i>Gold</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>M. Bell</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
			Pass
1♦	Dble	3♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
3♦	4♣	Pass	Pass
?			

(1) 4+ diamonds, 6-9 points

What would you do now as West with

♠ Q1098  
♥ AQ8  
♦ AQ743  
♣ 10

There is a very sound principle for competitive part-score bidding: Unless you think your side can make a game, do not compete a part-score hand to the 4-level. Bidding 3-over-3 is usually a losing proposition. Bidding 4-over-4 is worse still. Most of the time, both 4-level contracts will fail. If you bid 4♦, you are giving up on the chance of defeating their contract.

There is another consideration here. North has shown a very strong hand. North doubled 1♦ and then bid 4♣ opposite a partner who might have no points at all. You can expect North to have a very strong hand and freakish shape to be prepared to compete to the 4-level single-handed. North might still have some unexpressed values. If you bid 4♦ here, you are giving North another chance.

That is precisely what happened. West did bid 4♦. North now bid 4♥ : Pass : Pass, back to West. What now? No doubt annoyed and frustrated at the turn of events, West doubled 4♥. That decision did not turn out well either. Everyone passed and 4♥ doubled, with North declarer, became the contract.

West has 5 losers. East with 6-9 points will usually have 9 losers. Applying the Losing Trick Count formula, 24 – 14 = 10 tricks are likely. There is no guarantee you can beat 4♥ and so bidding 5♦ should not cost too much.

The full deal from [LAVAZZA](#) vs [SCHWARTZ](#), 2017 Spingold (USA K-O Open Teams), is on the next page:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North	
♠ AJ	
♥ KJ65	
♦ --	
♣ AK98654	
West	East
♠ Q1098	♠ 743
♥ AQ8	♥ 7
♦ AQ743	♦ K10986
♣ 10	♣ QJ72
South	
♠ K652	
♥ 109432	
♦ J52	
♣ 3	

Against North's 4♥ doubled, East led the ♦10. West played the ♦A and North ruffed. North played ♣A and ♣K, discarding a diamond. West ruffed with the ♥8 and continued with a diamond. North ruffed this and ruffed a club with the ♥10. West over-ruffed with the ♥Q and switched to the ♠10, North's ♠J winning. North played the ♥K and claimed ten tricks, North-South +590. North could ruff another club to set up the rest of the clubs and had a trump or the ♠A as entry to reach the clubs.

Just imagine West's feelings. If West passes out 4♣ and East makes the normal lead of a diamond, North will lose two clubs and two hearts. North has only one entry to reach dummy to play the hearts. After ♠J to ♠K and the ♥10, West simply rises with the ♥A and plays anything but a heart and the defence can come to a second heart trick later. So West could have passed out 4♣ and collected 50 or bid 5♦ over 4♥ and lost 100 if 5♦ was doubled, but instead West was -590. How good a lesson is that on not competing a part-score to the 4-level?

At the other table the bidding had been 2♥ South : 2NT West : 6♥ North, all pass. What should West lead?

A number of things are pretty clear: (a) North must have a very strong hand to bid slam opposite a 4-10 point hand, (b) North must have exceptional distribution and an expected source of tricks outside trumps. That source of tricks is clearly in clubs, (c) North will be void in diamonds and (d) North's 4+ trumps will include the ♥K. That should point West to leading the ♦A to try to shorten dummy's trumps. West might even dare to lead a low diamond, but that is unlikely to succeed if South has the ♦K, since South will probably play West for the ♦A because of the 2NT bid.

You can see what happens after the ♦A lead. Dummy ruffs and declarer is likely to play ♣A and club ruff to try to reach his hand to lead a heart. That would be fine if clubs were 3-2 (as expected for the 2NT bid). In practice West ruffs and 6♥ is down. Even if South plays the ♠J to the ♠K to lead the ♥10, West rises with the ♥A and plays another diamond. Dummy ruffs with the ♥J and West makes the ♥Q later.

However, West chose to lead the ♥8 against 6♥. South played low in dummy and won with the ♥9. South returned the ♥2. West rose with the ♥A, East discarding the ♦9. West switched to the ♦A (too late), ruffed with the ♥J. Declarer cashed the ♥K, removing West's ♥Q. Then came ♣A, ♣K and a club ruffed with the ♥10.

This was now the position:

North	
♠ AJ	
♥	
♦	
♣ 9865	
West	East
♠ Q109	♠ 74
♥	♥
♦ Q74	♦ K108
♣	♣ Q
South	
♠ K65	
♥ 4	
♦ J5	
♣	

As you can see, South can make 12 tricks with ease: spade to the jack, club ruff, spade to the ace and dummy is high. Instead declarer played ♠J, ♠A and then a club, losing two diamonds at the end, two down. What happened?

It appears that the ♥4 was stuck behind another card and did not appear until after spade to the jack and the ♠A. It was then too late to recover and so South had to accept two down, -100 and 12 Imps to [LAVAZZA](#). It was strange though that South did not notice sooner, as the 2♥ opening showed 5/4 either way in the majors.

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

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♥ KJ65	
♦ --	
♣ AK98654	
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♠ Q1098	♠ 743
♥ AQ8	♥ 7
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♣ 10	♣ QJ72
South	
♠ K652	
♥ 109432	
♦ J52	
♣ 3	

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♦	2♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	3♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Risky, but practical

(2) Pre-emptive

Overcalling 2♣ with a 4 loser hand was risky since 2♣ might have been passed out. East led the ♦10. North ruffed West's ♦A and played ♣A and the ♣4, ruffed with the ♥4, over-ruffed by the ♥8. West switched to the ♠10: ♠J – seven – king. North played the ♥2, queen, king, and ruffed a club in dummy for 11 tricks, +450.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	?		

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as North with

♠ 10432  
♥ AQ1054  
♦ 104  
♣ J6

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

*Sign on the lawn of a drug rehab centre: Keep off the Grass*