

Solvers--Continued from page 7

Problem 3.

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

♠KQ2 ♥A1054 ♦Q108754 ♣--

East	South	West	North
1♠	2♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

Hamilton: 3♠. Our hand just got a lot better with the (promised) fit. This bid shows something in spades and a good playing hand. That's what we have. I believe that it is better to give up on a heart contract to send this message. Slam is not out of the equation.

J.S.: But is a fit promised? Would 2♥ by partner be forcing? Would 3♣ be forcing? If not, 2♣ must cover both hands with a fit and those too strong for an invitational new-suit bid.

Stakgold: 2NT. Give partner: ♠xx ♥Kxx ♦KJx ♣KJxxx, and 3NT is our best contract. Of course, there are many other possibilities; for instance: ♠xx ♥KQxx ♦KJx ♣Axxx, when a club lead might set 3NT while 4♥ is a favorite. The danger with bidding 3♦ or 3♥ is that we will bypass 3NT which might be our best contract.

Roeder: 3♥. Suggesting notrump is premature with a void. Pard can still bid 3♠.

Lee: 3♥. It seems okay to be optimistic. Partner still has room for 3♣ if he needs a spade stopper for notrump.

Rosen: 3♥. My holding is nothing to be ashamed of. I can handle any call he makes.

Mould: 3♥. If partner has the diamond fit, his cue bid pre-supposes that this hand has gotten a lot better. Because 4♥ could easily be the right game, it seems normal to bid 3♥ here. The most straightforward problem of the set in my view.

J.S.: I would be much more comfortable with the 3♥ bid if anyone had mentioned that 2♥ (or 3♣) would have been forcing, and thus their partner's 2♣ bid guaranteed a diamond fit. That is not the case in my partnerships, thus:

Meyers: 3♦. I couldn't have much worse for the diamond overcall.

J.S.: Yes, even if partner has a diamond fit, what is the worth of the secondary spade honors and club void?

Bramley: 4♣. 3♣ would be forcing, so this should be a splinter. I'm always bidding game because my void is too hard to evaluate, a principle I learned from Sidney* (RIP). Might as well tell partner in case we have a magic fit.

J.S.: I don't know what my partners would expect me to hold for a 4♣ bid on this auction. A self-splinter is an interesting idea, but how could you stop in 4♥, North holding:

♠J65 ♥KQ876 ♦K6 ♣AK10?

What should one bid with those cards if partner overcalled 2♦ then bid 3♥ over your 2♣ cue bid? Nystrom, in a similar auction, guessed to bid 5♥, asking for a spade control. That seems valid; he expected partner to hold the red suit aces. The Poles stopped in the winning 4♥ contract. North bid 2♥ in response to the 2♦ overcall, obviously forcing in their style. South conservatively raised to 4♥, rather than bidding a more accurate 4♣,

which would have shown club shortness and excellent heart support. His choice was surely influenced by the missing ace-king of diamonds.

Problem 4.

Both sides vulnerable, IMP scoring
You are South holding:

♠3 ♥A98 ♦KJ96 ♣A10764

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2♦*	Pass
?			

*Inverted raise, 9+ HCP, usually five or more diamonds

Hamilton: 3♣. I take the high road when I have control of all four suits. Again, I try to make the most descriptive bid even if it is a slight overbid, because it can lead to the pot of gold at the end of the auction.

Mould: 3♣. Well, as the old man said when asked for directions "I wouldn't have started from here!" I am aware that Eric Kokish advocates opening 1♦ on these kinds of shapes and it has some adherents in North America. On this side of the pond nobody does it. Everyone opens 1♣ and raises 1♥ to 2♥ and over 1♠ bids 1NT or 2♣ according to partnership style. Assuming that 1♦ is the correct opening bid in our style I seem to have three choices: 3♣ splinter, 3♣ naturalish (does it promise extra values?) and 3♦ minimum. I cannot believe I have to splinter on all hands opposite 9+ with diamonds, so that is out for me - I just don't have the values for it. 3♦ minimum seems a little too much the other way though - after all I do have three key cards, a singleton and an outside five card suit. So I will go with 3♣ which at least shows some life. Also, if 1♦ is the correct opening on this shape then presumably partner has to allow for 3♣ being this kind of shape. That will be my argument anyway when I go down in slam opposite ♦xxxxx.

J.S.: Some players refuse to rebid 1NT with a singleton, but I believe a flexible style is best with 1-3-4-5 shape: open 1♦ with good diamonds and a suit oriented hand (such as this one) planning to rebid 2♣ after a 1♠ response; open 1♣ and rebid 1NT with soft honors (including a singleton honor in spades, other than the ace); open 1♠ and rebid 2♣ with weaker diamonds and a good five-card club suit.

Stakgold: 3♦, showing a minimum and lacking stoppers for 2NT (which pard could also pass). If pard bids 3♠ over 3♦, I will bid 3NT. If pard bids 4♦ over my 3♦, I will gamble 5♦.

Roeder: 3♦. I have a nice hand but, lacking a fifth diamond, I do not think I can force to game. Because of my aces, I could be convinced that this is an underbid. If I could pass 3♦ after I made a 3♣ rebid, that would be my choice. So, to some extent, the choice is a matter of system.

J.S.: Surely if you bid 3♣ and partner retreats to 3♦, you can pass confidently, knowing partner holds less than an opening bid.

Meyers: 2♣. In my partnerships 2♣ is invitational with shortness in one of the majors; partner can bid 2NT to ask which it is. Lacking that agreement I bid 3♣.

Rosen: 3♠, showing my short suit. I love this hand for game or slam. Great playing hand when you know partner rates to

have five diamonds and a good hand.

Lee: 3♠. I'll stretch a bit with good controls in order to show my shortness.

Bramley: 3♠, a familiar theme. I have enough shape and prime values to drive to game. As in (3), partner may be able to take over.

J.S.: I prefer the aggressive 3♣ bid. It does beg the question whether or not you can pass if partner bids 4♦. I vote yes - but then, anyone who bids 3♠ on these cards would want to pass if partner can't bid 3NT, 5♦, or make a slam try. The Polish South tried 3♣ and, when partner bid 3♠, had to decide which game to play - which is a good reason to have used a splinter over the inverted raise. He guessed to bid 3NT and partner produced: ♠A72 ♥J102 ♦A10732 ♣KJ.

A contract of 6♦ has the same play as 3NT. Notrump produced nine tricks when the ♦Q fell; the diamond slam made an overtrick when the ♣Q was third. Sweden reached the good slam after a 1♠ opening, a spade overcall, and a 2♣ transfer by the North hand.

Problem 5.

Neither side vulnerable, IMP scoring
You are South holding:

♠K97 ♥KQ4 ♦K6432 ♣Q8

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	2NT*	?

*Hearts and clubs

Stakgold: Double. That's an easy bid but the problem comes up the next round! If either opponent bids 3♥, I will double. If West bids 3♣, passed around to me, I will bid 3♥, hoping partner will courageously bid 3NT with ♠AQ10x ♥xx ♦AQxx ♣J10x.

Bramley: Double, then 3♥ over 3♣ by either opponent, angling for 3NT by partner. If he can't bid it I'll settle for 4♦, since we're probably off three tops unless partner can bid five.

J.S.: Trying to get notrump declared from partner's side is a worthy objective, but it is dangerous to suggest defending at the three level holding five-card support of his suit.

Roeder: 3♥. Showing a diamond fit with heart values. Bypassing 3NT with your diamond fit would be wrong.

Hamilton: 3♥. I would not bother to double 2NT as my hand has too many diamonds to want to defend. We have game and possibly a slam. My system is that the lower (of the opponent's) suit is invitational in the unbid major and higher suit is a limit raise or better. Therefore 3♥ would be my start, planning to pass 3NT, bid 4♠ over 3♠, 4♥ over 4♣, and raise 4♦ to 5♦.

Rosen: 3♥, showing a good hand, values in hearts and placing the notrump bidder on the right side if he has club

values. If partner has nothing in clubs we still might be on for 5♦.

Meyers: 3NT. An artificial bid showing diamonds might get us past 3NT. How is partner to know that my hearts are so healthy?

J.S.: How is partner to know that your diamonds are so healthy when you don't support? Jill is concerned that after 3♥, showing an invitational or better diamond raise, that partner will bid 4♦ without a heart stopper. For that reason, and because with lesser values you might want to stop in 3♦, it must be better to use 3♣, rather than 3♥, as an artificial raise on this auction.

Lee: 3♣, showing an invitational or better diamond raise. Seems normal. If partner bids only 3♦, I will continue with 3NT and shrug if it's wrong. I would love to play notrump from partner's side but I don't see a way to intelligently get this to occur.

Mould: 3♣. Another methods hand. Most play either that the lower cue is a good raise in partner's suit, the higher cue a game force in the fourth suit, and the fourth suit invitational. Others play it the other way round (which has considerable merit in my view as you need extra room sometimes to sort out what to do when you have the fourth suit in a game-forcing hand). I play that the lower cue is a good raise in partner's suit, which happens to be massively convenient here. The problem will come on the next round opposite partner's inevitable 3♦ bid. Do I bid 3♥ or do I bid 3NT, hoping ♣Qx is good enough? You haven't asked me, so thankfully I don't have to worry about that! (You and Scarlett -J.S.) I could double 2NT (values) or pass and double 3♣ (takeout) but both of those seem big positions with five-card support for partner and game forcing but soft values. I am assuming that the only hand partner can have with three diamonds is 4-4-3-2 exactly. Please tell me if that assumption is erroneous.

J.S.: Your methods and judgment seem spot on to me. After the Polish South doubled he was treated to an unexpected 4♥ bid from West, passed back to him. He had no choice but to double again, which was going to result in only a small net minus, for the defense had 300 coming against a non-vulnerable game. But North, holding: ♠AJ3 ♥7 ♦AJ10975 ♣K109, with a difficult decision early in the defense and not expecting partner to hold five diamonds, gave declarer a sluff-ruff, costing a trick. At the other table Wrang, the Sweden South, bid 3♣ leading to the cold 5♦ contract, and was doubled for no particular reason, collecting +550. Despite performing poorly on our problem hands, Poland pulled out a close win in the final session.

*In reference to Sidney Lazard, a bridge player with both skills and a pleasant demeanor seldom matched. The combination has not been equaled.

