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006. A matter of account

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

North
 ♠ KJ107
 ♥ K932
 ♦ A10
 ♣ Q32

East
 ♠ Q98
 ♥ Q876
 ♦ K
 ♣ AJ1065

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Dble	Rdbl	2 ♣
Pass	Pass	Dble (1)	All pass

(1) Penalties

West leads the ♣9: queen – ace – four. East returns the ♣J: king – ♠5 – ♣2. South plays the ♦5: four – ace – king and the ♦10: ♣5 – ♦6 – ♦7. East continues with the ♣10: seven – ♠4 – ♣3 and switches to the ♥6: ten – jack – king.

These cards remain:

North
 ♠ KJ107
 ♥ 932
 ♦ ---
 ♣ ---

East
 ♠ Q98
 ♥ Q87
 ♦ ---
 ♣ 6

Declarer plays the ♠10 from dummy. Which spade would you play as East?

Make up your mind before consulting the full deal on the next page.

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Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

North
 ♠ KJ107
 ♥ K932
 ♦ A10
 ♣ Q32

West	East
♠ A542	♠ Q98
♥ AJ54	♥ Q876
♦ Q974	♦ K
♣ 9	♣ AJ1065

South
 ♠ 63
 ♥ 10
 ♦ J86532
 ♣ K874

The deal arose in the LAVAZZA vs SCHWARTZ semi-final in the 2017 Spingold (USA K-O Teams). After 1♦ by West, Double by North, Redouble by East, South does best to pass, but that is very hard to judge. If this pass shows a desire to play for penalties, North should have no trouble passing as well. On most lines of defence, 1♦ can be defeated. Even if 1♦ doubled makes, the result would have been better for North-South than what actually happened.

At one table, South did pass, but North took it as no clear action from South and removed the double to 1♥. This was last week's puzzle:

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Sementa</i>	<i>Stamatove</i>	<i>Bocchi</i>
1♦	Dble	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	1♥	Dble (1)	1NT
Pass	Pass	Dble (1)	Rdbl (2)
Pass ?			

- (1) For penalties
- (2) For rescue

What would you do with the North hand?

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It is clear that South does not have heart support or four spades. Why did South choose 1NT and Redouble? To show both minors. North has a preference for clubs, but South probably has a strong preference for diamonds. With 4-4 in the minors, South would simply have bid 2♣. South is likely to have 9+ cards in the minors. With a 3-2-5-3 pattern, South is likely to have redoubled 1♥ for rescue. South might well have 5 diamonds, 4 clubs or even 6 diamonds 3-4 clubs. There is a good case for North's bidding 2♦ here.

Anyway, that did not happen. North chose 2♣. East doubled, all pass.

East led the ♦K: two – four – ace. North returned the ♦10: ♠9 – ♦3 – ♦Q. West switched to the ♣9: queen – ace – four. East returned the ♣J: king – ♠2 – ♣2. After ♦5: seven – ♣3 – ♣5, East cashed the ♣10 and shifted to the ♥6. West took the ♥A and returned the ♥4, taken by the ♥K. South ruffed a heart with the ♣8 and played a winning diamond. East ruffed and played the ♥8 to East's ♥J. Dummy was down to ♠K-J and West played the ♠5. Declarer mis-guessed by inserting the ♠J and lost to the ♠Q and ♠A. That was four off and –1100. Given West's original 1♦ opening, North might have played West for the ♠A and thus escaped for –800. If East had the ♠A, West has opened with only 9 points.

Even so, +200 or –230 in 1♦ redoubled would be much better than –800.

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South
 ♠ 63
 ♥ 10
 ♦ J86532
 ♣ K874

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At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Bell</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>Gold</i>
1 \diamond	Dble	Rdbl	2 \clubsuit
Dble (1)	Pass	Pass	Pass (2)

(1) For takeout (2) For pleasure

West led the $\clubsuit 9$, queen, ace. East returned the $\clubsuit J$: king – $\spadesuit 2$ – $\clubsuit 2$. South played the $\spadesuit 6$ to the $\spadesuit J$ and $\spadesuit Q$. East cashed the $\clubsuit 10$ and shifted to the $\diamond K$. South won with dummy's $\diamond A$, followed by the $\spadesuit K$. West won, cashed the $\diamond Q$ (East discarding $\spadesuit 9$) and the $\heartsuit A$ and exited with the $\heartsuit 5$ to the $\heartsuit K$. After $\spadesuit 10$, ruffed and over-ruffed with South's last trump, East made the last two tricks with the $\clubsuit 6$ and the $\heartsuit Q$. South made 2 club tricks, 1 diamond and 1 heart, four light, also –1100, no swing and just another flat board.

Back to today's problem from page 1 where the position after trick 6 was like this:

North	
\spadesuit KJ107	
\heartsuit 932	
\diamond ---	
\clubsuit ---	
	East
	\spadesuit Q98
	\heartsuit Q87
	\diamond ---
	\clubsuit 6

When declarer plays the $\spadesuit 10$ from dummy, it is important not to play an automatic-pilot second-hand low. As usual, success comes from counting points. North, dummy, began with 13 points. East had 12 initially, South has turned up with the $\clubsuit K$ and by inference the $\diamond J$ (as West captured the $\diamond 10$ with the $\diamond Q$). 13 points + 12 + 4 = 29 points and so West must have the $\spadesuit A$, as West opened the bidding. It follows that East should cover $\spadesuit 10$ with the $\spadesuit Q$. If not, you collect 800. Cover with the $\spadesuit Q$ and you score 1100 to equal the Spingold results.

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Puzzle for next week:

With only East-West vulnerable, there are two passes to South, who opens 1♥. What do you do as West with:

♠ K9872 ♥ 10 ♦ AKQJ54 ♣ 8

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

Point count: A method whereby one can rationalize one's bidding errors scientifically.