

Free Bid in Westwood -- Problem

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

♠ J 4
 ♥ A J 7 2
 ♦ 10 9 4
 ♣ 9 6 5 3



West	North	East	South
<i>Matthews Jr</i>	<i>Gamerman</i>	<i>Hill</i>	<i>Mukherjee</i>
		1 ♣	1 ♦
?			

Take my seat with the weakest hand at the table. Here are your choices:

Pass - many would require more values for a free bid, but the modern style is to bid with something sensible to do.

Double - a negative double of a 1 ♦ overcall promises *both* majors (or perhaps a chunky 4-3), so that's out.

1 ♥ - this is the normal bid. Major suits rule. (Over a 1 ♥ overcall, 1 ♠ shows 5 cards, but only 4 are required over 1 ♦.)

2 ♣ - four card support is nice -- unless partner opened on Qxx.

This information may help:

1. This is a matchpoint pairs game.
2. Tim Hill is a solid player who tends to be an aggressive bidder.
3. Lew Gamerman and Shome Mukherjee are the strongest pair in the room.

What is your call?

Free Bid in Westwood -- Solution

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	♠ Q 7 6 5										
	♥ 9 6 5 4										
	♦ J 6 5										
	♣ A 10										
♠ J 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 9 3
	N										
W		E									
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♥ A J 7 2		♥ Q 10 8									
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	♠ 10 8 2										
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	♦ A K Q 8 7 2										
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EW 5♣; EW 3♥; EW 2♠; NS 1N; NS 1♦; Par -400

West	North	East	South
<i>Matthews Jr</i>	<i>Gameran</i>	<i>Hill</i>	<i>Mukherjee</i>
		1 ♣	1 ♦
2 ♣	Dbl ¹	3 ♣	3 ♦
Pass	Pass	4 ♣	All pass

1. responsive (takeout)
 4 ♣ by East
 Made 5 — EW +150

With an ace and 4-card support, passing is way too timid.

The normal 1♥ bid will probably get us to one-too-many hearts, when we have a fit. The opponents will generally have a fit as well, and thus won't let us play two-only hearts. If pard competes to 3♥, these guys may double us, and it won't be pretty. Those four small clubs may be a liability. And forget about bidding hearts and then bidding clubs later - partner will expect better values. We want to discourage playing at the 3-level unless partner has good clubs.

In contrast, this is a fine hand, if partner has good clubs: an ace, a doubleton, 4-card support, and a couple of jacks. The direct raise was rewarded with a near top board (one pair bid the sub-50% 5♣).

At IMPs, bypassing hearts could miss a game and cost the whole match. At matchpoints, we are talking about one deal, and move on to the next. The risk would also be higher against weaker opponents, who we would be likely to beat with the normal action.

It can help to mix things up against stronger opponents. Look at the garbage on which North felt compelled to double. On some other South holding, North-South could end up playing 2♥ in a 4-3 fit. The raise may have put North under more pressure than 1♥ would have.