237. How experts treat a 2-suiter

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West: North-South vulnerable

West North East South $2^{(1)}$ Pass $4^{(2)}$? ? (1) Weak, 5 spades, 5+ minor

What would you do as South with:

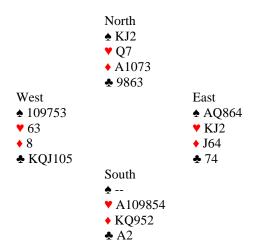
♣ --▼ A109854◆ KQ952♣ A2

You want to compete, but which is the best option? You could bid 5♥. That indicates the length in hearts, but it is putting all your eggs in one basket. If available, you could double for takeout. If partner bids 5♣, you will remove that to 5♦, offering partner the choice between diamonds and hearts. The downside of this sequence is that partner might play you for 4 hearts and 5+ diamonds. The upside for doubling is that partner might pass for penalties, which could be the best result for you. Another choice is 4NT, showing a freak 2-suiter. Again, if partner bids 5♣, you remove it to 5♦ showing at least 5-5 in the red suits. None of these captures your exact hand, but that is why opponents pre-empt.

What would you do as South if the bidding had started Pass: Pass: 1♠:?

The deal arose in the semi-finals of the 2017 World Teams:

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Venice Cup (World Women's Teams), China North-South:

West	North	East	South	South took the $\bigstar K$ lead with the $\bigstar A$, cashed $\bigstar K$, $\bigstar A$ and
2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠	4NT ⁽²⁾	played the ♥Q, king, ace, followed by the ♦Q and the ♥4 to
Pass	5♣	Pass	5 ♦ ⁽³⁾	the ♥7 and the ♥K for 11 tricks, +600
Pass	Pass	Pass		

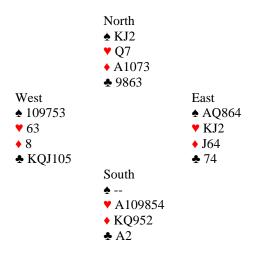
- (1) Weak, 5 spades, 5+ minor
- (2) 2-suiter, at least 5-5
- (3) Diamonds and hearts

Poland North-South:

West	North	East	South
2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠	5♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Weak,	5 spades, 5+	minor	

West led the ◆8, ace. Then came the ♥Q, king, ace, and the ♥10, taken by the ♥J. South won the ♣7 switch, drew the last trump and made 11 tricks, +650 and 2 Imps to Poland, who survived showing a 1-suiter when holding a 2-suiter.

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In the other Venice Cup semi-final, both Souths treated the 2-suiter as a 1-suiter:

England North-South:

West	North	East	South	
Pass	Pass	1♠	4♥	
4♠	Dble	All Pass		
(1) Weak, 5 spades, 5+ minor				

After the $1 \triangleq$ opening, South had the option of bidding $2 \triangleq$, Michaels, to show 5+ hearts and a 5+ minor. Some play $(1 \triangleq): 3 \triangleq$ as showing specifically hearts and diamonds, at least 5-5. Instead, South chose to blast $4 \checkmark$. With her void in spades, it was not hard to foresee what would happen next.

South led the \bigstar K. North overtook with the \bigstar A and switched to the \blacktriangledown 7. Probably thinking it made no difference, East played the \blacktriangledown K. South took the \blacktriangledown A and returned the \blacktriangledown 4 to the \blacktriangledown Q. North could / should have switched to a club, as the \blacktriangledown 4 suit-preference had suggested. South would win and North could ruff the next heart or over-ruff dummy for two down, North-South +300. Instead North switched to a 'clever' \bigstar 2: four $- \blacktriangledown$ 5 - \bigstar 5. Declarer finessed the \bigstar Q and was one down, North-South +100, the normal result on ideal defence and declarer play.

Sweden North-South:

West	North	East	South
2 ♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♥ ⁽²⁾	4♥
Pass	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	
(1) Multi	, weak two	in hearts or i	n spades

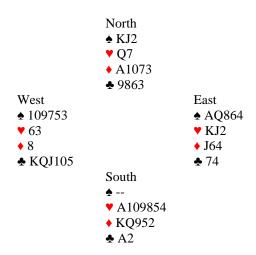
(1) Multi, weak two in nearts or in spaces

(2) Pass or correct

After a 3-level pre-empt or 2-Major – Pass – 3-Major or the actual auction here, some pairs forego a natural overcall of 4-minor and play non-leaping Michaels instead, where 4♣ shows clubs + a major and 4♦ shows diamonds + a major, at least 5-5 in both cases. If South had such a 4♦ 2-suiter bid available, she did not use it.

South led the \bigstar K. North overtook with the \bigstar A and switched to the \blacktriangledown Q: king – ace – three. The \blacktriangledown J won the \blacktriangledown 10 return. Declarer ruffed a diamond in dummy and played the \bigstar 5: two – queen – four. Declarer was not prepared to run the \bigstar 10 and lose to a possible bare \bigstar J with South, followed by a heart to allow North to score the \bigstar K. Declarer cashed the \bigstar A and lost a trick in each suit for one down, North-South +100, no swing.

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In the semi-finals of the Bermuda Bowl (World Open Teams), every South showed the 2-suiter:

Bulgaria North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dble ⁽²⁾
Pass	$4NT^{(3)}$	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Hearts and a minor, at least 5-5
- (2) Strong 2-suiter
- (3) Bid your minor.

West led the ♣K. South made the usual 11 tricks, +600.

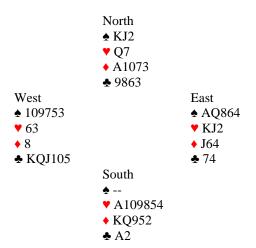
USA2 North-South:

West	North	East	South
2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	4♠	4NT ⁽²⁾
Pass	5♣	Pass	5 \(\) (3)
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Wash	enadae +	minor	

- (1) Weak, spades + a minor
- (2) Some 2-suiter, at least 5-5
- (3) Diamonds + hearts

Club lead, 11 tricks, +600, no swing.

In the other semi-final, with France North-South, the auction was the same as the one with USA2 North-South above except that West's $2 \stackrel{\blacktriangle}{\bullet}$ opening was a natural weak two in spades (very weak). Despite the strength of the clubs, West led the $\stackrel{\blacktriangle}{\bullet}10$: jack – queen – $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\bullet}2$. Declarer played $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\bullet}K$, $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\bullet}Q$, over to the $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\bullet}A$ and the $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\blacktriangledown}Q$, king, ace. The $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\bullet}10$ knocked out the $\stackrel{\blacktriangledown}{\blacktriangledown}J$ and South could ditch dummy's club losers and a spade on the heart winners for 12 tricks, +620.



New Zealand North-South:

West	North	East	South
2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3 ♦ ⁽²⁾	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	Dble	All Pass	

- (1) Weak, 5 spades and a 4+ minor
- (2) Game invitation in spades

North's 3NT would have succeeded if East had led a low spade. North wins and can set up the hearts without losing a trick to West. To beat 3NT East needs to lead a club or lead the ♠A and switch to a club. Neither of these is likely, but you can understand why South removed 3NT to 4♦ with that 6-5 shape. With a 4-loser hand, South might have bid 5♦ over East's 4♠. Would 4♦ over 3♦ be non-leaping Michaels in your methods? If you play N-L M, there is certainly a strong case for it here.

Against France's $4 \triangleq$ doubled, New Zealand's North led the \mathbf{VQ} : king – ace – three. South switched to the \mathbf{V} K, winning, and the \mathbf{V} 5: \mathbf{V} 3 – \mathbf{V} 7 – \mathbf{V} 6. Declarer played the \mathbf{V} 9: two – four – \mathbf{V} 4, the \mathbf{V} 5: jack – queen – \mathbf{V} 2 and the \mathbf{V} 4. Declarer knocked out the \mathbf{V} 4 and had ten tricks, losing a heart a diamond and a club, North-South +590 and 15 Imps to France.

After winning with the \P A at trick 1 and the \P K at trick 2, South needed to revert to hearts to beat \P A. If South does play a heart at trick 3, the \P J wins. If declarer now plays diamond ruff, \P 10, jack, queen, followed by diamond ruff, spade finesse, \P A, declarer is out of spades and South can cash a heart when in with the \P A. If declarer wins the heart switch at trick 3 with the \P J and plays a club, South can take the \P A and play a third heart to give North a trump trick.

At three tables in the semi-finals of the D'Orsi Trophy (World Seniors' Teams), South showed a 2-suiter at once. In India vs Italy, both Souths were able to show a heart-diamond 2-suiter.

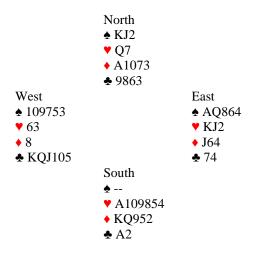
India North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	2 ♠ ⁽¹⁾
4♣ ⁽²⁾	4♦	Pass	4 ♠ ⁽³⁾
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

- (1) 2-suiter, hearts + diamonds
- (2) Fit-showing jump, 5+ clubs and spade support
- (3) Cue-bid

West led the ♣7, ace. Declarer drew trumps and played the ♥Q, king, ace, 11 tricks, India +620. The fit-showing jump could have been vital. Without a club lead, 6♦ can be made. Witness:

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Italy North-South:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	3♣ ⁽¹⁾
4♠	5♦	Pass	Pass
5♠	Dble	Pass	6♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Exclusion jump, the other two suits, hearts + diamonds

East led the ♠A, ruffed. Declarer drew trumps, pitched the ♠2 on the ♠K and played the ♥Q, king, ace, and the ♥10 for 12 tricks, +1370, 13 Imps to Italy.

With Sweden North-South, it went Pass: Pass: $1 \ge 2$ (hearts and a minor), $4 \ge 2$ Pass: Pass: Double (strong 2-suiter), all pass. South led $\bigstar K$. North overtook and switched to ΨQ , king, ace. South returned $\Psi 8$: $\sin - \sec - 3$ jack. Declarer ruffed a diamond, followed by the $\frac{1}{2}$ 10: jack – queen – $\frac{1}{2}$ 4. Declarer ruffed the $\frac{1}{2}$ 5. To draw the last trump would leave East with a heart loser and a club to lose and so East played the $\frac{1}{2}$ 10. South won and played the $\frac{1}{2}$ 10: $\frac{1}{2}$ 9 – $\frac{1}{2}$ K – $\frac{1}{2}$ 2. That was one down, North-South +100.

At the other table, USA2 North-South:

West	North	East	South	
Pass	Pass	1♠	2♥	
4♠	Pass	Pass	$4NT^{(1)}$	
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass	
5♠	Dble	All Pass		
(1) 2-suiter, hearts longer				

4NT showed 6 hearts and a shorter minor. With 1-5-4-3 / 1-5-3-4 / 0-5-4-4 South would double 4♠ for takeout.

South led the \bigstar K, followed by the \blacktriangledown A and the \blacktriangledown 10. East won, ruffed a diamond and played the \bigstar 10, winning, and the \bigstar 5, jack, queen, and the \bigstar A. Declarer lost to the \bigstar A for one down, North-South +100, no swing.

Problem for Tomorrow:

With both sides vulnerable, East deals and passes. What would you do as South with:

- **♦** K5
- **9**85
- ◆ AQ65432
- **♣** 3

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

WELL, TO BE FRANK, I'D HAVE TO CHANGE MY NAME.