

397. Curb your enthusiasm

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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

Playing teams or pairs, what would you do as West with:

♠ K1097
♥ 1074
♦ 1064
♣ AK3

You have 10 HCP and 9 losers. Partner is a passed hand. In general, when the bidding goes 1X : Pass : 2X : Pass, Pass, one should try to take action. The opponents can usually make 8 tricks in their trump fit. You should try to jostle them out of the safety of the 2-level and try to push them to the 3-level. If you wanted to bid here, you would double for takeout.

Having said that, at teams, the case for taking action in the pass-out seat is not strong when you are vulnerable and your hand pattern is 4-3-3-3. Playing pairs, one should take the risk and double, but you could wind up going two off and -200 will be a terrible score. You know yourself whether you would take the risk.

Suppose the auction has been:

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

What would you do now as West?

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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

What would you do as East with:

♠ Q843
♥ 8
♦ KQ85
♣ Q1072

You have only 9 HCP, but ideal shape for a takeout double in a 6½-loser hand. Unless South or North has a very strong holding in the suit partner bids, you figure to escape unscathed. If South has the values for game, South will bid 4♥. With potential for 4♥, South will make some game-try. If South is minimum, partner will have about 10 points or so and it is unlikely you will be doubled in whatever partner bids.

Of course, a takeout double is not safe. On a bad day, partner will have a 4-3-3-3 pattern with 4 hearts. Still, if you do not take action here, 2♥ will almost certainly be passed out, since West figures to have 3-4 hearts. The saving grace for the takeout double is that you are a passed hand. Add any jack to any suit and no one could complain about your passed-hand takeout double. Whether it is pairs or teams, my vote would go to 'Double'.

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

<p>West</p> <p>♠ K1097</p> <p>♥ 1074</p> <p>♦ 1064</p> <p>♣ AK3</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ Q843</p> <p>♥ 8</p> <p>♦ KQ85</p> <p>♣ Q1072</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ J65</p> <p>♥ KQ2</p> <p>♦ J92</p> <p>♣ 9865</p>	
<p>South</p> <p>♠ A2</p> <p>♥ AJ9653</p> <p>♦ A73</p> <p>♣ J4</p>	

When the deal arose in a quarter-final match in the 2020 Spingold (USA Knock-out Open Teams), the auction at one table was Pass : Pass : 1♥ : Pass, 2♥, all pass. At the other table it went Pass : Pass : 1♥ : Pass, 1NT (forcing) : Pass : 2♥, all pass. It was hard to compete against that sequence, as North-South might not have a trump fit.

One West led a trump. The other began with ♣A, ♣K, ♣3. As you can see, there are no problems in 2♥. South has six trump tricks and two aces. The defenders did not give declarer anything extra and the board was flat at North-South +110.

When the deal was played in a game on BBO, the auction went this way:

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

While East's double might be considered bold / rash, West's 3♠ is almost a double-cross. East goes out on a limb to try to push the opponents to the 3-level and succeeds. West should pass and hope to defeat 3♥, which can be done. If West bids 3♠ and fails, West has undone the good / risky / unwise work by East.

North led the ♣5, queen. Declarer played dummy's ♠3 and South rose with the ♠A to return the ♣J. West won, drew trumps, cashed the ♣K and ran the ♦10: two – five – ace. The defenders could take no more than their three aces and so West had 10 tricks, +170. That result is unlikely to curb West's enthusiasm for bidding three-over-three.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

What would you do as North with:

West	North	East	South	
		Pass	1♠	♠ Q
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	♥ A8762
Pass	?			♦ A98543
				♣ 3

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

What's red and really bad for your teeth? A brick.