

## Still looking for that game swing ...

Rakesh Kumar

The second night of the Autumn Teams competition, on Wednesday 19 March, featured another interesting demonstration of the need to bid courageously to find your way to the right game.

You are vulnerable and your opponents are not. After two passes, your right-hand opponent opens a weak 2S. What should you do with this hand?

♠ **AQT8**  
 ♥ **Q54**  
 ♦ **K**  
 ♣ **AJ752**

It's awkward, isn't it? You have a lot of high card strength and 2S must surely be going down, but at this vulnerability that will only be worth +50 per undertrick. You ought to be trying for the game bonus, hoping to score +600 or better. Bidding 3C isn't likely to achieve that, plus your suit isn't that good. So should you make a takeout double? You don't really have appropriate shape – and even if you get lucky and partner does respond 3H, would you dare to raise to 4H with only three cards in the suit?

Perhaps you could double and plan to convert partner's more likely 3D response to 3NT. However, when you double, you force partner to bid – she may have very few high card points and you may land in a doomed contract.

If you believe partner must have some length and probably has an honour or two in diamonds, then your singleton ♦K won't necessarily be wasted in notrumps, so the best solution is to overcall 2NT. This tells partner about your high card strength, even if no one could describe your shape as balanced! More importantly, it gives partner the opportunity to co-operate in making a decision about the final contract. As you can see from the complete deal, partner held a very useful hand:

<p><b>19</b> S/EW</p>	<p>♠ <b>KJ9642</b>              ♥ <b>K32</b>              ♦ <b>52</b>              ♣ <b>Q8</b></p>	<p>♠ <b>AQT8</b>              ♥ <b>Q54</b>              ♦ <b>K</b>              ♣ <b>AJ752</b></p>	<p>Opt res: EW 3NT; -660</p>																		
<p>♠ <b>3</b>              ♥ <b>AT96</b>              ♦ <b>AJT8</b>              ♣ <b>T643</b></p>	<p>♠ <b>75</b>              ♥ <b>J87</b>              ♦ <b>Q97643</b>              ♣ <b>K9</b></p>																				
<p>9 9 16 6</p>			<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"></th> <th style="padding: 5px;">E</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">W</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		E	W	NT	5	5	♠	3	3	♥	5	5	♦	3	3	♣	5	5
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She is likely to first bid 3C Stayman, looking for a possible 4-4 heart fit, but when you rebid 3D denying 4 hearts, you will arrive in 3NT, which is glacially cold.

Pushing for a vulnerable game at Teams often pays off, because fortune really does favour the brave. In the Autumn Teams, many settled for defeating 2S. Only two East-West pairs reached game, one playing in the straightforward 3NT and one in the rather more fragile but still unbeatable 4H.

