

Defence

Suppose you are sitting South and listen to West and East bid as follows:

1NT - 2♣ - 2♥ - 3NT

Your partner leads the 2♣, and dummy goes down. As you stare at your own cards as well as dummy's what are your thoughts?

♠ T 7 4 3

♥ K 7 6

♦ K 8 7

♣ K Q 9 4

♠ J 9 2

♥ Q J T 4 3 2

♦ 9 3

♣ A 6

You know from the bidding that declarer has a 4 card heart suit. Also, judging from the lead, declarer has 3 clubs. What are his spade and diamond lengths? Since declarer knew his partner had 4 spades yet didn't convert to 4♠ he must have fewer than 4 spades. So either he has 3 spades and 3 diamonds or 2 spades and 4 diamonds. The first case is unlikely as partner would have had a 5 card diamond suit and would surely have lead it. So it seems that declarer's shape is 2 spades, 4 hearts, 4 diamonds, and 3 clubs. Suppose that declarer plays the Q♣ from dummy and you take your Ace. How should you defend? *See page 8.*

Gambling 3NT

In the old days we were told to open 3NT if we held a balanced 25 or 26 point hand. If only we could be so lucky! Such hands come up with depressing infrequency.

A very common treatment nowadays is to use an opening 3NT for a hand with a solid minor suit (AKQxxxx at least). Your hope is that, courtesy of partner, you can survive the opening lead then run 7 or more tricks in your minor and somehow come to a ninth trick.

In order for the bid to be effective you must adhere to whatever agreement you have made with your partner about your outside strength if any (otherwise your partner will not know whether to rescue you; the rescue mechanism is to bid 4♣ which you pass or correct). The simplest agreement (which I recommend) is to have *no* outside Aces or Kings. Then partner can rescue if she holds stops (Ace or King) in at most one of the three other suits. But stopping two suits she will gamble that the opponents find the wrong lead. And what if the boot is on the other foot and the opponents open a gambling 3NT? Lead an Ace, have a look at dummy, and watch your partner's signal carefully:- your continuation will be the critical point of the hand.

An influx of new members

Some of you will notice that there are a number of new applications for membership on the wall. Five of these are from our learners' classes. Our classes are successful because of the help given by so many people. Nancy Waters, Judy Robertson, Baukje Blok, Jennifer Dawe, Alison Kerr, Frank Gradon all came and helped. Others have eased the beginners into Monday nights. Thanks go to Baukje, Nancy, Judy, Frank, Alec Ansett, Geoff Fisher, Robin Gillespie, Peggy Chisholm, Jean Young.

If you would like to play with one of the beginners, they all have a system card on them which outlines what they were taught. For people who play Benjamised Acol most of this should be familiar. This year we have taught them 4 card majors and weak twos. 2♣ promises 8 tricks in a suit or 21-22 HCPs and a balanced hand. 2♦ is a game forcing hand so partner cannot pass until game has been reached. 2NT is flat and shows 19-20 HCPs. 5 card suits are bid from the top rank down and 4 card suits are bid from the bottom rank up. Reverses in the suits bid (e.g. 1♦ followed by 2♠ bid) promise 17+ HCPs. 4♣ bids are Ace asking. A double at the 1 or 2 level shows opening points and the ability to support all of the unbid suits. If a double is followed by another bid, this shows 16+ HCPs.

The Arts Page

This is a passenger announcement. The train on platform one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve has come in sideways

I believe in making the world safe for our children. But not our children's children, because I don't think children should be having sex.

What were George W. Bush's three hardest years? A: Second grade.

The auction over, the lead a spade
Partner proudly dummy displayed
Our bidding was a sheer disgrace
To land four hearts' a hopeless chase
But wait! They've trumped their winning ace
How lucky that they fell from grace
That's saved our bacon, saved our face
Now no need to feel dismayed
Another contract bid and made.

Voluptua's confusion

18 year old Voluptua was vexed. How was it that boyfriend Randy was so engrossed in bridge that he was no longer attentive to her every whim, no longer hanging on her every word and (most hurtful of all) no longer so physically demonstrative in his affections? She was unaware that Randy believed she had become disenchanted with him and was trying to reinstate himself by honing his bridge prowess. Thinking of how she might once more wrap him around her little finger she had carefully chosen her attire for the Monday bridge where she was scheduled to partner her aunt Frieda.

"That skirt is disgracefully short, Voluptua" admonished her aunt as they entered the club, "and that neckline's too revealing". "Aunt Frieda," countered Voluptua "I had to wear *something*". She was gleeful; evidently she was all set to vamp. As it happened their first board was against Randy and Gordon. Voluptua was sitting South (see opposite). Clearly she had to open one of the black suits but which one? Eventually she decided that she could spend slightly longer leaning across the table drawing an 'S' rather than a 'C' and so, as indecently as possible, she opened 1♠. The bidding, having got off to an unusual start then proceeded:

1♠ - P - 1NT - P

2♣ - P - 2♠ - P

4♠ - all pass

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♠ T 2
♥ 7 6 3
♦ A Q T 8 3 2
♣ 6 4

♠ 8 5 4 3
♥ A K Q T 9 8
♦ 4
♣ Q 5

♠ 9 7 6
♥ J 5 4
♦ J 6 5
♣ K J T 9

♠ A K Q J
♥ 2
♦ K 9 7
♣ A 8 7 3 2

Gordon led A♥ and Voluptua surveyed dummy with some dismay. Indeed she became so flustered that she began the play believing that the contract was 3NT. That explains why she allowed Gordon to win the first three tricks in hearts as she discarded clubs rather than ruffing. At that point she became aware that Randy's gaze was inappropriately directed at exactly where she thought was appropriate and she returned to her senses. Ruffing the fourth heart with the T♠ she drew trumps, ran her diamonds, and emerged with 10 tricks; it was to prove a top.

Gordon congratulated her on her excellent trump management and they departed for the next round. "What did you say about rump management, Gordon?" asked Randy.

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