

357. Passive voice

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Forcing for one round

What would you do as West with:

♠ A10
♥ QJ9763
♦ KQ10
♣ 86

On the one hand, you have only 12 HCP, a minimum opening. That would indicate a pass. On the other hand, you have 6 hearts and a 6-loser hand. That indicates a good minimum. Perhaps you could bid 3♥? Most of the time partner will have 5+ diamonds for the 1♥ : 2♦ response. Perhaps you could raise to 3♦? As partner has bid 2-over-1 showing 10+ points, another choice is to double for takeout. If partner bids any number of clubs, you can revert to diamonds.

Each of the above choices is reasonable. The downside of 3♥ or 3♦ or Double is that partner might expect that you have a better hand than the one you hold. If you pass, you have shown minimum values and can later bid whatever then seems appropriate. You will certainly hear from partner again if partner has three hearts. If not, you can expect at most doubleton support and partner could have 0-1 heart.

The deal originated in a club duplicate pairs:

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	North	
	♠ 765	
	♥ AK4	
	♦ J6	
	♣ 109753	
West		East
♠ A10		♠ J2
♥ QJ9763		♥ 5
♦ KQ10		♦ 87532
♣ 86		♣ AKQJ4
	South	
	♠ KQ9843	
	♥ 1082	
	♦ A94	
	♣ 2	

Suppose in the auction above, West bids 3♥. Will East pass? With 11 HCP and a source of tricks in the club suit, East will probably bid 3♠, asking for a spade stopper. West obliges with 3NT, all pass. The same 3♠ : 3NT continuation is likely if West bids 3♦ or doubles 2♠ for takeout. After a spade lead, 3NT figures to be three light. If instead East heads for 5♦, that is at least one off after a spade lead and two off if East tries to discard the spade loser on the third club. After ♠K, ace, ♠A, ♠K, South ruffs, cashes the ♠Q and the defence collect two more tricks in the red suits sooner or later.

Here is a good principle: *Minimum hands take minimum action*. What if West passes 2♠? North might raise to 3♠, but given the East-West bidding, North might also judge to pass 2♠. How strong can South be? East might bid 3♣ over 2♠ and West will give preference to diamonds. North might now bid 3♠. East might compete to 4♦, but in general is it unwise to compete to the 4-level with part-score values.

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	South	
	♠ KQ9843	
	♥ 1082	
	♦ A94	
	♣ 2	

Both 3♠ and 4♦ can be defeated, but it is not easy. To beat 3♠, West leads the ♣8. East wins and shifts to the ♥5: eight – nine – king. Declarer plays a spade. West wins and continues with the ♥Q, ace, ruffed. The defenders come to a club, a spade, a heart ruff and the ♥J and a diamond trick later.

Against 4♦, South is likely to lead the ♣2. Double dummy, East can make 10 tricks, but the play is difficult (East has to win and play a heart to the ♥9 at trick 2). The ♠K lead can always beat 4♦ as long as North does not discard a club.

The top result (86%) for North-South was +300 for West 4♥ and West 3♥, both three off. North-South +200 (3♥ two down) scored 62%. South 2♠, making 9 tricks, N-S +140 was average. West 3♥ one off, –100, gave East-West 68%. South 3♠ –100 was worth 86% to East-West. Top score for East-West was 3♥, 9 tricks, +140.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
4♠	Pass	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A
♥ A2
♦ AK10975
♣ K872

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

British Military Staff Appraisals: This officer could not organize 50% leave in a 2-man submarine.