

Learning Points – Help Partner Find Our Slam I

By Steve Moese. Edited by Mike Purcell

January 4, 2011

Bidding Level: Basic / Intermediate

Tuesday Night Club Game, January 4, 2011 Mrs. Peggy Barrett, Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070. Mike Ma is my partner. We play a 2/1 version of Precision.

South Deals None Vul MPs	♠ K983	Mike												
	♥ A82													
	♦ J													
	♣ 85432													
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>♠</td> <td>N</td> <td>♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥</td> <td>W 11 E</td> <td>♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦</td> <td>S</td> <td>♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣</td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> </tr> </table>			♠	N	♠	♥	W 11 E	♥	♦	S	♦	♣		♣
♠	N	♠												
♥	W 11 E	♥												
♦	S	♦												
♣		♣												
	♠ AQ6	Steve												
	♥ 109													
	♦ A102													
	♣ AKQJ6													

The Bidding

The auction was straightforward. South opened 2N (20-21 HCP Balanced). North pursued a Stayman Auction and South showed no major suit interest. North accepted the 28-29 HCP game.

The Play

Declarer can count 10 winners and 3 losers. If ♠s split 3-3 then 11 tricks will be the norm. Declarer rectified the count by ducking the first trick, East winning the ♥Q. East switched to the ♦6, breaking up any squeeze on West. Declarer won and reeled off the next 10 tricks. Making 5 for +460 was an average minus. If we had bid the slam and took 13 tricks we score 7 MPs. We finished 2nd overall in North South by 3.5 MPs – the difference on this hand!

South	West	North	East
2N	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3N	All Pass
West leads ♥4			

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	3.5	3.5	7.5	3.5		7.5	3.5	0	3.5	3.5
Score	460	460	940	460		940	460	450	460	460

Post Mortem

Two pairs were astute enough to arrive at the ♣ slam. How might we have done the same? There are 2 ways, each depends on the choice of opening bid by South.

South	West	North	East
2N	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♣ ¹	Pass
4♦ ²	Pass	4♥ ²	Pass
4♠ ²	Pass	5♦ ²	Pass
5♠ ²	Pass	6♣	All Pass

1=Natural Forcing (implies 4-card major)

2=Cue bid in support of ♣s.

After a 2N opening bid: North must evaluate the hand as follows. We have 28-29 HCP, therefore 4NT is likely safe. We might have a game or slam in either black suit. The Stayman auction alerts North to the 8+ card ♣ fit guaranteed by South

(No 4-card major means South is 43 / 34 or longer in the minors).

4♣ is a natural try to reach the best strain. The ensuing cue bid auction shows no wasted prime values so the slam is likely. Note North's ♦ cuebid showing 2nd round control (singleton). If North instead cue bids spades here (2nd round control) North denies 2nd round ♦ control. If South bids 4N after 4♣, this should be to play (no suit agreed). North is the Captain here.

After a 1♣ opening Bid (Standard or 2/1 Game Forcing): Many auctions are possible! East might make a weak jump overcall. This helps NS. If West raises ♦s then NS's path to 6♣ is even easier to find! As the cards lie, EW will lose 2♦, 1♥ and 3♠ tricks, so 5♦

North Deals None Vul MPs	♠ K983	North												
	♥ A82													
	♦ J													
	♣ 85432													
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>♠ 1072</td> <td>N</td> <td>♠ J54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ KJ74</td> <td>W 11 E</td> <td>♥ Q653</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q74</td> <td>S</td> <td>♦ K98653</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 1097</td> <td></td> <td>♣</td> </tr> </table>			♠ 1072	N	♠ J54	♥ KJ74	W 11 E	♥ Q653	♦ Q74	S	♦ K98653	♣ 1097		♣
♠ 1072	N	♠ J54												
♥ KJ74	W 11 E	♥ Q653												
♦ Q74	S	♦ K98653												
♣ 1097		♣												
	♠ AQ6	NS: 5♠, 5N, 7♣												
	♥ 109													
	♦ A102													
	♣ AKQJ6													

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	3♦!!
4♣	(4♦)	4♥ ²	Pass
4♠ ²	Pass	5♦ ²	Pass
5♠ ²	Pass	6♣	All Pass

1=Natural Forcing (implies 4-card major)

2=Cue bid in support of ♣s.

Doubled will cost 500 points – more than the nonvulnerable game they can defend, but less costly than any NS slam that makes.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥ ¹	3♦!!
4♣	(4♦)	4♥ ²	Pass
4♠ ²	Pass	5♦ ²	Pass
5♠ ²	Pass	6♣	All Pass

1=Artificial 8-11 HCP Any shape
2=Cue bid in support of ♣s.

The form of Precision Mike and I play might have yielded an auction quite similar to the natural 1♣ auction.

South should realize that a 4.5 loser hand with a very strong single suit might miss a slam if partner has complementary cards. While 2N is appropriate on the surface this opening bid makes it very difficult for responder to value their holding accurately. Besides a typical 2N 20-21 HCP balanced hand has 5 or even 6 losers. (Try it).

If East chooses to remain silent after NS's 1♣ Standard or 2/1 Game Force auction, then South has an interesting rebid opportunity. Now, 3♣ overstates the length of ♣s and understates the strength of

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass!
???			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass!
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦ ¹	Pass
4♥ ¹	Pass	4♠ ¹	Pass
5♦ ¹	Pass	6♣	All Pass

1=Cue bid in support of ♣s.

the hand, 2♠ promises 4 cards and a semi/unbalanced hand, 2N is an underbid by at least 2 HCP, and no ♥ raise seems right. Here an expert reverse into 2♦ works wonders. Right on strength (equal to a jump shift) with little risk partner will insist on ♦s; opener will insist on NT or ♣s if all else fails. Responder will show ♣s cheaply and South can use several paths to approach slam in ♣s.

The key with South's hand is to realize that a 2NT opening bid makes slam exploration difficult, and a 1♣ opening surrenders

nothing of value while creating much needed bidding space.

2♣ (Strong Forcing and Artificial) is right on Quick Tricks, slightly wrong on losers, and wrong on HCP and shape (unless you play Kaplan Sheinwold). Save your breath. You don't gain much bidding space on 2N, and partner might get too aggressive when you eventually bid NT, placing you for 22+ HCP...

Finally, cue bidding that restricts us to 1st round control first is very limiting when we have limited bidding space. Look to learn 1st or 2nd round control approaches and you will find more slams like these.

Learning Points

1. Don't make rote opening bids. Anticipate partner's problems and find the approach that keeps your options open and lets you collaborate to get to the best spot.
2. 2NT opening bids preempt the auction for both sides. Make sure you and partner know what 4 level new suit rebids are by responder after a Stayman or Transfer auction.
3. A good suit and 4.5 losers should point you toward a more aggressive opening bid than 2NT. No, not 2♣ (Strong forcing and artificial) but 1♣ – Partner will strain to keep the auction going. Besides if partner passes, you might just be where you can get your only positive score!
4. Cue bid 1st or 2nd round controls once you have a known trump fit. Use RKC only if counting key cards guarantees you can avoid slams. If you need to know control location, stick with cue bidding.

Keywords: Make Bids That Help Partner, Cue bids 1st and 2nd round controls