

292. Differing opinions

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ A93
♥ J5
♦ AKJ8
♣ 9865

Today's deal comes from the semi-finals of the 2020 Australian Mixed Team Selection. On this deal, there was a different contract at each table. Had I been involved, there would have been a fifth contract.

Board 2: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

		North	
		♠ J72	
		♥ AQ73	
		♦ 542	
		♣ K74	
West		East	
♠ KQ86		♠ A93	
♥ 642		♥ J5	
♦ 93		♦ AKJ8	
♣ AQ32		♣ 9865	
		South	
		♠ 1054	
		♥ K1098	
		♦ Q1076	
		♣ J10	

Match 1:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	All Pass

East's 3♠ looks precipitate (read 'an overbid'). With a minimum opening, 3-card support for responder's major and a doubleton which does not amount to a stopper, my choice would have been 2♠. Still, all was well for West in 3♠. North led the ♣4. West captured South's ♠10 and played a heart. North took the ♥Q and switched to a trump, taken by the ace. South won the next heart and returned a trump. West won with the ♠K, ruffed the third heart, crossed to the ♣A, cashed the ♠Q and played a club, ten tricks +170. At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass
2NT ⁽³⁾	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) Puppet to 2♦
(2) Forced
(3) Inviting 3NT

South led the ♥10. The defenders took four heart tricks and North switched to the ♦2, ace. Declarer finessed the ♣Q, losing, and North continued with the ♦4, king. Declarer played a club and made eight tricks, +120 but -2 Imps.

Meanwhile, if it had started 1♦ : 1♠, 2♠, West would try for game with 2NT asking about East's spade length. East would bid 3♣ (3 spades, 4-5 diamonds, 4 clubs), all pass, +130.

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North	
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♥ AQ73	
♦ 542	
♣ K74	
West	East
♠ KQ86	♠ A93
♥ 642	♥ J5
♦ 93	♦ AKJ8
♣ AQ32	♣ 9865
South	
♠ 1054	
♥ K1098	
♦ Q1076	
♣ J10	

In the other match:

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
Pass	Dble	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I am sure there must be merit in North's double, even though South was unable to take action over 1NT. West led the ♠A. South also lost 3 spades and 3 diamonds, two down, -200. South was lucky West was unable to make a takeout double, which East could pass for penalties.

At the other table:

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

I am not familiar with the East-West methods, but not vulnerable, with only 24 HCP, no tens and no 5-card suit, 3NT would not be a favourite to succeed and so it proved. North led the ♥3. South won with the ♥K and returned the ♥10, taken by the ♥Q. Then came the ♥7 to the ♥8 and the ♠J, queen, king. North cashed the ♥A. West had the rest, one down, -50 and 6 Imps away.

For those who use Banzai Points (A = 5, K = 4, Q = 3, J = 2, 10 = 1), a 25-26 point 3NT requires 37-39 BP. Here West has 15 BP and East has 18, total 33, well below even the 36 suggested by 24 HCP. I like that 3♣ contract more and more.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ J
♥ --
♦ Q108762
♣ K86532

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

You recognize that you have finally reached your WONDER years when you: Wonder where you parked the car? Wonder where your keys are? Wonder what day it is? Wonder what the opening lead was?