

Bidding in 3rd seat - tactical strokes for tactical folks

You are the dealer and find yourself looking at this hand.

AKJ43
Q54
654
43

It is a hand with some promise and in many ways you would quite like to open. If you *did* open then partner would know to lead a spade if they were on lead , and you might put the opponents off from bidding to their best contract. All that is a pipe dream of course because if you *do* open , partner will assume you have opening points and will quite possibly propel your side too high. It certainly is not safe to open 1Sp in 1st seat (or 2nd seat).

Suppose though you are in third seat after two passes :

N	E	S	W
Pass	Pass	?	

In this seat you know that partner hasn't got an opening hand { and therefore won't push you too high } so the reasons for opening 1Sp become that more persuasive.

In fact if you do open a tactical 1Sp in this 3rd seat then you may even "buy" the contract { as the opponents may find it hard to compete with modest values }. And if the opponents are the ones who play the contract... partner will know to lead your suit.

Don't have any qualms on ethical grounds about bidding this way ; it has been part of the Acol system from the beginning and is in no way sharp practice .

To reiterate -in 3rd seat after partner has passed it is acceptable to open the bidding on less values than you need in 1st or 2nd seats. Ten points and even nine might be enough if you have a good suit that you want partner to know about. Such bids can hardly go wrong as you know partner won't have enough points to raise you too high.

Should partner be suspicious when you open a suit in 3rd seat ? No , not in the least. After all you may have a completely sound opening bid with bushels of points. They should respond as per normal and not give the possibility that their partner has opened a tactical bid even a seconds thought.

Overcalls too in 3rd seat may be *shaded* . If the opponents open 1Cl and you hold :-

AKJ54	N	E	S	W
432	P	1C	1S	
654				
32				

It would be a bit rich to overcall 1Sp in *2nd seat* but in 3rd seat ? Well for the reasons previously discussed it is a lot safer and may pay off. I would be happy to overcall with 1Sp not vulnerable in 3rd seat *because partner has already passed*.

