

They used to say (justifying inaction), “Too dangerous to bid.” Now (and I’m as guilty as the next person) they say (to justify some rash effort), “Too dangerous to pass.”

The modern trend to limit the green pass card to the bare minimum has spurred on a collaborative effort between Ron Klinger of Australia and Harold Schogger of Hendon. Their new book *The Power of Pass* examines many tournament deals in that players bid when they shouldn’t. Here is one in particular which caught my eye from the 2019 Sao Paulo Cup final in Brazil.

Dealer East N-S Vul

♠ A 7 6 3		♠ K Q 9 8 5 4				
♥ A K 3 2		♥ 7				
♦ A		♦ K J 7 6				
♣ A K 10 4		♣ 9 2				
♠ J 10 2	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ K Q 9 8 5 4
N						
W						
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S						
♥ Q J 8 6 5		♥ 7				
♦ 10 9 4 3		♦ K J 7 6				
♣ 7		♣ 9 2				
♠ -						
♥ 10 9 4						
♦ Q 8 5 2						
♣ Q J 8 6 5 3						

S	W	N	E
Pass	3♠(2)	Dbl(3)	2♠(1) 4♠(4)?
5♣	Pass	7♣	7♠(5)??
Dbl	end		

(1) Weak Two. The nice thing about pre-empting is you’ve shown your hand and don’t need to speak again (unless partner involves you). You can sit back in your chair and watch the opponents make their own arrangements, knowing you’ve made life more awkward for them. That’s the theory.

(2) Raising pre-emptively to the (nine-card) level of the fit.

(3) Take-out. North knows partner is very short in spades (probably void), so there is a very good chance of finding a fit in either hearts or clubs.

(4) The question mark is Klinger/Schogger’s. No one invited East to bid. If he thought he had too much playing strength for a Weak Two, he should have opened One or Three.

(5) The two question marks are Klinger/Schogger’s. I would say two question marks is an underbid.

We will gloss over the play in 7♠ doubled. Declarer lost five tricks — the ace of spades, a heart, a club and the ace and queen of diamonds. Five down and N-S +1,100. This would be a decent sacrifice if N-S were making. But why should they be? Your bidding forced them to guess — why should they have guessed right?

West should lead a trump (yes, even a singleton trump) v 7♣. It’s safe, and may remove a crucial entry/cut down a ruff. That opening lead (and that lead alone), defeats 7♣.

Declarer wins the club and must try to ruff three diamonds. He cashes the ace of diamonds, ruffs a spade, ruffs a second diamond, ruffs a spade, ruffs a third diamond, ruffs a spade and ruffs a fourth diamond. However, he cannot reach his hand to draw East’s second club and must try the ace-king of hearts. East ruffs — down down.

On the jack of spades lead, declarer wins dummy’s ace, cashes the ace of diamonds, and has the extra entry to negotiate the three diamond ruffs. Grand slam made.

Remember — pass is the opposite of fail.