

378. Competing aims

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ A5
♥ AJ762
♦ A876
♣ K4

Whether you are playing pairs or teams, it generally pays you to compete when a suit by an opponent is raised to the 2-level, followed by two passes. You could double, for takeout of course, or bid 3♦. Which action would you choose? What would be your plan if you double and partner bids 3♣?

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ 64
♥ Q3
♦ KQ1095
♣ 9876

You would like to compete, but in the direct seat, it is not as safe as competing in the pass-out seat. If you do want to bid here, a takeout double is the best action. That should show support for both minors or possibly diamonds plus tolerance for hearts. Doubling will be fine if partner has a 4-card minor or 6 hearts, but there is no guarantee of that. Partner's hand pattern could be 3-5-2-3. Even with 2-5-3-3, partner might choose clubs. The 4-3 fit will not be fun opposite your puny 4-card holding.

The other downside for competing with minimal values is that you do not know how strong South is. Maybe South is about to bid 4♠ or invite game. If you double, South might redouble to show a strong hand and invite a penalty double from North. All in all, passing looks the best option.

That brings us to today's puzzle. When they have a trump fit, your side almost always has a trump fit somewhere. When they have a 9-card trump fit, your side is assured of a 9-card fit somewhere or two 8-card fits. Bidding 3♦ on the West hand is an option, but a takeout double might work better. Partner is likely to have three spades and two hearts at most. That leaves 8 cards for the minors. If partner is 4-4 or 5-4 in the minors, partner will bid 2NT and let you choose the minor suit.

Partner might bid 3♣. What then? If partner is 5-3 in the minors with 5 clubs, you have a 7-card fit in each minor and 3♦ is not likely to be a better spot than 3♣. Partner might have bid 3♣ with six clubs perhaps with a 2-2-3-6 pattern. Now 3♣ is likely to be your best spot. Conclusion: If you double and partner bids 3♣, you should pass.

The deal comes from a game on BBO:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 10983	
	♥ 985	
	♦ J42	
	♣ AJ10	
West		East
♠ A5		♠ 64
♥ AJ762		♥ Q3
♦ A876		♦ KQ1095
♣ K4		♣ 9876
	South	
	♠ KQJ72	
	♥ K104	
	♦ 3	
	♣ Q532	

At several tables it went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	All Pass	

When declarer made 8 tricks, +110, North-South scored +3.5 Imps. Making 9 tricks, +140, = +4.5 Imps.

At some tables, it went Pass : 1♠ : 2♥ : 2♠, Dble and West bid 3♦. One West bid 3♥, not nearly as good a choice as 3♦. At some tables, it went Pass : 1♠ : 2♥ : 2♠, Pass : Pass : 3♦. At no table did the auction begin with Pass : 1♠ : 2♥ : 2♠, Pass : Pass : Double . . . Making 10 tricks in diamonds, +130, gave East-West +2.5 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AQJ74
♥ KQ6542
♦ 2
♣ J

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

Outvoted by my wife 1-1 again.