

## Learning Points - Give Them a Chance and They Just Might Help

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S Deals

♠ K10652

None Vul

♥ AK543

♦ QJ

Mike

♣ 7

Steve

January 2008 Independence Ohio Regional 2-Session Open Pairs Flight B.

♠ AQJ87	N	♠ 43
♥ J2	W 11 E	♥ Q10987
♦ K64	S	♦ A952
♣ AK10		♣ 62

First-seat preempts will usually work well when opponents hold the majority of the power. Weak three bids take so much space from the auction that just getting to game in the right strain can be a struggle. Here is an opportunity missed by our opponent who probably want their first call to do all over again.

### The Bidding

Not all would preempt with South's hand in 1<sup>st</sup> seat. The issue isn't so much the weakness of the hand, but that such a unilateral action might keep North-South from the right strain or level. The weakness simply makes the penalty for a mistake here larger.

♠ 9	DeepFinesse:		
♥ 6	NS: 1♣		
♦ 10873	EW: 3N 2♠		
♣ QJ98543	2♦ 3♥		
South	West	North	East
Pass	1♣ <sup>[1]</sup>	2♣ <sup>[2]</sup>	Double <sup>[3]</sup>
3♣	3NT	Passed Out	
North leads ♣7			

South passed. I admit a strong temptation to bid, especially if the vulnerability were in our favor. The 2 singletons recommend obstruction. With both sides nonvulnerable, a pass could work.

This might just be a misfit, and it's usually better to let opponents play misfits. Partner opened with a strong club ([1] Precision 16+ HCP any shape). North decided to make a Michaels Cue Bid [2] showing 55 in the major suits. East doubles [3] conventionally to show any shape hand with exactly 6-7 HCP. South bids 3♣ now, perhaps ruing the original pass, but also warning partner off the major suits. West now has a decision. With a combined 24-25 HCP we should likely be in game. Spades is no longer attractive given the 5-card suit sitting in North. It looks like 3NT is right even with the heart weakness. After all partner has 6-7 HCP. North could infer South held at most 4-5 HCP (North's 13 plus East's 6 and West's 16 leaves 5 for South at most).

### The Play

North dutifully led partner's bid suit. West decided that North should have 3 maybe 4 cards in the minors. A partial strip play might be very useful. The ♣7 fetched the ♣J from South won by West's ♣Ace. West played a low diamond to the table felling a telling ♦Jack. Indeed the hand is now a virtual open book. Partner finishes the strip of diamonds leading to dummy's ♦Ace. The last club from the table finessed South's remaining honor and exposed North's shortness. The ♥J all but finished the defense. Try as s/he might, North could not avoid being end-played in hearts. A small spade from North ran into partner's major tenace and the final heart left North without recourse. A 2<sup>nd</sup> spade return insured 11 tricks for declarer (a ♥ return on each ♥ end play keeps North from sacrificing the spade trick they deserve).

East West 3NT making 5 scored +460 and was worth 11 of 12 Match Points.

### Post Mortem Bidding

South puts unbearable pressure on West with an opening 3♣ preempt. Even at the 3 Level West is just strong enough to double first. This allow North to bid if s/he chooses. Opposite a 3♣ preempt best is to stay mute. There's not enough for game, and the hands are a clear misfit. North should hope for a big penalty should East-West stumble into either major.

East will respond 3♥ to partner's double. West will then face whether to bid spades or NT. In this auction if North does not bid, West will be sorely tempted to bid some number of spades at the 2<sup>nd</sup> turn. Opposite a weak response by partner. West should reason: I have 18 HCP and South should have 7-9

for the preempt. That leaves 13-15 HCP between North and East. Any good 6 HCP and I can make 3♠ or perhaps 3NT. We'll try 3NT given my double club stopper. With so many points in clubs, opponents must have their points in the other suits including spades. 3N is slightly safer.

As you can see, the first call decision by South resulted in a 960 Point swing and a path from top to bottom. Why? Ultimately the 1<sup>st</sup> pass let North bid an attractive hand even over a strong forcing opening bid. This extra information not only guided West to the right game contract, it also make the hand much easier to play.

Generally using 2-suit overcalls works when your side wins the contract. If opponents declare then they have much of the counting work done for them before the opening lead hits the table.

### **Post Mortem Play**

The Michaels Cue Bid pinned North's hand to the wall. The unfortunate fall of the DQ&J coupled with the lead of the singleton club gave partner a road map to a top board. North doesn't have to have 2 heart honors, so delaying the cash of the ♣K buys a little insurance. Nice!