

68. Tales with spades

By Ron Klinger

South dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	?		1NT ⁽¹⁾

(1) 15-17 points, might have a 5-card major

What would you do as North with:

♠ 842
♥ KJ10
♦ KJ102
♣ KQ4

The deal comes from GAUTRET vs ZIMMERMANN, one of the semi-finals in the 2019 Spingold (USA Knockout Open Teams).

Bd. 3: South dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 842	
	♥ KJ10	
	♦ KJ102	
	♣ KQ4	
West		East
♠ AQ1076		♠ --
♥ 9743		♥ Q86
♦ 75		♦ A9864
♣ 72		♣ 109653
	South	
	♠ KJ953	
	♥ A52	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ AJ8	

After 1NT : Pass, my vote for the North hand is 3NT. Most of the time a 4-3-3-3 pattern opposite a 5-3-3-2 makes as many tricks in no-trumps as in the 5-3 fit. When that number is nine, you want to be in 3NT. Sometimes, as above, you definitely do not want to be in 4♠.

West	North	East	South
<i>Fr'esche</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>M.Mus</i>	<i>Klukowski</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2♠

Presumably North was interested in 4♥ if he could find South with five hearts. Warned off a spade lead, West started with the ♦7: ten – nine – three. Declarer played the ♠2: ♠6 – ♠J – ♠Q. West curtailed proceedings with a switch to the ♥3: jack – queen – ace, nine tricks, +400. South would have succeeded even if West shifts to a club or returns the ♦2. South can win a club in hand and lead a low spade towards dummy's ♠8-4 and eventually set up a spade trick.

Note that if the bidding goes 1NT : 3NT, West will probably lead a low spade. Now South needs only to knock out the ♦A for nine tricks and can play for an overtrick by guessing the position of the ♥Q.

	North	
	♠ 842	
	♥ KJ10	
	♦ KJ102	
	♣ KQ4	
West		East
♠ AQ1076		♠ --
♥ 9743		♥ Q86
♦ 75		♦ A9864
♣ 72		♣ 109653
	South	
	♠ KJ953	
	♥ A52	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ AJ8	

	West	North	East	South
	<i>Zimmermann</i>	<i>C.Mus</i>	<i>Multon</i>	<i>Gautret</i>
	Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1NT
	Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠ ⁽²⁾
	Dble	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) "Do you have a 5-card major?"

(2) "Yes, I have 5 spades."

With so much strength in hearts, diamonds and clubs, there is a huge case for North rebidding 3NT over 3♠. It can certainly be right to look for 4♥ in case partner has ♠J-x and is missing an ace in the other suits, when 4♥ can make and 3NT fails. If partner does not have five hearts, 3NT will be your best spot most of the time.

West led the ♥4: ten – queen – ace. South played the ♦3: five – jack – six and the ♠2: ♣3 – ♠J – ♠Q. The ♦7 went to the ♦A and West ruffed the diamond return. South was two off, –300, 12 Imps to [ZIMMERMANN](#).

On the same theme, this deal arose in a major teams' event on BBO:

East dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AJ5	
	♥ 975	
	♦ A4	
	♣ A10962	
West		East
♠ 73		♠ K10964
♥ Q10832		♥ --
♦ 109875		♦ QJ62
♣ J		♣ K743
	South	
	♠ Q82	
	♥ AKJ64	
	♦ K3	
	♣ Q85	

At one table, East passed, South opened 1NT and North bid 3NT, all pass. West led the ♥3. Dummy won cheaply and declarer continued with the ♣A and another club for 11 tricks, +460.

At the other table, East opened 1♠, South overcalled 1NT and North raised to 3NT. West also led the ♥3, won in dummy. Declarer played the ♣10: three – five – jack. After the heart lead, South is sure to make nine tricks, but the ♣A first is a better play. West switched to the ♦10 and declarer made 9 tricks, +400 but –2 Imps.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

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

(1) Weak two in hearts or in spades:

What would you do as South with:

♠ K6
♥ A52
♦ AKJ2
♣ 8643

What if North had opened 2♠, weak two, and East passes?

A weak two usually has seven or eight losers, which translates into six tricks if maximum, five if minimum. South has four quick tricks (the ♠K counts as one), plus potential for an extra trick via the ♦J finesse. Opposite, say, ♠A-Q-J-x-x-x, 4♠ is essentially on the diamond finesse, certainly reasonable when vulnerable at Imps. South should do something. At the very least find out whether opener is minimum or maximum and bid 4♣ opposite a maximum

Bd. 4: West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ J109852	
	♥ J	
	♦ Q984	
	♣ A10	
West		East
♠ A7		♠ Q43
♥ 9876		♥ KQ1043
♦ 763		♦ 105
♣ QJ92		♣ K75
	South	
	♠ K6	
	♥ A52	
	♦ AKJ2	
	♣ 8643	

If North opens 2♠ (suit quality not so great) and South bids 2NT Ogust, asking for strength and suit quality, North would bid 3♥, maximum points, poor suit. North has 8 HCP, but you might well discount the singleton ♥J. However, North's shape is good and the 6-4 pattern justifies showing a maximum with 7½ losers.

In the 2019 Spingold, neither South invited game. They insisted on game!

C. Mus (N) – Gautret (S) bid 2♦ (multi) : 2NT (inquiry), 3♥ (maximum with spades) : 4♠, all pass, ten tricks.

West	North	East	South
<i>Fr'esche</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>M.Mus</i>	<i>Klukowski</i>
Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♣ ⁽²⁾
Pass	4♥ ⁽³⁾	Dble	Pass ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Multi, weak two in spades or in hearts

(2) Transfer me to your major

(3) Transfer to spades

(4) Nah, you go ahead and play 4♠.

North made ten tricks. As you can see, declarer loses only a club and two spades for +620, no swing.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. East dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♦	4♠	5♦	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AJ432
♥ AK2
♦ Q
♣ 9765

2. South dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			2♥ ⁽¹⁾
?			

(1) 5 hearts, 4+ minor, 6-10 points

What would you do as West with:

♠ Q10975
♥ J
♦ A4
♣ QJ854

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

Every few days during isolation, try your jeans on just to make sure they still fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.