



Ask Jerry

BY JERRY HELMS ✉ askjerry@jerryhelms.com 🌐 jerryhelms.com

Hello, Jerry,

For some reason, I agreed to play with an experienced player who is known to be rude ... my mistake. As dealer he held:

♠AK7 ♥K1094 ♦J107 ♣AQJ

West	Partner	East	Me
	1♦	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

My hand:

♠Q964 ♥Q875 ♦65 ♣963

I feel, first of all, he should have opened 1♣ and then bid 1NT instead of sitting for the double. He said that my passing the takeout double indicated support for his diamonds. I think he's wrong. After the session, he informed me that if I ever wished to play again, I would need to pay for his entry because he didn't want to waste his money. What do you think?

JB

► Play and Learn *continued*

the Rule of 22 is not needed. Use it only when deciding whether or not to open with fewer than 13 points. Once you apply the Rule of 22 to open, gauge your future bids on the actual strength of your hand along with judgment based on what you learn as the auction progresses. But don't chicken out mid-auction and pass partner's forcing bid. Opening the bidding obligates you to see that the bidding remains open after partner makes a forcing bid. ■

Hi, JB,

Wow! This so-called experienced player was wrong on so many counts that it is staggering. I'll start with his initial mistake and work my way down.

1. Why would anyone ever open 1♦ on J-10-x instead of 1♣ on A-Q-J? A 1♦ opening shows four or more diamonds 97.2% of the time; the only time we open 1♦ with a three-card suit is when specifically holding 4=4=3=2 distribution. In addition to distorting his shape, he was apparently choosing a "lead deflector" just in case he ended up playing the hand.
2. How could your pass of a takeout double possibly show diamond support? His contention casts serious doubts on his expertise. From your perspective, the opponents may well have been preparing to play in one of your four-card majors. Any bid by you over the takeout double would be natural and forcing, showing more than the 4 high-card points you actually hold. Your pass is the only action that is conceivable.
3. Although you did not specify the decibel level of his unwarranted criticism, I suspect he was guilty of violating one of my more important Jerry-isms:

It's OK to be wrong, but it is **NOT OK** to be wrong loudly and rudely!

My general feeling is that if the opponents think they can beat you in a one-level contract, they usually can. For this reason, I would seize any reasonable option to escape 1♦ doubled. Before your partner passed, he had one last chance to do something right on this deal. He should have made an SOS redouble. This redouble announces to responder that there might be a better place to play and to please pick his longest suit.

On this deal, you would have an easy 1♥ bid. 1♥, if left there, is a clearly superior contract to 1♦ doubled. If opener thinks the opponents have erred and he can make his contract, he should simply smile inwardly and pass.

You're right that a 1NT rebid would be correct with your partner's hand had his left-hand opponents made an overcall in a suit. But when 1♦ doubled comes back around to him, redouble is the better call.

This interpretation of the redouble in this type of auction has become standard to experienced duplicate players. Perhaps he felt you would not understand it. From my point of view, this is just one more undeserved insult hurled in your direction.

Pay his entry fee? Surely he jests! ■