162. To bid or not to bid

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South: Both vulnerable

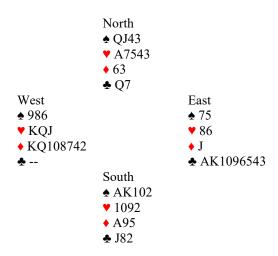
West	North	East	South 1NT ⁽¹⁾
3 ♦ ⁽²⁾	?		1111
(1) 12-14 p	ooints		
(2) Pre-em	ptive		

What would you do as North with:

♦ QJ43 **♥** A7543 **♦** 63 **♣** Q7

Today's deals arose in a BBO match in July.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable



Facing a weak 1NT opening, North with 9 HCP and an 8-loser hand, was never intending to bid game or even try for game if West had passed 1NT. It thus makes sense to pass 3. In the modern era, passing is antiquated and North doubled for takeout. East bid 4. and South bid 4. all pass.

West led the ♠Q, intended as suit-preference for clubs. South won and returned the ♠5, seven, six. East understood the message from trick 1 and ruffed. East cashed ♠K, ♠A, and played a third club, jack, ruffed by West and over-ruffed in dummy. South still had two hearts to lose, two down, East-West +200.

You can see why East, with eight clubs, elected to bid 4♣, in case North's takeout double was passed for penalties by South. In fact, 3♦ doubled should be one off, while 4♣ doubled would be two down.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♦	1♥	Pass	1NT
2♦	Dble ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass ⁽²⁾	

- (1) For takeout
- (2) East might have bid 3♣ here.

Lead: ◆J. Declarer took the ◆A and played the ♥A and another heart. Declarer lost 2 hearts, a diamond and 2 clubs, but had 8 tricks, +110 and +7 Imps.

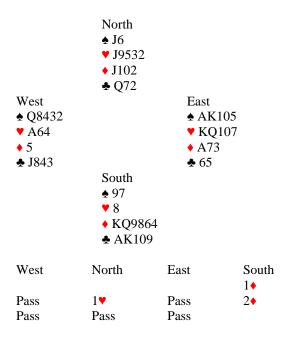
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West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	?		

What would do as North with:

North has only 5 HCP, which is below the 6 points normally expected for a 1-level reply. On the other hand, North has a 5-card suit and J-10-x in partner's suit. It is certainly reasonable to upgrade the hand to a 6-count and respond 1♥. A strong reason for responding 1♥ is that it is tougher for the opponents to compete after 1♦: Pass: 1♥ than after 1♦: Pass: Pass. So it proved on the actual deal:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable



East might have overcalled 1NT, but that was not free of risk with both opponents bidding. West led the $\clubsuit 3$. South lost 2 spades, a heart and a diamond, 9 tricks, North-South +110.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

West has only 7 HP, but with 5 spades, a singleton in diamonds and an 8-loser hand, 2♠ is certainly reasonable. North led the ◆J. Declarer took the ◆A, drew trumps and conceded two clubs, 11 tricks, +650 and +13 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South: Nil vulnerable

North

- **★** 1087
- **y** 94
- **♦** KJ75
- ♣ AQ82

South

- **♠** AJ6
- **▼** KQJ10753
- ♦ Q42
- ф --

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♠K. East plays the ♠9 (high-encouraging). Plan the play.

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

Puns about communism are not funny unless everyone gets them.