

353. Limitations

By Ron Klinger

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Natural, not forcing

Playing pairs, what would you do as South with:

♠ 854
♥ KQ862
♦ K96
♣ Q9

This should not be a tough problem. South has shown a minimum opening and 3+ hearts with the 3♥ bid. You have 10 HCP plus 1 point for the doubleton. Total 11 points. Opposite 12-13 points, you do not have enough for game. Even opposite 14 points, the combined total is not 26 points. You should pass 3♥.

If you are a Losing Trick Count aficionado, you should come to the same result. South's minimum opening should show a 7-loser hand. You have 8 losers, the number expected for a minimum 2-over-1 response. Your 8 + partner's 7 = 15 and 24 – 15 = 9 tricks expected on normal breaks. As you have shown an 8-loser hand, if partner had heart support and a 6-loser hand (8 + 6 = 14 and 24 – 14 = 10 tricks expected), partner should have jumped to 4♥.

The deal arose in a pairs event on BBO:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North	
♠	AK932
♥	A754
♦	2
♣	643

West	East
♠ Q7	♠ J106
♥ J1093	♥ --
♦ J10543	♦ AQ87
♣ 105	♣ AKJ872

South
♠ 854
♥ KQ862
♦ K96
♣ Q9

There were 4 pairs in 4♥. Three were –200 (20%) and one was –300 (0%). One played in 3♥, –100 (N-S 70%). It was only the 10% 4-0 trump break that led to the defeat of 3♥. Had hearts been 2-2 or 3-1, South loses only a spade, a diamond and two clubs. That would allow 3♥ to make and 4♥ would still fail.

Curiously, a number of Norths did not open the bidding. Using the Bergen test: if HCP + 2 longest suits = 20+, you can open in first or second seat, the North hand totals 20 and should open 1♠. Using the extended test: if HCP + 2 longest suits + quick tricks = 22+ (some use 21½+), the North hand qualifies easily via 10 (HCP) + 9 (cards in the two longest suits) + 3 (quick tricks), total 23.

At some tables it began:

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

(1) 2♠ is preferable to the takeout double

With 10 HCP, a doubleton and an 8-loser hand, South is too strong for 2♠. South could bid 2♥ and pass a 2♠ rebid or, in the actual case, pass a raise to 3♥. Another choice for South would be 3♣, a limit raise to 3♠. North would bid 3♠ and South should pass that.

At some tables it went:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

South might well have bid 3♥ over 3♣ to give North a choice of 3♥ or 3♠. There were 6 pairs in 3♠, –100 x 5 and –200 once. One was in 4♠ –200 after Pass : 1♠ : Dble : 2♠, Pass : Pass, 3♣ : Pass : Pass : 4♠?, all pass.

At the table where 3♠ went two down, the auction had been:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Dble	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

East began with ♣K, ♣A, ♦A and a third club, ruffed with the ♠4 and over-ruffed with the ♠7. West switched to a heart. East ruffed and played another club, ruffed with the ♠Q and over-ruffed with the ♠K. The effect was to promote another trump trick for East's remaining ♠J-10. The defence took 3 spade tricks, plus the 3 winners in the minors. Declarer could have held it to one down by ruffing the third club with dummy's ♠8.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
3♠	Pass	4♠	?

Playing pairs, what would you do as South with:

♠ 7
♥ AQJ10543
♦ Q964
♣ A

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

British Military Annual Staff Appraisals: He has a room-temperature IQ.