

Claim with Colchamiro



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Mirror, mirror on the wall — part 4

Last month I suggested a defense to enemy intrusions into our strong INT auctions. Let's review:

1. Doubles are negative (takeout) at the two and three level.
2. New suits (five-plus cards) at the two level are natural and not forcing.
3. New suits (five-plus cards) at the three level are natural and forcing.
4. 2NT is simple lebensohl, a relay to 3♣.

Suppose partner opens 1NT and your right-hand opponent overcalls 2♥. Here are some sample hands where you have a long suit:

1. ♠K8743 ♥53 ♦J85 ♣743
2. ♠KJ742 ♥54 ♦AQ3 ♣J54
3. ♠J8753 ♥76 ♦873 ♣642
4. ♠43 ♥86 ♦J65 ♣KJ7632
5. ♠A3 ♥84 ♦Q74 ♣KQ7532
6. ♠84 ♥A8 ♦Q98 ♣KQ7642

The suggested bids are:

1. 2♠. With 4 high-card points (partner has an average of 16), you want to compete. Partner is expected to pass.
2. 3♠. A new suit at the three level, whether it is a jump or not, is forcing. Partner should choose between 4♠ and 3NT. No need for simple lebensohl.
3. Pass. If there had not been an overcall, you would have transferred to 2♠, but the overcall takes you off the hook. Pass and stay out of trouble.
4. 2NT. This is simple lebensohl, a relay to 3♣. Partner has no choice

and you will pass.

5. 3♣. This is forcing. Maybe partner can bid 3NT with a heart stopper. If not, maybe this is a hand for 5♣.
6. 3NT. "Doin' what comes naturally." At other times, you may have a balanced hand. Suppose partner opens 1NT. RHO overcalls 2♠ and you hold:

1. ♠87 ♥K873 ♦AJ4 ♣K876
2. ♠63 ♥K1063 ♦763 ♣KQ73
3. ♠K73 ♥765 ♦A43 ♣K963
4. ♠KJ103 ♥73 ♦763 ♣A763
5. ♠87 ♥K73 ♦AJ73 ♣8753

The suggested bids are:

1. Double. This is a negative and is for takeout. Partner is expected to bid with an eye towards hearts. Only if partner is loaded in spades should she pass.
2. Double. You will pass whatever partner bids and hope for a plus.
3. 3NT. A simple answer for a simple problem.
4. Pass. This is the price for playing negative doubles and simple lebensohl. Don't double — partner is going to bid. Don't bid 2NT — partner is going to bid 3♣. You should pass and hope partner can reopen with a double, which you'll pass for penalties.
5. Double. This is recommended even without a four-card heart suit — in a pinch, three will do. You should pass whatever partner bids. If partner passes with strong spades, that's just fine, too.

If you and your favorite partner

prefer to play penalty doubles instead of negative doubles, responder's choices with long suits are unaffected. With balanced hands, however, things change. Look back at the five balanced hands. Playing penalty doubles, with hand No. 1 bid 3♠ a cuebid. It would act as Stayman. You're strong enough to force to game. With hand No. 2, you're stuck. Pass lets them steal. Forcing to game is an overbid. You can't quite have everything. With hand No. 3, 3NT is still just fine. With hand No. 4 you should double. This hand is the poster child for playing penalty doubles. Hand No. 5 is another where you're stuck — nothing fits.

Penalty doubles are fine, sort of, but negative doubles seem to cover more situations. That is why the experts prefer negative doubles. I guess you know where I stand.

Next month will be the last installment of this series, and I'll address one final important point. □

My first book, How You Can Play Like An Expert (Without Having To Be One), has great winning tips. Zia, Catherine Zeta-Jones and much more! It's available at my web site: www.melbridge.com (lots of free stuff, too) or e-mail me at mcolch@optonline.net.