

## **HAND #1**

**♠ KJ4 ♥ 3 ♦ AJ84 ♣ J7532**

**Your side is vulnerable – they are not.**

**As dealer, you pass, and the bidding goes:**

**Pass – 2♥ – Pass – Pass**

**It's your turn – what, if anything do you bid?**

### **Solution: Double**

You are a passed hand, so partner knows you have 11 HCP or less. You have support for all of the suits. You are short in their suits, so you are the one who should strain to bid. Partner is marked with some HCP, but with 3-4 cards in their suit, she may not have been able to bid (she will not have strained to bid, because she is not short in their suit – and she knows she can count on you, if you are short in their suit). She may even have a good hand with good hearts behind the opener, hoping to pass your double for penalties. Double has many ways to win and only rarely will lead to trouble. (No, this double does not promise 4 spades).

## **HAND #2**

**♠ A94 ♥ K876 ♦ AJ7 ♣ J86**

**Neither side is vulnerable.**

**Dealer to your right opens 3♣.**

**What, if anything, do you bid?**

**Solution: Pass**

You have a marginal opening hand with flat distribution. You are not the one who is short in the opponents' suit – in fact, you have the “death holding” in clubs. Pass and see what happens. Partner is likely to be short in clubs.... and if she is, she will strain to act. If 3♣ is passed out, your side probably didn't miss anything..... and if it turns out you did, so be it. Better to get a so-so result every once in a while than to get zeroes by guessing and wildly overbidding. Notice that on Hand #1 it was automatic to bid with 10 HCP, while on Hand #2 you really wouldn't dream of bidding with this 12-HCP hand.

### **HAND #3**

**♠ 10   ♥ AKT753   ♦ Q98   ♣ 973**

**The opponents are vulnerable – you aren't.**

**Dealer to your left opens 3♠, pass, pass to you.**

**What, if anything, do you bid?**

**Solution: Bid 4♥**

To bid 4♥ here may seem desperate with only 9 HCP, but all the signs are auspicious. You have a nice suit and, most importantly, you are the one who is short in the opponents' suit. You only need partner to have something like Qx or Jxx or even xxx in hearts.... do you expect her to double with hearts like that? Partner probably has a decent hand, flawed for a takeout double.... maybe even a very good hand. It could backfire – and some days it will – but the percentage action is 4♥. When this hand came up in actual play, partner's hand was ♠ 542 ♥ J2 ♦ KJ42 ♣ AKQ6 and 4♥ was ice cold.

## **HAND #4**

**♠ 5   ♥ A82   ♦ AT9854   ♣ Q98**

**The opponents are vulnerable, you aren't.**

**Your RHO opens 2♠ as dealer.**

**What, if anything, do you bid?**

**Solution: Overcall 3♦**

This one is close and not everyone's cup of tea..... but the percentage move is to overcall. The key is your shortness in the opponents' suit. Without it, you would not dream of bidding with this collection. It's also important that you have very good interior cards in your long suit. If partner wants to bid hearts or clubs, you will be happy to raise. Again, there are no guarantees, but it is better to act here than to pass. In actual play, your LHO jumped to 4♠, your partner bid 5♦, and LHO decided to double..... and 5♦ made easily for a top board. Without the overcall, your side never would have gotten into the bidding.

## **HAND #5**

**♠ AQ764 ♥ void ♦ 94 ♣ QJ9875**

**You are vulnerable, the opponents are not.**

**Your RHO opens 3♥ as dealer.**

**What, if anything, do you bid?**

### **Solution: Overcall 3♠**

This hand came up in actual play. South judged accurately that, while it was dangerous to bid, it was far more dangerous to pass. Again, the key is the shortness in the opponents' suit, which justified South in straining to act..... and he applied the axiom "6-5, come alive." After 3♠, LHO competed to 4♥, and partner bid..... 6♠! As it turned out, partner held ♠ KT853 ♥ A83 ♦ AK85 ♣ 6, so 6♠ rolled in. If you had passed over 3♥, and the bidding to partner had been 3♥-P-4♥, she would have been in a real pickle. Pretty hard to expect her to bid 4♠ on that flimsy suit. Good thing South gave her a clear path by straining to act with short hearts.

Note: If South had passed 3♥ and heard the bidding go 3♥-P-4♥-P, P, then maybe South now could bid 4♠ if the partnership agrees that such a bid shows spades and another suit to play in. However, that approach is not guaranteed, either, and there is no assurance LHO will bid 4♥ and give South another bite at the apple.