

## ALEX'S MONTHLY BRIDGE TIP

Here are two hands that Barbara and I had in Reno at the Nationals:

Barbara opened 2C with this hand:

S Q97  
H AQ54  
D AK52  
C AK

I held:

S AKJ105  
H K  
D Q1063  
C 843

I responded 2S, showing 8 or more HCP and a good quality five-card suit, headed by two of the top three honours. Barbara raised to 3S. Now I can smell slam. I am not supposed to bid 4NT with three small Clubs but where can partner's points be? She must have Ace or King Clubs or both in order to have hand enough points to open 2C.

4NT by me produced 5D (3 or 0 key cards)

5NT produced 6H (two kings)

I now bid 7S. As the cards lie, 7NT makes for the best score of all but sometimes one needs to ruff for the extra trick so we were happy with 7S. Remember too that very often people are too nervous to bid a grand slam so it is always a decent result when you do.

Here is one more:

I held the big hand this time:

S AQJ106  
H 9  
D AKJ  
C AK52

Barbara held:

S K9543  
H AK64  
D 1087  
C 4

Once again, a 2C opener reared its head:

Since the points were there but the good quality suit was not, she bid 2D (waiting)

I bid 2S and she raised to 3S, showing a much stronger hand than bidding 4S right away.

4NT - 5S (showed 2 key cards plus the Q of S). This was a lie BUT when you have 5 card support for partner's long suit, lie and pretend you have the Q because it is likely to fall between your 10 card trump suit fit.

5NT - 6D (one king excluding Spade King)

7S

Would you have bid those grand slams? Sure you would!

**ALEX & BARBARA'S TIP OF THE MONTH  
SHOWING A VOID AFTER KEYCARD BLACKWOOD**

You have this hand:

S K1086  
H K963  
D ---  
C J10532

1S by partner and you bid 3S (or 3D if you are playing Bergen Raises)  
Partner bids 4NT. What is your bid? By the way, you have 12 dummy points.

6D will show one or three key cards AND a void in Diamonds. It is usually 1 so don't fuss about the 1 or 3..

Make sure that when showing a void that you do not show a void when the void is in a suit that partner bid along the way. Voids in a suit of partner's are never good voids.

Next you have:

S K1086  
H A932  
D ---  
C 107542

1S by partner and you bid 3S (or 3D if you are playing Bergen Raises)  
Partner bids 4NT. What is your bid?

5NT will show 2 (or 4 but usually 2) keycards and a useful void. (Useful because partner did not bid that suit.) Partner will not know for sure where your void is but she can make an educated guess, based on her cards.

## PLAY THESE HANDS

### Hands by Jeff Hand professional player & teacher - Commentary by Barbara

#### North

S AK  
H AJ  
D AK6432  
C 1053

#### South

S QJ10985  
H K2  
D 97  
C 942

Contract is 4S by South. Opening lead is H 10.

Plan your play before looking at the answer.

If you were playing Swiss Teams (IMPS) or Rubber Bridge, you would play your contract very safely because in those forms of bridge, you are hardly rewarded for overtricks.

BUT playing matchpoints (MP's), which most of us play face-to-face or online, overtricks matter a great deal. How often are you in 4S, making 4 and the rest of the field (as it is called) is in 4S making overtricks so you get a bottom board.

On this hand, you were lucky that the opponents did not lead a Club.

Win H King in your hand. Play Ace and King Spades. Then play D Ace and King, now the D 2 and ruff it. Most of the time, missing five Diamonds, they will divide 3-2. On this hand, you really need them to divide 3-2. Now lead S Q, drawing their last trump and now lead the H 2 to dummy's Ace. On the three small Diamonds remaining in dummy, you discard your three small Clubs.

Here's one more:

#### North

S KJ76  
H Q109  
D 104  
C AK65

#### South

S Q10952  
H KJ  
D KQJ  
C 943

Contract is 4S by South. Opening lead is C Q.

Plan your play before looking at the answer.

When you count your losers, you find that you have one in each suit. At this time, you now look for lopsided side suits (non-trump suits). Both Hearts and Diamonds are lopsided. Lopsided because they have a concentration of high cards and are not three opposite three.

You cannot do anything about losing an Ace in Spades, Hearts and Diamonds BUT if you could find a parking place in dummy for one of Declarer's Club losers, that would be awesome. Thus you must look at the suit which has extra winners in the DUMMY. This is the Heart suit.

You have to develop this extra winner before defenders establish a Club trick for themselves.

Win Club Ace and lead a small Hearts (9) from dummy to your H King. If opponents do not win it, lead it again. They will win it and lead another Club. Now, before pulling trump, Lead the H Q and discard a losing Club.

Simple for many of you but sometimes we all play too quickly and our contract is doomed. If you draw trump first, opponents will win the S Ace and lead back another Club. Then, when you lead a Heart to drive out the Ace, they will win that and cash a high Club. Down one