

## Learning Points – Three Cards Are Enough

by Steve Moese (Mike Purcell ed.)

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Bidding & Declarer Play LEVEL: Intermediate

West Deals  
None Vul  
MPs

♠ 10  
♥ K109543  
♦ J74  
♣ AQ4

Steve

♠ QJ98  
♥ AQ  
♦ A1032  
♣ J102

N  
W 8 E  
S

♠ 432  
♥ 862  
♦ KQ8  
♣ K763

Ron

♠ AK765  
♥ J7  
♦ 965  
♣ 985

EW: 1♠, 2♦, 1♣  
NS: 2♥

West	North	East	South
1N <sup>1</sup>	2♥	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	2♠!!	Double
All Pass			

South leads ♥J

1= 14-16 HCP

Tuesday Evening May 18, 2010, Club Championship. Mr. Michael Lipp Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . My partner is Ron Babcock. We play Precision.

When opponents compete over partner's strong 1NT opening bid, landing in the right spot can be touchy.

### The Bidding

North's overall of the opening 1NT bid is sound. Interfering at the 2 level with trump length takes many tools away from the opening side. East faced the first question. Many play a double as penalty here. East West play Negative Doubles in this situation (promising 4 ♠s, the unbid major). East's 8 HCP and 2-3 trick potential suggest defending. South passes as 2♠ is not likely to play better than partner's ♥s (South should have 2 reasons for bidding over partner's natural overcall: a suit likely longer than partner, and 2) severe shortness in partner's suit (typically a singleton or void). West now has a classic reopening double.

Since we are playing Negative Doubles in this situation, West has to protect the Penalty Double of 2♥. North passes, having fully bid the hand on the 1<sup>st</sup> round.

East now faces an interesting question. West has 4 ♠s. While it's tempting to bid 3♣ holding 4 cards in the suit, 2♠ is one level lower and scores 30 points a trick, not 20. This is matchpoints after all. East rues the 3334 shape. A ruffing value would have been reassuring. South's double indicates the trump position. On the surface it seems risky as North does not promise much defense for the 2♥ overcall. However South does have top ♠s.

### The Play

South's ♥J opening lead means the ♥K is with North. South has either ♥J, ♥Jx, or ♥Jxx. East can count 4 tricks off the top and has to find 4 more to make this doubled contract. ♦s appear useful as transportation. ♣s are the puzzle, so clarifying ♣s helps read North's hand and might add 2 tricks to the cause.

No use taking a practice finesse. East plays the ♥A and leads the ♣J immediately. This holds the trick. Unless South is playing a deep game with the ♣A, the ♣K will also score. No need to hurry ♣s. Instead travel to hand with the ♦K and lead a small ♠ toward the board. Don't be tempted to play the ♠8 on the 1<sup>st</sup> round if South ducks (he did). Play the ♠J and watch South as the ♠10 falls.

Now a small ♣ off the Dummy forces the ♣A. North continues with a low ♦. South wins the (hidden) ♦K and leads a small trump toward dummy. South wins the follows with the ♠AK. North drops ♥s on both ♠ tricks. South plays a small ♦ won on the table (6 tricks won so far). The ♥Q puts North in and East wins a ♣ and the remaining high ♠ (2♣s, 3♦s, 1♥, 2♠s). Making 2♠ Doubled for + 470 was worth 7 MPs and top board:

NS Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	0	4	7		2		6	2	5	2
Score	-140	-100	470		-110		100	-110	-50	-110

### Post Mortem

Choosing to play at the 2-level in a 4-3 major fit can be productive, especially when holding a 3334 pattern (no extra tricks from ruffing in your hand). 8 tricks is likely the limit of the hand, and majors do

score more than minors – important at Match Point Pairs. Moysian fits at the 3 and 4 levels often need shortness in the 3-trump hand to work (extra tricks come from ruffing in the short hand).

Even so, the defense should prevail on this hand. North should return a 3<sup>rd</sup> round of hearts at the 1<sup>st</sup> opportunity (not a ♣ or ♦) to allow South a minor suit discard and to force the dummy prematurely (Declarer does better to pitch a side card). This will stop East from finding the 8<sup>th</sup> trick and result in an average board (EW Down 1 for -100) or better.

### **Learning Points**

1. Consider playing in a 7 card major if you have no ruffing values, insufficient strength to play at the 3 level in an 8-card minor, and notrump is not a safe option.
2. Consider Negative Doubles over a strong 1NT opening by partner. They solve many bidding issues when opponents interfere, and they do interfere.
3. If one trick discloses the position of the remaining honors in a side suit and the position is favorable, consider using the tempo gained to develop a second suit or draw trumps against an adverse distribution. You've just gotten a gift – use it!

Key Words: When opponents interfere over our NT, Negative Double, Moysian fit