

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP: WHOSE FAULT WAS IT?

Hand # 1

S A876
H 4
D A874
C K982

Your partner opens 1D, Pass by RHO and you respond 1S. Pass by LHO. Partner now bids 4S. Your bid.

Hand # 2

You open with 1S and partner responds 4S. This is your hand. Opponents pass throughout.

This is your hand. What will you bid next?

S AK982
H A865
D AK10
C 7

ANSWERS:

1: When you responded with 1S, you could have had just 6 points. Now you have 11 HCP and a singleton. A singleton in a suit that partner did NOT bid (a good thing!) That singleton is worth 3 points because partner has four-card support for your Spades and you have four-card support for her Diamonds: a two-suited fit. Your singleton Hearts is very valuable.

How many points did partner promise when she leapt like a maniac to 4S? Since you only promised 6 points (with your 1S response), she must have 19 or 20. Do not pass instinctively just because game has been reached.

1D -1S
4S is NOT a shut-out bid. It shows a monster hand.

You must now bid 4NT to make sure you are not missing two key cards, heading for a small slam if you find out good news from partner.

If partner responds 5H, showing two key cards and NO Queen of trump, then you must sign off in 5S, since you are missing one key card and you will lose one trump trick.

Partner could have:

S J542
H AKJ
D KQJ3
C A7

But if she bids 5S, showing two key cards and the Queen of trump, then bid 6S.

This time, partner has

S KQ42
H KJ6
D KQJ3
C A7

Your hand repeated for convenience:

S A876
H 4
D A874
C K982

We highly recommend that you learn Roman Keycard Blackwood. Barbara can email you a write-up on this if you wish.

2

You opened 1S and partner responded 4S. This is a weak bid showing 2-9 points. Partner can have a hand that looks like this:

S QJ1043
H 432
D J42
C K6

Your hand:

S AK982
H A865
D AK10
C 7

Your LHO leads Heart King. You are going to lose two Hearts and the Club Ace. The Diamond finesse happens to work because you live right. The point of this hand is to discourage you from bidding on after 1S - 4S. That bid is called the Weak Freak and is one of only shut out bids in bridge:

1S -4S
1H -4H

are shut out bids
and

1NT -3NT is a shut-out bid.

Do not get excited and fall in love with your hand after this sequence. Partner could have had even less.

BARBARA'S BRIDGE TIP:

We see the most dreadful overcalls taking place in online bridge. Perhaps it is just that you have stayed home too long and are starved for action. You cannot bear to keep passing so you enter into the auction with the worst possible assortment of junk.

1D by RHO and you have:

S K10983
H 542
D 107
C Q53

For goodness sake, pass! You may overcall with as few as 8 points at the one-level if you have a suit headed by two-of the top three honours or three of the top five honours. Those are the rules if you make a simple overcall at the one level with anywhere from 8-12 points. well, let's put it this way, those are the rules if you want to keep your partner!

When you overcall with so few points, the odds are that you will become the defending side and so it is of great import to tell partner what suit to lead. So, only bid suits of which you are proud and want partner to lead. An overcall commands partner to lead your suit. This will prevent her from leading another suit that will potentially give away a trick.

With 13 or more points, it is okay to not have a sterling-quality suit as you are more likely to become Declarer.

Overcalling at the two-level is a whole new ball game.

1S by RHO, you need to have 13 or more points and a great quality 5-card or longer suit. Maybe a tad less if you have a great quality 6-card suit. We used to teach 10 or more points but times have changed. The risk has become greater and things can get ugly. People are not as friendly and make more penalty doubles. Minus 800 and minus 1100 are reasons why your telephone will not ring.

PUPPET STAYMAN

Puppet Stayman is an excellent convention for allowing you to discover if the 1 NT opening bidder (or the 2 NT opener) happens to own a FIVE card major.

In order to use this convention, you do not wish to interfere with your regular Stayman or Transfer responses to a NT opener. First step is to agree with partner that you are playing Puppet Stayman.



1NT – 3C 3C is Puppet Stayman asking partner if he/she has a 5 card major.
If she does not have one, then opener must indicate if they have a 4 card major (1 or both)

REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPONDER TO NT OPENER TO USE PUPPET STAYMAN:

At least one 3 card major & at least 10 or more HCP. Examples are as follows:
Note that Responder to a 2NT opener only needs 6 HCP (or 5 HCP with shape)

♠ K76	♠ KQ6	♠ KQ76
♥ A75	♥ 5	♥ QJ5
♦ 43	♦ QJ43	♦ 87
♣ QJ876	♣ Q8762	♣ Q876

Keep in mind that we always want to find an eight-card fit in a major as this is safer and therefore preferable to playing a hand in No Trump. Based on that premise, on # 1 hand, we would love to find a 5-3 fit in either S or H. On # 2: Ditto with S. On # 3, we could use regular Stayman and may find a 4-4 fit in S but what if opener had a 5 card H suit, we would miss the 5-3 fit in Hearts.

How does opener respond to 3C?

3D No 5 card major but I do have at least one and maybe both 4 card majors
3H I have 5 Hearts
3S I have 5 Spades
3NT I have no 4 card major and no 5 card major either

If auction proceeds as follows:

1NT - 3C
3D Responder now continues as follows:

3D shows that opener has at least one 4 card major. Responder does something kinky now because he wants the stronger hand to be on play. He now bids the 4 card suit that he does not have

3H says "I have four Spades"
3S says "I have four Hearts"
3NT I am not at all interested in the fact that you have at least one 4 card major. In other words he says that he does not have a 4-card major.
4NT Invites opener to bid 6NT if he has a maximum
4D Hey, I have BOTH majors over here, you (opener) pick a major suit and bid it.

1NT - 3C
3H or 3S

Responder's bids are as follows:

3NT I want to play this hand in 3NT
4H or 4S If this was a raise of opener's major, then it means that is where you wish to play it
4NT Invites opener to bid 6NT if he has a maximum
