

340. Too hearty

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1NT(1)	Pass	?	

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as East with:

♠ AKQ6
♥ 4
♦ Q97
♣ Q9754

Standard bidders would take the straightforward route, 1NT : 2♣ and bid 4♠ if partner shows four spades and 3NT otherwise. One could transfer to clubs and then show the spades. Introducing a minor suit in a game-forcing auction usually suggests slam interest. The East hand is borderline for that action.

An attractive option, played by some, is to use 3-level splinters over 1NT. They would bid 1NT : 3♥ here to show 0-1 heart and normally a 3-suited hand, sometimes with a long minor suit. The splinter denies a 5+ major. The common shape for 1NT : 3♥ would be 4-1-4-4 or a 4-1-5-3 / 4-1-3-5/4-0-4-5/4-0-5-4. The splinter allows you to avoid 3NT if there is no major-suit fit and opener's holding in responder's short suit is not strong enough for 3NT.

The deal arose in the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) semi-final match between [DIAMOND](#) and [MITTELMAN](#).

Board 43: Dealer West : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 85	
	♥ 82	
	♦ J108643	
	♣ J86	
West		East
♠ 942		♠ AKQ6
♥ K95		♥ 4
♦ AK5		♦ Q97
♣ AK32		♣ Q9754
	South	
	♠ J1073	
	♥ AQJ10763	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 10	

At one table, with [MITTELMAN](#) East-West, it went 1NT : Pass : 2♣ : 3♥, Pass : Pass : 3♠ (4 spades) : Pass, 3NT, all pass. North led ♥8: four – ten – king. Declarer had 5 clubs, 3 diamonds, 1 heart, 3 spades on top and collected the 13th trick when South was squeezed in hearts and spades, E-W+720.

Yesterday's problem:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

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

(1) 15-17 points
(2) 3-suiter, 4-spades, 0-1 heart

What would you do with the South hand?

Board 43: Dealer West : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 85	
	♥ 82	
	♦ J108643	
	♣ J86	
West		East
♠ 942		♠ AKQ6
♥ K95		♥ 4
♦ AK5		♦ Q97
♣ AK32		♣ Q9754
	South	
	♠ J1073	
	♥ AQJ10763	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 10	

At the other table, MITTELMAN North-South:

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

(1) 15-17 points
(2) 3-suiter, 4-spades, 0-1 heart

You can see South's point of view, very strong hearts and freakish shape. However, the price proved too high. For a heart lead against 3NT or 4♠, South could have doubled 3♥.

West led the ♣A: six – four (encouraging) – 10 and the ♣2, South ruffed and played ♠J: two – five – queen. East switched to the ♥4: jack – king – two and West returned the ♥9. Declarer lost a heart, a diamond, a club and four spades to go four light, –1100 and 9 Imps to [DIAMOND](#).

As the cards lie, if South plays the ♠3 at trick 3 instead of the ♠J, South can hold the loss to three down. If West takes the ♠9, South will manage a spade ruff in dummy. If West plays low, South can later play ♠J and ♠10 and the ♠7 becomes a winner.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		

(1) 15-17 points

What would you do as North with:

♠ J104
♥ J
♦ KJ2
♣ KJ8542

Would it make a difference to your answer if West had doubled 1NT to show a 1-suited hand?

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

Why do they call them 'stands' when they are meant for sitting?