



Jerry Helms

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Ask Jerry

club tricks off the top. It shouldn't be too difficult to set up seven winners.

Lastly, if the opponents penalize 1NT, I can still run to 2♦ as a back-up plan.

If you have the time and inclination to share your thoughts, it would be much appreciated.

**Sincerely,
Dave**

Dear Jerry,

Both vulnerable, right-hand opponent opened 1♣ in first seat. I held:

♠A J 8 ♥A 7 5 ♦A K J 4 3 ♣10 6.

My first instinct was to double and then bid 2♦ over my partner's presumed major-suit response. But then I remembered some sage advice about making a call that would have the best chance of yielding a positive outcome, and I decided that 1NT wasn't so bad, even if it lied about a club stopper. For starters, RHO's 1♣ bid doesn't promise a suit the way a major-suit opening does. And since partner was likely to have a weak hand (4 to 7 points), he could transfer with a five- or six-card major suit, placing us in an appropriate two-level contract, or if he was balanced, 1NT is most likely the best place to play (because partner will likely have some of RHO's clubs).

If partner has a diamond fit but no club stopper, 1NT is still a decent contract, even if the opponents take the first four or five

P.S. After I overcalled 1NT, partner transferred to spades, and we got a good board (75%). Nevertheless, partner was unhappy with my "confidence-shaking" bid that lied about a club stopper.

Hi Dave,

Years ago, on a seminar off-night, I was requested to do an "enrichment series" lecture for a mixed group of both bridge players and non-bridge players. Typically the speakers were investment planners, novelists, politicians, etc. I opted to use Jerry-isms, which were created for bridge scenarios, and tried to tie them to the real world. At some point, I suggested that to be successful in both bridge and life, you needed to learn how to "color outside of the lines." My wife was in attendance at the rear of the audience, and I noticed a rather disgusted look on her face. At the conclusion of the presentation, which seemed to go pretty well, I asked Gini what generated her negative reaction. Her comment? "How could you tell people about coloring outside of lines when

you've never seen a line in your life?"

Congratulations on coloring outside of the lines! Now, before I generate a massive amount of criticism, let's discuss the theoretical "best" ways to handle this hand. Technically, you should first overcall 1♦, planning to follow your original overcall with a second-round takeout double, showing a strong hand with primary interest in diamonds, but secondary interest in the unbid suit or suits. If your partner freely introduces a major suit over 1♦, he should have a five-card or longer suit with at least a smattering of values. I do not play a new suit by advancer (partner of the overcaller) as forcing, but with these values, I would jump raise either major suit.

Despite the "correct" way to describe your hand, your reasoning for choosing the somewhat offbeat 1NT overcall meets my approval and gains my admiration. If partner raised to 3NT, and the opponents were to take the first five clubs, in the aftermath, you might want to suggest you had missorted your hand and discovered the ♣A you thought you held was actually the ♠A! I have found that my partners are far more tolerant of what they think is my failing eyesight as opposed to my overactive imagination! □