

WHEN TO PUNISH

East is the dealer and opens 1♠. He and West are vulnerable. You and your partner are non-vulnerable. You have the hand below, and it is too strong for a simple overcall. Overcalls should be in the range of 7-17 points. You have 19 HCP and a 5-card heart suit. You show this type of hand with a double and follow up with a heart bid over whatever partner bids. Since you and East have a total of about 32 points, your partner isn't going to hold too many points.

S	South
♠	4
♥	AKJ52
♦	KJ76
♣	AK8

This is how the bidding progresses:

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Dbl
Pass	2♣.	2♠	3♥
3♠	Pass	Pass	?

What do you do at this point? You could pass and hope either they will fail in their contract, or take 10 tricks and miss a game. On the other hand, you can keep bidding hearts at the 4-level. You have 5 losing tricks, but can partner really be expected to provide 2 cover cards – cards that will cover two of your losers?

Another possible action is to double for penalty. True, you don't expect to take any spades, but East will have to take at least 4 tricks in the other suits – which you have well stopped. To set them, you need 5 tricks and you see 4 of them in the rounded suits: hearts and clubs. Will partner be able to provide 1 more trick?

The alternative of passing is the worst option. Even if they don't make it, other tables will be at 3♠ and will also go set. **To get a good score at this vulnerability you must double.** Even if you set them only 1 trick, that is 200 points, more than any part score you can make. If you set them 2 tricks, that is 500 points, more than any game you can make.

This is the entire deal:

6		N North		W N E S	
		♠ 1082		1♠ X	
		♥ 743		P 2♣ 2♠ 3♥	
		♦ A85		3♠ P P X	
		♣ Q532		P P P	
W West		E East			
♠ J93		♠ AKQ765			
♥ Q109		♥ 86			
♦ 10942		♦ Q3			
♣ 974		♣ J106			
		S South			
		♠ 4			
		♥ AKJ52			
		♦ KJ76			
		♣ AK8			
				3♠ E NS: 0 EW: 0	

You finally decide to double. This is definitely a penalty double. You already doubled at the 1-level and partner gave you his longest suit. He certainly doesn't have anything else to say and will interpret your double as penalty, having already shown 18 or more points.

You should start off playing the ♣AK. Your partner will play the ♣5 on the first trick and the ♣2 on the second. That is either an encouraging signal or shows a doubleton. Either way, you are going to play the 3rd club. Partner's ♣Q holds and you need only 2 more tricks to set them. You should now play the ♥AK and partner follows with the ♥3 and then the ♥4. This indicates a 3-card heart holding. Don't play a third heart because the declarer has only 2 hearts and will ruff your third heart. Rather, switch to a diamond, leading the ♦3. Partner wins the ♦A and returns a diamond to your ♦K. You have just taken the first 6 tricks and set them 3 tricks for +800.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/z4cfs7j>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play"

you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.

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