

Dealer: N
Vul: EW

♠ 105
♥ 4
♦ Q97
♣ KQ9654

N	E	S
2D	X	?

What should South bid?

BIDDING 12 NON-VUL VS VUL – A LICENCE TO THRILL

Many years ago, I attended a talk at the Gold Coast Congress given by a world class player. He described being non-vulnerable against vulnerable opponents as “a licence to thrill”. What he meant by that was if your opponents have a vulnerable game or slam on, you can afford to go a long way down doubled in a contract of your own and still show a profit.

Dealer: N

Vul: EW

	♠ 984	
	♥ 872	
	♦ AKJ1042	
	♣ 7	
♠ Q72		♠ AKJ63
♥ KQ106		♥ AJ953
♦ 863		♦ 5
♣ J83		♣ A10
	♠ 105	
	♥ 4	
	♦ Q97	
	♣ KQ9654	

N	E	S	W
2D	X	5D!	P
P	X	P	P
P			

5DX gaining +300 was poor compensation for a vulnerable heart game (+680) or even slam (+1430). Note the pressure the 5D bid put on East. A 5H or 5S bid instead of the second double could easily be wrong – it might be going down, it might partner’s weaker major.

How do you judge sacrifices in these sort of situations?

- (1) Try to work out what the other side can make. You don’t want to sacrifice if the other side is going down in game or likely to go down. Give partner an average hand for their bid and work out what the other side might be able to make. On this hand, I’d give partner D AKxxxx and nothing else. With partner unlikely to have a 4 card major, our opponents are likely to have 2 major fits. What defensive tricks do we likely have? Two diamonds at the most and a club. So, they can probably make 4H or 4S.
- (2) Then work out how far down we are in a sacrifice. In 5D, we start with 6 diamond tricks. We should get 1 club and a heart ruff or 2. Making 8 or 9 tricks. 8 tricks is 3 down or -500 and will turn a profit against a vulnerable game (- 620).

Notice this only works non-vul vs vul. 3 down at other vulnerabilities is:

Vul (-800) vs vul (-620)

Vul (-800) vs non-vul (-420)

Non-vul (-500) vs non-vul (-420)

EW subsequently agreed that in future the 4 level cue of an opposition minor suit weak 2 (2D) or pre-empt (3C/3D) shows a big major suited hand (5 loser or better). Thus when the 5D bid comes in, West can easily see their 3 tricks (HKQ, SQ) make 5H a comfortable bid (even if you're a little worried about making 6H!).