

Daily Bridge Club

Simple Saturday

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Simple Saturday columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

I've heard a pessimist defined as an optimist on his way home from a trip to the casino. When you're declarer, you may need to be an optimist, assuming the cards lie well, or a pessimist, guarding against a poor lie.

Against today's 3NT, West leads a low heart. If South is optimistic, he will play low from dummy, hoping to win with the queen and make overtricks. But East takes the king and shifts to the deuce of spades, and when the lie of the clubs is foul, South is at risk of losing three spades, a heart and a club.

HEART TRICKS

South should play safe by taking the ace of hearts at Trick One. However the hearts lie, he can lose at most three heart tricks. But South must still make sure of four club tricks, and if he leads a club to his ace next, he fails.

To win four clubs no matter how the suit lies, declarer's safety play is to cash the king, lead a diamond to his hand and return a club toward dummy's jack.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A J 5 ♥ Q 4 ♦ K Q J ♣ A 9 6 5 3. The dealer, at your right, opens one heart. You double, and

your partner responds one spade. The opponents pass. What do you say?

ANSWER: You have 17 points – more than your double promised – and with some 17-point hands you might act again. But partner was obliged to respond to your double – he has fewer than 10 points and may have none – and your queen of hearts may be a worthless card. Pass.

South dealer

N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ 7 6 3
♥ A 10 3 2
♦ A 10 3
♣ K J 2

WEST

♠ K 10 8
♥ J 9 7 6 5
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ 7

EAST

♠ Q 9 4 2
♥ K 8
♦ 9 8 6
♣ Q 10 8 4

SOUTH

♠ A J 5
♥ Q 4
♦ K Q J
♣ A 9 6 5 3

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

Opening lead – ♥ 6