

## Tip of the Month

December 2004

When partner opens 1♣ and you have four diamonds and four hearts, there is an unresolved dispute concerning whether you should respond 1♦ or 1♥. When we first learned bridge, we were taught to respond “up-the-line” with 4-card suits when responding at the 1-level to the opening bidder. This suggests responding 1♦ with the aforementioned distribution. The theory is that the opener will bid his hearts at his second turn and you can support him. Basically, this is a fine idea. The problem is that sometimes the opponents want to play also. **THEY BID AFTER THE 1D RESPONSE.** When that happens, the previous plan won't work and there could be a problem finding your 4-4 heart fit, especially if opener has a minimum and can't bid after the opponent's interference.

We have a workable suggestion. When responder has a good hand, he should follow the guidelines and bid up-the-line respond 1♦. The principle involved is that if the opponents bid, responder can subsequently double to show a decent (10+ HCP) hand. The December 2004 Hand of the Month illustrates this concept, perfectly. When responder does not have a good hand, it has been our experience that responding in your strong 4-card suit works best. Therefore, if holding the East 1 hand below, respond 1♦; if holding East 2, respond 1♥; and if holding East 3, either seems acceptable but with only 8 HCP, we would respond 1♥.

East 1  
♠ 432  
♥ J764  
♦ AK65  
♣ 87

East 2  
♠ 432  
♥ AK65  
♦ J764  
♣ 87

East 3  
♠ 432  
♥ KT65  
♦ AJ64  
♣ 87

