

# 16 / DON'T LET THE OPPONENTS PLAY AT THE 2-LEVEL IF THEY HAVE FOUND A FIT

This rule will make a big difference to your scores – and to the respect which your opponents will show you in the future. Look at this auction:

<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>W</i>
1H	NB	2H	NB
NB	?		

South agrees hearts weakly; North can't even make a try for Game. However, they have found a fit and, if one side holds an eight-card fit, the other side virtually always has an eight-card fit too. The points will be close to 20–20 between E/W and N/S. When this occurs, never leave your opponents to play quietly at the 2-level. Bully them!

This hand demonstrates the principle:

<p> ♠ K65  ♥ A6432  ♦ 642  ♣ Q7 </p>		<p> <i>N</i>  —  2S </p>	<p> <i>E</i>  —  NB </p>	<p> <i>S</i>  1S  NB </p>	<p> <i>W</i>  NB  ? </p>
<p> ♠ 3  ♥ Q1095  ♦ AQ  ♣ J109543 </p>	<p> ♠ 10742  ♥ J  ♦ K10983  ♣ K82 </p>				
<p> ♠ AQJ98  ♥ K87  ♦ J75  ♣ A6 </p>					

North-South have found a fit and stopped in 2S. Should West bid now? Definitely, yes. Double is a possibility, but with a six-card suit, 3C is probably best. There are three main scenarios: N/S may defend and get you down (they won't double; they have a spade fit and limited points); they may bid on to 3S – if they make it, you have lost nothing; if they go down, you've pushed them out of a making part-score, and you may make 3C. None of these options looks bad. Only leaving them to play in 2S is the losing option.

Here, N/S can make 2S but not 3S, whilst E/W should secure nine tricks in 3C. You might argue that West was lucky to find partner with three good clubs but on the other hand, N/S could scarcely have been stronger than 24pts to have passed out 2S.