

What a Hand!!

By

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Here is hand I picked up (I was South) last year at Lorraine's club game that was, to the say the least wow!!! ♠7 ♥AKQ54 ♦AKQ10632 ♣-. You may be thinking, '*why talk about this hand; I will never see another like it again.*' While this may be true, there are a number of important guidelines when holding a strong, freakish two suiter.

Your primary thinking should be something like:

'I want to bid a slam in a red suit, but how can I elicit any information from partner to help me, determine whether hearts or diamonds is better?'

That is why, as a general rule, it is wise to bid your suits with two suiters, bidding the longer one first, if at all possible. Even this one loser hand should be opened 1♦, and not 2♣*. There is a small risk it will go all pass, but if it doesn't, you are now able to show your suits at a more comfortable level.

**However if you do open 2♣, and the auction goes:*

2♣ 2♦

3♦ 3NT

You have to bid 5♥, as 4♥ can be passed. 5♥ conveys the message: 'I want to bid a slam in a red suit, and am either 6-5, 7-5 or 8-5 distribution. Pick a contract.'

However East thwarts this plan and is the dealer and opens 1♠, and E-W are silent for the rest of the auction. Now what?

In a way, their opening limits your options. A double risks partner leaving it in, while an overcall (at any level!) will likely end the auction. Despite these limitations, West has actually helped you, as now you can now choose 2♠ from your bidding toolkit, Michael's, which shows hearts and an unknown minor. Partner may not be happy, but they cannot pass you in 2♠!

Now your plan should be that if partner prefers hearts, bid 6♦! This shows a significant suit disparity both in terms of length and/or quality. If partner has ♠Qxxx ♥x ♦x ♣KJxxxx they will pass 6♦. Now only a trump lead will (or a spade lead and trump shift) will beat 6♦, with normal breaks.

On the actual deal my partner held ♠953 ♥6 J54 ♣AQ9863. He passed, and we made six. Good right? I will come back to this point in a minute.

At another table I heard that the auction started the same way, but instead of asking for the minor with 2NT, North bid 3♣. This is not a good bid. You want to find out with minor partner has. There is no reason to suggest clubs as a strain when partner has advertised at least 10 cards in their own two suits.

Lesson to Learn

- Bid your suits, longest first 95% of the time.
- Opening 2♣ with a strong suiter often works poorly, as often you will run out of room trying to describe your hand.
- Remember, you want your partnership to make the best decisions. On distributional hands that means describing your hand AND listening to what the other three players bid and do not bid.
- If you have two suits and a strong one bid, the best approach is to bid your suits, and then double on your 3rd bid. Partner will now know you are distributional and strong.
- This means that jumps shifts are 100% game forcing, and reverses are a 100% one round force (with Ingberman 2NT Convention for responder to show a weak hand).