

My Bridge and Yours



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Non-system bidding issues — part 9

Discipline

Discipline — such as avoiding adventuresome bidding that you know will lose in the long run — is a sign of maturity as a player.

The first rule of holes: when you're in one, stop digging. A disciplined player refuses to fight a misfit.

♠ A Q J 3 ♥ 4 ♦ K J 9 5 2 ♣ A 9 4

<i>Partner</i>	<i>You</i>
	1♦
1♥	1♠
2♥	?

Pass. Game is remote. Even if partner has a fair heart suit, you can't expect to reach his hand enough times to set it up and cash it. Try for a plus score at hearts, where his hand will produce a few tricks.

♠ Q 9 6 4 2 ♥ A J 6 4 2 ♦ 5 ♣ 9 2

<i>Partner</i>	<i>You</i>
1♦	1♠
2♣	?

Although 2♣ isn't the contract of your dreams, you should regard the misfit and pass. If you continue to look for a good contract when none may exist, you may trade a small minus for a large one (when the opponents start to double).

In a Bermuda Bowl:

See next column

Down two. East would have judged well to retire over 2♥. The misfit signs were there: East had spade length and broken clubs; North and South were bidding away without locating a fit; West was likely to have

Dlr: East ♠ 7 2
Vul: None ♥ K Q 10 9 7 6
♦ J 9 2
♣ Q 4

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

♠ A 10 8 5 3
♥ 3
♦ K 6 4
♣ A 10 9 5

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

nothing.

Undisciplined players lose points because they bid to no purpose. As dealer with:

♠ A Q 8 7 5 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ 5 4

open 1♠. The odds on having a game justify opening the bidding. But if RHO opens 1♣ and you have:

♠ K 3 2 ♥ Q 5 ♦ K J 6 3 2 ♣ 6 3 2.

I believe you should pass at any vulnerability and form of scoring. What benefit will come from a 1♦ overcall?

Is it preemptive? Lead directing? Are chances for game promising? Does the diamond suit offer a vehicle for competing successfully for the partscore? Do you want to prepare the way for a save?

You have much to lose by bidding: You may get doubled or may give away information the opponents can use in the bidding or play.

It takes discipline to pass when RHO opens the bidding and you have a good balanced hand. Suppose East deals and opens 1♦, and South holds:

♠ K 10 7 ♥ K J 6 ♦ Q 10 3 ♣ A J 9 3.

Pass. The hand is better for defense. If you double, a possible result is that North will compete to the three level in a major and trade a plus for a minus.

I might double 1♦ with either of these hands because neither has secondary defensive strength in the enemy suit:

♠ Q 10 8 ♥ K J 8 ♦ 9 5 2 ♣ A K J 4

♠ Q 10 8 4 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ A 7 4 ♣ K Q 5

Still, to pass could be right.

As dealer, you hold:

♠ Q J 10 7 4 2 ♥ J 9 7 5 ♦ — ♣ K 10 6

I feel strongly that to pass is correct. To open 2♠ with four cards in the other major and a side void is an undisciplined, partner-trapping action. Partner will pass with:

♠ 3 ♥ A Q 8 4 2 ♦ Q 7 5 ♣ A Q 9 3,

or with many other hands that will make 4♥ playable. □