

Unusual Double -- Problem

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ Q
 ♥ Q J 4
 ♦ 10 9 4 3 2
 ♣ Q J 9 7



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	2NT ¹	4♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
?			

1. Unusual NT: 5+♥ & 5+♣, less than opening values.

Take over for West, who had to leave in a hurry. Questions:

1. Has anybody made a mistake in the bidding yet?
2. What's up with partner's double?
3. What is your call?
4. If you pass, what do you lead?

Unusual Double -- Solution

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ J 9 3		♠ 6 5 4									
♥ 9 5		♥ A 8 6 3 2									
♦ A Q J 8 6 5		♦ —									
♣ A 5		♣ K 10 8 6 4									
♠ Q	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 10 8 7 2
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W		E									
	S										
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♣ Q J 9 7		♣ 3 2									

N 6♠; NS 5N; S 5♠; NS 4♦; E 4♣; EW 2♥; W 3♣; Par +500:
E 7♣×-3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	2 NT	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
?			

1. *Has anybody made a mistake in the bidding yet?* Yes, West. With significant values in both of East's suits, and no defense, West should already have sacrificed at 5♣; better yet, 6♣.
2. *What's up with partner's double?* This is a Lightner double, to improve chances for setting the contract. It calls for an unusual lead, in this case, not ♠, ♥ or ♣. East must be void in diamonds. This double by a weak hand is not pure penalty, but asks West to do something sensible.
3. *What is your call?* When the opponents voluntarily bid game, they should have at least 24 HCP. Since you are looking at 8 HCP, the best you can hope for from East is two aces or an ace and a king, likely one in each long suit. While you can give partner one ruff, it's unlikely he can put you in to get a second. Four tricks are almost impossible. *Run! Run! Run!*
4. *If you pass, what do you lead?* Having ruled out two honor tricks plus two ruffs, you could try for three honor tricks and one ruff. Lead the ♥ Q or ♣ Q. You hope the king will appear in dummy, East has the ace, and you can regain or retain the lead to give East a ruff. If you hit the jackpot and two rounds survive in the suit you led, you are not out of the woods yet. If East has only a king in the other suit, a fourth trick may have to materialize out of thin air.

The alternative to this grim prospect is to give East a ruff, and hope East has something like AKxxx-T8xxx, either way. East will ruff the diamond and lead his king. You will deposit the queen on it, guaranteeing you can win the next round. East puts you in and gets the second ruff.

Sacrificing in clubs is by far the better plan. Look how well your cards fit with East's aggressive 2 NT bid!