

If an opponent passes after a long consideration, you should probably pass too.

If the bidding has started :

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1S | P | 2S | P |
| P | ? | | |

We have all heard it is wrong to let an opponent play at the 2 level, and to find some delayed action to push them to the 3 level. The essence of successful part score bidding is to push opponents from the safety of the 2 level to the jeopardy of the 3 level!

However...if West thought for a long time before passing 2S, North should pass.

The reason for the long trance is obvious, West was close to inviting game and if you give the opponents another chance, the auction could develop like this:

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| 1S | P | 2S | P |
| P* | X | 3S | P |
| 4S | P | P | P |

*after much deliberation

East, picking up the message from the long deliberation, pushes to 3S and West bids one more. Now you have to defend a touch and go game. If the cards lie luckily for them 4S might make. It is most annoying to give up a game score when you could have passed it out at two.

It is true that laws state East should not be influenced by partner's hesitation, but you are better off protecting yourself than having a confrontation with East who will claim " I was super maximum for my raise" or "did partner hesitate? I didn't notice" and so on.

Try to read you opponents as well as your cards, any variation from normal tempo in bidding or playing gives you information. Try to take advantage of it.