

FINDING THE BEST LIE

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "bid what you see, implied second clause, "when you can". Since bids give both shape and strength messages, make sure you've looked at the whole hand and thought about not just your first bid, but also your rebid before you act. Sometimes we have an easy and correct bid, sometimes there are 2 or more calls that accurately describe our hand. Sometimes there are none. When we face the situation where no call fits, we must have a way to prioritize the imperfect calls available in order to find the best lie.

Here's an example: You hold: 5 KQJ3 A8653 KQJ, you open 1 diamond, partner 1 spade,

Let's look at all the possible bids available to us at this point.

1 NT balanced hand 12-14 H.C.P.

2 diamonds, minimum hand with at least 6 diamonds

2 hearts, a reverse showing at least 16 H.C.P., 5+ diamonds, 4 hearts

2 NT balanced hand with 18-19 H.C.P

3 clubs, at least 4 clubs, strong jump shift, forcing to game

Priorities when choosing the best lie:

1. Do not lie about both shape and strength
2. Do not lie about strength, if you must choose whether to over-or-under bid, let your fit with partner be the deciding factor
3. If given a choice, lie about length in a minor, rather a major
4. Avoid making off shape NT bids as opener
5. Use suit quality to make close decisions

Rule 1 rules out both 1 NT and 2 NT rebid

Rule 2 rules out the 2 Heart reverse

That leaves 2 clubs, 2 diamonds, none is perfect on shape, partner will expect an extra club for 2 clubs and an extra diamond for 2 diamonds

It's not obvious at first thought, but 2 clubs is the best of our bad options, doesn't lie about strength, distorts our shape only a little bit and that distortion is in a minor suit where it's less likely to be as dangerous.

An important lesson in bridge is to learn the difference between auctions where you must speak again, as opposed to those where you may speak again. Opener's jump shift or a reverse at the two level are the only forcing auctions available.

It's a good idea to think "Does partner know the whole story of this hand from my opening bid, or do I have more to tell?"

For opener, here are some of the commonly agreed rules.

Open the higher ranking of 2 five-card major suits, regardless of which one looks better.

With 4-4- in the minors, usually open 1 diamond. With 3-3 in the minors, usually open 1 club.

A4 DEALER-1 DIAMOND
AQ4 3 NT
KQJ1097
Q3

J9863 1052 PASS
J108 9732
A PASS 8432
KJ102 A9

KQ7
K65 1 NT
65
87654

6 of spades lead, Declarer leads diamond K, you win your Ace, what do you do next?

J653 DEALER – 1 DIAMOND
6532 3 HEARTS
AKJ
A5

74 AKQ108
K107 4 1 SPADE
753 PASS 642 PASS
76432 QJ98

92
AQJ98 2 HEARTS
Q1098 4 HEARTS
K10

7 of spades lead, , partner cashes QKA of spades, declarer ruffs with J, what do you do?

AJ DEALER – 2 NT
KQ732 3 HEARTS
AKQ
Q54

7652 KQ103
54 PASS 106 PASS
J432 10875 PASS
K109 A62

984
AJ98 3 CLUBS
96 4 HEARTS
J873

K of spades lead, Hint: Think of the 4 suits as follows: 1. Trump Suit 2. the Don't Touch Suit
3. The Strip Suit, The Exit Suit.

How do you play this hand to make 4 hearts?