

# The Bridge Student

by Jay Apfelbaum

For November, we have a bidding problem. You are South.

Board: 17  
Dealer: North  
Vul: None  
Form: Matchpoints

South  
♠ 9  
♥ Q J 9 6 5 3  
♦ 8 4 2  
♣ K 10 7

The auction:

West	North	East	South
---	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	Pass	?

What now?

The first thing to do when in uncharted waters is to consider what partner might have. One possibility is the Ace of Spades, but with no control in hearts. Another is a great spade suit. There does not appear to be a third possibility, so let us consider our options.

Pass because we are probably too high already.

6♦ because that is the better trump fit.

We must keep our wits about us here. Partner made a very unusual bid. Considering the possibilities, the only correct call has to be pass. First, consider that this is matchpoints. A major suit will score better than a minor suit. Second, consider that if partner really is trying for a slam in diamonds we cannot have whatever partner might need.

I rate the choices:

Pass	10
6♦	1

Here is the complete hand:

	North	
	♠ A K Q J 10 5	
	♥ 4	
	♦ A K J 10 5	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ 6 3		♠ 8 7 4 2
♥ K 8 7 2		♥ A 10
♦ Q 7		♦ 9 6 3
♣ Q 8 5 3 2		♣ A J 9 6
	South	
	♠ 9	
	♥ Q J 9 6 5 3	
	♦ 8 4 2	
	♣ K 10 7	

After East takes both aces, he should continue hearts. North will ruff high and lead a low spade to the 9. Next comes a diamond finesse. When that wins, North will draw trump and play a high diamond. After West's Queen falls, partner will claim.

The moral of the story is to always keep your wits about you. And now it is time for next month's hand. A declarer problem.

Board: 10  
 Dealer: East  
 Vul: Both  
 Form: Matchpoints

	North	
	♠ K Q 9 6	
	♥ A Q 2	
	♦ 9 5 3	
	♣ 10 6 4	
	South	
	♠ J 7 4	
	♥ K 9 8	
	♦ A Q J 2	
	♣ A Q 9	

West	North	East	South
---	---	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West leads the ♣3. You try the 10, but East covers with the Jack. Plan the play. The answer next month. Those who want to express their opinion should contact the webmaster. I will try to mention all those who take the time to give me a thoughtful answer.