

347. There can be an alternative

By Ron Klinger

Teams: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) Long suit trial

What would you do as North with:

♠ K107
♥ Q932
♦ Q102
♣ AK5

This was the problem from yesterday:

Teams: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♦	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A92
♥ AK1076
♦ 854
♣ J8

The immediate thought would be to bid 4♥. Still, you have an 8-loser hand and partner might have the normal 7 losers for a minimum opening hand. $8 + 7 = 15$ and applying the standard Losing Trick Count equation, $24 - 15 = 9$ tricks expected.

There is another potential danger. East overcalled 1♦ and West did not raise. There must be a strong possibility that partner has three diamonds and you might easily lose the first three tricks in diamonds. The layout in diamonds could be any of these:

	North		North		North
	J76		Q93		K103
West		East	West	East	West
92		AKQ103	76	AKJ102	97
	South		South		South
	854		854		854
					East
					AQJ62

In each case West leads the suit and the defence can take the first three tricks, West ruffing the third round of diamonds in the third layout. If that happens, partner will need to have ♠KQ and ♣AK for 4♥ to be a good contract, with no loser in hearts as well. Partner will not have ♠KQ + ♣AK and the ♦K as well and not the ♦Q either if North has the ♥J or ♥Q. That would give North 15+ points and a strong 1NT opening.

To cater for these situations, it is a good idea for South to bid 3♦ as a long-suit trial bid (3+ diamonds and seeking help in diamonds). If North bids 3♥ over that, suggesting 3 diamond losers, there is a good case for stopping in 3♥.

The deal arose in a 2-session teams event at the New South Wales Bridge Association, using Real Bridge, an online ZOOM program that simulates a real bridge game (with the exception that revokes are not possible). Just like being at the table, you see your partner and you see your opponents. Conversation can be heard by all and, as in a normal face-to-face game, you alert your partner's artificial bids and explain them if asked.

Board 11: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K107	
	♥ Q932	
	♦ Q102	
	♣ AK5	
West		East
♠ QJ84		♠ 653
♥ J84		♥ 5
♦ 7		♦ AKJ963
♣ 109732		♣ Q64
	South	
	♠ A92	
	♥ AK1076	
	♦ 854	
	♣ J8	

As you can see, the ♦7 lead will put paid to 4♥. East wins three diamonds and as long as East switches to a spade or preferably a heart, declarer has a spade loser later. There is no way South can overcome those four losers.

There were 19 pairs in 4♥, all failing (one strangely by two tricks). One pair played in 2♥ +140, South passing in the auction given after North's raise to 2♥. One South played in 3♥, +140, after this auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♦	1♥
Pass	2♥	Dble ⁽¹⁾	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) For takeout

You will probably have also noticed by now that 3NT by North is unbeatable. North has 2 spades, 5 hearts (safety play: start with the ♥A or ♥K first) and 2 clubs, plus a diamond trick if East leads diamonds. North could end in 3NT via this sequence:

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

(1) Long-suit trial bid

No table had that auction. At nine tables of the 19 in 4♥, it began 1♣ : (1♦) : 1♥ : (Pass), 2♥ : (Pass) or an equivalent start where South doubled 1♦ to show 4+ hearts. At the other tables, the opportunity for a 3♦ trial bid did not arise. At seven tables it went 1♣ or 1NT : (3♦) 3♥ (Pass), 4♥, all pass. One went 1♥ : (2♦) : 4♥, another was 1♣ : (2♦) : 2♥ : (Pass) : 4♥ and another bid 1♣ : (2♣ – diamonds or majors) : 2♥, 3♥, 4♥.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North
♠ 42
♥ 6
♦ K108
♣ QJ108742

West
♠ J98
♥ Q87
♦ QJ43
♣ AK3

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Do you agree with North's bidding?

West leads the ♣A: two – five – six. What would you play at trick 2?

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

Time flies. You will be surprised how fast they are.