

# 97. Real men don't need stoppers

By Ron Klinger

You are the dealer at favourable vulnerability. What would you open with:

♠ AKQ10953  
♥ A102  
♦ 3  
♣ A7

Suppose you open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. What next?

There are two main groups of bridge players. In one group are those who want to give away as little information as possible, reach the final contract as quickly as possible and hope the opponents find the wrong lead or muff the defence because of the absence of information. Call them the 'bashers'. The second group is focused on finding the best contract, exchanging information with partner to that end and accepting that the opponents are listening in to their auction.

Today's problems contrast the bashers and the scientists. This arose in a teams' match on BBO:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ J2	
	♥ Q843	
	♦ J10	
	♣ KQ853	
West		East
♠ 86		♠ 74
♥ KJ97		♥ 65
♦ Q985		♦ AK7642
♣ J94		♣ 1062
	South	
	♠ AKQ10953	
	♥ A102	
	♦ 3	
	♣ A7	

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

South could see nine tricks for partner with seven spades (highly likely) and two aces. In fact, with clubs 3-3, there are thirteen tricks for North-South. The fly in the ointment is that the opponents have first lead. East began with the ♦6. West won with the ♦Q and returned the ♦9. East won with the ♦K and cashed the ♦A. West carefully unblocked the ♦8 and East could cash three more diamonds to take 3NT two down, North-South -100.

South was right in expecting his hand was worth nine tricks. As the 1NT response, 6-9 (10) points will usually provide 1-2 tricks, a jump-rebid of 4♠ is recommended.

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠ – 9 playing tricks in spades no second suit
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

2♣ was strong, 2♦ negative or waiting and 3♠ showed a 9-trick hand. North had one trick and some potential for more but settled for 4♠, lead: ♥9, 13 tricks, North-South +510 and +12 Imps.

♠ AKQ10953  
 ♥ A102  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ A7

Opening this hand with 1♠ runs considerable risk. There are many hands where partner might pass 1♠ but 4♣ can be made, such as:

♠ 876	or	♠ 876	or	♠ 87	or	♠ 64
♥ K53		♥ 4		♥ 543		♥ 7643
♦ 9842		♦ 98542		♦ A762		♦ 986
♣ 652		♣ 8652		♣ 652		♣ K542

Opening 2♣ and insisting on game, say, in 4♠, could come a cropper opposite many hands, such as:

♠ 876	or	♠ 42
♥ 843		♥ 876
♦ J762		♦ 864
♣ 654		♣ J8652

That is what makes the sequence 2♣ : 2♦ : 3♠ so attractive in showing a 9-playing trick hand. Partner passes with no trick and bids game with a trick or potential for a trick. After a positive reply to 2♣, there are good chances for a slam.

Playing standard methods, after 2♣ it would be reasonable to respond 3♣ with:

♠ J2  
 ♥ Q843  
 ♦ J10  
 ♣ KQ853

The suit quality of the clubs did not meet that standard required for 3♣ by the actual pair, but one would not condemn a 3♣ reply. South would then jump to 4♠ to show the 9-playing-trick hand. North might well pass that. As the cards lie, 6♣ makes easily, but it is not a great contract. You can play for either clubs 3-3 (a 36% chance, draw trumps, play clubs) or spades 2-2 (a 42% chance, play ♣A, ♣K, ruff a club high, ♠K, low spade to the ♠J). There are other possibilities if the defence starts with two rounds of diamonds: ruff, draw trumps, cash ♥A and play for clubs 3-3 or a squeeze if an opponent has the ♥K and 4+ clubs.

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 43  
 ♥ AKQ972  
 ♦ 103  
 ♣ A73

This arose in a match between two international teams:

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

	North		
	♠ AKJ86		
	♥ J85		
	♦ 85		
	♣ QJ9		
West		East	
♠ 92		♠ Q1075	
♥ 106		♥ 43	
♦ AKQJ72		♦ 964	
♣ 1086		♣ K542	
	South		
	♠ 43		
	♥ AKQ972		
	♦ 103		
	♣ A73		

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

West cashed six diamonds and 3NT was two down, North-South -100. South's very macho 3NT would have succeeded without a diamond lead. Even if West had led the fourth-highest diamond, 3NT was sunk. Note that West did not double 3NT. If you have their contract beaten, do not double, unless you can double any contract to which they might run. There was a vague possibility that South had ♦10-9-x-x-x, but it was more likely that South was having a 'bash' and might run to 4♠ or elsewhere if doubled.

After a simple overcall, some play that a change of suit is not forcing. In that case, South would need to jump to 3♥ to force. Others play that a 1-level advance is not forcing, but a 2-level or higher bid of a new suit is forcing. In that case, South could bid 2♥. Still others (include me) play that any change of suit after an overcall is forcing, except if it is by a passed hand.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West cashed two diamonds and switched to the ♠9. Declarer won, cashed ♥A, ♥K, crossed to the ♠K, ruffed a spade, crossed to the ♥J and played the ♣Q, winning. Next came the ♣J, king, ace. West still had the ♣10, but South had ten tricks, +420 and +11 Imps.

Today's deals went to the scientists 2-0.

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	?		

(1) Trial bid, seeking help in clubs

What would you do as North with:

♠ 107543  
♥ KJ6  
♦ J107  
♣ A7

2. Dealer South : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Game-force, 4+ hearts, 15 + points

(2) Minimum opening, no shortage

What would you do as North with:

♠ 93  
♥ AKQ1082  
♦ AJ76  
♣ 5

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

*What do you call panic-buying of sausage and cheese in Germany? The wurst-kase scenario.*