

A Real Deal Workout

with Ron Klinger

Teams: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?			1NT – 15-17

What would you do as West with:

♠ J 7
♥ A K Q 8 6 4 3 2
♦ K 8 6
♣ ---

The deal arose in the final of the World Seniors' Teams and the semi-finals of the World Mixed Teams in 2022.

Board 21: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

	North		East
	♠ Q 10 6 3		♠ 9 5 4 2
	♥ 9 5		♥ 10
	♦ A Q		♦ 10 9 7 5
	♣ J 10 7 5 3		♣ Q 8 6 2
West		South	
♠ J 7		♠ A K 8	
♥ A K Q 8 6 4 3 2		♥ J 7	
♦ K 8 6		♦ J 4 3 2	
♣ ---		♣ A K 9 4	

I would have expected that this was an easy decision for West. With ready-made defence against 1NT, you pass and hope that they stay in 1NT or even better, push on to 3NT. If North runs to Stayman or transfers to a suit, you introduce the hearts later.

As you can see, North-South have 25 HCP and are likely to reach 3NT via 1NT : 2C, 2D : 3NT, all pass. West cashes eight hearts for +400. Meanwhile East-West can make only 9 tricks in hearts for +140.

Suppose you swap the North and East hands. Now it is likely to go 1NT : Pass : Pass : Pass. With the DA-Q opposite, West can now make 11 tricks in hearts for +450. Good? Yes, but defending against 1NT is still better, with 8 hearts plus 2 diamonds, ten tricks, East-West +500.

If West doubles 1NT, North-South are likely to run to a safer spot. North-South can make 5C as the cards lie, but if West passes throughout, North-South figure to reach 3NT. North-South can make 4S if played by South. An unlikely club lead can defeat 4S if played by North.

When this deal arose only two East-West pairs produced a positive result. In the Seniors' final, at one table it went South 1NT, West 4H, North Double, all pass. West made nine tricks (playing low diamonds twice set up the DK), North-South +100. At the other table:

West	North	East	South
			1NT
4H	Double	Pass	4NT (1)
5H	Double	All pass	
(1) Pick a minor			

West made nine tricks, -300 and 5 Imps away. Still, that was better than if North-South had played and made 5C for +600. However, there was a better option for East-West.

In the Mixed Teams' semi-finals:

Table 1: 1NT : 4H : Double, all pass, East-West -100.

Table 2, with East-West passing throughout: 1NT : 2C, 2D : 3NT, all pass, East-West +400 and +11 Imps.

Table 3:

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Double?	Pass	2C (1)	Pass
2H	Double (2)	Pass	2S
3H	3S	All pass	
(1) Too weak to pass for penalties			
(2) For takeout			

West led the HA, followed by the H2 (suit-preference for clubs). East ruffed and returned the C6: ace - S7 - C3. Declarer had the rest, North-South +170.

Table 4, with East-West passing throughout: 1NT : 2C, 2D : 3NT, all pass, East-West +400 and +6 Imps.

The East-Wests who passed went plus. The East-Wests who bid went minus. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. Note the Power of Pass.

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