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District 8 Solvers Forum

by Tom Kniest

 $oldsymbol{1}$. Matchpoints, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
_	1S	Pass	?
What is	your cal	l as Sou	th holding:
S-Q865	5 H-J7 D	-AJ109'	72 C-J?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
2D	100	8	29
2N	90	1	2
4S	80	2	21
3S	70	3	25
4C	60	5	0

I think the panel is off its collective rocker here. Eight thought this hand justified a 2/1, and one chose a forcing raise. There's nothing safe about this hand at the 5-level, and that's where you're likely to wind up if you show a strong raise. I think the 4C splinter-bidders are are really asking for it.

I agree the hand has too much playing strength to stop below game. So just bid it. If partner has the mountain that makes slam, chances are he'll bid on. There are some perfectos that will get passed. However, the danger of the dreaded 5 level is too great.

ATHY: "2D. A preemptive action may be best on some hands, as West may be poised to enter over 2D. An interesting hand with nearly no limits for either pair."

This seems like a good argument against 2D. Don't let them in cheaply.

BERNHARD: "2D. The big features are the diamonds and spade support. By bidding diamonds now and jumping in spades next, I should paint a pretty good picture of this hand."

FEILER: "2D. I'm not thrilled with this; it may let EW in to find a save, but slams, even grands, are possible and they depend on a diamond fit."

HUDSON: "2D. Of course I'll drive to 4S. Showing the diamonds first

should help partner evaluate the combined holdings, especially if EW compete. The stiff club isn't nearly as important as the diamond suit."

MERRITT: "2D. Since this isn't game forcing, I think it should be correct. I hate to lie about the spade, but I would rather bid where I live."

BWS plays a 2/1 game-force system, so when you support spades next, it will be a game-forcing auction.

MARSHALL: "2NT. This hand is worth a raise to game, which might not make, yet could make a slam if partner's cards are right. Hands in that category should not be bashed."

If you're going to overstate your high cards, I think 2D is far superior to the forcing raise here. At least it will find the double fit if it exists.

WALKER: "4S. A good hand for a Bergen limit raise followed by the raise to game if partner signs off, but I don't think BWS plays it. (Nor will you after partner makes a slow retreat to 3S.—Ed.) In case the opponents have a big fit, I don't want to let them find it with 2D."

WERTHEIMER: "3S. 2NT is too much and 4S doesn't quite fit.

2. IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1D
1S	2C	DBL *	?
* (penalt	y)		

What is your call as South holding: S-AJ104 H-Q103 D-KQ653 C-4?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Pass	100	6	32
2D	80	4	36
2NT	70	3	13
RDBL	60	1	16

I don't see how you can even think of bidding here. Partner has a better idea of your hand than you do of his, and it's unlikely your suit is better than his. If it is, *he* will run.

ATHY: "Pass. Saving to 2D is wrong. 2C is your spot, as best you can tell. Partner can remove."

Passing does not imply a tolerance; it only says you have no alternative.

MYERS: "2D. Showing a minimum without club support."

And a damn good diamond suit.

WALKER: "2D. I think a pass here implies club tolerance. East sounds like he has partner by the neck. We may still be in trouble, but it should harder for them to double this."

I think Karen heard RHO snap the red card on the table. However, this wasn't clear in the problem conditions.

The 2NT bidders are stepping into it even worse, as dummy will soon be dead and you won't be turning tricks with the long clubs. The defense is already set, and you *will* be doubled, and may wind up in 3C or higher.

DODD: "2NT. What I would have bid without the idiotic penalty double. While it's tempting to try to teach East a lesson, North may read a pass as club tolerance and pass with an insufficient suit, or with diamond tolerance. Plus, I'd hate to explain to teammates why we rode out 2C doubled while our counterparts made 3NT."

FEILER: "2NT. I'd say redouble is takeout, but I wouldn't care to find out the hard way if partner doesn't agree."

Even if partner reads a redouble, where can he go with xx, Kxx, xx, AJ10xxx? I would pass, but some would bid 2H. Showing no fear:

CURTIS: "Redouble. Partner is likely to be 3-3-1-6. If he bids 2H, expecting me to be 3-4-5-1, I can pull to 2S or 2NT."

 $oldsymbol{3}$. IMPs, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South	
_	_	_	1C	
Pass	1D	Pass	1S	
Pass	2H *	Pass	?	
* (4th-suit forcing, artificial)				

What is your call as South holding: S-A1083 H-973 D-K3 C-KQ105?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
3D	100	7	16
3H	90	2	9
3C	80	2	23
2NT	60	3	43
2S	50	0	7

Here's an old saw that keeps rearing its ugly head. What do you do when the 4th suit paints you into a corner? Kent Feiler says a raise of the 4th suit shows nothing when no other descriptive bid is available. In the past, he's run afoul of the possibility that partner could have that suit and that raising offered 4-card support as a playable spot. However, here it's clear that you didn't Pass over a 4 card heart suit to bid a 4 card spade suit. Therefore, it's the most descriptive bid available. Since all of my partners would be scratching their heads, I stuck with 3D as a least of evils, knowing that partner had to be prepared for this little lie. As you can see, the solvers really struggled with this one.

DODD: "3D. 4th suit forcing in BWS is a game force, and this seems the smallest lie. NT is only right from North's side, if at all. Maybe North is coming in spades or clubs; we won't know until his next call. In the meantime, I'm not rebidding a 4-card suit or NT without even a half stop."

FEILER: "3H. This bid doesn't 'show' anything. It denies a heart stopper, 3-card diamond support, and any great desire to rebid one of my suits."

CURTIS: "3H. Let partner decide; he's the one forcing. This pinpoints your minimum 4-3-2-4."

HUDSON: "2NT. No choice. Partner will usually have 3 hearts and will always have at least 2, in which case all we need for NT is a 4-3 or 4-4 split."

KESSLER: "3D. Anyone who bids 2NT deserves to lose the first 5 heart tricks. 3D is the most descriptive and most flexible bid we can make."

If only bridge were really played that way, where every bid got the result it deserved!

MARSHALL: "2NT. Even if partner hasn't a stop, it looks like hearts are splitting, provided he has more than one. Partner has still to show why he trotted out the 4th suit. I don't think we're committed to the NT game, but it does look like that at the moment."

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MERRITT: "3C. What else am I supposed to do? If partner follows up with 3D, I'll be happy to raise."

WERTHEIMER: "2NT. What else? I don't need hearts for this bid, and I can't have everything, anyway."

No, but since partner's 2H doesn't show a stopper, he will expect you to have one if you bid notrump. That stopper is all he wants; he'll be forgiving about anything else in your hand.

MYERS: "3D. Waiting to see what partner has in mind."

And, a comprehensive answer from: WALKER: "3D, trying to get NT played from the right side (or avoid it altogether if we don't have a stopper). Since every bid lies about a card or a stopper, it seems best to err in a suit partner wants to hear. Kx looks as good as xxx. The 'expert' call is 2S, but absent a specific discussion about this showing 'duress' with only 4 cards, I don't think I'd throw it at him."

I like the idea of bids that show duress, as I'm often in that state. Bidding 2S here would certainly lead to some on my behalf.

4. IMPs, NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1NT	3S	?

What is your call as South holding: **S**-QJ2 **H**-AJ62 **D**-AKQ64 **C**-J?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
5S	100	4	4
4D	90	3	11
DBL	90	1	11
4NT	80	2	20
5NT	70	1	2
4S	70	1	14
6NT	50	2	25

This is a wonderful problem. Lots of people are trying bids that they hope mean what they want them to mean. One popular answer was:

KESSLER: "4D. I've got to start somewhere, and hope to find out if we're off the spade AK. Anything we bid is going to put partner in a box, but the more bids he makes, the more information I'll have for my final guess."

ATHY: "4D. 33 HCP usually produce a slam. This seems the best action to give partner a chance to show a spade card. It may also put a potentially-spadeless West on lead."

Who will lead a club to partner's ace and get a spade ruff. No, I don't think we want West on lead against any contract. Here's are some other ideas:

MYERS: "Double. Negative, waiting to see what partner says. If he shows a spade stopper with 3NT, I'll bid 6NT."

And if he bids 4H?

MATHENY: "6NT. Even if we find a fit in a suit, say via 5NT, the possibility of a spade ruff is great. I'll pay off to the AK of spades."

FEILER: "4S. I'm hoping for 4NT, over which I'll bid 6NT. If I get 5C, I'll try 5D.

4S could be ambiguous, as opener may think you're showing a singleton or both minors. Some Solvers tried 4C, but I don't think that would be recognized as Gerber without discussion.

BERNHARD: "5NT. Opponents could have 7 HCP and they could be the AK of spades. Hopefully, partner will read this as saying I have the 3rd round of spades stopped and he will go on with a high spade honor.'

Most of the panel and Solvers have the right idea here, but haven't found the right gadget. Here's the "easy" answer to this dilemma:

CURTIS: "5S. Asks for a stopper." **DODD**: "5S. The jump to 5 of the opponents' suit goes way back to when bridge was young and has always been played as an asking bid. This is unambiguous and must show the spade queen since North is forced to bid 5NT with the xx of spades.'

Old tools are sometimes the best tools. 5S has to be the "right" bid here, although I also like this approach:

MERRITT: "4NT. I just can't come up with a sensible auction. East might have the spade AK, or West might have annoying minor-suit holdings. Hopefully, partner will know with a 4333 16-count that it's time to go."

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4NT could be the winner at the table. Even with 33 HCP and a spade stopper, 6NT may have little play if North has something like Kx, KQxx, xx, AKxx. But if partner bids 6NT over an invitation, you *know* it's making.

5. Matchpoints, NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		3C	Pass
3S	DBL	Pass	?

What is your call as South holding: **S**-Void **H**-AQ972 **D**-63 **C**-A106532?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
6H	100	4	16
4H	80	3	43
4C	80	2	4
4S	80	1	5
5H	80	0	2
Pass	70	3	28
7H	50	1	0

Many answers on this one. Some of the confusion seems to center on the interpretation of the double:

HUDSON: "Pass. Assuming partner's double is penalty, this hand looks like a horrible misfit."

MARSHALL: "6H. If partner's double is purely penalty, I shall find another partner. So it is takeout."

Yes, it should be takeout. However, since partner has one or no clubs, it's a given that he has at least moderate spade length. You can even bid them here to expose a psych. So much for those who think 4S is a cuebid!

Some panelists opted for Big Bids: **ATHY**: "7H. Probably gets me a zero, but at least a double of 7S should be a winner. Let the opponents guess."

Lucky for you, the lowest score is 50, although you're in danger here. 7H could work out, and you had some soulmates, but caution won out:

CURTIS: "6H. Nice preempt. 7H is possible, but strive for the best result possible, not the best possible result."

FEILER: "6H. Our best chance of getting to 7H is if an opponent tries 6S. If it's East, I'll pass and invite seven. Incidentally, I have to play the hand to avoid an opening round ruff."

WALKER: "6H. A cuebid is pointless, so you might as well just bid your values. Partner's double should be cards/takeout and isn't necessarily a spade stack. West's 3S is ostensibly forcing, but I bet it's based on a big bundle of spades and little else. The other problem with cuebids is partner may bid hearts first, and we'll go down on a club ruff on opening lead."

The slam could make, but what 12 tricks do you think you'll take, especially with a trump lead? I'm with:

MYERS: "4H. I'm worrying about duplicated club values."

Not having two quick losers is not the same as having 12 tricks. We'll revisit this theme again in Problem 6.

Others tried a gentler slam search:

KESSLER: "4C. I plan to cue clubs and spades and then bid 6H. If partner has solid diamonds or compensating values, he can bid 7. I would think two cuebids followed by 6H would certainly indicate an interest in 7H."

WERTHEIMER: "4C. East and I could have 13 clubs, and North and West could have 13 spades, but that's unlikely because the double should be takeout. Partner could easily be 3-4-6-0 with KJ of hearts and AKQ of diamonds. If so, I like my chances in 7H. However, if partner has 7 solid spades, I expect him to bid 4S after my cuebid to expose the psych."

Partner has solid spades and LHO has a big diamond suit to explain his psych? The game you play in is too tricky for me! Finally, we have:

BERNHARD: "Pass. Sounds like they're in trouble, so enjoy!"

DODD: "Pass. Perhaps we can make 4H on some sort of cross-ruff, but why guess? 3S should be bloody, and EW have nowhere to run; no place to hide."

So have you formed an opinion on how to handle this type of auction? My suggestion for partner's actions over 3S: 3NT, 4D, 4H and 4S are natural. 4C is a two-suiter. Double is takeout (with spades) if 3S was forcing; it's penalty if 3S was nonforcing.

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6. Matchpoints, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	_	Pass	1S
Pass	1NT *	Pass	2H
Pass	4D **	Pass	?
* (forcin	a NT) ** /	enlinter fo	r hoarte)

What is your call as South holding: **S-**AK542 **H-**AQ74 **D-**A753 **C-**Void?

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
6H	100	6	34
4S	90	4	20
6D	90	1	0
4NT	70	1	7
5D	60	2	4
5C	50	0	13
Others	50	0	22

A lot of action here, too! It's true that 5C, chosen by several Solvers, is a cuebid, but it's one you want partner to make so you can ascertain that it's a useful value (12 cross-ruffing tricks, even on a trump lead).

BERNHARD: "6H. Bidding what I think I can make."

MYERS: "6H. We have the magic fit, but where would tricks come from to make 7?"

MATHENY: "6H. Partner should have top cards to suggest a slam."

KESSLER: "6H. With a trump lead, 7H will need help. With AKxxxx of clubs and Kxxx of hearts, partner would surely bid 2C over 1S, so he rates to be 2-5-1-5 or 2-4-1-6 without great clubs. I don't know anyone who wouldn't bid six."

You've found him. I think this is yet another hand with no quick losers, but no assurance of 12 tricks. If partner has 6 hearts, I grant you have a good chance of 12 tricks. Or if he's 5-5 with KQJ of clubs, you're in good shape. However, on many deals, the club king or queen would be more useful values than the diamond ace.

This is matchpoints, and I think it's too big a shot to jump to six. My choice: **CURTIS**: "4S. Let the cuebidding begin!"

FEILER: "4S. I hope no one bothers to question whether this is a cuebid.

5C is a bad idea; that's partner's other suit and we don't want to give him the impression we have the ace."

MERRITT: "4S. This hand is a clear advance and 4S seems like the place to start."

The 4S cuebid gives you some room, and you can still stop in 5H if it's right. Some of our other cuebidders weren't stopping, though:

WALKER: "6D. Nothing good can come from a low-level cuebid (4S, 5C, 5D), which just leads to a long auction where I show aces, partner retreats back to hearts, and I have to guess. The jump cuebid *does* mean something, though. It tells partner I have everything covered up to this level. He'll know club controls aren't important, else I would have started cuebidding at a lower level to find them, and he should know that it's his secondary cards (heart king and spade queen) that are needed for a grand."

MARSHALL: "5D. When I cue 5S on the next round, this should give partner the best chance of valuing his SQ, if he has it."

And finally, a real optimist:

DODD: "4NT. Tempting to simply flail 6H, but if North shows both missing keycards, we're odds on for a grand, as I can't envision less than 5-card heart support in dummy."

Thanks to all who sent in answers for this set, which was as difficult for the panel as it was for the Solvers. Maybe the next set will be tamer!

Congratulations to **Jenni Hartsman** and **Don Mathis**, who outscored all Solvers and are invited to join the August panel.

You can join in by trying the new problems on page 10. Please submit your answers as soon as possible (by June 24) on the handy web form:

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

Scott Merritt, 1215 Paula Drive, Champaign IL 61821 merritt@prairiecity.com Page 10 **District 8 Advocate**

HOW THE PANEL VOTED (Panel/Staff average:)							
Norm Athy, St. Louis Bob Bernhard, St. Louis Tony Curtis, Chicago Kent Feiler, Harvard IL Jim Hudson, DeKalb IL Mark Kessler, Springfield IL Finlay Marshall, Edinburgh UK Larry Matheny, Bloomington IL Mason Myers, St. Louis	1 2D 2D 3S 2D 2D 2D 2NT 3S 2D	Pass Pass RDBL 2NT Pass Pass 2NT 2D 2D	3 3D 3C 3H 3H 2NT 3D 2NT 3D 3D	4 4D 5NT 5S 4S 6NT 4D 4D 6NT X	5 7H Pass 6H 6H Pass 4C 6H 4H 4H	6 6H 6H 4S 4S 6H 6H 5D 6H 6H	540 540 500 510 520 480 570 470 480 550
Don Wertheimer, So. Bend IN	3S	2D	2NT	4NT	4C	5D	430
HOW	THE S	TAFF	VOT	ED			
Tom Dodd, Boerne TX Tom Kniest, Clayton MO Scott Merritt, Champaign IL Karen Walker, Champaign IL	2D 4S 2D 4S	2NT Pass Pass 2D	3D 3D 3C 3D	5S 5S 4NT 5S	Pass 4H 4S 6H	4NT 4S 4S 6D	510 550 530 550
SOLVERS Honor Roll (Solvers' average:)							
Jenni Hartsman, Champaign IL Don Mathis, St. Louis Charles Fyffe, St. Louis Allan Sheppard, St. Louis Jim Diebel, Chicago Rich Peer, St. Louis	560 520 510 510 510 510	Dav Ash Mic Bill	re Wetzo er Kacl ah Foge Johnso	n, Chillica el, Auror on, Farm	npaign IL othe IL	10	510 510 500 500 500 500

Solvers Forum August Problems

1. M	atchpoints,	both	vulnerable
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West	North	East	South
	1NT	2H*	Pass
Pass	DBL	Pass	?
* (Hearts	& spades)		

What is your call as South holding: S-Q42 H-Q5 D-QJ86 C-10975?

2. Matchpoints, NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South	
_		$1 \mathrm{H}$	DBL	
4H	4S	Pass	?	
What is your call as South holding:				
S-KQ8	H-42	D- AKQ104	C-KQJ ?	

3. IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
_		1NT	DBL *
Pass	2NT	Pass	?
* (pen	altv)		

What is your call as South holding: S- Q54 H-A D-AKJ742 C-A108?

4. IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
_			Pass
1C	DBL	RDBL	?
What is	your call	as South	holding
	H -104 D		

5. IMPs, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South	
_	_	_	1D	
Pass	1S	Pass	2H	
Pass	3D *	Pass	3S	
Pass	4H	Pass	?	
* (forcing	g; 8+ pts.)			
What is your call as South holding:				
	H- A1073			

6 Matchnoints NS vulnerable

o. Mau	inpoints, i	no vuine	erabie
West	North	East	South
_		3S	?

What is your call as South holding: S-A10652 H-KQJ6 D-KQJ3 C-Void?