

Learning Points – Would You Believe 3 Diamonds?

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Competitive Bidding Level: Basic / Intermediate

North Deals EW Vul MPs	♠ 102 ♥ K1053 ♦ KQJ973 ♣ Q	
♠ AK65 ♥ 62 ♦ 10654 ♣ 874	N W 25 E S	♠ 98743 ♥ AQJ94 ♦ - ♣ A105
	♠ QJ ♥ 87 ♦ A82 ♣ KJ9632	

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

East leads ♠9

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

Bridge is a bidder's game. Getting into auctions early with discipline can reap benefits in unexpected ways.

The Bidding - Precision allows opening 1♦ on 11-15 HCP and 7 losers. That's why North opened 1♦. East made a Michaels Cue bid for the Majors. South showed values and a willingness to compete by bidding 3♣. West now had to choose whether to bid at the 3-level or not. When West passed, North corrected to 3♦ the final contract.

The Play - North led the ♠9 and EW cashed their two ♠ tricks. West switched to the ♥6 to the ♥10, ♥J and ♥7. East cashed the ♥A and led the ♥4 (suit preference for ♣s). South ruffed with the ♦8 and was over ruffed by West's ♦10. The ♣A completed down 2 for minus 100. This was worth 16 of 17 MPs for North South.

Post Mortem - At unfavorable vulnerability West's pass over 3♣ might seem reasonable. However assuming the Michaels Cuebid is disciplined (55 in the Majors and not more than 7 losers), 3♣ is completely safe. Not only does it get your side to the right strain, it helps guide the defense, were North South to declare.

West has a 9-loesr hand. If East can make a Michaels Cuebid on as little as 8 losers (Kxxxx, xxxxx, xx, x) then West fears being doubled and defeated. Note, South's 3♣ bid is natural and shows constructive-plus values. We play Michaels over Michaels. 2♥ shows an invitational hand or better in North's suit (♦s), and 2♠ would show a game forcing hand in the 4th suit (♣s). Some prefer to play stopper showing Q bids in search of 3NT since the Majos are out of the question. Make sure you and partner discuss your preferences. Partner's ♠QJ doubleton is not worth 3 HCP because opponents own ♠s. Only if North holds ♠Kxx or better would ♠QJ be work 3 HCP. Count that holding as 0 if opponents have a 9-card ♠ fit. Only 4 pairs reached the ♠ game. 6 EW pairs played a ♦ game (3 were doubled). The middle road led to a top score. Notice the top score went to a NS pair who likely opened 2♦ weak – all pass. We don't endorse weak 2 bids with a side major suit, but who can argue with results.

CONT	By	NS	EW	N-S MPs	E-W MPs
5♦	N		200	9.5	7.5
4♠	W		650	4.5	12.5
5♦	N		200	9.5	7.5
3♠	W		200	9.5	7.5
4♦	N		150	14	3
3♥	W		170	13	4
5♦	N		200	9.5	7.5
5♠	W		680	2.5	14.5
2♥	E		140	15	2
3♠	E		200	9.5	7.5
5♠	W		680	2.5	14.5
4♠	E		650	4.5	12.5
2♦	N		50	17	0
5♦X	N		300	6	11
3♦	N		100	16	1
5♦X	N		800	0.5	16.5
3♠	E		200	9.5	7.5
5♦X	N		800	0.5	16.5

Learning Points

1. Light openings work when disciplined. Your system must allow getting out fast if you find no fit.
2. Michaels Cue bid show values and is not empty (8+ HCP in the target suits & 7-losers or fewer).
3. Michaels over Michaels (analogous to Unusual/Unusual) is one way to defend. Using stopper cue bids in the majors is another.

Keywords: Light Opening Bids, Michaels, Michaels over Michaels, What a Michaels bid shows.