

331. The spirit of optimism is dying

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

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

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as North with

♠ 10432
♥ AQ1054
♦ 104
♣ J6

When one looks at the North hand, one might think, 'North has 7 HCP and so game is not a strong bet.' However, there are other things to consider besides HCP. There is a good chance for game if a major-suit fit exists. North: 8 losers: Expectation for South with 15-17 points: 6 losers. Applying the LTC formula: $8 + 6 = 14$ and $24 - 14 = 10$ tricks are likely (c. 80% probability) if North-South have a trump fit.

What if there is no trump fit? Applying Banzai Points (A = 5, K = 4, Q = 3, J = 2, 10 = 1) gives a good guide there. In BPs, you add 50% to HCP and so a 15-17 1NT opening translates into a 22-25 Banzai 1NT and 25/26 HCP for 3NT = 37-39 BPs. North has A = 5, Q = 3, J = 2, 10 = 1 x 3 = 13 BPs (adding 50% to HCP). In addition, using BPs you add 2 points for a 5-card suit and 3 points for a 5-card suit with 3+ honours. Here North can add 3 points for the heart length + quality. Total BPs: 16. Add to opener's 25-27 gives you a total of 41-43 BPs together. North should therefore insist on game via 2♦ transfer to 2♥, followed by 2♠ (game-force).'

That is not what happened when the deal arose in the [LAVAZZA](#) vs [SCHWARTZ](#) semi-final in the 2017 Spingold (USA K-O Open Teams):

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North		West	North	East	South
	♠ 10432		<i>Bianchedi</i>	<i>Danatov</i>	<i>Madala</i>	<i>Stamatov</i>
	♥ AQ1054		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>M. Bell</i>	<i>Duboin</i>
	♦ 104		Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
	♣ J6		Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾
West		East	Pass	2♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♠ ⁽³⁾
♠ AQ7		♠ K86	Pass	Pass	Pass	
♥ 976		♥ J32				
♦ 752		♦ QJ98				
♣ K1082		♣ 973				
	South					
	♠ J95					
	♥ K8					
	♦ AK63					
	♣ AQ54					

(1) No major
(2) Offer to play in 2♥
(3) Prefer spades to hearts

If 2♠ did not suit North, it was open to North to retreat to 2NT. It was apparently not an invitation to game, else South would have jumped to 3NT over 2♥. The auction by both North-South pairs sounds like rescue Stayman with a very weak hand.

Stamatov received the ♦2 lead: ten – jack – king. He played the ♠9: seven – two – king. A club now from East would hold South to nine tricks, but East returned the ♦Q. South won and continued with the ♠5: queen – three – six. West persisted with a third diamond, ruffed with dummy's ♠10. Next came the ♠4: eight – jack - ace. West exited with the ♣2, won by the ♣J and when hearts were 3-3, declarer had 10 tricks, +170. The only losers were the three spades.

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 10432	
	♥ AQ1054	
	♦ 104	
	♣ J6	
West		East
♠ AQ7		♠ K86
♥ 976		♥ J32
♦ 752		♦ QJ98
♣ K1082		♣ 973
	South	
	♠ J95	
	♥ K8	
	♦ AK63	
	♣ AQ54	

Duboin, South in 2♠, also received the ♦2 lead: four – eight – king. He played the ♣4: eight (a losing move for second-hand-low) – jack – three, followed by the ♥4 to the ♥K, ♥8 to the ♥A, ♦10 to the ♦K and the ♦3, ruffed in dummy. After ♣6 to the ♣A, South continued with the ♦6. West ruffed with the ♠Q and played the ♠A and ♠7. South also lost just three trump tricks, +170, no swing.

When the deal was replayed on BBO:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠ ⁽³⁾	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 15-17 points

(2) Transfer to hearts

(3) 5+ hearts, 4 spades, game-force

West led the ♣2: jack – nine – four. Avi Kanetkar (S) played the 2♠ : six – nine – queen. West shifted to the ♥9: four – two – king. With the hearts 3-3, South had 9 tricks, but South was not to know that, particularly with West's switch to the ♥9. South continued with the ♠J: seven – three – king and East returned the ♣7. South took the ♣A and persisted with a third spade, taken by West with the ♠A.

West should now have cashed the ♣K. That would have held South to 9 tricks. West was hoping that East had the ♦A and South ♦K-Q-J-x and so West played the ♦7. South won and when the hearts behaved, South emerged with 10 tricks. It was improbable that South's diamonds were K-Q-J-x. With that, South would have tackled diamonds early, not embarked on the spades with such a weak holding.

O'Malley: Who might this honey-tongued young man be, Mr. Perkins?

Perkins: Richard has applied for the post of footman here.

O'Malley: Do you play bridge?

Richard: I beg your pardon?

Perkins: It's a sine qua non with Mrs. O'Malley that a footman should play bridge.

Richard: Oh, I would find life very dull without my bridge, Mrs. O'Malley.

O'Malley: Good. Do you play low club discard?

Richard: I most certainly do.

O'Malley, to Perkins: Take him. I'll take responsibility. You take Richard. (to Richard) Young man, you are engaged, but remember this: the first time you trump an ace of mine, you fire yourself.

Richard: Mrs. O'Malley, the first time I trump an ace of yours, I shoot myself.

O'Malley: Good

(An early scene in the movie, *Spring in Park Lane*, 1948)

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

North

♠ 652

♥ 652

♦ AJ64

♣ 1032

East

♠ KJ8743

♥ K4

♦ 102

♣ 654

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

(1) Weak two

(2) Still for takeout

West leads the ♠Q: two – three (low-like) – ace. South plays the ♦K : three – four – two and the ♦7: five – jack – ten. Next comes the ♦A. What do you play on that as East?

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

Two silkworms had a race. They ended up in a tie.