

Opening Choice -- Problem

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul



♠ 4 3
♥ A 8 6 3
♦ 9 5 3 2
♣ A K 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	?

Care to guess who will declare this hand?

Playing matchpoint pairs, it's your call -- what do you say?

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♠ K 9 7		♠ A 8 2									
♥ Q 9 5 4 2		♥ 10 7									
♦ 7 4		♦ A J 10 8									
♣ Q 8 6		♣ 10 9 5 4									
♠ Q J 10 6 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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		♠ 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K J		♥ A 8 6 3									
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♣ J 7 2		♣ A K 3									

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	Pass	1 ♦
3 ♠ by West		3 ♠!	All pass
Lead: ♦ 7			
Made 4			

Look at your spade suit. The player with five spades, or the opponents with a 4-4 fit, will probably declare.

Is this an opening hand? Add a point to any hand with three quick tricks (A-A-A, AK-A or AQ-AQ). Subtract a point with sterile 4-3-3-3 shape. This hand counts to 12 points and is normally an opening bid.

In third and especially fourth seat, it is usual to add your high card points to the number of spades. If this total of Pearson points is 15 or higher, open the bidding; usually pass with fewer Pearson points. This plan affects second seat as well: add a point for a spade suit on close decisions, especially in second seat. Here, your spades argue for passing. If you chose to pass, you hold your own in the post-mortem, but you may lose the deal.

The normal opening bid is the longer minor suit. You might want to play in it. If you chose a 1 ♦ opening, you lose both the post-mortem and the deal.

With little interest in competing to the 3-level, the winning bid is an unorthodox 1 ♣. If partner has the spades, it probably won't make much difference what you open. If West is about to bid and declare spades, a diamond lead from partner is likely to be damaging to your side.

On the actual layout, a club lead should assure that your side gets all four of its tricks, and a decent score. Any declarer who gets a diamond lead (the most attractive if you pass or open 1 ♦), should win the opening lead in hand, clear trumps, run the diamonds, and lead a heart up for a tenth trick. If you have opened 1 ♦, declarer should get it right. If you passed, it's a guess -- half a trick (on average) that a club lead would have saved.