



Ask Jerry

Jerry Helms

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Dear Jerry,

In a recent online tournament, partner (in second seat, both vulnerable) opened 1♥ holding:

♠KJ ♥K9876 ♦J107 ♣QJ5.

Right-hand opponent overcalled 2♣. I bid 2♦ holding:

♠A73 ♥A104 ♦AQ954 ♣98,

which ended the auction! I know I could have cuebid 3♣ showing heart support, but I thought 2♦ was forcing. My partner says no, since there was interference. Please clarify. In addition, what do you think of the opening bid?

Mrs. X, M.D.

Dear Dr. X,

Let's take your questions in reverse order. Although styles may be different ... what opening bid? A balanced hand with 11 high-card points and one quick trick is a normal, shaded third-seat opening, but it's not even close in first or second seat.

Lacking a specific, non-standard agreement, a new suit by an unpassed responder, in or out of competition, is unlimited in values, therefore 100% forcing! My best guess is that your partner, having opened such a dog, may have reconsidered his decision, panicked and tried to make amends by passing 2♦. This compounded the first mistake, since it's more wrong to take two different positions on the same hand. If your partner felt he should open, he was obliged to continue bidding until pass was a le-

gitimate option. Otherwise, he should have passed originally.

Regarding your options, I believe in making bids that most resemble the cards you hold. From your perspective, game values were certain, with slam not out of the question. It seems clear to first introduce such a good diamond suit with plans to follow by showing heart support.

Take two aspirin and call me in the morning.

Dear Jerry,

The other day we had the following auction:

Partner	North	Me	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	All Pass		

Partner was livid that I had passed a "forcing" bid, and was only slightly mollified by the fact that she made only three. Did I do something wrong?

Sylvia

Dear Sylvia,

Hmm ... by passing, you went plus 140, and by bidding, you were apparently going minus. Let me think ... plus score ... minus score. I vote for you, both because of the result and because your partner's bid was non-forcing.

Some clever bridge theorist once described your partner's action as a third-seat rebid because three suits have been rapidly introduced. A third-suit rebid is the most wide ranging action available to opener in that it limits his values to less than game-forcing strength, *i.e.*, 12 to a bad 18 HCP. On the auction you described, your partner's hand could have been as bad as this:

♠KJ86 ♥92 ♦Q74 ♣AQ73,

or as good as:

♠AK75 ♥Q92 ♦J ♣AK843.

Holding more than this, opener must jump shift, which is not only forcing, but forcing to game.

So when your partner introduces a non-reverse third suit, although you are not required to bid, you should strain to do so when holding 8 or more points, just in case she has a hand in the 17 to 18 range. For instance, if you held the following hand:

♠Q86 ♥Q9643 ♦Q74 ♣75

and the auction went as above, I would pass 1♠ in a flash.

Holding:

♠Q86 ♥KJ643 ♦Q1052 ♣7,

I would rebid 1NT because pass is just too deep a position when partner could have 17 or 18 points.

A Jerry-ism to share with your partner:

**It's okay to be wrong,
but not okay to be
wrong loudly!**