

The Rochester Sectional tournament is over. It was a big success. Many participants gave us rave reviews for "Rochester Nice". "Rochester Nice" is a step up from "Minnesota Nice". Many of us heard participants say that they love the Rochester tournament and the friendly atmosphere they enjoy here. This a great statement for our club. The Board of Directors ordered a celebration – Good idea!!

OK, enough about "Rochester Nice". I want to talk about "Rochester Serious". I am suggesting that you work on making your opponent's life a "living hell". Interfering in the bidding as much as possible, more penalty doubles, pushing the opponents bidding to higher levels, getting back at experienced players that consistently reduce your position on the leader board and finally, ~~learning to smile in a manner that looks friendly but has an "in your face" aspect to it~~ (better leave this one out).

Have you ever noticed that some of our "Rochester Nice" members seem to be downright pushy? They do most of the things listed above. Their names are frequently at the top of the leader board. When you sit down at their table you get: "Welcome to Table 7. We hope you enjoy your time here". Why wouldn't they welcome you? Fresh meat!

It may sound like I am picking on these good players. No! I like pushy players. They make you think. They "push" you into really difficult decisions. Research is showing that the mental and social aspects of playing bridge have many health benefits. Be thankful for the health benefits that these caring people provide.

But, to compete with these nice people, you might have to jack up your own "pushiness". I have a couple of small suggestions that might help:

1. Suppose RHO opens 1♦. If you don't have a biddable major and 2♣ is a possibility, s-t-r-e-t-c-h to make that bid. This doesn't induce the "living hell" state, but it is a little pushy. The opponents don't get to bid a major at the one level. This can complicate their bidding. It's a start.
2. In this bidding sequence,

1♥	pass	2♥	pass
pass	you?		

You need to think carefully before you lay the pass card down. The opponents have found an 8-card major fit and likely own at least half the points in the deck. If you have good defensive possibilities, pass. If not, letting them have it at the 2-level doesn't sound like the percentage play to me. Look hard for a bid to "push" the opponents higher. Down one could very well be a good board for you. **Note:** Pass is still an option. Don't do something crazy.

To bid, you should have a good suit - the likelihood of being doubled is less. Don't overlook a takeout double as the bid you need. Your partner may leave it in. Partner may be lying in the weeds and thinking along the "living hell" possibility for the opponents. Give him a chance to demonize them. This could be much more than creating a minor annoyance.

PUSH!

Arne