

2022 Bronze Bidding Challenge: February

Problem 1 **Teams: None Vul, Dealer West**

♠KJ6	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥52	P	P	1♠	P
♦862	?			
♣KQT94				

If you rely totally on the point count this hand is not strong enough for a 2-over-1 response, but what are the alternatives? 1NT is probably not where you want to play with no stoppers in the red suits, and none of the panel voted for that. They all decide to introduce the nice club suit.

FRAME: 2♣: A close call between an underbid of 2♠ but I prefer the slight overbid and will try to backtrack in the subsequent auction.

HAMILTON: 2♣. Only 9 points but the good clubs and useful spades make it worth a 2/1. Will bid Spades next round.

GALLACHER: 2♣. Are my clubs good enough to bid at the 2-level? I have 3 good spades and partner's hand is unlimited. The opposition have passed. I can always come back to spades depending on partner's next bid.

Since you are a passed hand partner need not respond to your change of suit – but if they were to pass you would not be unhappy and, as Mike points out, it is highly unlikely that partner will pass when neither opponent is strong enough to bid.

Derek likes a 5-card 1♠ opener, so he is worth a Fit Jump. Perhaps a bit rich if partner may have only 4 spades....

SANDERS: 3♣. We are a passed hand so perfect for a fit bid! Good clubs with spade support typically 9-11 points and nonforcing. If partner is weak they can retreat to 3S or if strong reach a nice slam.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2♣	7	10	26
3♣	1	8	0
2♠	0	6	5
3♠	0	5	1
1NT	0	3	6

Problem 2 **Teams: All Vul, Dealer North**

♠JT93	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥J832		1♦	Dbl	P
♦8743	?			
♣A				

Most of the panel are not particularly enthused by this collection. They bid their cheaper major.

HAMILTON: 1♥. Normal to bid lower suit with equal length.

If partner had opened 1♣ you would respond 1♥, knowing that partner will bid again and you will find your best fit. But this does not apply after your forced response to a takeout double. Partner can Pass.

He will not convert 1♥ to 1♠ unless he has a very strong hand.

You are not worth a jump response – you need about 8 points with a 5-card suit, 9 or 10 with only a 4-card suit, but your hand could be worse and you might want to make another bid in a competitive auction.

TUDOR: 1♠. Looking ahead to the next round of bidding. Suppose North says 2♦ or 2♣, then I can bid 2♥ – keeping the bidding low with both Majors in the picture.

Seems like a good plan. If you respond 1♥ and bid spades later you should have longer hearts than spades. Our resident optimist goes further:

SANDERS: 1♠. If partner takes further action I will jump to 3♥ to get across the extra values I have but not quite shown with my initial action. (I quite like 2♦ as an alternative option)

Peter also suggests a 2♦ cue to show the same length in the Majors. This is a good bid, but it is generally played as forcing till a suit is agreed, which takes you to the 3-level, perhaps too high on this occasion. The singleton Ace is much less useful than an Ace in one of your suits.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
1♥	6	10	24
1♠	2	9	4
2♦	0	7	5
2♠	0	4	1
2♥	0	3	4

Problem 3 Teams: EW Vul, Dealer West

♠5	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥AJ6	1♣	P	1♠	P
♦KQJ4	?			
♣AJT74				

You do not want to make a minimum rebid here, so you have to choose between reversing into your second suit or responding 1NT, lying about your distribution. The panel is split.

TUDOR: 2♦. Forcing Reverse, showing 16+ and longer clubs than diamonds. A 1NT rebid distorts my hand and could result in missing a minor suit slam.

Derek, whose cup is always half full, believes we may still reach a minor suit slam after a 1NT rebid.

SANDERS: 1NT—Not perfect but keeps things low, gets across the values and still have 3♦ bid in reserve, if partner bids checkback Stayman!

Others believe that the hand does not merit a reverse because of the misfit.

MALE (similarly FRAME): 1NT. Not ideal with a singleton in partner's suit, but not good enough for a 2♦ reverse, despite the nice quality.

MCKAY: (similarly EDMOND): 1NT. I would rather get my suitability for NT across than bid out my shape in case we miss our chance at 3NT.

What would your partner respond to 1♣ with Jxxx Kx Axxx Qxx? Most prefer to bid the Major, in which case 3NT has a possibly fatal flaw. But if 1♠ denies lower-ranking 4-card suit partner probably has 5 spades and NT will be the best spot.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
1NT	5	10	14
2♦	3	8	22
2NT	0	3	1
3♦	0	2	1

Problem 4 Teams: All Vul, Dealer West

♠KQ	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥A98643	?			
♦32				
♣J42				

There is no 'correct' answer to this one! It is largely a matter of temperament.

Half the panel open a weak2.

MALE: 2♥. Good HCP, but KQ doubleton is a downgrade for me. Jxx not worth much either.

GALLACHER: 2♥. I don't have enough to open. I have a long weak heart suit. Seems right to bid 2♥.

There is a Top Tip about pre-empts: 2 flaws are OK, 3 flaws are one too many. This hand has the worst possible suit holding for a weak 2 opener, most points are outside the suit, and its values are mainly defensive. This persuades two panellists to open 1♥.

TUDOR: 1♥. Close between opening 1♥ or passing. With most points outside of the heart suit (which also isn't a great suit) I don't open a weak 2♥!

The remaining panellist thinks both these options are flawed.

EDMOND: Pass – the suit is not good enough for a Weak2 and ♠Q wasted.

All true, but should there be a gap between a 1-opener and a 2-opener when you have a 6-card Major? If you Pass now you may be frozen out of the auction altogether – but that may be no bad thing.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2♥	5	10	12
1♥	2	8	4
Pass	1	7	22

Competitor's top scores

2* Master	Will Iles	Stewartry	37
	Charles Fogelman	GBC	33
1* Master	Roy Heanes	New Melville	40
	Alasdair Adam	Individual	38
Master	Neil Bulleid	Buchanan	40
	David Edelman	Maccabi	38
	Jane Smithson	Berwick	37
	Alex Sutherland	New Melville	36
	Louis Moore	Berwick	34
	Pam Warner	New Melville	33
	David Olive	Inverness Caledonian	31
	Alice Wilson	Oban	31
District Master	Ken Brown	Pentland	37
	John Smithson	Berwick	37
	Patricia Gilmore	Pentland	34
	Paul Kerr	Troon	34
	Alan Paterson	Johnstone	34
	Ken Tait	Marmion	32
	Rosemary Jamieson	Carlton	30
Local Master	Chris Mickley	Nairn	37
	Eman Clayburn	Carlton	36
	Allison Clayton	Aberdeen	36
	May Armour	Kyle	32
Club Master	Angela Horsfall	Carlton	38
	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	38
	Peter Beckett	New Melville	35
	Shona Low	Marmion	35
	Margaret Mainland	Orkney	35
	Andrew Vinten	Montrose	30