

398. Of minor consequence

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

- ♠ KJ9
- ♥ K104
- ♦ KJ107
- ♣ K104

This would be a headache for anyone who has been told, 'Never lead away from a king'. (*Answer later*)

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

- ♠ Q
- ♥ A8762
- ♦ A98543
- ♣ 3

The hand smacks of a misfit. A good idea here is to bid 2♦ and hope to buy it there.

When the deal arose in a quarter-final match in the 2020 Spingold (USA Knock-out Open Teams):

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

At one table it went:

	North		West	North	East	South
	♠ Q				Pass	1♠
	♥ A8762		Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
	♦ A98543		Pass	2♦	All Pass	
	♣ 3					
West		East				
♠ KJ9		♠ 8542				
♥ K104		♥ QJ93				
♦ KJ107		♦ 2				
♣ K104		♣ 9876				
	South					
	♠ A10763					
	♥ 5					
	♦ Q6					
	♣ AQJ52					

East led the ♥Q. North won with the ♥A, ruffed a heart, cashed the ♣A and played the ♣Q, king, ruff. Another heart ruff, was followed by the ♣J, declarer pitching a heart and a fourth club. West discarded and North ruffed. North cashed the ♦A and was down to ♠Q, ♦9-8-5, ♥8. After ♠Q to the ♠A, declarer played the club winner. West ruffed and North discarded the ♥8. North still had a trump trick to come. North lost just three diamonds and scored +130.

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

At the other table:

	North	
	♠ Q	
	♥ A8762	
	♦ A98543	
	♣ 3	
West		East
♠ KJ9		♠ 8542
♥ K104		♥ QJ93
♦ KJ107		♦ 2
♣ K104		♣ 9876
	South	
	♠ A10763	
	♥ 5	
	♦ Q6	
	♣ AQJ52	

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

(1) Transfer to diamonds

West's takeout double with a balanced 14 count opposite a passed hand will not be found in a bridge textbook. With the misfit in spades, North might have chosen redouble instead of showing diamonds. North or South can double for penalties any spot that East-West reach. West might then regret that takeout double.

Against 3♦, East led the ♥Q. North followed a similar path to the one taken by North at the other table and also finished with 10 tricks, +130, no swing.

When the deal was played in a game on BBO, West had the opening lead problem after the auction on page 1:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Did I mention 'Never lead away from a king'? Maybe that is a mantra of West's, as he did not lead away from a king. Indeed, not. He led the ♦K! The idea, of course, was to snare a possible singleton ♦Q with South. South had shown at least 10 cards in the black suits and might well have had two hearts and the bare ♦Q.

Declarer could have played ♥A, heart ruff, ♠A, spade ruff, heart ruff. That would bring South to 8 tricks. Instead, South took the ♦A and played the ♦9. East ruffed and switched to a club, queen, king. West switched to the ♥K, safe since South was now known to hold a singleton heart. South made four club tricks and three aces, two light, East-West +100.

Incidentally, what do you think of North's pass of 3♣? Not that it would have helped, but might South not have 6 spades, 5 clubs? That would make a preference to 3♣ attractive. Of course, if South might be 5 spades, 6 clubs, then North has to guess whether to pass 3♣ or bid 3♣. It all comes back to North's rebid after 1♠ : 1NT, 2♣. You can see how well 2♦ turned out, while the 2NT rebid was certainly optimistic.

Problem for Tomorrow:

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

♠ 1064
♥ A8
♦ 63
♣ AQ9432

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

Even people whom you consider good for nothing and a menace to society can bring a smile to your face. For instance, when you push them down the stairs.