

345. Heading in the wrong direction

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

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

What would you do as South with:

♠ KQ3
♥ QJ7
♦ QJ9
♣ A853

After you have made up your mind, consider this problem.

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | Pass | 1♦ | Dble |
| Pass | 2♦ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ | Pass | ? |

(1) Maximum pass, unsure of the best spot

What would you do now with the South hand?

The deal comes from the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) semi-final match between [LAVAZZA](#) and [SCHWARTZ](#).

Bd. 57: Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

| | | | |
|---------|--|----------|--|
| North | | East | |
| ♠ A862 | | ♠ J94 | |
| ♥ A1054 | | ♥ 96 | |
| ♦ 106 | | ♦ AK8752 | |
| ♣ Q62 | | ♣ J10 | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ 1075 | | ♠ J94 | |
| ♥ K832 | | ♥ 96 | |
| ♦ 43 | | ♦ AK8752 | |
| ♣ K974 | | ♣ J10 | |
| South | | | |
| ♠ KQ3 | | | |
| ♥ QJ7 | | | |
| ♦ QJ9 | | | |
| ♣ A853 | | | |

[LAVAZZA](#) North-South:

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | Pass | 1♦ | 1NT |
| Pass | 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ ⁽¹⁾ |
| Pass | 3NT | All Pass | |

(1) No major

The 1NT overcall is the natural action for South: 15 points, balanced hand and a stopper in opener's suit. West led the ♥2: four – nine – jack. South returned the ♥Q, king, ace. After ♠2 to the ♠K, South played the ♥7: three – five – ♦2. South shifted to the ♦9 and East let that win. South now cashed ♠Q, ♠A, ♠8, ♥10 and ♣A for ten tricks, +430. Via the heart finesse, South still makes 3NT if West leads the ♦4 and East ducks.

Bd. 57: Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

| | |
|---------|----------|
| North | |
| ♠ A862 | |
| ♥ A1054 | |
| ♦ 106 | |
| ♣ Q62 | |
| West | East |
| ♠ 1075 | ♠ J94 |
| ♥ K832 | ♥ 96 |
| ♦ 43 | ♦ AK8752 |
| ♣ K974 | ♣ J10 |
| South | |
| ♠ KQ3 | |
| ♥ QJ7 | |
| ♦ QJ9 | |
| ♣ A853 | |

SCHWARTZ North-South:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------------------|----------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♦ | Dble |
| Pass | 2♦ ⁽¹⁾ | Pass | 2♥ |
| Pass | 3♥ | All Pass | |

(1) Maximum pass, unsure of the best spot

South's pass was quite a surprise. Partner shows a maximum pass and you have 15 HCP. One would expect South to commit to game with those values. A rebid of 3NT looks suitable. It may or may not make, but the strength is there for game.

West led the ♦4. East won with the ♦K and switched to the ♠J. South took the ♣A and played the ♥Q, winning, and the ♥J winning. Then came the ♥7: eight – ten – ♦2 and the ♥A to draw the missing trump. South had 10 tricks, losing 2 diamonds and a club. That was +170, but –6 Imps.

This was yesterday's problem:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 2♦ ⁽¹⁾ | ? |

(1) 6 diamonds, 6-10 points

What would you do with the South hand?

This arose in a replay on BBO. I held the South hand and should have bid 2NT (15-18, balanced, stopper in diamonds). That would have taken us to a successful 3NT, but I chose to double for takeout. Partner bid 4♦, pick a major, and I opted for 4♠, the stronger holding.

West led the ♦4. East won with the ♦K, cashed the ♦A and played a third diamond, queen, and West ruffed with the ♠10. Whether I over-ruffed or discarded a club, there were two more losers, one light and –50. Simple advice: If the hand fits a no-trump bid, that is usually the best choice.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Pairs: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North

♠ J52

♥ 9653

♦ A87

♣ K105

South

♠ KQ10964

♥ K2

♦ K3

♣ J84

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|------|-------|------|-------|

| | | | |
|--|--|----|----|
| | | 1♣ | 1♠ |
|--|--|----|----|

| | | | |
|---------------------|----|----|----|
| Dble ⁽¹⁾ | 2♠ | 3♦ | 3♠ |
|---------------------|----|----|----|

| | | | |
|------|------|------|--|
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
|------|------|------|--|

(1) 4+ hearts

West leads the ♣9. What do you make of the lead?

What is your plan of play (a) against weak opponents? (b) against strong opponents?

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

The guy who invented throat lozenges died last week. There was no coffin at his funeral.