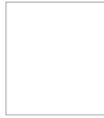


07/12/11 North American Pairs Qual

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul



♠ —
♥ 10 7 5 2
♦ K 10 8 5
♣ K 8 7 5 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	?

Here's a bidding problem ...

(answer on the next page)

07/12/11 North American Pairs Qual

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A J 10 6 4 3		
	♥ Q J 9 6 4		
	♦ A 4		
	♣ —		
♠ K Q 5 2		♠ 9 8 7	
♥ A 8 3		♥ K	
♦ J 7 2		♦ Q 9 6 3	
♣ J 9 3		♣ A Q 10 6 4	
	♠ —		
	♥ 10 7 5 2		
	♦ K 10 8 5		
	♣ K 8 7 5 2		

NS 4♥; NS 2♠; E 2♣; NS 1♦; W 1♣

West	North	East	South
	<i>Pete</i>		<i>Margarita</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♥	All pass	

2 ♥ by North

Margarita correctly passed 2♥. She has four trumps and nice ruffing values, but *no points in my suits*. Yes, responder should strain to raise in this situation, but this would be pushing it. I like to have ten points with 4-card support, or eight points with 5-card support, for a raise. As Eddie Kantar puts it, a raise of opener's second suit promises 4-card support, *in blood*, so there are no hands good enough to raise with 3-card support. The void is a mixed blessing. Opposite at least nine cards in the majors, one of those kings is likely wasted. A raise would have merit if one of those kings were in hearts.

But we can make a game?! Well, yes, but that's just luck: the opponents' hearts are blocked. If hearts are 2-2, a trump lead will sink 4♥. And if one player has ♥AKx, a trump lead sets 3♥. Mark this auction: when opener bids two suits and plays in the second, consider leading a trump from almost any holding.

Similarly, my hand was not worth a jump shift to 3♥, which would be forcing to game. Just bid 2♥ and hope for another noise from partner. For example, over a 2♠ preference, this would be an easy 3♥ bid at the third chance.

That distinguishes the hand I held from ♠AJT63 ♥QJ94 ♦A4 ♣43, on which I would also rebid 2♥. With that hand, if the opponents start with three rounds of trump, 2♥ would likely fail.

Precision North players, whose opening 1♠ opening bid is limited, might choose a 3♥ rebid, as the hand could not have much more playing strength. South should probably pass that bid for all the same reasons.

- Pete Matthews