

An Interesting Bidding Hand

By Mike Lawrence

Dealer: S

Vul: None

South

♠A K 10 7 6

♥10 8 4

♦Q 10 9 8 4

♣--

This hand came up in the Grand National Teams playoffs. If you come up with the right decisions, you continue to the next round.

No one is vulnerable. There are two passes and your partner opens one spade in third seat. The next player passes and it is back to you. What is your plan?

North	South
	Pass
1S	?

This is a fine hand under the circumstances. Even though partner opened in third seat, you aren't going to let him get away short of game. What do you bid now? Here are some choices.

1. Three spades
2. Four spades
3. Two diamonds
4. Three diamonds
5. Drury two clubs
6. A splinter of four clubs

North	South
	Pass
1S	?

Passed hand bidding is not easy. Many of your forcing bids are no longer available and what few substitutes you have are not adequate. Of the six choices, the only one that makes sense is four clubs. Here are my objections to the other choices.

Three spades - This is just plain inadequate. Even if partner has a dog, there should be some kind of play for game.

Four spades - Also inadequate. This will get you to game so it is a better bid than three spades, but it does nothing to help partner look for a slam.

Two diamonds is too scary to contemplate. It might get passed out.

Three diamonds has merit since it is a jump shift. It has merit, though, only if it promises a spade fit.

Drury can work, but it will be hard to convince partner that this is your hand.

It is the splinter that gets my attention. It tells partner you have four or more super trumps plus it identifies a major aspect of your hand. Partner won't know that you are void in clubs, but he will know you have a singleton along with other features.

North	South
	Pass
1S	4C
4D	?

Partner thinks enough of his hand that he cue-bids four diamonds. Do you bid four spades or do you think enough of your hand to do more? Here are your choices.

1. Four spades
2. Five spades
3. Five clubs

North	South
	Pass
1S	4C
4D	?

Of these bids, I reject four spades. Partner is showing a willingness to look for slam and he is missing the AK of trumps. It is hard to imagine a hand that he can have which is not safe at the five level.

Five spades is OK since it shows more enterprise, but I still prefer five clubs. Five clubs shows a void now and invites more news from partner.

North	South
	Pass
1S	4C
4D	5C
5H	?

What now? Partner has bid spades yet is still cue-bidding. Choose from these bids.

1. Five spades
2. Six spades
3. Six clubs

North	South
	Pass
1S	4C
4D	5C
5H	?

Since partner is continuing to show features, I can't imagine stopping in five spades.

Six spades is OK here, but it gives up on seven. Heck. If partner has the two red aces and the king of diamonds, seven spades will be playable. Why bid six spades and give up on seven when seven is still a likelihood?

Bid six clubs and hope partner can bid six diamonds.

North	South
	Pass
1S	4C
4D	5C
5H	6C
6H	?

Nuts. Partner has the wrong king. Sign off in six spades and expect it to be cold, with seven sometimes being on a finesse.

Here are the two hands. How should you play six spades with the king of clubs lead?

♠ A K 10 7 6
 ♥ 10 8 4
 ♦ Q 10 9 8 4
 ♣ --

♠ Q 9 8 4 2
 ♥ A K 9
 ♦ A 7 3
 ♣ A 8

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♠ A K 10 7 6
♥ 10 8 4
♦ Q 10 9 8 4
♣ --

♠ Q 9 8 4 2
♥ A K 9
♦ A 7 3
♣ A 8

Do not rush to guess the diamond suit. Ruff the club lead with the ten. A tiny safety play to cater to West's having eleven clubs! Draw trumps (they divide two-one). Now you can discard dummy's heart on the ace of clubs, play the ace and king of hearts, and ruff a heart. With clubs and hearts eliminated, you can lead the ten of diamonds for a finesse. Whatever West wins with, he has to give you a sluff and a ruff or lead a diamond. Either clears up your problems.