

## District 8 Solvers Forum -- June 2002

by Tom Kniest, Clayton MO

### 1. IMPs, none vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	2D *	Pass
Pass	2S	Pass	?
* (weak 2-bid)			

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-AK3 H-62 D-KJ93 C-J942 ?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
2NT	100	6	8
4S	90	4	26
3NT	80	3	16
3S	80	1	24
3D	70	2	23
Pass	50	0	3

We've been endowed with a good set of problems and even the expert panel can't agree on most, including this one.

We know North does n't have a great hand because he did n't double. We just don't know how weak he is. The lack of a double is also ominous in that he may be void in diamonds and didn't want to sit for a 2-level double. Therefore, your diamond holding may be worthless in a spade contract. Still, a hand like S-Q10xxxx H-AQx D-void C-Axxx could produce game.

I like 2NT, but just a tad more than 3S. Jumping to game hangs partner. You want him to protect, and you don't want to make him gunshy about it.

**BERNHARD:** "3S. This is IMPs, so I'll do a gentle raise. Kind of middle ground, which places you well for the post-hand discussion."

**FEILER:** "4S. I might be burning partner for his balance. 3NT initially looks good, but West's lead is likely to be in hearts or clubs. They might have a diamond ruff coming in 4S, but East won't lead the A from AQxxxx."

**PAULO:** "3NT. After opponents' weak calls, partner should have a good hand. I follow Hamman's rule."

**MERRITT:** "3D. Why not invite game? If partner retreats to 3S, I'll let him lie. Any other bids will get the game boost, though."

For the majority:

**DODD:** "2NT. Balancing or not, this is IMPs. If we were vulnerable, I would jump to 3NT."

**MARSHALL:** "2NT. Everything can be wrong, from supporting partner and running into a diamond ruff, to bidding NT and seeing hearts cashed. Partner has to have something, so it seems he has some points in hearts."

**KESSLER:** "2NT. There are a lot of 11-12 point hands where 3NT will make and 4S will go down. Also, partner has a chance to bid another suit, raise or pass. There is no guarantee of game opposite a balancer."

**RABIDEAU:** "2NT. If I had better spades, I'd raise. Seriously, partner is allowed to have a decent hand. His non-spade cards are sitting behind most of the opponent's round-suit cards, and I want to prevent potential diamond ruffs."

### 2. Matchpoints, both vulnerable

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

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-Q H-AKQ D-Q102 C-KQ9754?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
2NT	100	8	40
2D	80	5	13
3C	70	1	24
2H	60	2	8
3NT	50	0	13
Other	50	0	2

This was pretty clear to me: bid 2NT to show high-card power and the other suits stopped. At matchpoints, which rewards NT. Also, kiss your potential club slam good bye. For this reason, I'd bid 3C at IMPs and probably not be embarrassed by partner's response.

**CARTEAUX:** "3C. The only bid that makes sense to me. I don't like to bid NT with a singleton in partner's suit."

3C seems the straight value bid, but the flaw is that your suit is pretty ragged for this call. Other panelists tried to keep long clubs in the picture by reversing into a short red suit. The 2D reverse might work, since you can still bid 3NT over a raise or spade re bid. If you reverse to 2H, however, partner will believe that's a real suit. Let's see you unravel the auction after his jump to 4H or a splinter in either minor.

**ATHY:** "2H. A forcing action in the suit where you have big cards. You need to hear a diamond cuebid en route to your club slam, should there be one, so why cloud the issue by reversing into a creepy 3-card diamondsuit?"

**DODD:** "2H. How did this non-problem sneak into an other wise tough set?"

**FEILER:** "2D. Pretty good for 3C; even the stiff Q might be working. I'll try to head off their best suit for an eventual 3NT. Too bad it's a bidding contest; I won't be able to see how it works out."

**PAULO:** "2D. Anything else shows weaker points than this reverse."

**MATHENY:** "2D. I want to discourage a diamond lead against our likely final contract of 3NT."

I think simple is best here, and I'm with the majority, who thought this looked like a notrump hand:

**POPKIN:** "2NT. I always make the point-count bid, especially when I don't have a second suit. If partner has 6 spades, she'll rebid them; if only 5, then checkback. If 4, we'll play in NT."

**MERRITT:** "2NT. Hopefully, my stiff Q will pull the same weight as 32 doubleton. I'm a little heavy for this call, as well."

**WALKER:** "2NT. Switch the hearts and spades and I'd try a bogus reverse to 2D, but there's no reason to skew your distribution with this hand, which is going to be bidding 3NT eventually."

**3.** Matchpoints, none vulnerable

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

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-AQ7 H-742 D-J4 C-Q10953?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Pass	100	9	18
4H	90	3	32
Double	90	2	34
3NT	90	2	16

I think the Solvers are way ahead of the panel on this one. Pass is so popular in obvious and anti-matchpoint that I gave every one else 90 just for bidding.

If you think 3S is cold, then bid 4H as a one-trick save. Partner has more than a weak 2-bid, so you're odds on to set this. RHO did n't double the second time to show extras, so he may be just bidding one more for the road, hoping to play it undoubled.

Yes, you might beat it only one, and every once in awhile, they may make it, but they're almost certainly going down. It wouldn't surprise me to collect 2 spades, a heart, a diamond, a diamond ruff, and a club, or some combination thereof.

**CHICKENLITTLE:** "Pass. The sky is falling."

**ATHY:** "Pass. Partner is in 1-2-3 Pass mode. Why start a fight with a creepy maximum 2H raise? 3NT could work, and with my luck, probably does. But with these slow cards, nothing besides Pass strikes me as sensible."

**MARSHALL:** "Pass. Does 3H mean something different in the states? Here, it's an attempt to play in 3H, going one off. It is not constructive."

In the U.S., we sometimes make a competitive bid in the full expectation of making it.

**PAULO:** "Pass. partner preempted after a 3rd-hand opening."

**RABIDEAU:** "Pass. my preempting partner is n't going to supply much on defense."

**WALKER:** "Pass. 4H could be a good save, but I do have some defense. Double is out of the question, especially since partner could be quite light for his 3rd-seat opening."

Except that he did bid again, and didn't preempt originally. Think

about the hands you open in 3rd seat and then shrink back into your chair. He doesn't have that hand, and he heard you bid only 2H. If he has solid hearts and out, he won't sit a double.

Here come the adventures:

**BERNHARD:** "4H. Tempting to double, but 4H rates to make, and I might get a crack at 4S."

There's a form of liar's poker at work here. When long suits abound, some people tend take another bid.

**POPKIN:** "Double. Partner has extra values, but I don't know if my clubs will be useful. Since my hearts are so weak, I don't want to take a chance on going down in 4H when I think I can beat 3S. I lead the J of diamonds."

**FEILER:** "3NT. Those queens and jacks look more like 3NT than 4H."

**4** Matchpoints, none vulnerable

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

What is your call as South holding:

**S-AJ10654 H-4 D-532 C-AQ9?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
Double	100	4	13
3H	90	4	15
3S	80	3	40
4S	70	2	7
3C	60	2	15
2S	50	1	14

A very close vote here. I gave the top score to DBL because it covers every base. This is not penalty. It shows a good hand and shortness in hearts. Partner can sit if indicated, but he'll usually bid, and we have plenty of time to get to the proper contract.

There's a further hint that double could be the winner because support doubles are now part of BWS, so partner has already denied three spades.

The 3H bidders are odds on to hear 3NT from partner. The 4S bidders will often buy a stiff trump and go down. However, I have a lot of sympathy for 4S...towards the end of an evening

with lousy scores, and I just want to get the hands over and get to the bar.

Almost 30 percent of the Solvers made nonforcing, competitive bids of 2S and 3C, but with opening-bid values, you can't just give up. Forty percent of Solvers went with:

**PAULO:** "3S. To show my six cards in an invitational hand."

**CARTEAUX:** "3S. Too good for 2S, but if we're playing support doubles, I might consider 2S instead."

I gave 3S a fairly good score because it had so much support on the panel. However, 3S is nonforcing, and I think this hand is much too good for this bid.

**ATHY:** "3H. The ubiquitous cuebid. 3S is non-forcing and I think I have a bit too much for that considering my big black cards. A club raise to any level could lose the spade suit when partner holds two. So, once again, I ask my expert partner to figure out what needs to be done."

**BERNHARD:** "3H. Does partner have the Qx of spades, or hearts well stopped, or a lot of clubs? 3H asks."

**KESSLER:** "3H. I don't like to double with a stiff heart, especially with the opponents not vulnerable. Even at matchpoints, 3S is for wusses."

**DODD:** "3H, seduced by club honors."

From those who own the table:

**FEILER:** "4S. In my home-brew system, I'd be able to double for take out. 4S is a bit of an over bid but what else? 3H will produce 3NT from North more or less automatically and if I now pull that to 4C or 4S, I've made a slam try."

**WALKER:** "4S. This hand is way too good for 3S. Double suggests doubt (and therefore more balanced values) and may endplay partner into passing. Even if he bids over a double, it only delays the inevitable, which will be 4S."

Now from the enlightened few:

**POPKIN:** "Double, reopening. Since BWS plays support doubles, it is quite possible partner has a penalty double of 2H, but couldn't because it would have shown support. I play all doubles under the bidder as take out."

**RABIDEAU:** “Double. 3S is tempting, but partner doesn’t have more than 2 and could have a heart stack since there was no heart raise by East.”

**MERRITT:** “Double. This should give us enough flexibility to get to the right spot.”

**5.** IMPs, both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	1S	Pass
1NT*	2NT**	Pass	3D
Pass	4C	Pass	?

\* (forcing NT)    \*\* (minors)

What is your call as South holding:

**S-A10643 H-AJ1032 D-J3 C-6 ?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
5C	100	5	10
4H	90	2	28
4S	90	1	2
4NT	90	1	4
5D	70	4	14
Pass	60	3	21
Other	50	0	21

Three of the 4-level bidders were showing values on the way to at least 5C, so I raised their scores. One of them meant to bid hearts naturally and he got an unexpected bonus.

What does partner have? It’s a hand so good that he didn’t want to overcall 2C and have the auction die. So, he made a bid that forced you to bid, and then bid the other suit at a higher level — in other words, he’s ready to play a 4-level contract when you could be broke. He also has longer clubs than diamonds. He could be 6-5, 7-5, 7-4 (rarely, but keep an open mind), 7-6 etc. You can take care of whatever major-suit losers he has, and your diamond jack could be a big card.

Probably the minimum hand partner can have is something like **S-x H-x D-KQ10xx C-AKQxxx?** Can that hand play diamonds? Only if both diamonds and clubs break. However, clubs can stand 4-2 in both suits.

Our slam-going panelists thought partner might be even stronger:

**CURTIS:** “4H. Someone seems to be lying and it better not be pard, who

should have a big hand. I’m going to risk a heart bid in the hope that partner takes it as either a cuebid or ambivale about clubs vs. diamonds.”

**DODD:** “4NT. The only logical conclusion is East psyched and partner has something like 5-6 or 5-7 (6-7 anyone?). The main point is that 4C is not a correction, and 4NT is not Blackwood (no agreed suit), but should show values (i.e., aces!) and an inability to select either minor suit.”

**FEILER:** “4S. If partner is 5-6 in the minors, we certainly have a slam and maybe even a grand. If he’s 6-7 and my aces are wasted, we may not even have a game. I don’t know whether we can sort these possibilities out, but I’ll give it a try. I could try 4H or 4NT, but I don’t know what they mean, and if 4NT is RKCB, I wouldn’t know what the response meant.”

I think Kent sips too much of that home brew he mentioned earlier. No slam tries for me with a stiff trump and a possibly worthless ace. Most panelists were just hoping to make game, and some were even more pessimistic:

**ATHY:** “Pass, and hope partner doesn’t come unglued when I have 2 aces. With some partners, I guess I can’t pass, but across from a good 7-5 hand, I think this is the wrong stuff.”

**PAULO:** “Pass. I respect misfits.”

Four panelists opted for the 5-2 fit:

**CARTEAUX:** “5D. A bit aggressive, but I like my two aces and the club shortness.”

There are some hands where a club ruff might net you an extra trick, but with partner having so many clubs -- and such good ones, if we’re reading him correctly -- the ruff may not be helpful, or even safe.

Here are the solid citizens who will convince you that 5C is best:

**POPKIN:** “5C. I don’t want to play a 5-2 diamond fit. The other question is how valuable my two aces are. I suspect one of them is paper, so with no minor-suit help, I’m just going to bid 5C.”

**MARSHALL:** "5C. I've been on the receiving end of unimaginative partners who don't 'see' 11 tricks just because they don't have a fit. If partner can bid to the 4-level all by himself, I can go on. If I had a fit, I'd be cuebidding, but here I don't want to encourage too much. It's likely one of my aces is waste paper."

**WALKER:** "5C. Game may depend on how good partner's clubs are, but with two aces and the diamond filler, I feel like I have to raise."

**6.** Matchpoints, NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1D
2C	DBL	3C	?

What is your call as South holding:  
**S-K H-J1083 D-AKQ106 C-AJ3?**

Action	Score	Votes	% Solvers
4H	100	10	47
4C	80	1	3
3NT	70	4	11
Double	60	1	15
3H	60	0	21
Others	50	0	3

The panel was pretty much in agreement on this one. You have the values for game. If partner can't stand hearts, then 5D should play OK. I upgraded 4C because it was oriented to finding a major-suit fit.

I think double is very risky, as there's no guarantee of beating 3C and I would expect a make more of ten than not. The 3NT bid may work out if LHO has both club honors. If not, I don't see much chance for a make.

**MATHENY:** "Double. Tough problem. This is the wrong vulnerability for double, but partner may have only three hearts and I need the club 10 to feel good about 3NT. Partner will know I don't have great clubs (no 3NT), so may take another call."

**BERNHARD:** "3NT. Hamman rule if 3NT is one of the choices. This should play well in NT and partner may not have four hearts."

I wonder how many awful 3NT bids and/or passes of 3NT have been ascribed to Bob H. I doubt he would want to take responsibility for all of them.

**MARSHALL:** "3NT. I presume the double promises at least 4 spades and 3 hearts. In this auction, I'm guessing, but by bidding 3NT, I'm showing all my points, including the club jack."

**WALKER:** "3NT. I don't know if BWS specifies that partner's negative double guarantees both majors, but even if it does, that agreement is unplayable. What's partner supposed to bid over 2C with his 5-3-3-2 8-count?"

The majority chose 4H, and some of them were also suspicious that partner might not have a 4-card suit:

**FEILER:** "4H. If partner doesn't have four hearts, we should still be able to scramble out to 4NT or 5D."

**PAULO:** "4H. If partner is strong, he can go on."

**KESSLER:** "4H. Trying for slam is too awkward, not to mention unlikely. I'll take a plus at matchpoints."

**DODD:** "4H. In BWS, North holds both majors for this double. 3H is nonforcing and 3NT is too big a gamble."

I don't think BWS plays this double promises both majors because it's just too limiting. If you can provide a reference, I'd like to see it.

Thanks to all who sent in answers to this interesting set. Congratulations to **Tonee Stevenson** and **Arbha Vongsvivut**, who topped all Solvers and are invited to join the August panel.

The annual Solvers Contest is based on your best three scores, so there's still time to enter for 2002. Check out the August problems on the last page and send your solutions as soon as possible (by June 24, please) on the web form:

[www.prairienet.org/bridge/forum.htm](http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/forum.htm)  
 or by mail or email to:

**Scott Merritt, 1215 Paula Drive,  
 Cham paign IL 61821  
 Email: merritt@shout.net**

♠ HOW THE PANEL VOTED

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score
Norm Athy, St. Louis	3NT	2H	Pass	3H	Pass	4H	490
Bob Bernhard, Florida	3S	2NT	4H	3H	4H	3NT	520
Bob Carteaux, Ft. Wayne IN	4S	3C	4H	3S	5D	4H	500
Tony Curtis, Champaign IL	3NT	2NT	3NT	3C	4H	4H	510
Kent Feiler, Harvard IL	4S	2D	3NT	4S	4S	4H	510
Charles Fisher, St. Louis	4S	2NT	4H	2S	Pass	4H	500
Mark Kessler, Springfield IL	2NT	2NT	Pass	3H	5C	4H	590
Finlay Marshall, Edinburgh UK	2NT	2D	Pass	3C	5C	3NT	510
Larry Matheny, Bloomington IL	3D	2D	Pass	3S	5D	DBL	460
Manuel Paulo, Lisbon, Portugal	3NT	2D	Pass	3S	Pass	4H	500
Nancy Popkin, St. Louis	4S	2NT	DBL	DBL	5C	4C	560
Larry Rabideau, St. Anne IL	2NT	2D	Pass	DBL	5D	3NT	520

♠ HOW THE STAFF VOTED

Tom Dodd, Boerne TX	2NT	2H	Pass	3H	4NT	4H	540
Tom Kniest, Clayton MO	2NT	2NT	DBL	DBL	5C	4H	590
Scott Merritt, Champaign IL	3D	2NT	Pass	DBL	5D	4H	540
Karen Walker, Champaign IL	2NT	2NT	Pass	4S	5C	3NT	540

♠ SOLVERS HONOR ROLL (Solvers' average: 481)

Tonee Stevenson, St. Louis	570	Ed Rauch, St. Louis	540
Arbha Vongsvivut, Godfrey IL	560	Bob Sievers, Champaign IL	540
Glenn Smith, St. Louis	550	Paul Soper, Sierra Vista AZ	540
Warren Bosch, Elgin IL	540	Terry Goodykoontz, Champaign IL	530
Jim Hudson, Dekalb IL	540	Bob Shair, Champaign IL	530

*Tied at 520:* Steve Babin, Normal IL; John Contarino, Bloomington IL; Mark Leonard, Ypsilanti MI; Rich Peer, St. Louis; Lars Sandegren, Quincy IL; Mark Satterthwaite, Urbana IL; Frank Varga, Budd Lake NJ

Solvers Forum August Problems

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-KQ1095 C-A?**

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-K1096?**

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-753 C-1098754?**

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?**

5. Board-a-match teams, EW vul.

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?**

6. Matchpoints, EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1C
Pass	1H	3D	3H
5D	DBL	<b>All pass</b>	

What is your **OPENING LEAD** with:

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