

Hearts, by GOSH -- Problem

**Board 15**  
East Deals  
Both Vul



♠ Q J 6  
♥ Q J 10 9 5 2  
♦ A K  
♣ A J

West	North	East	South
<i>ssb8048</i>	<i>StewR</i>	<i>aeb</i>	<i>PeteM</i>
		1 ♣	Dbl
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	?

[deal rotated for convenience]

Plan the bidding as South.

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Here are some examples inspired by *The Complete Book on Takeout Doubles, 2nd Edition*, by Mike Lawrence:

1. West opens 1 ♦. With spades, a double should work out well on: ♠ A Q 9 7 5 3 ♥ A Q ♦ 9 4 ♣ A Q 3
2. West opens 1 ♥. With a lower-ranking suit, overcall 2 ♣ on: ♠ A Q ♥ 9 4 ♦ A Q 3 ♣ A Q 9 7 5 3
3. West opens 1 ♣. Only because the 5-card suit is spades, double on: ♠ K Q J 9 6 ♥ A Q ♦ A Q 9 6 ♣ 5

All of these hands meet the minimum requirements (18 HCP and a decent suit) for bidding a new suit, after making a takeout double. They fall into the category of a good, one-suited hand, what Robson & Segal call a GOSH. Nevertheless, if you double on hand (2), both the opponents and partner can hurt you in spades. Notice that, if a fit is found, all these hands contain five "losers," counting the first three cards held in each suit. Stew points out that they should play better than that, with most finesses likely to win.

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Had South advanced 1 ♦, it would be sufficient to bid 1 ♥ with the South hand. After a 1 ♠ advance, Mike Lawrence and I would cue bid 2 ♣, planning to follow up with a non-jump bid in hearts, to show this strength with 3-card spade support. If you don't play that way, then just bid 2 ♥ over 1 ♠.

Advancer has just bid our suit, so a raise to 2 ♥ takes less strength than to bid a new suit. Here is a minimum raise to 2 ♥, based on Lawrence:

♠ A 10 9 3 ♥ K J 10 4 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ 4 3


“This hand has only 14 points, but they are all good ones. In addition, it has excellent spot cards.” He says, with a singleton club, 13 HCP could be enough to raise. This is a nice 7-loser hand, normal opening bid values; I would want another winner to raise. Bill Root says 2 ♥ shows 16-18 points, 3 ♥ = 19-21, and 4 ♥ = 22 or more.

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What is the upper bound for a raise to 2 ♥ by South? Would it matter if East had rebid 2 ♣?

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Hearts, by GOSH -- Solution

<p>♠ 8 7 4 3          ♥ K 8          ♦ 6 4 3 2          ♣ 7 5 4</p>		<p>♠ 10 9 5          ♥ A 7 6 3          ♦ 10 9 8 7          ♣ Q 9</p>	<p>♠ A K 2          ♥ 4          ♦ Q J 5          ♣ K 10 8 6 3 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
<i>ssb8048</i>	<i>StewR</i>	<i>aeb</i>	<i>PeteM</i>
		1 ♣	Dbl
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♥
Pass	Pass	3 ♣	3 ♥
All pass			

The upper bound for a raise to 2 ♥ depends partly on what a jump advance of 2 ♥ would have meant. Lawrence advocates that North should make a jump advance with a good eight HCP or better. Bill Root recommends jumping with 10-12 points and sometimes with a good nine. Max Hardy recommends jumping with 9+ to 12-HCP; since he says HCP, Hardy is the most conservative. I'm with Root; I would also count a fifth heart as a point or two. Over opener's 2 ♥, North should try for game with near-maximum values for a non-jump advance, such as an ace and a working king, for example: ♠ A 10 5 ♥ K 7 6 3 ♦ 10 9 8 7 ♣ 9 4

Doubler should jump to 3 ♥ when a desirable game might be played at two-only-hearts. Advancer should go with a little more than one sure winner. Lawrence says, a rough rule of thumb is that if you have two or more points than a normal raise to 2 ♥, you can make a jump raise when partner is responding to a takeout double. This looks much better than a Lawrence 2 ♥ bid, but that could be our last making contract.

East actually did bid 2 ♣. "In auctions like this one, the takeout doubler should be willing to overbid a little when he has a sound double that includes four-card support for partner's suit ... by raising, you take pressure off your partner..." Doubler should never raise with only three card support; Lawrence and I agree, a double of 2 ♣ is still takeout, showing a good hand with 3-card heart support. Lawrence says, with terrible shape, this North hand should pass: ♠ Q 7 6 ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ K 9 8 ♣ J 6 3

It's likely that East has clubs headed by the king and queen, and that a club will be the opening lead. For game to make, North must provide two winners, probably top major suit honors. Any major suit finesse seems likely to lose, so a lone ace probably won't suffice. With a 2-1 trump split, ♥ Q 8 7 6 5 4 ♣ A Q could easily play a trick better than the actual hand. In spite of having 18 HCP, a 2 ♥ rebid seems reasonable.

Because South will raise more aggressively to 2 ♥ on this auction, it's better for South to jump a little more often as well. While game seems unlikely, it's possible. Also, we don't intend to let the opponents declare below 3 ♥, so jumping may win by shutting out the opponents; going low has more to lose. A jump to 3 ♥ seems reasonable. With more than an ace, partner would have an easy 4 ♥ bid.

East was bidding on cheese, as so many people do at matchpoints. Neither North nor South can expect the combined club holdings to produce two tricks -- or for the heart finesse to win -- or for 3 ♣X to be -500.