

Dealer: E

Vul: All

♠ 84
♥ Q10
♦ 873
♣ QJ10432

E	S	W	N
1S	P	2S	3C
X (1)	?		

(1) Invite to 4S

What should South do?

DO NOT SACRIFICE WITH FLAT HANDS

Dealer: E

Vul: All

	♠ K109		
	♥ KJ7		
	♦ Q9		
	♣ AK865		
♠ Q53		♠ AJ762	
♥ A95432		♥ 86	
♦ 642		♦ AKJ105	
♣ 7		♣ 9	
	♠ 84		
	♥ Q10		
	♦ 873		
	♣ QJ10432		

E	S	W	N
1S	P	2S (1)	3C
X (2)	?		

What should South do?

- (1) The actual West bid 2H but this was not right. 2H should show 10+ points which wasn't the case here. Also, West should show major suit support as quickly as reasonably possible. This is a simple 2S raise.
- (2) The X is a GAME TRY double. When you bid a suit, partner raises to 2 and the opponents butt in at the 3 level, a X INVITES to game. A bid of 3 of your suit is competitive, usually on the basis you have 6 trumps and with partner's known 3 trumps you have a 9 card fit and hence can compete to the 3 level.

It is very tempting to bid 5C on this hand. You know there is at least an eleven card club fit. However, to compete safely at the 4 and 5 level, you need a shortage (a singleton or void) in one hand as well as 10 or 11 trumps.

Notice you're going 3 down in 5C on this hand with careful defence – 2 diamonds, 1 heart, and 2 spades. Three down doubled vul is -800 – much more than their vul 4S game of -620.

If the South hand had had a singleton spade and 4 diamonds, this gets rid of one loser and 5C is now only 2 down for -500 and a good sacrifice against 4S.

To sacrifice at the 4 level, you need 10 or more trumps and a shortage in one hand.

To sacrifice at the 5 level, you need 11 or more trumps and a shortage in one hand.

BE VERY WARY OF TAKING SACRIFICES WITH FLAT HANDS

There is one exception – if you are non-vulnerable against vulnerable. Three down doubled on this hand at that vulnerability is -500 – better than their -620 for a vulnerable game.

Dealer: E
Vul: All

♠ Q53	♠ K109	♠ AJ762
♥ A95432	♥ KJ7	♥ 86
♦ 642	♦ Q9	♦ AKJ105
♣ 7	♣ AK865	♣ 9
	♠ 84	
	♥ Q10	
	♦ 873	
	♣ QJ10432	

E	S	W	N
1S	P	2S	3C
X	?		

(Hand repeated for convenience)

There is one other factor you should consider when competing or sacrificing: what does the opposition have? Partner has a good hand to bid at the 3 level over the opposition bidding. However, given the size of the club fit, we have 1 club trick at the very most on the defence and it's very unlikely partner will produce more than 2 further tricks. NS very probably have 4S on (as they do).

This is why I would not bid 4C on this hand either. 4C might push them into a 4S which they were not going to bid. The time you make a bid like 4C on these sort of hands is where you are reasonably sure their 4S contract is going down and you WANT to push them into it.