

NORTH  
WEST 14 Dealer  
SOUTH

# Bath Replays

## 20 Risk vs Reward

Board 14. Tuesday 23 October, 2007.

My first bid on this hand was easy. I passed, as did South, and my partner opened proceedings with 2♣. This is not our very strong hand, but promises 8 playing tricks in a suit (yet to be disclosed) or a 21+ no trump hand. It's forcing for at least one round so I was hoping that North would bid to let me off the hook.

NORTH ♠ 752  
WEST 14 Dealer ♥ 76543  
SOUTH ♦ 10653  
♣ 7

No luck, so I had to find a bid. Again, not difficult, as our first round responses to 2♣ bids are ace-showing: so 2♦ from me, showing no aces. Pass from South, 3♣ from my partner. Once again nothing from North. Now I have a problem. 3♣ is not unconditionally forcing but very encouraging. Clearly with my pointless hand I should pass, but 3♣ is not an attractive contract. Partner will have to make 9 tricks in his hand as I can contribute no help whatsoever in clubs.

I *know* that it might be wrong but should I bid 3♥? I *know* that this is forcing and my partner will bid again, but what's the worst that can happen?

- He can bid 3♠ which would be forcing but I could then ignore the force, pass and be happy that I'd found a better spot than 3♣.
- He can bid 3NT – not a pleasant spot to be in, but can it be any worse than 3♣? Partner still only has to make 9 tricks, and maybe my ♦10 will be of some use?
- He can bid 4♣ in which case I take my medicine, apologise for bidding with a near Yarborough and for causing Partner to go down one more than he would have had I passed 3♣.
- He can bid 4♦, in which case I pass once again, a bit happier that we've found a contract where at least my hand will contribute something. If he makes five I apologise.
- He can raise me to 4♥. Great! If he's got 8 playing tricks somewhere then surely with my five trumps I can scramble another two.

So I grit my teeth and bid 3♥. Pass from South ... Out comes the **STOP** card ... 6♥ from Partner. Gulp from me and passes all round. Here's the complete auction:

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	6♥	All pass

A small spade is led, and dummy goes down. Not so bad after all! There's no point in holding up, so I go up with the ♠A straight away. Ace and another club to get to my hand, then lead a trump. The ♥K appears, so I take another round of trumps, ruff another club, the ♣K drops and my two losing spades and a losing diamond go on the remaining three master clubs. Making seven. Here's the complete deal:

♠ A6  
♥ AQ1092  
♦ -  
♣ AQJ1052

NORTH ♠ 752  
WEST 14 Dealer ♥ 76543  
SOUTH ♦ 10653  
♣ 7

Unsurprisingly, no other E/W pair was in this 17-point slam, so it does go to show that occasionally you can get a good result by taking a chance as long as you balance risk against possible reward.

*Peter van Praag  
November 2007*

♠ Q1043  
♥ J8  
♦ AQJ9  
♣ K83

♠ A6  
♥ AQ1092  
♦ -  
♣ AQJ1052

NORTH ♠ 752  
WEST 14 Dealer ♥ 76543  
SOUTH ♦ 10653  
♣ 7

♠ KJ98  
♥ K  
♦ K8742  
♣ 964