

GOSH -- Problem

Board 3
 East Deals
 N-S Vul



♠ 8 6
 ♥ 8 6
 ♦ 5 3 2
 ♣ A K Q 10 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
2♦ ¹	Dbl	Pass	3♦ ²
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣ ³
Pass	4♥	Pass	?

1. Weak two-bid.
2. Forcing, usually both majors or asking for a stopper.
3. I was asking for a stopper, based on my club suit.

What now?

Board 3
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

GOSH -- Solution

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

NS 7♣; NS 5N; NS 4♥; NS 2♠; Par +1700; EW 7♦×-7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
2♦ ¹	Dbl	Pass	3♦ ²
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣ ³
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6NT	All pass	

1. Weak two-bid.
2. Forcing, usually both majors or asking for a stopper.
3. I was asking for a stopper, based on my club suit.

6 NT by North

Lead: ♣ 6

Down 5 — NS -500

As far as we knew at the time, partner's 3♥ picked that major over spades. After the cue-bid, our 4♣, fully expressed the strength and type of our hand. Indeed, partner probably needs two fast tricks on the side, in addition to a diamond stopper, to make 3 NT. For example, this fine hand won't cut it:

♠ A J 10 9 ♥ K Q J 10 ♦ A 6 ♣ J 4 2

Partner's repeat of 4♥ shows a good one-suited hand, what Robson & Segal call a GOSH. Slam chances may be good, but we have nothing extra in our hand, not even the ♣ J. The wise choice is to pass, and take our plus score. A bump to 5♥ is OK, since we have at least an 8-card fit there.

I fell from grace and bid 5♣. Partner's 6 NT ended the auction. The *a priori* odds for banging down the top clubs are 54% to take six tricks. However, the 5+ diamonds in the West hand change those odds. For example, if we know East has four clubs, the finesse is 67% and the drop is 33%. Partner finessed on the opening lead and ended 5 down. Note that declarer must bring in both of our suits to make the slam, which means West must hold two or three hearts. Without either suit, we have at most eight tricks at notrump.

Had the opening lead been a standard ♦ 4, the lowest card in the suit, declarer would deduce that West probably opened a 5-carder. We would win the lead, cash the top hearts, and discover the bad break. With nine of West's cards accounted for, surely the club finesse is a favorite -- way down again.

Was the ♣ 6 lead a safe exit, an entry-cutting play, or a sneaky lead from the ♣ J? Partner was in a tough spot.

Which Slam? -- Problem

Board 13
West Deals
Both Vul



♠ A K 10 9 8 5 4 3
♥ 5
♦ K J
♣ K 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

What now?

Board 13
 West Deals
 Both Vul

Which Slam? -- Solution

♠ 7		♠ J 2
♥ K Q J 10 8		♥ 7 6 4 3
♦ A Q 8 6 4		♦ 10 3
♣ A Q		♣ J 10 8 7 3
♠ Q 6	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A K 10 9 8 5 4 3
♥ A 9 2		♥ 5
♦ 9 7 5 2		♦ K J
♣ 9 6 5 4		♣ K 2

NS 6N; NS 6♠; NS 6♥; NS 6♦; NS 3♣; Par +1440: NS 6N=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	3 NT	Pass	5 ♣

All pass
 5 ♣ by South
 Down 2 — NS -200

When we have no confirmed trump fit, a *jump* to 5 ♣ is super-Gerber, asking for aces. At least that was our agreement, and one of us remembered it. This is a tool that we keep in our bag and bring out once a decade; this seemed like the time, since we might have a grand slam. This deal shows there is much to be said for not having such an obscure tool!

Poison -- Problem

Board 20
South Deals
Both Vul




♠ Q 10 7
♥ 9
♦ Q 9 5 2
♣ A 10 9 8 2

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

Choose your poison.

Board 20
 South Deals
 Both Vul

Poison -- Solution

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

♠ A J 9 3
 ♥ A 4
 ♦ A 8 7 4
 ♣ K Q 7

♠ Q 10 7
 ♥ 9
 ♦ Q 9 5 2
 ♣ A 10 9 8 2

NS 5♠; NS 5♦; NS 5♣; NS 2N; EW 1♥; Par +650; NS 4♠+1

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

We play inverted minor raises, but that is off in competition. This is just an ordinary 6 to a bad 10 raise, so we have a maximum. The winning call is 3♠!

We have already denied a 4-card spade suit, so this must show a decent 3-card holding with shortness in hearts. Perfect!

Takeout Double -- Problem

Board 1
East Deals
None Vul



♠ K 10 4
♥ J 10 6 3
♦ Q 10 7 4
♣ 9 4

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

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

What now?

Takeout Double -- Solution

Board 1
 East Deals
 None Vul

♠ —		♠ J 9 8 5									
♥ A Q 7 5		♥ K 4									
♦ A K 3 2		♦ J 9 5									
♣ K Q 8 3 2		♣ J 7 6 5									
♠ A Q 7 6 3 2	<table style="border: 1px solid gray; 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		♠ K 10 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 8 2		♥ J 10 6 3									
♦ 8 6		♦ Q 10 7 4									
♣ A 10		♣ 9 4									

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
3 ♠	6 ♣	2 ♠	Dbl
6 ♣ by North			
Down 2 — NS -100			

If we pass, partner will need substantial extra values to come back into the auction. We have six points and a suit to bid, so we should act.

Reluctant to commit to my anemic heart suit, I hedged my bet with a responsive double. Some pairs play this shows two unbid suits, but we had the agreement that the responsive double shows two suits of the same rank, minors here. My plan was to convert clubs to diamonds, offering a choice.

Partner's very aggressive jump to slam gave me pause. Did partner have a self-sufficient club suit, or should I follow through with 6♦? Wrong guess again - the cost of "minder-masting" to avoid the normal 3♥ bid.

Weak Two-Bid -- Problem

Board 3
West Deals
N-S Vul



♠ A 9 7
♥ 10 9 8 4
♦ J 10 8 4 3
♣ 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♥	3♦	?

By agreement, partner's weak-two bid promises a good suit, either two of the top three honors or A-J-10-x-x-x.
Would you bid here, at unfavorable vulnerability?

Board 3
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

Weak Two-Bid -- Solution

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

EW 5♣; NS 3♥; EW 3♦; EW 1♠; Par -400; EW 5♣=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♥	3♦	4♥
4♠	All pass		
4♠ by West			

The opponents should have a game, and a heart void could easily produce a slam. With our shape, we can probably make 3♥, so all the opponents can collect for their game at 4♥ is 200 points. That's what I bid. At matchpoints, we want the opponents to make the last guess. West guessed wrong.

Lead-Director -- Problem

Board 8
North Deals
None Vul



♠ J 5 2
♥ K J 10 7 6
♦ K 5 2
♣ Q 2

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


1. Good 15 to bad 18 HCP.
2. Hearts.

Do you have any agreements about partner's pass of the lead-directing double?

Playing your system, what would you do here?

Board 8
 North Deals
 None Vul

Lead-Director -- Solution

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

S 3N; N 2N; NS 2♥; NS 2♣; S 1♠; NS 1♦; Par +400; S 3N=

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT ¹	Pass	2 ♦ ²
Dbl	Pass ³	Pass	2 ♥

All pass

1. Good 15 to bad 18 HCP.
2. Hearts.
3. Denies 3+ hearts or a diamond stopper.

2 ♥ by South

Lead: ♣ 9

Made 2 — NS +110

The standard agreement is that partner would bid 2 ♥ with at least 3-card support, so passing denies that. This is the most important message to send.

Our partnership plays that a redouble sends the second most-important message: here it shows a stopper in the suit shown by the opponent's double. Opener's pass denies either of these messages.

Over partner's wide 16-17 notrump opening, we had planned to drive to game. What game can we play? We cannot declare the notrump -- opener would do that -- and we don't have a fit in the heart suit. We subside in 2 ♥ -- from the correct side, not that we can prevent the eventual diamond lead through, this time. We make exactly that, a huge system win.

The standard redouble is an offer to play, and we play that way when we don't have a second message. For example, if Stayman 2 ♣ is doubled, pass denies a stopper, and redouble is business.

Trump Tricks -- Problem

Board 2
 North Deals
 E-W Vul



♠ A Q J 10
 ♥ 10 5 4 3 2
 ♦ 5 2
 ♣ 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	1 ♠	?
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦
3 ♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	?

What would you do over the 1 ♠ overcall?

Clearly, our hand is too good to pass. We can double to show hearts, or bid 1 NT to show 8 to 10 HCP, a balanced hand and a spade stop.

Whichever we do, the auction continues as shown. Do you agree with the double of 3 ♠?

If we double, partner pulls to 4 ♣. What now? (No, we can't double that!)

Trump Tricks -- Solution

Board 2
North Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	1♠	Dbl ¹
2♠	3♣	Pass	3♦
3♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All pass			

1. Negative, 4+ hearts.

The negative double stands out, with a 5-card heart suit. The primary goal of our bidding is to reach our own best contract, and this is a solid first move. If we need to show spade stoppers, we'll be ready.

The alternative, a free bid of 1 NT, has these defects:

1. All our marginal strength is concentrated in the enemy suit. Though apparently located well behind overcaller, it probably won't fit well with partner's hand. Partner will expect some distributed values.
2. Since we failed to announce four hearts, partner will expect true 3+ card support for one or both minor suits.

After the negative double, opener's 3♣ shows extra strength or length. That's not necessarily so, after a free bid of 1 NT.

Having made the negative double, a penalty double of 3♠ is a standout. This shows spade tricks and sends a "hate your suits" message. Partner should pass this double.

In contrast, having made a free bid of 1 NT, the penalty double of 3♠ does not send the "hate your suits" message. Since we are likely to have a minor suit fit, partner may have only four clubs. It's better to pass and take our plus score. If we do double, partner may pull to 4♣ with extra shape -- still expecting a fit.

When partner does the "wrong thing," it's important to keep our head in the game. 4♣ is not a slam try. It says, "I heard your diamond preference, but we may want to play in clubs anyhow." Holding 2-2 clubs, we have a clear pass of 4♣. (With more diamonds than clubs, partner would just bid 4♦.)