

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP # 1

When your opponent has opened with one of a major, LHO bids a suit and then opener bids another suit, you can safely assume that opener has at least nine cards in both of these suits and it could be more. When opener (RHO) becomes declarer and now leads a Jack in an unbid suit, if dummy (on your left) has Kxxx in that suit and you have Axxx in that suit ...Well, normally it is right to play second hand low, but not this time because it is most likely that this J is a singleton. Hop up with your Ace and this time ignore that adage: "Second Hand Low." Normally, you would play small, without all that information from the bidding, in hopes that [partner can win the Queen, garnering your side two tricks in that suit.

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP # 2

Your RHO bids 1H and you have

S KJ109

H 6543

D AQ3

C 65

Your LHO bids 2H and now it goes Pass-Pass back to you. You should not Pass now, allowing them to play in such a low-level contract. Your opponents have somewhere around 20 points (or would have bid on) and so, allowing for the fact that there are 40 HCP in the deck, your partner is marked with around 10 HCP. Note that she is short in Hearts and has at most one heart. That means she has 12 cards remaining in other suits. Bid 2S (yes, in Balancing seat, you can do this). You may buy the contract or push them to 3H which perhaps they won't make. No guts, no glory. Just do it!

OPENING LIGHT IN THIRD & FOURTH SEAT

THIRD SEAT: It is acceptable to open a bit light in third seat. Let's say 11 points including distribution and best of all a 5 card suit. For that matter, if you have

S AKJ9

H 76

D Q876

C 987

Pass-Pass to you, bid 1S, in spite of the fact that you have only 4 of them. In third seat, you can take liberties, especially not vulnerable versus vulnerable and with a good suit. It causes great grief to your LHO who now must enter the bidding at the 2 level, if he dares. ANMD you tell partner what to lead if your side is defending.

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.

There is something called CASINO 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 have 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, (After Pass-Pass-Pass to you) 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 either. 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. Or you may end up with your own minus, going down.

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 the 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 JUMP SHIFT RESPONSE TO THIRD OR FOURTH SEAT OPENER

The jump shift in response to a third or fourth seat opener may be used in several ways. We suggest that it shows a maximum for a passed hand (11-12) and a 5 card or longer suit.