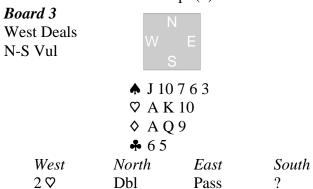
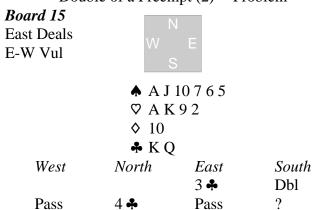
Double of a Preempt (1) -- Problem



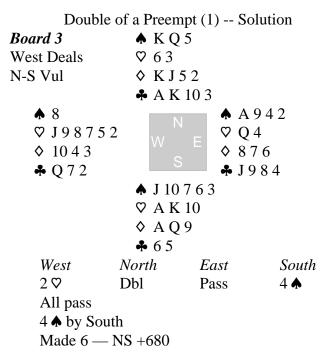
Take my seat at an online special matchpoint pairs game at the Huntsville AL club. Your bid?

Double of a Preempt (2) -- Problem



You double 3 **4** to keep hearts in play. If partner hurts you in diamonds, your hand is just strong enough to remove to spades.

Partner cue bids - what now?



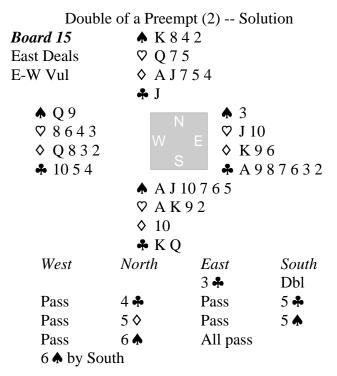
Yup, I missed a laydown slam. Holding no top trump honor I settled for game. I ignored my *fifth* spade, worth two points in response to a takeout double, my two trump honors, and my three and a half quick tricks. I hope you did better. For the double, partner's hand should be worth at least 15 points - no 13 HCP 4-4-3-2 hand, please.

Five spades also misses the slam. That bid asks partner to bid slam with first or second round control of hearts, the enemy suit. According to *Commonsense Bidding* (William S. Root, page 194), a *voluntary* raise to five of a major suit asks partner for control of a specific suit: (A) the unbid suit, if our side has bid three suits; (B) the enemy suit, if an opponent has bid.

The responses are (1) with first round control, cue bid; (2) with a singleton, bid slam; (3) with the guarded king, bid 5 NT; (4) with no control, Pass.

Cue bid $3 \, \nabla$ to show a hand of at least limit raise strength. Partner will bid a minor suit, and you will convert to $4 \, \spadesuit$, showing slam interest. (Without slam interest, you would have bid $4 \, \spadesuit$ immediately, even with four spades and five clubs.) Now partner bids $5 \, \spadesuit$, asking *you* for a heart control. (Your lack of a top trump now applies: don't show first round control of hearts; just bid $6 \, \spadesuit$.)

Slams can be difficult to bid when the points are divided about evenly between the two hands.



For the double, South's hand should be worth at least 14 points - no 12 HCP 4-4-3-2 hand, please.

North is not slamming, just attempting to get to the best game, wanting South to pick a major suit. With club shortness, North suspected South might be off-shape with club length. If we land in a 4-3 fit, hearts would be better, since any ruff would be taken in the short hand. (If South does pick hearts, North must pass, since any bid would be slamming.)

Once again, a meek $4 \spadesuit$ bid misses a laydown slam. I think $5 \spadesuit$ shows this hand, and is not just a raise of responder's presumed spade suit. However, if you are worried that partner will pass without a club control, either cue bid $5 \clubsuit$ (as shown above) or count on partner for an ace and leap to $6 \spadesuit$. All these roads lead to slam on this deal.