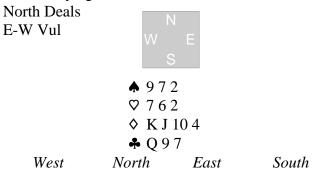
1. Playing Inverted Minor Raises -- Problem



Playing matchpoint pairs, our system includes inverted minor raises: a 2 \$\phi\$ response would be natural, but forcing, with at least an invitational hand.

Pass

1 🔷

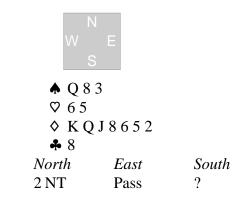
What should we do? Does the vulnerability make any difference?

2. Slam Killer -- Problem

West Deals None Vul

West

Pass



It's with good reason that the 2 NT opening is called the slam killer.

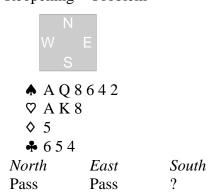
This one shows a balanced hand with 20 to 21 high card points. We are playing regular Stayman, Jacoby & Texas transfers. 3 ♠ has been agreed as minor suit Stayman, without further discussion.

We also have agreed that we could make a natural slam try in diamonds by bidding Stayman, and then bidding 4 ♦ (no longer implying a 4-card major). Our only way to ask for keycards in diamonds would be to do this, and then bid 4 NT.

What should we do, playing matchpoint pairs?

3. Reopening -- Problem

West Deals N-S Vul

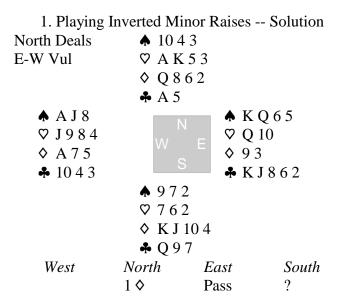


What should we do?

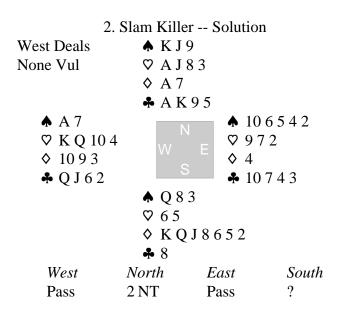
West

10

(2022-12-02 Puritan) https://3nt.xyz © Pete Matthews Jr



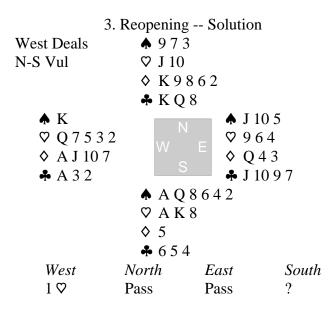
Respond 1 NT, getting there before the opponents. However, pass when vulnerable, possibly avoiding a disaster. After either, it is reasonable to compete with  $2 \diamondsuit$ . Nobody makes much on the actual deal.



The acceptable matchpoint contracts on this deal are 3 NT, 4 NT and 6 ⋄. For a thin slam, bid the safest!

Bid 4  $\clubsuit$ , Gerber, asking for aces. Partner's 4 NT shows three, and we bid 6  $\diamondsuit$ . Finding fewer aces, sign off in 4 NT. The automatic lead of the  $\heartsuit$  K defeats 6 NT, but in 6  $\diamondsuit$ , we win , draw trump, pitch a heart, and knock out the  $\spadesuit$  A - making six.

This is the only hand on which I have used Gerber, since I invented crosswood in 2011.



Reopen with 2 \( \bar{\pi} \), which shows a hand such as this. Some players use this as a weak two bid, but common sense says that's a waste of a good bid. The opponents are unlikely to have a game, so there's no need to preempt.

It's much more useful to show a six card suit in a solid opening bid. For details, see *The Complete Book on Balancing*, Revised Edition, by Mike Lawrence.

Here is a response plan to consider:

Our suit is trump; we cannot play in partner's suit.

Pass = any misfit lacking interest in game.

cue bid = asks for stopper (may be slamming in ♠)

2 NT = natual game try

3 NT = to play

3 raise = support and two (sure) winners

4 raise = support and three winners

3 suit = support, two winners, and K or Q in suit

Applying this method to the current deal, North, with too many soft values, passes  $2 \spadesuit$ . Replace the  $\diamondsuit$  K with the  $\diamondsuit$  A: North either jumps to game or bids  $3 \clubsuit$ . We can accept with club length, or waffle with  $3 \diamondsuit$  (fear of  $\clubsuit$  Qxx).

Frequent readers will notice the adaptation of my game try system, similar to 1 \(\bullet -2 \hbla; 2 \) NT-? With the actual North hand, we don't bid a secondary value when we have them in two side suits.