

Dealer: N
Vul: NS

♠ Q10987
♥ 5
♦ J9542
♣ 109

N	E	S	W
1C (3+)	P	?	

What should South bid?

BIDDING 26 – RESPONDING LIGHT

Dealer: N

Vul: NS

	♠ AK53 ♥ K943 ♦ K ♣ AK87	
♠ 62 ♥ QJ1072 ♦ A103 ♣ 532	♠ Q10987 ♥ 5 ♦ J9542 ♣ 109	♠ J4 ♥ A86 ♦ Q876 ♣ QJ64

N	E	S	W
1C (3+)	P	1S!	P
4(D) (1)	P	4S	P
P	P		

(1) Splinter showing 4 card spade support, a shortage in diamonds and enough for game.

We learnt in beginner classes that you needed 6+ points to respond to partner's opening bid. However, you get the above hands where you know 1C passed out is unlikely to be our side's best score. Minors are worth less than majors or NTs and we could on a bad day be in a 5 card fit.

In teams or IMPs scoring, bidding games and getting the game bonus is all important. When faced with the above sort of hands, I assume a major fit and add shortage points to the HCPs. If I am getting 6 or more, I respond. The hand that opened 1 of a minor frequently is quite strong and a light game can be found.

Yes, you do occasionally get the dreaded 2NT response. You pass and hope for the best. However, my experience has been that responding light here works more often than not.

Tougher decision in pairs. Here, we are not concerned so much with game bonuses but with getting an equal or better score than those sitting in the same direction as us. I'm still inclined to respond, particularly if it looks like we have a poor fit in the minor and are vulnerable.

In a Congress, 1/3 of the field didn't get to the making 4S. Note one further point – if South passes 1C, West should NOT balance and give NS a second chance to find 4S. My experience has been in the pass out seat that it's right 80% of the time to pass out an opponent's 1 of a minor contract if you don't have an opening hand. Why? My partner hasn't been able to summon up an 8+ overcall nor a takeout double. Yes, partner could be jammed with an opening hand which couldn't double, but this is a minority case.