

Rubens' Pearls On Hand Evaluation (7)

....on VALUATION TECHNIQUES: ALL TOGETHER NOW

Neither side is vulnerable. You are North and the Dealer. After two passes, your partner opens 1C (2+) and West jumps to 2S (weak).

What do you bid?

♠	
♥	9652
♦	AQ83
♣	KJ932

You have the perfect shape and sufficient HCPs for a negative double. Your partner now bids 3C, indicating a club suit of at least five cards and probably longer. East passes. Based on first principles, since East didn't bid 3S over your double, partner is likely to hold 3 or even 4 spades, implying she should hold as few as 4 red suit cards. With the remote chance of losing a club trick how many losers will you have in the red suits? This is a close decision whether to invite with 4C or bid 5C.

Let's apply the Ruben's recommended augmentations to the Hand Evaluation Techniques:

- (1) High Card Points: Assume your partner has 12HCPs for her opening. You have 10HCPs. Add on distributional points and you should have combined Total Points in the range 27-29. An Ace and a King represent 7/10 HCPs in your holding and you have a very strong fit.
- (2) Honour nature and location: Not much to go on here. You do have a useful primary honour in diamonds although, with the spade pre-empt by West, a diamond finesse may well lose. Ironically, despite your hearts being all losers, any heart honours your partner holds should be well located.
- (3) The Adjusted Losing Trick Count: Assume your partner has 7 losers. Given the suit fit, you can take full account of your (initially notional) 6 losers with no need to adjust. Subtracting your combined 13 losers from 24 suggests that you will make 11 tricks.

On balance, it seems that you should raise partner to 5C. You could bid 3S to see if partner has a spade stopper but 9 tricks in NT could still be less certain than 11 tricks in clubs.

BOARD 1					
BD: 1	♠				Dir: N
	♥	9652			Vul: Nil
	♦	AQ83			
	♣	KJ932			
♠ A98754			♠ KT6		
♥ 83			♥ QJT7		
♦ K954		25/11/21pm	♦ J762		
♣ 8			♣ Q6		
	♠	QJ32			
	♥	AK4			
	♦	T			
	♣	AT754			
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	1	4	1	3
S	7	1	4	1	3
E					
W					
					10
				7	9
					14

The full hand is shown here. None of the 6/9 pairs that played in a club contract bid game, let alone slam which makes. Some experts might convert 5C to 6C on the South hand using similar reasoning.

- (a) Partner should have no more than six losers in a club contract to bid this way and I have only six myself.
- (b) I have excellent controls in my hand and partner should be very short in spades to do a negative double and then support clubs so strongly.

