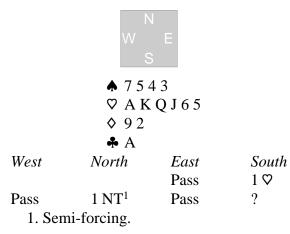
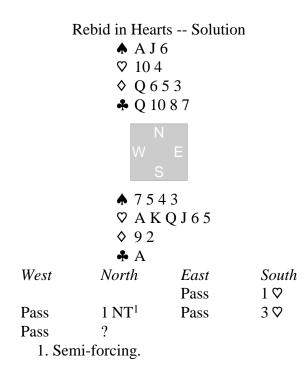
Rebid in Hearts -- Problem



Join South for this deal with matchpoint scoring from "The Bidding Box" in *Bridge Bulletin*, April 2022. Both expert pairs were playing a two-over-one game force system, with a semi-forcing 1 NT response.

What would you bid?

Please don't say that you would open $2 \diamondsuit$ (expanded Flannery), showing four spades and five or six hearts. That's not really a spade suit!



A *loser* is any of the first three cards held in a suit that are not an ace, king or a queen. South has a five loser hand, three spades and two diamonds. This the proper number of losers for a jump rebid of $3 \heartsuit$ -- assuming the hand is worth an invitation -- and that's the bid both expert Souths chose.

One North bid 3 NT and played there. The other North tried 3 \bigstar as a choice of games between 3 NT and 4 \heartsuit , and also played in 3 NT. This contract is not great, but better than 4 \heartsuit . The scores awarded were: 2 \heartsuit 11; 2 NT 9; 3 \heartsuit 6; 3 NT 5; 4 \heartsuit 2.

North has a fine acceptance of game, yet no game is a good bet. The South hand is likely to produce exactly seven tricks. To be able to *lay down* nine tricks, North would need to provide the two missing aces, or one ace with a king that fits an ace (and not have that ace dislodged, if the \clubsuit K). Queens and jacks in the North hand have little or chance of taking the ninth trick, except perhaps in spades, yet North will surely be counting them.

In my opinion, a singleton ace is worth three points, unless and until a big trump fit is found. The \clubsuit A is not pulling its weight. On this deal, the \clubsuit K would be a better card! Furthermore, the \heartsuit J is not really pulling its weight -- it does not add a trick so much as prevent losing an extra trick on a bad split. The fourth spade is a likely loser in a heart contract.

The South hand is not worth a game invitation; losing trick count is a secondary consideration. The correct rebid is $2 \heartsuit$; North would pass, and the top score would be achieved. (With a slightly better hand, North would invite a game, and South would be pleased to accept.)