

# 88. Well-suited

By Ron Klinger

The bidding starts 1♥ : Pass : 1♠ : Pass back to you. What is your rebid with:

(a)	and	(b)
♠ 76		♠ 76
♥ KQ9865		♥ KQJ8653
♦ AK3		♦ AK
♣ AJ		♣ A8

Both hands have 17 HCP, but Hand (b) is stronger. Hand (a) has five losers, Hand (b) only 4. The hearts are much stronger in Hand (b). With Hand (a), you should rebid 3♥, showing 6+ hearts, usually 15-18 HCP and about 5 losers, occasionally 6. The 3♥ bid is not forcing. With Hand (b) you should rebid 4♥, partly because you have only 4 losers and need just 1 trick from partner and partly because your hearts are 'self-sufficient'.

What constitutes a self-sufficient suit? A good test is the Rule of 10 for suit quality: Add the number of cards in the suit to the number of honours in that suit. If the total comes to 10 or more, you can consider it a self-sufficient suit, one that does not need support from partner, one that you can insist on as trumps, should you wish to do so.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	?	

What would you do now as East with:

♠ AKJ10832  
♥ 75  
♦ Q  
♣ A43

East has seven spades and the spade suit has four honours. You could bid 4♠ here to show the values for game and the self-sufficient spade suit.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 65	
	♥ 103	
	♦ 10873	
	♣ KJ765	
West		East
♠ --		♠ AKJ10832
♥ AKQ982		♥ 75
♦ AK65		♦ Q
♣ Q98		♣ A43
	South	
	♠ Q974	
	♥ J64	
	♦ J942	
	♣ 102	

If it starts 1♥ : 1♠, 2♦ : 4♠, West will push on since West has not yet shown better than a minimum hand. West could bid 4NT : 5♣ (0 or 3 key cards) : 5♦ (asking for the ♠Q) : 5♥ or 5♠ (no ♠Q), 6♠, trusting East to have strong enough spades, because of the 4♠ bid, perhaps A-K-x-x-x-x-x or similar to East's actual spades.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 65	
	♥ 103	
	♦ 10873	
	♣ KJ765	
West		East
♠ --		♠ AKJ10832
♥ AKQ982		♥ 75
♦ AK65		♦ Q
♣ Q98		♣ A43
	South	
	♠ Q974	
	♥ J64	
	♦ J942	
	♣ 102	

West's bidding 4NT appeals, but another choice after East's jump to 4♣ is to bid 5♣. This asks, 'Are your trumps really good enough opposite my void or singleton?' East would bid 6♣, since East figures to lose only one trump trick on most layouts.

The problem with the jump to 5♣ is that West does not have control in clubs and does not know that East has club control.

It could also go 1♥ : 1♠, 2♦ : 3♣ (fourth-suit forcing to game), 3♥ : 4♠ . . . This still promises a self-sufficient spade suit and shows a stronger hand for East than the jump to 4♣ over 2♦. West will certainly now bid 4NT and end in 6♣.

In a teams' match, one East-West pair bid 1♥ : 1♠, 2♦ : 3♣ (fourth-suit), 3♥ : 3♠, 4♥, all pass. With 3♥ and then 4♥, West was intending to show a strong hand, better than a jump to 4♥ over 3♣. With such powerful spades, East might still have gone on to slam via 4NT. Against 4♥, North led the ♣5: three – ten – queen. West played ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q, ♦5 to ♦Q, ♠A, ♠K for 13 tricks, +710.

At the other table, East-West followed the suggested path 1♥ : 1♠, 2♦ : 4♠, 4NT : 5♣ (0 or 3 key cards for spades), 5♦ (asking for the ♠Q) : 5♠ (I do not have it), 6♠, all pass, +1430 and +12 Imps.

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♦	2♥
4♦	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ AKQ97532  
♥ J96  
♦ --  
♣ K10

Here North has an excellent spade suit again, 8 cards, 3 honours, suit quality 11. The problem with bidding 4NT here is that if partner shows 2 or 3 key cards for hearts whether one of them might be the ♦A, possible albeit not probable.

A jump-bid to 6♦ would be taken as Exclusion Key Card Blackwood, asking for key cards outside diamonds. The problem with that is, that could be off two aces anyway and if partner shows two key cards with the ♥Q (7♣) or without (6NT), you are living way beyond your means. For Exclusion Key Card Blackwood, most top players require a jump-bid beyond 4 of the agreed trump suit. What else is there?

West dealer : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AKQ97532	
	♥ J96	
	♦ --	
	♣ K10	
West		East
♠ 106		♠ J
♥ 87		♥ 32
♦ K10874		♦ AQJ532
♣ AJ82		♣ Q965
	South	
	♠ 84	
	♥ AKQ1054	
	♦ 96	
	♣ 743	

After the auction given, in a BBO game vs robots, Jim Biggins of Kansas, USA, bid 5♦, diamond void and inviting slam. South knew North must be very strong in the black suits to invite slam with no values in hearts. South jumped to 6♥. North converted that to 6♠, mainly to protect the ♣K in case South did not have ♣A or ♣Q. As it happens, the ♣A was onside anyway. East led ♠J. North made all the tricks, +1010. Originally, at one table West passed and North opened 4♠ (way too strong), all pass. At the other table, West opened 2♦, weak, North bid 4♠, all pass. Both made 13 tricks, no swing, once after ♥3 lead and once after ♦A lead. Note that East did not bid 5♦ (only two off, doubled) over 4♠. Had East bid 5♦, it might have pushed North-South into the slam.

## Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	6♥	?

(1) Michaels, 5+ spades, 5+ minor

What would you do now as South with:

♠ 1086542  
♥ A8  
♦ J54  
♣ Q7

2. East dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dble <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	1♦
4♠	?	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	3♣

(1) 6+ points, 4+ hearts

(2) 10+ points, 3+ spades

What would you do as North with:

♠ 1094  
♥ A10962  
♦ J1095  
♣ 5

**Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?**

*Today's weather during quarantine? Room temperature.*