

## PUNISH THEM!



Who are “they”? Maybe you know some of them. Maybe you are one yourself! “They” just do not know their place! “They” have been given multitudinous “pass cards” (if you use written bidding, then you are well aware that you can select “pass” as a bid...often the best bid..true?) and yet “they” refuse to use one.

“They” are not those happy souls who have licence to bid over a Precision 1♣. As everyone knows that bid is forcing, “forcing” on the opposition to make some ghastly overcall on a jack high suit (lead directional, partner?). “They” are not even those who choose a delicate overcall of an Acol (or everyone else’s strong) 2♣ bid. (Talking of which, which I was not, what has happened to the wonderful world of psyching? Are we all too afraid or unfamiliar with a score of 6 down doubled in our contract!?)

Who then are “they”? Back to them in a minute.

Well, “they” did know their place on this board, leaving my partner with an interesting decision. He opened a weak no -trump and saw his partner transfer to hearts at the 2 level and then rebid diamonds...at the 6 level!

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass (thank you!)
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
6♦	Pass	?	

As East, you hold ♠ AT5 ♥ 963 ♦ KQ9 ♣ K843

So, what do you think? Do you owe your partner another bid?

I do remember once from many years and partners ago when I opened 6♦. Partner had a similar diamond holding and raised to grand which made on a finesse! Maybe word had spread down through the partners as I was left to play in the small slam, which was a pity as these were the East-West cards:

West	East	Diamonds broke 3-1 and hearts 3-2 making the grand a claim. There must have been ways of bidding the grand as 5 of the 14 pairs did so.
♠ -	♠ AT5	
♥ AKQ54	♥ 963	
♦ AJT876	♦ KQ9	
♣ A6	♣ K843	

If diamonds can be set as trumps, key card will do the rest though there would be many weak no-trump openers with maximum points which would not be so appealing higher than the 6 level.

Here is one successful sequence to 7♦ where the diamond suit was first bid at the 7 level!

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	
Neil Stuckey	Barry Palmer	
1NT (♦s)	1♣	No doubt, Neil claimed before dummy appeared!
4♠ (exclusion key card)	2♣ (likes diamonds)	
5♣ (♦Q ask)	4NT (1 key card)	
7♦ (good news week!)	6♣ (♦Q and ♣K)	
	Pass	

The optimists played the grand, the pessimists, and there were 4 of them, played in 4♥. They have suffered far too many 5-0 breaks in their bridge careers. Three pairs played in the inferior 6♥ slam with the other pair praying for a bad heart break as they were in the 12-trick safety of 6NT.

I will make one further  
 observation about this board.  
 South held:

♠ KJ9742  
 ♥ 87  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ QJ52

This is not everyone's overcall of a weak no-trump. So, why with a similar hand but just one extra spade in place of a heart, is it OK to call the spade suit at the three level after an opponent opens 2NT, showing nearly double the point count of a weak no trump...22-23!

"They" did!

I do not think I have ever had the opportunity to show such disrespect for a strong opening bid. "They" should be punished. Were they?

**Board 28**

West Deals  
 N-S Vul

♠ K J 9 8 6 5 4  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ A 10 9 7

♠ A Q  
 ♥ A K 9 8 5  
 ♦ A 9 2  
 ♣ K Q 2



♠ 7  
 ♥ 7 3  
 ♦ K Q 10 8 7 6  
 ♣ J 6 5 3

♠ 10 3 2  
 ♥ Q J 10 6 4  
 ♦ J 4 3  
 ♣ 8 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2NT	3♠	?	

**PENALTY!**

?

The big question is how forcing would “pass” by East be? I would say 100%. No 22-23 count is ever selling out to 3♠.

You would not, this time, be wanting to penalise 3♠. As long as West sacrifices their ♠Q by playing two rounds of trumps, this contract will go one down. Not much punishment there.

This time, if East were to pass, West would likely bid 3NT. Matters may rest there though it could get interesting if East had ambition. A 4NT invitational raise may lead West to declare 6NT.

Another way 6NT could be reached would be a direct 4♦ call over the 3♠ interference. West is not going to stop short of slam now with 6NT being the best choice.

### **“The Punishment”**

Against 6NT, North would be well advised to lead a red singleton though ♣10 is safe, for a while. Whatever the lead, declarer will play a couple of rounds of clubs with North beating one of South’s honours (West needs to play ♣ KQ on the first two rounds of the suit and cash ♥AK before running all the diamonds). Once more North must not exit a spade. On the run of the diamonds, North can throw four spades safely (one had to go on the ♥K) though will find life decidedly less pleasant when declarer plays their last diamond. Squeezed and nicely so. In fact, it is irrelevant whether or not North calls spades but the spade call will certainly guide West to the squeeze play rather than have any thought of a spade finesse for trick 12.

So, have we exacted punishment on “them”, the ghastly disrespectful overcallers of the very very strong 2NT opener? Maybe Jamie Zhu and Jerry Chen did as they bid and made 6NT. Alas, not at my table. I am still waiting... beware!

*Richard Solomon*