

390. A mélange of choices

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	Pass	1♠
2♦	Dble	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ J1064
♥ 82
♦ K104
♣ A865

First, you need to determine what North's double means or what you think it means. Then you have to decide upon your action. Make up your mind before reading further.

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	Pass	1♠
2♦	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AKQ9
♥ AK54
♦ 732
♣ 104

A takeout double is taken to be based on a hand with opening strength or better. When it is equal to minimum opening strength and partner replies with a minimum bid, the doubler is expected not to bid again and thus confirm a minimum double. If the doubler does bid again, either by way of raising partner's suit one level or bidding a new suit at the cheapest level, the expectation for doubler's strength is about 16+ points and 5 losers. If the double's next action is a jump-raise of partner's suit or a jump-bid in a new suit, the expectation now is 19+ points and a 4-loser hand.

If this were an exam and the answers were based on the choices made by world-class players, I would fail. My rebid with the North hand over 2♦ would be 2♠. True, it is a 6-loser hand, but it does have 16 points and the high cards held are excellent. No wastage there. Partner should take the 'free' 2♠ bid as a mild game-invitation.

When the deal arose in the quarter-final match between [FLEISHER](#) and [LAVAZZA](#) in the 2016 Vanderbilt (USA Knockout Open Teams), one North jumped to 3♠ over 2♦. To me, that looks like a huge overbid when partner's range is about 0-9 points and the lower end of that range is distinctly possible. Maybe they play that a 2♠ bid by North over 2♦ would / could be a minimum double.

The other North doubled 2♦, probably to show a strong balanced hand without a diamond stopper. Perhaps North was concerned that South might not have four spades for the 1♠ bid. One should not normally worry about that rare possibility. If I were South, I would certainly assume that North did not have 4-card spade support. My choice for the answer to the question at the top of the page would be 3NT to show a hand at the top of the 0-9 range with a stopper in diamonds. If you do not fancy 3NT, then you might choose 2NT.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AKQ9	
	♥ AK54	
	♦ 732	
	♣ 104	
West		East
♠ --		♠ 87532
♥ QJ97		♥ 1063
♦ AQJ954		♦ 6
♣ QJ7		♣ K932
	South	
	♠ J1064	
	♥ 82	
	♦ K108	
	♣ A865	

FLEISHER North-South:

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

With South having a possibly worthless hand, you certainly cannot blame South for bidding 4♣ when holding an ace and a king and ruffing potential in hearts. The bad trump break was unlucky, but even if trumps had been 3-2, 4♣ has little prospect of success. Needing to ruff hearts in hand and clubs in dummy, South cannot afford to draw trumps early and is quite likely to lose a club, two diamonds and a diamond ruff.

West led the ♥Q, ace. After ♣10: king – ace – seven, South crossed to the ♥K, ruffed a heart, over to the ♠A and ruffed dummy's last heart. South exited with a club to the ♣J. West returned the ♣Q, ruffed in dummy and South conceded one down, East-West +50.

LAVAZZA North-South:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	Pass	1♠
2♦	Dble	All Pass	

Figuring North would have a strong balanced hand for the double and dummy was likely to have few or no values, Zia Mahmood (S) chose to pass and play for penalties. The defence began with ♥A, ♥K, heart ruff and spade switch, ruffed by West. A club to the king was won by South, who returned a club. West won and played ♦A, ♦Q. South won and gave North a club ruff, one down, North-South +200 and +6 Imps.

Double dummy, West can make 8 tricks. After ruffing the spade at trick 4, West plays ♦A, ♦Q and loses only to the ♦K and ♠A from there.

This was the auction when the deal was replayed in a game on BBO;

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	Pass	1♠
2♦	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South won the ♥Q lead with the ♥A, played the ♣4, king, ace and exited with the ♣8: jack – ten – two. West continued with the ♥J and declarer cross-ruffed hearts and clubs for nine tricks, North-South +140.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1NT ⁽¹⁾	?		

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as North with:

♠ KJ3
♥ AQJ64
♦ 984
♣ 92

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

Where did the Terminator find toilet paper? Aisle B, Back.