

## PARTNERSHIP STYLES

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### (Powerwielders, Risk Takers, and Communicators)

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At the 2012 Hawaii Regional (Open Pairs, 1/17/12 evening), on board 1, none vulnerable, North as dealer opened 1 spade, passed by East. South held:

♠ A 8 6 5 3  
♥ Q 10 9 8 7 5  
♦  
♣ A 5

Since my partner and I (we play maybe once a year) had a misunderstanding on this hand, I decided to ask some other players who compete at the A level how *they* would bid the hand. Take a minute now and decide: **how would you bid???**

On the basis of the responses I received, I decided there are several styles of partnership, at least for this hand. Powerwielders are “take charge” players who essentially say to their partners, “you tell me what you’ve got and *I’ll* decide where we play the hand.” Risk takers essentially listen to the auction and decide to take a chance that the contract they bid can be made most of the time. I’ve heard this style called “seat of the pants” bidders. Communicators like to tell their partners early on if they have support, and proceed from there. For example, when Marty Bergen played with Larry Cohen, they had a rule: if responder has four-card support for opener’s major, he must support him at his first turn (“support with support”). If responder bid another suit and then showed support, he would *never* have four-card support. (*Bridge Bulletin*, January 2012, p. 51).

A sequence from the powerwielders typically went: 1 S, 2 H, 3 D, 3 S, 4 S, (5 C, 5 H), 6 S.

A sequence from the risk takers went: 1S, 2 H, 3 D, 6 S.

Sequences from the communicators either used Jacoby 2NT or splinters to show support:

1 S, 2 NT, 3 H, (4 D, 5 D), 6 S or 1 S, 2 NT, 3 H, 4 C, 4 S, 6 S or 1 S, 4 D, 4 H, 6 S.

One power wielder told me emphatically, “you don’t splinter with a void.”

As can be seen from the entire hand, NS are cold to easily make a 19-HCP (“points, schmoints”!, thanks Marty) slam in spades:

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

I concluded that Mike Capelletti, Jr. said it best: “There’s no right or wrong when it comes to bidding judgment.” That is, you and your partner just have to be on the same wavelength.

During the next week, I discovered that Eric Rodwell had taken a poll on his website concerning a quite similar problem in February 2011! I can identify with the guy who said "Trying to convince pard of a big fit after 2 diamonds is like trying to get the toothpaste back into the tube."

## **To splinter or not to splinter?** Fri, Feb 11th 2011 (From Eric Rodwell's site, BridgeTopics.com)

As South you have: North / None; Pairs (See POLL)

♠ K Q J 6 North bids 1 ♠ and East passes  
♥ Q J 9  
♦ K Q 8 7 6  
♣ 2

### **39% first showed long diamonds, later supporting spades**

Jan van Cleeff - 2011-02-11 10:55 Prefer to offer a 'working suit' to a direct splinter in clubs. Advantage is also that this keeps the bidding low in contrast to uneconomic splintering. After a likely 1S-2D-2S/NT, and then 3S (3+ spades + diamond length) by me, partner is in good position to judge how to go further.

Jean-Charles Allavena (not verified) - 2011-02-15 13:06 What I learnt from my old friend Hervé Mouiel is that, according with french style, this hand is far too strong for a splinter (despite the lack of aces) and that we don't use the splinter with a good second suit. The only serious way to bid a grand slam with a minimum hand of the opener is to let him know good diamonds, then support in spades, these two points producing tricks that you may count... the club control will come later... This style may seem old fashioned, but I don't see the interest to hide the main things behind a 2NT bid... and I believe that 4D (support) should be very precise, due to the lost space, showing things like 4252.

jp rocafort (not verified) - 2011-02-16 23:08 it's about strategy, not system. i don't intent to describe my hand but to get the little bit of information i need: control of hearts, number of aces. 2D, followed by a spade raise should do the job.

Owen Leigh (not verified) - 2011-02-19 08:24 This hand is too strong for splinter (best to specify 6 or 7 losers). Slam is good opposite three aces and diamond support so I don't want partner to downgrade club honours. I start with 2D and continuation will depend on system.

### **35% splintered (58 votes)**

gloussis@the.fo... - 2011-02-16 21:42 I think the splinter bid (4C) is the best because it is not promising a monster hand, has good trumps and one key card. Suppose partner is minimum but has controls and no wasted values such Axxxx Axx Ax xxx or Axxxx AKx xx xxx he must be interested by bidding 4H. On the other hand, with a maximum hand like Axxxx Ax Jx KQJx he must stop. Last but not least, partner knows enough if opponents pre-empt at 4-level or higher (after the 2D alternative).

### **23% bid 2NT Jacoby (38 votes)**

bbengtson666 - 2011-02-17 07:12 To find out if a fit-slam is in the cards. I prefer to use artificial 2NT to assure a 9-card fit. If pard shows diamond shortness, a retreat is in order, but many other rebids by opener can be quite illuminating. (Especially helpful: 3NT rebid by opener to show strong balanced hand with weak spade holding.) Trying to convince pard of a big fit after 2 diamonds is like trying to get the toothpaste back into the tube.

G Peter (not verified) - 2011-02-23 13:23 All options have merit as the path to game. The question is what is the best path to slam given opener is not minimum? My preference would be for 2NT where all replies except 4S are positive to possibility of slam.

### **4% preferred a fit bid, good diamonds with good spade support (7 votes)**

**Total votes: 168** Please note that here again, "all options have merit as the path to game."