

BID WHERE YOU LIVE by Maritha Pottenger

There are many instances when bidding to show where your values are is more important than the “technically correct” call. Some examples:

- 1) 3rd and 4th seat openings of a minor. Game is unlikely. You may end up defending. It is more important to bid your BETTER minor than to follow the “rules” (club with 3-3 and diamonds with 4-4). If you have Kx Axx xxxx AKxx, open 1C NOT 1D.
- 2) Usually with only one bid as responder, you bid a 4-card major over anything else. If however, your major is really puny, and most or all of your values are in your minor, bid your minor. Thus, 9xxx Qx KQJx xxx should respond 1D NOT 1S to partner's 1C opening.
- 3) Sometimes a no trump bid is superior to a negative double or raising partner's suit. When you have “wasted” secondary cards in an opponent's suit, your partner is often short in that suit. If you negative-double, or raise partner's suit, s/he will think that shortness is working, and you could end up too high. Bidding no trump warns partner that you have cards in the opponent's suit. Thus, when partner opens 1C and RHO overcalls 1H, do NOT negative double with this hand: 8xxx KQ10x Kxx xx. This hand should bid 1NT. Over half of your values are in the opponent's suit; let your partner know!
- 4) When you have game-going support for partner's major, it is important to distinguish from the following three types of hands:

Balanced—bid Jacoby 2NT

A good side suit of 5 or more cards (“source of tricks”)--bid that suit

Singleton or void and 4 or more trumps—make a splinter bid

In each case, you need to make the call that best shows the most important feature(s) of your hand so that your partner can properly evaluate how good your fit is (or not).

- 5) When you and your partner are competing fiercely with the opponents and likely to go up to the 5 (or even 6) level, let partner know if you have a 2-suited hand. That way, s/he can be more aggressive if you two turn out to have a double-fit, and can quickly double the opponents for penalty when his/her values are in a different side suit than yours.