

Be As Disruptive As You Can

Dealer: North Vul: East/West Lead: ♣A	North ♠J72 ♥92 ♦J95 ♣AK1076	
West ♠Q53 ♥AKQ103 ♦A86 ♣95	South ♠K86 ♥J ♦K107432 ♣843	East ♠A1094 ♥87654 ♦Q ♣QJ2

The Bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

Result: Making 4♥; -620 for North/South

East and West had a standard conversation that started with West's 1NT opening. When the responder to a 1NT opening has both a 4 and a 5 card major, he uses Stayman to uncover the 8-card fit. East will accept as the trump suit, whatever major West would have rebid. However, if West denied a 4-card major by rebidding 2♦, East would have bid his 5 card heart suit at the three level (3♥), showing a 5-card heart suit and a game going hand (10 or more points). Here though, East/West struck gold in the heart suit and game was easily bid. North led off with the ♣AK and another club. South ruffed with his ♥J but West over-ruffed. After drawing trump, West entered the dummy with a diamond ruff and finessed against the ♠K. West ended up losing the two clubs and a spade, fulfilling the game contract and scoring 620 points for their side.

On this deal South rolled over and played dead. Maybe she and her partner were playing "strong two" bids. If so she had another 8 or 9 months to wait until she was dealt a hand with 22 or more points! How much more effective the two bid is when played weak. The

“weak two” is a tactical weapon where openings of 2♠, 2♥ or 2♦ are made with a good 6-card suit and not enough points to open with a standard 1-level opening. In other words, a “weak two” shows a weak hand but one with enough cards in the suit bid to take about 5 tricks. I always say that its partner’s responsibility to come up with the remaining 3 tricks and if he doesn’t – get a new partner. Just kidding☺

Sometimes, after opening the “weak two” you get to play at the 2-level and you either make it or you don’t. But the larger benefit is to disrupt communications between the opponents so they don’t find their optimum contract.

To open the “weak two” your suit should be exactly 6 cards in length and classically, contain 2 of the top 3; or 3 of the top 5 honors. This is called a “good suit.” In the modern style that is played today, these requirements are shaved a little. With favorable vulnerability (E-W vul; N-S not), it’s okay to open at the 2-level with 2 of the top 5 honors. You are giving up some of your safety but the penalty is lower when you are set a trick or two and you are non-vulnerable. With the vulnerability reversed (i.e. unfavorable vulnerability) go back to the classical definition of a “good suit”.

Of course, the higher the denomination of the “weak two” opening, the more disruptive it is. Here, South should have opened 2♦. This isn’t as disruptive as a 2♠ opening, but it does cut off the whole 1-level for the opponents. Let’s look at how the bidding proceeds from the 2♦ opening.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♦
2♥	3♦	3♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Because of the preemptive 2♦ opening by South, West was not able to open 1NT, showing his points. He made a simple overcall instead. This could be from a hand with about 7 to 17 points. North knew that she and her partner both had weak hands but had exactly 9 diamonds between them and judged to increase the preemption to the 9-trick level and bid 3♦. She was relying on the Law of Total Tricks that says they are protected to the contract level equal to the number of trump between them.

East was unsure how strong his partner's overcall was and made a single raise to show support for hearts. He should have followed the same Law of Total Tricks and raised to game. He knew their partnership held 10 hearts between them.

After South's pass, West elected to pass. He didn't know if East had a good hand or was just being competitive over North's 3♦ bid. Of course, the result was a score of only 170 points, and this was a fine result for the North-South pair.

Bridge is a competition between your team and the opponents. When you have a long suit - try to enter the bidding. Sometimes you might steal the contract for a part score and sometimes you may disrupt the opponents so they don't reach the contract they should be in.