

403. A two-trick difference

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

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

What would you do as East with:

♠ KJ974
♥ 1085
♦ J7
♣ A97

The deal comes from a knockout match in a BBO Teams' event.

Dealer North : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 1063	
	♥ K7	
	♦ A9654	
	♣ 652	
West		East
♠ --		♠ KJ974
♥ AQ63		♥ 1085
♦ K10832		♦ J7
♣ 10843		♣ A97
	South	
	♠ AQ852	
	♥ J942	
	♦ Q	
	♣ KQJ	

At one table it went:

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

West's takeout double opposite a passed hand is playing with fire. There is a good chance that partner has spade length and you might not have a trump fit anywhere. If partner bids 1NT, you can bid 2♦, but will partner take that as weak or as showing extra strength? And what if partner replies 2NT. That double illustrates a common phenomenon, living beyond your means.

West led the ♦2: four – jack – queen. South played the ♣K. East won and returned the ♣9, taken by the ♣J. The ♥2 was won by West, who brought back the ♦K, ace, South discarding ♥4. Declarer can succeed from here via ♥K, club to the queen, heart ruff, diamond from dummy, over-ruffing East's trump, and ruffing the last heart with the ♠10. After East over-ruffs, South now just needs to duck if East plays a high trump. South loses only a heart, a club and two trump tricks.

However, South slipped by playing a diamond from dummy, a definite slip but not yet fatal. East discarded the ♣7. South ruffed with the ♣2 and played the ♣Q. East ruffed with the ♠4, the third trick for the defence, and exited with the ♥10, taken by the ♥K.

This was now the position:

North	
♠ 1063	
♥	
♦ 96	
♣	
West	East
♠ --	♠ KJ97
♥ Q6	♥ 5
♦ 108	♦
♣ 10	♣
South	
♠ AQ85	
♥ J	
♦	
♣	

South can play a spade and cover the ♠7 with the ♠8 or more likely, cover the ♠9 with the ♠Q. South ruffs the ♥J and plays the ♠10, ducking East's ♠J or ♠K and leaving South with ♠A-8 over ♠K-7 or ♠J-7. South takes the last two tricks and makes 3♠ doubled.

South slipped again by playing another diamond from dummy. East discarded the ♥5 and South ruffed with the ♠5. The ♥J was ruffed with the ♠3. East over-ruffed with the ♠7, the fourth trick for the defence. East returned the ♠J – the ♠K would have been equally effective. South won with the ♠Q, but East still had ♠K-9 and the ♠K became the setting trick, East-West +200, the hard way.

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♦ K10832	♦ J7
♣ 10843	♣ A97
South	
♠ AQ852	
♥ J942	
♦ Q	
♣ KQJ	

After the bidding has started this way:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
?			

Despite the good shape and the 6 losers, a good idea for West would be to pass. The value of passing is severely under-rated in this day and age. Just like the instant gratification needed by a child, the urge to bid regardless of values or situation has often overcome reason. There is no shame in passing with a moderate hand. People will not point you out in the street for such a pass. If you absolutely cannot resist bidding, how about a 2♦ overall?

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	♣ KQJ	

This was today's question on page 1:

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

What would you do as East?

You have 9 HCP and partner is making a balancing double. You know partner is void in spades and declarer has the ♠A, ♠Q and ♠10 in the combined hands. Your spade length under declarer's spade length is badly placed.

In practice, East passed for penalties, but opposite an 11 count at best – partner did not double 1♠ – that has huge risk. A better choice would be 3♣. Your clubs are stronger than your hearts and you would rather receive a club lead if North-South push on to 3♠. It is not very likely that you will be doubled in 3♣ if the clubs do not divide badly.

Against 2♠ doubled – West must have hated East's pass – West led the ♦3. Ducking in dummy was possible, but South did not really need a discard on the ♦A. Losing a diamond trick would look silly. South took the ♦A and played the ♣2: seven – king – four. On the ♥2, West took the ♥A and returned the ♦2. South ruffed, crossed to the ♥K and played the ♣5: ace – queen – four.

East switched to the ♠J: queen – ♦8 – ♠3. South cashed the ♣J and ruffed the ♥9 with the ♠6.

These cards remained:

	North	
	♠ 10	
	♥	
	♦ 965	
	♣	
West		East
♠ --		♠ K974
♥ Q		♥
♦ K10		♦
♣ 10		♣
	South	
	♠ A85	
	♥ J	
	♦	
	♣	

On the diamond from dummy, East ruffed with the ♠9. South over-ruffed with the ♠A. Next came the ♥J, ruffed with the ♠10. If East ducked, the next diamond from dummy would let South make the ♠8. In practice, East over-ruffed with the ♠K. That left East on lead with ♠7-4 so South's ♠8-5 made the last two tricks. That gave South 10 tricks and +1070, 15 Imps to North-South.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North

♠ 6532

♥ KJ753

♦ KQ

♣ A7

South

♠ AK98

♥ Q6

♦ AJ9

♣ QJ94

With East-West silent, North-South have reached 4♠ via 1♥ : 1♠, 2♠ : 3♣ (trial bid), 4♠, all pass. West leads the ♦6: king – seven – nine. You play the ♠2: four – king – jack. How do you continue?

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

What is the name of the girl in the middle of the tennis court? Annette.