

our forcing bid. But we agree that two spades is forcing. A new-suit bid by the doubler isn't forcing following a minimum noncompetitive advance (possibly with zero points). However, when advancer bids freely or jumps, doubler's new-suit bid, which shows a big hand (one too strong for an overcall), can't logically be passed. If it is clear that two spades is forcing, doesn't it cater to the best of all worlds?

Palatka's Pass Problem G

IMPs: North-South vul. You, South, hold:
 ♠ A 10 2 ♠ A 3 ♦ K Q 2 ♣ A Q J 5 2
 SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 2 NT 3 ♣ 3 NT Pass Pass
 Pass 4 ♠ Pass Pass
 ?

What call do you make?

Action	Score	Votes
5 ♣	100	12
6 ♣	80	8
5 NT	60	2
4 NT	60	0
Double	50	4
	30	5

Most of the panel neatly avoided the trap. But not these voters:

RICHARD FREEMAN (and SUE PICUS nearby identically): "Four notrump. West does not have king-queen-jack of spades and an entry, but he should have enough distribution so that defending four spades-doubled won't be profitable enough."

ERIC KOKISH: "Four notrump. North's pass suggests a source of tricks, and we're closer to a slam than to beating four spades enough to please us."

ROBERT WOLFF: "Four notrump. It could be that we are taking a save. Many different things could make it right to bid on."

We agree that South shouldn't defend, with all prime cards and a superior offensive hand. The "trap" is that

S.O.P. in these situations is to persevere in notrump. It's the instinctive move. However, a little thought reveals that we should play in a suit contract.

ADAM WILDAVSKY: "Five clubs. It sounds as though partner has a singleton spade and length in one or both minors (not four hearts, if a double of three spades would have been negative). We rate to take at least one more trick in a suit than in notrump, so four notrump is out."

STEVE GARNER: "Five clubs. Partner has asked for my opinion. Giving him an ideal minimum:

♠ x ♠ x x x ♦ J 10 x x x ♣ K x x x, we should be laydown for five of some minor. Finally, we see a deal where LHO made our life a little easier."

Garner and Wildavsky each went on to mention the possibility of slam. As do:

JILL MEYERS: "Five clubs. Partner rates to have minor-suit length and shortness in spades—we might even be making a slam—I don't want to keep my five-card club suit a secret."

DANNY KLEINMAN: "Five clubs. The penalty against four spades doubled figures to be inadequate. With my one spade stopper the ace, and partner's pass suggesting shortness in spades, I don't want to bid four notrump, as we may have only nine tricks if partner has, say:

♠ x ♠ K Q x ♦ J x x x x ♣ K x x x, or similar. If he does, I hope he'll read me for something like the hand I hold and bid six. That'll teach West to bid four spades directly over two notrump."

JOHN CARUTHERS: "Five clubs. Partner's pass is encouraging. Need I have more to be encouraged? I should put it to that so-and-so West by bidding six clubs. Let him bid again over that. All we need for slam is a fit, a singleton spade, and two of the three key cards. Not too much to ask."

RON GERARD: "Five clubs. Not a Lazard-like six diamonds, because North could hold clubs. And not six of anything, because I didn't pay North's share of the entry fee. But unless North paid my share of the entry, five clubs with this hand is what his pass invited me to do."

Ron refers to the famous deal in July's Fifty Years Ago, where Lazard, having passed over RHO's opening bid, intelligently jumped to six diamonds on a four-card suit despite no action from his partner.

MICHAEL ROSENBERG: "Five clubs. If I had real guts, I'd bid five spades to teach West a lesson. As partner didn't negate-double three spades or penalty-double four spades, he likely has one-three in the majors or, if a doubleton spade, significant playing values. Maybe partner will sniff out the perfect fit and get us to slam. If North bids five diamonds, I'll check out my RHO. If he doesn't look too swift on lead, I'll raise to slam."

Yes, it seems clear to bid clubs, not notrump. Did you notice that each and every quoted five-club bidder mentioned slam?

CHIP MARTEL: "Six clubs. Why not? As little as:

♠ x x ♠ K x x ♦ A x x x ♣ x x x x, gives us an okay play for slam. Once we are choosing between a moderate penalty and a high contract, why not get a bonus? Perhaps this will give West pause about bidding against us."

GERALD CARAVELLI: "Six clubs. Time for my once-every-four-months flyer. If partner had long diamonds, I would expect him to gamble out four notrump or five diamonds. With two low spades, he would double. If I am reasoning from a plausible premise, then my hand has become huge opposite some 1=4=4=4 minny, so six clubs is a decent shot."

That specific shape is unlikely if you think that a double of three spades would have been negative. Here is someone whose comment implies that he doesn't think such a double is negative in BWS:

JEFF RUBENS: "Six clubs. Admittedly, there is some ambiguity here, because I might have six clubs; but that seems unlikely to cost. If you are asking, I think five notrump would (for the moment) suggest four diamonds and five clubs; five spades sounds like four hearts and (for the moment) five clubs. Not driving to slam is not an option; one mustn't let a bullying West fearlessly kick sand in the face of a 97-pound weakling."

KIT WOOLSEY: "Six clubs. The bidding indicates that partner has a singleton spade and some values. Opposite that, six clubs figures to be a fine contract."

MARSHALL MILES: "Six clubs. Partner's pass shows either a singleton spade or a long suit (and a hand strong enough to invite our bidding beyond game). I wouldn't be surprised if he corrects to six diamonds."

And, indeed, we'd have a great dummy for him.

BILLY EISENBERG: "Six clubs. Doesn't partner have a singleton spade?"

RON SMITH: "Five spades. Partner's forcing pass suggests short spades and a long minor. If his pass wasn't intended as forcing, heaven help us."

Not intended as forcing? Our default rule for forcing passes is: "If the janitor would play it as forcing, then it is forcing." Even the janitor's blue-haired grandma would treat this pass as forcing. But isn't five spades a bit much? We don't think either the janitor or his grandma would be trying for seven.

The creator of this problem (so to speak) took quite a lot of indirect hits

from the panel's comments:

ERIC RODWELL: "Five clubs, North's pass is certainly forcing, and with such good offense I should bid. The question is whether four notrump or five clubs is better; I pick five clubs, because pard could easily have a stiff spade, e.g:

♠ x ♥ x x x ♦ A J 10 x x ♣ 10 9 x x,

as he did in real life. This makes me realize that I, as West, should probably have bid four spades the first time with my:

♠ K Q J x x x x ♥ K Q x x ♦ x ♣ x."

Four spades doubled would have given North-South a paltry plus 100. Four notrump was on the club finesse, which was on, but that same finesse yields 1370 in six clubs. If the club finesse had lost, five clubs would make 600, while four notrump would have been down in hundreds. North's actual hand should not surprise anyone.

Now, sadly, we must investigate the other end of the spectrum. We love six clubs. We like five clubs. We think four notrump is misguided, but it is surely better than:

AL ROTH: "Double. No choice. I passed three notrump, so why should I bid more?"

Isn't he famous for listening to the bidding and diagnosing the situation?"

CARL HUDECZEK: "Double. It would be hard to give me a better defensive hand than this on the auction."

PATRICK LONG: "Double. With no guarantee of making anything, a sure plus may win the board."

Not this time. Not even the janitor should double.

The scheduled Swiss Match will appear at a later time.

Problem H

Matchpoints; none vul. You, South, hold:

♠ J ♥ J 4 2 ♦ J 10 7 6 4 2 ♣ K J

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	2 NT	3 ♥	Pass
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	5 ♣		

Three answers required.

(H1) If partner doubles, what is your opening lead?

(H2) If partner passes, would you double? (yes/no)

(H3) If partner passes, what would you lead against five clubs (doubled or undoubled)?

Action	Score	Votes
(H1)		
♦ 7	40	11
♦ 6	30	5
♦ J	30	1
♦ 2	20	1
♦ 4	20	1
♣ 2	20	6
♠ J	20	3
♦ x	15	2
♥	10	0
Abstain		1
(H2)		
no	30	17
yes	20	14
(H3)		
♣ 2	30	15
♠ J	20	10
♥ 2	15	4
♥ J	10	2
♣ K	10	0
♦	10	0

Our janitor is back. Even he knows that partner's double shows a diamond void.

STEVE GARNER: "H1. Diamond seven. Partner has requested a diamond lead, and I must oblige."

DANNY KLEINMAN (with JILL MEYERS, MARSHALL MILES, MICHAEL ROSENBERG, ADAM WILDAYKSY, and ROBERT WOLFF all almost identically): "H1. Diamond seven. On this auction, partner's double is Lightnesque."