

# 366. Take the strain

*By Ron Klinger*

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT – 15-17
Pass	2♦ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

(1) Transfer to hearts

What would you do as South with:

♠ AKQ3  
♥ K43  
♦ K93  
♣ Q72

- (a) If you are playing teams?  
(b) If you are playing pairs?

A 5-3-3-2 pattern facing a 4-3-3-3 will usually make as many tricks in no-trumps as in the 5-3 fit. Here you have a 4-3-3-3 and partner has shown 5 hearts. Partner might have a 5-3-3-2 pattern, but of course, partner could have different patterns perhaps 2-5-4-2 or even 3-5-4-1 with a hand that does not justify introducing the minor suit, as that would suggest slam potential.

At teams, the safer path is to remove 3NT to 4♥. It would look silly to bid 3NT and lose the first five club tricks when partner has a low doubleton club, while 4♥ is an easy make.

At pairs, it is worth taking the chance and passing 3NT. After all, why can't partner have 3 or even 4 clubs. You should not always look at the worst scenario.

The deal arose in a club pairs' duplicate. One South did very well by choosing to pass 3NT.

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

North	
♠ --	
♥ J10875	
♦ AQ108	
♣ KJ86	
West	East
♠ J7652	♠ 10984
♥ A62	♥ Q9
♦ J62	♦ 754
♣ 94	♣ A1053
South	
♠ AKQ3	
♥ K43	
♦ K93	
♣ Q72	

Look at the North hand. You can see why one cannot be sure that partner has a 5-3-3-2 pattern. With the actual cards, both 4♥ and 3NT will succeed. Half the field was in 3NT. Making only 9 tricks was a bottom score. Making 10 tricks, +630, scored 64% and 11 tricks, +660, was a top for North-South. The other half of the field played in 4♥. Most made just 10 tricks, +420, a shared second-bottom for 29%. Making 11 tricks, +650, was second best, 85%.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥ – 5+ hearts

2♠<sup>(1)</sup> ?

(1) Weak jump-overcall

What would you do as North with:

♠ AQ2  
♥ K82  
♦ A92  
♣ 10754

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

*I hate this snow . . . no wait . . .*

*I love this this snow . . .*

*(signed) Bi-Polar Bear*