

## DON'T BID 4 OVER 3 IN COMPETITION

Dealer: E  
Vul: NS

	♠ KJ96		
	♥ J632		
	♦ K6		
	♣ J84		
♠ 1075		♠ Q32	
♥ A94		♥ KQ8	
♦ 432		♦ AJ9875	
♣ 10976		♣ Q	
	♠ A82		
	♥ 1075		
	♦ Q10		
	♣ AK532		

E	S	W	N
1D	2C (1)	P	3C (2)
3D (3)	?		

- (1) Generally, for a 2 level overcall you should have 3 honours to 5 cards in the suit or 2 honours to 6 cards. Your hand strength should be not much less than an opening hand. The reason the requirements are so strict compared to a 1 level overcall is that it is much easier to double a 2 level overcall. You should be especially careful vulnerable. Here, South's hand doesn't quite reach this standard, but the club honours are good and the hand strength is well into the opening range. I would overcall 2C.
- (2) Note that North's one level raise of the overcall is NOT an invite to game. It shows 6-9(10) points and is designed to crowd the opponents out of the auction. If you wish to invite an overcaller to game and have support for their suit, you should use the UNASSUMING CUEBID (UCB). The UCB is a cuebid of the opener's suit (2D here). It says you have support and a hand worth (10)11+ points.
- (3) 3D is a poor bid. There is a bridge maxim, "Never go to 3 unless you hear from me". If you ever rebid at the 3 level opposite a passed partner, you should be showing an 8 trick hand. East should just quietly pass – NS are in trouble and looking at -200 but instead East has rescued them and is going for -50 in 3D on good defence.

So, what should South bid over the 3D? In general, in competition, you should NOT be bidding 4 over 3. Too much can go wrong:

- (1) You are almost assuredly going down as the 4 level is game in the majors usually requiring 25+ points. Your opponents know this too and doubles can happen.
- (2) Your opponents might not have been making their 3 level contract and you go down instead (as is the case here),
- (3) If the opponents can make their 3 level contract, you might be going down too far at the 4 level, and
- (4) You might push the opponents into a game they would not have bid.

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On this hand, South bid 4C and managed to escape for -200. It was still a bottom. In addition to the bid of 4 over 3, there were a number of stop signs that South drove through:

- (1) If North is a 9 loser (6-10) from the bidding, added to South's 8 loser gives an equation of  $24 - (8+9) = 7$  tricks. NS have been too high in the bidding already without trying for 10 tricks.
- (2) NS are vulnerable – not the time to be pushy.
- (3) Q10 is a poor and wasted holding in the opposition suit.
- (4) This might only be an 8 card club fit on the bidding (as it is). 4 level distributional raises require 10 trumps or more AND a shortage in one hand.

South should have quietly passed and collected +50 from 3D going 1 down.