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Mike's Advice

2/1 in competition (continued)

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ A Q 8 7 4	♠ K J 3
♥ K 3 2	♥ 8 7 4
♦ J 7 6	♦ 9 8 2
♣ K 7	♣ A Q J 8

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♠	2♦	Dbl	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	All Pass

West has an easy opening bid of 1♠. After North's overcall, East has three choices: 2♠, 3♠ or double.

2♠ is an underbid. 3♠ is okay on values, but the hand has only three-card spade support. Limit raises guarantee four-card support, a rule that can be broken only when there is no safe method for showing when you have a limit raise with three.

So double is my choice. You expect opener to bid something and you will show your limit raise next.

After the double, West bids 2♥ because East should have four or five hearts barring something odd going on. This is better than bidding 2♠ and playing it there facing a possible singleton spade in the East hand.

East then jumps to 3♠, showing a limit raise. East is known to have exactly three trumps because he would

have bid 3♠ earlier with four.

Note that when you open 1♥ and the opponents overcall, it is less comfortable to make a limit raise via a negative double because the bidding may get too high. Say that you double a 1♠ overcall and they bid to 3♠. If you bid 4♥, it is a big overbid. Better perhaps is to jump to 3♥ with an invitational limit heart raise, even with only three-card support. I do not feel there is anything perfect here.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ K 7 5 3	♠ J 6 2
♥ A J 8 7 4	♥ K 9
♦ 3 2	♦ A 9 8
♣ A J	♣ 10 8 6 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♥	Pass	1NT	Dbl
Pass	2♦	2♥	All Pass

West opens 1♥ with one of the bad distributions for a 2/1 player. If East responds 1NT, forcing, West has to rebid something and with this hand it would be 2♣. This is a rare occasion which West must be ready for.

After the forcing 1NT, however, South intervenes with a double. Fortunately, this relieves West of having to bid. Bidding spades at this point in the auction would show a lot more.

When North replies to his partner's takeout double with 2♦, East competes to 2♥. Having bid 1NT earlier, this bid shows a fair hand with two hearts most of the time. This is not a guaranteed action because South's takeout double suggests that he is short in hearts, which means North may have a lot of them. Still, bidding 2♥ pays homage to the idea that winning bridge is pushy bridge.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ J	♠ K 10 8 6 5 4
♥ A K Q 6 2	♥ 7
♦ Q 7 3	♦ A K 10 6
♣ J 8 3 2	♣ 7 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♥	2♣	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	All Pass

West opens 1♥ with nice hearts but not a nice hand. After the 2♣ interference, East tries 2♠. This bid is not forcing to game and in that light, this is a fair hand for 2♠.

2NT isn't pretty, but West has to bid something. Even though 2♠ is not game forcing, it is forcing for one round. Note that West has one spade. The competitive auction has taken away some of opener's precision, so he occasionally has to make a bid like this one.

Imagine that West had a fifth club and one less diamond. Strange as it might look, bidding 2NT with this hand would be correct, too. 3♥ is not a good idea because opener has only five hearts.

East rebids his suit (3♠). This sequence is definitely encouraging, but it can be passed. And in this case, West is happy to pass it.

While this hand is not a big deal, knowing what your bids mean is a big deal. Some partnerships play that a two-level bid in a new suit is game forcing, with or without an overcall, and that is not a good choice of understandings. When the opponents overcall, you will discover that the partnership is less likely than normal to have game-going values. Allowing the partnership bidding to cater to partscore hands becomes more important than normal.

see next page for continuation

Solutions to Test Your Play

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 7 3	♠ A 8 2
♥ A K 2	♥ Q J 9 8 5 4
♦ A K 7 6 3	♦ 9
♣ 8 7 2	♣ K 9 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	2♣	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Problems are on page 55.

After the routine 1♦ opening, North overcalls 2♣ and East tries 2♥, forcing for one round. The key bid in this auction, however, is 4♥. When your partner bids 2♥ in competition, the auction is not game forcing. A 3♥ bid by West could be passed. West, with a solid hand, chooses to bid the full value of it to make sure game is reached. □

West hands for February's Bidding Box

Bid these hands with a partner. The East hands are on page 26. The N-S players are silent unless otherwise noted. Scores on page 28-31.

Problem 1. North deals. None vul. North bids 1♦. South bids 3♦ (weak).

♠ A 8 7 4 2 ♥ Q J 7 2 ♦ A K ♣ Q 8

Problem 2. East deals. N-S vul.

♠ Q 10 9 2 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ Q 7 5 2

Problem 3. South deals. E-W vul.

♠ 9 6 ♥ A K J 10 ♦ 9 ♣ A K J 7 5 4

Problem 4. West deals. Both vul.

♠ Q 6 3 ♥ Q J 9 8 7 ♦ 3 ♣ A 9 8 5

Problem 5. North deals. None vul. North opens 2♣, Precision (11-15 HCP, five-plus clubs). South bids 3♣, non-forcing.

♠ Q 10 8 6 ♥ A Q 8 6 3 ♦ Q 7 6 5 ♣ —

Problem 6. East deals. E-W vul.

♠ 6 2 ♥ 10 5 4 2 ♦ K 8 6 5 ♣ K 10 2

Problem 7. South deals. N-S vul.

♠ K 7 6 3 ♥ A K 9 5 3 ♦ J 5 ♣ 5 4

Problem 8. West deals. Both vul. North bids 2♠ (weak) if possible.

♠ A K 2 ♥ 9 6 5 3 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ K 6 4

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

Cash both diamonds (important), cross to the ♣K and run the ♠J. If East has the ♠K, you are wondering why you aren't in six. If West wins the ♠K, you are hoping you can make five.

Assume the finesse loses. If you have lost to a stiff king, West must exit in either hearts (sure death) or with a club. If West started with Q-J-x-x in clubs, West must be clever enough to exit with a low club. If West started with the ♣9 7 doubleton (and you didn't squander your ♣6 when you crossed to dummy's king), it won't matter how clever West is because you can set up clubs for three tricks by simply covering with the 10, winning the trick, and after drawing trumps, driving out the other club honor using your 6. Dummy's 8 is now high.

If West exits with a low club, play the ♣K hoping to drop an honor from East. Whether that happens or not, draw trumps, cash the ♥A and lead a club. If clubs are 3-3 or if West started with ♣J 9 x x or ♣Q 9 x x, West will take the trick and no heart finesse is needed with the ♣10 high in dummy. A worst-case scenario finds East with a club holding of Q-J-x-x, Q-9-x-x or J-9-x-x. In that situation, you will need the heart finesse. □

If West exits a trump after winning the ♠K, draw trumps, cash the ♣K, return to the ♥A and lead a club. If there is good news in the club department, you won't need the heart finesse. Otherwise you will.

2. ♠ A J 3 2
 ♥ 4 3 2
 ♦ A J 9
 ♣ A 8 2
- | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| ♠ 7 | | ♠ 6 5 4 |
| ♥ Q 10 8 7 | N
W E
S | ♥ 9 6 |
| ♦ K 10 4 3 | | ♦ 8 7 5 |
| ♣ J 10 6 3 | | ♣ K Q 9 7 5 |
- ♠ K Q 10 9 8
 ♥ A K J 5
 ♦ Q 6 2
 ♣ 4

Start by ruffing a club at trick two and leading the ♠K and a spade to the ace. If both follow, ruff a club and lead a low diamond to the jack. If it loses and a heart comes back, win the ace, cross to dummy with a spade and take the heart finesse. If the diamond finesse wins, however, cash the ♦A and exit a diamond. Assuming West has the king, West has no safe exit and you make your slam.

If spades turn out to be 3-1 either way, do not ruff a second club. Enter your hand with the ♥A and lead the ♦Q. If it loses, take the heart finesse. If the queen is covered, win the ace, cross to the ♥K and if the ♥Q hasn't appeared, enter dummy with a trump and lead a heart. If hearts are 3-3 or if East has the queen, you are home. If West has four hearts to the queen, finessing the ♦9 successfully will still bring you fame and glory. □