

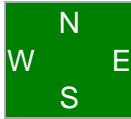
MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Opportunities Lost?

Or are they? Do we bid too much at the wrong times even at a lowish level?
Are we too afraid to penalise at too low a level?

How many of those questions apply to you? (Sorry, I promise not to ask any more questions!)

I lie! Just two. What would you do?

South Deals				♠ A
N-S Vul				♥ 9 8 7
				♦ A Q 9 7
				♣ A 7 6 4 3
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
			Pass	
2♠	3♣	?		

2♠ is 5 spades with a 4-card minor...and less than an opening hand.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ 8 7 6 5

♥ 5

♦ J 10 2

♣ A Q 9 7 6



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♣	2♦	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
?			



Quantity not Quality

Our first problem is the easier of the two, which does not mean that the right decision was made at the table! 5 trumps are five trumps all in one hand even if their texture is not all one would desire.

If partner can produce just one entry, then this contract should be down...your three aces, their entry and a spade ruff. The contract was in fact two down even though partner had no entry to give you a ruff!

<u>South Deals</u>	♠ Q 9 5 3		
N-S Vul	♥ A K		
	♦ K		
	♣ K Q 10 9 5 2		
♠ K J 8 6 4	♥ Q J 10 3	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A
♦ J 8 6 2	♣ —		♥ 9 8 7
			♦ A Q 9 7
			♣ A 7 6 4 3
			♠ 10 7 2
			♥ 6 5 4 2
			♦ 10 5 4 3
			♣ J 8
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
2 ♠	3 ♣	?	

North might feel somewhat aggrieved to be doubled with their good- looking hand though the combined North-South spade holding is truly awful. 5 clubs and 2 top hearts is all North can muster...-500. Alas, East bid a conservative 3♦ which breezed home but the opportunity of a nice pick-up was gone.

No correspondence please about West's choice of opening bid which would have precluded their side finding any heart contract. Had North conceded 500, West would have been the hero whose opening made it happen!



Out of the frying pan into the fire

When you have nothing, say nothing. When your “nothing” includes lots of their suit, say even less unless you use a red card!

North/South played with fire on the following board and escaped not only unharmed but with the added bonus of a plus score. South could even have really made West pay even more! Let’s look.

What was that double of 2♥ your partner made? Did you know it was for penalties? If yes, were you brave enough to pass?

Board 8
 West Deals
 None Vul

♠ 8 7 6 5		♠ Q 4
♥ 5		♥ A K J 9 6
♦ J 10 2		♦ A 8 6 3
♣ A Q 9 7 6		♣ 10 5

♠ A K 2
 ♥ Q 10 8 7 4
 ♦ Q
 ♣ K J 8 2

♠ J 10 9 3
 ♥ 3 2
 ♦ K 9 7 5 4
 ♣ 4 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2 ♣	2 ♦	2 ♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
	?		

West had done well on their limited values to reopen at the 1 level. North’s 2♣ bid must be open to debate as to its soundness. Even though, they were not vulnerable, their suits were questionable in quality...and there was every chance South had spades (now hard to find) and or a string of diamonds which would not be beneficial to North. (Of course, South had both!)

Had North passed 1♥x, so might East. Redouble for rescue would be a dangerous but winning action by South as North-South were best in 1♠.

However, East rescued North from “the fire” by bidding their diamond suit. Not for long, though, as South found a reason to compete in 2♥. (*back in “the fire” again!*). East turned the screw but West released it by removing to 3♦.

A really convoluted auction but South did not feel inclined to make the second penalty double of the auction with 3♦ drifting two down. As we read, it is likely that North would still have been striving to make a few tricks from the mess of 2♥ x. -300 on a very good day, possibly worse.

There was nothing wrong with the bidding in the first board (if we choose to ignore the shape deficiencies in West’s opening). However, it seems that all four players in our second board bid once too often. There are various messages there for all four players... a little more conservatism on such boards from North-South.... trusting a penalty double for West though East’s 2♦ call too seems strange. (Would double from East of 2♣ have been take-out style? If so, it would have been the winning action, where ever South chose to play.)

All up, a night of opportunities lost.

Richard Solomon