

February 2021 ACBL Bridge Bulletin Notes

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Page 43, "It's Your Call," Problem 4 – Going past 3N... or not.

♠—	♥A1082	♦QJ10	♣AQ8765
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	?

The highest scoring bid is 4♦. As Zachary Grossack states, "Anytime a freely bid 3NT is pulled to four of a minor, it is a slam try." Yes, opener is minimal, but as Dan Korbelt notes, all the values are "prime" including first round controls in the three side suits. Both August Boehm and Janice Molson point out that partner can

stop in 4NT (it's not Blackwood) if not interested in slam. Most of the panel wants to show slam interest. Mike Lawrence chose a forcing (because it goes past 3N) 4♣ rather than 4♦.

Six panel members chose to stop in 3NT. Roger Lee points out that partner could have gone slower if interested in slam. Fast arrival is generally used when you are not interested in bidding on. West could have gone slowly with a forcing spade bid (maybe fourth-suit forcing) to show interest in slam.

Page 57, "Better Bridge with Bergen," by Marty Bergen – Opening 2N

In the 19th installment of his "Secrets to accurate hand evaluation" series, Bergen continues the discussion of when to open a hand 2N when, on the face of it, it does not contain the requisite HCP or shape.

18 ♠A2 ♥AKJ10 ♦AJ1092 ♣82

This hand has only 17 HCP and is only semi-balanced. A 2N opening bid typically shows 20-21 HCP and a balanced hand.

However, Bergen adds:

- 1 point for the three aces
- 1.5 points for the fifth diamond and the great diamond intermediates
- 1 point for the quality of the heart suit; the JT carry more value with the AK

Those extra points bring the hand total to 20.5 points and a 2N open.

Page 44, "Card Play 101," by Phillip Alder – Counting 1, 2, 3...

Through several examples, Alder demonstrates how to use information from the auction to determine the action to take during the play of the hand.

West leads the ♥2, partner's suit, and East plays the ♥J. Now what?

Dlr: East	♠ 8 5 2		
Vul: Both	♥ 6 3		
	♦ Q J 10 9		
	♣ A Q J 10		
	♠ A K Q		
	♥ A 10 9		
	♦ A 8 4 3		
	♣ 9 6 4		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3NT	1♥	1NT
		All Pass	

This is easy when you consider the auction. You, South, have 17 HCP and North has ten. East opened the bidding, showing 12+. That's 39+ hcp. So, West has fewer than two HCP and, therefore, no room for either the ♣K or the ♦K. Forget about clubs; finesse in diamonds and take three spades, one heart four diamonds and a club. Nine tricks, making 3N.

Dlr: West	♠ 7 5 4		
Vul: E-W	♥ J 10		
	♦ Q J 10 9		
	♣ K Q 10 9		
♠ K Q J 10 9 8		♠ A 2	
♥ Q 4	N	♥ 7 6 3	
♦ 7 3	W - E	♦ 8 6 5 2	
♣ A J 5	S	♣ 8 4 3 2	
		♠ 6 3	
		♥ A K 9 8 5 2	
		♦ A K 4	
		♣ 7 6	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♠	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

West leads the ♠K; East overtakes and returns a spade to West's ♠Q. West cashes the ♣A and plays a club to dummy's ♣K. You are now booked and cannot afford to lose a heart trick.

Normally when you hold eight cards, missing the Q, it is right to lead a high card, hoping to drop the Q. If the Q doesn't drop (and it rarely does), then you finesse for it. In this case, the normal approach would be wrong.

East passed West's 1♠ bid, denying six points. East has already shown up with the ♠A, so cannot also hold the ♥Q. You must hope that the ♥Q will on the second heart trick drop (about a 40% play) and it does in this case.