

THE BRIDGE COMPANION



Newsletter for the advancing bridge player.

A compilation of material
from previous issues.

Sampler

This article first appeared in Issue #2 Sep/Oct 1994.

The Decision

How do you answer the question, "What denomination?". As responder, answering this question is one of your primary objectives. The answer is the fact that every suit has 13 cards. If one side or the other together holds 7 cards in a particular suit, then they hold a bare majority of that suit (7 cards versus 6 cards). If together they hold 8 cards then they possess a comfortable majority (8 cards versus 5 cards). Notice that adding just one card to your combined holding increases your advantage from a 1 card edge to a 3 card edge. Holding 8 cards together is known as a "fit", as in the hands "fit" together well. The presence of a fit is what you should use as the basis for your decision.

The basic framework of the entire bidding language has been designed around locating a fit in a suit. The primary thrust is around the major suits, ♠ and ♥, because they score so well (30 points per trick as opposed to 20 points per trick for the minors). The reason we want to play in a trump fit is two fold. First, a trump contract gives us additional choices during the play such as trumping losers in the dummy. These plays are not available to us at no trump contracts. Secondly, a trump contract tends to take one more trick than the no trump contract. If you make 9 tricks at no trump you can usually take 10 tricks in a trump suit.

...8 cards together is known as a "fit", as in the hands "fit"

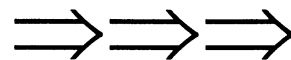
On partscore hands you want to locate and play in any suit fit of which you are aware. Likewise on slam hands you should play in any suit fit that you can determine. On game hands the decision is slightly different. It is very important that you locate, and play in, any major suit fit (eight cards or more). These hands should be played in 4♥ or 4♠. The rest of the game hands are generally played in 3NT unless you have a very strong reason why you should not. You should play virtually all hands with a minor suit fit in 3NT. It is much easier to take 9 tricks at no trump than trying to take 11 tricks at 5♣ or 5♦. Consider the next 100 hands that you come across that have game values and do not possess a major suit fit. To give you some idea of frequency, you should probably play 5♣ or 5♦ once and 3NT 99 times.

Quality of the trump suit has nothing to do with the decision. The decision is based strictly upon the NUMBER of cards in the suit (8 or more). The strength of your hand is used for the "What level?" question, NOT the "What denomination?" question. If

(Continued on page 2)

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
Want to
improve
your
Bridge?

Look
inside



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Send all correspondence to:

THE BRIDGE COMPANION

P.O. Box 752652

Houston, TX 77275-2652

gking@bridgecompanion.com

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Gary King-Editor/Writer/Publisher

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The Decision

(Continued from page 1)

you and partner together hold 26 points or more and eight hearts, then you should play 4♥. If you and partner together hold 26 points and do not hold 8 hearts or 8 spades then you should play 3NT, even if you have a fit in a minor suit.

Many students worry about picking a trump suit that is poor in quality. Please do not concern yourself. It is the number, not the quality, that is important. Consider a hand where you and partner have exactly 26 points (game values) and 8 spades. Collectively your spades are the 98765432.

There are 10 points available in each suit (A+K+Q+J=10). Together you and partner have 26 points and not one of them is located in spades. All 26 are located in hearts, diamonds, and clubs. There are only 30 points total available in hearts and diamonds and clubs and you have 26 of them. The greatest majority of the time you will not have any losers outside of the trump suit.

You have 8 spades and that leaves 5 for the opponents. You would expect an ODD number of missing cards to break as evenly as possible (3-2) more than half the time. If the spades divide among the opponents as you expect, then you have only 3 losers which is what you are allowed in 4♠.

Note that if you add values to your spade suit you would have to take them away from some other suit (if you want to maintain exactly 26 points). Can you see that you are just moving your losers from one suit to another?

Think of your decision in terms of the big picture. Base the denomination question around the critical factor of the suit fit. On a partscore or slam hand, any suit fit will suffice. On game hands you should play in major suit fits or 3NT. It really is that simple.



Captain - Crew

This article first appeared in Issue #1
Jul/Aug 1994.

Most students bring a hand with a problem and start the conversation with, "I was trying to tell partner that....". That's usually the problem! Everyone is busily TELLING and nobody is busy LISTENING. Take a simple auction:

West	North	East	South
	INT	Pass	?

Which member of the North-South partnership has the most information about the combined assets of N-S? The answer is South, of course. South knows that partner has a balanced hand and 16, 17, or 18 points. South also knows exactly what assets that he holds. North, on the other hand, only knows what is in his hand and knows NOTHING about South's hand. As it turns out, responder is always in the position of knowing the most about the combined hands.

As a result, the RESPONDER is the captain. It is the captain's job to steer the partnership to the correct contract. The captain is constantly trying to answer the two bidding questions:

What level?

What denomination?

That translates to: responder being the LISTENER. The collector of information. It is the responder's job to get the partnership to the right contract. Opener is the DESCRIBER, the crew, the teller of information. It is the opener's job to describe their hand as accurately as possible so that the captain can make a good decision.

As with most conversations, it works so much better when everyone understands their role. One person talks and the other listens. Responder makes the final decision or issues conditional orders.



Short articles such as Captain-Crew cover specific critical issues.

Step-by-Step develops analysis tools, problem solving skills and ordered thinking.

The main feature runs 4-6 pages and ends with an exercise to test your new knowledge!

Step by Step

INSTRUCTIONS:

Step by Step is a bridge problem presented in serial form. Read each panel and work out the answer to the question or questions asked before turning to the continuation. This is similar to the thinking process you should go through as you bid and play a hand. There are a total of three panels in this problem.

This feature first appeared in Issue #9 Nov/Dec 1995.

[1]

Sitting South you pick up:

♠AQ10 ♥KJ ♦7 ♣AKJ9872

Without a doubt a very good hand. By the original count method a value of 21 points. Eighteen in honor cards and three extra for the seven card club suit. A good hand, but we will need partner to have some help before game is assured. You open your longest suit, 1♣. West passes, partner responds 3♣, and East passes. The bidding is back to you. What do you know so far from the auction? What are the instructions? How should you proceed?

<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
???			

Partner's hand:

How many clubs does partner have?

3 4 5 6

Does North have 4 spades? Y N

Does North have 4 hearts? Y N

Minimum strength for North: _____

Maximum strength for North: _____

Hand evaluation:

Has the strength of your hand changed?

Yes No Cannot tell

What is value of your hand in support of clubs (use the shortness method)? _____

Combined strength:

Based on the shortness method, the minimum and maximum point count for North and South together?

Minimum: _____ Maximum: _____

What level: Partscore Game Slam

What denomination: What is the question that you need to ask?

Step by Step

[2]

♠AQ10 ♥KJ ♦7 ♣AKJ9872

<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
???			

The North hand does not have either 4 hearts or 4 spades and is even unlikely to have 4 diamonds. North does have 5 or 6 clubs. Partner must be certain of a fit to support a minor and we might have had only a 3 card suit. Together you have 12 or 13 clubs! The strength for the North hand is 11 or 12 points. The value for your hand increased slightly to 22 should you decide to play in clubs (18 HCP plus 3 for the singleton diamond and 1 for the doubleton heart). Together the North-South hands are worth 33 or 34 points. This is a hand in the slam zone. The only thing that would keep you from bidding a slam is if the opponents have two aces. Blackwood should take care of things. You should bid 4NT (Blackwood ace asking convention). If partner shows no aces by bidding 5♣ you will pass. If partner shows one (5♦) or two (5♥) you will bid 6♣. The auction continues with partner showing two:

<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

The opening lead is the ♦K and the much awaited dummy comes into view:

<u>North</u>
♠954
♥A4
♦A96
♣Q10543

Your objective is 12 tricks. You can afford one loser.

<u>South</u>
♠AQ10
♥KJ
♦4
♣AKJ9872

How many sure tricks do you have? _____

What is the best choice of alternatives for developing the needed extra trick?

How would estimate your chances for success?

< 50% 50% > 50%

Step by Step

[3]

You have 11 top tricks (7 clubs, 1 spade, 2 hearts, and 1 diamond).

You have two potential spade losers that might be disposed of by means of a finesse. The finesse in spades is actually a double finesse (missing both the ♠J and the ♠K). If either finesse works your slam will be home. Remember that in a double finesse you must finesse for the lower honor first. Your plan will be to travel to dummy and play a spade to the ♠10:

- If it loses to the ♠J then, after regaining the lead, you will travel back to dummy and take a finesse against the ♠K.
- If it loses to the ♠K you now have 12 tricks.
- If it wins you can go back over to dummy and take the spade finesse against the ♠K and make seven!

An excellent line of play that rates to work about 75% of the time. Winning either one of two finesses equates to 75%.

As good as that might be there is a better line of play (a 100% line!!). Simply time the first spade finesse so that if it loses, West must do some of your work. Delay the first spade finesse until you have removed all other possibilities from West.

<u>North</u>
♠954
♥—
♦—
♣10543

Win the ♦A. Trump a diamond in the South hand.

<u>South</u>
♠AQ10
♥—
♦—
♣AKJ2

Lead a trump to dummy's ♣Q (this pulls the only outstanding trump) and trump the last small diamond in the South hand. Now cash the ♥K and then the ♥A. All red cards have been eliminated from your hand as shown on the right. Now take the finesse against the ♠J. If it loses, West must give you your 12th trick with a free spade finesse or a ruff-sluff with his return of a red card!

♠♥♦♣

THE BRIDGE COMPANION Modern Bidding Reference

HAND EVALUATION (Work Point Count)

Length method: A=4 K=3 Q=2 J=1
add 1 for every card over 4 in any and every suit

Shortness method: A=4 K=3 Q=2 J=1
add for void=5 singleton=3 doubleton=1

OPENING 1 LEVEL BIDS (CREW)

Minimum suit length promised on initial bid:
1♠/1♦ = 3+ cards 1♥/1♠ = 5+ cards
1NT or 2NT = balanced hand 4-3-3-3 4-4-3-2 5-3-3-2

Priorities for choosing what to open at the 1 level:

1st- Open 1NT any time you have 16, 17, or 18 points and a balanced hand.

2nd- If you cannot open 1NT, open your longest suit, provided:

(a)- If it is a major suit (♥ or ♠) your suit must be at least 5 cards long. Any quality will do, even ♠65432.

(b)- If you are prohibited from bidding a major suit, open your longest minor suit.

3rd- If you have two suits, both 5 cards long, open the higher ranking one.

4th- If your minor suits are equal in length:

(a)- Open 1♦ when you have 4 diamonds and 4 clubs.

(b)- Open 1♣ when you have 3 diamonds and 3 clubs.

RESPONDING TO 1NT OPENING (CAPTAIN)

Pass = 0-7 points, no suit over 4 cards long except maybe clubs (Signoff).

2♣ = 8+ points, Stayman Convention, asks if opener has a 4 card major suit (Forcing).
Opener rebids as follows:
2♦ = no 4 card major suit
2♥ = 4 card heart suit
2♠ = 4 card spade suit

2♦ = 0-7 points, 5+ card suit (Signoff).

2♥ = 0-7 points, 5+ card suit (Signoff).

2♠ = 0-7 points, 5+ card suit (Signoff).

2NT = 8-9 points, asks opener to pass on a minimum (16-17) or bid 3NT on a maximum (17*-18) (Invitational).

3♥/3♠ = 10-14 points, exactly a 5 card suit, responder is asking opener to bid the correct game, 3NT without a fit, 4 of the major with a fit (Forcing).

3NT = 10-14 points, no hope of a major suit fit (Signoff).

4♥/4♠ = 10-14 points, 6+ card suit - known fit (Signoff).

4NT = 15-16 points, Quantitative. Invites opener to bid a slam on a maximum (6NT) or pass with a minimum.

RESPONDING TO 1♥/1♠ OPENING (CAPTAIN)

Since opener has shown a 5 card suit raising with a fit is first priority. New suits by responder are forcing. Raising and bidding no trump are invitational. Passing is the only signoff.

With 0-5 points

Pass, with any distribution. (Signoff).

With 6-10 points

1st- Raise one step with 3+ card support.
Example: 1♠-2♣. (Invitational).

2nd- Bid new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit.
Example: 1♥-1♠. (Forcing).

3rd- Bid 1NT, the catch all.
Example: 1♥-1NT. (Invitational).

RESPONDING TO 1♥/1♠ OPENING (CAPTAIN)

With 11-12 points

1st- Raise two steps with 3+ card support.
Example: 1♥-3♥. (Invitational).

2nd- Bid a new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit.
Example: 1♥-1♠. (Forcing).

3rd- Bid a new suit at the 2 level with generally a 5+ card suit.
Example: 1♠-2♦. (Forcing).

With 13+ points

1st- With 3+ card support use a two step process. Bid a new suit and then game next time.
Example: 1♥-2♦-2NT-4♥. (2♦ is Forcing. 4♥ is Signoff).

2nd- Bid a new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit.
Example: 1♥-1♠. (Forcing).

3rd- Bid a new suit at the 2 level with generally a 5+ card suit.
Example: 1♠-2♦. (Forcing).

4th- Bid 2NT with 13-15 points and a balanced hand. Generally shows 2 cards in opener's major suit.
Example: 1♥-2NT. (Forcing).

5th- Bid 3NT with 16-18 points and a balanced hand. Generally shows 2 card in opener's major suit.
Example: 1♠-3NT. (Invitational).

RESPONDING TO 1♣/1♦ OPENING (CAPTAIN)

Since opener may only have a 3 card suit searching for a major suit fit is first priority. New suits by responder are forcing. Raising and bidding no trump are invitational. Passing is the only signoff.

With 0-5 points

Pass, with any distribution. (Signoff).

With 6-10 points

1st- Bid new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit, especially a major suit.
Example: 1♣-1♠. (Forcing).

2nd- Raise one step with 5+ card support (partner might only have three!).
Example: 1♦-2♦. (Invitational).

3rd- Bid 1NT, the catch all.
Example: 1♦-1NT. (Invitational).

With 11-12 points

1st- Bid new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit, especially a major suit.
Example: 1♣-1♠. (Forcing).

2nd- Bid a new suit at the 2 level if you have to, with generally 5+ card suit.
Example: 1♦-2♣. (Forcing).

3rd- Raise two steps with 5+ card support (partner might only have three!).
Example: 1♣-3♣. (Invitational).

With 13+ points

1st- Bid new suit at the 1 level with a 4+ card suit, especially a major suit.
Example: 1♣-1♠. (Forcing).

2nd- Bid a new suit at the 2 level if you have to, with generally 5+ card suit.
Example: 1♦-2♣. (Forcing).

3rd- Bid 2NT with 13-15 points, a balanced hand, and no new 4+ card suit.
Example: 1♦-2NT. (Forcing).

4th- Bid 3NT with 16-18 points, a balanced hand, and no new 4+ card suit.
Example: 1♣-3NT. (Invitational).

THE BRIDGE COMPANION Modern Bidding Reference

REBIDS by OPENER (CREW)

- ⊖ After an INVITATIONAL bid you may CHOOSE to pass. Bid if the possibility of game still exists.
- ⊖ After a FORCING bid you must bid. Try to narrow the description of your hand in terms of strength and shape.
- ⊖ INVITATIONAL bids are raises of your suit and some no trump responses.
- ⊖ FORCING bids are bids in new suits and any bid below game when both partners know game values exist.
- ⊖ Bids in second suits by opener or responder promise only a four card suit.
- ⊖ Strength breakdown:
Minimum = 13-16 Medium = 17-18 Maximum = 19-21

Minimum (13-16):

- (1) Pass, if responder raised your suit one step or if responder bid 1NT and you have no second suit or extra length
Example: 1♠-2♦-P or 1♠-2♠-P and 1♥-1NT-P or 1♠-1NT-P.
- (2) Support responders major suit at the lowest level with 4+ cards.
Example: 1♠-1♥-2♥.
- (3) Bid a new suit at the 1 level with 4+ cards.
Example: 1♠-1♥-1♠ or 1♠-1♦-1♥.
- (4) Bid a new suit at the 2 level if lower ranking than your first bid suit with 4+ cards.
Example: 1♠-2♦-2♥ or 1♠-1♠-2♠.
- (5) Bid no trump at lowest level with 13-15 and a balanced hand.
Example: 1♥-1♠-1NT or 1♠-1♠-1NT or 1♠-2♠-2NT.
- (6) Rebid your original suit with extra length (6+ cards if a major suit and 5+ cards if a minor suit).
Example: 1♥-1♠-2♥ or 1♦-2♠-2♦.

Medium (17-18):

- (1) Re-raise to 3 level if responder raised your suit
Example: 1♥-2♥-3♥ or 1♠-2♠-3♠.
- (2) Jump raise responder's major suit.
Example: 1♠-1♥-3♥ or 1♥-1♠-3♠.
- (3) Bid a new suit at the 1 level with 4+ cards.
Example: 1♦-1♥-1♠ or 1♠-1♦-1♠.
- (4) Bid a new suit at 2 level with 4+ cards even if higher ranking than the first bid suit.
Example: 1♥-2♠-2♦ or 1♦-1♠-2♥ or 1♠-1♠-2♦.
- (5) Jump rebid in the original suit with extra length (6+ cards in both major and minor suits).
Example: 1♦-1♠-3♦ or 1♥-2♠-3♥ or 1♥-1♠-3♥.

Maximum (19-21):

- (1) Bid game if responder raised your major suit.
Example: 1♥-2♥-4♥ or 1♠-3♠-4♠.
- (2) Support responder's major suit with 4 card support at the game level.
Example: 1♦-1♥-4♥ or 1♥-1♠-4♠.
- (3) Jump rebid in no trump with 19-21 points and a balanced hand.
Example: 1♠-1♥-2NT or 1♠-2♦-3NT.
- (4) Jump rebid in a new suit with 4+ cards if it is lower ranking than your first bid suit.
Example: 1♥-1♠-3♠ or 1♠-1NT-3♥.
- (5) Bid new suit at the lowest level with 4+ cards if it is higher ranking than your first bid suit.
Example: 1♥-2♦-2♠ or 1♠-1♠-2♥.

REBIDS by RESPONDER (CAPTAIN)

Add combined values of both hands and decide if it is a game or part score. What denomination? What level?

RESPONDERS REBIDS with 6-10

After opener shows minimum, 13-16, (partscore hand):

- (1) pass if in best fit
- (2) bid 1NT if still at 1 level
- (3) rebid at the 2 level in a suit already mentioned by the partnership

After opener shows medium, 17-18, (partscore hand or game hand):

- (1) w/6-8, pass or bid previously bid suit at the lowest level
- (2) w/9-10, bid game or a new suit (forcing) to get more information from opener

After opener shows maximum, 19-21, (game hand):

- (1) pass if partnership already at game
- (2) bid game if you know the correct spot
- (3) bid a new suit (forcing) to get more information from opener

RESPONDERS REBIDS with 11-12

After opener shows a minimum, 13-16, (partscore hand or game hand):

- (1) bid 2NT to invite game
- (2) rebid suit previously mentioned by the partnership at the 3 level

After opener shows a medium, 17-18, or maximum, 19-21, (game):

- (1) bid game
- (2) bid a new suit (forcing) to get more information from opener

RESPONDERS REBIDS with 13+

After opener shows a minimum 13-16, medium 17-18, or maximum 19-21 (game hand):

- (1) bid game if you know the correct spot
- (2) bid a new suit (forcing) to get more information from opener

Note: If opener has 19-21 the partnership may belong in slam.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

There are two ways to enter the auction after the opponents have opened the bidding. Your goal changes dramatically. After the opponents have opened it is unlikely that your side possesses enough strength to bid game. Therefore your bidding is designed around finding a fit and playing in a partscore. On hands where your choice of suits is clear you should overcall. On hands where you have the strength but need partner's assistance in picking from among the unbid suits, you should make a takeout double.

OVERCALL

1. At least a five card suit or longer (this applies to all four suits).
2. A minimum of 9-10 points if you overcall at the one level.
Example: 1♠ by RHO, 1♥ by you.
3. A minimum of 12-13 points if you overcall at the two level.
Example: 1♠ by RHO, 2♦ by you.
4. A GOOD QUALITY suit. If we defend partner will lead your suit!
5. New suits by partner are NOT forcing. Raises are invitational.

TAKEOUT DOUBLE

1. A minimum of 12-13 points. You may count support points to determine your strength.
2. Support for ALL the unbid suits.
3. Opponents must have opened with a suit bid. Doubles of no trump openings are PENALTY.

Interpret the Bidding

This feature first appeared in Issue #5 Mar/Apr 1995

Instructions: Across the top row are given two auctions (in a regular issue five to seven auctions are presented). For each auction answer the questions listed down the first column. Responder is the captain. Opener is the teller/describer. Responder is the collector of information and the final decision maker. The auctions are per the Modern Bidding Summary. The answers and a brief narrative is provided.

Regularly appearing features are designed to sharpen your skills!

"Interpret the Bidding" works on defensive skills and bidding visualization.

"Test your _____" provides a "pop quiz" on a variety of topics.

<p style="text-align: center;">↗ Auctions Questions ↘</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">#1</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>North</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>South</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	1♣	1♠	2♥	3♠	4♠	Pass	<p style="text-align: center;">#2</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>North</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>South</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	1♦	1♠	2NT	3♠	4♠	Pass
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1♦	1♠																	
2NT	3♠																	
4♠	Pass																	
<p style="text-align: center;">Point Value Based upon the entire auction, what are the upper and lower limits for each hand? ➤</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>North:</u> Minimum value: _____ Maximum value: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>South:</u> Minimum value: _____ Maximum value: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>North:</u> Minimum value: _____ Maximum value: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>South:</u> Minimum value: _____ Maximum value: _____</p>																
<p style="text-align: center;">Shape Based upon the auction, are these hands balanced, unbalanced, or can you tell? ➤</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>North:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced <input type="checkbox"/> Unbalanced <input type="checkbox"/> Can't tell</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>South:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced <input type="checkbox"/> Unbalanced <input type="checkbox"/> Can't tell</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>North:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced <input type="checkbox"/> Unbalanced <input type="checkbox"/> Can't tell</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>South:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced <input type="checkbox"/> Unbalanced <input type="checkbox"/> Can't tell</p>																
<p style="text-align: center;">Distribution Based upon the entire auction, what are the possible holdings in the indicated suits? Check all boxes that apply. ➤</p>	<p>A. How many spades are in the North hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4</p> <p>B. How many spades are in the South hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7</p> <p>C. How many clubs are in the North hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>D. How many hearts are in the North hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6</p>	<p>A. How many spades are in the North hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>B. How many spades are in the South hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7</p> <p>C. How many diamonds are in the North hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6</p> <p>D. How many hearts are in the South hand? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4</p>																

Interpret the Bidding - Answers

Test YOUR Opening Lead

#1 North opened 1♣ and rebid 2♥. This is known as a reverse (opener bid the suits in "reverse" order from the norm or expected order). A reverse shows a medium or maximum strength hand (17-21) and the first suit is **always longer**. The South hand is 11-12 points. Responder rebids a suit previously bid by the partnership at the 3 level with 11-12. North is unbalanced with at least 5 clubs, at least 4 hearts, and at least 2 spades. South's 3♠ rebid shows a 6+ card suit and South is therefore unbalanced. North could have 2 or 3 spades. With 4 spades North would support spades immediately and with none or one would bid 3NT over the 3♠ rebid by responder. South has at least 6 spades. North has at least 5 clubs but might occasionally have 6. North has exactly 4 hearts.

#2 North opened 1♦ and rebid 2NT to show a balanced hand too powerful to open 1NT. North's minimum would be 19 and the maximum 21. South needed 6 points to respond 1♠. After North rebid 2NT the partnership had game values and so South further bidding did not promise any more than the original 6 points. However, South expressed no interest in a slam and therefore is limited to a maximum of 11 (11+ 21=32). North is definitely balanced. South may or may not be balanced, it is impossible to tell from the auction. North should have exactly 3 spades. With 4 North would have supported spades immediately and with only 2 North would have bid 3NT over 3♠. South should have exactly 5 spades. With only 4 spades and no support from opener, responder would have bid 3NT over 2NT. With 6 or more spades South would have bid 4♠ directly over 2NT. North may have 4 or 5 diamonds and still be balanced. North can no longer have a 3 card diamond suit. The only hand you open with a 3 card diamond suit has 4 cards in both majors (4-4-3-2). With 4 spades opener would have supported spades immediately and not rebid 2NT. South cannot have more than 3 hearts. With a 4 card heart suit (or longer) South would have explored for a possible heart fit.

♠♥♦♣

①	♠4 ♥10985 ♦QJ87 ♣QJ102	You	LHO	Partner	RHO
		Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
		Pass	3NT	Double	All Pass

②	♠A4 ♥A953 ♦87632 ♣A7	You	LHO	Partner	RHO
		Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

These problems first appeared in Issue #17 Mar/Apr 1997.

①	You	LHO	Partner	RHO
	♠4 ♥10985 ♦QJ87 ♣QJ102	♠J953 ♥A ♦A963 ♣K743	♠AKQ102 ♥643 ♦54 ♣985	♠876 ♥KQJ72 ♦K102 ♣A6

Until partner doubled, the ♣Q or the ♦7 were the leads of choice. Partner clearly thinks that they will not make 3NT. His double asks you to lead dummy's first bid suit, in this case a spade. If you led a spade, down one. Any other, 3NT making.

②	You	LHO	Partner	RHO
	♠A4 ♥A953 ♦87632 ♣A7	♠J95 ♥K87 ♦AJ9 ♣J1063	♠87632 ♥J64 ♦54 ♣542	♠KQ10 ♥Q102 ♦KQ10 ♣KQ98

You have 12 HCP and the opponents bid to 3NT. Partner has at most a queen or jack. Lead the suit that has the greatest trick potential. Lead your fourth best diamond, the ♦3. If you lead and continue diamonds down one. Any other, 3NT making.

"Test your ..." features have appeared covering Opening Lead, Stayman, Opener's Rebid, and Third Hand Play.

BIDDING CHALLENGE

INSTRUCTIONS

This is a good exercise to work with partner. If you are without a regular partner cover the auctions with a blank sheet of paper and work out how each hand should be bid. Compare your results to the auctions shown. There are four West and four East hands shown below. Bid each West hand with each East hand. That provides a total of sixteen different hands to bid together. As you do the exercise notice how you choose to bid each hand. Take note of the similarities and differences as you bid the same hand with four different hands from partner. Either you and/or partner should record the auction and the hand numbers. The West hands are labeled [1] through [4] and the East hands are labeled [A] through [D]. On Pages 8-9 you will find the correct auction for each of the sixteen possible combinations ([1][A], [3][C], [4][D], etc.). You may find it easier to bid only three or four hands before stopping to look up the proper auctions and discuss the results with partner. These problems appeared in Issue #18 May/June 1997.

WEST HANDS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 West
 ♠K104
 ♥AQ84
 ♦K10762
 ♣A</p> | <p>2 West
 ♠K4
 ♥AQ84
 ♦K10762
 ♣A8</p> |
| <p>3 West
 ♠4
 ♥AQ84
 ♦K10762
 ♣A86</p> | <p>4 West
 ♠K4
 ♥AQ84
 ♦K1072
 ♣AK8</p> |

EAST HANDS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A East
 ♠AJ765
 ♥97
 ♦83
 ♣J1093</p> | <p>B East
 ♠AJ765
 ♥10976
 ♦Q83
 ♣9</p> |
| <p>C East
 ♠AJ76
 ♥976
 ♦83
 ♣J1097</p> | <p>D East
 ♠AJ76
 ♥1097
 ♦Q8
 ♣Q973</p> |

BIDDING CHALLENGE RESULTS

<p>1 West ♠K104 ♥AQ84 ♦K10762 ♣A</p>	<p>East ♠AJ765 ♥97 ♦83 ♣J1093</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>East</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	East	1♦	1♠	2♥	2♠	4♠	Pass				
West	East													
1♦	1♠													
2♥	2♠													
4♠	Pass													

2♥ rebid is a reverse. Describes a 17-21 point hand with more cards in the first bid suit (diamonds) than the second bid suit (hearts). It also promises a second rebid. West shows secondary spade support (3 cards) and 19-21 points with the 4♠ rebid. A 3♠ rebid at this point would limit West to 17-18 or medium strength.

<p>1 West ♠K104 ♥AQ84 ♦K10762 ♣A</p>	<p>East ♠AJ765 ♥10976 ♦Q83 ♣9</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>East</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	East	1♦	1♠	2♥	4♥	Pass					
West	East													
1♦	1♠													
2♥	4♥													
Pass														

Once again the value of the West hand rises after the heart fit is found. The 4♥ rebid by East indicates no interest in slam, even if West has a maximum hand. West is only allowed to bid with an extraordinary hand that has not yet been able to show full potential such as ♠x ♥AQJx ♦AKJxxxx ♣A.

<p>1 West ♠K104 ♥AQ84 ♦K10762 ♣A</p>	<p>East ♠AJ76 ♥976 ♦83 ♣J1097</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>East</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	East	1♦	1♠	2♥	2NT	3♦	Pass				
West	East													
1♦	1♠													
2♥	2NT													
3♦	Pass													

When East bids 2NT rather than 2♠, West knows that no spade fit exists. Anytime responder rebids 2 of the original major or 2NT the partnership may quit below game. All other bids are forcing to game. Without an established fit and with only 17-18, the opener should rebid the lower suit to stay low.

<p>1 West ♠K104 ♥AQ84 ♦K10762 ♣A</p>	<p>East ♠AJ76 ♥1097 ♦Q8 ♣Q973</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>East</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	East	1♦	1♠	2♥	3NT	Pass					
West	East													
1♦	1♠													
2♥	3NT													
Pass														

The 3NT rebid by East indicates game interest only and no interest in slam even if West has maximum strength hand. West will only bid again with an extraordinary hand. Once again, the failure of East to rebid 2♠ precludes any possibility of a spade fit.

2	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
A	♥AQ84	♥97	2♥	2♠
	♦K10762	♦83	2NT	3♦
	♣A8	♣J1093	Pass	

The 2NT rebid by West must show 2-4-5-2 or 1-4-5-3 distribution and only 17-18 (a 3NT rebid would be 19-21). The East hand is very marginal and unlikely to produce nine tricks needed for 3NT. East picks the best spot. After showing 17-18 and with partner only taking a preference, West must pass.

2	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
B	♥AQ84	♥10976	2♥	4♥
	♦K10762	♦Q83	Pass	
	♣A8	♣9		

The East hand is worth 10 points after the heart fit is found but still short of the needed 33-34 points for slam. A very sound contract with lots of alternatives for extra tricks. The spade suit and the diamond suit both offer extra trick potential. Take two finesses in trumps, first against the jack and then against the king.

2	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
C	♥AQ84	♥976	2♥	2NT
	♦K10762	♦83	3♦	Pass
	♣A8	♣J1097		

3NT would have little or no play so this partscore is probably as good as you were going to get. When you have good hands the bidding can get high pretty fast. Without a fit, that spells trouble. With any luck you can take a successful spade finesse and discard a club loser. A diamond to the king is a 30-35% chance.

2	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
D	♥AQ84	♥1097	2♥	3NT
	♦K10762	♦Q8	Pass	
	♣A8	♣Q973		

Just about any opening lead will help you. Best would be to start diamonds early by leading a small diamond towards the queen. You can finesse the diamond ten the other direction. The club nine is an important card. Even if it is not a trick the opponents may not be able to set up clubs because of it.

3	West	East	West	East
	♠4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
A	♥AQ84	♥97	2♦	Pass
	♦K10762	♦83		
	♣A86	♣J1093		

Without the values for a reverse, opener must rebid the diamond suit. If East has four hearts then she must have at least five spades (with 4-4 she would start with 1♥ and not 1♠). In this case East bails out early with minimum hands and no fit. Try to get at least one heart ruff in the East hand.

3	West	East	West	East
	♠4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
B	♥AQ84	♥10976	2♦	Pass
	♦K10762	♦Q83		
	♣A86	♣9		

A heart partscore would be preferred but in the case of a partscore the first fit is the ticket. Trump clubs in the East hand. Avoid trumping spades in the West hand (your diamond length will generate those tricks for you anyway). It is hard to imagine not making this hand.

3	West	East	West	East
	♠4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
C	♥AQ84	♥976	2♦	Pass
	♦K10762	♦83		
	♣A86	♣J1097		

The East is practically useless to the West hand. Good thing you stopped low! I would likely use the one entry to dummy to take the heart finesse unless the bidding indicated some better play. This is good example of why you should stay low on hands without a fit.

3	West	East	West	East
	♠4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
D	♥AQ84	♥1097	2♦	Pass
	♦K10762	♦Q8		
	♣A86	♣Q973		

The 9 point hand in the East is still not good enough to move over the 2♦ rebid. The play will be easier but still likely to be a struggle to make. You will probably make against anyone that likes to lead aces (♠A for example, thank you very much!).

4	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
A	♥AQ84	♥97	2NT	3♠
	♦K1072	♦83	3NT	Pass
	♣AK8	♣J1093		

With a maximum balanced hand, West rebids 2NT. The 3♠ rebid by East is forcing (West may not pass). Even with the appropriate values 3NT is difficult. A favorable spade or club position is almost a sure make. Less than 50%.

4	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ765	1♦	1♠
B	♥AQ84	♥10976	2NT	3♥
	♦K1072	♦Q83	4♥	Pass
	♣AK8	♣9		

East has an easy time continuing the exploration for a major suit fit. Over 3♥ opener can show four hearts or three spades. The East hand rises to 10 points after the heart fit, but still shy of slam values. Cash the top clubs while discarding a diamond. Lead diamonds with an effort to establish the suit by ruffing in the East.

4	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
C	♥AQ84	♥976	2NT	3NT
	♦K1072	♦83	Pass	
	♣AK8	♣J1097		

This is truly an ugly hand. Favorable location of the spade queen is your best bet. Probably should play the top clubs first. If the queen drops great, now you can work on hearts. If it does not drop then lead another club to set up the last club in dummy. When you get there with a spade (hopefully), cash the good club!

4	West	East	West	East
	♠K4	♠AJ76	1♦	1♠
D	♥AQ84	♥1097	2NT	3NT
	♦K1072	♦Q8	Pass	
	♣AK8	♣Q973		

Hearts has the best potential with extra chances in both clubs and spades. Whatever they lead will probably help. Take a double finesse in hearts if you can. If and when you attack diamonds lead small to the queen first. Judge which suit to attack based on what the opponents do not attack.

PLAN THE PLAY

There are 53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000 possible bridge deals. You do not have enough time to learn how to play everyone of them. What you do have time to learn is a problem solving PROCESS. A process that you can apply to every bridge hand that you encounter. You must have a PLAN. After the auction is over and while your left hand opponent is considering the opening lead, you should begin the following four step planning process. You should do it on every hand that you play. Continue with the process after dummy is tabled and do NOT play the first card from dummy until you are at the last step.

Step One Pause

Determine your objective. How many tricks do you need in order to make your contract? It is critical that you convert the contract into a number of tricks. Don't think 3NT. Think 9 tricks. Don't think 4♥. Think 10 tricks and no more than 3 losers. The contract by itself is too abstract for your mind to focus on, however a number of tricks or a number of losers is more easily grasped. Put your goal in terms with which you can work.

Step Two Look

Count your winners and losers. It is usually best to count winners at no trump contracts and losers at suit contracts. You know your objective. How many tricks do you have? These are SURE tricks. Tricks that you could cash right now. If you don't own the ace then you don't have any SURE tricks in that suit.

Step Three Alternatives

Identify all the places that offer the possibility of trick development. Do not select any alternative until you have identified all the possibilities. Choices would include the use of promotion, length, finesse, trumping in the dummy, discarding losers, or any combination of these.

Step Four Now

Play the FIRST card from dummy. You wouldn't get on an airplane without knowing it's destination would you? Don't start playing cards to the hand until you know where you intend to develop your tricks.

Practice Hands

Results are on Page 11.

No. 1 Dummy

♠A54
♥743
♦AQ
♣K10987

Declarer

♠K76
♥A52
♦K852
♣QJ4

Contract: 3NT

What is your objective? _____

How many SURE tricks do you have? _____

Which suit offers the greatest potential for the additional tricks that you need? _____

What method will you use to develop the additional tricks that you need? _____

No. 2 Dummy

♠976
♥3
♦A9753
♣A643

Declarer

♠AKQ83
♥A54
♦84
♣752

Contract: 4♠

What is your objective? _____

How many losers do you have? _____

Can you dispose of any losers? In which suit? _____

What method will you use to get rid of any losers? _____

What will be your 10 winners? _____

No. 3 Dummy

♠A5
♥7432
♦AQ
♣K10987

Declarer

♠K7
♥10986
♦KJ85
♣AQ4

Contract: 4♥

What is your objective? _____

How many losers do you have? _____

The only suit with losers is trumps. You are missing 5 trumps. How would expect them to be divided between the opponent's hands? _____

If they split as expected can you make 4♥? _____

What method will you use to develop the additional tricks that you need? _____

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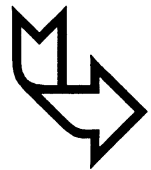
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PLAN THE PLAY

Results from the Practice Hands on page 10.

No. 1- In 3NT your objective is 9 tricks. You start with exactly 6 SURE tricks (2 spades, 1 heart, and 3 diamonds). The club suit offers the greatest potential for developing extra tricks by means of promotion. By driving out the ♣A we will develop 4 additional SURE club tricks.

No. 2- In 4♠ your objective is to limit your losers to 3. You have no losers in the spade suit as long as it behaves as expected (3-2 break). In the side suits you have 2 heart losers, 1 diamond loser, and 2 club losers. The best play for disposing of losers is trumping your heart losers in the dummy. Before pulling trump, ruff (another word for trump) two hearts with the little spades in dummy. Your 10 winners will be 5 spades, 1 heart, 2 heart ruffs in the dummy, 1 diamond, and 1 club.

No. 3- In 4♥ your objective is to limit your losers to 3. You have no losers in any suit outside of hearts (trumps). Holding 8 hearts leaves 5 for the opponents. When missing 5 cards in a suit you expect them to be distributed 3-2 more than half of the time. If you lead hearts 3 times and the suit breaks as we expect, you will have only 3 losers on this hand. Your 10 winners will be 2 spades, 1 heart, 4 diamonds, and 3 clubs.

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-Gary King

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