

## Double Digits

David J. Weiss

In this quiz, the stakes on each deal are high. Oh, not anything so trivial as coin of the realm, but large numbers of IMPs. No small swings for us. Here, classified according to the relevant facet of the game, are some opportunities for you to make a difference.

### 1) Bidding:

Both vulnerable. South holds

♠AKJ10754  
♥Q86  
♦  
♣A107

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣*	Pass
4♦**	Dbl.	4♥	Pass
7♣	Pass	Pass	7♦
?			

\* Game forcing, shows a good suit.

\*\* Shortness

The 4D bid seemed like a good idea at the time, and it rocketed us to what seems like a laydown grand; but it was not without its price. It feels as though East may have done the right thing. Now what?

### 2) Opening lead:

N-S vulnerable. South holds

♠8  
♥9754  
♦--  
♣AKQJ9842

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
2♠*	4♥	5♣	6♥
7♣	Dbl.	Pass	7♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

\* Weak

Although you might like to make the insurance call of 8♣, the rules require you to lead instead. What will work?

3) Defense:  
Neither vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦*	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

\*three-card limit raise

**NORTH**  
 ♠Q73  
 ♥QJ5  
 ♦K974  
 ♣KJ9

**EAST**  
 ♠--  
 ♥K962  
 ♦J1063  
 ♣AQ1054

Partner, West, leads the diamond five. Declarer covers with the seven, and your jack is taken by the ace. The club six is led toward dummy, covered by West's eight and dummy's jack. How will you defeat this slam?

4) Poker:  
Neither vulnerable. South holds

♠AJ954  
 ♥8  
 ♦4  
 ♣AKJ953

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♦*	Pass	Pass	2♠**
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣**
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT**
Pass	Pass	Dbl.	?

\* Weak  
 \*\* Who knows?

Perhaps you and partner might like to adopt some conventional methods for this situation, but at the moment you have none. At least you managed to mention both suits. Now what?

## Results

- 1) If you chose to bid 7S, you are in (ahem) good company. It certainly looks as though defending is tantamount to accepting a large loss. Collecting 1100 or 1400 against your entitlement of 2140 will be costly. A forcing pass lets partner make the last mistake, but what does it show? The diamond ace? Partner can hardly know to bid 7♠ with the singleton queen or two small.

### NORTH

♠--  
♥AK75  
♦86  
♣KQJ9864

### WEST

♠Q983  
♥103  
♦AQJ752  
♣3

### EAST

♠62  
♥J942  
♦K10943  
♣52

### SOUTH

♠AKJ10754  
♥Q86  
♦--  
♣A107

But alas, the 7♠ call is a mere 22 IMPs worse than the alternative. The estimate that 7♦ would be a good save was correct (-5 for 1100), but your counterparts did not reach 7♣. In fact, they got all the way to 5♠. So you lose 13 by trying the spade grand, and could have won 9 by defending.

2) Can it be right to cash an ace against a grand? Only in real life, not in a published hand. Sure enough, the real-life deal was:

	<b>NORTH</b>	
	♠AKJ754	
	♥--	
	♦8652	
	♣1065	
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>
♠Q109632		♠--
♥1086		♥AKQJ32
♦KQ43		♦AJ1097
♣--		♣73
	<b>SOUTH</b>	
	♠8	
	♥9754	
	♦--	
	♣AKQJ9842	

Either black-suit ace gets ruffed off (just as their red-suit lead would have been ruffed if they let you play 7♣!), but the spade sets the contract. Your heart nine just barely gets promoted as East tries to get to hand in order to trump his two clubs. At the other table, a spade lead set 7♣x, so the club lead is 22 IMPs worse than the spade lead.

3) Win the club queen and return a diamond. Simple game, bridge. Grab whatever tricks you can, as cheaply as possible, and return partner's lead. This is not a tricky hand where you're supposed to, say, win a deceptive club ace and somehow talk declarer out of the heart finesse.

**NORTH**

♠Q73  
♥QJ5  
♦K974  
♣KJ9

**WEST**

♠984  
♥1043  
♦Q85  
♣8732

**EAST**

♠--  
♥K962  
♦J1063  
♣AQ1054

**SOUTH**

♠AKJ10652  
♥A87  
♦A2  
♣6

At the table, East won the club queen (good!), and returned the heart two (bad, very bad!). The seven drew West's ten, and after running the trumps declarer reached this annoying position, with East to discard:

**NORTH**

♠  
♥Q  
♦K  
♣K

**WEST**

♠  
♥4  
♦Q8  
♣

**EAST**

♠  
♥K9  
♦J  
♣A

**SOUTH**

♠  
♥A8  
♦2  
♣

East postponed the awful moment by discarding a diamond, but when declarer crossed to the board in that suit, there was no card East could spare. A diamond return at trick three ends all squeeze threats by breaking the link to dummy. A successful alternative is the return of the heart nine rather than the deuce; that preserves West's ten and the defenders can survive the pressure. With the normal 4S making 5 at the other table, a losing return is 21 IMPs worse than a winning one.

- 4) I don't know if there is a theoretically correct call, but I can tell you the result if you pull to 4♣. You will score +150, as opposed to +550 if you pass or +400 if you somehow divine to pull to 5♣.

**NORTH**

♠ 107  
♥ AJ652  
♦ K73  
♣ Q87

**WEST**

♠ 632  
♥ Q73  
♦ AJ10986  
♣ 10

**EAST**

♠ KQ8  
♥ K1094  
♦ Q52  
♣ 642

**SOUTH**

♠ AJ954  
♥ 8  
♦ 4  
♣ AKJ953

Bridge math is peculiar. For you, the losing decision to pull costs 10 IMPs; the one IMP you lose (against 170 in 3♠) rather than the 9 IMP gain you would have achieved by sitting it out (you didn't seriously consider redoubling, did you?). But consider the fate of the hero of the deal, East. By boldly doubling a cold contract in an auction where no one knew if it would make, so that a pull was highly likely, East swung a mere 7 IMPs (gaining one instead of losing six).