

# Improve your bridge with me



**Migry Zur Campanile**

One of the golden rules which I often repeat during my lessons is the importance of bidding hands as quickly and effectively as one can. This approach can be summarized as "Get your hand off your chest!". Each bid carries an important message about our strength and distribution: when we open 1NT, partner will expect us to have a balanced hand with 15-17 points and will immediately know the rough total amount of the points on our line; therefore he is in the best position to assess what action to take, for instance, after opponents overcall.

Yet, time and time again I see 1NT openers fall in love with their cards and bid again, with often disastrous results, after sequences like:

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass
?			

Another common disease is the re-preempting syndrome. Sometimes we have preemptive hands which do not fall neatly into place for a barrage at a level three or level four. When that happens, we just need to take a view based on the vulnerability and our best judgment and stick with it. The idea of preempting is to force our opponents to exchange information under the pressure of an already high level of bidding, aided if necessary by partner who will support our suit if he sees fit. It is a huge mistake to think, for whatever reason, that we can make another bid like in this sequence:

West	North	East	South
3♠	Dbf	Pass	4♥
?			

The only objective we will achieve is either ending up paying a four digit penalty or,

in the rare occasion when our unorthodox action works, to convince partner that we selected the wrong opening first time round.

In both cases it is vital to remember that the task of describing our hand was essentially over with our first bid, it is up to partner now to take action based on the information we supplied him with.

IMPs None VUL N Dealer

Your partner opens in North with 1♦, East overcalls 1♥.

You hold:

♠ QJ1098765  
♥ K  
♦ J754  
♣ -

### What do you bid?

While 1♠ is not strictly wrong, it may well lead to problems later on. For instance if the bid comes back at a high level and we now rebid 4♠, our partner may well expect more strength from our hand and take decisions accordingly. Much better to get the hand out in one go and bid 4♠ immediately, a bid which is pre-emptive in nature and denies interest in slam.

Everyone passes and West leads the ♦3.

This is what you see:

♠ A  
♥ J874  
♦ AQ1096  
♣ QJ8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ QJ1098765  
♥ K  
♦ J754  
♣ -

### How many losers do we have?

Three: one in spades, one in hearts and one in diamonds.

### What can we tell about the lead?

West has led the ♦3 instead of leading his partner's suit. It is unlikely he would do so from Kxx, so we must assume that it is a singleton. The first thing we must do is to rise with the ♦A.

### Is that enough to guarantee the contract?

No. While we have no problem if spades split 2-2 or if East has three trumps, if West has Kxx in spades, he can take the second round of trumps and play a heart to get his partner in so that he can play a diamond for him to ruff.

### Is there any way we can avoid this?

If we could pitch the ♥K from hand we would be able to stop East getting in to play a diamond across.

### How can we do that?

We must hope that West has at least one top club. After taking the lead in dummy with the ♦A, we play immediately the ♣Q. If East does not cover, we pitch the ♥K. If he covers, we ruff and get back to dummy with the ♠A to play the ♣J on which we pitch the ♥K. We have just executed the so called "scissors coup", thus named because by pitching a loser on a loser we have succeeded in cutting a vital line of communication between our opponents.

Here is the complete hand:

		♠ A	
		♥ J874	
		♦ AQ1096	
		♣ QJ8	
♠ K52			♠ 3
♥ 965			♥ AQ1032
♦ 3			♦ K82
♣ A109653			♣ K742

  

		♠ QJ1098765	
		♥ K	
		♦ J754	
		♣ -	

