

162. To bid or not to bid

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
3♦ ⁽²⁾	?		1NT ⁽¹⁾

(1) 12-14 points
(2) Pre-emptive

What would you do as North with:

♠ QJ43
♥ A7543
♦ 63
♣ Q7

Today's deals arose in a BBO match in July.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ 986	♠ QJ43	♠ 75	♠ AK102
♥ KQJ	♥ A7543	♥ 86	♥ 1092
♦ KQ108742	♦ 63	♦ J	♦ A95
♣ --	♣ Q7	♣ AK1096543	♣ J82

Facing a weak 1NT opening, North with 9 HCP and an 8-loser hand, was never intending to bid game or even try for game if West had passed 1NT. It thus makes sense to pass 3♦. In the modern era, passing is antiquated and North doubled for takeout. East bid 4♣ and South bid 4♠, all pass.

West led the ♦Q, intended as suit-preference for clubs. South won and returned the ♦5, seven, six. East understood the message from trick 1 and ruffed. East cashed ♣K, ♣A, and played a third club, jack, ruffed by West and over-ruffed in dummy. South still had two hearts to lose, two down, East-West +200.

You can see why East, with eight clubs, elected to bid 4♣, in case North's takeout double was passed for penalties by South. In fact, 3♦ doubled should be one off, while 4♣ doubled would be two down.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	Pass	1♣
2♦	Dble ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass ⁽²⁾	2♥

(1) For takeout

(2) East might have bid 3♣ here.

Lead: ♦J. Declarer took the ♦A and played the ♥A and another heart. Declarer lost 2 hearts, a diamond and 2 clubs, but had 8 tricks, +110 and +7 Imps.

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?		1♦

What would do as North with:

♠ J6
♥ J9532
♦ J102
♣ Q72

North has only 5 HCP, which is below the 6 points normally expected for a 1-level reply. On the other hand, North has a 5-card suit and J-10-x in partner's suit. It is certainly reasonable to upgrade the hand to a 6-count and respond 1♥. A strong reason for responding 1♥ is that it is tougher for the opponents to compete after 1♥ : Pass : 1♥ than after 1♦ : Pass : Pass : Pass. So it proved on the actual deal:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

	North		
	♠ J6		
	♥ J9532		
	♦ J102		
	♣ Q72		
West		East	
♠ Q8432		♠ AK105	
♥ A64		♥ KQ107	
♦ 5		♦ A73	
♣ J843		♣ 65	
	South		
	♠ 97		
	♥ 8		
	♦ KQ9864		
	♣ AK109		
West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East might have overcalled 1NT, but that was not free of risk with both opponents bidding. West led the ♠3. South lost 2 spades, a heart and a diamond, 9 tricks, North-South +110.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

West has only 7 HP, but with 5 spades, a singleton in diamonds and an 8-loser hand, 2♠ is certainly reasonable. North led the ♦J. Declarer took the ♦A, drew trumps and conceded two clubs, 11 tricks, +650 and +13 Imps.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ 1087
♥ 94
♦ KJ75
♣ AQ82

South
♠ AJ6
♥ KQJ10753
♦ Q42
♣ --

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♠K. East plays the ♠9 (high-encouraging). Plan the play.

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

Puns about communism are not funny unless everyone gets them.