293. Small sacrifice

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North: East-West vulnerable

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West North East South 1♠ ?
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What would you do as East with:

- **♦** AK1042
- ♥ A1084
- ♦ A94
- **♣** 9

Suppose you have decided to pass. South responds 1NT, Pass: Pass, back to you. What would you do now?

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer North: East-West vulnerable

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West North East South
1♠ Pass ?
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What would you do as South with:

- **♣** J **♥** --**♦** O108762
- ♣ K86532

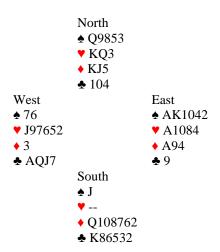
If you had a weak jump shift available, you could try 3♣ or 3♠, but that is not in the repertoire for most pairs. You could pass, but you might easily miss a game in one of the minors. The recommended action is a 1NT response, showing 6-9 points (pray partner can find a rebid) or 6-12 points if you play 1NT forcing.

Board 3: Dealer North: East-West vulnerable

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North
          ♦ Q9853
          ♥ KQ3
          ♦ KJ5
          ♣ 104
West
                       East
                       ♦ AK1042
★ 76
♥ J97652
                       ♥ A1084
♦ 3
                       ♦ A94
♣ AQJ7
                       ♣ 9
          South
          ♠ J
          Y --
          ◆ Q108762
          ♣ K86532
```

In one match, it went 1♠: Pass: 1NT, all pass, at both tables. At one table, West led the ♥6, king, ace. East returned the ♥10, won by the ♥Q. North played the ♦K (the ♦J might have saved a trick), taken by the ♦A. East continued hearts and South came down to ♠J, ♠K-8 and five diamonds. West switched to the ♠7. East cashed ♠K, ♠A, followed by the ♣9, giving West the last four tricks and East-West +300. It is not often you go six down in a freely-bid contract.

Board 3: Dealer North: East-West vulnerable



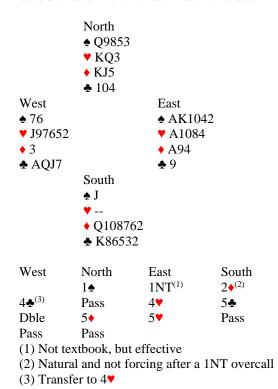
At the other table, the play began the same way: West led the \checkmark 6, king, ace. East returned the \checkmark 10, won by the \checkmark Q. North also played \checkmark K at trick 3. When East captured the \checkmark K, East cashed the \checkmark K and \checkmark A before proceeding with the hearts. Now West was on lead and South's \checkmark K was safe from attack. Declarer lost 2 spades, 5 hearts, the \checkmark A and \checkmark A, three down -150, but +4 Imps.

I can almost hear you saying, "See. North-South failed badly in 1NT. If only North-South had been playing twoover-one with a forcing 1NT, North would have rebid 2♦ and North-South would be in a comfortable spot, as 2♦ will make easily."

Just wait a moment before you become too enamoured with that idea. Whether 1NT goes down six or three, it is a great result for North-South. Look at what East-West can make. Double dummy, 6♥ is available. That is not a contract likely to be reached, but certainly 4♥ is feasible. Failing in 1NT is a small sacrifice in comparison.

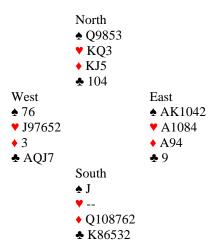
If the bidding had started $1 \ge 2$: Pass: 1NT: Pass, $2 \ge 2$ it might suddenly rouse the opponents into action. Indeed, in the other match, both sides played in $5 \le 2$. It was doubled at one table.

Board 3: Dealer North: East-West vulnerable



I have grudging admiration for Nye Griffiths' 1NT overcall as East. I am not sure that I would have found that bid, but it certainly worked well. South led the ♠J. East won, cashed ♥A and made 11 tricks in comfort, +650. Note also Pele Rankin's excellent pass as North after 5♥: Pass: Pass.

Board 3: Dealer North: East-West vulnerable



At the other table:

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West North East South 1 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} Pass 1 \text{NT} Pass Pass 2 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} !? 4 \text{NT}^{(1)} 5 Dble All Pass (1) Pick a minor
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South led the ΔJ . East won , cashed the ∇A and made 11 trick routinely, +850 and +5 Imps. East's 2∇ was certainly brave, but given my druthers, I'd prefer the direct 1NT overcall. One should keep a record of how often doubling the opponents at unfavourable vulnerability actually pays off.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West: Nil vulnerable

West North East South Pass 1♣ ?

What would you do as East with:

- **A**QJ98
- **♥** 64
- **♦** 97
- **♣** 10943

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

A thief who stole a calendar got 12 months.