

## 374. In shape

*By Ron Klinger*

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠ – fourth suit forcing
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ K54  
♥ K  
♦ K7653  
♣ AQ103

You have no more shape than promised, but you do have a spade stopper and your hand is better than a minimum opening. How can you convey that to partner. (*More later.*)

The deal arose in the quarter-final match between [FLEISHER](#) and [LAVAZZA](#) in the 2016 Vanderbilt (USA Knockout Open Teams):

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North			
♠ K54			
♥ K			
♦ K7653			
♣ AQ103			
West		East	
♠ 98732		♠ J106	
♥ A7		♥ J10984	
♦ Q82		♦ J94	
♣ 984		♣ 75	
South			
♠ AQ			
♥ Q6532			
♦ A10			
♣ KJ62			

For [WELLAND](#), the auction began 1♦ : 1NT (artificial, forcing to game). After a series of relays, North revealed a 3-1-5-4 pattern with extra values. South then checked on controls and bid 6♣ after the reply. With trumps 3-2 and diamonds 3-3, 6♣ was an easy make, North-South +1370.

With [LAVAZZA](#) North-South it went:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	2NT <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	4NT <sup>(4)</sup>
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Transfer to hearts

(2) Artificial, forcing, exactly 2-5-2-4 and an invitational hand

(3) Minimum

(4) Inviting slam

I am no fan of opening 1NT with a singleton even when it is a singleton king or a singleton ace. If no-trumps is the right spot, you will find it after your natural 1♦ opening. Meanwhile, when you open 1NT, partner expects a balanced hand and not the trick-taking potential of a shapely hand.

North could have bid 3♣ over 2♠. If it was a part-score hand, 3♣ figured to be safer than 2NT. If partner was strong, the club fit would have galvanized South into heading for 6♣. North might have bid 6♣ over 4NT.

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

		North	
		♠ K54	
		♥ K	
		♦ K7653	
		♣ AQ103	
West		East	
♠ 98732		♠ J106	
♥ A7		♥ J10984	
♦ Q82		♦ J94	
♣ 984		♣ 75	
		South	
		♠ AQ	
		♥ Q6532	
		♦ A10	
		♣ KJ62	

East led the ♥10 (underleading): two – seven – king. North played the ♦3 to the ♦10 and ♦Q. West shifted to a club and North made 4 clubs, 4 diamonds, 3 spades and the ♥K, +690, but –12 Imps. Given the strength in dummy, West might have known, after taking the ♦Q, that there was little more for the defence other than the ♥A. West could have cashed the ♥A and held North to 11 tricks. That would not have changed the score here, but it would be vital if playing a pairs' game.

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQ  
♥ Q6532  
♦ A10  
♣ KJ62

South's problem is that North's rebid has a wide range. It could be a minimum 11-12- point hand or a good hand up to 17-18 points. It could be 5-4 in the minors, but it might also be 5-5 or 6-5 or 1-3-5-4. Opposite a minimum with no heart fit, 3NT might be best. Opposite extra strength or extra shape, a slam is feasible.

South should rebid 2♠, fourth-suit forcing, to find out more about opener's hand. In reply, 3♦ is the default bid to deny extra shape and to deny a spade stopper. It could be 5 diamonds – 4 clubs or 6 diamonds – 4 clubs. A 3♣ rebid would show 5-5 or 6-5 in the minors. With extra strength and no spade stopper, North can raise the fourth suit, here 3♠. With a spade stopper, opener is expected to bid no-trumps.

In this auction, it is useful to distinguish between opener's rebid of 2NT or 3NT. The partnership can stipulate the difference. One option is to play 3NT as a minimum with spades well held and 2NT for all others, but with a spade stopper. This allows the fourth-suit bidder to clarify the hand. Here responder would rebid 3♣ over 2NT and that should lead the partnership to 6♣.

Another option would be to play 2NT as minimum 11-14 or 18+ and 3NT as 15-17. That approach would also have led to 6♣. It is certainly worthwhile for a partnership to sort out their agreements in this area.

In practice, it went 1♦ : 1♥, 2♣ : 2♠, 3♠ : 3NT, all pass.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

(1) Simple Stayman

(2) No 4+ major

What would you do as South with:

♠ AJ3  
♥ K2  
♦ KQ1062  
♣ Q104

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

*It would be a good idea to get rid of democracy. All in favour, raise your hand.*