

41. Facing a Weak Three bid, not following "Put up or Shut up"

A Three-level bid, whether opening or jump-overcalling, shows a weak hand with a decent seven-card suit. It is bid with two aims.

(a) To make life awkward for the opponents, to cut out their dialogue.

(b) To tell partner there's only one trump suit for their side. To tell them not to try their own suit, nor (except very occasionally) 3NT.

What Happened

The contract of 4♠ was reached after South's highly dubious 3♠ bid and North's understandable raise to 4♠ (North expected a far better hand and wasn't sure whether the 3♠ bid was forcing). West doubled and the defence was merciless.

East correctly won his ♥A on West's ♥Q lead — declarer was marked with ♥K and it could have been singleton. At trick two, East switched to ♠5 (best) to cut down ruffing in dummy.

Declarer played low, West winning ♠10 and switching to ♣8. Declarer tried ♣Q but East covered with ♣K. Declarer won ♣A and led ♦3. West grabbed ♦A and led ♣7. East won ♣9 and led ♠6.

Declarer forlornly finessed ♠Q but West won ♠K and led ♣6. East enjoyed ♣109, enabling West to discard ♦9. East then led ♦8, which promoted West's ♠J. Down five and -1,400. Wow. Declarer can save only one trick — by rising with ♠A on the second round to avoid the trump promotion.

What Should Have Happened

South passes 3♦. I doubt West would bid — after all he does not have enough to open at the One-

Dealer: North, Vulnerability: North-South

♠ 92		♠ 65
♥ 63		♥ A854
♦ KQJ6542		♦ 1087
♣ Q3		♣ KJ109
♠ KJ10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> NE </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> WS </div> </div>	
♥ QJ1092		
♦ A9		
♣ 876		
	♠ AQ8743	
	♥ K7	
	♦ 3	
	♣ A542	

What Happened

S	W	N	E
		3♦ (1)	Pass
3♠ (2)	Pass	4♠ (3)	Pass
Pass	Dbl (4)	end	

(1) Weak with a good seven-card suit.

(2) Very unwise, breaking the mantra, "Put up or Shut up." Partner's diamonds are better (longer) than your spades and there's no reason to expect partner's spade(s) to be better than your diamond.

(3) Most would play South's (unusual) 3♠ bid as forcing.

(4) West looks at her three defensive tricks (♠KJ and ♦A) and doesn't like the sound of the auction. Clever West.

Contract: 4♠ Dbled (by S), Opening Lead: ♥Q

What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
		3♦	end

Contract: 3♦ (by N), Opening Lead: ♠6

level. Actually, the very favourable layout would enable him to make 4♥ but in practice, the pre-empt has done its job. The 3♦ contract would make a quiet nine tricks.

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