



would do with a slammish hand and a singleton club, so, I think this places pard in a better position to evaluate his hand if lefty bids 5♣.

J.S.: *There is another possibility Fred failed to list:*

Ivaska: 3♣. I have more than enough playing strength for my limit raise (or better), although the defense is a little lacking. However, I don't see that I have a suitable alternative. The only other possibility is a direct 4♣, for which this holding is much too strong. Not only that, but 4♣ may have the effect of goading them into competing with five of a minor, which would leave me very poorly placed indeed. I could not expect intelligent cooperation from North since I would have had such an atypical 4♣ bid (shorter spades plus an ace). I suppose I would double in that case but without a high degree of confidence. My cuebid may produce the salubrious effect of allowing West to get her/his club raise out of his system, persuading him to sell out to the eventual 4♣.

J.S.: *Some partnerships use 3NT by responder in these auctions to indicate a good 4♣ bid. The disadvantage of that bid and other lower bids, compared to 4♣, is that they give West the opportunity to show a club fit or an independent diamond suit below the five-level. At the table the bid was 4♣. North held: ♠AKQ62 ♥KJ865 ♦A ♣J10, and the cold slam was missed. Initially I leaned towards the under-strength 2♥ bid, but I am switching to the 3♣ bid which Paul suggested. Either of those bids plus Roger's fit bid would have found success. I hope my call is not unduly influenced by knowing the deal (West would not have competed).*

Problem 2.

Both sides vulnerable, IMP scoring
You are South holding:

♠103 ♥AQ2 ♦A1065 ♣A1063

South	West	North	East
1NT*	2♣	Dbl**	3♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
?			

Ivaska on Bridge



By Paul Ivaska
Las Vegas, Nevada

*Declarer Can't Choose
Losing Option if
It Isn't Offered*

North
♠7
♥QJ82
♦Q75
♣A10874

West East
♠J103 ♠A4
♥954 ♥763
♦K1062 ♦AJ84
♣Q63 ♣J952

South
♠KQ98652
♥AK10
♦93
♣K

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

Opening Lead: ♦2

Some holdings and hand patterns have definite personalities. This one from an IMP match between two excellent teams stars one such holding, and a player who understood its characteristics.

The bidding was good, and consistent with modern practices. South's hand is strong defensively, therefore a preempt

*14+ to 17
**Takeout

Lee: Pass. I would bid four of a minor if I knew which one was right, but as it stands, I don't want to guess in a situation where they are probably just down.

Ivaska: Pass. I don't expect a large penalty, of course, especially with almost the worst defensive trump holding possible, but I'm not sanguine about four of a minor (or 4♥ for that matter) in view of my flat distribution. I expect to beat 3♣ in view of my three aces, especially if partner can be persuaded to lead a trump, although I wouldn't be surprised to be told that it made.

Bramley: Pass. Partner has game-going strength, but if we have two spade losers and no stopper we may not have a game. We rate to get +200 or +500, sometimes +800: a great result when we have no game, and tolerable when we do. I'd like to know whether partner had a way to show shortness on the previous round. If not, then the danger of passing is greater. Of course, bidding offers no assurance that we'll reach either the right level or the right strain. If forced to bid I'd choose 4♣, which won't be great when pard is 2-4-4-3.

Rosen: Pass. And hope to get +500. Second choice would be 4♣ and force a minor suit game which should have a play.

Roeder: Pass. 4♥ or five of a minor might make. But you are minimum, albeit a beautiful minimum. This seems a pretty straight forward adherence to the religion of the Law of Total Tricks, assuming the opponents have nine trumps – admittedly, not a sure thing.

Lawrence: Pass. I have four potential tricks and a partner who is willing to defend. My doubleton spade may be facing a doubleton spade, and that's a bad sign.

Hamilton: Pass. With three aces it would seem that we could set 3♣, yet the law says they will be okay there if they have the presumed nine or ten

spades. If they have only nine spades we are off the first two tricks, so game in a minor is unlikely. Because the law may be off by a trick (the deck is not split; we have at least a 22-18 advantage), I think pass is best in the long run.

Stakgold: 3NT. Because I neither doubled 3♣, nor bid 3NT over 3♣, partner knows I don't have much in spades, so his double is mainly takeout. My 3NT is for minor suit takeout. I have already denied four hearts by failing to bid hearts over 3♣.

J.S.: *3NT seems quite reasonable if partner will assume it is takeout. Change that - make it that 3NT seems best if it would be takeout. My partner would think that is where I wanted to play, but there is a strong argument that it should be takeout. North might have bid differently, holding: ♠Q ♥J9764 ♦KJ74 ♣QJ7, but if he had chosen 3♦ over 2♣ (invitational or better with hearts) we would have bid to a hopeless heart game. It would not only be hopeless, it might quite possibly have been doubled by East, who cleverly bid only 3♣ with: ♠98652 ♥K10853 ♦2 ♣95. North might also have down-graded his cards and passed when 3♣ got back to him. At least he led a trump, the only lead to hold the contract to nine tricks. But I don't see any villain on this deal; only a hero's award for East.*

Meyers: 4♥, and go for the Moysian. If partner does not have four hearts he or she should bid a five-card minor and not double a second time.

J.S.: *Wow! Nothing like going for all the marbles. For our younger readers, a Moysian fit is a four-three trump fit, the virtues of which were frequently espoused by Alphonse Moysie, Jr., a long-time, outspoken editor of The Bridge World.*

Problem 3.

Both sides vulnerable, IMP scoring
You are South holding:

♠AKQ7 ♥9 ♦A96 ♣KJ943

South	West	North	East
2♣	Dbl	2♥	1♦
Dbl	*Pass	3NT	3♦
?			Pass

*Penalty

Rosen: Pass. Something looks fishy on this hand. I want out.

Roeder: Pass. Sorry, do not see the problem.

J.S.: *Prepare to be enlightened.*

Stakgold: Pass. Partner's 3NT makes little sense after not passing my business double of 3♦. Is pard showing a club fit after bidding 2♥ with a six-card suit? I pass, hoping partner has something like: ♠Jx ♥K10xxxx ♦Qx ♣Qxx although I would have passed 3♦ doubled with that hand.

J.S.: *Yes, that's the problem. It is difficult to come up with a hand partner could hold to remove the double which includes more than one diamond.*

Lee: 4♣. Partner's two reasons for pulling this double would be club support and/or short diamonds. Both of these things are excellent for my hand, and it's unlikely we are down in 5♣ unless we are having a misunderstanding about the meaning of my double.

Lawrence: 4♣. Partner won't bid 3NT without a good club fit. I'll bid 4♦ in case he has four clubs to the ♠AQ, and a stiff diamond. There's no reason he can't have that hand. And if he has a lesser club fit, we rate to have a play for 5♣. Not sure we can find 4♣. If I bid it, it won't carry the interest in a club slam.

J.S.: *I can't agree with any example*

hand for partner that includes four clubs and a singleton diamond. Partner bid a non-forcing 2♥ over the negative double. He would have cue bid 2♦ with a big club fit.

Hamilton: 4♣. Where is that club suit we represented? The auction sounds like partner has a club fit, but will it be sufficient? We can provide only four sure tricks if pard's fit is just the ♣Q. Cannot expect the ♣A and the ♥AK, there are too many cards in the opponents' hands to hope for that. I like pulling to 4♣ or possibly 5♣. I do not think we can make 3NT but could make 5♣, or even 6♣ (♠xxxx ♥Axxxxxx ♦x ♣Axx).

Ivaska: 4♣. I don't care for the double of 3♦, to say the least. Maybe it's just me, but bad things seem to happen when I double a partial at IMPs with such a weak trump holding (including just three, no less). I would have simply gone ahead with describing my excellent hand via 3♣. After all, we could have a spade game (for which a penalty of 3♦ figures to be inadequate compensation), although it isn't that likely. However, the bridge gods have graciously provided me with a second chance, which rarely happens. Partner must have a club fit to remove 3NT (otherwise he would have just passed, not realizing the dubious nature of my previous auction).

However, 3NT figures to require nine running tricks, since East seems to have a good diamond suit. Couple that with the ♣A, as is likely (there isn't much else outstanding), and 3NT has no chance.

Bramley: Pass. I can't imagine bidding. We could make opposite the ♣A and out. Partner ought to have a weak defensive hand with bad hearts and stronger clubs than I'd expect, like: ♠xxxx ♥Jxxxxxx ♦x ♣AQ8. Opposite that hand 3NT is cold, ♠5 is unlikely, and 3♦ may make.

J.S.: *You have the shape correct, but surely, with your example hand partner would have simply raised clubs. He wouldn't trot out a weak heart suit, especially after the negative double, holding limited values and good clubs.*

Meyers: Pass, but I would have overcalled 1♠, not 2♣.

J.S.: *Being forced to make a doubtful bid initially doesn't relieve one of the obligation of making thoughtful bids on the later rounds. A careful reading of the comments, including those by a couple of passers, should be convincing that 3NT offers little chance of success. 4♥, 4♣, and 5♣ will all make opposite partner's: ♠853 ♥AQ10876 ♦2 ♣Q105.*

3NT was down three. Because North could be fairly certain 3♦ was failing (it would be down two), and because of the possibility that North will pass 3NT when it has no play, South should have passed the double.

Problem 4.

East/West vulnerable, IMP scoring
You are South holding:

♠Q87542 ♥AJ106 ♦-- ♣AQ9

South	West	North	East
?	Pass	Pass	3♣

Lee: 3♣. I would love to double to get hearts in the game, but the diamond void is too big of a negative for me.

Meyers: 3♣. What am I supposed to do? I do not have enough to double and correct 3♦ to 3♣.

Bramley: 3♣. What else? Too skewed to double. Four clubs is closer but will get us to 4♥ too often when we belong in spades. Pass is bizarre. When in doubt, bid the long suit.

(See Solvers on page 11)