

2023 Bronze Bidding Challenge: September

Some problems from the World Youth Championships.

Problem 1 **Teams** **NS Vul** **Dealer East**

♠AQ84	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥K6	-	-	1♦	1♠
♦8532	?			
♣Q52				

A unanimous panel is very rare and suggests this was not a difficult problem.

But our player, as well as several competitors preferred to raise partner's suit. Most of the panel considered, then rejected, that auction.

SANDERS: 2NT: 10-12 and a good spade stop. This is a really tough choice of actions. Don't mind 2♣ UCB or 3♦ indicating good diamond support but most of my points are in spades so prefer the NT option.

Why I like this is partner can raise to 3NT with a minimum hand and a 6-card solid diamond suit and not much outside or rescue to 3♦ with a poor 6-card diamond suit.

HAMILTON: 2NT, natural. This is a good hand for playing weak NT; if opener has a strong NT she'll raise to game, if long Diamonds or two suiter we can play in the minor.

When an opponent bids your best suit you can no longer expect to make length tricks in it. High card points in opponents' suit are not very useful in your suit contract, particularly if partner is short, duplicating your assets.

In the World Youth Championships several Souths overcalled 2♠: West passed, then passed partner's re-opening double to collect 800. But passing 1♠, hoping for a big penalty at the 1-level, is too big a view.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
2NT	8	10	21
2♠	0	7	3
3♦	0	6	8
1NT	0	4	2
DbI	0	2	1

Partner had ♠- ♥AT93 ♦AKT94 ♣K873, so 3NT is where you want to be this time. 5♦ is a fortunate make when trump break 2=2.

Problem 2 **Teams:** **All Vul** **Dealer East**

♠K75	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥K	-	-	Pass	Pass
♦AKJT5	1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
♣KJ32	?			

A nice hand, improved by partner's 1♠ response. If partner has 5 spades and a few working cards you want to be in game.

SANDERS: 3♣. Easily enough to force to game. If partner gives preference to 3♦ indicating a weak hand, we still have enough to have another bite at the cherry and bid 3♣. Rule of thumb: A new suit at the 3-level is game forcing.

HAMILTON: 3♣. A bit light but if partner can't bid 3NT next round we'll bid Spades and play in the major

Half the panel agree that this hand merits a game-forcing jump rebid. The other half think that is a small overstatement. Three of them change the suit, planning to bid spades next time, thus showing their distribution and inviting game.

TUDOR: 2♣. Although partner's Spade bid has improved my hand, insisting on Game with a jump-shift in clubs is a bit too much.

SIME: 2♣. Very close between 2♣ and a game-forcing 3♣. Only the Kingleton persuades me to go low. The ♦T is pulling me higher.

MALE: 2♣. This hand is good enough for 2♣, then over false preference support the spades.

Some competitors may be afraid to bid just 2♣ because it is not forcing, so partner may pass. But 'not forcing' does not mean 'weak' and partner should try their hardest to give you another chance to bid. Bidding the new suit, then showing 3-card support for partner describes this hand well. Russell finds a different way to invite game.

FRAME: 3♠: Partner's failure to bid hearts suggests he is more likely to hold at least 5 spades but I'll merely make a strong invitation to the spade game in case he has an absolute minimum.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
3♣	4	10	27
2♣	3	9	7
3♠	1	7	1

Partner had ♠JT984 ♥AJ92 ♦2 ♣985.

All games are tricky – 3NT and 4♠ made half the time, failed the other half.

Our 2♣ rebid was passed, not unreasonably on this occasion – but 2♣ also failed!

Problem 3 Teams: NS Vul Dealer West

♠KJ ♥AKQJ63 ♦KJ2 ♣A4	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	2♣	2♠	Pass	4♠
	?			

Opponents can be very irritating when they intervene over your strong opening bid. The majority of the panel believe that vulnerable opponents will not bid this way unless they have a lot of distribution. Some speak from experience in such situations:

SIME: 5♥. This may not make. However, we may not beat 4♠ after a blind lead. I would rather be defending 5♠ doubled (quite likely).

MALE: 5♥. They have found a big 10/11 card fit. My partner doesn't know which suit to lead, and even though Pass should show a King + (double would be a bust) I prefer to bid 5♥.

Not everybody has this agreement about partner's Pass: some prefer to use double to show a few values.

SANDERS: 5♥: this may well be a sacrifice! Looks like partner has nothing given no double. So there is a high probability that 4♠ is making. Rule of thumb: A double after an overcall of 2♣ is for take out.

I think Derek's approach is more common nowadays: responder's pass over an overcall is weak.

HAMILTON: Pass. Whatever agreements you have this is surely forcing, as you can't let them play in game undoubled after you open 2♣. If partner doubles, I'll pass; if he bids 5♣/5♦ I'll try 5♥. In retrospect wish we'd opened 1♥!

The Forcing Pass probably gives rise to more partnership discussion than any other call.

Clearly you cannot allow opponents to play undoubled below game level after opening 2♣, but how high does this apply? You have not promised the values to make game at the 5-level.

On his own:

FRAME: Dbl: Partner can't have much here but surely I have enough to beat their spade game - if not, I'll apologise to partner and move on!

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
5♥	6	10	17
Pass	1	6	3
Dbl	1	5	14

Moving on... partner had a near-Yarborough: ♠64 ♥T9852 ♦9743 ♣93. South was 5=1=1=6, and 5♠ could not be beaten! Doubled spade contracts scored 990 or 850 at 7 of the 20 tables. There were only 9 tricks in hearts, but 5♥ was rarely doubled, so a cheap save. A classic example of the axiom: "Points don't take tricks."

Problem 4 Teams: NS Vul Dealer North

♠K765	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♥J	-	1♦	1♥	Pass
♦Q83	?			
♣QT742				

When partner makes a simple overcall and RHO passes you should ask yourself: why?

There are 2 possible reasons:

- a) they have a very weak hand and no particular fit for their partner*
- b) they have a strong holding in your partner's suit and are lurking, hoping for a re-opening double, which they will pass.*

When you have a weak misfitting hand b) is the most likely reason – but it is not yet time to try to rescue. If you bid immediately partner will expect some values and you will get too high. Wait till the double is passed round to you – then you may try to find a better spot.

The majority of the panel choose to Pass,

MCKAY: Pass (and await developments)

EDMOND: Pass (a poor 8 pts and no good suit)

TUDOR: Pass The best way to convey that you have nothing is to say nothing!

SANDERS: Pass. Give me a couple more points and 1NT would be the normal action. Rule of thumb: a 1NT response to partners overcall is about 9-11 and a stop in opponents' suit.

You have a misfit, but just enough HCP to imagine that RHO may simply be weak. If partner has a strong overcall and you pass you may miss game. Some panellists hate to miss game.

SIME: 1NT. Flawed, but I would prefer a fifth spade for 1♠ and a better suit for 2♣. Both are reasonable choices, much better than passing 1♥ which has multiple ways to lose imps.

FRAME: Try 1NT for size: Although my diamond stop is minimal, I'll take the risk that RHO's failure to raise suggests that partner's overcall may include something to help cope with that suit!

MALE: 1♠. Terrible decision!

I tend to agree: if you think this is your hand you may as well respond as if partner had opened the bidding. Partner might overcall 1♥ with a 4-card spade suit on the side. But partner needs to know you may have a 4-card suit for this response – time for a discussion.

	Votes	Marks	Competitors
Pass	5	10	13
1NT	2	7	7
1♠	1	6	10
2♣	0	4	1
Dbf	0	0	3

Partner's overcall may not meet with universal approval: ♠QT8 ♥KT742 ♦JT6 ♣T9. It certainly does not match my criteria, but that's Youth Bridge for you. This was a good time to pass and watch opponents get too high

Competitors Top Scores

Some competitors seemed to find this set easier – congratulations to all three perfect scores.

2* Master	Will Iles	Stewartry	40
1* Master	Alasdair Adam	Stirling	37
	Roy Heanes	New Melville	31
	Robin MacPherson	New Melville	30
Master	David Hartley	New Melville	35
	Jane Smithson	Berwick	35
	Pam Warner	New Melville	35
District Master	May Armour	Kyle	40
	Alan Paterson	Johnstone	40
	Andy McKinnel	Linlithgow	36
	John Smithson	Berwick	36
	Ken Tait	Marmion	35
	Graham Vincent	Linlithgow	35
	Dawn & Peter Beckett	New Melville	34
	Ken Brown	Pentland	31
Local Master	Lesley Robertson	Peebles	39
	Keith Smith	New Melville	36
Club Master	Wilma Currie	Kilmacolm	37
	Debbie Bland	Bearsden Academy	35
	Angela Horsfall	Carlton	32
	Linton Horsfall	Carlton	32
	Helen Adamson	Kirkcaldy	31
	Fiona McCourt	Bearsden Academy	31
Novice	Ian Lawson	New Melville	36
	Evelyn Watson	Stepping-Stone	33
	Mairi Lawson	New Melville	34