

223. Dealing with a freak

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	?	1♣

What would you do as East with:

♠ A9652
♥ 92
♦ J107
♣ J84

Today's deal comes from Session 4 of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) Round of 16 match between MITTELMAN and NICKELL.

Board 55: Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North		
	♠ Q104		
	♥ J		
	♦ KQ98653		
	♣ 73		
West		East	
♠ J		♠ A9652	
♥ AQ107543		♥ 92	
♦ --		♦ J107	
♣ AQ1052		♣ J84	
	South		
	♠ K873		
	♥ K86		
	♦ A42		
	♣ K96		

West	North	East	South
<i>Hanlon</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Amoils</i>	<i>Levin</i>
1♥	2♦	Pass	1♣
4♥	Pass	Pass	2NT
			Pass

West	North	East	South
<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>
1♥	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1♣
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Natural, not forcing

When the deal was replayed in a BBO game:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♣
			Pass

The play was the same at every table. North led the ♦K. West ruffed and played ♥A and a second heart. South won and continued diamonds. West ruffed, drew the last trump, crossed to the ♠A and played the ♣J. When that won, declarer finessed in clubs again and that was 12 tricks. In the BBO game, it was +480, no swing. In the replay, it was East-West +230.

Board 55: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q104	
	♥ J	
	♦ KQ98653	
	♣ 73	
West		East
♠ J		♠ A9652
♥ AQ107543		♥ 92
♦ --		♦ J107
♣ AQ1052		♣ J84
	South	
	♠ K873	
	♥ K86	
	♦ A42	
	♣ K96	

One can hardly crime West for the 1♥ overcall. You are in regal company when you match the bids chosen by world-class players like Tom Hanlon (Ireland) and Eric Rodwell (USA). Still it was strange to overcall just 1♥ if you are prepared to bid 4♥ on the next round, even though partner has passed (as the East players did in the Spingold). If you are going to bid 4♥ next, perhaps it is better to start with a double of 1♣. It is a pity that the North players in the Spingold did not pass. It would have been interesting to see the outcome.

In the replay auction, after 1♣ : 1♥, full marks to North for the Pass. After North passed, East might have bid 1♠. However, with a 10-loser hand and only one trick for partner, it looks sensible for East to go quietly opposite just a 1-level overcall.

On the surface, West has only 3 losers, although West will need some entries to dummy to take the heart or the club finesse or both. Suppose it had started 1♣ : Double. What next?

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Dble	1♦	1♠	1NT
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

Here East's 1♠ bid over 1♦ is expected to have 6-9 points. That entitles West to jump to 4♥.

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

(1) Natural, not forcing

Here too, East's 2♠ should be about 6-9 points. East will be apprehensive when West jumps to 4♥ and relieved when West makes 12 tricks. 'Could we have bid it, partner?'

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Dble	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

(1) Natural, pre-emptive

The 3♦ bid makes it much tougher for East-West. East might consider that if West can double and bid for nine tricks opposite possibly no values, then the ♠A warrants raising to 4♥. Still, I would not crime an East who passed 3♥ in this auction. It would be different if it had started 1♣ : Double : Pass : 1♠, Pass : 3♥ : Pass. Here West has jumped to 3♥ and that should show a 4-loser hand. It asks partner to bid game with one trick and East should certainly bid 4♥ in that sequence.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

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

(1) 15-17 points

What would you lead as West from:

♠ Q62
♥ AQ109
♦ A754
♣ 42

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

Definition humour: Two synonyms stroll into a tavern.

New book: <i>The Power of Pass</i> (by Harold Schogger and Ron Klinger). \$A25.00 Available from Suzie Klinger, post free until 2021: email suzie@ronklingerbridge.com or telephone 0411 229 705.
