



## Ask Jerry

BY JERRY HELMS  [jerryhelms.com](http://jerryhelms.com)

Dear Jerry,

A friend recently attended one of your seminars and purchased an extra booklet for me. There was a lot of good information. In particular, I was interested in two of the hands involving aggressive third-seat actions. Because I was not there to hear your explanations, would it be possible for you to review these for me? Each auction started with two passes:

1. ♠96 ♥975 ♦74 ♣KQ9852  
2. ♠A85 ♥KQ108 ♦J95 ♣643

You opened both of these hands. Why?

Confused Gal

### ► Play and Learn *continued*

- a) Your plan is to respond 1♥, searching for the all-important major-suit fit. If partner can't support hearts, you can rebid 2NT to invite game.
- b) You have enough points but not enough hearts to bid 2♥ after RHO's 1♠ overcall. At least you have a spade stopper and can bid 2NT (invitational in competition). If you wish you could show your hearts, you're not alone. Next time, we'll see how using negative doubles lets you do that. ■

Hi Gal,

I strongly believe in this mantra:

**Look for reasons to bid rather than excuses to pass.**

Here's another Jerry-ism that's applicable:

**Integrate what you can see with what the auction tells you.**

On the first hand, your partner, as dealer, passed, suggesting she holds at most 10–11 points. You hold exactly 5 points, leaving the opponents with 25 or more high-card points. I cannot fathom allowing them a free ride to begin the exchange of information if any option is available to impede them.

I see two options:

1. Pass, saying, "There is nothing I can bid that would help define my values or shape."
2. 3♣, saying, "I hold a reasonably good club suit with less than the strength required to open 1♣."

Clearly the second option more closely describes your hand. Following this logic, a 3♣ opening stands out to me. By removing 11 steps of bidding (everything from 1♣ through 3♣), you often create problems for your LHO. If your partner ends up on opening lead, she'll appreciate your suggestion of a club lead.

Vulnerability is relevant, and obviously you can afford to be more frisky

at favorable vulnerability – that's when they are vulnerable and you aren't. Is it possible you'll occasionally get in trouble with actions like this? Absolutely! Then again, I have gone for 800 after making a perfectly normal opening bid. The game, however, rewards bidders more than it does passers.

I want to be in the auction on the second hand, too. Even Charles Goren advocated opening in third seat a queen light. One of his conditions for light openings was tolerance for any suit that responder might choose, so that opener can pass and land in a playable spot.

I tend to agree, but with stipulations. In the seminar you mentioned, one participant opened this hand 1♣. I would pass before I would do that ... but I wouldn't pass.

With only 10 HCP, the opponents rate to have at least as many total points as you and your partner. If they win the declaration and your partner is on lead, it's a great idea to give partner a little guidance.

I would open 1♥ with this hand in third seat at any vulnerability and at any form of scoring. I do play five-card majors, but more importantly, I play bridge.

As you build your convention vocabulary, you'll discover a tool called Drury that's especially made for light third-seat action.

Next time, come to my seminar. If you think this was wordy, you should listen to me in person! ■