

383. Air-conditioned bridge: Medium, high and low

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?	Pass	1♠

What would you do as North with:

♠ 83
♥ A108
♦ AK109732
♣ 8

(Answer later)

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?		Pass	1♠

What would you do as West with:

♠ 2
♥ QJ543
♦ Q5
♣ AJ1076

For most players, a Michaels 2♠ here would be *de rigueur*. This shows a hand with 5+ hearts and a 5+ minor. Some play it only as weak. Others play it either weak or very strong and still others allow it to be wide-ranging. The downside of the Michaels Cue-bid is that the minor is not known. If allowed the space, partner can bid 2NT to ask for the minor, but responder often takes action and fourth player cannot tell which minor partner has and maybe cannot afford to ask for it (say, with 4NT).

There are also others who play specific 2-suiters, so that after (1♠), 2♠ = minors (the next two suits), 2NT (Non-Touching suits) = hearts + clubs and 3♣ = diamonds + hearts (the next two suits). With this West hand it would start (1♠) : 2NT.

In the quarter-final match between [FLEISHER](#) and [LAVAZZA](#) in the 2016 Vanderbilt (USA Knockout Open Teams), both Wests bid 2♠ (hearts plus a minor) over South's 1♠ opening. This was the full deal:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North		East
	♠ 83		♠ K1064
	♥ A108		♥ 7
	♦ AK109732		♦ 86
	♣ 8		♣ KQ9432
West		South	
♠ 2		♠ AQJ975	
♥ QJ543		♥ K962	
♦ Q5		♦ J4	
♣ AJ1076		♣ 5	

LAVAZZA North-South:

West	North	East	South
2♠ ⁽¹⁾	3♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	1♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♠
		All Pass	

(1) Hearts + a minor
(2) Shows diamonds

West led the ♥3: eight – seven – two. Declarer finessed the ♠Q and cashed the ♠A. Declarer lost 2 spades and a club but made 10 tricks, North-South +620. Note that East could not be certain which minor West held. Had West been able to show hearts + clubs, East would have sacrificed in 5♣ (but yes, 5♠ can be made).

North
 ♠ 83
 ♥ A108
 ♦ AK109732
 ♣ 8

West
 ♠ 2
 ♥ QJ543
 ♦ Q5
 ♣ AJ1076

East
 ♠ K1064
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 86
 ♣ KQ9432

South
 ♠ AQJ975
 ♥ K962
 ♦ J4
 ♣ 5

FLEISHER North-South:

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

(1) Hearts + a minor

(2) Shows diamonds

(3) Stopper in hearts

The diamond slam is not much of a contract. You have a club loser and you need the diamonds to behave and the ♠K onside. It is below 50%, even though the bidding makes it likely that the ♠K is with East. West led the ♣A and switched to the ♦5, king. Declarer cashed the ♦A, drawing trumps, finessed the ♠Q, crossed to the ♥A and finessed the ♠J. Declarer discarded a heart from dummy on the ♠A and claimed 12 tricks, +1370 and +13 Imps.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, the auction bore no comparison to the ones above:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass?	3♦??	All Pass	

A natural 2♦ response is recommended for North. The actual 3♦ was natural and invitation, showing 6+ diamonds and 10-12 points. The North hand fits the description, but it is nevertheless too strong for that action with the powerful 7-card suit headed by the A-K plus an outside ace. East led the ♥7 and declarer made 11 tricks, +150. I guess the result vindicates West's decision to pass 1♠.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

North
 ♠ Q102
 ♥ KJ1032
 ♦ 95
 ♣ A84

South
 ♠ AKJ764
 ♥ A9
 ♦ A10
 ♣ J65

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♠
Pass	3♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Sound raise to 3♣

Suppose West leads ♥5: two – queen – ace. You draw trumps, East turning up with three spades. and cash ♥9, East showing out. You claim 13 tricks.

Now suppose you are in 4♠ and West leads ♣3. Plan the play at pairs, knowing East has ♥Q bare and 3 spades.

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

The finest shoes may be made of smooth leather, but I will never be suede.