

A Minor Advance -- Problem

Board 35
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



♠ —
 ♥ K Q 9 7 4
 ♦ A K 10 3
 ♣ A K 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	?	

Take my seat as East in a matchpoint pairs game at the recent Nashua NH regional, for the second of three boards in the penultimate round of the second session. What is your plan? *[solution on next page]*

For ideas, see <https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/takeout-doublers-cue-bid-after-minor-suit-advance/>, which I initiated. This deal and topic inspired me to perform a simulation to see what the right strain was likely to be on this deal. Here is a brief summary of how I did that:

Generate 5,000 deals in Dealmaster Pro with these specs:

----- South Definitions S1->S1 -----

S1 Acc HP12-15 S5-5
 H2-3
 D2-3
 C2-3

----- North Definitions N1->N2 -----

N1 Acc HP 0- 4 S0-3
 H2-5
 D2-5
 C2-5

N2 Acc HP 0- 3 S0-4
 H2-4
 D2-4
 C2-4

----- West Definitions W1->W1 -----

W1 Acc HP 0- 7
 [H=<D,D>=C]

-----East cards already dealt:-----

S
 H K Q 9 7 4
 D A K 10 3
 C A K 9 7

Make South dealer for all deals, save as PBN.
 Double dummy all deals with DDS via Bridge Composer.

Cygwin commands to extract number of tricks won in each strain:
 grep "E H" MinorAdvance.pbn | tr -d "[a-zA-Z\ \]" > R_E_H.txt
 grep "W D" MinorAdvance.pbn | tr -d "[a-zA-Z\ \]" > R_W_D.txt
 grep "W NT" MinorAdvance.pbn | tr -d "[a-zA-Z\ \]" > R_W_NT.txt

Paste each file into an Excel spreadsheet column, and perform analysis.

A Minor Advance -- Solution

Board 35
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 5 4		♠ —									
♥ 10 8 6 2		♥ K Q 9 7 4									
♦ J 4 2		♦ A K 10 3									
♣ 10 8 3		♣ A K 9 7									
♠ A 9 7 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 5		♥ K Q 9 7 4									
♦ 9 8 6 5		♦ A K 10 3									
♣ Q J 6		♣ A K 9 7									
♠ K Q 10 8 6											
♥ A J 3											
♦ Q 7											
♣ 5 4 2											

EW 5♦; EW 3♠; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; EW 2N; Par -600

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	?	

	Hearts/E	Diam/W	NT/W	
Av Tricks	10.27	10.54	8.59	Clearly, you ignore hearts at your peril. Because NT seldom is the only making game, the main issue is, which red suit?
Game	76%	50%	52%	
Only Game	16%	6%	3%	Sensible diamond raises include 3 ♦, 3 ♠ (shortness), 4 ♦, and
Slam	12%	21%	0%	4 ♠ (exclusion keycard Blackwood, for those who play it).

2♥ is the only sensible way to immediately show hearts. The trouble is, 2♥ cancels the expectation that doubler has diamond support. Partner may pass with heart shortness, while game can be made in diamonds. As you can see from the simulation, more often than not, you want to be in game.

My strong opinion is that doubler's cue bid should show a strong hand (usually 18+) and some support for advancer's suit, but with *doubt as to strain*. Most other strong hands can be bid some other way. After a major suit advance, doubler's cue bid shows exactly 3-card support (or the rare immediate slam try). With a strong two-suiter, use a two-suited bid, or double and bid a suit.

In spite of my having super 4-card support for partner's minor suit advance, our game could be in hearts. I bid 2♠ and continued with 3♥ over partner's 2NT. Partner was not on the same wavelength and raised to 4♥, down one. My "correct" bid convinced partner I had a heart monster. Rats! (A heart monster bids 4♥, not 3♥.) Ultimately, what counts is what partner understands. [I got ♦ Q lead; 4♥ on a spade lead: ♠ A; ♠ ruff; ♦ A; ♦ K; ♣ A; ♣ Q; ♠ ruff; ♣ J; ♠ 7 ♥ 10 ♦ 10 ♠ 10; ♥ 2 ♥ K ♥ 3 ♥ 5; ♣ K ♠ Q ♠ 9 ♥ 6; and the defense prevails.]

In the simulation, I assumed South was 5-3-3-2 and North was also balanced, because they bid only the once. Balanced hands for the opponents make game more likely, but a few unbalanced hands should not affect the relative outcomes much. West will usually have five or more spades and likely some strength there.

Barely functional all day with bronchitis, knocking over cups of water & stumbling about, I could still focus on bridge. We had a huge first session, but this and other bad results in the second session left the event in doubt. Good news, last round sit-out! Back to the room for a necessary nap before dinner. While I was sleeping, the second place pair misguessed two boards in the last round, so we did win. Hard to beat good luck!