

42. Three tales about no-trumps

By Ron Klinger

West	North	East	South
2♣ ⁽¹⁾	2♣	Pass	1NT
(1) Takeout, shows both majors			

What would you do as South with:

♠ K74
♥ AKJ3
♦ QJ107
♣ Q3

This deal comes from the 2019 Spingold (USA Knockout Open Teams) and was replayed in a match on BBO in early April:

South dealer : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ953	
	♥ 5	
	♦ 8643	
	♣ A109	
West		East
♠ A10862		♠ --
♥ Q1074		♥ 9862
♦ A		♦ K952
♣ K64		♣ J8752
	South	
	♠ K74	
	♥ AKJ3	
	♦ QJ107	
	♣ Q3	

In the auction given, what does North's 2♣ mean? Is it natural to play? Not attractive when West has shown spades and hearts. On the other hand, West's spades need not be strong, perhaps no more than K-x-x-x. Could North's 2♣ be showing a stopper and asking for a heart stopper? Or asking for a spade stopper? These are matters you might need to discuss and sort out with your partner(s) if you have not already done so.

Unsure of North's intentions, South bid 2NT and North bid 3NT. West led the ♥4: five – eight – jack. South played the ♠K, winning, and the ♠7, eight, nine, followed by the ♦3: two – queen – ace. West continued with a heart. South won, played another spade to the ♠Q and knocked out the ♦K. South made three spades, three hearts, two diamonds and a club, +600.

Double dummy, 3NT can be defeated. After South wins with the ♥J at trick 1 and plays the ♠K, West needs to take the ♠A and switch to a club. That is not easy. When declarer plays the ♣10 or ♣9 from dummy, East has to play low. That is also tough.

You cannot blame West for bidding, but note that if West keeps quiet, North-South figure to play in spades, which would be pleasant from West's perspective.

In the Spingold:

	North		
	♠ QJ953		
	♥ 5		
	♦ 8643		
	♣ A109		
West		East	
♠ A10862		♠ --	
♥ Q1074		♥ 9862	
♦ A		♦ K952	
♣ K64		♣ J8752	
	South		
	♠ K74		
	♥ AKJ3		
	♦ QJ107		
	♣ Q3		

West <i>Helness</i>	North <i>Driiver</i>	East <i>Martens</i>	South <i>Brink</i>
2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♥	1NT
Pass	2♠	All Pass	Pass

(1) Majors

East led the ♥8. Declarer made eight tricks, +110

At the other table:

West <i>Nowo'zki</i>	North <i>Gawrys</i>	East <i>Kalita</i>	South <i>Klukowski</i>
2♣ ⁽¹⁾	2♠	3♥	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	All Pass

(1) Majors

South led the ♥A. East went one down, -100, no swing.

East dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?	Pass	3NT ⁽³⁾

(1) 20-22

(2) Asking

(3) No 5-card major, no 4-card major

What would you do as North with:

♠ 86
♥ K94
♦ 1082
♣ AQ972

East dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 86	
	♥ K94	
	♦ 1082	
	♣ AQ972	
West		East
♠ Q95		♠ J10432
♥ AQ1053		♥ 72
♦ J		♦ 7654
♣ 6543		♣ 108
	South	
	♠ AK7	
	♥ J86	
	♦ AKQ93	
	♣ KJ	

In the auction given, North passed 3NT, the normal choice one would think, all pass. West led the ♥5: four – seven – eight. South cashed the ♦A and when the ♦J dropped, South continued with the ♣K, ♣J, ♦3 to the ♦10, three more clubs and 13 tricks in total, +720.

As the cards lie, North-South can make 6NT, 6♦ and 6♣. They are reasonable, but not marvelous slams. On a different layout, South could lose two heart tricks. Diamonds could be 4-1 or 5-0 (a 32% chance) and clubs could be 5-1 (a 14% chance).

In the Spingold, both tables began:

West	North	East	South
<i>Helness</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Martens</i>	<i>Brink</i>
<i>Nowo'zki</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Klukowski</i>
Pass	3♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass		Pass	3♥ ⁽³⁾

(1) 20-22

(2) Asking

(3) No 4-card major, no 5-card major

Bas Drijver (N) bid 3NT, all pass. South made 13 tricks, +720, on the ♥3 lead. Piotr Gawrys (N) knew that with no 4-card or 5-card major, South must have a 5-card minor or 4-4 in the minors. Over 3♥, he rebid 4♣. He expected South to cue-bid 4♥ or 4♠ if he had support for clubs. Michal Klukowski (S) bid 4♦ over 4♣ to show 5 diamonds. North bid 5NT, pick a slam, and South chose 6♦.

West led the ♦J. South made 12 tricks, +1370, +12 Imps.

That 2NT situation above was reminiscent of this layout, which came up during some practice on BBO in April:

East dealer : Both vulnerable

West	East
♠ AK85	♠ QJ10
♥ K6	♥ 73
♦ AQ64	♦ K9832
♣ AQ10	♣ K62

With North-South silent, it went Pass : 2NT (20-22-minus), 3NT, all pass. Twelve tricks were routine. East complained that West was really 22+ and should have bid opened 2♣ and over 2♦, rebid 2NT to show 23-24. What do you think?

Results were 6NT +1440 x 3, 6♣ +1430 x 1, 6♦ +1370 x 1, 3NT +690 x 10, 3NT +660 x 1.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	?

(1) Simple Stayman

What would you do as South with:

♠ 32
♥ K104
♦ 942
♣ KQJ63

2. South dealer : Nil vulnerable

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

What would you lead as West from:

♠ K102
♥ AQJ52
♦ 63
♣ Q62

Why not discuss the problems by phone with your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.