

133. Target practice

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♣	Pass	5♣	5♠
Pass	5NT	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ KJ10765
♥ 104
♦ AK1092
♣ --

A jump to 5NT after a trump suit has been agreed usually asks about the quality of the trump suit. Some play that this asks opener to bid seven if holding two of the top three trump honours. Others play that this jump asks partner to specify how many of the top three honours are held.

Can that apply here? Three reasons suggest that this is not the case: (1) This is not a jump to 5NT. (2) Spades have not been agreed as trumps (unless you think 5NT here implicitly agrees spades, and (3) To use 5NT, partner must know there are no losers outside the trump suit. That would give partner ♥A-K, a void in diamonds and first-round control in clubs. That would require North to hold ♠Q-x-x-x ♥A-K-Q-x-x-x-x ♦ --- ♣ A-x or something similar. Any such hand is not compatible with the pass over 3♣.

In that case, 5NT must mean something else. A sensible consideration would be that 5NT says, 'Pick a slam.' In that case South should bid 6♦. North can always convert to 6♠ if diamonds does not suit North.

The final of Alt-Invitational VI, organized by bid72, bridge 24 and netbridgeonline, together with BBO (Bridge Base Online), was between **BLASS** (Josef Blass, Jacek Kalita, Michael Nowosadzki, Jacek Pszczola, Fredrik Nystrom, Johan Upmark, Marcin Lesniewski) and **STREET** (Paul Street, Kamel Fergani, Nicolas L'Ecuyer, Ron Pachtman, Fred Pollack, Piotr Zatorski).

Board 3: Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 2	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ Q8654	
	♣ A987	
West		East
♠ Q83		♠ A94
♥ 9		♥ J876532
♦ J73		♦ --
♣ Q106542		♣ KJ3
	South	
	♠ KJ10765	
	♥ 104	
	♦ AK1092	
	♣ --	

Given South was good enough to bid 5♠ over 5♣, you can see why North was keen on slam. North's problem was which slam. North chose 5NT, hoping South would take it as 'pick a slam'. Had South bid 6♦ over 5NT, all would have been well, but **STREET's** South bid 6♠, all pass. I cannot tell what logic led South to that decision, but the choice was unsound. There was no layout of the spade suit which would allow South to lose only one trump trick. South lost a trick to the ♠Q and one to the ♠A, one down. East-West +100.

Board 3: Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 2	
	♥ AKQ	
	♦ Q8654	
	♣ A987	
West		East
♠ Q83		♠ A94
♥ 9		♥ J876532
♦ J73		♦ --
♣ Q106542		♣ KJ3
	South	
	♠ KJ10765	
	♥ 104	
	♦ AK1092	
	♣ --	

BLASS North-South:

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♦	4♥	5♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

(1) Cue-bid, club control, diamonds support

North's 3♦ is no thing of beauty, but it led to a happy ending for North-South. East led the ♣3. North won, drew trumps, cashed the hearts and then played the ♠2, four, king. After spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, declarer had 13 tricks, +1390 and 16 Imps to BLASS.

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♦
Pass	?	Pass	3♣

What would you do as North with:

♠ AJ10842
 ♥ 1064
 ♦ Q53
 ♣ 8

A good question to ask yourself at this stage is, 'Are you looking for game or for slam?'. Partner's jump shift to 3♣ shows 19+ points with 5+ diamonds and 4+ clubs. You have minimum support for diamonds and 7 HCP. That suggests game interest only.

If you support diamonds, partner could become excited and head for slam. How can you slow the auction down?

Board 10: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ10842	
	♥ 1064	
	♦ Q53	
	♣ 8	
West		East
♠ K7653		♠ Q9
♥ 8752		♥ KJ9
♦ 107		♦ J92
♣ 72		♣ QJ1063
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ AQ3	
	♦ AK864	
	♣ AK954	

BLASS North-South:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North's 3♠ was the path to take if you have only game interest. If partner supported spades, and hence would be short in hearts, there was a case to head for slam. If South had bid 4♣ rather than 3NT, North would then support the diamonds. When South rebid 3NT, North was content to play there. As it happens, 6♦ is a respectable slam, but North's decision to settle for game is certainly reasonable.

West led the ♥7. South made two hearts, five diamonds, the ♠A and two clubs, ten tricks, +630.

STREET North-South:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♦ ⁽²⁾
Pass	4♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	4♠ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	6♦ ⁽⁵⁾	All Pass	

- (1) Values in this suit
- (2) Asking for key cards in diamonds
- (3) One or four.
- (4) Do you have the ♦Q?
- (5) Yes, but no outside kings

For 6♦ to come home. South needs two out of three things to go well: diamonds 3-2 (68%), the ♥K onside (50%) and clubs to behave. The diamonds were 3-2 and the ♥K was onside, but the clubs were 5-2 and the hand that was shorter in diamonds was also short in clubs.

West led the ♥7: four – king – ace. Declarer cashed the ♠A and ruffed the ♣4 with the ♦3. After the ♥6 to the ♥A, South played the ♣5: ♦7 – ♦Q – ♣10. South cashed the ♠A, pitching the ♥3, ruffed the ♣2 and played the ♣9: ♦10 – ♠4 – ♣Q. West exited with the ♠K, ruffed by South, who played ♦A, ♦K, but had to lose a trump trick to East for one down. All would have been well if West had started with three or four diamonds. Then South's ♦A, ♦K would have cleared trumps and made the slam. That would have been +1370 and +12 Imps to North-South. As it was, East-West collected 100 and 12 Imps their way.

As the cards lay, South could have made 12 tricks. Can you see how?

	North	
	♠ AJ10842	
	♥ 1064	
	♦ Q53	
	♣ 8	
West		East
♠ K7653		♠ Q9
♥ 8752		♥ KJ9
♦ 107		♦ J92
♣ 72		♣ QJ1063
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ AQ3	
	♦ AK864	
	♣ AK954	

After ♥7: four – king – ace, the ♣A from South, the ♣4 trumped with the ♦3 and the ♥6 over to the ♥Q, these cards remained:

	North	
	♠ AJ10842	
	♥ 10	
	♦ Q5	
	♣	
West		East
♠ K7653		♠ Q9
♥ 85		♥ J
♦ 107		♦ J92
♣		♣ QJ10
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ 3	
	♦ AK864	
	♣ K95	

South now played the ♣5 and West ruffed in with the ♦7, over-ruffed in dummy with the ♦Q. That doomed the slam. It was unlucky for South, to be sure, but in the diagram above, South could have made the slam after West's ruff with the ♦7 by discarding dummy's ♥10. If West plays a spade, South takes the ♠A, discarding the ♣9, ruffs a spade, ruffs the ♥3 with the ♦5, cashes the ♦Q and plays a spade. Whether East ruffs or not, South makes the rest. The same result follows if West plays a heart or the ♦10 after winning with the ♦7.

[BLASS](#) won the final by 77.1-56 [62.1-1!, 5-30, 10-25].

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Artificial strong

(2) Negative or waiting

(3) Game-force, balanced or 5+ hearts

(4) 5+ points, 5+ clubs

(5) 5+ hearts

What would you do as North with:

♠ 6
♥ AKQ87
♦ K65
♣ AKQ6

2. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

North	
♠ 6	
♥ AKQ87	
♦ K65	
♣ AKQ6	
	East
	♠ AQJ83
	♥ 43
	♦ 10972
	♣ J9

After the auction above, 3NT was passed out. West leads the ♠2. Which spade would you play as East? Suppose your high card won trick 1. What do you play at trick 2?

3. With both sides vulnerable, partner deals and bids 1♠. Pass on your right. What would you do with:

♠ J9743
♥ 75
♦ 962
♣ A63

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

Advice for Seniors #7: Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it sure does muffle the sound.