

Partner Strikes Gold, or the Dog in the Night -- Problem

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 8 7 2
♥ 6
♦ K 3
♣ A K 10 8 4



♠ 9 5 4
♥ 10 4
♦ A Q 5 4 2
♣ Q 6 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			

Partner leads our suit! Declarer calls for the ♦ 3. Plan the defense.

Partner Strikes Gold, or the Dog in the Night -- Solution

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ K 10 8 7 2		♠ 9 5 4									
♥ 6		♥ 10 4									
♦ K 3		♦ A Q 5 4 2									
♣ A K 10 8 4		♣ Q 6 2									
♠ Q J 6	<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		♠ A 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 9 8 5 3		♥ A K 7 2									
♦ 8 7 6		♦ J 10 9									
♣ 9		♣ J 7 5 3									

N 4♠; N 5♣; S 3♠; S 4♣; NS 2N; NS 1♥; NS 1♦; Par +420: N 4♠=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			

Declarer probably would have bid a 5-card heart suit, so partner has at least six hearts. Why didn't that dog bark? The hearts must not be strong enough for a non-vulnerable weak two bid! (Most West players would open 2♥, but we play "good suit.")

The only hope on this hand is the diamond suit. Duck, playing an encouraging card. Declarer clearly has at least ♦J-10-9; we hope that partner has ♦8-7-6, so that the suit will run. This works: we get four diamonds and either a spade or a club to set the contract.

If we win the opening lead and shift to the ♥10, declarer wins the ♥A, tests clubs, gets the bad news and splits the spades -- thereby knocking out West's entry. When West leads the ♦7, we get another chance! If we duck now, the ♦K wins, and declarer cannot reach the ♥K in time.

If declarer calls for the ♦K on the opening lead, we must either duck that or the second trick, without touching hearts, or declarer can make the contract.

Opener Rebids a Minor -- Problem

Board 26
 South Deals
 Both Vul




♠ J
 ♥ 10 8
 ♦ Q 10 7 6 4
 ♣ A Q 10 4 3

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

What now?

Board 26
 South Deals
 Both Vul

Opener Rebids a Minor -- Solution

<p>♠ Q 7 5 2 ♥ J 7 4 3 2 ♦ K 2 ♣ K 6</p>		<p>♠ A K 8 6 3 ♥ A 9 ♦ A J 5 3 ♣ 7 5</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 4 ♥ K Q 6 5 ♦ 9 8 ♣ J 9 8 2</p>
<p>♠ J ♥ 10 8 ♦ Q 10 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 10 4 3</p>			

NS 6♦; NS 5♠; NS 3N; NS 5♣; NS 1♥; Par +1370: NS 6♦=

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

This is a situation where it is good to keep the bidding open when possible. North can have a quite good hand for 2 ♦ here, perhaps a point or two more than North actually holds, but still not good enough for a jump shift.

Long ago, being a rules kind of guy, I made up a provisional rule to raise partner's minor suit here with 8 HCP and 5-card support, or 10 HCP and 4-card support. This has stood the test of time: South has a clear cut raise to 3 ♦. Game will then be reached: 3 NT depends on the diamond finesse (50%), while the superior 5 ♦ contract probably makes if either finesse wins, and makes six here by establishing the long club or spade.

Spade Fit -- Problem

Board 25
East Deals
N-S Vul



♠ K J 5 4
♥ A 8 7
♦ 7 6
♣ A K 6 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	?

What now?

Board 25
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

Spade Fit -- Solution

♠ A 8 7 3		♠ 9 6 2									
♥ 10 6 3 2		♥ J 5									
♦ A 9 8		♦ Q J 10 3 2									
♣ 9 7		♣ J 3 2									
♠ Q 10	<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		♠ K J 5 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K Q 9 4		♥ A 8 7									
♦ K 5 4		♦ 7 6									
♣ Q 10 8 5		♣ A K 6 4									

NS 3♠; NS 3♥; NS 2N; NS 2♣; NS 1♦; Par +140; NS 1♥+2; NS 1♠+2			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	?

Treating North's raise as semi-constructive, the situation is effectively the same as a { 1 ♠ - 2 ♠ } auction, except that we know more about the fit. South has the high cards to make a game try, but the hand has seven losers. North would need four winners to produce a solid play for game, which is not reasonable to expect. South should pass 2 ♠.

If South makes a natural 3 ♥ game try, North should refuse with two winners and accept with three. Aces are the best winners of all; with two aces and a doubleton opposite length, North should accept the game try. It's a bad game; 4 ♠ fails on a ♠ 9 overruff of the fourth club: no fourth winner.

Not all pairs play our way, on three issues:

1. Most pairs would open 1 NT. Our 1 NT opening is a good 15 to a bad 18. South has a slightly better than average 15-count, but hands with 4-4 in the black suits bid well when opened 1 ♣. This flexibility at 15 HCP has served us well over the years. (On this deal, we would always find the spade fit after a 1 NT opening, whether North decides on invitational or crawling Stayman.)

2. Take away one or two HCP and many Souths would still rebid 1 ♠ over 1 ♥ with this shape. With that lesser hand, we would raise to 2 ♥ immediately. We need extra values to bid 1 ♠ and then remove responder's likely 1 NT bid to 2 ♥. South has them on this hand, just barely. (The other folks would have to jump to 3 ♥ to show extras.)

3. North's raise of opener's second suit promises 4-card support. 1 ♠ was not forcing, so North would have passed with a poor hand. However, 2 ♠ has a preemptive effect, so other Norths might raise on any hand with 4-card support.

Diamond Partial -- Problem

Board 16
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ K J 8 7 5 2
 ♥ K 6
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ J 10 2



♠ 10 6 3
 ♥ 8 5 3
 ♦ 10 8 7
 ♣ K Q 8 4

NS 2♠; W 1N; EW 1♥; NS 1♦; N 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1♦
Dbl	1♠	Pass	2♦
All pass			
2♦ by South			
Lead: ♣ 3			
Made 2 — NS +90			

Join me as East for this deal at matchpoint pairs at the Warwick Regional. Partner leads the ♣ 3, third best from even and low from odd. With little pause for thought, opener calls for the ♣ J from dummy. We cover with the queen, and declarer wins the ace.

Declarer leads the ♠ 9, and dummy's ♠ K wins. After some thought, declarer calls for the ♣ 2 from dummy. What is partner's most likely distribution? Plan the defense.

Board 16
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

Diamond Partial -- Solution

♠ A Q 4	♠ K J 8 7 5 2	♠ 10 6 3
♥ A Q 10 4	♥ K 6	♥ 8 5 3
♦ Q 9 6	♦ 3 2	♦ 10 8 7
♣ 9 5 3	♣ J 10 2	♣ K Q 8 4

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

NS 2♠; W 1N; EW 1♥; NS 1♦; N 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♦
Dbl	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦
All pass			
2 ♦ by South			
Lead: ♣ 3			
Made 2 — NS +90			

Partner clearly has three spades and three clubs. They would have overcalled 1♥ with a 5-bagger, so play partner for four hearts and three diamonds.

Declarer has rebid a 5-bagger and has "stolen" the spade trick they were going to get anyhow, with the ♥ K as an entry. Now they are trying more trickery.

Holding the ♣ 9, declarer's automatic play on the opening lead would probably be a small club. Win the ♣ 8 and lead a trump. When partner gets in with a heart, another club gets the killing second round of trump.

Unfortunately we slipped a trick at the end, as declarer made two anyhow.