

This hand was bid 6 times last week, 3 pairs bid game 3 pairs bid part scores.
Let's see how the bidding might have gone. Teams competition.

Acol

N E S W
P P
1S P 2S P
?

5 Card Major

N E S W
P P
1S P 2S P
?

Now we have difficult decisions for both.

For Acol it is simple, 13 points plus a singleton and guaranteed 4 spades in support justifies a raise and for 5 carders, it is even clearer as they can see the same logic minus the 4 card support but still 9 trumps. Acol bidders have a slight advantage as they know they have 10 trumps.

At this point it seems like guesswork whether to bid 3 or 4 spades. If they bid 3S simply asking partner to bid 4S if they have extra values or if they just bid 4S gambling based on the system then both options win 50% of the time.

There are two mechanisms that may assist here.

1. Trial bids
2. Losing Trick Count

1. After a major suit fit, bidding a suit that you require help with is known as a trial bid. If North bids 3D here, they are asking partner if they hold honours OR a shortage - holding King/xD South will bid 4S. Partner agreement can also elect to show '*shortage*' in a suit - in this case, North will bid 3C asking partner if this information improves their hand. Holding King C x 5, South isn't interested and bids 3S.

2. Counting losers. This is more important for North on this occasion. Before bidding starts, North should examine the hand from a loser point of view with Spades as trumps. They see 1S loser, 1H loser, 3D losers and 1C loser, totalling six probable losers. When partner bids 2 Spades, N/S losers go down to 5 as there is no longer a spade loser. Therefore partner needs 2 tricks to make game possible. The response of 2S shows 6 to 9 points and either 3 or 4 spades depending on system.

How many tricks would you expect partner to hold when responding 2S?

On average the expectation would be 2 tricks. With 5 losers in hand and 2 tricks in dummy, this leaves a total of 3 losers overall, making 4S easier to bid. Combining both systems will help to bid tight games, which is vital in teams.

One final consideration. Should East contest over 1 Spade vul against non vul?

In pairs 100%, a X is preferable. In teams 2D is risky so again better to X.

Curiously 5H x by W would be a very good score for EW, going 1 off for 200 as against 420.

Dlr: South
Vul: E/W

Optimum NS 4S 420

North's Hand:
 ♠ A K J 10 9 2
 ♥ A 10
 ♦ J 8 5 4
 ♣ 7

South's Hand:
 ♠ 7 5
 ♥ J 8 6 5 3
 ♦ 10 7
 ♣ A Q J 2

West's Hand:
 ♠ 7 5
 ♥ J 8 6 5 3
 ♦ 10 7
 ♣ A Q J 2

East's Hand:
 ♠ 8
 ♥ K Q 9 7
 ♦ A Q 9 3 2
 ♣ 10 9 3

Trick Count:
 13 8 11 8

Card Count:
 ♠ Q 6 4 3
 ♥ 4 2
 ♦ K 6
 ♣ K 8 6 5 4

Card Count:
 ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N
 N - - - 4 1
 S - - - 4 1
 E 2 2 3 - -
 W 2 2 3 - -

Board No 19 E/W Vul Dealer South

Bid	By	Ld	Tks	+Sc	-Sc	+	-
3♠	N	♥K	+1	170		0	0
3♠	N	♥K	+1	170		0	0
4♠	N	♠8	=	420		+7	-7
3♠	N	♥K	=	140		-7	+7
4♠	N	♥K	=	420		-1	+1
4♠	N	♥K	+1	450		+1	-1