

WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we, present a copy from their 2013 Nov - Dec bulletin article by columnists > Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer. Read original - [Here](#)

Would you Have Bid differently ?

Over the past six months, we have been analyzing a variety of auctions where partner opened one of a minor. To wrap up this series of articles, we felt it would be beneficial to demonstrate, with some hands that actually came up at the table, what can happen when you and your partner have not had time to discuss fully your style and agreements. Remember that while Two-over-One, Strong NoTrump and Standard Carding are a good start, it takes a fair amount of time discussing the details to avoid disaster at the table.

Hand one: Have you discussed this with your partner? After a last minute decision to attend a local sectional, Ron was fortunate to pick up a fine player at the partnership desk. They barely had time to fill out a convention card, and no time to discuss any of the more difficult auctions.

On the third hand of the session, Ron was the dealer holding ♠8 ♥KT3 ♦KQJ8 ♣AJ932. We have discussed this hand type in previous columns, and know there are two schools of thought: either open 1♦ and rebid 2♣ (if partner bids 1♠ possibly misleading partner about your diamond length) or open 1♣ and rebid 1NT with a stiff spade (possibly misleading partner about your spade length.) Since Ron and his partner had not discussed their styles, Ron felt that it was safer to open 1♦. When his partner responded 1♠, Ron thought he had avoided a bad auction. He rebid 2♣, and passed partner's 2♦ preference.

Ron was glum when this dummy appeared: ♠KJ742 ♥J852♦73 ♣Q7. They had managed to find their six card fit on the two level. One opponent held most of the missing diamonds and, needless to say, Ron and his partner scored poorly.

So, what went wrong? First, neither of them did anything wrong, per se. Their auction would be duplicated by many players. But they hadn't had time to discuss how they wanted to handle such minor suit oriented hands so neither partner was sure of what the other held.

Hand two: "I was just kidding, partner." Playing with an excellent local player for the first time, Ron picked up a lousy hand white against red in 3rd seat. He held ♠J8432♥K754 ♦8 ♣T93. Partner dealt and opened 1♦, and Ron had a difficult bid. On the one hand, a 1♠ bid promised values he simply didn't have. On the other hand, Ron's partner may have opened 1♦ on a 3 card suit. Perhaps she was 4-4 in the major suits and relatively short in diamonds. At unfavorable vulnerability, the opponents might not bid and might leave them in a 3-1 fit.

Ron chose to respond 1♠. He thought that if partner bid either 2♦ or 2♣, then he could pass. He also knew that he could rebid 2♣ over opener's 1NT, since, with this partner, he had discussed 1NT rebids and he knew that a 1NT rebid by opener would always show at least two spades.

Instead, Ron's partner did something unexpected. She reversed with 2♥ and Ron knew that 2♥ was clearly 100% forcing. But Ron had already stretched the truth with his first bid and he thought that 2♥ rated to be a playable spot. Maybe, just this once, he could get away with breaking partnership discipline. With real discomfort, but attempting to look strong and confident, Ron passed.

Ron's partner, to her credit, remained calm, said nothing except "thank you" and played the hand. She held ♠AT ♥AQJ8♠AKQT52 ♣8. When hearts broke 3-2, she had little trouble making eleven tricks. Plus 200 was not a good score, with most of the field in 4♥ for 650.

So, what went wrong? Holding 5-4 in the majors, many players would bid 1♠ just as Ron did. He did have only four HCP, but with a singleton diamond, he had six support points for either major. The issue here is partnership trust. If you tell partner Your hand is worth a response, and then pass her forcing bid, she won't know whether to believe you in the future. Similarly, if you have made a game forcing bid, it's quite important that, even if you hate your earlier bidding, you don't stop short of game. You can't have a precise bidding conversation when someone runs off in the middle of it!

And what would have happened had Ron passed initially, as he considered doing? His LHO would probably have made a balancing double to reopen the bidding. The opponents had a nine card club fit, after all. And the double may have given Ron's side a chance to find their cold game in hearts. Ron realized that bidding and then passing a forcing bid was the worst of both worlds.

The moral of the stories...

None of us makes the best bid every time. Some hands are more difficult to handle than others. What Ron wants to emphasize is that regardless of what happens at the table, it is never helpful to yell or to criticize your partner. Accept the bad board with Class and resolve to discuss it away from the table.

Also, remember that the next time, you may be the one who picks up a trouble hand. Try to learn both from your mistakes and the mistakes of others. And whenever you have a difficult auction, put that auction on your list to discuss with new partners. Ron now asks, even in the most casual partnership, if he is allowed to rebid 1NT with a singleton in partner's suit!

We look forward to seeing you at the table!