

double, but I have no good diamond spot cards (for defense), and 1♥ or 1♠ would be a guess.”

Two players bid 1♠.

“I can't see doubling and having to bid 2NT if partner bids clubs,” says Robinson.

“My computer simulations show that 1♠ is the most likely call to get us to the proper contract,” says Bridge Buff. “Humans are too quick to double with a singleton in an unbid suit, and 1NT is a misdescription.”

Two panelists bid 2♦ to emphasize the majors.

“Pick your poison,” says Boehm. “I pick 2♦. Because I'm balancing, partner will allow more leeway.”

“2♦,” agrees Lawrence. “This is one of my favorite themes. I hope I have a sympathetic moderator.”

Lawrence's comment means he knows that 2♦ usually promises more length in the majors than 4-4. Still, it gets both suits in play, and the majors are where you are likely to have game. Also, it avoids the nasty problem of rebidding 2NT.

The majority votes for double. There are several good things that can happen, particularly when partner bids a major. There are bad things, too. Partner may bid clubs, or the opponents may bid clubs and bid to a better contract. As Deas says, however, double is the least of evils.

2. IMPs. Both vulnerable.

♠A Q J 10 7 5 ♥A K Q 9 ♦J 4 ♣J
 West North East South
 1♦ Pass 1♠ ?

Call	Votes	Award
2♠	10	100
Pass	3	50
Dbl	2	30
4♠	0	30
3♠	2	20
2♥	0	10

Bid your suit

Say the opponents open the bidding and respond in a new suit at the one level. If your side cuebids one of their suits, the standard interpretation is that it's natural. Usually it's a limited bid, however, with good opening-bid

strength. Even though this hand is stronger than that, 10 of the experts choose to bid 2♠.

“2♠ natural,” says Kennedy. “If I have another opportunity, I'll follow with 3♥. Partner rates to be broke.”

The Sutherlins agree. “There is a good chance the auction does not die over 2♠. We plan to bid hearts next — partner could have four hearts and zero to one spade.”

“My hand is a little stronger than partner expects for 2♠,” says Walker, “but it's the most accurate description.”

“2♠ is heavy,” say the Coopers, “but no other call fits.”

“I want to show my spade suit right away,” says Meckstroth.

“I hope that I get another chance to bid 3♥ later,” says Lawrence.

“The only problem with 2♠ is that the hand is too strong,” says Stack. “We are vulnerable, so probably it should be stronger like this hand.”

“I choose 2♠, even though I'm a touch heavy for this,” says Colchamiro. “4♠ is tempting, but I'm too old for that.”

“This hand is what a 2♠ bid shows,” says Falk. “I have a maximum, but that's not a crime. This is how we find 4♠ when North has

no spade support but some useful values.”

“2♠,” agrees Meyers. “If I were sure 3♠ were natural, I would bid that.”

Two panelists are sure.

“3♠,” says Sanborn. “I play that 2♠ is natural, so this is highly invitational. Double is wrong because all future spade bids would be cuebids.”

“I hope partner plays 3♠ as natural,” says Deas. “This describes the strength of my hand pretty accurately.”

Several panelists considered 3♠, but rejected it as asking for a spade stopper for 3NT. Others weren't sure what it would mean.

“Pass,” says Rigal. “Stay fixed this round and then balance over 1NT or 2♦. Any delayed double of diamonds should show spades and another suit, because I didn't act on the first round.”

“Pass,” agrees Robinson. “I hope to find out more about the hand and bid some number of spades later.”

“Pass,” echoes Bridge Buff. “No call describes this hand well, so I choose to pass and listen to my human opponents. My simulations will be more accurate with more data to input.”

Panel's answers

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
August Boehm	2♦	Dbl	2♣	1♦	3NT	310
Larry Cohen	1NT	Dbl	1NT	Redbl	Pass	360
Mel Colchamiro	Dbl	2♠	1NT	1♦	Pass	500
The Coopers	Dbl	2♠	2♣	Redbl	Pass	460
Lynn Deas	Dbl	3♠	1NT	1♥	Pass	380
Allan Falk	1NT	2♠	1NT	1♦	Pass	460
Betty Ann Kennedy	1NT	2♠	2♣	1♦	Pass	450
Mike Lawrence	2♦	2♠	2♥	1♥	Pass	350
Jeff Meckstroth	Dbl	2♠	1NT	1♦	3NT	460
Jill Meyers	Dbl	2♠	2♥	1♦	Pass	460
Barry Rigal	Dbl	Pass	2♥	1♦	Pass	410
Steve Robinson	1♠	Pass	2♣	1♦	Pass	390
Kerri Sanborn	Dbl	3♠	2♣	1♦	Pass	410
Don Stack	1NT	2♠	2♥	1♦	Pass	420
The Sutherlins	Dbl	2♠	2♣	Redbl	Pass	460
Karen Walker	Dbl	2♠	1NT	1♥	4♣	400
Bridge Buff	1♠	Pass	1NT	Redbl	4♦	320