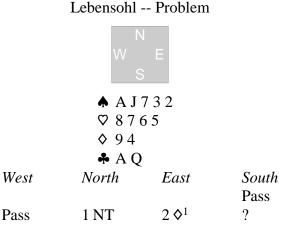
Board 15South Deals N-S Vul



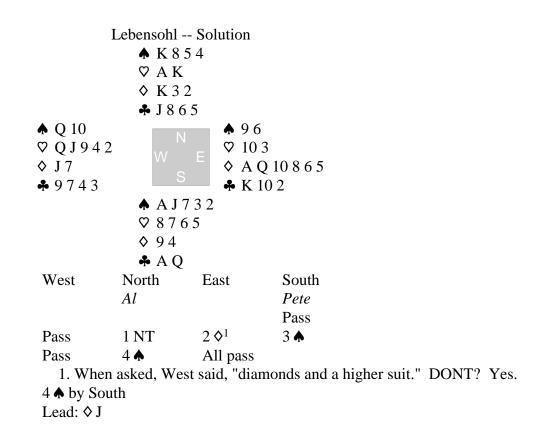
1. When asked, West said, "diamonds and a higher suit." DONT? Yes.

Join me as South for this deal in a club matchpoint pairs game.

Playing old-fashioned standard bidding, a bid at the 2-level is to play, so we would not bid $2 \, \spadesuit$. 2 NT would be the only invitational bid. A new suit at the 3-level would be forcing, and $3 \, \diamondsuit$ would be game-forcing Stayman, and 3 NT would be to play. All of these bids assume that, if a stopper in the known suit is needed, partner has it. What should we do here, with these methods?

We have better methods -- we play lebensohl. Everything is standard, with these exceptions: $3 \diamondsuit$ (Stayman) and 3 NT deny a stopper in diamonds. 2 NT is no longer invitational; it asks opener to bid $3 \clubsuit$. We can then pass $3 \clubsuit$, if we only wanted to compete in clubs, bid $3 \diamondsuit$ (Stayman) or 3 NT (both promising a diamond stopper), or bid an invitational $3 \heartsuit$ or $3 \spadesuit$. This plan is known as "slow action shows stopper (SASS)" or more succinctly, "fast denies." What should we do here, with these methods?

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Lebensohl only helps in that, if we bid 3 ⋄ or 3 ♠, partner knows we do not have a spade stopper. These are the only reasonable bids. I picked wrong. I figured East's higher suit was probably hearts, so I gave up on that suit. If it turned out to be spades, at least my cards would be well-located. If we do have a heart fit, it won't play well if they split 4-1 either way. So I bid 3 ♠, and partner duly raised to game. Three rounds of diamonds promoted a trump trick for West. Making four was a horrible score for us.

North easily makes six spades: win the likely ∇ 10 lead, draw trump in two rounds. Take the club finesse and ruff the king out, using the hearts and ruffs for transportation. Discard a diamond on the \clubsuit J, and eventually ruff two diamonds on dummy.

Not until well after the session, preparing to write up the deal, did I learn that East had no higher suit, only diamonds. If they were playing DONT and East misbid, then I have no recourse -- I was correctly told their agreements. However, *if they were not playing DONT*, *we were injured*, *and we deserved an adjusted score*. (Neither of them remarked on the matter after the play -- nor did West alert or save in hearts.)

Against a known 1-suiter, I would surely have chosen $3 \diamondsuit$, to locate either 4-card major in partner's hand. North declares in either major they have, and we make $6 \spadesuit$ as well. Perhaps I should have taken right-siding the contract into account, but $3 \spadesuit$ was reasonable. It's what I would have done holding

Al pointed out that transfer lebensohl would have solved the problem of my wrong-siding the hand by bidding 3 \(\bigcirc\): I would instead jump to 3 \(\nabla\), showing five or more spades in an invitational or better hand. Larry Cohen writes about lebensohl and transfer lebensohl at https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/print/775. Since this is the first time I have found a need for transfer lebensohl, I'm in no hurry to take it up.