Ask Jerry

by Jerry Helms

*Well-known teacher and player **Jerry Helms** answers your bridge questions. Send your questions to jeryhelms@aol.com.*

Dear Jerry: *What should I have rebid as South with this hand after the auction went:*

♠ A K 6 2
♥ J 7 3
♦ A K 9 5 2
♣ 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Double	?

It is too strong for 2♥ but 3♥ would show four-card support. East's takeout double has shown support for spades. Bidding spades doesn't seem right and I didn't want to rebid my diamonds. I thought about a redouble but I wasn't sure what that would show.

—Peter Fortent, ON

Dear Peter: In my opinion, the choice is clear: 1♠. Yes, my right-hand opponent, East, has made a takeout double showing support for clubs and spades. But, East might have only three-card support for spades and spades could be our best trump suit if partner has four of them.

More importantly, the auction isn't over. I intend to show the heart support at my next opportunity. Partner will know I don't have four-card support since I didn't raise right away. Partner will also know I have extra strength since I would have raised to 2♥, even with three-card support, if I had held a minimum opening bid. Finally, partner will know I am short in clubs since I bid diamonds and spades and raised hearts. We'll be well placed to settle on the best contract.

Players in my classes often ask if they should bid a four-card major after their right-hand opponent makes a takeout double. I always say yes. After all, suppose North, on your right, opens 1♦ and you have this hand as East. Wouldn't you make a takeout double? Certainly. This is the best call to get the partnership into the auction, even though you only have three-card support for hearts. Now, suppose this is the complete deal:

	♠ Q 7 ♥ A Q 8 7 ♦ K J 9 7 ♣ 10 7 3	
♠ 10 6 5 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ Q 9 8 2	N W E S	♠ A J 9 4 ♥ J 6 5 ♦ 6 4 ♣ A K 6 5
	♠ K 8 2 ♥ K 9 3 2 ♦ A Q 8 5 ♣ J 4	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Double	?

North-South's best contract is 4♥. They lose only one spade and two club tricks since one of South's spade losers can be trumped in the North hand. If South is afraid to bid hearts because of East's takeout double and decides to raise diamonds or bid notrump instead, the 4–4 heart fit will get lost. South should respond 1♥ despite East's takeout double. North will show support and the partnership will have no difficulty reaching game in hearts.

When an opponent takes an action that doesn't remove your ability to make a natural call, you should tend to bid normally.

Dear Jerry: *My partner opened 1♥ and my right-hand opponent overcalled 1♠. Is this hand too weak and balanced to make a preemptive jump raise to 3♥?*

♠ 7 4
♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ 8 4 2
♣ 7 6 5 2

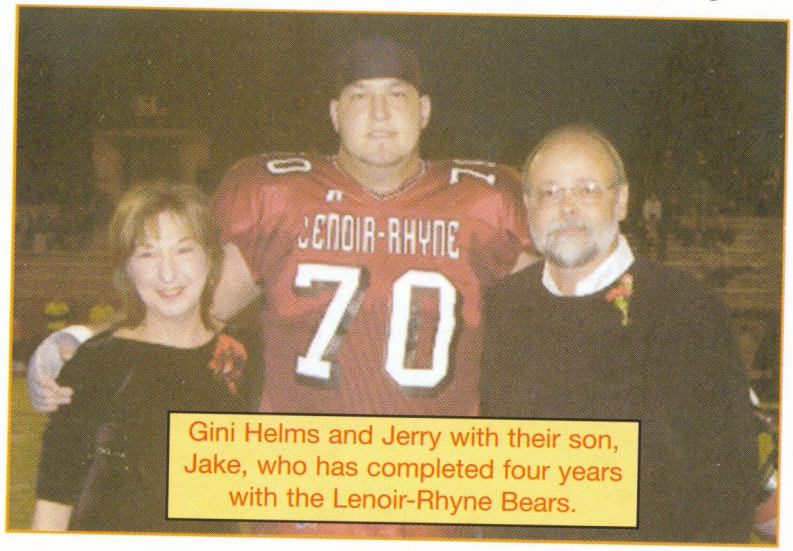
—Jeff Tilson, AZ

Dear Jeff: A jump raise of opener's major suit to the three level after right-hand opponent overcalls or makes a takeout double shows a weak hand and four-card support. Your hand certainly qualifies on both counts.

I'd prefer to have a hand with a little more shape if I'm going to make a preemptive raise with only 2 high-card points. Perhaps something like this. Nonetheless, I'd still make a preemptive jump raise with your hand except at unfavorable vulnerability —when our side is vulnerable and the opponents are not.

♠ 4
♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ 8 7 4 2
♣ 7 6 5 2

There is one proviso. I would want to be sure that my partner is on the same wavelength. If partner can't take a bit of a joke, and would expect a more shapely hand for a preemptive raise, I would simply pass to keep partnership harmony. That's the priority. –*JH*



Gini Helms and Jerry with their son, Jake, who has completed four years with the Lenoir-Rhyne Bears.