

129. Nervous system

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | ? |

What would you do as South with:

♠ 5
♥ A8
♦ 8653
♣ KQJ1072

In standard methods, you have a comfortable 2♣ response, followed by 3♣ after opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠ or 2NT. After a 2♦ rebid by opener you have to choose between 3♦ and 3♣. Those who play a 2-over-1 system, where a 2-level response is forcing to game, have to respond 1NT. The hand is not strong enough to force to game. The consequence is that a forcing 1NT response carries a very wide range, from (5) 6-12 points. Sometimes, that makes it tough to describe your values.

This deal arose in an international match:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ A10984 | |
| | ♥ KQ952 | |
| | ♦ -- | |
| | ♣ 854 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ KQ32 | | ♠ J76 |
| ♥ J106 | | ♥ 743 |
| ♦ QJ10742 | | ♦ AK9 |
| ♣ -- | | ♣ A963 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ 5 | |
| | ♥ A8 | |
| | ♦ 8653 | |
| | ♣ KQJ1072 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------|---------------------|-------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 2♣ ⁽¹⁾ |
| 2♦ | 2♥ | Dble ⁽²⁾ | 3♣ |
| 3♦ | 4♣ | Pass | 5♣ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) Natural, 4+ clubs, 10+ points, one-round force

(2) No information what this was. Maybe just values.

West led the ♦Q, ruffed. South played ♠A, spade ruff, diamond ruff, spade ruff, diamond ruff, heart to the ace and the ♣10. East took the ♣A and returned a heart, won by the ♥K. Declarer continued with the ♥Q and discarded the ♦8. South was left with ♣K-Q-J for 12 tricks, +620.

You might think that South was lucky that West was void in clubs, otherwise West might have led a club to the ♣A and a club return would eliminate two diamond ruffs. It is true that South is deprived of two diamond ruffs, but as the cards lie, South is still in good shape. Winning the second club, South ruffs a diamond, crosses to the ♥A and removes any missing trump. Declarer then continues hearts and with the 3-3 break, South again makes 12 tricks. If hearts were 4-2, South will still make 5♣, but not with an overtrick.

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| | | |
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| ♦ QJ10742 | | ♦ AK9 |
| ♣ -- | | ♣ A963 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ 5 | |
| | ♥ A8 | |
| | ♦ 8653 | |
| | ♣ KQJ1072 | |

At the other table:

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|--------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 1NT ⁽¹⁾ |
| Pass | 2♥ | Pass | 3♣ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) 6-12 points, forcing

West led the ♦Q. Declarer ruffed, crossed to the ♥A, ruffed a diamond, cashed ♠A, ruffed a diamond and played ♥K, ♥Q, discarding the fourth diamond and made 12 tricks for +170 but -10 Imps.

North might have raised 3♣ to 4♣, but from North's point of view, South could have 5 points or 7 or 9 or 11 points. That makes it hard for North to make the right decision. With length and strength in spades, Jodi Tutty of Canberra (West) made a good decision by not overcalling 2♦ over 1NT. Passing is often the best action.

Three points worth noting: (1) Both Norths opened 1♠. No place for the faint-hearted at the bridge table. (2) North-South have a good trump fit in clubs and despite having only 19 HCP, 5♣ will make most of the time. (3) North has 6 losers, South has 6 losers. 6 + 6 = 12 and via the LTC formula, 24 - 12 = 12 tricks are likely.

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 3♣ | ? | | |

What would you do as North with:

♠ AKJ65
♥ A9853
♦ J
♣ 82

You could bid 3♣ and hope to have a chance to show the hearts later. There are two downsides to this approach. Firstly, 3♣ might be passed out and you have missed a better fit in hearts. Secondly, partner raises 3♣ to 4♣ with three trumps, perhaps with ♠Q-x and again there could be a better fit in hearts.

If you have methods available, it almost always preferable to show a 2-suiter and find partner's preference than to bid just one of the suits. One method after a 3-level pre-empt is 'non-leaping Michaels'. After 3♣, you bid 4♣ = both majors (at least 5-5 is expected) - partner then chooses a major - and 4♦ = ♦s plus a major (at least 5-5), then 4♥ and 4♠ = pass or correct. A 4♠ bid then obviously cannot stand hearts, but asks partner to pass 4♠ or correct to 5♦ if holding the heart-diamond hand. Using these methods, you could bid 4♣, hearts + spades.

This deal comes from the same match:

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

| | | |
|----------|----------|------------|
| | North | |
| | ♠ AKJ65 | |
| | ♥ A9853 | |
| | ♦ J | |
| | ♣ 82 | |
| West | | East |
| ♠ 98 | | ♠ 43 |
| ♥ J6 | | ♥ 7 |
| ♦ 964 | | ♦ AK107532 |
| ♣ AK9763 | | ♣ Q105 |
| | South | |
| | ♠ Q1072 | |
| | ♥ KQ1042 | |
| | ♦ Q8 | |
| | ♣ J4 | |

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|---------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | Pass ⁽¹⁾ | Pass |
| 3♣ | 4♣ ⁽²⁾ | 4♦ ⁽³⁾ | 4♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) One would not crime a 3♦ opening.

(2) Majors

(3) Belatedly, a fit-showing non-jump

West led ♣A, ♣K and switched to the ♦9. East won and South had the rest, +420.

At the other table, with Jodi Tutty East and Dave Beauchamp West:

| | | | |
|------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | 3♦ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass |
| 4♦! | Dble | Pass | 4♥ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

(1) Better choice than Pass.

Note Beauchamp's 4♦ bid. It removed the 4♦ cue-bid and also the 4♣, clubs + major, option for North-South. It forced North into a takeout double with a risk of hearing 5♣. The play was the same, 10 tricks, +420, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. You are the dealer with both sides vulnerable. What would you do with:

♠ 8
♥ Q65
♦ K2
♣ KQ87532

2. With only North-South vulnerable, North passes. East opens a natural 1♦. What would you do as South with:

♠ 92
♥ A5
♦ 54
♣ AKQ10962

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

Advice for Seniors #3: You don't need anger management. You need people to stop annoying you.