

Don't Be Afraid to Bid

by Mark Horton

Mark Horton Editor of **BRIDGE** Magazine and no international tournament is complete without his presence as Bulletin Editor. As a player he has won most English tournaments and represented England in several Camrose matches; now he dashes all over the world, playing in and reporting on international tournaments.

All the textbooks tell you that you need six points to respond to your partner's opening bid. However, my advice is to bid as often as you can.

Why is this a good idea? Firstly, let's take a look at this deal from the 1993 Spingold Final:

<p>Board 12 West Deals N-S Vul</p>	<p>♠ A 4 3 2 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ A Q J</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ Q J 10 9 5 ♥ 10 7 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ 10 6 2</p>
	N											
W		E										
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<p>♠ 7 ♥ A K 9 8 3 ♦ Q 7 6 ♣ K 8 7 5</p>	<p>♠ K 8 6 ♥ Q 6 5 ♦ A K 9 2 ♣ 9 4 3</p>											

In the Open Room the bidding followed a predictable course:

West	North	East	South
<i>Nickell</i>	<i>Lall</i>	<i>Freeman</i>	<i>Deutsch</i>
1 ♥	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Nickell made a good start with his opening lead of the ace of hearts but then continued with a low heart. Deutsch won with the queen and took a club finesse. He returned to hand with the king of spades and repeated the club finesse.

Now he cashed the ace of clubs and overtook the jack of diamonds with the ace. When a spade to the ace saw West discarding a heart, he exited with a heart to endplay West into leading away from the queen of diamonds, and so scored +600.

Had Nickell continued with king and another heart after cashing the ace, declarer would not have been able to throw him in and would have had to go down.

When the board was replayed West was not called upon to find the killing defense.

West	North	East	South
<i>Martel</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Stansby</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	All pass		

East's decision to respond one spade left one of the world's best pairs with no obvious way into the auction. A misdefense allowed Martel to score seven tricks but with undertricks costing only 50 points a time he was on to a winner in any event.

So you can see that by responding on a subminimum hand you may make it very difficult for your opponents to enter the bidding – and even if they do they may not reach their best contract.

BOLS TIP: Don't be afraid to respond to an opening bid.