

Choose your poison

by Ron Klinger

West dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♠	Pass	4♠	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 73
♥ KQJ983
♦ Q
♣ AQJ5

Conventional wisdom is to play partner for two tricks after an opposition pre-empt. South has five losers. If partner produces the hoped-for two tricks, that still brings you to only ten tricks. Given East's raise to 4♠, it becomes a bit less likely that partner will bring you two tricks.

Recommended action is to pass. If you cannot bring yourself to do that, then double for takeout. The worst does not always happen, but if it does and partner bids 5♦, remove that to 5♥. I cannot promise you eternal happiness, but doubling first gives you a better chance of survival than bidding 5♥.

Today's deal arose in the 2018 TBIB Swiss Teams at the North Shore Bridge Club Super Congress.

Round 1: Board 10

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ Q92	
	♥ A42	
	♦ 98742	
	♣ 86	
West		East
♠ KJ108654		♠ A
♥ 106		♥ 75
♦ J3		♦ AK1065
♣ K9		♣ 107432
	South	
	♠ 73	
	♥ KQJ983	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AQJ5	

If you chose 5♥, it will go Pass : Pass : Double by East, all pass. You lose two spades (eventually), a diamond and a club, two light, -500. If you pass, you should take 4♠ down, +100, maybe +200. If you double, there is a strong case for North passing for penalties rather than bidding 5♦. The ♠Q is useful in defence but wasted if your side becomes declarer. The defence can always take 4♠ doubled one down, which is a whole lot better than failing in 5♥. Taking 4♠ doubled two down is a little more difficult. A diamond lead from North and a diamond ruff for South later can do it: ♦4 lead, ace; ♠A; club taken by ace; ♥K; ♥9 to the ♥A, diamond return, ruffed by South and a trump trick for North later.

Datum: N-S 60. Results: 4♥ doubled x 2, +790 x 1, -200 x 1; 4♥ x 23, +620 x 7, -100 x 11, -200 x 5; 5♥ -200 x 2; 5♥ doubled -500 x 2; 4♠ x 6 -100 x 3 -200 x 3; 4♠ doubled -200 x 1, -500 x 1.

My partner played really well today. Regrettably the game wasn't bridge.