

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Jones



The dates for our July 2025 Long Beach Regional are finally corrected on the ACBL Find a Tournament website. I found it quite difficult to get to the correct person at ACBL Headquarters. The phones at headquarters were down for a while. Then, when the phones were up, and I got to speak to the new person in charge, it turned out she was too new at her position to help with anything difficult. The person who was knowledgeable enough to help is also a national director. I found him at the Las Vegas nationals, but he was so busy that the best I could do was schedule a later phone call. In any case, I had the conversation, and Ruth Baker, our tournament coordinator, followed up my phone call and the problem was corrected. The dates are correctly posted as Monday June 30 through Sunday July 6, 2025. Save the dates! We will have a flyer up soon.

Carolyn Hannas is working on the 2027 Long Beach Hilton contract. It should be signed soon.

The dates we would like for the 2026 regional won't work. The Long Beach Hilton sold the dates to the World Cup soccer group playing out of Carson (at much higher rates than we were getting). The Hilton offered us different dates but their selection of dates doesn't work for us. Their dates overlapped an ACBL National Tournament, which isn't allowed (and would not be intelligent). Thus, we will need either a new site or a new date for 2026. Contact me please if you have ideas.

On January 12, we will be testing a new bridge format. The format is a hybrid game that combines both online play with the club. To play you will bring a laptop or similar device to a participating local club. Contact Tom Reynolds [at 626-487-4265](tel:626-487-4265) for more

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Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge



Sorry, nothing from our District Director this month.

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information. Currently the local clubs that are signed up include: Pasadena BC, Long Beach BC, South Bay BC in Lomita and the 750 Bridge Club in Woodland Hills. There will be no masterpoints awarded at this trial event. I have players who are experienced with bridge technology available at all four sites. Players can win a free game or lesson from one of the several top LA players who have volunteered their time. The game will be played on RealBridge (a competitor of BBO). See the flyer in this newsletter. There will be practice sessions available on Real Bridge before our event. The dates that Shireen Mohandes has suggested for practice before the event are:

I met Shireen when she spoke at the Las Vegas regional, and again when she was starting against me in a pair game. She is a very nice person, and quite talented. She had special dispensation to be playing live bridge at the same time. She was playing and directing at the same time. Wow! I would think that is a difficult multi-task!

Date	Day and start time	How long
Jan 6	Monday at 10 am Pacific	40 minutes
Jan 6	Monday at noon Pacific	40 minutes
Jan 6	Monday at 5 pm Pacific	30 minutes
Jan 7	Tuesday at 10 am Pacific	40 minutes
Jan 8	Wednesday at noon Pacific	60 minutes
Jan 9	Thursday at 10 am Pacific	40 minutes

District 23 Rank Changes November 2024

Junior Master

Bryan Caluwe
Susan Damico
Colette Paul
Randy I. Schafer

Regional Master

Barbara K. Andryjowicz
Pauline Annakin
Nabil J. Nahman

Silver Life Master

Camden Clair Parish

Ruby Life Master

Wayne D. Beagle

Club Master

Rebecca A. Austin
Susan Claster
Jeannine P. Isaacs
Fred Register
David E. Simon

NABC Master

Paul A. Goddard
Peter Kavounas
Steven Novak

Gold Life Master

Dan M. Lubesnik
Stephen D. Massman

Advanced NABC Master

Margery Teller

Sapphire Life Master

Carol McCully
David Peim

Sectional Master

Patrick G. Finley
Khushroo H. Lakdawala
Ann Peacock

Life Master

Richard Schulman

Diamond Life Master

Marv J. Dauer
John W. Petrie

Bronze Life Master

Nina Huang

The Teacher's Corner

Case for The Defense

by Daniel F. Oakes

Last month, we focused on attitude signals; this time around, we're going to move to count signals. To remind you, I'll be using standard signals in this series, which for count signaling means a high card followed by a low one shows an even number of cards in a suit, and a low card followed by a high one shows an odd number of cards in a suit. In some ways, count signals are easier than attitude signals, and in other ways, they're harder. How so? Let's start with the good news:

Count signals are super easy, on the one hand, because the information being transmitted is completely unambiguous. If it's an attitude situation, partner will be looking to me to suggest whether he should play a particular suit or not, but it may be hard for me to determine what's best. On the other hand, if it's a count situation, I know whether I have an odd or even number of cards in the suit. Partner may have a hard time reading my card (a 3 is "high" if you have the doubleton 32, but a 7 is "low" if you have the 789), but that's his problem!

The part that's often harder is figuring out what to do with the information. When it's an attitude situation and partner encourages on a spade lead, most of the time, you'll know what to do – when you're on lead again, lead a spade! But when it's a count situation and partner tells you that he has an odd number of spades, you have to do more thinking to figure out what to do next. We'll get to that next year, when we put all of these signals together in the context of defending an entire hand, but for now, let's focus on some key fundamentals, starting with a crucial question: "When is it a count situation?"

Generally, in our signaling hierarchy, count is second to attitude (this isn't set in stone, but is certainly the most common treatment in the USA; some partnerships, especially in other parts of the world, may use count as their primary signal, but we'll stick to standard American). So our first priority is attitude, but when attitude is either known or irrelevant, we signal count.

The most common situation where count is typically given is when declarer is first to lead a suit. When declarer is working on a suit, we generally

assume that our future lies elsewhere, so rather than show attitude, we show count. For instance, assume we're defending a spade contract. Partner leads a heart, and declarer wins the trick and leads a low club; partner plays the 2. What does that mean? Most of the time, it means partner has an odd number of clubs. Declarer is first to lead the suit, so partner is signaling count.

Another example of a count situation is when we've already given an attitude signal. A good general rule is not to tell partner things he already knows. So if partner leads a suit and dummy wins the ace, we'll usually give an attitude signal; our next card will let partner know whether we have an odd or even number of cards remaining in the suit (aka "present count"). For those who are already playing upside down signals, standard count is considered the norm when giving present count, even when playing upside down. To clarify (standard carding players ignore the next two sentences for the sake of sanity), if you're playing upside down carding:

If declarer leads a suit first, play low to show an *even* number of cards in a suit or high to show an *odd* number (upside down count).

If partner leads a suit first, play an attitude card (most of the time), and the next time the suit is led, play low to show an *odd* number of cards remaining in the suit and high to show an *even* number (standard present count).

Finally, when declarer or dummy wins the trick in front of you with a relatively low card, usually show count. For instance, you lead the 3 of a suit; dummy plays the 10, and partner plays the 9, then declarer plays the 5. Does partner's 9 mean he likes the suit (attitude)? No! If partner liked the suit, dummy wouldn't be winning the trick with the 10; partner is showing an even number of cards in the suit led. Usually this guideline applies when dummy (or declarer playing second later in the hand) wins the trick with the queen or lower. Now, some important general guidelines:

- Remember that "high" and "low" are relative terms; check your spot cards and dummy's to help you. If partner plays the 5, and you have the 3 and dummy the 2 and 4, the 5 is partner's lowest card. If you can't see the 2, 3, or 4, it's

probably a “high” card from partner’s point of view. Don’t be lazy!

- If you signal count religiously, Advanced+ to Expert level pairs will pick you apart, but you’ll have numerous opportunities to pick up tricks against Novice to Advanced- pairs (you’ll learn how in future articles). Get in the habit of signaling count (when appropriate) against all but the very best pairs. Against those pairs, be more circumspect (when partnership strength is asymmetrical, it’s usually more important for the weak hand to signal count honestly; the strong hand can lie. If you haven’t bid, the opponents won’t know who the strong hand it. Even if you have, you’re usually safe. If expert opponents are missing an odd number of cards in a suit and both intermediate opponents play low (someone is lying), they’ll usually assume the opponents are playing random cards. But if both defenders always signal honestly, they’ll figure it out.
- Remember the auction! Don’t stop at “odd” or “even.” If declarer is playing NT and has an even number of spades, it’s 2 or 4. If he denied a 4-card major in a Stayman auction, it’s 2.
- These count signals don’t apply to the trump suit (we’ll talk about that later).
- Word to the wise: Every bridge hand has 3 suits with an odd number of cards and 1 with an even number of cards, or 3 evens and 1 odd. Think about it.

See you next month!

Bridge Wisdom

from Barry Crane

Card sense is when it’s technically right to do something, the little man that sits on my shoulder or anyone else’s shoulder says, “Don’t do that.” And you say to yourself, “Well, wait a minute, that’s the right way to play.” And he says, “Yeah, but you don’t wanna play that way.” That instinct is card sense. It’s almost an ability to feel where the cards are. It’s something that you can’t buy, you can’t find; you were born with it. The ability to do the right thing at the wrong time or really to do the wrong thing at the right time.

(So, where does that leave us mere mortals?)

SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 12 (SUNDAY) 1 PM

Play the New (experimental) online face-to-face format

- A face-to-face feel in an online format
- Audio and Video to/from partner and opponents
- Headphones required for audio

Participating Bridge Clubs

- Pasadena Bridge Club
- Long Beach Bridge Center
- South Bay Bridge Club
- 750 Bridge Club

Win a bridge date with one of Southern California's best players: Ifti Baqai, Mitch Dunitz, Ellis Feigenbaum, John Jones, Alex Kolesnik, Hemant Lall, Marjorie Michelin, Jill Myers, Walt Schafer. (No masterpoints awarded.)

Anyone Can Win

Four winners of the open event and four winners of the limited event will be awarded an online session with an expert bridge player. Two other players will also be awarded an online session based on a random draw.

How it works

The event will be played at multiple clubs but online on **RealBridge**. Both partners must be resident at a participating club, but not necessarily the same club.

You must bring a computer or tablet with at least 4 hours of battery life. The clubs will have some limited plug in ability but don't count on it.

If your device needs to be plugged in you must make a reservation for it at the club you are playing at.

The event will be stratified.

About RealBridge

Launched in 2020, RealBridge closely replicates the face-to-face environment with built-in audio and video.

The USBF JLALL and Reynolds Teams Matches are held using RealBridge.



Please note: This is not an ACBL event.

The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones



Submitted by John Jones

Category: Starting with W (each term begins with the letter W)

And the answer is ...

\$100 - An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ showing a good six card suit and about 4 - 10 HCP.

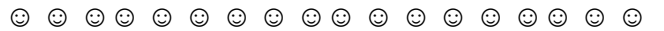
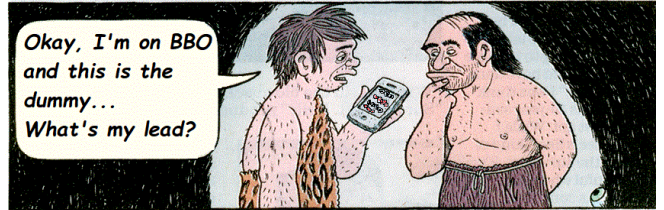
\$200 - Responding 2♦ to partner's opening strong 2♣ bid without showing anything.

\$300 - An opening bid of 1NT which shows a balanced 12 - 14 HCP is this.

\$400 - A contract which is declared by the anti-positional side and would be better if declared by the partner.

\$500 - An algorithm for estimating how strong a hand is. In this system an ace = 4, a king = 3, a queen = 2, and a jack = 1. This system was invented by a man with the first name of Milton.

(Solution to Bridge Jeopardy is on page 9. No peeking!)



Christmas Carols, Revisited

These were generated by a very, very sick mind ... and no second lines are available. Take them and run with them, if you like!

Jingle bells, shotgun shells, Santa's packing heat

God help ye merry gentlemen, there'll be huge bills to pay

Angels we have heard on high, tell us to go out, and BUY (Tom Lehrer's Christmas Carol)



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Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill www.acblunit551.org

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
Individual: February 1, 10 a.m., Ontario
Unit Game: January 11 and 18, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
 NO UNIT GAME IN DECEMBER
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

In the November Individual, the winner was Clint Lew, scoring 63.64%. Close behind in second was Tom Cusack; tying for third were Helen Wang and Dabid Ochroch. In December (I dunno, somehow I got a month behind here!), Ramona Hernandez tied with Yours Truly at 59.52%. Linda Tessier was third.

In the November Unit Game, Fredy and Lulu Minter's 58.85% edged out Karen McCarthy and Karen Olin by just 0.06 matchpoint. Tim and Eileen Finlay were next, followed by Steve Mancini – Helen Wang, and Carl Silsbee – Peter Kavounas.

Promotions: Patrick Finley is now a Sectional Master; Barbara Andryjowicz is a Regional Master, and Peter Kavounas has advanced to NABC Master. Congratulations to the three of you, and keep up the good play!

Only one pair managed to crack the 65% barrier in November: Fredy and Lulu Minter just squeaked by with a 65.93% effort. With several lost games due to remodeling at our playing facility, there weren't really too many winners last month. The others topping the leader board were Mary Ann Wotring, Caryn Mason, Patrick Finley, John Jones, and Vic Sartor.

While there were several bizarre hands recently, here's one that I found amusing. I'll show the whole hand:

North			
♠	K 8 4		
♥	8 6 3		
♦	A 8 7 5 2		
♣	9 6		
West		East	
♠	Q 10 3 2	♠	A J 9 5
♥	void	♥	A J 10 5
♦	K 10 9 7 5	♦	void
♣	K J 10 4	♣	Q 8 7 5 3
South			
♠	8 7 5		
♥	K Q 9 7 4 2		
♦	Q 6 4		
♣	A 2		

North dealt, with only E-W vulnerable (I sat East). After North passed, I opened 1♣, and South butted in (as usual) with 2♥. Partner made a negative double. North raised to 3♥, and over to you ... or me ... or, oh, let's go on. I figured, what the what, even though I have only 12 HCP, and five of them are in LHO's suit, with partner showing spades and enough values to bid at the three level, I went 4♠, which became the final contract. The opening lead (big surprise here) was the ♥K. Now what?

I suppose the natural inclination is to win that ♥A in hand. But I said to myself, "Self, whaddaya gonna discard from dummy? And what if trumps don't behave?" No discard seems helpful, so I ruffed. Trumps behaved (for a change!) and when I forced out the ♣A, it was natural for South to place partner with the ♥A, and out came the ♥Q. Making 6, since I got three discards for losing diamonds. That's five trump tricks, three hearts, and four clubs. 12 tricks on an effective combined 18-count, the ♦K never entering the picture.

Ahhhh, the magic of shape!

Quote for the month: "One trouble with trouble is that it usually starts out as fun." (Ann Landers)



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Our Face-to-Face game is being held at the Newhall Community Center in Santa Clarita at 10:00 am on Fridays. The game is FREE but reservations are required as our space is limited.

For more information, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) or Paula Olivares (paula@pacbell.net).

Winners of the Friday F2F game:

Nov. 8		
N/S	Gary Grey – Ted Maki	57.44%
E/W	Carol Trenda - Gary Trenda	59.52%
Nov. 15		
N/S	Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois	62.16%
E/W	Jan Ladd – Roy Ladd	66.68%
Nov. 22		
N/S	Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois	65.06%
E/W	David Khalieque – Paula Olivares	64.68%
Dec. 6		
N/S	Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois	58.33%
E/W	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	62.50%

January Schedule for Face-to-Face Game:

Sat. Jan. 4	Club Championship
Sat. Jan. 11	Unit Game
Fri. Jan. 17	Unit Game
Fri. Jan. 24	Unit Game

Virtual Game Schedule

Monday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Tuesday:	6:15 PM	Open game
Sunday:	12:30 PM	Open game

Contact our club manager at virtualclub@bridgemojo.com for reservations. ACBL has increased the minimum entry fee to \$5. Virtual games are now available to all BBO players. Invite your favorite partner to play with you in one of our games.

Big Virtual Club Games (65+%):

Sun. Nov. 24	Richard Robertson – Robot	65.87%
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Mon. Nov. 25	Paula Olivares – Bill Brodek	65.97%
Tues. Nov. 26	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd	69.44%
	Jim Hu – Zachary Madden	66.67%
Mon. Dec. 2	Bill Brodek – Robot	73.89%
	Bill Langlois – Donna Davidson	68.61%
Sun. Dec. 8	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd	72.22%

Next Board Meeting: TBA

Pasadena – San Gabriel by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



*Sorry, nothing from Pasadena
– San Gabriel this month..*



Long Beach by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org

www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, nothing from Long Beach this month.

Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

November started with a bang at Downey-Whittier, as a Club Championship game on November 6th drew a couple of heavy-hitting ringer pairs. Yas Takeda and Robert Yu set the pace with a 71.25% game, good for 1st East/West and 1st overall and 2.92

masterpoints, while Lulu and Fredy Minter were 1st North/South. It also apparently doubled as Couples Day for the B pairs, as Liz and Kent Burrell were 1st B, while Bob and Linda Krause were 1st B North/South.

John Petrie and Sankar Reddy blew the doors off the Unit Championship game a week later with a 76.39% game. Mike Ventri and Steve Hough turned in a 64.17%, usually enough to win, but only good for a distant 2nd A this time around. Bob and Linda Krause continued their winning ways to capture the B prize and 3rd overall.

There was a serious dogfight on November 20th, as Mike Ventri and Dan Oakes put up a 67.50% game for 1st overall and needed every bit of it, as Steve Hough and Gabby Sill took North/South honors with a 67.19%. Talk about razor-thin! Petrie and Reddy broke 60% to take 2nd North/South, and Jack Rainsberry and Bill Skupen were 2nd East/West and top overall B.

Finally, on the Thanksgiving Eve game (Nov. 27), Petrie and Reddy did it yet again, scoring 60.42%, half a board ahead of Ventri and Hough. John Jones and Caryn Mason were 3rd, and the Krauses took yet another B prize.

Mike Ventri was the top point winner in November, bringing home 6.34 points playing with a couple of different partners. Petrie and Reddy were right behind him with 5.4 points, and they even took a week off. The Krauses' consistency brought in over 3 points on the month.

You be the Director: Everyone at the table has about 3,000 masterpoints. West leads the 9 of diamonds against a 4 spade contract. Declarer asks East, "Are your leads standard?" East replies, "Yes." Two reasonable options at trick 1: Dummy has the ace of diamonds, and declarer has the queen, so if the lead is from KJ9(x), he can play low and the queen will win. On the other hand, if the lead is a singleton and declarer plays low, East can win the trick and give partner a ruff, and declarer is probably going down in an otherwise cold contract.

Long story short, declarer won the ace and ended up going down with the help of some bad breaks in the hand; the lead was from KJ9x (opponents lead 3rd and 5th best against suit contracts). After the hand was over, dummy called Director and argued that the defenders should have disclosed that they play 3rd and 5th best leads. Your ruling?

The actual ruling (and it was a good one) was that the result stands. East could (and probably should,

in the interests of full disclosure) have clarified that their leads are 3rd and 5th, but answered the question accurately – 3rd and 5th isn't a "non-standard" lead agreement. Moreover, with almost 3,000 masterpoints, declarer was certainly experienced enough to protect himself (by asking for further clarification) if the more specific information would make a difference to his line of play.

The moral of the story is, you're entitled to know your opponents' agreements. Sometimes opponents aren't as forthcoming as they could be, but when their responses are vague or incomplete, or you aren't familiar with the convention they named (rather than explaining what it shows), don't be too shy to ask them to clarify.

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – What is a Weak-Two Bid?

\$200 – What is a waiting bid?

\$300 – What is a Weak NT?

\$400 – What is wrong side?

\$500 – What is Work Count?

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, David Chechelashvili, Jordan Chodorow, Mister Mealy-mouth, Jill Meyers, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

As always, panelists are playing 5-card majors, 15 - 17 NT, and 2/1 GF. Beyond that, except where indicated, panelists may use any reasonable methods.

1

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

South	West	North	East
2♥	X	XX	3♣
???			

You, South, hold: ♠ 42 ♥ KJ10983 ♦ K2 ♣ Q92

What call do you make?

Note: I got this problem from someone who did not know what the redouble at the table meant. I told panelists to use whatever methods would apply in their own partnerships. Some partnerships will use the redouble as strong, other partnerships will be playing some form of McCabe in which the Weak Two bidder is asked to bid 2♠. Others will play that the redouble allows the weak-two bidder to compete further. Thus, panelists will be applying their own methods and not necessarily approaching the problem from similar viewpoints.

The panelists who play that partner's redouble asks them to double with good defense have an easy double here.

Meyers: Double. I have defense and extras, it is not strict penalty.

Mealy-mouth: Double. North's redouble shows a good hand and suggests defending, so with sound normal values for my vulnerable Weak Two and honor-third in the opponent's suit, I'll second the emotion.

Shuster: Double. I have good defense and partner asked for my opinion.

Bartusek: Double. Partner has solicited my opinion on whether we should declare or defend (most likely with xx in hearts). I have good defensive assets and partner will not play me for more than Hxx in clubs. If partner did not want to give me a choice partner would have just

passed and then doubled on the next round.

Is there a party in town? Rick wants to go, but Jordan doesn't.

Roeder: Double. Partner's redouble invites you to the party. You have relatively great defense outside your suit. As Prince once crooned, "Let's party like it's 1999."

Chodorow: Pass. We play redouble is Parking Lot (*his version of McCabe, the redouble forces the next step, in this case 2♠, and responder will set the contract with their next bid*), so this hand is not invited to the party. If redouble were value-showing, it would have a penalty double.

Wittes: Pass. With most of my partners, I play McCabe, so redouble by partner would say I have a suit of my own that I want to play. Not playing McCabe, I have just about the hand I would be expected to have Vul vs NV, so I will pass and leave it to partner where we go from here.

Perhaps the most difficult decisions to be made in this situation are those whose methods play that redouble invites further bidding.

Chechelashvili: Pass. Redouble is the willingness to compete, but with club length I will leave the decision to partner whether to bid 3♥, pass, or double.

All of the treatments suggested by our panel are relatively well known in expert circles.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs Both Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	1NT*	X\$	2♥#	???
	<p>* = 12-14 \$ = Penalty # = Natural, signoff</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You, South, hold: ♠ AJ65 ♥ 6 ♦ Q10932 ♣ 1087</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>			

Several years ago, the most common meaning of a double by South would have been penalty. Now the double is commonly played as takeout. One of the difficulties in this situation is whether the double should be made with a singleton and a minimum, in case partner leaves the double in. I'll start with the doubler's.

Chodorow: Double. Bridge is a game of percentages, and you're going to hold this hand type far more often than one that wants to penalize 2♥. Partner can convert with a Rule of 9 holding.

The "Rule of 9" is a guideline used to decide whether to bid or pass for penalty when your partner makes a takeout double. If the number of cards you hold in the opponent's suit, added to the number of honors in that suit (including the 10), plus the level of the contract (in this case 2), equals 9 or more, you should pass for penalty; if it's less than 9, you can bid on. Thus, if partner's heart holding is four cards in length with 3 heart honors, such as KQTx, the rule of 9 addition would be 4 (number of trumps), plus 3 (number of heart honors), plus 2 (the 2♥ level) = 9. The rule works quite well.

Roeder: Double. A matter of partnership understanding. I believe most expert pairs play that subsequent doubles by either partner at first opportunity are takeout.

Shuster: Double. I suppose I could also bid 3♥, but that forces game and I'd be OK with 2♥ doubled.

Meyers: Double. The best way to treat double of a weak NT is to play partner for a strong NT and bid over your RHO as if the auction went 1NT (2y) so double here would be takeout.

Those who don't want to double here go in different directions.

Bartusek: Pass. We are in a forcing auction and our 1st double is described as a negative double by either of us. Unfortunately, I can't make a negative double because it guarantees at least a doubleton heart at the 2-level since we do not want to defend against an 8-card fit (partner will pass my double with 4 hearts). An immediate bid by me would show a suit in a weak hand; thus, if I pass now and then bid on the next round, I will be showing some values (and we might even get to a making game).

Chechelashvili: 2♠. Even though I play double as a takeout, I'm not willing to risk partner passing with AKJx of diamonds and KQxx in hearts.

Wittes: 3♦. I play partner's double shows a good 14 on up. Partner doesn't guarantee four spades, so I will bid a decent five-card suit with some values. If partner bids 3♥, I will bid 3♠ then. If partner bids 3♠, I will raise. If partner bids 3NT, I will pass.

Mealymouth: 3♦. Now more than ever, all deals should be viewed as competitive partscore deals until proven otherwise. If an undoubled 3♥ comes back to me, I'll bid 3♠. Problems like this are one reason to play doubles of opposing notrumps as showing suits (per partnership agreements) rather than for penalties, even when the notrumps are weak.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	North	East	South	West
	1♣	1♠	2♦	4♠
	X	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ void ♥ AK ♦ KQJ9865 ♣ K842

What call do you make?

The scoring is matchpoints, so we do not want to play 5♣ or 5♦ on hands that might have a slam. Do we have a slam? A grand? In which strain? Are we getting enough already?

Chodorow: Pass. Partner knows the opponents are sacrificing, and she still wants to penalize them. 5 of a minor is matchpoint death, and the double contraindicates slam.

Shuster: 6♦. It has to be percentage to force slam at this point. I'm willing to give up on seven, since I don't even know how to look for it effectively. 5NT would be possible, as it would inform partner of at least a two-card disparity in our minor lengths; but this would not capture the difference in quality, so we could wind up in 6♣ down while 6♦ is excellent opposite ♠KQxx ♥QJxx ♦x ♣Axxx. Since 6♦ rates to always have a play and 6♣ will sometimes have none, AND partner will often choose wrong if given a choice, it falls on this hand to decide.

Bartusek: 6♦. A guess, but probably the practical bid. Clubs might be a better trump suit, but diamonds should play fine. My second choice is cue bidding the spade void in an attempt to get to a grand, but with all this bidding it's unlikely partner has the perfect necessary to make 7.

Roeder: 6♦. The opponents are saying that most of their values are in Spades. Great for us. 5NT is within reason but I am worried about a slow loser in 6♣. Give Partner a hand like ♠Kxx ♥QJxx ♦xx ♣AQxx to make my point.

Some bid NT to get the clubs in the picture.

Mealymouth: 5NT. If ever I've had a hand for a "choice of slams" 5NT, this looks like it.

Wittes: 4NT. This should show long diamonds with club tolerance. I plan on bidding 6♣ or 6♦ over whatever partner bids and hope we don't miss a grand, though partner should have some reasonable spade values to double 4♠. I would not be surprised if partner has a stiff or even a void diamond.

Meyers: 4NT and from there I am bidding either 6♣ or 6♦.

Our last panelist wants to leave a grand in the picture. I like his bid.

Chechelashvili: 5♠. I think it's clearcut, although I am not sure what I am going to do after 6♣. I don't play forcing passes in this situation, so to me partner's double would be some extras and I would like to bid 7♣ or 7♦, but with uncertainty about the methods it's better to bid 5♠ and wait; and the real decision will be the next bid.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs None Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	pass	3♦	pass	pass
	???			

You, South, hold: ♠ Q10876 ♥ void ♦ A ♣ Q976543

What call do you make?

Does passing and bidding a suit promise a two-suiter? It does in my book. There are references to Non-Leaping Michaels here. If Non-Leaping Michaels is being played, and it is on in balancing seat, 4♣ would promise a two-suiter even if the hand was not a passed hand.

Shuster: 4♣. This leaves our side best-placed if someone bids 4♥. I understand 3♠ though, and should we belong in 4♠, concealing the clubs could be critical to the success of the contract.

Bartusek: 4♣. A gamble, but partner should realize that I should also have a major suit since I didn't preempt in 1st chair.

Chodorow: 4♣. The initial pass correctly limits the hand. Now bidding out the twelve cards in two suits describes it perfectly. Don't worry about getting too high when you have the freakiest hand of the month. Partner has stuff.

Roeder: 4♣. (Assuming we are not playing non-Leaping Michaels). Since partner rates to have a bunch of hearts, you might backdoor into a 4♠ contract after a potential 4♥ bid from partner. If I am playing the non-Leaper (*non-leaping Michaels*), I will bid 3♠ and duck.

Mealy-mouth: 4♣. Not caring whether partner thinks it's natural or Non-Leaping Michaels, showing clubs and an unspecified major.

Wittes: 4♣. I feel I need to bid with this distribution at this vulnerability. I wish I could show spades too, but partner couldn't bid over 3♦, so I don't want to push things. If the opponents should bid 4♦, I will try 4♠.

Chechelashvili: 3♠. I can bid 4♣ after 3NT showing a weak hand (whether Non-Leaping Michaels applies here or not). This bidding shows a weak two-suiter; with stronger two-suiter, we can bid 4♣ if playing Non-Leaping Michaels, or double if not playing it.

Meyers: Pass. I think partner has diamonds and some hearts, and my RHO has a lot of hearts but not enough values to bid. I'll bow out HOWEVER, if I were playing with Kerri (*Shuman*) I might bid 4♠, which shows spades and the other minor the way we play.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>IMPs N-S Vul</p>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
	1♥	2♣	X#	pass
	2♠	???		

= Negative

You, South, hold: ♠ 3 ♥ AJ ♦ K1082 ♣ AK9874

What call do you make?

We made our overcall (double would have been correct six decades ago), but we now need to start getting the rest of the hand described. Now what? I'll start with the conservatives.

Meyers: Pass, I bid my hand already.

Shuster: Pass. I have a little extra, but neither side has a known fit.

Mealymouth: Pass. Partner hasn't promised anything (no 3♣, no 2♦, no redouble), and it's unclear whether anyone has a fit. Might East have a balanced minimum with three spades and replied 2♠ to West's Negative Double as the least of evils? Hello, bad splits!

The difference between those who double versus those who bid 2NT is that the NT bidders get their shape well-described, but the doublers allow partner to pass, or maybe get to hearts.

Bartusek: 2NT. Take-out for the minors with clubs being two cards longer. Hopefully I won't go for a number. Partner just needs a little bit for this to be right. One can't just give away part-scores because we're vulnerable.

Wittes: 2NT. Once again this should show long clubs with four diamonds.

Roeder: 2NT. Your RHO's major-suit enthusiasm implies a high probability that you have a minor suit fit. This bid is enthusiastic but being vulnerable at IMPs is an enthusiasm breeder.

Chodorow: Double. With five losers, this hand is significantly better than a minimum opener. Double keeps both diamonds and a Rule of 9 penalty pass in play, so is more flexible than 2NT.

Chechelashvili: Double. I want to compete in clubs or diamonds; if I had less defense, I would bid 2NT showing the same shape, but a more offensive hand, for example ♠x ♥Ax ♦KQxx ♣KQJxxx.