



BIDDING 6-PACK 3rd Sept 08

Problems

Board 1	None Vul
♠ 8532	<i>West North East South</i>
♥ 5	1♠ 2♥ 4♣
♦ Q43	??
♣ AT864	

Board 2	N-S Vul
♠ K942	<i>North East South West</i>
♥ KQ5	Pass 3♠ Pass
♦ A872	??
♣ AK	

Board 9	E-W Vul
♠ 9	<i>North East South West</i>
♥ AQ4	??
♦ AQ94	
♣ K7542	

Board 12	N-S Vul
♠ AKQT852	<i>North East South West</i>
♥ AT	Pass
♦ KQ	1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass
♣ 76	2♣ Pass 3NT Pass
	??

Board 25	E-W Vul
♠ KQJ7653	<i>East South West North</i>
♥ K9	Pass
♦ J	1♣ Pass 1♠ 2NT
♣ AQ2	??

Board 32	E-W Vul
♠ 2	<i>South West North East</i>
♥ AKT93	1♥ 2♠ 3♥
♦ QJT93	??
♣ A3	

Solutions

Board 1	None Vul
♠ 8532	<i>West North East South</i>
♥ 5	1♠ 2♥ 4♣
♦ Q43	??
♣ AT864	

South's 4♣ was a Splinter, showing game values, shortness in Clubs, and Spade support. What would a Double mean here? It's not particularly helpful to play this as lead-directing for Clubs, and a more useful treatment is to play it as lead-directing for a different suit. Conventionally, the other suit is usually defined as "the suit below the splinter suit". What's lower than Clubs? With Spades agreed, it's Hearts. Should West double here for a Heart lead? Yes, it would be nice if the defense started A♥ and ruff a Heart, don't you think? As it happens, that's the only defense to hold Declarer to 10 tricks. Let's not forget the negative inference if West chooses not to double 4♣, namely that West prefers a Diamond or else has no preference.

Board 2	N-S Vul
♠ K942	<i>North East South West</i>
♥ KQ5	Pass 3♠ Pass
♦ A872	??
♣ AK	

After the vulnerable preempt, North needs South to have a very particular hand if slam is to make. Yes, Diamond shortness and the A♠ will do the job very nicely. Well, almost! If Partner is 7=2=1=3 then 6♣ will indeed make, but if Partner is 7=3=1=2 then the A♥ will need to be onside. Anyway, without special methods, North should settle for 4♣ and hope that Partner does not have the perfect hand. However, those of a scientific bent may play asking bids in this situation. One method is that bidding a new suit here asks for the preemptor's holding in that suit. So, North bids 4♦ here, after which:

- 4♥ (first step) is no first- or second-round control in Diamonds
- 4♠ (second step) is a singleton
- 5♣ (third step) is a first-round control (Ace or void)

4NT is missing from those step responses and that bid is reserved for Kx(x) in the key suit. The chance to use that method won't come up very often, but this deal is tailor-made for it. North bids 4♦, South answers 4♥ and North signs off in 4♣, secure in the knowledge that slam is not a

possibility. Well, *almost* secure. Couldn't South have the A♠ and A♥? Some pairs have rules about 1st and 2nd seat 3-level preempts, and not having an outside Ace might be one of them (or, if you don't like that, then perhaps you could prohibit having *two* Aces).

Board 9	E-W Vul			
♠ 9		<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South West</i>
♥ AQ4	??			
♦ AQ94				
♣ K7542				

North has an opening bid, of course, but what is the bid which best prepares her for the likely 1♣ response from South?

- *Open 1♣, and rebid 2♣?* No, that rotten suit is not worth rebidding.
- *Open 1♣, and rebid 2♦?* A little bit light for a reverse, don't you think?
- *Open 1♣, and rebid 1NT?* No, too strong for that.
- *Open 1♦, and rebid 2♣?* Not perfect, as it distorts the relative lengths of the minors. Nonetheless, it seems to be the least of evils.

Board 12	N-S Vul				
♠ AKQT852		<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
♥ AT					Pass
♦ KQ	1♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	
♣ 76	2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass	
	??				

South's 2♥ was game-forcing, and North might have shown a good suit earlier by rebidding 3♣ instead of 2♣. However, she reasonably decided to go slowly in order to find out more about Partner's hand. Next, South's jump to 3NT shows some extras, as with a minimum No Trump hand she would have bid 2NT. Is 4♣ Gerber here? That's a matter for partnership agreement, and much as we think that Gerber is an overused convention, it's rather useful on this deal!

Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that 4♣ is Gerber. What are the responses? Most common is the 0/1/2/3 approach, but here's an interesting alternative (no doubt influenced by the 1430 responses to Roman Key Card Blackwood):

- 4♦ is 1 or 4 Aces
- 4♥ is 0 or 3 Aces
- 4♠ is 2 Aces and a minimum
- 4NT is 2 Aces and a maximum

Assuming that Partner shows 2 Aces (maximum or otherwise) then North can reasonably try 7NT.

Board 25	E-W Vul				
♠ KQJ7653		<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>
♥ K9					Pass
♦ J	1♣	Pass	1♠	2NT	
♣ AQ2	??				

North's 2NT was the Unusual No Trump, showing, in this case, Hearts and Diamonds, after which East must decide how to raise Spades. What are your methods here? Many partnerships play "Unusual vs Unusual", utilizing the cue-bids in the two enemy suits to show different hand-types. But different partnerships use the cue-bids in different ways, are you and Partner on the same wave-length? Our own Unusual vs Unusual preference is "Lower for Lower", primarily for its simplicity:

- 3♣ is a minimum hand with long Clubs
- 3♦ (the lower cue-bid) is a better hand with the lower of the two E-W suits (long Clubs)
- 3♥ (the higher cue-bid) is a better-than-minimum hand with the higher of the two E-W suits (Spade support)
- 3♠ is a minimum hand with Spade support.
- Pass is none of the above.

Based on that, East has a 3♠ bid, we would say ... Spades but not enough extras for a 3♥ cue-bid.

Board 32	E-W Vul				
♠ 2		<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
♥ AKT93			1♥	2♠	3♥
♦ QJT93	??				
♣ A3					

North's 2♠ was preemptive, of course, and South can surely compete to at least 3♠. Suppose that South does indeed raise to 3♠ and that West now bids 4♥. Does South expect to beat 4♥? Probably not. Assuming that North can be relied upon not to preempt with side-suit values, it looks as if N-S do not have 4 tricks on defense. Yes, if South bids 3♠ and then 4♣ she will have missed the boat. Surely it is better to bid 4♣ directly, putting West to the test.

On the actual layout, a direct raise to 4♣ is likely to work very well indeed. West, with a promising 5-5 hand, is likely to guess wrong by bidding 5♥, which is down one. But if South feebly bids 3♠ initially, West can show his extras by bidding 4♥, and East will be in a position to later double 4♣.