

The passing game

By Tom Townsend

Dealer South

Game All

♠ A 6 ♥ K ♦ K 10 9 6 5 2 ♣ A 6 4 2	♠ Q 8 ♥ J 10 8 6 3 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ K 9 8	<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">S</td> </tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ J 10 9 7 2 ♥ A Q 9 7 5 ♦ J ♣ 5 3
N	E						
W	S						
	♠ K 5 4 3 ♥ 1 ♦ Q 7 4 3 ♣ Q J 10 7						

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥(1)	pass(2)	IN 1(1)
2♦(1)	2♥(1)	dbld(3)	2♠(4)
pass	pass	dbld(3)	pass
pass	pass		

- (1) Presumed gun-to-head bids
- (2) Playing negative doubles
- (3) These were for business
- (4) Sheer desperation

Contract 2♠ doubled
 Declarer South
 Opening Lead ♥K

HAROLD Schogger, veteran North-West London bridge teacher, sent me his and Ron Klinger's new book. Published by Modern Bridge Publications, Australia, it's called *The Power of Pass - is someone holding a gun to your head?*

"A bridge player's best bid is pass" is an old but good adage. To be precise, that should be "call", not "bid". The art of the pass has sold few books in the past. Commercially speaking, a better proposition tends to be something like *Rampant three-bids for rabid players*. Perhaps this newcomer will prove the exception.

Ron and Harold's advice is almost invariably sound, and will help you win in unspectacular style. The title of Chapter 20 is this: "If strong in a suit bid on your right, pass and hope for penalties later". Always assuming, of course, that one can't make an immediate penalty double.

The other side of the coin is that if LHO is likely to be long in your suit, don't bid. On our deal from Chapter 20, contested lately by four international players on BBO, there was a lot of unnecessary bidding - particularly North's 2♥, when West had let him off the hook with 2♦.

The result was a ridiculous contract. West led the ♥K to 2♠ doubled, and switched brightly to the ♣2. South scored the ♣8 in dummy and played ace and another diamond. West won with the ♦9, cashed the ♣A, noted East's high-low (♣5 then ♣3), and gave him a club ruff.

East led the ♥A, ruffed with the ♠3 and overruffed; West played his fourth club, ruffed with dummy's ♠Q. South played a heart off dummy, ruffed the ♥Q low, and was overruffed with the ♠A. East had three more trump tricks to come for down four.

The deal was originally played in the 2019 Spingold, in Las Vegas. Joel Wooldridge (North) bid (called) like he'd read Harold and Ron's book. He passed over 1♦ with the six hearts. While not the standard (in)action, this feels very logical facing a passed hand, not holding the boss suit. It certainly kept his side out of trouble.

Table One 2♠ doubled minus four by South, N/S -1100
 Table Two 2♠ plus one by West, N/S -140