***This Week in Bridge***

**(78) When Partner is a Passed Hand**

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**General**

When partner is a passed hand and it is our turn to bid, we have different options available to us than when we are in the 1st or 2nd seat. In the 3rd Seat, we can open light – 4-card Majors, lead-directing minors/Majors, diverse preempts, and much more. In 4th Seat, we can choose to pass the hand out and we only open when we expect to go plus. Before we open the bidding in 3rd or 4th seat we should think about what our goals are and more importantly, what we expect from partner and what partner might do. Thinking ahead will help prepare us to make good decisions in these highly competitive auctions.

**3rd Seat Openings**

When we open in the 3rd seat we will have several different kinds of hands. We need to be prepared for what partner might do and think about how we might handle certain situations – especially if we have a minimum (or subminimum) opening bid.

**Opening a Major**

When we open a Major we could have a 4-card (or longer) suit and we could have a subminimum opener (or better.) That is a lot of variation in our possible hand - we should be prepared for what partner might do.

* Partner will bid 1NT or raise our suit with most passed hands. If we have a bad hand, we will pass either of these bids.
* Partner might also make a 3-card (or 4-card) limit raise – using *Drury*. We should be ready for these artificial 2-level responses. If we think ahead and are looking for it, we won’t miss it and have a disastrous bidding mix-up.
* Another thing that we need to be prepared for when we open light in the 3rd seat is for the opponent to overcall and partner to make a limit raise with a cuebid. In that case, we need to be prepared for how we are going to slow down the auction – rebid our suit.
* We want to think about if there are any bids that will get us excited to explore game.

**Opening a Minor**

When we open a minor light on values, we will likely be doing so in order to lead direct.

* We should be prepared for a 1NT response – will we pass or will we rebid our suit?
* We should also have a plan for what we are going to do if partner responds in a Major (new suit) – can we pass (do we have three or four card support) or do we need to find a rebid?
* We also want to think about if there are any bids that will get us excited to explore game.

Thinking about these things before we open the bidding will help us prepare for the auction that might unfold.

**4th Seat Openings**

In the 4th seat we can open similarly to how we do in the 3rd seat, with the exception that we will always have a good (solid) hand. We open expecting to go plus, using the *Rule of 15*. We want to be prepared for how to slow the auction down (just as we were in the 3rd seat opening example.)

* It is important to make sure that we don’t get to high.
* It is important that we keep the opponents out of the auction however possible (2-level openings.)
* We also want to be prepared for Drury, cuebids, and other bids that will force us to make potentially difficult decisions.

When we open in the 4th seat the auctions are likely to become very competitive – the pesky opponents never seem to leave us alone anymore. So preparing for competition and finding a way to go plus is invaluable.

**Conclusion**

Planning your opening bid and your rebid are good habits when we open in the 1st or 2nd seat. When we open in the 3rd or 4th seat things can get even more complicated and we need to be prepared for how we might handle the auction. Thinking ahead and having some ideas of how we might handle potentially difficult situations helps us avoid disasters and prepares us for what is likely to come. Don’t just bid, think ahead and you will become a better bidder!