

HOW WELL DO YOU & PARTNER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?

by Mike Lawrence

You are West. Your hand is:

S 8
H K J 8 7 5
D A K J 7
C K J 8

The bidding:

WEST EAST

1H - 1S
2D - 2H

What should you (West) bid now? In an effort to help your decision, here are five possible hands for your partner (East) to have.

#1

S J 7 6 3
H A 4 2
D 8 5 3
C A 9 4

#2

S A K 10 5 4
H Q 6
D 9 8 5 3
C 7 4

#3

S K 9 7 6 5
H 8 3 2
D 8 5 2
C Q 5

#4

S K Q J 7 4
H 9 3
D 8 6
C 9 6 5 3

#5

S Q 9 5 4 3
H 10 9 2
D 6 4
C A Q 3

ALSO:

Which is the worst of these five hands that East can have for his bidding?

Which is the best of these five hands that East can have for his bidding?

Here are my thoughts on each of these five hands.

#1

S J 7 6 3

H A 4 2

D 8 5 3

C A 9 4

This is an impossible hand for East to have. He should have raised to two hearts. Why look for a major suit fit when you have a perfectly good major suit fit already? Raise to two hearts. That shows 6-9 support points, which is exactly what you have.

#2

S A K 10 5 4

H Q 6

D 9 8 5 3

C 7 4

This is the best of the possible hands East can have. It has nine good points, which is about as many as West can hope for. It also has a doubleton heart, which is typical of preference bids. The queen doubleton of hearts is pretty good stuff under the circumstances.

#3

S K 9 7 6 5

H 8 3 2

D 8 5 2

C Q 5

This is a possible hand. It looks pretty awful, but it does have three trumps and what turns out to be a nice queen of clubs. This is not the worst of these five hands.

#4

S K Q J 7 4

H 9 3

D 8 6

C 9 6 5 3

This is the bad one. It has no help in either of West's suits and it has all of its strength in spades where may be of no value to West.

#5

S Q 9 5 4 3

H 10 9 2

D 6 4

C A Q 3

This is not a possible hand. East should raise to two hearts. If you bid one spade and later take a preference to two hearts, West will suspect you of having a preference-type hand like hands 2, 3, and 4. With decent heart support and raise points, it is best to raise and not confuse the issue.

SUMMARY

Most of the time, East's auction suggests just two hearts. This is a bad sign for a heart contract. If East happens to have three hearts, he ought to have a pretty wretched hand on the lines of Hand 3.

Look at Hands 2, 3, and 4, which are possible hands for East to have.

Game is poor or impossible on Hands 3 and 4 and is not a favorite to make on Hand 2, which is the best hand of the lot.

West should pass it out in two hearts. It is important for West to know that East will raise when it is right and not be distracted into bidding spades unnecessarily.

COUNT YOUR LOSERS

			S A62		
			H J975		
			D 5		
			C K8732		
S 10985				S 743	
H K32				H A	
D K743				D Q1086	
C 106				AQ954	
			S KQJ		
			H Q10864		
			D AJ92		
			C J		
W	N	E	S		
Pass	Pass	1C	1H		
Pass	2H	Pass	4H		
All Pass					

West leads C 10. Dummy comes down and South counts his losers.

Spades: 0

Hearts: 2

Diamonds: 3 (Yes, you must call this 3 losers)

Clubs: 1

6 losers is 3 too many. Undaunted, South resolves to not draw any trump. He has to ruff THREE Diamonds in dummy and if he pulls trump first, he will not have three trumps in dummy with which to ruff those losers.

East wins the first Club lead with the C Queen and leads back a Spade.

Declarer needs two entries back to his hand so he can keep ruffing Diamonds. So he wins the first Spade in dummy and leads a Diamond to the Ace. Now the 2 D and ruffs in dummy. Small Spade to Spade King. D 9 and ruffs in dummy. Another S to Spade Q. Ruffs D Jack in dummy. NOW and only now may declarer lead a trump.

Opponents win two trump tricks and one Club trick.

Note that if Declarer had pulled any trump, Opponents may have managed to pull some extra rounds of trump, thwarting Declarer's plan.

Take your time and plan at Trick # 1.

FORCING OR NOT FORCING

The following hands ask you to decide what each player (East and West with no intervening bids) should bid. Also, decide whether each bid is Forcing or Non-Forcing. Answers follow. Scroll down for those.

West is dealer on all hands.
Indicate whether bids made
are forcing or non-forcing.

BID THESE HANDS WITH ME

WEST	EAST
1. ♠ 63 ♥ AQ109 ♦ AKJ103 ♣ 87	♠ 542 ♥ K8765 ♦ Q52 ♣ 32
2. ♠ AQ10765 ♥ 8 ♦ AK5 ♣ A65	♠ K2 ♥ AQJ42 ♦ 876 ♣ 432
3. ♠ 32 ♥ AKJ3 ♦ AQ42 ♣ AJ4	♠ AQ54 ♥ 542 ♦ 63 ♣ 9876
4. ♠ 5432 ♥ AQ ♦ AK64 ♣ AQ3	♠ AQJ9 ♥ K32 ♦ 532 ♣ K52
5. ♠ 42 ♥ AKJ2 ♦ AKQ32 ♣ 32	♠ KJ10653 ♥ 43 ♦ 54 ♣ AQ4
6. ♠ 32 ♥ 32 ♦ AKJ32 ♣ K1032	♠ AK7654 ♥ A54 ♦ 654 ♣ 4

Forcing
Forcing
Forcing
Forcing
Forcing

ANSWERS

WEST

EAST

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. 1♦
3♥ NF
16-18 + 4♥</p> | <p>1♥ F
Pass</p> |
| <p>2. 1♠
3♠ F
Forcing because resp. promised 10 or more points & Opening Bidder promised 16-18 and 6 card ♠ suit.</p> | <p>2♥ F (Playing standard)
4♠</p> |
| <p>3. 1♦
2NT NF
shows 18-19 HCP
Balanced hand
Stoppers in unbid suits</p> | <p>1♠ F
Pass</p> |
| <p>4. 1♦
4♠ * NF
5♦ (3 or 0 aces: 1430)
4♠ showed 19-20 pts + 4♠</p> | <p>1♠ F
4NT (Blackwood)
6♠
Responder got excited because he has 13 pts. opposite p's 19+</p> |
| <p>5. 1♦
2♥ * F
4♠
2♥ is a reverse (always forcing) = 17 + pts & more of first bid suit than second.</p> | <p>1♠ F
3♠ F = 10+ pts + long ♠</p> |
| <p>6. 1♦
2♣ *
= 13 or more pts. (unlimited)
Resp must choose one of OB's suits
(Resp. can choose by passing)</p> | <p>1♠ F
3♠ Invitational
= 10-12 pts + 6 ♠</p> |
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TIPS TO BECOME A BETTER BRIDGE PLAYER (continued)

by Eddie Kantar

13 If partner makes a nice play, a kind word or two at the end of the hand goes a long way.

14 Keep partner's skill level in mind. Lead a weaker player by the hand.

15 Watch partner's spot card signals. The stronger your partner, the more meaningful they are.

16 As declarer, being able to take a trick with one of two equal cards, take the trick with the higher equal. The exception is at notrump when you have an AK stopper. If you plan to take the trick, take it with the king. Taking the first trick with the ace is very suspicious. If that were your only stopper, why didn't you hold up?

17 As declarer when leading a suit (finessing) that has equal honors, lead the higher or the highest if you want it covered, lead the second highest if you don't want it covered. It works like a charm.

18 As declarer, play cards you are known to hold if it cannot cost you a trick. For example, if a queen is led, dummy has small cards, you have KJ doubleton and the ace is played on your right, play the king. NOT the jack. Third hand knows you have the king from the lead of the queen, and the opening leader knows you have the king from partner's play of the ace. Since the king and jack are equals, and since they both know you have the king, PLAY IT! PLAY IT! *That leaves doubt in opponent's mind as to who has the J.*

19 Defend passively if side suit tricks cannot get away; defend aggressively if they can. Reread this tip!

20 Be on the lookout to double artificial bids (Stayman, Jacoby Transfers, cuebids, Blackwood responses) to help partner out on opening lead. However, low level doubles of artificial bids require both length and strength (typically five or six card length with 3+ honor cards in the suit). The higher the level of the artificial bid, the shorter your length must be-but you still must have honor strength in the suit (KQx, for example).

i.e. Lead Directing Doubles at low levels need length and strength. At higher levels: Only strength.

21 The bidding is the key to defensive strategy and to a great extent influences the play of the hand. Treat the bidding as you would a best friend.

22 If you and partner lead Ace from Ace-King be forewarned that it is a trick one strategy only. After trick one the king is led from ace-king combinations. The reason for this is that the ace is often led part way through a hand when dummy has a long suit and discards are about to happen. So defender wishes to lead the Ace to say "I do not have the King" but King when he has Ace and King OR King and Queen.

24 Take your time before playing third hand to the first trick. It is often times the most important play you will make in the entire hand.
