

# District 8 Solvers Forum ♠

by Tom Kniest

## 1. Matchpoints, both vul ner a ble

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

What is your call as South hold ing:  
**S-A84 H-A1092 D-AK642 C-5 ?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
2H	100	13	68
2S	70	2	17
3S	60	0	9
2D	50	0	6

The panel wasn't quite unanimous, but the 2H reverse was their clear preference. Most wished they were a bit stronger, but this is certainly more than a minimum, and with 5 controls!

**BERNHARD:** "2H. Strong enough to reverse with all prime cards."

**DODD:** "2H. Bare minimum for a forcing reverse, but I don't want to miss a laydown game opposite a hand like KQxx, xxx, Qxx, xxx."

**SPEAR:** "2H. I'd like to have more, but I like what I have."

I'm with the majority. Reverse into hearts, then show your spade support. This should show this shape and about this strength, although the Q or J of hearts would be a nice addition.

Several panelists mentioned the merits of a spade raise. If it's right to raise spades, then to what level? If you do, can you ever find hearts? The gentle raise to 2S could work out at matchpoints, but most panelists decided that 2S was more of an underbid than 2H was an overbid. Odd men out:

**MERRITT:** "2S, which is what I bid at the table, so I guess I have to bid it here. I hope I can catch up on the next round, but 2H is just such an overbid."

Go ahead and overbid – it's also fun to backpedal!

## 2. IMPs, both vul ner a ble

West	North	East	South
—	—	2D	?

What is your call as South hold ing:  
**S-AKJ10863 H-AQ9 D-Void C-KQ5 ?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Double	100	6	58
3D	90	5	22
3S	80	1	5
4D	80	1	0
4S	70	2	13

Here's a problem with some meat.

For the majority:

**MATHENY:** "Double, risking a pass by partner."

**WILLENKEN:** "Double, the best call to get us to slam if there is one. We have tons of defense if partner passes."

**BERNHARD:** "Double. I hope partner is from the Edgar Kaplan school and takes out take out doubles."

**WERTHEIMER:** "Double followed by 4S, which is stronger than an immediate 4S. This might elicit a cuebid from partner. If he passes, we won't be hurt unless we're cold for slam."

I'm a doubler. You'll find out right away if partner has real values. If he passes, you have a good opening lead.

I adjusted scores upward on two single-vote actions because the proponents had strong arguments:

**MARSHALL:** "4D. A double should show at least a two-suiter, and a cuebid might make it difficult for partner to appreciate your void. Show the void and, although you have a single-suiter, little should go wrong. The one bid you don't make is the unilateral bash to 4S."

**WALKER:** "3S. This is the standard way to set trumps and show a mountain. Partner should bid a control (ace or king) if he has one. Double asks for -180, and a cuebid will usually be interpreted as a two-suiter."

I like the 3S jump, except I think you need the spade queen. Note that 3S is **not** a weak jump over call. It's a bridge rule that you cannot preempt over a preempt unless you bid at game level.

Some thought the 3D cuebid was best, although partner might initially take it as Michaels. However, a 3-level cuebid is often a try for 3NT, so responder's first duty is showing a stopper. If the cuebidder has a two suiter, he repeats the cuebid. With big hands, most pairs play it can be any two suits.

**FEILER:** "3D. Partner will take 3D as (1) Michaels; (2) a solid suit asking for a stopper or; (3) a very strong hand. The saving grace may be that I have the boss suit and can convince him that I have (3) before we get too high."

**HUDSON:** "3D. I have to start with a cuebid to establish a game force. Still, it's going to be tough to get partner's input. If he bids 3H, I suppose I'll jump to 4S. Over 3NT, I'll try 5S since 4S without a jump would be an underbid. If he says 4C, I'll be stymied and may just take a shot at 6S."

Jim was afraid 5S over 4C might be taken as Exclusion Blackwood, but I don't think that would apply here.

**OPPENHEIMER:** "3D. Too offensive to double; too good for 3S or 4S."

Two panelists were bashers:

**FOGEL:** "4S. This should show a self-sufficient suit and game in-hand, or nearly so. Partner knows you might need a trick from him for game. With two useful cards, he should bid on."

**DODD:** "4S. 3S would convey a strong hand, but risks missing a cold game. If it goes 5D on my left, back to me, I now have an easy double."

I think this hand is way too strong for 4S. What would you bid with AK-eighth of spades and out?

There seems to be a difference of opinion on the meaning of 3S here. What we all agree on is that it is *not* a preempt. Tom O. and Tom D. hint that they view it as strong but passable — something like an intermediate jump overcall? WALKER swears it's a big hand and is forcing to at least game.

It's interesting that our staff chose four different bids — and had different expectations about what the other bids mean. What a great game.

### 3. Matchpoints, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1C
1S	Pass	2S	3C
Pass	Pass	3S	?

What is your call as South holding:  
**S**-Void **H**-AKQ **D**-K107 **C**-QJ108764?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Pass	100	8	44
4C	80	4	32
Double	70	3	20
5C	50	0	4

I like this problem, but I think the majority choice is hopeless at matchpoints. It's anti-"Law" if you accept the likelihood that each side has 9 trumps. If we can beat them, then we're probably on for 10 tricks. And one Law adjustment is possession of a long suit, which provides extra tricks because the opponents can't pull two for one.

The chance of +130 is so great that +50 or +100 will be a poor score. I bid 4C here, but with many partners, I'd double and be comfortable that I'd shown this shape and strength (although I'd like for one of my outside honors to be in clubs).

Over double, partner can evaluate his spades — QJ9x is good for defense; xxx is good for offense, irrespective of his other cards. I expect he holds some strength since EW tried to stop at 2S. Perhaps the bidders' scores should be upgraded since it was only 8-7 to pass, but since there was no consensus, I'll let the passers have their victory.

**FEILER:** "Pass. I bid a lot the last time; I don't have to bid it again."

**HUDSON:** "Pass. Maybe 3C was inadequate, but it's too late to worry about that. I just can't keep on bidding. Partner still has a call."

**WILLENKEN:** "Pass. Double, the only real alternative, is too hungry. Partner rates to have about a 3-count and 4 spades. Why should you be beating them? Partner may double himself if they've done something stupid."

If partner doubles, they'll go for their lives. Of ten, however, they'll be going

down 2, but partner won't double because he won't know you have this much defense. Anybody with a simulator? Here are the tigers:

**BERNHARD**: "Double. I have cards and clubs. Clubs, I've already shown, so let's find out what partner has."

**OPPENHEIMER**: "Double. Why not? I have defense and can stand partner to bid anything."

I agree, but with the partners I would be doubling with, I'd expect a pretty good suit or a re-treat to 4C.

**MERRITT**: "Double. I bring wood, and I have an intelligent partner."

Here are the bidders, who I think are taking a middle-of-the-road action:

**KESSLER**: "4C. This would be easier if double were competitive, or if I could bid 4C and be on lead to double 4S. I hope partner was n't doubling 3S."

**WALKER**: "4C. I'm not selling out to their 9+ card spade fit. I had a chance the last round to show a takeout, so double now should be 90% penalty."

The table answer: Partner held Kx of clubs and Qxx of spades. EW make 3S and you go down one in 4C (or make, if you guess Ax of diamonds off side).

**4.** Matchpoints, EW vulnerable

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

What is your call as South holding:

**S**-AQJ972 **H**-J983 **D**-102 **C**-4 ?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
2S	8	100	18
2D	6	90	60
2NT	1	60	15
Other	0	50	7

I thought there were only two choices here, but Solver votes came in for:

**FOGEL**: "2NT. No guts, no glory. I'd bet money that I can endplay RHO in spades for a few extra tricks in NT."

I don't think you'll enjoy playing notrump unless you get a spade lead and diamonds run for a lot of tricks.

Your distribution suggests the hand is breaking badly, and that caused the

panel to be conservative. Let's hear from the dutiful and the pessimistic:

**FEILER**: "2D. My hand isn't all that good. Partner is going to have trouble taking spade tricks with his void."

**MATHENY**: "2D. My hand keeps getting worse."

**WERTHEIMER**: "2D. Any other call would be unacceptable. A 2S bid is a path to a negative score whereas 2D has a chance of making."

True, bidding 2D will probably stop the auction, but I don't think it will play well unless partner has six. However, you **do** have six good spades, well positioned, and partner has high cards. That should make you want to play in spades, in spite of the bad break, even opposite a void. And the way to get there is to just bid it.

**DODD**: "2S. Natural, making a mental note about East's suit quality for red over calls. The minor length is behind us, so ruffing is safe. We might make 140 if partner is enterprising."

**HUDSON**: "2S. Obviously natural. I hope to single in my low trumps and possibly coup East in the end."

**SPEAR**: "2S. Only at matchpoints, non-vul."

I fail to see how vulnerability affects the correct bid here.

**WILLENKEN**: "2S. Probably wrong if partner is 0-2-6-5, but otherwise likely the best partscore."

**WALKER**: "2S. I expect to make this, no matter how many spades RHO has. For the record, partner didn't have much -- **S**-3 **H**-A102 **D**-AJ543 **C**-K1095 -- and you still make an easy 140."

Isn't that hand a little rich to come back in the auction, with partner a passed hand and you between bidding opponents? (Not that you'd do that.)

And wanting to go both ways:

**OPPENHEIMER**: "2D. Try to go plus. We be long in 2S, but partner might think 2S is a cuebid and not get the joke. If you really trust him, try 2S to play."

Our panel is a trusting bunch. Not one mentioned the possibility that partner might think 2S was a cuebid.

### 5. Matchpoints, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	1H	2D	?

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-K84 H-J53 D-Void C- A1086542 ?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
3C	11	100	50
3D	3	80	13
4D	1	70	5
4H	0	70	5
2H	0	60	23

This drew a wide range of bids, and it's easy to see why. You have a fit and a nice suit of your own, and the right stuff from partner might make slam. Should you show the clubs or just be content to play hearts? Is this worth a game force or just an invite?

I think you have to get to game, just in case it makes. You have only three hearts, but those and the void may be enough for game.

2H does not do this hand justice. No panelist bid 4H, but I think that's a reasonable action because it gets you to the likely limit of the hand and puts pressure on the opponents.

Let's start with the picture bidders:

**DODD**: "3C. An over bid on HCP, but too much distribution and too many controls for 2H. This hope fully sets the table if EW later save over our game."

**BERNHARD**: "3C. Tempting to just bash 4H, but the bidding is far from over. The more partner knows about my hand, the better placed he will be."

**MARSHALL**: "3C. A bit light, but I would have bid 2C had there been no interference, so 3C seems pretty easy."

**MERRITT**: "3C. I'm going to game with a 7-loser hand, so start with 3C."

**WERTHEIMER**: "3C. Decent support plus a void, an other control and a 7-card suit to the ace. That more than makes up for the lack of high cards."

Others had their hearts set on hearts:

**HUDSON**: "3D. Limit raise or better. I owe partner a heart, but I judge that the diamond void makes up for that."

**MATHENY**: "3D. If I bid 3C, it may get too high before I can show hearts."

**WALKER**: "3D. 3C can lead to confusion. Depending on how the auction goes before we bid hearts, partner may think we have either a doubleton heart or a much bigger hand."

And a mad scientist:

**SPEAR**: "4D splinter. I like 4C, a fit-showing jump, but only if discussed with 3-card support."

I wonder what kind of support his partner is expecting for this?

### 6. Matchpoints, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	2H	?

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-J H-3 D-AQ982 C-QJ9876 ?**

Action #	Votes	Score	% Solvers
Pass	10	100	58
3C	5	70	12
3D	0	60	17

Here's another hand where I think our panel is being way too timid. On most hands, we hear "Bridge is a bidder's game." "Six-five, come alive!" "Faint heart never won fair lady." (you get my point), but not this time. Two-thirds of our panel and more than half the Solvers opted for:

**FOGEL**: "Pass. This is not worth opening in first chair, so I'm not going to make a 3-level over call in second chair."

**HUDSON**: "Pass. If they bid 4H, I'll be there with 4NT. If it goes Pass-2S-Pass, I'll pass like a chicken. But on this round, I have no problem."

**KESSLER**: "Pass. I'm not brave enough to enter directly with a two-suited bid, but I am stupid enough to bid an unusual 3NT or 4NT later."

**MERRITT**: "Pass. If this passes out, I'll eat my shorts."

**OPPENHEIMER**: "Pass. The auction won't end here. While 4H looks attractive, you might have a partner who thinks you have something."

That may be true, but I sure enjoy playing against opponents who don't bid. And I don't lose sleep worrying about what partner has; I just try to tell him what I have.

Some Solvers tried 2NT to show minors, but that is **not** unusual. Over their pre-empt, **no** notrump bid shows minors. 2NT and 3NT are natural. 4NT is Blackwood. 5NT is too much and probably means "pick a slam."

So how do you show two suits? Over 2H or 2S, you can jump to 4 of their suit, but that's too rich with this hand. With a major-minor hand, an option is "Leaping Michaels" — you jump to 4 of your minor, which shows at least 5-5 in that minor and the unbid major.

So if you decide to bid, (and I think you should) what's your choice? 3D to prepare a rebid? That may work on some deals, but I think if I just show my suit and overcall values, I've done my job.

**WILLENKEN**: "3C. Will any one really pass?"

New Yorkers don't realize how conservative we are here in the heartland.

**WALKER**: "3C. This is only an overcall; it does n't show the world's fair."

**FEILER**: "3C. I hate these hands; whether I bid or pass, it always turns out wrong. This time, I'll go down swinging."

Thanks to all who sent answers for this set and to our expert guest **Chris Willenken**, a New York player who is the current leader in the ACBL Junior race. Congratulations to **Kathy Miller** and **Rich Peer**, who led all Solvers and are invited to join the February panel.

Winners of the 2001 Solvers Contest will be announced in the next issue. February starts a new year and a new contest, so I hope even more of you will try the new problems on page 6.

Avoid the holiday rush. Please submit your solutions as soon as possible (by December 23) on the handy Web form: [www.prairienet.org/bridge/forum.htm](http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/forum.htm) or by sending mail or email to:

**Scott Merritt**

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### ♠ HOW THE PANEL VOTED (Panel/Staff average: 550)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score
Bob Bernhard, Longwood FL	2H	DBL	DBL	2S	3C	2NT	520
Kent Feiler, Harvard IL	2H	3D	Pass	2D	3C	3C	570
Micah Fogel, Elgin IL	2H	4S	Pass	2NT	3C	Pass	530
Jim Hudson, DeKalb IL	2H	3D	Pass	2S	3D	Pass	570
Mark Kessler, Springfield IL	2H	3D	4C	2S	3C	Pass	570
Findlay Marshall, Edinburgh UK	2H	4D	Pass	2D	3C	Pass	570
Larry Matheny, Bloomington IL	2H	DBL	4C	2D	3D	Pass	550
Tom Oppenheimer, St Louis	2S	3D	DBL	2D	3C	Pass	520
Jack Spear, Kansas City	2H	DBL	Pass	2S	4D	Pass	570
Don Wertheimer, South Bend IN	2H	DBL	Pass	2D	3C	Pass	570
Chris Willenken, New York NY	2H	DBL	Pass	2S	3C	3C	570

### ♠ HOW THE STAFF VOTED

Tom Dodd, Boerne TDBL	2H	4S	Pass	2S	3C	Pass	570
Tom Kniest, Clayton MO	2H	DBL	4C	2S	3C	3C	550
Scott Merritt, Champaign IL	2S	3D	DBL	2D	3C	Pass	520
Karen Walker, Champaign IL	2H	3S	4C	2S	3D	3C	510

### ♠ Solvers Honor Roll (Solvers' average: 490)

Kathy Miller, Bloomington IL	600	Bob Sievers, Champaign IL	570
Rich Peer, St. Louis	590	Paul Soper, Sierra Vista AZ	570
Tonee Stevenson, St. Louis	580	Judith Eaton/Glafkos Galanos, Carbondale	560
Judith Liebman, Urbana IL	570	Thomas Rossow, South Bend IN	560
Don Mathis, Florissant MO	570	Mark Satterthwaite, Urbana IL	560