

Don't try to improve a partscore OR don't get in a tug-o-war with partner

Most pairs agree to this chestnut. It means that you will happily sit in partner's suit rather than bid 2NT just because you have some values and no great fit. .e.g. The auction goes :-

(1S) – 2C – (P) - ?

and you hold

♠QJ3

♥A854

♦Q972

♣J7

Should you pass, bid 2D, bid 2H or bid 2NT

2D and 2H will force partner to bid again in most partnerships. That is unlikely to be a good idea since partner will be expecting a 5 carder and his rebid may get us too high. 2NT has chances but that stopper will probably vanish early in the play and opener is sure to have an outside entry to his established spade suit, making it a very tight contract.

2C is likely to be a safer contract. Spades cannot be run against this contract. Hence, pass is an attractive option – don't try to improve the partscore.

What do you make of this auction?:-

(1S) – 2C – (P) – 2H

Since 2H is not trying to improve the partscore, most pairs regard the bid as “constructive” and showing tolerance for clubs if the 2C bidder hates hearts. The 2H bidder should have the values for a 2H overcall of 1S. So, while it is non-forcing, game is not out of the question.

What do you make of this auction?:-

1C – (P) – 1H – (P)

2C – (P) - ?

You are looking at :-

♠753

♥A85432

♦Q9

♣J7

On a lucky day, you can rebid 2H and make it with ease. On a bad day, partner will have a singleton and the suit will play poorly. On the other hand, partner has shown a six card suit and minimum and you have support. 2C should be quite playable and you have an easy pass. Don't get in a tug-o-war with partner.

Of course, it is an easier decision at teams – any positive score will do. At pairs, the lure of +110 or +140 in hearts is tempting but not good for partnership morale if it is a failing contract. Partners are rarely disappointed when you leave them in a fit!