

to bid it if you double. 5♣ paints a fairly good picture of what you have, and you may still get to slam if you belong there.

4. Matchpoints. None vul.

♠A ♥QJ8 ♦A109 ♣AQ9753

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	?

Call	Votes	Award
2♦	17	100
3♣	2	30
3♥	0	10

Bidding a three-card suit

Two panelists make the value bid of 3♣. This shows 16–18 points and a six-card (or longer) club suit.

"It's a textbook bid," says Quinn. "I can support hearts next if partner has enough to keep the auction alive."

Robinson agrees with 3♣. "Anything else would be a misdescription," he says.

The rest of the panel bids 2♦. This is a reverse and typically shows 17 or more HCP (but could be less with extreme distribution). You promise five or more in your first suit and four or more in the second, with the first suit being longer. In this case you have only three diamonds. Why does the panel bid this way?

"2♦," says Freeman. "It's important to discover if partner has five hearts."

"2♦ saves a lot of bidding room," say the Colchamiro. "We'll raise hearts as soon as we can."

"This hand is worth a reverse," says Soloway, "because of the three-card heart support."

"Over 2♦, partner can rebid 2♥ with a five-card suit," says Kennedy.

"I hate phony reverses," says Meckstroth, "but this seems to be a good candidate for it."

"I don't love false reverses," says Cohen, "but this seems the only sensible way to start with this hard-to-describe hand."

"2♦," says Rigal. "Ugh, I hate inventing suits, but you've persuaded me to do it. I know it will end in tears! My club suit is a little weak for

3♣, 2NT is out, and partner would expect four hearts for a 3♥ bid."

"I am a little strong for a jump in clubs," says Montin. "Also I have the potential to play in hearts if partner has a five-card suit. I will let him describe his hand now."

"I should be able to recover from the bogus reverse," says Walker, "and eventually show belated heart support and extra club length. I'd feel better about notrump if partner suggested it."

"My clubs are wrong for 3♣ and my hearts are too good," says Falk.

**It's Your Call
February 2007**

*Problems from Polish
Bridge magazine*

1. Matchpoints. E-W vul

♠KJ ♥J ♦A954 ♣AQ9873

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	2♣
3♥ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	Pass	?

(1) Weak.

2. Matchpoints. None vul.

♠AJ ♥AK9 ♦9763 ♣7653

West	North	East	South
	3♦	Pass	?

3. Matchpoints. N-S vul.

♠KQ10864 ♥K8 ♦9 ♣9432

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	4♣	Pass	?

(1) Forcing.

4. Matchpoints. N-S vul

♠104 ♥AKQ96 ♦KQ63 ♣A6

West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

5. Matchpoints. E-W vul.

♠AK986 ♥J10963 ♦98 ♣2

West	North	East	South
	1NT ⁽¹⁾	Dbl ⁽²⁾	?

(1) 15–17.

(2) One minor or both majors.

"I'll reverse, planning to raise hearts next. If North bypassed a five-card diamond suit, that won't be bad either."

"Too much potential for hearts to bid 3♣," says Boehm. "At my next turn, I can support hearts. Even a 4–3 fit may easily be the winning ticket."

"Jump raises should be made only when there is no other reasonable bid," say the Sutherlins. "Here we have a reasonable alternative."

One surprise bid was 2♦ by Bridge Buff. Computer software programs normally make "down the middle" bids instead of fancy three-card reverses.

"Aha, the Bridge World nightmare hand," says Sanborn. "In one of my partnerships, I have a bid for the three-card raise with a hand that also qualifies for a three of a minor rebid. Given that I can't have that, it's a choice between 2♦ and 3♣. I think I am a little too good for 3♣ and have a poor suit (in context) as well."

The Bridge World magazine has a feature called the Master Solvers' Club. Problems similar to this one have appeared there, and a hand that falls in that genre is referred to as the Bridge World Death Hand. As Sanborn points out, it is a hand that has the values for a jump rebid in a minor, but includes three-card support for the major that partner responds in.

The panel shows reluctance to rebid 3♣, especially with the partial heart fit. The 3♣ bid could leave partner poorly placed for his rebid. The 2♦ reverse has the advantage of keeping the bidding low.

5. Matchpoints. Both vul.

♠AQ7 ♥Q ♦AK1054 ♣AK97

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

Two-part question:
(1) Do you agree with South's first two bids?

Call	Votes	Award
Yes	17	50
No	2	15

(2) What is your call?

Call	Votes	Award
Pass	12	50
4NT	5	35
5NT	0	0

Should you make a one-level opening bid with 22 HCP?

Most of the panel agree with opening 1♦. When you open 2♣ and have to rebid 3♦, a lot of bidding room is lost. If you open 1♦, partner once in a while passes and you miss a game, but the experts are willing to risk this. The reward of opening 1♦ is that the exchange of information begins at a low level and the risk versus the reward is worth it.

"I suppose I could have opened an off-shape strong 2NT bid," says Sanborn, "but the auction rates to go better if I can get by the first round of the bidding when I open 1♦."

Falk agrees. "I hate opening 2♣ on hands like this one."

"I open 2♣ more than most people," says Cohen, "but this hand is too hard to describe after 2♣. The world won't end if I open 1♦ and it is passed out."

Robinson agrees with 1♦. "The best way to find a minor-suit slam is to open 1♦ and rebid 3♣," he says.

"We can live with 1♦," say the Colchamiro. "Opening 2NT as a compromise is also possible."

The Coopers say, "We don't think 2♣ is the right bid with a three-suited hand if there is a reasonable alternative."

The Bridge Buff agrees with opening 1♦. This shows that software is getting more sophisticated. Earlier programs would simply count points and invariably open 2♣. Buff's programming apparently took into account that two of the HCP were a singleton honor and that two- and three-suited hands are hard to bid after starting with 2♣.

Rigal does not agree with 1♦. "I would have opened 2♣ since I can never catch up. Why not open 2♣ and at least tell partner you have a game-forcing hand?"

"I think you need to open 2♣ with 22 HCP," agrees Meckstroth.

The panel majority passes over 3NT. What are their reasons?

"I would pass and hope we don't have a slam," says Meckstroth.

Soloway agrees. "Very close to raising to 4NT quantitative," he says.

"Pass," agree the Colchamiro. "We made our bed, now we will lie in it."

"The suits are not good enough to venture 4NT," says Freeman.

"Sure, I have extras," says Cohen, "but no assurance of safety if we go any higher. I can picture partner with:

♠KJ104 ♥K863 ♦52 ♣863"

Quinn also votes for pass. "Bidding higher is dangerous here. Even if partner has a nice hand, our fits aren't strong enough to produce a slam. Quite often you get a very good matchpoint score if partner can take 12 tricks, even if you don't bid six."

"Partner is more likely to have a six count than the 11 you need for slam," says Lawrence.

"Although we have a lot of high cards," says Baze, "we have no tricks.

I see no trick source."

Walker sums up the reasons for pass. "No fit, no enthusiasm from partner, no reason to fall in love with this hand."

Five panelists bid again by raising to 4NT. When the last bid is 3NT, a 4NT bid is considered a notrump raise rather than asking for aces.

"Partner cannot expect any more since I did not open 2♣," say the Sutherlins.

Falk agrees. "I've got about a king extra in high cards, so I must give North one more chance to consider slam," he says.

Sanborn bids 4NT. "Partner can't play me for more than 22 HCPs. I need to make a try."

There are two points that the panel made with this deal. They sometimes open a one-level bid with a very strong hand — something many advancing players aren't willing to do. Raising 3NT to 4NT is invitational in most cases, not asking for aces. □

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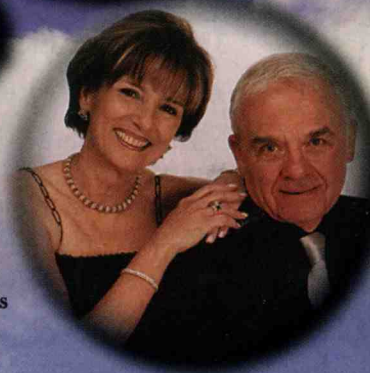
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