

Ask Jerry

BY JERRY HELMS ... www.jerryhelms.com

Dear Jerry,

My regular partner and I had a disagreement about the following auction:

West	Partner	East	Me
1 💙	1	1NT	2 💙
Dbl	24	Pass	4 🖍
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

Down two. After I showed support with my cuebid, I thought partner was showing extra values by bidding 2♠, so with my 11 support points, I raised to game. Not a success. Which one of us bid too much?

Elliot

Hi, Elliot,

If you don't have agreements, bad results can happen. Without knowing either hand, it's difficult to be sure, but it appears someone certainly bid too much.

I assume that your 2 V cuebid showed trump support with at least limit-raise values. Clearly your cuebid requires your partnership to reach at least 2 . In the methods I prefer, your partner's non-forced 2 h rebid should be the weakest possible action. This bears some relationship to a bidding principle called "fast arrival," i.e., the faster you reach the minimum level required, the less interest you show in going higher.

I play that any new suit by the overcaller (your partner in this case) would be a help-suit game try. Pass should be a neutral, but forward-going

action, allowing advancer (you in this example, the partner of the overcaller) to either bid game directly opposite known less-than-minimum values or to make a help-suit try of his own. With this agreement, you would be the guilty party, because you had already expressed your values and partner had expressed his.

A comparable auction:

West	Partner	East	Me
1.	1	1 🖍	24
3♣	?		

The 2 \(\infty \) cuebid forces us to at least 3♥, therefore the same principle applies. 3♥ would be the weakest possible action, while passing shows interest in game if the cuebidder is on the top end of his limit raise.

Although you didn't ask, in this auction there is another partnership agreement that I think has a great deal of merit. With both 2 & and 2 A available as cuebids, we play 2 - as a limit raise with exactly three trumps, and 2 as a limit raise with four or more trumps. Basically, with two cuebids to choose from, the cuebid which potentially keeps us the lowest shows three trumps, while a cuebid which forces the higher level guarantees four or more trumps.

> Send your questions to askjerry@jerryhelms.com