

Despite all the reasons to pass, we have:

BRIAN GLUBOK: "One diamond. Start low: The longer the auction, the more mistakes everyone can make."

FRED STEWART: "One diamond. One notrump may be the best spot, but I can still get there from here. Bidding it directly may lead to an ugly two-heart contract."

LARRY ROBBINS: "One diamond. I should be stronger to double and to follow with notrump. I can bid spades over partner's hearts. One spade would not guarantee but would usually deliver five."

ROZANNE & BILL POLLACK: "One diamond. The hands we live for are a choice

there is no tomorrow. They prefer to keep the ball rolling and hope that something good happens or that they will have a chance to recover. While there is merit to this philosophy, when the clues indicate that the final decision is clearly the percentage action, one should go for it.

Problem D

IMPs; East-West vul. You, South, hold:

♠ 3 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ Q J 6 4 2 ♣ 10 7 6 5

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1 ♠	2 ♣	2 ♥

?
What call do you make?

← see page 52

have a singleton spade, and partner figures to have at most four spades perhaps fewer. The singleton three spades is an unlikely trump trick.

CARL HUDECEK: "Three clubs. The wrong hand on which to try to be a genius."

JEFF RUBENS: "Three clubs. I can't bring myself to pass, but the honors are serious wrong for a jump in clubs."

SAMI KEHELA: "Three clubs. Four clubs might tempt partner to embark on a sacrificial course, and I doubt that he will be thrilled by my contribution."

If partner sacrifices against four clubs, how bad can that be? He can't

lies. One spade would lie
 an effort to shut out hearts,
 wait. No double with a weak
 hearts. One notrump over-
 d hearts."

ANSON: "One diamond. Al-
 to bid hearts, and then I can
 I don't want partner to think
 spades."

and is reasonable and
 ut. It is likely that some-
 hearts, though what will
 ith gets to bid spades is
 ss.

FILES: "One spade. I dislike
 f one notrump."

ised that there were no
 notrump, which could
 winning contract. Any
 ers were cowed by the
 partner has a weak hand
 th.

'One spade. No direct way
 nd the unbid minor."

FF: "One spade. One dia-
 long-range choice; but not
 nce partner will probably
 s is so final."

to avoid finality, since
 orrow. They prefer to
 rolling and hope that
 d happens or that they
 nce to recover. While
 o this philosophy, when
 e that the final decision
 centage action, one

Problem D

vul. You, South, hold:
 > Q J 6 4 2 ♣ 10 7 6 5
 NORTH EAST
 2 ♣ 2 ♥

make?

Action	Score	Votes
4 ♣	100	15
3 ♣	80	6
5 ♣	70	4
Pass	50	1

How many clubs to bid? Our resi-
 dent conservative says none:

DANNY KLEINMAN: "Pass. With no
 strength in clubs, and slow strength in the
 red suits, I don't want to encourage partner
 to take what may be an overly expensive, or
 perhaps a phantom, save."

Phantom? South has exactly zero
 sure defensive tricks. If North takes
 a save after South raises, it would be
 hard to imagine that it will be a phan-
 tom. Oversaving is also far-fetched.
 Give North as little as:

♠ x x x ♥ x x ♦ K x ♣ K Q x x x x,
 and five clubs will concede only 500
 against a vulnerable game.

MARSHALL MILES: "Three clubs. I have
 mixed emotions about bidding, since I
 probably have a trump trick against hearts.
 Still, we likely have a good sacrifice if part-
 ner takes it."

Sure, you have a trump trick in
 hearts. But do you really think that is
 where the opponents will play? You
 have a singleton spade, and partner
 figures to have at most four spades,
 perhaps fewer. The singleton three of
 spades is an unlikely trump trick.

CARL HUDECEK: "Three clubs. The
 wrong hand on which to try to be a genius."

JEFF RUBENS: "Three clubs. I can't bring
 myself to pass, but the honors are seriously
 wrong for a jump in clubs."

SAMI KEHELA: "Three clubs. Four clubs
 might tempt partner to embark on a sacri-
 ficial course, and I doubt that he will be
 thrilled by my contribution."

If partner sacrifices against four
 spades, how bad can that be? He can

look at his spades and check his de-
 fense. I'd be quite happy if partner took
 a save after I bid four clubs, as I would
 have exactly what he expects. Three
 clubs is a nothing bid, giving the op-
 ponents all the room they need to find
 the right contract while not describing
 hand-type to partner. South might bid
 three clubs on 4-3-3-3 with three clubs
 to an honor.

BILLY EISENBERG: "Four clubs. A matter
 of style."

ALAN BELL: "Four clubs. Only four;
 partner could have defense against spades."

BART BRAMLEY: "Four clubs. Heart im-
 purity deters an immediate five-club blast.
 This way I can blame partner."

ERIC KOKISH: "Four clubs. Red-suit
 quacks may be useful for defense, but there
 is too much distribution and too few ace-
 kings for three clubs or a cue-bid, and five
 would be too extreme."

HOWARD WEINSTEIN: "Four clubs. At
 matchpoints, I would bid five, as the risk-
 to-reward ratio changes greatly. The oppo-
 nents rate to have nine spades, but jumping
 to five will usually induce a double, and my
 hand rates to be poor with quacks opposite
 partner's likely short suits, and partner may
 have spade strength. I won't try to win imps
 3 at a time."

IRA RUBIN: "Four clubs. Too many los-
 ers for five clubs, especially with the threat
 of at least one heart ruff; partner might have
 a spade stack."

MARK COHEN: "Four clubs. Feels right
 despite 6 HCP plus a singleton."

MIKE KAMIL: "Four clubs. I'd rather that
 my hearts were three low, but this will clue
 partner."

NICK NICKELL: "Four clubs. The only
 real flaw is too much in hearts."

ROBERT WOLFF: "Four clubs. Five is
 too much with no club honor and some
 defense."

ROZANNE & BILL POLLACK: "Four clubs. Combines obstruction with a reasonable description. Three clubs would overstate the strength, and five would be too unilateral with soft values and insufficient offense."

STEVE ROBINSON: "Four clubs. Not five, because I don't know whether the opponents have a fit. Sometimes partner has a very strong hand."

RAY ZOLLER: "Four clubs. Leaving the save decision up to pard."

FRED STEWART: "Four clubs. East-West appear headed for game. Might as well bid the extent of my hand and fold 'em up."

GEOFF HAMPSON: "Four clubs. Force East-West to decide on their major without interaction and avoid a big number."

I can't say that four clubs is wrong. It is an accurate description of South's hand, and North will be in a good position to determine whether or not to take a save. Five clubs might be too high. Still, four clubs does leave the opponents room to get together. Either one opponent may have three-card support for partner or a rebiddable suit. Once that rebid or raise has been made, the opponents will be well-placed to handle future decisions. Thus, I agree with:

LARRY ROBBINS: "Five clubs. Maximum pressure. I may go for 800, or we may be able to beat four hearts, but more likely East-West will take the push, or we will go for only 300 vs. 620."

DAVID BERKOWITZ: "Five clubs. Lower honors here and there make this problematic, but I feel the need to get the auction past four of a major."

BRIAN GLUBOK: "Five clubs. Automatic. Can't sell to four of a major; no point waiting. As the late, great Lowenthal always reminded us (quoting Heitner): Vulnerability is for children."

Glubok hits the nail on the head. If South bids four clubs, the opponents

will almost certainly reach four of some major. If this comes back to South, will he get that good feeling in the pit of his stomach that the opponents likely have done the wrong thing? No way. He will be tempted to take the save, although he shouldn't (since, presumably, four clubs described his hand and left the decision to partner).

A good philosophy to determine how high to make a preemptive raise is to raise to the level where you don't know what you are rooting for the opponents to do. If I were to bid four clubs, I would know that I was rooting for East-West to let us buy it there. I definitely won't like it if they reach four of a major. However, after five clubs I won't know what I am rooting for. It might be right for the opponents to defend, or it might be right for them to bid. If I don't know what I want the opponents to do, it will be more difficult for them to make the right decision.

If the opponents would always do the right thing over five clubs, I would be better off bidding only four and leaving the save decision to partner. But opponents don't always do the right thing, particularly when they haven't had a chance to determine their degree of fit. Five clubs could push them into a failing five-level contract or into defending prematurely. Five clubs forces the last guess. Four clubs will often transfer that guess to North-South.

Problem E

IMPs; North-South vul. You, South, hold:

♠ 4 ♥ J 9 8 7 5 3 2 ♦ 4 ♣ A 7 3 2

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	—	1 ♦
?			

What call do you make?

Action	Score
Pass	100
2 ♥	80
3 ♥	70
1 ♥	60
4 ♥	50

Here's another preem test. How high do we go? In any other way, how much should vulnerability slow us down? he-man:

ALAN BELL: "Four hearts. Vulnerability, the five level may be a plus."

I hate to say it, but at any level the four level may be better. It is far safer to make a double of four hearts than a double of three hearts—a backfire isn't a double. I grant that seven-four is a double, but pretty much like an eagle. It is not and at any other vulnerability I think four hearts fine. I think doing things a bit too much. The problem with overpreempting is that favorable vulnerability opponents have an accident. If you preempt, it isn't so simple, since they are not going to while if your side has the lead, you pay a big penalty.

ARTHUR ROBINSON: "Two singletons. Four clubs is reckless."

One man's reckless is another's routine.

ROZANNE & BILL POLLACK: "Four hearts. Ugly, but normal. It's not very likely to pass and show this hand. It has the same lack-of-trump-honor as a three-level preempt. It will be happy if partner raises."