

WHEN GOOD HANDS GO BAD

HAND BY PHILIP ALDER
COMMENTARY BY BARBARA

S KQJ10
H KQJ10
D 1098
C 65

S 5
H 5
D KQJ7654
C KQ43

S 9876
H 9876
D -----
C J10987

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	4C*	Pass	4D
Pass	7D**		

S A432
H A432
D A32
C A2

**North does not have the HCP needed to go looking for slam but he has magnificent shape. This is a hand that is great for Gerber (the ace-asking convention when partner has opened 1NT or 2NT). If south shows a goodly number of aces, slam is there for sure.*

*** 4D (in response to 4C) shows 0 or all 4 Aces. North knows it has to be all 4 or South could not have had 15-17 HCP to open 1NT without holding any aces.*

THE PLAY: We are taught to count losers in declarer's hand but that is because most of the time declarer's is the hand that has the most trump. When dummy has more trump than declarer, you should think upside down and pretend that you are declarer sitting in the north hand.

Thus, when you count, you find that N has 0 Spade losers, 0 Hearts losers, 0 Diamond losers and ONE Club loser.

If you now proceed to draw trump, you will find that you end with a club loser that you cannot dispose of.

West leads the Spade King. You win it and play Ace Clubs and then Club 2 to the Club King. Now ruff a club with the Diamond ACE...never send a boy to do a man's job. NOW draw trump and say..."the rest are mine!"

S AJ432
H A5432
D 2
C K2

S K1098
H KQJ
D 765
C 765

S 5
H 9876
D AQ43
C AJ43

West	North	East	South
1S	Pass	2C	Pass
2H	Pass	3H	Pass
4H	Pass	Pass	Pass

S Q76
H 10
D KJ1098
C Q1098

North leads the Heart King. When you are strong in declarer's first bid suit that does NOT become trump, lead a trump.

(Continued on next page)

West figures that she has 4 Spade losers and 2 Heart losers. Since she is only allowed to lose THREE tricks, there is work to be done.

West wins the Heart Ace and plays Ace Spades and ruffs a Spade in dummy. Club from dummy to her King in her hand and ruffs another Spade. Now she cashes her Ace Diamonds and ruffs a Diamond in her hand (just to get back to her hand). She ruffs a third Spade. Trump a Diamond and lead your last Spade which is now good. North will score two Heart tricks and you have made an overtrick. All because you did NOT draw trump.

Moral: When you have a singleton or a void in the dummy and losers in your hand in that suit, it is usually right to not pull trump. Ruff those losers with dummy's trump. You always gain tricks this way.

Note that ruffing losers from dummy with declarer's trumps very seldom gains you tricks. You do this only to get back to your hand or to develop a long suit in dummy.

INSUFFICIENT BID...NOW WHAT??

1 H (opening bid)



1D (response to opening bid)

The director must be called to the table. The next player (Above it is West, whose turn it now is to bid) is given two choices. He may accept the insufficient bid or reject the insufficient bid. IF he rejects the insufficient bid, the offender (who bid 1D in the above scenario) is now permitted to make the bid sufficient (in this case by bidding 2D) without any further penalty. If she should choose to bid anything other than 2D, then her partner will be barred (forced to pass) for the rest of the auction. The offender may substitute any legal call, including pass, but partner will be barred if it is not 2D. She may NOT substitute the word "Double" as one of her options.

(It is important to note that West may not tell South to please make the bid sufficient! That was not one of West's choices...he can accept or reject only.)

It is always met with scepticism and a complete lack of understanding that you might actually consider accepting an insufficient bid.

Supposing the non-offender: (West in the above situation) now held the following:

K32
xx
xxxx
xxxx

He could now have chosen to accept the insufficient bid and now raise spades cheaply by bidding 1S. It is sufficient as his right hand opponent (RHO) last bid 1D.

Let's look at another example:

N	E	S	W
1H	1S	2H	P
2NT	3S	3H*	??

You are West. South has made an insufficient bid of 3H*. If you reject this bid, then South may now choose to pass instead of making this bid sufficient. Now East will be stuck in 3S. This is your hand, WEST:

X Q109x Jxxx xxxx

In this case, you should accept this bid of 3H and pray that partner (East) doesn't bid any more Spades.

It is however never right to accept an insufficient bid just to be nice. If you have no interest in the hand and you and partner are not bidding, it is probably not right to accept an insufficient bid.

If the insufficient bid was made because of a mechanical error (pulled wrong card by mistake) then it may be corrected without penalty. Director must still be called to assess this.

OPENING LIGHT IN THIRD OR FOURTH SEAT & THE DRURY CONVENTION

You will open light in third seat if you have a good suit. You need 11 or more points (including distribution). Do not open light in third or fourth seat with Qxxx KJx Axx Jxx. Your objective in opening light in third seat is to make it tough for the person in fourth seat to get into the act or to get partner to lead that suit. So make it a good suit. P – P and you have xx AQxxx Axx xxx, by all means open 1H.

If it goes P – P – and you have AKJx Kxxx xxxx xx Open 1S. Yes, partner will expect you to have 5 cards in that suit but that's okay. Your 1S opener has made it tough for opponents now to bid and if opponents buy the contract and partner gets on lead, she will lead a S. Mission accomplished. This is an effective tactic.

OPENING LIGHT IN FOURTH SEAT

Opener will not open bad hands in fourth seat. When you open in fourth seat, you should expect a plus score. It's also good to hold the spade suit to reduce the chances of being outbid. You do NOT open with a weak 2 or 3 or 4 in the Pass out seat.

There is something called CANSINO COUNT (Also known as Pearson Points). It dictates that in 4th seat, if you DO NOT HAVE a full opening bid, then you add up the number of HCP in your hand and also add to that the NUMBER OF CARDS YOU OWN in the spade suit. If that number comes to 15, you may open the bidding. There is a natural advantage to the side that has spades as it is the boss suit. If you open in 4th seat light with let's say 1H and you only own 2 little spades, then the guy on your left may now have spades. He can now enter the auction with 1S. You have now allowed the opponents into the act when you could simply passed out the hand and not opened at all.

You should evaluate your opponents also when deciding to open light in 4th seat. Any time it is close, see who you are playing against. If you are playing against the best pair at the club, and it goes P – P – P to you, say Pass! You will do better than having to struggle and fight against perfect defense or competitive bidding. BUT if you find yourself playing against a gentle pair, go for it and open. They will have trouble defending or bidding against you and you will buy the contract. You will usually get a plus this way. Don't let on later why you opened light in 4th seat though!

NOTE: In the pass out seat, if you bid 2H, you are not promising a weak hand. You never preempt in the pass out seat. Preempts are made to steal bidding space and make it tough for your opponents to enter the auction. You can pass after P – P – P to you and you get no points on your side of the score sheet but they get none on THEIR side also. IF you bid 2H with a weak hand in pass out seat, they (opponents) may now bid 2S and make it, scoring a positive score for their side.

So what does 2H in pass out seat mean? It must mean something. You must not have a bid lying around in your toolbox that is never used.

P-P-P to you and you have

x
AKJxxx
Axx
xxx

You might think of bidding 1H but bid 2H in pass out seat. This promises 13-15 points and a good quality 6 card suit. It is simply more descriptive. Partner has a clearer vision of what is in your hand now.

P-P-P to you and you have

AQJxxxx
xx
xx
KQx

Bid 3S. This will show 13-15 points and a 7 card suit in this seat. Ditto with 4S which will show 13-15 points and an eight card suit of quality.

THE DRURY CONVENTION

Drury is a most useful convention. It was devised by Douglas Drury, a Canadian, who used to play with a well-known lawyer from Toronto, Eric Murray. Eric used to open very light in third seat and Doug always wanted to know if his partner had opened light or if he had a full opening bid,

If partner opened 1S in third seat and you had

S Q753 H KQ2 D K765 C 97

or

S K75 H Q632 D AJ76 C75

If you bid 3 S and partner has opened light, the problem is that you may well be too high and she will go down one.

So, instead, would you choose to bid 2S? NO! If opener had 15 points and you have these lovely limit raise hands, you would miss game if you bid only 2S.

ENTER THE DRURY CONVENTION!

NOTE: *The original convention was called Drury and had different treatments which are no longer popular. The most commonly used version is called Reverse Drury.*

Drury is used **only when partner has opened one of a major in either third or fourth chair.**

REQUIREMENTS:

3 or more of partner's major suit trumps
10 or more points, including distribution

How does it work?

Note that if opponents enter the auction bidding a suit or NT, then the opportunity to use Drury is gone. i.e. There is NO Drury in competition. You can however agree to still play Drury if opponents make a takeout double.

Here is how Reverse Drury works. After partner opens 1S or 1H in 3rd or 4th seat, a 2C bid by you is artificial (fake) and shows 10 or more points (Including distribution) and 3 or more trumps. If opener has opened a sub minimum hand, he will rebid two of his suit, and you will pass. This way, you avoid the three level which may well be too high.

Please understand that some people play this convention differently.

Many players believe that the opener will describe his hand as follows (after partner bids 2C):

2 of his major shows a SUB minimum (he opened light in 3rd or 4th seat.

2D shows a full opening bid or better.

If S's is the agreed on trump suit, 2H as rebid by opener shows a full opening bid and says that opener also has at least four cards in H suit. This would be useful in case responder also has four H. The 4-4 fit is best of all, even when you have a 5-3 fit in the other major as it allows you to make discards on the side 5 card suit.

GETTING FANCY:

But if you want to go a little bit further, you can play that a bid by responder of 2C shows only three trumps and 2D guarantees 4 or more trumps...still a limit raise but the joy of having four trumps in dummy cannot be underestimated. This helps opener a lot in evaluating his hand if his trump holding is weak. Opener's rebids have the same meaning as after a 2C bid.

(Continued on next page)

Barbara's recommendation: If you are playing Drury for the very first time, keep it simple.

If partner has opened in 3rd. seat or 4th seat (i.e. it has gone Pass-Pass to her or Pass-Pass-Pass) then you can bid 2C to show 10 or more points (including distribution) and 3 or more of her major. *[DO try to remember that your 2C bid says nothing about C's. (If you have a long C suit and 10-12 points, you will have to respond 3C to partner's opening bid of 1 of a major.)]*

OPENER: Nice and simple: Here is what I suggest: Evaluate (and re-evaluate) your hand... after partner has raised you by bidding 2C. If you now have:

16 points, now bid 4 of your major.

15 points, now bid 3 of your major, asking partner if she has 10? 11? 12? If 11 or 12, then she can now bid 4 of the major.

13 or 14 revalued points OR LESS: Bid 2 of your major which indicates a lack of interest in going to game.

What would you do if you opened (first chair) and held:

AQxxx

Ax

Qxx

Xxx

You open 1S and partner bids 3S, what will you bid now?

ANSWER: You should Pass. You have a dead minimum.

So you see, it is the same thing, when partner bids 2C after your 3rd seat opening bid, if you have a minimum hand such as this, you will bid 2S in your rebid after partner's 2C Drury. This shows a lack of interest in game, since responder passed to start with. The auction does not get too high, thanks to Drury.

References: Larry Matheny & Larry Cohen

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