

Learning Points – Use All Your Chances in a Partial

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Defense Level: Basic/Intermediate

East Deals
Both Vul
MPs

♠ 94		♠ K3
♥ KQJ85	N	♥ A964
♦ Q32	W 10 E	♦ A8764
♣ K104		♣ J7

♠ J		♠ K3
♥ 10732		♥ A964
♦ KJ		♦ A8764
♣ AQ9632		♣ J7

♠ AQ1087652	NS 3♠
♥	E 3♣ 2♦ 3♥
♦ 1095	W 2♣ 1♦ 1♥
♣ 85	

Tuesday Night Club Game, September 28, 2010 Mr. Bob Veverka, Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . Dr. Joe Fisher is my partner. We play 2/1 Game Force.

Preempts make normal actions impossible and cause opponents to become creative. Sometimes they land on their feet, sometimes they don't. That's what pressure is all about – **make opponents make the last decision.**

The Bidding

EW use a short ♣ approach in a Standard American context. They alerted the 1♦ opening bid as promising 5+ cards. South has a 5½ loser hand with an 8-card ♠ suit. Preempts should follow the Rule of 2-3-4-5. At Both Vulnerable the preempt should be at 3 tricks above the number of tricks in your hand. South bid 4♠ reflecting the 7½ trick playing strength in this hand. West now faces the dilemma preempts are meant to produce. A double would be penalty and not negative at this level. 5♣ might be right or could be unilateral and land them in the wrong suit. 4♥ is out of reach. Partner could have long ♦'s on this (wildly) distributional hand. Pass and Double (Penalty) are certainly options. West settled on 5♦. Neither North nor South had anything further to say about the matter.

East 1♦¹
South 4♠
West 5♦!!!
North All Pass

South leads ♠A
1 = 5+ Card suit

The Play

Partner's long suit is probably ♥s. South knows that West settled on ♦s so West probably cannot stop ♠s (though 4N by West here might have been ace-asking anyway). A trump lead might eliminate ruffs from dummy (the likely short trump hand), but it would also give up tempo in the race to 3 tricks for the defense. A ♦ might also finesse partner out of a rump honor prematurely. A ♣ might work but there's no guarantee. A ♠ lead might catch partner short in ♠s. There is a small inference that partner has 2 or fewer ♠s because he did NOT raise to 5♠ (maybe partner simply has defense against 5♦). South chose to lead the ♠A – ♠J – ♠9 (discouraging) – ♠3. South then continued the ♠Q (suit preference for ♥s) - ♥2-♠4-♠K. Declarer played the ♦4 to the ♦J, partner's ♦Q winning. Partner tables the ♥K. Declarer covered and South ruffed away the ♥A as dummy followed suit. The ♣8 caused declarer to finesse the ♣K by ducking. North wins the ♣K and cashes 2♥ tricks. South pitches the ♣5 on the first and the ♠2 (just in case the message didn't get through the first time) on the 2nd. North now leads a small ♣ for South to ruff. When the smoke cleared the ♠A, ♦Q, ♦9(♥ Ruff), ♣K, ♥Q&♥J, ♦10(♣ Ruff) meant 7 tricks for the defense.

East Deals
Both Vul
MPs

♠		♠
♥ 85	N	♥ 9
♦ 32	W 10 E	♦ A876
♣ 104	S	♣ J

♠ 108765	
♥	
♦ 10	
♣	

After 7 tricks – N to lead

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	7.94		4	1.75		5.69	6.81	1.75	4	0.06
Score	500		-100	-200		200	400	-200	-100	-500

Down 5 was worth +500 and 8 of 8 MPs.

Post Mortem

There are several points worthy of mention. The Short ♣ approach employed by the opponents where opener guarantees 5 or more ♦s for a 1♦ opening might have steered the partnership away from the best course of action. Playing negative doubles works well through 5♦ or so (*See Marty Bergen*). At the 5 level, a penalty doubler will never have a trump stack when opponents are bidding freely. Instead the double should be about finding the best place to play. West had 3 or 4 options at his 1st turn to bid: Pass, Double (Penalty), 5♣ (Forcing free bid), 5♦ (hoping a 5-2 fit is sufficient). The preempt took away so much space responder was left to his own device as to how best to proceed.

We rank East's calls:

Double (Negative) > Pass > Double (Penalty) > 5♣ > 5♦ >>>> 5♥, and NT doesn't make the list....

Why rank the penalty double so high? Where will South's outside tricks come from??

While South's opening lead gave away a ♠ trick, it enabled South to get 2 ruffs. If South instead leads the ♣8 and partner wins, the ♥K will expose the position and declarer will NOT take the ♦ finesse into North. That will exhaust South's trumps before South can get a 2nd ruff. Try it!

Notice the extensive signaling used by NS to communicate opportunity – when deep into a defensive set, suit preference is often the best signal you can employ. Be sure you and partner are on the same page.

EW could take 5-6 tricks against 4♠ by South with a (slightly) inspired ♦K lead by West. South will have no way to get to the ♠ finesse and will likely lose 1 or 2 ♣s (do you hook the ♣10?), 2♦s and a ♦ ruff, & the ♣K.

For more about Weak Jump Overcalls see:

http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/20100127_Making_a_Preemptive_Jump_Overcall.pdf

Learning Points

1. Preempt to the level prescribed by the Rule of 2-3-4-5 if you want partner to know what's going on. Weaker preempts might be fun for the preempter but they leave the partnership in the dark.
2. When responding after a preempt at a very high level. Consider using the double as negative. You can expand this double to show general strength and no clear direction, or cooperative (3 trumps and strength to play at the level of the preempt).
3. Sometimes the best opening lead gives up a trick to get 2 more later. Think: 1) Passive or Active leads, 2) which suit, then 3) which card...
4. Signal, Signal, Signal...and when you have to discard, signal some more!

Keywords: Weak Jump Overcall Rule of 2-3-4-5, Responder's bids under pressure, defensive signals