

344. Stopping short

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Dble
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ 98
♥ A9542
♦ J104
♣ 875

Opener's sequence of takeout double followed by 1NT opposite a hand that might have no points, shows about 19-21 points. The North hand is therefore worth an invitation via 2♦ transfer to hearts (even though hearts have already been bid by North), followed by 2NT to invite game.

The deal comes from the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) semi-final match between [DIAMOND](#) and [MITTELMAN](#).

Bd. 40: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 98	
	♥ A9542	
	♦ J104	
	♣ 875	
West		East
♠ A10764		♠ 532
♥ 103		♥ QJ7
♦ 832		♦ K95
♣ 1064		♣ KQ93
	South	
	♠ KQJ	
	♥ K86	
	♦ AQ76	
	♣ AJ2	

After the auction above, North for [MITTELMAN](#) passed 1NT, which became the contract. West led the ♠6. South won and ducked a heart to East, who switched to the ♣K: two – four – five. Next came the ♣3. South won with the ♣J, cashed the hearts, ditching spades, and took the diamond finesse for 11 tricks, +210.

[DIAMOND](#) North-South:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♠	Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Strong spade raise

It is hard to be enamoured with West's 1♠ overall with a modest suit, only 4 HCP and facing a partner who could not open the bidding. Still, it did keep North-South out of game. Why South did not take a second bid with a 20-point hand is also a mystery.

Bd. 40: Dealer East : Both vulnerable

<p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠ 98</p> <p>♥ A9542</p> <p>♦ J104</p> <p>♣ 875</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p>♠ 532</p> <p>♥ QJ7</p> <p>♦ K95</p> <p>♣ KQ93</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p>♠ A10764</p> <p>♥ 103</p> <p>♦ 832</p> <p>♣ 1064</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠ KQJ</p> <p>♥ K86</p> <p>♦ AQ76</p> <p>♣ AJ2</p>

Against West's 2♠, North led the ♦J, winning, followed by the ♦10, low, queen. South cashed the ♦A and the ♣A. Then came the 13th diamond, ♥3, ♠8. North took the ♥A. That was six tricks for the defence and South still had two trump tricks to come. That was three down –300 and 3 Imps to **DIAMOND**.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	?		

(1) 20-22 points, balanced

What would you do with the North hand?

A standard auction might go like this:

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

(1) 20-22 points, balanced
 (2) Transfer to hearts
 (3) Choice of contracts

What would you choose as South? With the 4-3-3-3 pattern, double stoppers in spades and diamonds and almost a double stopper in clubs, there is a case for passing 3NT. On the other hand, 4♥ could be better if North's hand is not balanced. At teams, 4♥ can be safer. At pairs, passing 3NT is a reasonable move. On the actual deal, both 3NT and 4♥ make with overtricks.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, it went 2NT : 3♦ (transfer), 3♥ (3+ hearts), 4♥, all pass. I am not convinced that bidding 3♥ to show 3+ hearts (and presumably 3NT to deny 3 hearts) is a good idea.

(1) Responder might want to pass 3♥ with a worthless or near-worthless hand and 5-6 hearts. (2) Suppose responder has 5 hearts and 4 spades. A 4-4 spade fit might play better than a 5-3 heart fit. After 2NT : 3♦, 3♥, would 3♠ by responder show 4 spades or be a cue bid? (3) What does opener do with 4 spades and 2 hearts? Do you bid 2NT : 3♦, 3♠ to show that? Why are we giving the opponents this information?

Against South's 4♥, West led the ♦3: jack – king – ace. Declarer played ♥A, ♥K and the ♠K. West won and shifted to the ♣6: five – queen – ace. South played ♠Q, ♠J, discarding a club from dummy, and ♦10, ♦Q and the 13th diamond, pitching dummy's last club. That was 11 tricks for North-South +650.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	?

(1) 6 diamonds, 6-10 points

What would you do as South with:

♠ KQ3
♥ QJ7
♦ QJ9
♣ A853

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

Local police are hunting the 'knitting needle nutter', who has stabbed six people in their back in the last 48 hours. Police believe the attacker could be following some kind of pattern.