



Protective Bidding Part II

IN the last issue I started looking at protective bidding, which is effectively 'defensive bidding' that occurs in the pass-out seat when you have a decision to make: do you let the opponents play the hand or do you try to push them up a level?

Let's begin by looking at some auctions where you would want to protect, and try to come to life having already passed:

1.	West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	2♦	Pass
	Pass	?		
2.	West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
	Pass	?		
3.	West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
	Pass	?		

In each case, if you are short in the opponents' suit then it is clear to call, as partner might be lying in wait with a penalty pass of their contract, or more often he will just bid his longest suit and a fit will be found.

Let's look at that third auction again – can it really be right to come in at the three level when you couldn't open the bidding?

Here are a few sample hands you might hold for the sequence:

Hand A ♠ Q 10 3 ♥ K J 9 7 ♦ Q 8 6 3 2 ♣ 8	Hand B ♠ 7 ♥ K J 7 6 ♦ K J 10 8 5 4 ♣ 4 3
Hand C ♠ K Q 9 6 5 ♥ Q 10 9 6 4 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ Void	Hand D ♠ K J 7 6 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A J 9 7

Hand A should double 3♣. Partner's most likely hand type is a penalty double of

clubs, but if he bids a suit you will be well placed as well. You would have opened the bidding had you held another king, so partner won't be expecting that much.

Hand B can't double as partner will just bid spades but 3♦ is fine. If partner has the weak no-trump type hand with a few bits and pieces, this will be a fair contract, and it won't be a disaster even if he has a singleton diamond.

Hand C should bid, and rather than guess whether to bid your mediocre hearts or your stronger (but shorter spades) you might as well bid 4♣ and go for all the marbles. Perhaps the opponents have lured you in, but assuming partner has at most four clubs, he should have at least two hearts or three spades (if he had a 2-1-6-4 shape, he might have bid 3♦ himself) and the fit will give you a chance of finding (and making) game.

Hand D, with the most points, should pass, as clearly partner has nothing. You know he is short in clubs (even if the opening bid is just a six-card pre-empt) but he couldn't dredge up a double; just pass and take a few 50s.

Note that you don't expect your chosen action to work every time – sometimes the opponents will have unexpectedly more than you think and you have been suckered in, but all you can do is take the action that will work most of the time.

What about when you have not already passed – do you want to bid in fourth seat even though this is your first opportunity to call? Well, a common situation is when an opening bid is passed around to you:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♦	Pass	Pass	?

Here you can 'borrow a king' from partner and bid accordingly.

Hence a double would show (broadly speaking) about 9 or more points. I

suppose the absolute rock-bottom minimum would be something like this:

♠	A 10 9 8
♥	K 9 8 6
♦	Void
♣	10 9 7 5 3

The only danger is that partner leaps to 3NT, but if that is the case he will have diamonds well-guarded and you do at least have a five-card suit

for him to play on. *The fact that you are 'borrowing a king' from partner does mean he should take one off his hand when responding, and not leap to game with only 12 points, as your combined total will not be enough.*

In general partner should always deduct a king from his hand when he responds, effectively giving back the values that you have borrowed.

We will finish our look at protective bidding in the next issue, but let's review some of the Dos and Don'ts of protective bidding that we have seen so far:

Do:

- Be keen to bid in the pass-out seat when you are short in the opponent's suit.
- Try and choose the most flexible call available such as a double or a two-suited bid, giving partner a choice of response.
- *Borrow a king* when the opponent's opening bid is passed round to you.

Don't:

- Let the absence of points slow you down – shape is everything.
- Forget that passing on the first round gives you a lot of leeway to bid on poor hands on the second round – partner won't get carried away.



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