

Learning Points – NABC Toronto Push the Opponents Around

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Bidding Level: Intermediate

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|----------|
| ♠ 4 |
| ♥ 86 |
| ♦ Q1082 |
| ♣ QJ8632 |

Toronto NAP. NABC+ Swiss Teams Qualifier. 6th round Mike Ma is my partner. Our team has played well until now. We have 4 wins and 1 loss. 2 more wins put us into the final day of this 4-session National (NABC+) event. Having played 6 hands against a team of 4 World Champions, you pick up this gem. Up till now you sense the match is about even. **← Vulnerability is favorable and you, East, bid 1st. What are you prepared to do?**

Bidding

“Aye, there’s the rub.” You expect your counterpart to preempt. What can you do to gain an advantage? This 6 ½ loser hand suggests opponents have a major suit fit. The choices appear to be Pass, or opening 3♣, 4♣ or 5♣ (6♣s is solely for the inebriated!). What do you believe will happen at the other table? Likely a 3♣ opening bid barring some conventional treatment for this hand. **3♣ is statistically the most favorable of all possible opening bids** - based on score analysis from and analysis of millions of online bridge hands (Larry Cohen). The Rule of 2-3-4 suggests 4½ ♣s. What do you choose to do?

| Your Choice | What Happens | Result |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Pass, 3♣ | They bid and make 3 or 4 ♠ | -140 or -620 <i>The play to make 4 is delicate. Try it!</i> |
| 4♣ | They double and set you 2 tricks | -300 |
| 5♣ | <i>Read on!!!</i> | |

If you chose 5♣, you hope the opponents have an impossible decision. South’s double is Cooperative / Penalty (North has judgment range based on their hand) as opposed to pure penalty. Partner’s redouble is PENALTY – he says we can make 5♣! North now feels the pressure at high altitude. Should North pass, or bid 5♦, 6♦, or 7♦? 7♦ seems risky given the amount of air taken out of the auction by the 5-level preempt.

| East | South | West | North |
|------------------|--------|---------|----------|
| 5♣! | Double | Redbl!! | 6♦ |
| Pass | Pass | Double | All Pass |
| Opening Lead: ♠4 | | | |

The Play

Declarer ducks the opening lead and West continues a ♠ ruffed by East. A ♥ switch allows West to win 2 ♥s and give East a ♥ ruff. Now a ♣ continuation left declarer with only a ruffing entry to hand and a porous suit from which to draw trumps. Leading the ♦K allowed West to win the ♦A and a ♥ return scored the ♦Q. In all the defense collected 7 tricks for +1400. What was a 12 IMP win became a 29 IMP blitz, and we were on the way to playing on Sunday.

| | | | |
|------------|------------|---|----------|
| West Deals | ♠ J2 | | |
| NS Vul | ♥ 1054 | | |
| IMPs | ♦ KJ97543 | | |
| | ♣ 4 | | Steve |
| ♠ KQ3 | | N | ♠ 4 |
| ♥ AQJ97 | | W | ♥ 86 |
| ♦ A6 | | E | ♦ Q1082 |
| ♣ 1075 | | S | ♣ QJ8632 |
| Mike | ♠ A1098765 | | |
| | ♥ K32 | | |
| | ♦ | | |
| | ♣ AK8 | | |

Post Mortem

5♣ was a risky venture worth trying only at favorable vulnerability and only in 1st seat (no one has shared information). At the other table East opened 3N showing a porous 4-level minor preempt and played 4♣ doubled down 2 for +300 our way!

Learning Points

1. At favorable vulnerability bid 3♣ whenever reasonable. Don’t wait for the perfect 7-card preempt.
2. Consider what you might do to shake up the result in your favor. A 3-bid eliminates their 2nd suit, a 4-bid eliminates 4NT as RKB, and a 5 bid creates chaos when hands are unbalanced. It’s ok to shake up the table, just be ready for the bubbles to break...and hope they do in your favor!

Keywords: Preempt, Favorable Vulnerability, 1st seat, 3, 4, and 5 level bids, Rule of 2-3-4.