

367. Strain decision

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥ – 5+ hearts
2♠ ⁽¹⁾	3NT	Pass	?

(1) Weak jump-overcall

What would you do as South with:

♠ --
♥ AJ109654
♦ Q76
♣ AJ6

Partner has the spades stopped, but how good is the stopper? For 3NT, partner should also have a couple of hearts. That should make a 4♥ rebid a standout.

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥ – 5+ hearts
2♠ ⁽¹⁾	?		

(1) Weak jump-overcall

What would you do as North with:

♠ AQ2
♥ K82
♦ A92
♣ 10754

The basic choice is whether you jump to 3NT or whether you show a good hand with heart support. For many pairs, a jump to 4♥ would show a shapely hand with 4+ trumps and perhaps a shortage somewhere. When you have a hand that is worth game based on high-card strength, you can bid 3♠ to show that holding. If minimum, opener can bid 4♥ or cue-bid but not bid beyond game. With extras, opener should cue bid and decide whether to head for slam after responder's next bid.

It was mentioned in yesterday's column that 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 a double stopper in spades. That makes 3NT attractive. Partner can always run to hearts or bid another suit if 3NT does not appeal.

It is true that the club suit is a worry, but if partner is 5-3-3-2, it is unlikely that the opposition can run five club tricks. In any event, given the bidding, East would be highly likely to lead a spade. Of course, this will all become academic if the final contract is not in no-trumps.

The deal arose in the quarter-final match between [FLEISHER](#) and [LAVAZZA](#) in the Vanderbilt (USA Knockout Open Teams):

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AQ2	
	♥ K82	
	♦ A92	
	♣ 10754	
West		East
♠ 9876543		♠ KJ10
♥ 3		♥ Q7
♦ J103		♦ K854
♣ K3		♣ Q982
	South	
	♠ --	
	♥ AJ109654	
	♦ Q76	
	♣ AJ6	

FLEISHER North-South:

West	North	East	South
<i>Bocchi</i>	<i>Welland</i>	<i>Brenner</i>	<i>Auken</i>
		1♣ ⁽¹⁾	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	5♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Not a universal choice, but prompted by the vulnerability

West's 4♠, after passing on the previous round, showed spade length but not a good hand. It was aimed at a sacrifice against 4♥. Note North's fine pass over 4♠ rather than doubling for penalties. As the cards lie, West in 4♠ doubled could lose a spade, a heart, two diamonds and a club, a very nice -300 instead of -620 or more if South were allowed to play in 4♥.

North's pass over 4♠ was forcing and asked South to choose between doubling for penalties or bidding on to 5♥. The void in spades made the decision to bid 5♥ easy.

West led the ♦J: two - king - six. East switched to the ♣2. South rose with the ♣A, played the ♥J: three - king - seven, discarded a club on the ♠A, drew the last trump and had 11 tricks, North-South +650.

LAVAZZA North-South:

West	North	East	South
<i>Grue</i>	<i>Bianchedi</i>	<i>Moss</i>	<i>Madala</i>
		1♦	4♥
4♠	4NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	5♣ ⁽²⁾
Pass	6♥	All Pass	

(1) Slam interest

(2) Cue-bid

West led the ♦10, underleading, low, king. East switched to the ♣2: six - king - four., one down - 100 and 13 Imps away.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, South passed North's 3NT after the auction at the top of page 1. East led the ♠K (reporting, not recommending). North won, cashed the ♥K and played a low diamond. East rose with the ♦K and North claimed 12 tricks, +690.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North

♠ 974

♥ AJ72

♦ QJ1086

♣ 9

South

♠ AQ83

♥ K5

♦ AK742

♣ 86

West	North	East	South
			1♣ ⁽¹⁾
1♥	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Dble ⁽³⁾	3♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

(1) Artificial, strong

(2) Shows 5+ diamonds

(3) Shows clubs

West leads the ♥4: jack – six – five. Plan the play. Diamonds are 2-1.

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

Life and beer are very similar . . . Chill for best results.