

**August 2019 ACBL Bulletin Notes**

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Page 39, **Bidding Box**, Problem 7 – *Get out early with a misfit*

When you and partner have a mismatch, unless you can make a contract with little to nothing from partner, you want to get out early. Neither pair did; both bid low percentage games, 3NT and 5♦.

West has a strong hand, but it has holes that needed filling and East can't fill them. The East hand has very little value unless West has either diamonds or good spades. West has neither.

The *Bridge Bulletin* auction is a good learning tool:

	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	
Too many losers to open 2♣	1♥	1NT	Not enough points to bid at the two-level. Would show 10+ in Standard and an opening hand in 2/1.
Natural, second suit. Not enough points to jump-shift. 3♥ is also possible (16-18 and a good six-card suit), but West gets better information with 2♣. If East passes 2♣, West knows East is weak with fewer than two hearts and at least four clubs (with two hearts and three clubs, East would correct to 2♥).	2♣	2♦	Phew! Glad to be able to bid diamonds at the two-level.
Good six-card suit over here.	2♥	3♦	Not interested in your hearts. Diamonds.
OK, have it your way. We are getting out.	P		

Page 41, **It's Your Call**, Problem 3 – *Protecting 3N*

Partner passed, so it is unlikely that we have slam. On this deal, our focus is to get to the most makeable game. We also want the lead coming **to** (and not through) our black suit tenaces (♠AQ and ♣KJ), so we don't want to end up in a notrump contract declared by partner.

Two panelists bid 4♥, bidding what they are looking at. However, the majority of the panel bids 3NT. The 3NT bidders reason that they have eight top tricks: the ♠A and seven heart tricks. There is also a good chance that West will lead a spade from his six-card spade suit, making the ♠Q the ninth trick off the top. If a club is led that would set up the ♣K as the ninth trick – assuming the opponents don't take too many diamond tricks first.

The weakness of the 3NT bid is that we could get killed in diamonds. Although this is certainly possible, the opponents need to find diamonds and they might not do so. They can't see our hand. Partner is likely to have some help in diamonds (since we have most of the rest of the points). And, if they lead a diamond, we have the option of ducking in dummy since we have the ten.

An important point the 3NT bidders made is that they felt that it was easier to make nine tricks in notrump than ten in hearts on this deal. Since, it's IMPs, the extra 20 points for the heart game is small change.

Page 57, **Bergen** – *Hand evaluation is the key to better bidding*

We strongly agree with Bergen's point that good hand evaluation is the best way to become a good bidder. Leaning too much on high card points will limit your upside as a good bidder. This point is also echoed in Linxweiler's letter from the editor on page 6.

Bergen uses high points as a starting point and then he agrees with the evaluation, upgrades it or downgrades it.

His key points are:

1. Queens are often worth less than two points and Jacks are often worth less than a point (he calls them "quacks")
2. He upgrades for good distribution
3. He upgrades for useful intermediate cards (tens, nines, eights)
4. He upgrades for aces
5. He downgrades for balanced hands (4-3-3-3 is the worst, no matter what suit is the four)
6. He downgrades for lack of useful intermediate cards
7. He downgrades for an aceless hand

He gives eight examples of his methods. There is much more to this topic; this is only Part 1.