

Preempt at MIT Indy

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 8

♥ A Q 10 4

♦ 5 2

♣ A J 7 3 2



West North East South

2♦

?

Note: This deal is presented in sections separated by a line across the page. Cover the next section while you address the current one.

Take my seat at the annual individual "membership game" at MIT. The spoiler on our right bids a weak 2♦.

What would you do?

The obvious bid is 3♣. Suppose we do that. LHO raises to 3♦, which is passed back to us. Now what?

Double would suggest: ♠ A 10 8 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J 10 7 3 2. Pard will be pleased to bid a five card major, may try a good four carder, but might bid 4♣ out of desperation. The upside to a double on the actual hand is that we get to pass next. We won't get too high in a major, but we may play 5-2 (or 4-2) spades.

3♥ would suggest: ♠ A 8 ♥ A Q 10 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J 10 7 3 2, or maybe a fifth heart. On the actual hand, if we have a heart fit, then we will play in the correct strain, but pard may push on to a bad game. In general at matchpoints, it's more important to find the correct strain than the correct level, so I gave this serious consideration.

Pass is in keeping with having a cruddy first suit and being vulnerable. That's what I did. In hindsight, this was a poor choice; the opponents seem to have a nine card fit, so we should have a fit somewhere.

Let's step back to the first round of bidding, having seen what the real problem of the deal might be. Rather than 3 ♣, I could have doubled. I gave my hand to Lew Gamerman, a stronger player than me, and that's what he chose. However, partner is likely to bid spades, and we'll just have to play there.

The Grossack brothers, Adam and Zach, grew up in Newton. They went through the superb training offered by the ACBL Junior program, where they won world championships. Both Grand Life Masters in their 20s with multiple NABC wins, Zach was recently on the cover of *The Bulletin* as the youngest GLM ever.

Once, playing against me in a regional, older brother Adam overcalled at the two level in a four card heart suit, and did well. I forgot to examine the deal at the time, and I have always wondered about his logic. I think this is a hand for a 2 ♥ overcall. Hearts presents the best prospect for a partscore or game -- and for sorting out the level -- the only thing wrong with the bid is the lack of a fifth heart. Lew said that's OK, but he still liked a double.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ Q 3
 ♥ K 7 3
 ♦ Q 10 9 6
 ♣ Q 10 8 5

♠ A 8
 ♥ A Q 10 4
 ♦ 5 2
 ♣ A J 7 3 2



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2♦
3♣	3♦	All pass	
	3♦ by South		
	Lead: ♠ A		

Well, we are defending 3♦, having passed. On our lead of the ♠ A, partner plays the ♠ 7, which looks like an encouraging standard signal.

Now what?

It looks like pard's only useful card may be the ♠ K. We could use it now, but there is no rush. That trick is not going anywhere, our trumps are lower than dummy's, declarer could hold the ♠ J, and he could use it to dispose of a heart.

A quick count shows we have four tricks: ♠ A, ♠ K, ♥ A, ♣ A. Where, oh where, are we to get a fifth?

Lead the ♥ Q, as I did at the table. This is called a *surrounding play*. We hope that declarer has three hearts, and that we can take two. If declarer has the ♥ J, the lead of the ♥ Q leaves the jack unprotected when partner later leads a heart. We plan to put pard in with the ♠ K and take two hearts on his heart return. But what if declarer has only one heart, and we lose the ace? No big deal: we already lost the board by not finding the nine card heart fit. In fact, finding declarer with three hearts (and partner as well), is the only hope for an acceptable result on this deal.

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♠ Q 3
 ♥ K 7 3
 ♦ Q 10 9 6
 ♣ Q 10 8 5

♠ A 8
 ♥ A Q 10 4
 ♦ 5 2
 ♣ A J 7 3 2



♠ K J 10 7 6
 ♥ J 8 6 2
 ♦ 4
 ♣ 9 6 4

♠ 9 5 4 2
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ A K J 8 7 3
 ♣ K

EW 4♥; EW 3♠; NS 3♦; EW 1N; EW 2♣; Par -300: NS 5♦×-2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2♦
3♣	3♦	All pass	
3♦ by South			
Lead: ♠ A			
Made 3 — NS +110			

Nice play, but pard has four hearts. With the ♠ Q popping up in front, there are ten tricks in 4♥.

Lew pointed out that East could have doubled 3♦, which experienced players treat as takeout. However, this *responsive double* was specifically omitted from the card everybody was playing. Furthermore, concentrating on the 2♥ overcall, I mis-remembered East's hand, and made it stronger for Lew.

Would you double with the East hand in an Indy? East said at the time, that he considered 3♠, but decided that he was too weak.