

Learning Points – Handling a Breakdown in the Bidding

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March 10, 2012

Bidding Level: Intermediate

South Deals All Vul MPs	♠ Q52		
	♥ AK9		
	♦ 3		
	♣ AQ10986		
♠ J	N	♠ K9874	
♥ 1082	W 7 E	♥ QJ654	
♦ AK765	S	♦ 9	
♣ K743		♣ J5	
	♠ A1063		
	♥ 73		
	♦ QJ10842		
	♣ 2		

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♦	2♣	Dbl ¹
2♦ ²	Pass	3♦ ³	Pass

All Pass

1= Negative

2= Q Only Force – GF or LR+ in C♠

3= Western Cue asking NT Stopper

West leads ♠J

dummy. A small ♠ is too risky. Instead play two more rounds of ♥s and ruff the 3rd round low. Now in your hand, play a small ♣ finessing the ♠K (NOT the ♠J). When this holds, play the ♣A, pitching one ♠ and the ♣10 Pitching another ♠. In all you lose 3♦s and 1♣.

Post Mortem – Whether 3N makes or not is less relevant than how North South handle the bidding misunderstanding. 3♦ making 3 was worth 11.5 of 17 MPs (68% board).

For the curious, a ♥ lead against 3N makes play very very tricky. On this bidding, ducking the 1st ♥ then leading the ♠Q from dummy helps. When East covers (best) finessing the ♠K in West establishes 5♣ tricks before the ♥K is knocked out. South comes home with 2♠s, 2♥s, and 5♣s, plus any ♦s West lets us have. Strange the field did not find the play!

Learning Points

1. Keep an even keel and discuss agreements away from the table. Partner doesn't need to bear the burden of your emotions and you don't need the distraction of emoting.
2. Find ways to eliminate known losers. The contract you save might be your own.
3. Remember nothing is ever worse than the score says it is.

A/X Open Pairs, Qualifying, Indianapolis Regional Mike Ma is my partner. We play Precision.

When an accident occurs do you get angry and emote? Or do you empathize with partner and keep your focus? Not wasting your energy or causing partner to waste his/hers can be a big help in long tournaments. Besides, the error might not be what you think.

The Bidding – Modern 2/1 opens 2 ½ Quick Trick hands that are Major suit oriented. This one is a little frisky. With 3316 shape, 2♣ is better than a takeout double. Partner will expect a 4-card Major from a takeout double here. The negative double promised one or both majors. South intended 2♦ as natural. North understood it as Q-Only-Force (either a GF hand in a 4th suit or a limit raise of ♣s). With 15 HCP and extra ♣s in a semi-solid suit, North ventured 3♦, hopefully allowing South to declare, protecting a positional ♦ stopper. The auction ended sooner than North hoped.

The Play – Declarer can count 1♠, 0♥s, 2 or 3♦'s and 1 or 2♣s losers. When the 1st trick carries the top 4♠ cards, a ♦ lead might help remove defensive ruffs. The fall of the ♦9 suggests 3 trump losers. If West has the ♣K, then perhaps both South's low ♠s can go away on ♣s. West continues the ♥2 and South must win in

		NS	EW	NS MPs	EW MPs
3♣	N	110		11.5	5.5
3♦	S		100	6	11
4♣	N		200	3	14
4♥X	E	1100		17	0
3♣	S		100	6	11
3♦	S	110		11.5	5.5
3N	N		400	0.5	16.5
2♦	S		100	6	11
2♥	E	100		9	8
3N	N		300	2	15
3N	N		400	0.5	16.5
3♥	E	200		15	2
3♦	S	110		11.5	5.5
3♠	N		100	6	11
3♦	S	110		11.5	5.5
3♥	E	200		15	2
3N	N		100	6	11
3♥	W	200		15	2

Keywords: Play the contract you're in. Loser on loser. Stay calm. Emoting never helps.