

15. So Much for the Theory

By Ron Klinger

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT ⁽¹⁾	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Dble ⁽³⁾	2♦ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	Pass	3♣ ⁽⁵⁾	3♠ ⁽⁵⁾
3NT	?		

(1) 15-17 points

(2) Majors or minors or diamonds

(3) Values

(4) Pass or correct

(5) Natural

What would you do as North with:

♠ K75
♥ 103
♦ KQ10973
♣ 82

Conventional wisdom is not to sacrifice against 3NT. Either 3NT is failing or the cost of the sacrifice is too great. Is this different? What do you know about partner's hand? As North has shown a 1-suiter (6+ suit), South's 3♣ should include six spades. Having bid only 2♦, pass or correct, partner cannot be very strong, yet partner is prepared to compete at the 3-level and possibly incur a retreat to 4♦. Your move.

The deal comes from the Watermark Swiss Pairs at the North Shore Bridge Club Super Congress in 2018:

Round 5: Board 21

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K75	
	♥ 103	
	♦ KQ10973	
	♣ 82	
West		East
♠ A62		♠ 8
♥ A96		♥ 8754
♦ A852		♦ 4
♣ K65		♣ AQJ10974
	South	
	♠ QJ10943	
	♥ KQJ2	
	♦ J6	
	♣ 3	

As you can see, West has ten instant winners in 3NT for +630. Meanwhile, South has only one loser in each suit, -100 in 4♠ doubled, or -300 if the opponents find the diamond ruff.

Datum: E-W 460. Results: 3NT +630 x 7; 5♣ +600 x 15; 5♠ doubled -500 x 1, -300 x 2, -100 x 1; 4♠ doubled -100 x 1.

Both vulnerable, West opens 2♠ (weak 5 spades, 4+ minor). It goes Pass : Pass : 2NT, Pass : 3NT, all pass. West to lead from:

♠ J9763
♥ A4
♦ K3
♣ 10964

The opponents bid no-trumps after you have shown a specific suit. They are prepared for the lead of your suit. Theory says it can be better to try some other suit for which they might not be prepared. A red suit lead is much too risky, but you could try a club lead. Have you made up your mind?

The deal arose in the TBIB Swiss Teams at the 2018 North Shore BC Super Congress:

Round 4 : Board 7

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 10	
	♥ K7	
	♦ Q109872	
	♣ KJ85	
West		East
♠ J9763		♠ KQ2
♥ A4		♥ J9653
♦ K3		♦ J54
♣ 10964		♣ 32
	South	
	♠ A854	
	♥ Q1082	
	♦ A6	
	♣ AQ7	

A club lead allows, South to make ten tricks. A spade lead beats the contract. So much for theory. Of course, West would have been better off to pass initially. Then if the opponents reach 3NT, a spade lead figures to be the most attractive start.

As the cards lie, the game that cannot be defeated is 5♦. One route to 5♦ by North-South, with East-West passing throughout, is Pass : 1NT, 3♥ (0-1 spade) : 3♠ (do not want to play 3NT), 5♦ : Pass.

Datum: E-W 70. Results: 3NT x 34: -200 x 26, -100 x 4, +630 x 1, +660 x 3; 5♦ +600 x 3.

Tomorrow's Problems:

1. You are the dealer at favourable vulnerability. What is your plan of bidding with this hand?

♠ A87
♥ A8
♦ 106
♣ AK10863

2. You are vulnerable against not. East deals and passes. What is your plan of bidding as South with:

♠ Q6
♥ J5
♦ AQ10954
♣ KQ3

When they were sitting side by side at table he (Townsend) told her that he had known Walter Fane ever since he came to the Colony.

“We play bridge together. He’s far and away the best bridge player at the Club.”

She told Walter on the way home.

“That’s not saying very much, you know.”

“How does he play?”

“Not badly. He plays a winning hand very well, but when he has bad cards, he goes all to pieces.”

“Does he play as well as you?”

“I have no illusions about my play. I should describe myself as a very good player in the second class. Townsend thinks he is in the first. He isn’t.”

“Don’t you like him?”

“I neither like him nor dislike him. I believe he’s not bad at his job and everyone says he’s a good sportsman. He doesn’t very much interest me.” (from ‘The Painted Veil’, by Somerset Maugham)

