

380. Swing low

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1NT	Pass	2♣	3♣
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ KQ7
♥ AQ8
♦ A85
♣ J1075

You are not forced to bid and you have decent defence against 3♣. You could double for penalties as long as partner takes it as penalties and not for takeout. If you have any doubts about that, you should pass. If partner has a decent hand, partner can double for takeout and you can then pass for penalties. If partner has a modest hand and passes 3♣, you might not have more than four tricks in your own hand.

This was yesterday's puzzle:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1NT	Pass	2♣	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 52
♥ 74
♦ K9
♣ AKQ9832

After your 1♣ opening, West overcalled 1NT. If West is a sound bidder, West will have a stopper in clubs, at least ♣J-x-x-x. With the strength for a 1NT overcall and no club stopper, West could / would / should have made a takeout double. If West has a club stopper, your club suit is worth 6 tricks at best – West might have five clubs, ♣J-10-x-x-x and then you have only five club tricks. Your ♦K is not a sure trick either and you should not be venturing to the 3-level. That is not safe territory. Why not simply double 2♣? That asks partner to lead a club if West becomes declarer, which is likely. Doubling 2♣ is cheaper and much safer than a 3♣ bid.

This was the East hand:

♠ 10963
♥ K1093
♦ Q10742
♣ --

After a 1NT opening, the East hand is tailor-made for a 2♣ Stayman response. This is often called 'Rescue Stayman' and is commonly used with a weak hand and a 4-4-4-1 pattern, short in clubs, or this pattern. Playing Simple Stayman, partner's reply might be 2♠ or 2♥ or 2♦. No matter which it is, you will pass. This hand is quite good for Rescue Stayman. East might have the same pattern with no HCP.

It is riskier to bid 2♣ if you play some form of Extended Stayman. With a maximum, partner might take you too high. Given the actual strength of the East hand, you might be prepared to take the risk.

The deal comes from a game on BBO:

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ84	
	♥ J652	
	♦ J63	
	♣ 64	
West		East
♠ KQ7		♠ 10963
♥ AQ8		♥ K1093
♦ A85		♦ Q10742
♣ J1075		♣ --
	South	
	♠ 52	
	♥ 74	
	♦ K9	
	♣ AKQ9832	

Against 3♣, West's natural lead is a spade. Declarer would duck that and can hold the losers to a spade, two hearts, a diamond and a club, via a spade finesse later if necessary. Even if West begins with ♠K, winning and switches to ♥A and ♥8 to the king and East shifts to a low diamond, South will not mis-guess that. South plays low and East-West make only five tricks. That is why doubling 3♣ is dangerous. Swap the ♥K and the ♥J and South can make 3♣.

There were nine Souths in 3♣. One was two down, -4 Imps, five were one down -2.5 Imps and three made it, +1.7 Imps.

At three tables, the auction went this way:

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

North led the ♣6. South took three club tricks, dummy discarding 2 spades and a the ♦2. When South switched to the ♠5, king, ace, North continued with the ♠J. Each West went three down, -150 for -2.7 Imps and a good learning experience.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Dble	1♠
2♥	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AKQ7
♥ J1096
♦ 6
♣ A1062

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

They say that St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland. Wouldn't it be great if he could do it for politics.