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This Week in Bridge

(117) Drury in Competition

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Level: 5

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General

Another conversation to have with partner is “How much Drury do we play?” Not just 1-way vs 2-way Drury, but also how much do we play in competition? Specifically, when do we still have artificial ways of showing a limit raise at a low level and when do we return to normal / standard bidding? Here, we will look at the different approaches (from Drury off in any competition all the way to Drury on all the time) and hopefully facilitate a conversation between you and each of your partners about how much Drury you like to play!

Drury Off in Competition

One of the simplest and most common approaches is to play that Drury is off in competition. If the opponents overcall, we can just use a cuebid (Q=LR+) to show a limit raise. If the opponents make a takeout double, we can start with a XX and then raise partner to show a limit raise. This approach has the advantage of returning all our natural bids to us in a competitive auction, but it has the disadvantage of not allowing us to be able to show a limit raise at a low level (and immediately) – possibly forcing us too high if partner has opened the bidding light. Now, let’s look at more options for how we might keep some of these artificial Drury bids.

Drury On Over X

The “Little Bit of Drury in Competition” approach is to play that over a takeout double, we leave our Drury bids on (and just ignore the double) but that over an overcall, we play that Drury is off – and make a cuebid (Q=LR+) to show a limit raise. This is a nice start to playing Drury in competition. It can be a “gateway drug” to playing more and more Drury in these competitive auctions.

Drury On Vs. 2♦ and Lower

A further upgrade to playing more Drury in competition is to leave Drury on vs. interference below and up to the Drury Bids:

- Vs. X Both 2-way Drury Bids are on
- Vs. P (P) 1♥ (1♠) Both 2-way Drury Bids are on
- Vs. 1NT overcall Both 2-way Drury Bids are on
- Vs. 2♣ X is a 3-card LR (stolen bid style) and 2♦ is a 4-card LR
- Vs. 2♦ X is a 3-card or 4-card LR (not room for both bids here)

This is a style of trying to keep the Drury bids available (both 2♣ and 2♦) whenever reasonable and possible and returning to “natural bidding” if the opponents bid higher than that.

Drury On in All Competition

The other extreme approach (compared to all off in competition) is to play that we always have a Drury bid. This “Always Having an Artificial Limit Raise” approach can be created by extending the previous example (2♦ and lower) to allow X to show a limit raise if the opponents bid 2♥ or higher. This is a simple adjustment, replacing a negative double with a limit raise.)

Another approach to always have a Drury bid available is to play lots of *Transfers in Competition* – especially when you are a passed hand. In that case, the bid right under our suit becomes an artificial limit raise (or X if the opponents have bid the suit right under our suit).

In either of these cases, we can play that a double at the 3-level or higher is a limit raise. This allows for there to almost always be a Drury bid available (artificial limit raise) for a passed hand Responder!

Conclusion

Your approach to Drury in competition is up to you and your partner. But the more you open the bidding light in the 3rd seat and the more you open with 4-card Majors (especially poor suits) the more you will want to have ways to show a limit raise and attempt to stay at a low level! We find that players tend to become either all or nothing people when it comes to Drury – they either want it off in competition or completely on in competition. Whatever you decide to do (there is no right or wrong answer here), the key is for you and partner to agree and then make full use of whatever methods you decide to play!