

MONDAY NIGHT IMPROVERS

18/11/2024



Board 12

West Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 10 6 3

♥ K J 10 8

♦ 10 5

♣ A K J 2

♠ A K 9

♥ A Q 5 4

♦ 8 7

♣ Q 6 5 3



♠ 8 5

♥ 9 6

♦ A J 6 2

♣ 10 9 8 7 4

♠ Q J 7 4 2

♥ 7 3 2

♦ K Q 9 4 3

♣ —

West

1 NT

North

Pass

East

Pass

South

Pass

This hand, from a Monday night improvers' session last month, caught my eye, if only because every West played in 1NT when NS can make 11 tricks in spades. It just goes to show how destructive the 12-14 weak no trump opening bid can be to the opposition. At most tables, the bidding presumably went 1NT followed by 3 passes. Just 2 Norths doubled, and on both

occasions South passed. West made anywhere between 3 and 7 tricks.

Playing acol, a double over 1 NT is for penalties but all you are really saying is, "hey partner, I have more points than opener" (over a strong no trump, a double should show 18+ points). Sat over West's 1 NT opening bid, this hand is a regulation double for North.

Should East pull 1 NT X? Probably. But any improving partnership must know their system around a 1 NT opening bid inside out. Is 2♣ by East after 1 NT-X a weak take out? Or maybe it shows clubs and another 4 card suit?

After partner doubles 1 NT and East passes, what should South do? (If East bids 2♣ is the decision any easier?) Without getting in to the theory of the Offense to Defence Ratio, or labouring over the vulnerability (ODR tip: Queens and Jacks are offensive in long suits, but defensive in short suits), consider the South hand. Would you rather be declaring or defending? With a minimum of 23 points between you and partner you would expect to defeat 1 NT, but you must also be close to game. What if West gets in and can run 5 clubs? +100 would be a poor score against game, or even a part score, in Spades.

Bid 3♠ (game invitational) and, in this case, your partner has an easy raise to 4♠.