

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP

Some players have their pet conventions and they make their partners play them. When choosing to play a convention, consider how often it comes up versus the alternate natural meaning. e.g. Drury. When partner is already a passed hand, do you play

Bergen? which may get your side too high.
Drury? if you have a fit with partner's major and 10-12 points

and what is

Pass - Pass - 1S - Pass
2NT

What is the 2NT? Is it Jacoby 2NT? It should not be, by a passed hand.

We would recommend that it would show something like

S 65
H AKJ
D Q876
C J876

Also, you and partner must discuss if you play Bergen if your RHO has made a takeout double? We recommend that this is fine to play it this way but not by a passed hand. BUT Drury can be used in this sequence by a passed hand.

Do you play Inverted minors when you have passed initially? As long as it shows 10 or more points, then we would encourage this treatment.

BUT do discuss and agree with partner.

And what if partner opens 1NT and RHO bids 2C. It is commonplace that Double now by you would be Stayman. So what do you do when partner opens 1NT and your RHO bids 2D and you have

S AK76
H A943
D 65
C 876

Do you bid

3C as Stayman?
3D as Stayman?
Double? And what will that show?

Standard treatment would be 3D as Stayman. A cuebid of opponent's suit. But you must have 10 or more HCP to make this bid. 3C would be 10 or more HCP and a 5 card or longer Club suit.

BARBARA'S BRIDGE TIP ON PREMPTS:

When you preempt in first or second seat, it shows a hand that you want to be declarer. NOT a defender. Because you will often only get one trick at most with your suit as a defender.

Thus if you have

S AK5
H Q1087653
D 54
C 6

Do not open 3H. If you do, opponents may now bid to 4S and your partner may now sacrifice in 5H, knowing that your hand has no defensive values. If the devil makes you open this hand, then open 1H.

BEING DECLARER IN A NO-TRUMP CONTRACT

by Brian Richardson

A great many bridge players, when they are learning the game, prefer not to play no-trump contracts. Unfortunately, this dislike seems to last far too long with most bridge players. No-trump contracts occur very frequently (after all you only need to take 9 tricks to make a game!), and all players need to develop their skill in being Declarer in a No-trump contract.

There are a number of strategies that competent No-trump players use, and some of the more common are as follows:

1. Developing Tricks.

Contract 3NT by South
Lead D Jack

North
S KT6
H AKJT
D AK4
C J96

South
S A7
H 642
D Q765
C QT52

With a D lead Declarer can see 7 top tricks – 2 in the Spade suit, 2 in the Heart suit and 3 in the Diamond suit. If the Heart Queen is in West's hand, finessing twice will provide an additional 2 tricks. But what if the missing Queen is in East's hand? Now the finesse will only provide one additional trick.

To make matters worse East may now switch to a Spade, and a very good contract will be defeated. The correct way to play this contract is to recognize that by driving out the Club Ace and King, Declarer can find an additional 2 tricks. So Declarer should win the Diamond lead with Dummy's Ace and immediately play the Club Jack, then playing the Club 9 at the next available opportunity.

2. Preserving entries.

Contract 3NT by South

Lead: S Jack

North

S AQ6

H AKJ52

D A73

C KT

South

S K53

H 63

D K92

C J9832

Declarer has 7 top tricks – 3 in the Spade suit, 2 in the Heart suit and 2 in the Diamond suit. The Heart suit looks an attractive possibility for developing additional tricks, but it is by no means certain that it will provide those tricks. However the Club suit provides a GUARANTEED two additional tricks.

Declarer needs to be very careful in playing this contract. There are only 2 entries to Declarer's hand to enable access to those Club winners once they have been set up. The opening Spade lead needs to be won in Dummy and the Club King now played. If Declarer makes the mistake of winning the opening lead in his hand the contract will be defeated by 2 Diamond leads BEFORE the Club suit has been established.