

District 8 Solvers Forum

August 2002 issue

by Scott Merritt, Champaign IL

1. IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	1C	DBL

1S 2S Pass ?

What is your call as South holding:

S-Q63 H-AJ104 D-KQ985 C-A?

Action	Score	Panel %	Solvers
3D	100	5	33
3S	90	1	2
4S	90	1	10
4C	80	1	0
3C	70	5	19
4D	70	1	0
2NT	60	0	2
3H	50	0	10
Pass	50	0	2
4H	40	0	21

Wow! What a challenging set of hands. So much so, in fact, that there were no perfect scores and only 3 over 550. One of those was mine, so it's dubious because I hand out the scores!

We start with a hand where partner has "cuebid" after my take out double. If partner is really showing at least one red suit and a good hand, we have an absolute mountain, and one of our opponents must clearly be kidding.

Kniest: "3C. 2S was n't natural; double would show spades. I have a big hand and slam is still in the picture, but I'm not sure of the right game yet."

Williams: "3D. Over partner's 3H bid, I'll cuebid 4C."

Either of these statements would be correct if partner's 2S were forcing, but I think that misses the boat here. While double would indeed be spades, partner also needs a way to bid spades without allowing the opponents a free level of bidding. With a hand like KJxxx, Qxx, xx, xxx, what is he to do? A double of 1S would be a waste of time, as the opponents aren't about to play there.

Marshal: "4C. I'm going to 4S whatever happens."

Walker: "4S. Partner's 2S is natural, not a cuebid. He's showing 5+ spades and fair values — something like AJ109x, Qxx, xx, xxx."

I truly believe this is the right attitude to take on this hand. The real question is whether or not to be in game. While you do have compensatory values and a real fit, you also know the suit is breaking poorly. This hand may turn out to be a question of spades breaking 4-1 or 5-0 and which side has the 10. For the final word, I turn to our guest panelist, my fiancée:

Lippitt: "3D. I bid my long suits, keep winners and pitch losers."

Heather is only 2/3rds of the way through ACBL's "Learn to Play Bridge" tutorial, but she certainly has the fundamentals down.

2. IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2H	DBL	Pass	2S

Pass 4H Pass ?

What is your call as South holding?

S-J964 H-75 D-K82 C-KT96

Action	Score	Panel %	Solvers
4NT	100	3	12
Pass	100	1	2
5C	90	3	24
5S	80	1	14
6S	80	2	7
4S	60	3	40
5NT	60	1	0

When this is the easiest problem of the set, you know that the editor has been in a bad mood! Partner has doubled, and then after you show a weak hand, he decided that a raise to game or a simple cuebid wouldn't be enough. While the panel was split, the advancers lead the decliners, and that is why the 4S call did n't get the top score. We will hear from the pessimists now.

Feiler: "4S. I can't quite squeeze out another bid. Partner could have a very good hand and still not make slam, e.g. S-AKxx H-x D-AQxx C-AQxx."

Kniest: “4S, Can I take all the tricks after they cash a heart? Maybe, but partner might have cuebid just to explore below game. Therefore, I give up for the moment, but partner doesn’t have to if he has more.”

I just can’t buy in to this kind of reasoning. While true that slam may not make, to sign off with two controls is insulting your partner. If partner merely wanted to play game, he would have simply bid 4S.

As advancing seems to be the way to go, the questions how to proceed.

Curtis: “5C. Let the cuebidding begin.”

Athy: “5C. Some action is called for besides 4S. I’ll try cuebidding a king.”

Rabideau: “6S. 6C is tempting but partner might leave me there with AKQx, x, Axx, AQJxx. A grand is possible but I don’t know how to probe for it.”

Walker: “4NT. Since partner doesn’t have a solid side suit, he must have great spades to be making a slam try opposite my advertised 0-8 pts. Two kings is a super-maximum, and bidding anything more ‘delicate’ than Blackwood is pointless.”

This hodgepodge of responses was a nice cross-section of what the advancers had to say. Larry was one of the few that mentioned clubs as a possible strain, and ultimately believe 6C is a practical choice here. You may miss a grand, but I’m sure it won’t be the last time, and what are the odds of partner holding like AKQx, A, Ax, AQxxx?

A few panelists mentioned the silence of East, but only one had the courage to stand by her convictions:

Lippitt: “Pass. East-West have way to many hearts to remain silent in this day and age. If I had a hand as good as the one I’m advertising, I could start with a simple cuebid and see what pard says. I must expose the psych, and this is the only way I know how.”

While those were not her exact words — indeed they are nowhere near her exact words — she certainly gets the award for having the guts to stand up to the panel and bid what she feels is

correct even if it was not going to muster many points! I had to admire her gumption, not to mention her charm and stunning good looks with all the points on this hand.

3. Matchpoints, Both Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	1D	Pass
1H	Pass	1S	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	?

What is your call as South holding?

S-A H-A94 D-653 C-T98752

Action Score Panel % Solvers

Pass	100	10	48
2C	60	4	52

Even the solvers came up with only two answers here. It’s matchpoints and you’re itching to blast declarer out of 1NT. You have a 6-card suit to the deuce, but at least they’re solid! Is now the time to come barreling in?

Feiler: “2C. I’d pass if I were on lead.”

Bernard: “2C. This is matchpoints, partner is probably going to lead a spade and there goes one of my entries for setting up the clubs. I would bid 3C or even 4 before I would pass. Passing should get minus 20 points ... not that I feel strongly about it.”

Lippitt: “2C. At least any finesses that I take in trumps will be on!”

I hate to disagree with my future wife, but I feel that bidding is *sui cide*. The passers make a little more sense.

Vongsvivut: “Pass. My hand has too many losers (8). Partner has too many spades, 5 or 6. Diamond honor in partner’s hand is in the wrong place. Some one will double if I bid 2C.”

Williams: “Pass. I’m red and the opponents have no fit. In fact, if 5 of my great suit showed up with the NT bidder, it would not shock me.”

The panel went on and on about how partner is marked with 5+ spades, 3+ hearts, 3+ diamonds, leaving him very few clubs. Even if partner does have clubs, then the opponents have a red-suit fit that they will bid, and partner will then again lead the wrong suit! While all the signs point to passing, if

Heather deems that bidding is correct, I guess I have to capitulate. I am getting this married thing down pat!

4 IMPs, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1H	1S	Pass	?

What is your call as South holding:
S-K H-A5 D-A9763 C-K10954

Action	Score	Panel	% Solvers
2H	100	4	26
2C	90	2	19
2D	90	5	38
2NT	80	2	2
3NT	70	0	5
1NT	60	0	10
2S	50	1	0

What a devilish problem this is. You have so much to say, but so little time. You have two biddable suits, a heart stopper, and a potentially nice filler for partner's suit. BWS explicitly states that a new suit in this sequence is not forcing, merely constructive.

Williams: "2D. If partner can't move over 2D, I don't think we're missing anything. My first instinct was 2NT, but that's a bit heavy with only Ax of hearts."

Rabideau: "2D. A cuebid would get us past this round, but then what? I'll hope partner can find a rebid and allow me to describe this hand. Yes, on a bad day I play here opposite xx."

While 2D does start describing your hand, with so many controls, I am simply too scared that partner has that dreck that we worry about. If we're going to bid one of our suits, I like this:

Curtis: "2C. Let partner bid diamonds or cuebid."

Lippitt: "2C. I'm sure Scott will like this bid simply 'cause I made it."

In deed I do, Heather! If partner is going to pass, I'd rather play my K109 suit than my A97. I also feel that keeping it lower may induce partner to bid

2D on a poorer hand; he would not be so inclined to try 3C over 2D. Finally, for the suit bidders, after partner retreats to 2S, are you really gonna try 3Cs? After you got past one nonforcing call, I suspect that you would try 3H to find out where this hand belongs, as well as finally get your values across.

After all that, there are still two more camps to be heard from! First the 2NTers.

Walker: "2NT. Ax is not a great value for notrump, but unless partner can rebid spades naturally, this seems like the best compromise between torturing him (cuebid auction) and hanging him (3NT)."

There is certainly a pick-your-poison mentality on this hand, and I believe that 2NT does a nice job of getting the pertinent information across to partner. After a 2NT call, you will never be ashamed to put down dummy, and it would be awfully tough to lose the post-mortem (now *that's* winning bridge!)

In the end, though, most people wanted to make a little stronger advance, which is why I gave 2H the top score. I think starting with a cuebid is the most flexible alternative, and then following it up with 2NT if partner retreats to 2S does this hand full credit. While I have never discredited with my partners whether or not this is a forcing sequence, it would seem to fit this hand to a tee -- non-forcing, but highly invitational. And hey, partner may even surprise you with a bid of 3 of a minor after your cuebid.

5. Board-a-Match, EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	1D	Pass	1S
Pass	2D	Pass	?

What is your call as South holding:
S-AQ1082 H-J53 D-A C-8763



BRIDGE WORLD STANDARD



<http://www.bridgeworld.com/bws/bwsall.html>

Action	Score	Panel %	Solvers
Pass	100	7	17
3D	90	1	2
2NT	80	0	19
3C	80	0	26
2H	70	1	10
2S	70	4	26
3NT	60	1	0

That said, the editor is up to her eyeballs in evilness again. They always throw in a Board-a-Match problem so we have an excuse to throw all reason out the window and play bad bridge! As you can see, the panel, with a hand that most of them would open, chooses to stop at the 2-level after partner opens! While there are early signs of a misfit, are we really going to bail out now?

Walker: "Pass. This strategy offers an extra option as the opponents, also schooled in BAM madness, will often balance and we'll win the board with +200 or +500. This is not the right hand to try to squeak out +110 in spades. With no real ruffing value, I'd have to score trump tricks on power opposite partner's presumed shortness."

Wertheimer: "Pass. 2S would show a suit at least as good as the diamonds partner has."

Lippitt: "Pass. While I'm only up to chapter 4 of the Learn to Play Bridge software, I'm certain the defense will take the first 5 tricks in the round suits and then get a trump promotion of lefty's 9xxx on the 13th heart. I just can't allow that to happen to partner."

While Don may be overstating the case against 2S a bit, you do have a nice filler for partner, while he has advertised no such value for your suit. Heather, on the other hand, makes a startling case for passing, but I learned a long time ago that with an opening hand, one takes more than one call! Well, the 2S bidders at least got that is sue correct, but they seem to have their own BAM arrangements.

Marshall: "2S. Let us not kid ourselves that we'll be allowed to play in 2D if it is correct. 2S lets partner compete when he has a poor hand with

spades and bid on constructively when he does n't have a poor hand."

Rabideau: "2S. As I recall, this form of scoring was popular around the time whist was evolving into auction bridge. Anyway, as much as I dislike bidding 5-card suits, I'll make an exception here (only because the suit is so chunky) in an attempt to beat the score for 2D. 2H is possible, but then I'd catch pard with a 1-3-6-3 and he'd pass!"

Yet another jab at the moderator's age I see! No Larry, I was not around when whist was evolving, but if it makes you happy to reminisce about the good old days, I can't stop you.

As for the bridge logic, I liked it until I heard you bid 2S. If you really are young at heart, let's see that 2H call! Not a single panelist mentioned the fact that you have an opening hand. It's 2.5 quick tricks and it passes the Rule of 20 (add the length in your two longest suits to your high-card points, and open if the number is 20 or higher). This hand counts out to 20: 5 spades + 4 clubs + 11 HCPs.

Vongsvivut: "3NT. I can see 8 tricks — 6 diamonds, one spade and one side-trick ace or king somewhere."

Where there's 8, there must be 9! I like the gump tion.

6. Matchpoints, EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1C
Pass	1H	3D	3H
5D	DBL	All pass	

What is your opening lead with:

S-AQJ3 H-AQ97 D-9 C-10983 ?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Diamond9	100	8	36
Heart A	80	2	24
Spade A	90	2	5
Club T	70	1	21
Heart 3	50	0	5
Heart Q	50	0	2
Club 3	60	1	2
Heart 9	50	0	2

We have a nice defensive hand, yet the opponents have bid to the 5-level in a

live auction at unfavorable vulnerability. Now, as any one who has ever played with me knows, we are in for a zero! I have learned to use all of my judgment, pick a 1st, 2nd and 3^d choice, and then proceed to lead my 4th choice, as it is always better than options 1, 2 and 3!

We'll start with my first choice:

Kniest: "Spade ace. Hope fully, this will let me see dummy and do something right next if I haven't already blown the hand."

Before we lead, we need to divine why the opponents are bidding. It's either: **(A)** They have more diamonds than they know what to do with (i.e. Lefty has 6 and just needed to bid); or **(B)** Lefty has only 3 or 4 diamonds, but has a surprise club suit that he feels will run in our face. The spade ace tends to cater to both of these holdings, as we know that one of the opponents is short in hearts. It would be a shame to have the heart ace blown up and let dummy score the heart king.

Walker: "Spade ace. LHO is n't crazy — he did n't bid a red-vs.-not 5D just on distribution. He surely has a big source of tricks, which has to be clubs, so we have to take our top tricks now."

Lippitt: "Heart ace. Can I guess right yet again?"

Is there a better argument for the heart ace? None of our panelists debated the value of leading one ace over the other, but if you are going to lead an ace, I would suspect that you want to lead the one most likely to cash.

For those of you who refuse to attack on opening lead, I pray that Karen was correct in her analysis. Still, an overwhelming percentage of the group led a trump or a club.

Feiler: "Diamond 9. There's no hurry to lead aces and dummy will have some short suit."

There were many who echoed Kent's sentiment, but how many trumps do you really think your side has? Partner has two at the absolute most. If he has threetrumps, then the opponents' must have enough compensatory val-

ues that this hand is over! The person who made the most sense when he decided to lead a non-ace was:

Marshall: "Club 3. I am going for the jugular! I suspect pard is very short in clubs and I don't want to give up my natural trick if his shortness is an honor. If he isn't void, or doesn't have stiff ace, he'd better have a quick trump trick to get his ruffs."

I like the thinking, but I don't believe it will play out in the real world. For partner's double, I give him something like all 4 kings. Now if de clarer has the singleton club, he may be able to fly club ace, finesse the trumps and then set up the clubs when we had three or more major-suit tricks coming.

On this hand, any lead may be right, except for a diamond! Or a club, as it happens, as either of these leads would get you -950 when this hand was played in real life. The layout was:

LHO: S-xx H-x D-Qxxx C-AKJxxx
RHO: S-xxx H-xxx D-AKJ10xx C-Q

For purposes of discussion, though, your guess is as good as mine, as long as you remember to take into account the opening paragraph of this discussion, where I made it clear that your guess is **better** than mine.

Maybe getting married will knock some sense into me. Cheers until next time, when there will be two Merritts on the panel.

Thanks to all who sent solutions to this challenging set. Congratulations to **Joseph Cheng** and **Jim Hudson**, who topped all Solvers and are invited to join us on the October panel.

Your answers and comments really are a big help in analyzing the problems, so I hope all of you can help us out by trying the new problems on page 11. Please send answers as soon as possible (by August 24) on the web form:

www.prairienet.org/bridge/forum.htm
or by mail or email to:

Tom Dodd

43265 IH 10W, Boerne TX 78006

Email: fieldtrialer@yahoo.com

♠ How the Panel Voted

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score
Norman Athy, St. Louis	3C	5C	2C	2D	Pass	D9	510
Bob Bernhard, Orlando FL	3C	4NT	2C	2D	2S	D9	490
Tony Curtis, Chicago IL	3C	5C	Pass	2C	2S	C10	490
Kent Feiler, Harvard IL	3C	4S	2C	2NT	Pass	D9	470
Heather Lippitt, Rockford IL	3D	Pass	2C	2C	Pass	HA	530
Finlay Marshall, Edinburgh UK	4C	5S	Pass	2S	2S	C3	440
Larry Matheny, Bloomington	3D	4S	Pass	2H	2H	D9	530
Larry Rabideau, St. Anne IL	3D	6S	Pass	2D	2S	D9	540
Arbha Vongsivut, Godfrey IL	3D	5C	Pass	2H	3NT	D9	550
Don Wertheimer, South Bend IN	4D	6S	Pass	2H	Pass	D9	550
Hugh Williams, Carbondale IL	3D	5NT	Pass	2D	Pass	D9	550

♠ How the Staff Voted

Tom Kniest, Clayton MO	3C	4S	Pass	2D	Pass	SA	510
Scott Merritt, Champaign IL	3S	4NT	Pass	2H	3D	SA	570
Karen Walker, Champaign IL	4S	4NT	Pass	2NT	Pass	SA	550

♠ Solvers' Honor Roll

Joseph Cheng	580	Jason Clevenger, St. Louis MO	520
James Hudson, DeKalb IL	570	Tony Jowett, Canberra, Australia	520
David Wetzel, Rantoul IL	550	Len Vishnevsky, San Francisco	510
Rémi Dessarce, Grenoble, France	550	Wally Hendricks, Champaign IL	500
Bob Sievers, Champaign IL	530	Rick Warburton, Schererville IN	500

Tied with 490: Rich Peer, St. Louis; Pete Petillo, Arlington MA; Nuray Yalcin.

Solvers Forum October Problems

1. Matchpoints, both vulnerable
West North East South
 — -- 2D* Pass
 Pass 2S Pass ?
 * (Weak 2-bid)
 What is your call as South holding:
S-3 H-A864 D-K64 C-QJ865 ?

2. IMPs, NS vulnerable
West North East South
 — -- 3H Pass
 4H DBL Pass ?
 What is your call as South holding:
S-QJ84 H-Void D-J93 C-AJ8753?

3. IMPs, both vulnerable
West North East South
 — 1S ?
 What is your call as South holding:
S-AK H-AKQJ854 D-74 C-65 ?

4. IMPs, none vulnerable
West North East South
 1C 2NT* Pass ?
 *(Unusual -- diamonds & hearts)
 What is your call as South holding:
S-AQ76542 H-73 D-K C-654 ?

5. Matchpoints, both vulnerable
West North East South
 — 1C Pass 1D
 Pass 2C Pass ?
 What is your call as South holding:
S-A5 H-10743 D-Q10643 C-A4 ?

6. Matchpoints, both vulnerable
West North East South
 — 1H Pass 2H
 3C Pass Pass ?
 What is your call as South holding:
S-KQ9 H-Q85 D-J106532 C-7 ?

Thanks for the problems above to Bob Sievers (#1), Len Helfgott (#2) & Kent Feiler (#3 & #4).