

4. IMPs. Both vulnerable.

♠A6 ♥AQJ105 ♦— ♣K109864

West	North	East	South
	1♠	5♦	?

Call	Votes	Award
5NT	10	100
Dbl	6	80
5♥	2	40
6♣	1	10
5♠	0	10
Pass	0	0

**What does 5NT mean?**

Partner opens the bidding, your

right-hand opponent bids your void at the five level and you have a strong hand with the other two suits. Now what? The majority bids 5NT — pick a slam.

"5NT," says Sanborn. "I'll take a chance and force to slam. This is the only way to get us to the right strain."

"5NT, pick a slam," says Rigal. "Anyone who tells you that they have any idea what's right, should be kicked off the panel. A few might resign, mind you, rather than answer this one!"

"Yes, we could be cold for a grand slam," says Theurer, "but East's preempt has robbed us of too much bidding space, so I'll bid 5NT and settle for getting (hopefully) to the best strain. Partner should not read this as grand slam force. There are more hands where this bid is needed as pick a slam, as is the case here."

"5NT is pick a slam," says Meckstroth. "Who is coming up with these problems?"

"We expect partner to get the 5NT as pick-a-slam bid," say the Gordons. "It's much more useful than the old grand slam force. Double could be right, but we are odds-on to have at least a small slam. Partner would likely pass a double."

"I hope partner can work out that 5NT is pick a slam," says Walker. "I can't justify settling for plus 200 or plus 500 when I'm so certain we have a slam somewhere."

"I don't think partner will mistake 5NT for grand slam force," says Falk. "Double hardly describes this hand when I want to be in slam somewhere."

There's a comedian in every crowd: "5NT," says Robinson. "This is choice of suits. Let partner guess."

Six experts choose double.

"Double shows values and no clear-cut action," say the Joyces.

"I suspect we have a better contract than 5♦ doubled," says Boehm, "but I see no reliable way to guess what it is. Once in a while, partner can take it out, and then we're in good shape."

"I really don't like double," says

Cohen, "but I can't see guessing to bid 5♥ or 6♣. In my dreams, partner pulls the double, but in real life, he will probably pass, and I have done the wrong thing."

Two experts see the danger of double, but don't want to commit to slam.

"I must bid, but what?" asks Stack. "I would bid 5NT if I thought partner would choose between hearts and clubs, but it should probably show a stronger spade tolerance. I will opt for the reasonable guess of 5♥."

"5♥," agrees Kennedy. "The power of preempts has struck again."

"This is more fantasy," says Lawrence. "I will guess to bid 6♣. I would bid 5NT if I was sure it was some kind of pick a slam."

Which bid has a higher frequency after a preempt: the grand slam force or pick a slam? The panel feels using the bid as showing two suits occurs more often, and, therefore, is more useful.

5. IMPs. Both vulnerable.

♠9 ♥Q 10 6 ♦Q 10 9 ♣A 10 7 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
4♥	Dbl	Pass	Pass
			?
Call	Votes	Award	
5♣	15	100	
Pass	4	50	
6♣	0	0	

### Take out a takeout double

Should you pass and take a likely plus score or bid your six-card suit? Most of the panel chooses the latter and bids 5♣.

"I've found that bidding works better than passing," says Robinson.

"Six-card suits were meant to be bid opposite a takeout double."

"Pass could be right," says Boehm, "but 5♣ keeps the door to slam open."

"To pass and have the opponents be plus 790, when our side should be plus 600, would be a very bad result," says the Sutherlins.

"This could be a double game swing to pass," says Sanborn. "I have enough offense to bid 5♣, but not enough to suggest anything higher."

"Doubles of high-level preempts get left in with flat hands and pulled with shape," says Cohen. "I'm hoping partner has enough to get us 1370 in 6♣."

"I'm taking out my partner's takeout double," says Rigal. "I hope he can raise to six."

"Another preempt forcing me to guess, so I'll guess 5♣," says Theurer. "Pass is possible, but we might not beat it very much, and, occasionally, it could even make."

"Takeout doubles are meant to be taken out, especially when you hold a six-card suit" says Walker.

Four experts choose to pass.

"We'll hope for plus 500 or plus 800 instead of a possible minus score at the five level," say the Joyces.

"We pass and take our plus score," say the Coopers. "While 5♣ is tempting, we are not sure it will make, and we never bid at the five level in auctions like this unless we expect to go plus."

"Pass," agrees Kennedy. "I'm going for a sure plus."

"With a probable heart trick and spade shortness, this hand is best for defense, even with the long, decent club suit," says Stack. "Partner needs a lot of cover cards for our side to make 5♣. I don't think this is a close decision." □

You can participate in It's Your Call. Go to [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) and click on My ACBL. You can submit answers for a given month until the 21st, at which time the next month's problems will be available.

### The top scores for April:

Kris Klamut, Aurora CO	500
Sandy Birnholtz, Sylvan Lake MI	500
Doris Andrews, Southbury CT	500
Lulu Minter, Glendora CA	500
Krishna Rustagi, Seattle WA	500
Siraj Haji, Columbus OH	470
Jeff Fang, Arcadia CA	470
Nancy Bloom, Chatham NJ	470
Joy Lague, Marco Island FL	470