

## Bronze Bidding Challenge: August 2023. Comments and Scores

*Another set supplied helpfully by a panel member.*

**Problem 1 Teams: All Vul, Dealer East**

♠T6	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
♥AQ9	-	-	1♥	2♣
♦K9742	?			
♣T74				

*This would be a problem even without the intervening overcall. Is this hand worth a change of suit response at the 2-level? Most of the panel settle for a single raise.*

**FRAME:** 2♥: Not perfect with only 3-card support but I'm not good enough for 2♦ and my dummy may well be useful to ruff the 3rd round of spades.

**MURDOCH:** 2♥. The natural value bid. Responding 2♦ then raising 2♥ to 3♥ gets us a level higher for no good reason.

*Alisdair is put off this bid for fear of landing in a 4=3 fit.*

**MCLEOD:** 2♦. I should have 10+ HCPs, but 9 will have to do. If I'm not willing to make the only viable bid, I'll have to Pass. I need 4 hearts to raise partner, and NT is asking for trouble with two empty suits. It is tempting to Pass and wait for partner to reopen with a double, since we might be unable to make anything if partner doesn't have a good enough hand to do that. But we might miss a viable 2♥ contract, and we might have a 9-card diamond fit, since the SBU system is to bid Majors first. Passing also gives LHO far too much freedom to shut partner out of the auction.

*I think most will agree that the single raise does not guarantee 4-card support – sometimes there is no better bid than a 3-card raise. Partner may have 5 hearts, and if not the 4=3 fit may be the best available spot.*

*This is particularly true in a competitive auction: if you bid 2♦ now and LHO introduces spades you may not get another chance to tell partner about your heart support.*

*Derek is concerned that the hand is too strong:*

**SANDERS:** 2♦: A good nine points so too strong for just 2♥. Must admit I really like a 3♣ UCB showing a good heart raise. See how you are a passed hand, so the point range for this action is very narrow. Partner with only four hearts, a strong balanced hand and club stop still has the option of 3NT.

*Unfortunately, Derek misread the question: you are not a passed hand, so partner might expect rather more.*

*No-one considered 3♦, a Fit Jump showing diamonds as well as heart support. The heart support is surely adequate, but the diamonds are not good enough to be considered a source of tricks.*

Problem 1	Panel	Marks	Competitors
2♥	5	10	9
2♦	3	8	18
3♣	0	6	1
3♦	0	4	1
Dbl	0	1	1

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

♠KQ8	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
♥Q5	1♦	2♥*	3♣	P
♦K8743	?			
♣AJ9				

\*2♥ = weak jump overcall

*Partner has been compelled to introduce his suit at the 3-level. Does that mean we have the values for game? The panel believe so, and most of them choose to cuebid 3♥. The cuebid sometimes shows a good raise of partner's suit, but here its primary purpose is to look for a heart stopper for no-trump.*

**SANDERS:** 3♥: Typically a strong balanced hand with no heart stop, forcing to game, asking partner 'to do something sensible'. We probably have enough for five of a minor if required.

**HAMILTON:** 3♥. You have to bid something, and this shows a good hand and keeps 3NT in the picture. You are hoping partner can bid it with a heart stop. If not you will likely play 5♣ or 5♦.

*Five of a minor looks quite ambitious. Some competitors are less sanguine and pass in despair. This might be the winning action if partner has stretched to bid, but East is unlimited and could be quite strong. A new suit at the 3-level should be forcing and you really owe partner another bid.*

*Other competitors solve the problem by raising partner, but that takes you past 3NT, possibly the only making game if partner has 6 clubs, a rounded suit Ace and ♥Jxx.*

*Alisdair has a more imaginative suggestion.*

**McLEOD:** 3♠ Last chance to bid 3NT, partner! They probably don't have a heart stop (I'd expect partner to prioritise showing that over a minor suit), but just in case, I'll give them room now. Partner doesn't have 4 spades because they'd have doubled 2♥, so I'm not worried about finding myself declaring 4♠ in a Moysian 4=3 fit. If they bid that, I'll know they have 3 and correct to 5♣. This approach is more flexible than just putting 5♣ on the table – partner might even decide that diamonds is the right suit!

*A lone competitor votes for 3NT, which is certainly the best shot if partner holds ♥Ax*

Problem 2	Panel	Marks	Competitors
3♥	6	10	7
3♠	1	9	4
3NT	0	8	1
3♦	1	6	1
4♣	0	5	10
5♣	0	2	2
Pass	0	1	5

### Problem 3 Teams None Vul, Dealer East

♠KT9	West	North	East	South
♥AT853	-	-	1♣	P
♦JT93	1♥	P	1NT	P
♣5	?			

*The 8-man panel splits evenly 4 ways.*

*Two are prepared to force to game:*

**MCKAY:** 3♦. I would like to bid 2♣ (checking back on whether partner has 3 hearts) but that is undiscussed. I can't bid 2♦ as that is not forcing.

**SANDERS:** 3♦. Definitely one of the best 5=4=3=1 eight counts ever seen, so will add a couple of points! Now an easy jump showing 5 hearts, 4 diamonds and forcing to game!

*The others are content to make invitational bids.*

**FRAME:** (similarly **MURDOCH**): 2NT. Another stretch but you need to bid your games at teams and 3NT looks to be the best option. I'd venture 2♣ (Checkback) if that is only forcing to 2NT and is part of SBU Standard but fear that most who play this treat it as game-forcing.

**MALE:** 2♦. Shape-showing, telling partner I have 5 hearts.

**SIME:** 2♦. I am assuming that we don't play Checkback Stayman. Whilst 2♦ isn't forcing, it is hard to envision a hand which would pass and miss game (2/3 in the red suits bids 2♥).

*For those who are bemused by all the references... Checkback is an extension of Stayman used when opener rebids 1NT. 2♣ asks whether partner has 3-card support for a Major, or 4 cards in any unbid Majors. It promises at least the values to invite game. Here it would be used to find out whether partner has 3-card heart support.*

**HAMILTON:** 2♣. Checkback Stayman – if you play it. Else a direct 2♦. Will then invite game.

*You may argue that 2♦ also finds out about heart support – but partner sometimes has to give false preference with a doubleton. And 2♦ definitely does not work for those who play Two-way Checkback! In this version, particularly useful in a 5-card Major system, 2♣ demands that partner bid 2♦, which you may pass, or bid on to show invitational values. The 2♦ rebid becomes an artificial game force, leaving lots of room to investigate the best game or slam.*

**McLEOD:** 2♣. Invitational Checkback forcing a 2♦ bid from partner, after which I bid 2♥ to show 5. I accept it is debatable whether this qualifies as a Game Invitational hand, but this approach is surely better than passing, and any other bid distorts things even more. This is the only way to end the auction with a hand that at least resembles the one I bid. By the way, ignore the diamond suit – there is never going to be a fit there.

Problem 3	Panel	Marks	Competitors
2♣	2	10	1
2♦	2	9	12
3♦	2	7	1
2NT	2	6	10
Pass	0	5	2
3NT	0	2	4

**Problem 4 Teams EW Vul, Dealer East**

	West	North	East	South
♠AQ54	-	-	1♥	P
♥92	2♦	P	3♣	P
♦AQ532	?			
♣Q2				

*Once again we have a new suit at the 3-level, forcing to game in this auction. Once again it is not clear how strong partner may be. We have promised 10HCP with the 2over1 response, so partner does not need much more than a minimum opening bid to force to game. Half the panel make the pragmatic bid chosen by nearly every competitor.*

**FRAME:** 3NT: If partner bids on, I'll cooperate with a push for slam but, otherwise, this seems to be the most sensible spot!

**MURDOCH:** 3NT. Maybe a 4NT value bid would be more accurate but probably partner would attempt to tell me how many Aces he has.

**SANDERS:**3NT: Partner could be very strong here and I am top of my range. Will need to trust partner to bid a quantitative 4NT if they have 19-20. Rule of thumb: 4NT after a natural NT bid is quantitative 😊

*Iain makes the same point:*

**SIME:** 4NT. Natural and invitational. If I wanted to RKCB for clubs, I would bid 4♣ first.

*Since we have no fit for either of partner's suits it seems normal to bid no-trump. 4NT is quantitative (invitational) here but it is not clear how many HCP it shows.*

*Others try to show that they have a bit extra by introducing the fourth suit.*

**MALE:** 3♠. I think I need to bid 4th suit. If partner has 17+ HCP he needs to know I have an opening hand.

**HAMILTON:** 3♠, fourth suit forcing. 30+ points between you, but no fit. This auction could end anywhere! You hope that partner can bid 3NT, then you can make a quantitative raise with 4NT. If partner bids something else you might miss 3NT but hopefully have enough to make 4♥/5♣/5♦.

**MCKAY:** 3♠. This is tricky, we might have a slam on but it is difficult to bid. 3♠ isn't Fourth Suit Forcing as we are already in a GF situation so it should probably show spades and a good hand and ask partner for more information. We may go past 3NT but that doesn't matter so much in Teams.

*Tim makes a good point. Fourth Suit Forcing is normally a way to create a forcing situation where another bid might be nonforcing. When the auction is already forcing to game there is no need to make an artificial bid.*

Problem 4	Panel	Marks	Competitors
3NT	4	10	29
3♠	3	9	1
4NT	1	8	0

## Top Scores

*Another tricky set, another small entry – we hope the new season will galvanise more players to enter the September competition. Here are the leading scores:*

1*Master	Alasdair Adam	Stirling	32
Master	David Hartley	St Andrew	37
	Ken Brown	Pentland	35
	Alex Sutherland	New Melville	34
	Alan Kirk	Bearsden Acad	32
	Pam Warner	New Melville	32
	David Olive	Caledonian	29
District Master	Graham Vincent	Linlithgow	38
	Dawn & Peter Beckett	New Melville	34
	Andy McKinnel	Linlithgow	34
	Ken Tait	Marmion	34
	May Armour	Kyle	30
	Paul Kerr	Troon	28
Local Master	Keith Smith	New Melville	31
	Allison Clayton / Lesley Cochrane	Aberdeen	27
Club Master	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	34
	Brian Allan	Dundee	33
	Fiona McCourt	Bearsden Acad	32
	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	30
	Debbie Bland	Bearsden Acad	29
Novice	Ian Lawson	New Melville	35
	Sandra Mair	Carlton	33
	Evelyn Watson	SteppingStone	28

*Congratulations to Ken Brown on attaining the rank of Master, and to regular competitor Jane Smithson who becomes a 1Star Master.*