



COMPETITIVE AUCTIONS

Avoiding potential competition

Keeping your opponents out of the auction is critical to winning.

Sometimes raises can act like a mild preempt.

- You and your partner arrive in 2♠ without adverse bidding and take 9 tricks for a +140
- Your partners competed to 3♥ and they were also +140
- Your team gained 280 (7 IMPs) because of a part score swing.

Blocking or Bar bid

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
2♠	P	?	

Bid 3♠

♠ KQTxxx

♥ Qx

♦ KQx

♣ Jx

North

Bidding to 3♠ will likely keep the opponents out of the auction.

This should be done with a hand that has poor defensive possibilities and good offensive trick-taking potential.

The bid of 3♠ is mildly preemptive and will keep opponents from competing.

This treatment is sometimes called 1-2-3 stop or I call it 1-2-3 down 1.

Blocking or Bar bid

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
2♠	P	?	

Pass

♠ J98xxx

♥ AKx

♦ Qx

♣ Kx

North

With this hand you have defensive values outside the spade suit so do not bid 3♠

If opponents enter the auction, and partner does not compete, you should compete to 3♠.

Blocking or Bar bid

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	?	

Bid 3♥

♠ xx
♥ AKQxxx
♦ Kxx
♣ Qx

North

If you pass 2♥, this invites opponents to compete.

With high cards concentrated in the trump suit, after a raise by your partner, bid 3♥.

The opponents may enter the auction at the 3 level, but it will be with a risk.

Blocking or Bar bid

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	?	

PASS

♠ AT9x
♥ KJxxx
♦ Ax
♣ Qx

North

You have an excellent defensive hand, and you would be taking an unnecessary risk to bid 3♥.

The opponents probably have the minors, and if they compete they will come in at the 3 level.

If the opponents do compete, you should allow partner decide to pass, go to 3♥ or double.

Support quickly

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
?			

Bid 2♥

♠ QT9x
♥ JT9
♦ Kxxx
♣ xx

South

Responding 1♠ will allow you to get to the optimum contract if partner has 4♠.

The potential advantage is outweighed by the mild preemptive value of an immediate raise in ♥.

Your LHO may be willing to come in with 2 of a minor, but might have 2nd thoughts to bid 3 of a minor.

Support quickly

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
?			

Bid 1♠

♠ KTx

♥ KT9

♦ Kxx

♣ xx

South

On the previous hand you would reject a game try, but with this you would accept.

With 9 HCP and a ♣ doubleton, your hand is worth 2 bids.

Bid 1♠, if partner raises ♠, make a game try.

If partner rebids ♥, raise.

Law of total tricks

W	N	E	S
			P
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥	2 ♠

South plays in 3♥ -100, while E/W would score 110 in 2♠. Good in pairs -- no difference in teams.

N/S buys hand for 3♥ and E/W plays 3♠. Both go +140 = 7 IMPs.

If you allow E/W to make 2♠ and your opponents at the other table bid 3♥ you will have a loss of 250 = 6.

If E/W pushes on to 3♠ they will make 140, if they allow you to play 3♥ they will gain 100.

- The IMP table should be considered. Let's look at some possibilities.
 - N/S can take 8 tricks in ♥ and E/W can take 8 tricks in ♠.
 - Each side could take 9 tricks.
 - N/S can take 9 tricks in ♥ and E/W can take 8 in ♠.
 - N/S can take 8 tricks in ♥ and E/W can take 9 tricks in ♠.

Dealer - North

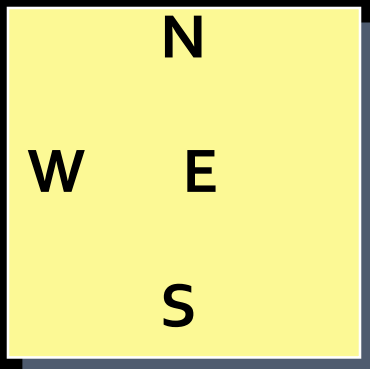
Contract 3 Spades

Lead ♦A

♠ K643
♥ QT92
♦ 863
♣ KT3

W	N	E	S
			1♦
Dbf	P	1♠	2♦
	P	P	2♥
	p	2♠	3♦
	P	P	3♠
	AP		

♠ QJT2
♥ 86
♦ 9542
♣ J95



♠ -
♥ KJ73
♦ AKQJ2
♣ Q874

Commentary:
East cashed 2♦ winners and shifted to a small ♣. North won and led the ♥Q winning the K with the ♥A. South led a ♠A and got the bad news, and switched to a ♥. East won and returned a ♥.

♠ A9875
♥ A54
♦ T7
♣ A62

West ruffed the low ♥ and South was able to escape for -100.

Dealer - North

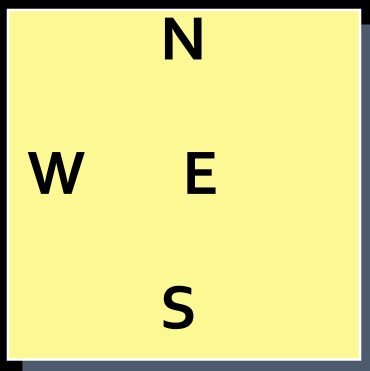
Contract 3♠

Lead ♦A

Vul + All

♠ K643
♥ QT92
♦ 863
♣ KT3

♠ QJT2
♥ 86
♦ 9542
♣ J95



W	N	E	S
			1♦
1♠	P	2♠	3♠
	4♦	3♦	AP

♠ -
♥ KJ73
♦ AKQJ2
♣ Q874

Commentary:

At the other table against 4♦, passive defense was best.

Despite a correct guess in ♥, he had to break the ♣ suit himself and went -100.

♠ A9875
♥ A54
♦ T7
♣ A62

With 18 trumps in the combined hands (9 spades and 9 diamonds) neither side can score more than 9 tricks. Should either side double? In matchpoints YES.

At IMPs, the quantitative nature of scoring says NO!

Bergen is useful

- Bergen is based on the law of total tricks.
 - Bidding a 9 card fit at the 3 level and a 10 card fit at the 4 level places maximum pressure on the opponents.
 - Playing Bergen the way it was first written, reverse Bergen, or combined Bergen are very effective at both IMPs and matchpoints.
 - Using Bergen makes it very difficult for opponents to enter the bidding.

Partscore penalty double

- Doubling partscores above 2♦ can be extremely expensive and/or rewarding.
- Below you will see some examples of doubled partscores.
- Notice the result of doubling below 2♦ and game contracts are not as expensive.

Contract	Doubled	Undoubled	Points Lost	IMPs Lost
2♦	-180	90	90	3
3♦ Vul	670	-110	560	11
3♦ Not Vul	470	-110	360	8
4♥ Vul	790	620	170	5
4♥ Not Vul	590	420	170	5

Partscore penalty double

W	N	E	S
	P	P	1 ♠
P	1NT	P	P
	2 ♣	?	
	DBL		

♠ Qx

♥ QTx

♦ KTxx

♣ QTxx

South

- If partner has the right hand you may collect 500.
- If they make it, it is not a disaster.
- The potential gain is worth the risk.
- If East balanced with 2♥, the correct bid is to pass. The risk is not worth the potential gain.

Partscore penalty double

W	N	E	S
	1♥	P	2♥
	2♠	3♥	3♠
	P	P	?

♠ AKx
♥ KQTxx
♦ QJx
♣ xx

South

- An excellent matchpoint player playing IMPs for the first time had played the 3 boards well and on each board he gained 1 IMP.
- The following hand appeared.
- At match points the dbl is reasonable but at IMPs – very dangerous.
 - Matchpoints either a top or bottom
 - At IMPs if they make it you lose -730 and you lose the Swiss match or you are well behind in a KO.



Redouble

- Generally, it is good to play systems on after a double.
- Use Bergen, Jacoby 2NT and other fit showing bids before the opponents get a chance to preempt several levels.
- The redouble should be used when you have 10 or more points and not a fit.
- With your own suit or two suits, bid naturally.

Overcall

- Skillful matchpoint players gain an advantage with overcalls, even with 4 card suits.
- In matchpoints, you will win much of the time interfering with opponents and gaining undertricks from the opponents.
- At IMPs it is disastrous. The gain of over/undertricks is not worth a -500 or -800 that occurs.

Overcalls

♠ Qxx
♥ AJ9xx
♦ KTx
♣ Jx

Hand 1

♠ Qxx
♥ AKJ98
♦ xx
♣ AQT

Hand 2

- Safety at IMPs is paramount.
- The texture of your suit should be such that a penalty double is unlikely.
- Stay out of auctions where the opponents have more strength, unless you want the suit led or you intend to sacrifice.
- When opponents open 1 ♠
 - Hand 1 - it is best to pass- your suit is not strong enough.
 - With hand 2 you can bid 2♥. It is unlikely you will be doubled.

Overcalls

W N E S

			1♥
♠	A ² KJxx		
♥	xx		
♦	xxxx		
♣	xx		

South Hand 3

W N E S

			1♠
♠	?		
♥	Qxx		
♦	KJxxxxx		
♣	Ax		

Hand 4

- With hand 3 you only have 8 points, but your suit is good and you are at the 1 level.
- With hand 4 despite your 11 HCP and your 6 card suit, you should pass.
 - 2♦ is too dangerous.
 - Your honors are scattered and you could go down -800 or -1100.
 - At matchpoints 2♦ is perfectly acceptable.

Overcalls

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♦
	?		

♠ QJT98x

♥ Ax

♦ Axxx

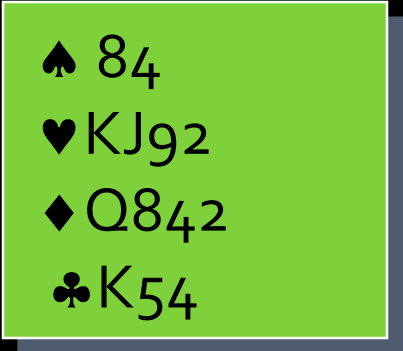
♣ x

South Hand 5

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	2♣	?

- With hand 5 your values are concentrated, your suit is excellent and you're at the 1 level.
- If the bidding had been changed you can still bid 2 ♠.
 - Your suit good.
 - Your honors are not scattered.

Negative Doubles

W	N	E	S
		1♣	♠
	x		
 <p>♠ 84 ♥ KJ92 ♦ Q842 ♣ K54</p>			
South			

- Sometimes an overcall of an opening bid will place the next hand in an awkward position.
- A simple and useful bid is available.

The negative double is basically a takeout double. You should have 4 card support the the other suits.

Negative Doubles

W N E S
 1♠ 2♣

?
♠ K4
♥ AQT72
♦ QT98
♣ 54

South a

♠ K4
♥ AQT7
♦ QT98
♣ Q54

South b

- The negative double is a convenience not a requirement
- Bid 2♥ The negative double is used only when other bids are not convenient.
- On the South b hand you should make a negative double

Negative Doubles

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♠
	?		

♠32
♥Q9532
♦Q632
♣J3

South c

♠Q
♥J972
♦Q962
♣J8

South d

- On hand South c the lower limit for a negative double is a function of the scoring.
- Pass
- On hand d, the aggressive matchpoint player might make a negative double but not at IMPs.
- Pass

Negative Doubles

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♠
	?		

♠ J4
♥ AT93
♦ 632
♣ QT76

South c

♠ 75
♥ QJ9872
♦ K32
♣ 82

South d

- As a general rule, 6-7 point hands must contain a fit with partner or have a bidable suit.
- On hand South c a negative double can be made because of the club fit.
- On hand South d, a negative double should be made because of the reasonable 6 card heart suit .

Negative Doubles

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♠
	X	3♠	4♥
	P	P	4♠
	X	AP	

♠ 976
 ♥ AJ9x
 ♦ AK763
 ♣ T

North


♠ 5
 ♥ KQ97
 ♦ QT8
 ♣ J9832

South

- The main purpose of the negative double is to allow the partnership to compete safely.
- E/W thought they won the board because 4♥ makes and they only lost -100
- When they went back to compare the scores, one table was -140 (3♠) and the other table was -100 (4♠ doubled)
- Minus 6 imps!!!



Summary

- Partscore swings will be up to 280 points or 7 IMPs
 - Keeping your opponents out of the auction is critical
 - Blocking bids and raising partner's suit are excellent ways to keep opponents out of the auction.
 - Apply the law of total tricks.
 - Partscore's should not be doubled unless you can see a 2 trick set
- 



Summary

- At matchpoints, interfering with the opponents is helpful; at IMP's it can be dangerous.
- The texture of your suit is critical.