



Leaping and Non-Leaping Michaels

FURTHER TO my article developing modern ideas on the use of Lebensohl continuations when defending against Weak Two bids and the Multi 2♦ (April 2013 issue, pages 22-23), I thought we would look at **Leaping Michaels** as a defence to two-level openings (Weak Twos and the Multi) and also consider **non-Leaping Michaels** against three-level pre-emptive bids.



Leaping Michaels

These are terrific bids to have in your armoury. They are highly descriptive, very effective but, just as importantly, enormous fun to play!

The basic idea is to play as follows:

Over a weak 2♦ opener:

- 3♦ = Asks for a stopper for no-trumps
- 3♥/3♠ = Natural and strong (six cards, 16-18 HCP)
- 4♣ = Clubs + major (at least 5-5)
- 4♦ = Both majors (at least 5-5)

Over a weak 2♥ opener:

- 3♥ = Asks for a stopper
- 3♠ = Natural and strong
- 4♣ = Clubs + spades (at least 5-5)
- 4♦ = Diamonds + spades (at least 5-5)

Over a weak 2♠ opener:

- 3♠ = Asks for a stopper
- 4♣ = Clubs + hearts (at least 5-5)
- 4♦ = Diamonds + hearts (at least 5-5)

Over a Multi 2♦ opener:

- 3♣/3♦ = Natural
- 3♥/3♠ = Natural and strong, at least six cards
- 4♣ = Clubs + major (at least 5-5)
- 4♦ = Diamonds + major (at least 5-5)

The principle is that you can 'leap' to a Michaels-style bid at the four level. These bids *guarantee* at least 5-5 in the two suits shown. Since they commit the partnership to the four level by deliberate choice, a good hand is needed, typically four or five losers at most. The current trend is to play the bids as *almost* forcing (95% or so, anyway).

As with normal Michaels cue-bids, I recommend that you *do not use* the bid when holding a *strong* six-card major, as it makes reaching the best contract so much more difficult.

Hand A is a typical example (absolute minimum in my opinion):

Hand A
♠ A K J 10 5
♥ 3
♦ K Q J 8 2
♣ 4 3

Over 2♥ (weak) you can bid 4♦ to show the two suits immediately. This would reserve the cue-bid to ask for a stopper, so with Hand B:

Hand B
♠ A 5
♥ 3 2
♦ A 8
♣ A K Q 7 6 4 2

You could bid 3♥ over the opponent's opening 2♥ bid to ask for a heart stopper with no fear that partner would interpret it as a Michaels cue-bid.

Responding to Leaping Michaels

Typically what you do is to 'choose' to play in either of partner's known two suits. Very rarely you might decide to pass – and I must stress the 'very' in 'very rarely'!

Given that the Leaping Michaels bid shows a really good hand, the partner of the 'leaper' can sometimes make an immediate slam try either via a cue-bid of the opponent's suit or Roman Key-Card Blackwood etc. In order to avoid ambiguity, I would play that RKCB agrees the suit just bid by the 'leaper', e.g. in the following auction:

West	North	East	South
2♥	4♦ ¹	Pass	4NT ²

- ¹ Diamonds and spades
- ² Roman Key-Card Blackwood

RKCB is for diamonds rather than spades.

Non-Leaping Michaels

If you do start playing these methods, it is very rewarding – not to mention quite logical – to play non-Leaping Michaels as well. These bids apply when the opponents have opened at the three level. Thus:

Over 3♣:

- 4♣ = Both majors
- 4♦ = Diamonds + major

Over 3♦:

- 4♣ = Clubs + major
- 4♦ = Both majors

Over 3♥:

- 4♣ = Clubs + spades
- 4♦ = Diamonds + spades

Over 3♠:

- 4♣ = Clubs + hearts
- 4♦ = Diamonds + hearts

Since you are not jumping, I suggest the need for such a good hand (as was the case for Leaping Michaels, discussed earlier) is not so strong. For example, with Hand C:

Hand C
♠ 5
♥ K Q J 3 2
♦ A Q 8 7 4
♣ 4 2

This hand might well chance 4♦ over a 3♠ bid from the opposition. The bid is now not remotely close to being forcing.

Adding non-Leaping Michaels to your repertoire does not impact significantly on your traditional approach to dealing with pre-empts. Thus doubles, overcalls at

the three level and bidding no-trumps, all remain the same – it is just the four-level overcalls that are affected.

However, an issue remains with hands which might previously have wanted to overcall naturally at the four level in a minor, e.g. with a hand such as Hand D:

Hand D

- ♠ A 5
- ♥ 2
- ♦ K 7 4
- ♣ A Q J 7 5 4 2

Over 3♥ *be careful!* You cannot now bid 4♣ as it shows clubs and spades. Your options therefore are to pass, jump to 5♣, or occasionally have a bash at 3NT

(you will need a stopper in the opponent's suit, of course!).

Further Treatments

Just for completeness, I recommend the following:

Over 3♣/♦:

4♥/4♠ = Natural

Over 3♥:

4♥ = Game-forcing two-suiter (spades + minor)

4♠ = Natural

4NT = Minor two-suiter

Over 3♠:

4♠ = Huge two-suiter (hearts + minor)

4NT = Minor two-suiter

So there you have it. Try these methods out, and let me know whether you enjoy them.

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English Bridge Archives



by Elena Jeronimidis

REACTIONS TO the online version of the June *English Bridge* have ranged from 'Wonderful – at last. I LOVE it!' to 'I do NOT want an online *English Bridge*. No good to me whatsoever.' Luckily there were rather more comments like the former than the latter, so thank you all who gave us feedback – especially those who said something nice!

On discovering that not only is the current magazine online, but that the last six issues can also be accessed from the Members Area of the EBU website, one person commented: 'I've been hoping that the EBU would do that – I don't need to worry about keeping my old copies!' That is indeed the case, and it gets better because now all past issues since 2007 are online too (except the last six, which are 'members only') in the public area at www.ebu.co.uk. Why only since 2007? Because in August 2007, when I became the magazine editor, I also took over the typesetting, so having all those issues on my computer I could provide the files in suitable format to Matt Betts at Aylesbury, and he has since converted them for uploading on the web.

Matt has done a great job, and has put in links to advertisers' websites for your convenience. As from this issue, he will also add links to articles in this or past issues, as marked by the little 'Link' logo featured here.



Matt will continue to enlarge our archive to include, eventually, all back issues of the magazine. But it will be a slower process, as issues prior to August 2007 need to be lovingly scanned page by page, so please don't expect the job to be completed at the speed of light. However, there is a gift for you when you visit our archives: the very first, historic issue of *English Bridge* is already there, so you will be able to judge how much the magazine has developed over the years.

I hope the archives will solve the problem of wanting to read again a particular article or series, and maybe print it out for your partner, so you can both benefit from our experts' advice. Although this is the most common reason for wanting to look through back issues, I hope you will find that perusing them online is a rewarding activity. I know I'm biased, but I enjoyed revisiting the issues I have edited, and would like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' to all contributors, past and present, for providing quality writing and illustrations (one of my favourites is below, a Celia Weber cartoon from the August 2007 issue). And finally, a big 'thank you' to those members who have contributed to the 'Letters' pages and County News, or have provided feedback. Without you all, this would be a very different – and much poorer – magazine.



THE MAN WHO FORGOT TO SWITCH OFF HIS MOBILE PHONE AT A BRIDGE TOURNAMENT