

381. Trust account

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Dble	1♠
2♥	3♠	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ 9
♥ KQ43
♦ AJ95
♣ KQJ4

What is going on here? You have 16 HCP and partner figures to have 6-9 HCP. The opponents are trying for game with at most 18 HCP. This is the time to teach them a lesson, right? You can double them for penalties and shoot them down in flames, right?

Don't be so sure. The opponents have bid to game with fewer HCP than expected. What does that tell you? They must have significant shape as compensation. The opponents are vulnerable against not. They do not bid game and think they are going two or three off. Most of the time you should trust competent opponents who bid beyond their high-card means at unfavourable vulnerability. You will see the denouement later.

Incidentally, do you agree with East's takeout double? Yes, you do have 16 HCP, but you would have to be concerned about a reply from partner in spades. If you rebid no-trumps next, you are indicating a hand with 19-20 points, not 16. Even then, partner might remove your NT rebid to 4♠ if partner has six spades.

If not a takeout double, what else might East do? East could overcall 1♦, despite the lack of a fifth diamond. Another option is a 1NT overcall. At least the high-card strength is right for that and you are not promising more than two spades, whereas the takeout double implies 3+ spades.

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

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

What would you do as North with:

♠ AKQ7
♥ J1096
♦ 6
♣ A1062

It would be timid to bid only 2♠. Yes, you have only 14 HCP, but you have a singleton as well. Counting 3 points for the singleton brings your tally to 17 points. That is sufficient for a jump-raise. Another way to look at the position is to consider the shape of the hand and your losers. Suppose you move the ♥9 from the hearts into the diamonds. Now you would have a balanced 14-count plus 1 for the doubleton with a 7-loser hand and 2♠ is enough. The actual hand is worth 17 points and has 6-loser. That entitles you to bid one more than a minimum spade raise.

The deal comes from a game on BBO:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

North	
♠ AKQ7	
♥ J1096	
♦ 6	
♣ A1062	
West	East
♠ 2	♠ 9
♥ A752	♥ KQ43
♦ K8732	♦ AJ95
♣ 853	♣ KQJ4
South	
♠ J1086543	
♥ 8	
♦ Q104	
♣ 97	

At one table, the auction was the one at the top of page 1 and East did double 4♠, all pass. You might wonder about South's 4♠ bid with only 3 HCP. Even adding 3 points for the singleton and one for the double brings you to 7 points, not usually enough to bid to game after a jump-raise. However, South has an 8-loser hand (and you might deduct a loser for the known 11-card fit). North's jump to 3♠ should herald a 6-loser hand. Applying the Losing Trick Count Formula, your losers (8) + partner's losers (6) = 14 and 24 - 14 = 10 tricks expected. Even if 4♠ failed, it could be a good save against 4♥.

The LTC proved right again when 4♠ proved to be unbeatable. West led the ♠2, ace. South lost a heart, a diamond and a club, but had 10 easy tricks for +790 and +10.7 Imps. Three other Souths were in 4♠, but none were doubled. That is because the auction at one table went Pass : 1♣ : Double : 3♠, Pass : 4♠. At the other two tables South made a weak jump shift, Pass : 1♣ : Double : 2♠, 3♥ : 3♠ : 4♥ : 4♠, all pass. They each scored +620, +8.4 Imps.

At three tables, 4♥ was passed out. At two tables, the auction was like this, one North passing 3♥ and the other bidding 3♠ over 3♥:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Dble	2♠
3♥	Pass /3♠	4♥	All Pass

Declarer was one down - 50, but +3 Imps. At the third table, West made 4♥, +420, +11.7 Imps when South kept quiet. It went Pass : 1♣ : Double : Pass, 2♥ : Pass : 4♥, all pass.

At the other tables, East or West trusted the North-South bidding at this vulnerability and sacrificed in 5♥. Three were doubled. North-South +300 gave North-South 2.3 Imps. East-West -100 gave East-West +1.7 Imps. Minus 50 in 5♥ undoubled was worth 3 Imps to East-West.

Problem for Tomorrow:

You are the dealer at favourable vulnerability. What do you do with:

♠ A94
♥ 95
♦ KQ7654
♣ 94

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

Yesterday I fell down from a 10-metre ladder. Fortunately I was only on the first rung.