

## The Night of The Long Suits

They were not all diamond suits but they mostly were.... and the suits were not all bid to the optimum, which was somewhat annoying when this one was...and all I could do was follow suit!

What is your plan of action with the following when your partner opens 1♠, and with no opposition interference, you hold:

♠ 765      ♥ -      ♦ AKQT8743      ♣ T7

Almost certainly, the final contract would need to be in diamonds. You bid 2♦ and partner shows a balanced hand of 15-17 hcp with 2NT or an above average hand with 5 spades and 4 hearts. The problem is in finding which honours partner does have... and Key Card Blackwood or Minorwood would not tell all. Malcolm Mayer was the only East to persist with diamonds and the only player to declare a slam when his partner showed two key cards. After his partner bid no trumps the second time, Malcolm persisted with a Minorwood 4♦ and he was rewarded when he saw dummy. Indeed, a system that showed two aces of the same colour would have won the day, though such an approach is usually inferior to Key Card.

<u>Board 7</u>					
South Deals		♠ 3 2			
Both Vul		♥ A K 9 4 3			
		♦ 2			
		♣ K 9 8 3 2			
♠ A Q J 8 4			♠ 7 6 5		
♥ Q 6 5 2		W    N    E	♥ —		
♦ 9 6	S		♦ A K Q 10 8 7 4 3		
♣ A Q			♣ 10 7		
		♠ K 10 9			
		♥ J 10 8 7			
		♦ J 5			
		♣ J 6 5 4			

Only a club lead threatens the slam, though after that lead all depends on the spade finesse. Malcolm had no trouble earning 12 imps after the ♥J lead gave North great hope for a few fleeting seconds.

Revenge, though, was swift..well part revenge! It required some aggressive action from a weak 2 opener which was too good really to open at the 2 level but not strong enough to open at the 1 level. After the sequence:

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass			

where 2♦ was a standard Multi and 2♠ showing less than game interest but better hearts than spades, would you bid again with:

♠ KJT975      ♥ T75      ♦ -      ♣ A654

It was certainly right to do so!

<b>Board 13</b>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
North Deals	♠ K J 10 9 7 5		2♦	Pass	2♠
Both Vul	♥ 10 7 5	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
	♦ —	All pass			
	♣ A 6 5 4				
♠ 6 3				♠ 4 2	
♥ A 9 3	N			♥ Q 6 2	
♦ A K J 8	W E			♦ 10 9 7 6 5	
♣ 3	S			♣ 4	
♣ K J 2				♣ 7 3	
	♠ A Q 8				
	♥ K J 8 4				
	♦ Q 2				
	♣ Q 10 9 8				

Both South and West had acted very conservatively and the raise opposite possibly zero spades and hcp was well rewarded. Certainly, that North hand was worth more than a pass of 2♠ after partner showed some interest/value in the heart suit... but what would you have opened the hand?

The field was divided between the optimists (who bid to game or who took a penalty off 5♦) and the pessimists who languished in a spade partial.

Back, though, to the diamonds and opportunity lost:

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
		Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	x
Pass	2♦	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♦	3♥	Pass
Pass ?			

Holding as North: ♠ J6 ♥ Q52 ♦ AKQJ9765 ♣ -

And after firstly hoping to take the first 8 tricks against 1NT, what is your choice?

The winning action was certainly 3♠ asking for a spade hold with your heart holding being good enough to look after that suit.

		West	North	East	South
<u>Board 10</u>	♠ J 6			Pass	Pass
East Deals	♥ Q 5 2	1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Dbl
Both Vul	♦ A K Q J 9 7 6 5	Pass	2 ♦	2 ♠	Pass
	♣ —	Pass	3 ♦	3 ♥	Pass
♠ 7 5		Pass	?		
♥ A K 6 3					
♦ 4 3 2					
♣ A J 5 4					
	♠ K Q 10 4 2				
	♥ J 10 8 7				
	♦ 8				
	♣ 10 8 2				
	♠ A 9 8 3				
	♥ 9 4				
	♦ 10				
	♣ K Q 9 7 6 3				

I chose a rather timid 4♦ when 3♠ would have earned 600 and even a double either 200 or 500 (are you brave enough to underlead your 4 top diamonds to get back to partner's hand?), though the favourably placed ♣A meant that 4♦ did make.

Fortune favoured the brave, whether one referred to Malcolm Mayer's persistence with diamonds, the raise by the weak 2 opener, or in attempting 3NT on the third hand above. We will rather conveniently ignore the two declarers who went 7 down vulnerable in their slightly aggressive 3NT (board 15 if you are interested). Long suits produced lots of imps and lots of fun for the declaring sides.

*Richard Solomon*