

Scoring, Competing and Game Bidding

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
1♥	2♦	Pass	1N
All pass			
We prefer to play in a major instead of a minor but we shouldn't take this thinking too far. Sometimes we should aim to play in the more comfortable partscore. Here South knows that North holds 5hearts but decides to play in the known 8card minor suit fit. With the hearts breaking 4-2 (as would be most common) the 5-2 fit fails but 2♦ makes. The latter loses two spades, one diamond and two clubs. In 2♥ there would also be an unavoidable trump loser.			
♠ Q 8 ♥ A K 8 4 2 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ K 8	♠ K J 5 3 ♥ J 10 9 7 ♦ K 5 2 ♣ 10 9 3 2		♠ 10 9 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A J 7 6 ♣ J 6 5 4

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable			
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
2♥	2♠	1♥	1♠
		3♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	3♠
All pass			
<b>1</b> Purely competitive but some may try 3♦ as a game try. This could work spectacularly if partner accepts (see final paragraph for this hand).			
It is generally right to compete to the level of the fit. That means that on competitive partscore deals, we should aim to play at a level that is consistent with the number of trumps we hold (so contract for the 2level when holding eight trumps). West may have raised with 3card support but generally has 4cards. East, in bidding on to 3♥, may also have taken into account his good distribution.			
South knows partner has 3+spades so, with 6spades, continues to 3spades. 3♠ will make provided declarer plays a spade to the ace (attempting to run ♠10 doesn't work here); and plays East, who has opened the bidding, for the ace of clubs (with the queen placed with West). Declarer will lose a spade, two hearts and a club. After three rounds of diamonds have been played declarer will know that East has 1552 shape. That means that 3♥ will always make (two diamonds, a spade and a club to lose). So even if declarer fails in 3♠, that loss will be better than conceding to a making 3♥.*			
*Perhaps East West will bid on to 4♥. Now the defence is crucial. South must lead a club (or switch to one after cashing one/two diamonds). Else East's club loser can be thrown on the established ♠K.			
♠ 10 5 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ K J 8 4 3	♠ Q ♥ J 10 8 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ Q 7 6 5	♠ A K Q 5 4 ♥ 10 8 6 5 4 ♦ A 9 ♣ A 8 7 6 2	♠ 7 6 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ 10 2 ♣ 10 2

<p>♠ 9 7 5 4 ♥ J 2 ♦ 10 8 4 2 ♣ K Q 4</p> <p>♠ A J 10 6 2 ♥ A Q 6 5 ♦ 7 ♣ A 9 6</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A K Q J 9 ♣ J 10 8 7 5</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1 ♠</td><td>2 ♦</td><td>2 ♠</td><td>1 ♦<sup>(1)</sup></td></tr><tr><td>3 ♥<sup>(2)</sup></td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♥</td><td>3 ♦<sup>(1)</sup></td></tr></table> <p><i>1 Pass is possible but a little feeble 2 Game try, usually (as here) 4hearts</i></p> <p>East has a maximum hand for his gentle raise to 2 ♠ so very willingly accepts the game try. Whilst the East West auction began with an agreement of the spade suit West has been able to bring in a new suit. East has suggested that as a place to play. West will accept hearts as trumps believing the contract has been placed in a 4-4 fit. No matter, even the 5-4 fit works better than playing the 5-3 spade fit.</p> <p>In spades declarer cannot avoid losing a diamond and a club. But in hearts declarer will make twelve tricks. On the fourth and fifth spade (side suit) winners declarer can throw a club and a diamond. It's just a matter of ruffing a diamond for the twelfth trick (something that would also have been possible had the hearts broken 3-1).</p>	West	North	East	South	1 ♠	2 ♦	2 ♠	1 ♦ <sup>(1)</sup>	3 ♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	4 ♥	3 ♦ <sup>(1)</sup>
West	North	East	South										
1 ♠	2 ♦	2 ♠	1 ♦ <sup>(1)</sup>										
3 ♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	4 ♥	3 ♦ <sup>(1)</sup>										
<p>♠ 5 4 ♥ A Q 5 2 ♦ 10 7 3 2 ♣ 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ A J 10 9 7 ♥ K 10 8 3 ♦ Q 6 ♣ Q 9</p> <p>♠ K 8 2 ♥ 9 7 6 ♦ 9 8 5 4 ♣ A 5 3</p> <p>♠ Q 6 3 ♥ J 4 ♦ A K J ♣ K J 10 6 2</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 N</td><td>All pass</td></tr></table> <p>Once West bids 2 ♥ East knows that West holds at least 5 spades. The partnership therefore has an 8 card major suit fit. Generally we look for such 8 card fits and, having found one, play in the major suit. Is that what East should do now? No. When we have quite balanced hands, but know of the 5-3 fit, we might think about playing in no trumps. We will be put off if we hold a small doubleton. Here, however, our doubleton is opposite partner's second suit. That suit should not be a concern for us. Further we have extra values and a very robust holding in the unbid suit. We should bid 3N.</p> <p>Against best defence we can be held to ten tricks in either spades or no trumps. Bidding 3N was the right thing to do. Against 3N let's say South leads a diamond. We win and play on clubs. South wins and must switch to a heart to hold the contract to ten tricks. Whatever happens, when we regain the lead, we'll have set up the club winners and will run ♠ Q from dummy.</p>	West	North	East	South	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 N	All pass
West	North	East	South										
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass										
2 ♥	Pass	3 N	All pass										

<p> ♠ K43  ♥ Q4  ♦ A10987  ♣ K9 </p> <p> ♠ 965  ♥ AK9  ♦ 65  ♣ AQ875 </p> <p> ♠ AQ8  ♥ J8532  ♦ KQ4  ♣ 106 </p> <p> ♠ J432  ♥ 1076  ♦ 32  ♣ J432 </p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 ♣<sup>(1)</sup></td> <td>2 ♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3N</td> <td>All pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>1 Pass would not be wrong</b></p> <p>Over 2 ♦ South has a difficult rebid. He bids his 3card spade suit* as a way of letting partner know that 3N might be the destination if North has a club stop. North may have preferred a better club holding but Kx, with the lead coming round to his hand, will suffice. If West has overcalled East will definitely lead a club. The beneficiary of that is North who now has ten effortless tricks (three spades, six diamonds and a club).</p> <p><i>*If West doesn't overcall South will always bid 2 ♠. With the overcall South may prefer an asking bid of 3 ♣ (have you a club stop?).</i></p> <p>When this hand was recently played in a Wednesday night duplicate some played in 5 ♦, obviously worried about the club position. Because of the matchpoint scoring system 3N should always be preferred over 5minor unless the partnership believes 3N has no play and that 6minor isn't possible.</p> <p>Here any North Souths seeking the minor suit game would have the ignominy of finding that 3N was cold and 5 ♦ had no play (two hearts and a club to lose).</p>	West	North	East	South		1 ♥	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3N	All pass	
West	North	East	South														
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♥														
2 ♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠														
Pass	3N	All pass															

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable			
♠ QJ83 ♥ KJ2 ♦ A Q8 ♣ A105	♠ A74 ♥ 9653 ♦ 1096 ♣ 974	<b>West</b> Pass <b>1 12-14</b>	<b>North</b> 3N <b>East</b> Pass <b>South</b> 1N <sup>(1)</sup>
When the partnership has extra values over what's needed for game, consideration should be given to not trying to find a major suit fit. The reason is that the high card power of the hands may mean that the same number of tricks is available in no trumps. With 17hcps, North knows the partnership has 29-31 hcps.  Here declarer will take the same eleven tricks in no trumps and spades, losing just two aces. There's no need to risk a club finesse – declarer can think of throwing dummy's third club on South's fourth diamond; or of throwing South's third club on North's third heart.  This hand is similar to hand 4. There we eschewed the 5-3 major suit fit. Here we avoid looking for the 4-4 one.			

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable					
♠ 7 ♥ A Q 10 9 3 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ 7 6 2	♠ A Q J T 3 2 ♥ 8 6 4 2 ♦ - VOID - ♣ Q 9 4	<b>West</b> 2♣ 4♣ Pass	<b>North</b> 2♥ 5♦ <sup>(1)</sup> Pass	<b>East</b> 2♠ 5♣ <sup>(2)</sup> 6♠	<b>South</b> 1♦ 3♥ 6♦ All pass
<i>1 Double fit in the red suits has come to light 2 Double fit in the black suits has come to light</i>					
<p>Fireworks. This hand is a good example of why it pays to bid more when holding a double fit. It's really a case of who's going to get off the merry-go-round first. After North's 5♦ bid East could easily jump to 6♠. He plays partner for the two top club honours and the king of spades – reasonable thinking given his earlier leap to 4♠. With North South bidding and supporting hearts East can also place partner with one heart (at most).</p>					
<p>Why does East bid 5♠? It's a move that could backfire but he strongly believes North South will bid again. Now when they bid 6♦ 6♠ looks like a sacrifice (and might get doubled). By bidding in this fashion (a style known as "walking the dog") East minimises the chance of the opponents finding the winning sacrifice of 7♦. That contract fails by three tricks. It would be doubled but a gain of 800 points is little in comparison to 1,430 (or 1,660 if 6♠ is doubled).</p>					

<p>♠ K Q J 7 5 2 ♥ 9 5 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 10 4 2</p> <p>♠ 6 ♥ K J 7 2 ♦ A 5 4 2 ♣ 8 7 6 3</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1 ♥</td><td>2 ♠<sup>(1)</sup></td><td>4 ♥<sup>(2)</sup></td><td>Pass<sup>(3)</sup></td></tr></table> <p>1 <i>6spades, 5-9 hcp's ("weak")</i> 2 <i>Bids one more in a competitive auction (i.e. had North passed, would have bid 3 ♥)</i></p> <p>This may not be a common auction in that some Souths may be tempted to bid 4 ♠. But is that the right thing to do? More often than not 4 ♠ will be doubled (either by West who has a few extras; or by East who may feel that's the way to protect their side's making game).</p> <p>Give partner the hand he's got – which is about as "classical" as it comes (all points in the bid suit, no side suit defensive cards) – and North South will make seven or eight tricks depending on who has ♣A. With West the opener it's more likely to be with that hand so South should be thinking of 4 ♠ failing by three tricks. That's what will happen. North South will book themselves a negative score of 500, a score worse than allowing East West to make 420 (which they will by leading twice towards West's ♣J).</p> <p>When South bids 4 ♠ it is a sacrifice. When sacrificing the idea is to show a profit. Three factors are important for such bidding – that most East Wests will bid to game; that those games will make (South has some defence that could have put that notion in doubt); and that the penalty will be less than the conceded game. If that's not clear the winning option ... is to pass.</p> <p>Further, when thinking of bidding on, the worst possible holding is a doubleton in the opponents' suit. Often, as here for South, it's duplicated by partner holding a similar doubleton. That's two losers for starters.</p>	West	North	East	South	1 ♥	2 ♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	4 ♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass <sup>(3)</sup>
West	North	East	South						
1 ♥	2 ♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	4 ♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass <sup>(3)</sup>						