Ignorance -- Problem Board 7 **♦** K 10 6 ♥ A 4 South Deals ♦ 52 Both Vul ♣ A K J 9 4 3 West South North East Pass **Pass** 1 ♣ **Pass** 1 **3 ♣** Pass **Pass** 3 💠

3 ♠

Join me for this disaster. See if you can bid better, with choices at every turn.

1. Do you agree with my opening 1 ♣ bid? Or would you make the "value bid" of 1 NT? Either is reasonable, so I'm not taking complaints yet.

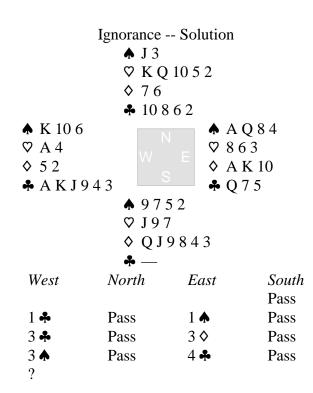
4 🚓

Pass

Pass

- 2. Encouraged by my spade fit, I chose the jump rebid at $3 \clubsuit$. The 1 NT opening seems better than a mere $2 \clubsuit$ rebid at this point. Nevertheless, $2 \clubsuit$ has merit, because it usually provides a 6-card suit, a powerful asset that will encourage partner to try for 3 NT. $2 \clubsuit$ would only provide five cards on hands where 1 NT is not acceptable, for example:
 - ♠ 6 ♥ A J 4 2 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ A Q J 9 3 [singleton prevents 1 NT]
 - ♠ 6 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ J 8 5 2 ♣ A Q J 9 3 [diamonds too weak to open]
 - ♠ 10 6 ♥ A Q 4 2 ♦ 5 2 ♣ A Q J 9 3 [when a 2 ♥ reverse, or 1 NT opening or rebid, do not appeal]
- 3. Really, really wanted to bid 3 NT, but had to show spade support with 3 \(\hbla. \)
- 4. Wish I had opened 1 NT. What now?

Board 7South Deals
Both Vul



I passed and made seven for a bottom. (Looking at only the East-West hands, the desired contract is 6 NT.) Partner and I each picked a pro to ask about this. Anything responder bids over 3 4 is unconditionally forcing to game.

Steve Gladyszak said he plays $4 \clubsuit$ as Minorwood in this situation (asking for keycards in clubs). Partner and I were playing Kickback, instead. $4 \diamondsuit$ should ask for keycards; once partner raises clubs, we are not playing this hand in diamonds. Partner is slamming, but lacks a heart control. Holding the crucial \heartsuit A, asking for keycards is correct. If this logic does not appeal, then cue bid $4 \heartsuit$. Do not pass! And do not bid $5 \clubsuit$, which will muzzle partner.

What if partner held something like this?

Opposite a jump rebid, the queen of partner's suit is the best card in the deck. This hand is surely worth a try for 3 NT, but how do you know if hearts are stopped?

The answer to that is, you can't. The try for 3 NT is to bid 3 NT and try to make it. If hearts are wide open, maybe they won't be led, or maybe the suit will split 4-4.

This situation is not something you can figure out at the table. Guides such as "game over slam" won't help. You just have to know that responder's $3 \diamondsuit$ is forcing to game, and therefore, $4 \clubsuit$ is a slam try. Now I know. (Yes, $3 \diamondsuit$ was forcing to game 60 years ago -- now I know again.)

Ah, yes. Had I opened 1 NT (15-17), we would surely have nestled in 3 NT. Partner would not try for slam with a flat 15-count. So my auction was perfect, up to the point where I passed 4 \$\infty\$, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.