

A CONVENTIONAL NOTRUMP BID

You are sitting South with this hand:

South
 ♠ A8
 ♥ Q983
 ♦ KJ10
 ♣ AKQ9

You pick up this 19 HCP hand and after East passes, you open 1♣. West passes and your partner responds 1♥. Before you can rebid, East overcalls 1NT. What is that?

You ask West, his partner and he states that it is a convention called Sandwich Notrump. It is a take out for the two unbid suits. But unlike a take out double, it is very weak. It is more disruptive than constructive – but only mildly so.

You jump to 3♥ to show a medium size opener and West chooses one of those unbid suits to bid. He advances to 3♠. Partner and East both pass. You should just bid the game. You aren't worried about the spades and if East has diamonds, yours are sitting on top of his. Your bid of 4♥ is passed out.

East leads the ♠3 and you take over for North:

Vul: N/S	North ♠ 972 ♥ J652 ♦ A5 ♣ J1087	East ♠3
	South ♠ A8 ♥ Q983 ♦ KJ10 ♣ AKQ9	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	1NT	3♥
3♠	Pass	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Partner's hand is better than you thought. Yes, the opponents had a fit in spades and a combined total of 13 points. Since they were not vulnerable, you are surprised that they didn't push to a 4♠ sacrifice.

You have an unavoidable spade loser and a diamond loser that you can ruff in your hand, assuming the hearts split 3-2. Of course, you have to lose the ♥AK as well. After winning the first trick with dummy's ♠A, you attack hearts. Lead a small heart to your hand. This is won by East's ♥K. He took his ♠K and switched to diamonds. You win in your hand and lead to dummy's ♥Q. If West ducks his ♥A, leave this master trump outstanding and play the ♦K, planning to trump the ♦J. But luckily, the ♦Q falls under the ♦K and the ♦J is good. Now give up a heart to the ♥A. Win West's return and claim with your 4 good clubs.

It's always a good idea to ask about any bids the opponents make that you don't understand. But only ask if it could make a difference to your bidding. Don't help them to clarify their bidding.

Here is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">2</div>	N North ♠ 972 ♥ J652 ♦ A5 ♣ J1087	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1♥	1NT	3♣	3♣	P	P	4♥	P	P	P	
	W	N	E	S														
P	1♥	1NT	3♣															
3♣	P	P	4♥															
P	P	P																
W West ♠ QJ106 ♥ A74 ♦ Q3 ♣ 6532	E East ♠ K543 ♥ K10 ♦ 987642 ♣ 4																	
	S South ♠ A8 ♥ Q983 ♦ KJ10 ♣ AKQ9	4♥ N NS: 0 EW: 0																

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/znfa2po> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.