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Ask Jerry

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Dear Jerry,
My LHO opened 1♦, partner doubled, and holding:

♠K 6 4 3 ♥A 10 8 4 ♦6 3 2 ♣J 5,

I followed the rule by responding "up the line," bidding 1♥. When my LHO rebid 2♦, and partner passed, I was reluctant to bid again. We had a 4-4 spade fit, and could easily make 2♠ even though partner held minimum values for his double. Where did we go wrong?

Confused

Hi Confused,
Let's start with some terminology. You are "responder" to a partner's opening bid. When partner overcalls, or makes a takeout double, you become the "advancer." You are correct to respond "up the line" to an opening bid, but obligations as advancer are different!

What follow are a few Jerry-isms which apply to this situation.

- *"Integrate what you see with what you've heard."*

You can see 8 HCP in your hand. Partner's takeout double has suggested values at least equal to an opening bid. Simple math indicates your side holds roughly 50% or more of the values on this deal. In addition, the double suggests support or at least tolerance for all unbid suits. In a way, the takeout double was like partner bidding, "one club/heart/spade."

- *"The one who knows, goes!"*

Contrary to a misconception held by some, a takeout double of one of a minor does not guarantee four-card support for both majors. Since you are the only one who knows "we" hold the values to compete, and at least a

reasonable place to compete, it's up to you.

- *"Always plan a second bid before you choose a first."*

The auction I suggest:

1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♠
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♥

I feel quite certain your partner held exactly four spades and three hearts for his double. With your hand worthy of taking two bids, you should start with an advance of 1♠, preparing yourself for the possibility of later bidding hearts in a competitive auction like the one above. Your non-jump initial advance bracketed your values somewhere between 0 and 9 points. By bidding a second time, you acknowledge enough values to still be involved. Your partner, remembering your initial nonjump response should not overestimate your total values. If your partner held three spades and four hearts, he would pass. If he held four spades and three hearts, he would take you back to spades.

If your partner held an acceptable takeout double with 3=3=2-5 shape, ask him to try to hold at least four cards in one of the majors in the future!

A lot of bridge is not about rules, but thinking ahead. Side note: I wrote a similar column 10 years ago. It was interesting the responses I received from a large number of readers who had never really thought this through. Nice to know I'm useful sometimes! ☺