

352. Home via a different route

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

North
♠ A874
♥ AQ972
♦ 94
♣ K4

South
♠ Q5
♥ K1043
♦ AK
♣ A8752

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠ ⁽²⁾
Pass	5♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	6♥ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Sets hearts, asks for key cards

(2) 0 or 3 key cards

(3) In case it is zero

(4) No, it is three.

West leads the ♣J. Plan the play.

You have an inevitable spade loser, but if trumps are 2-2 or 3-1, the play looks comfortable by setting up the clubs as long as they are 3-3 or 4-2. As you plan to set the clubs up later, you start by winning trick 1 with the ♣K. There is no reason to delay drawing trumps.

How should you play the trumps?

You should start off with the ♥A (or ♥Q). This leaves you with a tenace in trumps in each hand, K-10-4 opposite Q-9-7-2, and guards against either opponent holding all four hearts.

You play ♥A, ♥K and ♥Q, West following and East discarding ♦6, ♦10.

What next?

If the clubs behave, they can wait. You have plenty of entries to hand for the clubs. The clubs could be 5-1. If so, you can ruff two clubs in dummy, but that still leaves you with a club loser and a spade loser. Just in case, you should play a low spade from dummy at trick 2. This will give you an extra trick if the ♠K is onside.

If the ♠Q loses to the ♠K with West, you will still be fine if the clubs are 3-3 or 4-2. Win the spade return, play ♣A and ruff a club. If a club is still outstanding, cross to hand with a diamond and ruff a fourth club. No problem if clubs behave.

The deal arose in a teams' match on BBO (Bridge Base Online) and was passed on to me by Bruce Neill of Sydney.

Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

North	
♠ A874	
♥ AQ972	
♦ 94	
♣ K4	
West	East
♠ 10632	♠ KJ9
♥ J85	♥ 6
♦ J8752	♦ Q1063
♣ J	♣ Q10963
South	
♠ Q5	
♥ K1043	
♦ AK	
♣ A8752	

After ♣J, king, three rounds of hearts ending in dummy and a low spade, East can take the ♠K. Say, East switches to a diamond. South wins, cashes ♠Q, ♣A, ruffs a clubs, pitches a club on the ♠A, ruffs a spade or plays a diamond and ruffs the last club in dummy for 12 tricks.

When the deal arose, Tania Lloyd, a very fine player, was declarer and found a different path to success. She took the ♣J lead with the ♣K, cashed ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q, ♣A and ruffed a club, discovering the bad news. Next came ♦A and another club ruff, which left this ending:

North	
♠ A874	
♥	
♦ 9	
♣	
West	East
♠ 10632	♠ KJ9
♥	♥
♦ J	♦ Q
♣	♣ Q
South	
♠ Q5	
♥ 10	
♦ K	
♣ 8	

South crossed to the ♦K and exited with the ♣8. East won and had to play a spade. This allowed South to score her twelfth trick and make 6♥ the hard way. Had East come down to ♠K-J, ♦Q-10 and ♣Q, that would have taken the slam one down, but that ship had sailed when East discarded two diamonds at trick 2 and 3.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Natural, not forcing

Playing pairs, what would you do as South with:

♠ 854
♥ KQ862
♦ K96
♣ Q9

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

What does it take to make an octopus laugh? Ten-tickles.