



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(111) Leaping Michaels

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Level: 4

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General

When RHO opens a 2-level preempt, they have started eating up our valuable bidding space. But this is just the start of their attack on us. LHO may join in the attack and raise the preempt, making our life even more difficult. When we are bidding over RHO's 2-level preempt we should keep this in mind. We need lots of tools to deal with this situation. Let's look at these options and which hands we use them on:

- Takeout Double – any 3-suited hand, very strong balanced hand, or other big hands.
- 2NT Overcall – Strong balanced hands.
- Overcalls and Jump Overcalls – 1-suited hands.
- Cuebids – Strong trick-oriented hands without a stopper.
- 3NT Overcall – Strong trick-oriented hands with a stopper.

We need a tool for showing 2-suited hands before the auction gets away from us. Leaping Michaels will be our tool for showing 2-suited hands.

Leaping Michaels

Over a 2M preempt, jumping in the other Major shows a strong 1-suited hand ("we don't preempt a preempt.") But if we have a strong hand with a long minor then we are unlikely to go past 3NT. A jump to 4-minor is an illogical call and thus is an excellent candidate to be used as a conventional call. These jumps (leaps) will be used to show the strong two-suited hands.



2♠ ___?

- 4♣ 5+♥, 5+♣, GF hand (usually about a 5-loser or fewer hand)
- 4♦ 5+♥, 5+♦ GF hand

2♥ ___?

- 4♣ 5+♠, 5+♣, GF
- 4♦ 5+♠, 5+♦, GF

2♦ ___?

- 4♦ 5+♠, 5+♥, GF
- 4♣ 5+♣, 5-card Major (not everyone plays this treatment!)

Slam Try by Advancer [RST]

When partner makes a Leaping Michaels bid (showing a good hand) and we have a good hand with support for one of partner's suits we would like to be able to make a slam try, but because the auction has gotten so high so quickly we have very little space to make a try for slam.

My personal approach to this situation (which comes up more frequently than you would expect) is to play 4NT as Keycard in the Major and a cuebid of the opponent's suit as Keycard in the minor.

Example

- 2♥ 4♦* P ___?
- 4♥ Keycard in ♦
 - 4♠ To Play
 - 4NT Keycard in ♠
 - 5♦ To Play

This allows us to clearly try for slam in either of partner's two suits.

Note: If you are not comfortable playing the cuebid as a Keycard ask, then you can play the cuebid as a "slam try in the minor", agreeing on that suit and trying for slam. After that, 4N would be Keycard in the minor.

Conclusion

Leaping Michaels is a great way to show a strong hand with two suits (immediately showing both suits) when the opponent opens a weak-two bid. The convention gives up very little since a jump to 4-minor is almost never bid for something else. It is important to try to find our fit in these auctions – before the opponents can extend the preempt and make our life even more difficult. Discuss these auctions with your partner and upgrade your competitive bidding methods.