

# Claim with Colchamiro



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## Longings and belongings — part 2

Last month we said that you should almost never “bid 5 over 5.” When the bidding is competitive, you should understand that “the five level belongs to the opponents.” Let’s learn more about that.

### They are saving

The most common situation is when you clearly have the majority of the points and bid game, and they sacrifice against you. For example, you bid 4♠ and the opponents bid 5♦. You must not let them play unscathed — you must either double or bid on. Passing out 5♦ is a dereliction of duty. Here is an example:

You	North	Partner	South
1♠	3♦	4♦	5♦
?		?	

Either opener or responder must bid 5♠ or double 5♦. If you pass 5♦, partner must make the final decision and bid 5♠ or double. This is called a forcing pass.

If you make a forcing pass in such a situation, it is because you are not sure what to do, and pass invites partner to bid to the five level.

But to do so, she must have extra values within the context of the auction and within the context of what she has previously shown.

Also, it usually implies that she believes that her side has at most only one loser in the opponent’s suit — either because the forcing passer has a singleton in their suit, or because she has so many — three or four — that she is pretty sure that her partner is short. Holding two low cards in the opponents’ suit (or J-x or Q-x) is sometimes known as “the death hold-

ing.” It wouldn’t at all be surprising if it turned out that partner also had two losers in their suit.

A double suggests that your side play defense either because of the aforementioned “death holding” in their suit, or because the doubler is minimum for her previous bids and has little or no confidence that the partnership can take 11 tricks. If one partner doubles, the other should be warned that the five level is in danger (for you) and should almost always pass, even if relatively weak. Remember, the five level belongs to the opponents.

Let’s take an example. You hold:

♠K J 8 6 4 3 ♥K J 5 ♦3 ♣K 8 7.

In the previous auction, you pass over 5♦ and partner doubles. Her double says, “I know you have at least some interest in going to 5♠, but I think it’s better to play defense and collect what we can from 5♦ doubled.” With this hand, you should pass the double in a flash. Remember partner has cuebid and has perhaps:

♠A 5 2 ♥Q 10 6 3 ♦K 7 2 ♣Q J 3.

Opposite this hand, even 4♠ is in jeopardy.

### We are saving

A second situation is when you have pushed the opponents to the five level. Suppose it is clear to you that your side is saving. If the opponents “take the push” to the five level, your job is done. Your save has made them guess — they have guessed to go to the five level. Don’t assume that they have made the winning decision. A lot of the time, they have erred and are too high, so pass and defend. Won’t you feel like a fool if, for example, you bid 5♠ over their

5♥, and go down doubled, only to find out that they were going set. Many-time national champion Kit Woolsey wrote long ago that the real art of competitive bidding is to make them make the last guess.

### Who’s zoomin’ who?

The third situation is when the deal is really wild and distributional, and nobody knows who can make what. “Who’s zoomin’ who?” the old song asks. In these situations, both sides are guessing, so you might as well guess by letting them play at the five level. Once in a while it would have paid to bid on, but for every time that works out, it happens that your bid pushes them to 6♥ and they make it!

Go quietly in these situations, too, particularly at matchpoints. Strategy at IMPs suggests that you take out insurance and “bid one more.” But even that has a price. Not infrequently, the insurance premium you pay by bidding one more is quite steep — often as high as 9 IMPs. □

*My first book, How You Can Play Like An Expert (Without Having To Be One), has great winning tips, Zia, Catherine Zeta-Jones and much more! It’s available at my web site: www.melbridge.com (lots of free stuff, too) or e-mail me at mcolch@optonline.net.*