

OVERTRICKS MATTER

We find that very often people get to game and are happy to just make their contract. Often, they are missing an opportunity to make an extra trick or two. Don't be satisfied with just fulfilling your contract if you can look for a way to make overtricks without jeopardizing your contract.

This is the commonest reason for a bad result on a board. Most of the room is in 4S making 5. You are in 4S making 4. You get a bottom board. As declarer, stop at trick one and analyze the hand. If it looks like it is a piece of cake to make your contract, stop and see what line of play will allow you to potentially make one or two overtricks. TIP: Look for 10's and 9's and see how they may help you. See how you can try to best get your unsupported King to win a trick. Don't be satisfied with mediocrity!

HAND ANALYSIS

In this day and age, we have something that is to our great advantage for improving our game; something we never had in the olden days. Twenty years ago, William Bailey (an American) developed a programme called "Deep Finesse". This programme analyzes each hand as to the number of tricks that can be taken by either side in all types of contracts (NT, S, H, D or C). The hand record printouts give this information, thanks to this programme.



We now have a great tool to help us with our bidding, play and defence.

e.g. we played the hand in 3C and we look at the analysis which says we can make 3NT; now we can scrutinize the hand to see if bidding this was possible.

e.g. You scored + 200 for being in 3S making 5 and you got a bottom board; you can now look to see how you might have bid game on this hand, since everybody else reached game and made it.

NOTE: The hand record may say that you can make 6NT but that does not necessarily mean that you could have bid it. BUT it is an enormous convenience to be able to quickly look at this record and see why you received a poor result on several hands.

Sometimes it may not be your fault. You were simply "fixed" either because your opponents made a lucky guess on bidding or defence or play but for the most part, you can learn by using this great tool. In the 70's and 80's, we only had hand records for a very special event or at a tournament and there was no double dummy analysis (this is what it is called when you can see all four hands). Now it is an everyday occurrence to have these records.

We urge you to

1. Keep a private score
2. Get a SUMMARY at the end of each game
3. Pick the 3 worst scores you received
4. Take the time to find out why you did so poorly on those 3 hands.

If you do this while still at the bridge club, there is always someone there who can give you some advice. Just show them the hand record and tell them the board number. Best of all, make a note at the time you play this hand as to how the bidding went and what was led. An expert cannot help you if you cannot narrate how the bidding went. It is a critical component.

THE MEANING OF THIS REBID MAY SURPRISE YOU!

by Barbara Seagram

S W N E

1D P 1S 2H
2NT

What does the rebid of 2NT mean? It is not a jump but how many points does this show?

Let's start with looking at this hand:

You have the following hand and the auction above took place.

S 32
H A75
D KQ87
C A865

If your RHO had not bid after 1D - 1S, you would now have bid 1 NT. NOTE: That is ONE NO TRUMP.

If your partner had instead bid 1H and RHO did not bid, you would now raise to 2H (that one may also surprise you but you do not need 4 card support to raise partner's response to the 2 level. All you need is 3 cards and an inability to bid No Trumps).

If you need help with this, check www.barbaraseagram.com Go to ARTICLES on the right. Click on that and the top article is Raising partner with 3 card support.

Note that if RHO had bid 1S after your partner had responded 1H, you could now make a support double, if you and partner play these (and you should).

Back to this case scenario:

S W N E

1D P 1S 2H
?

With your minimum hand above, you are required to pass. Even holding a H stopper, you will still pass. You see, bidding NT at the one level is a whole different ball game than bidding it at the two level. Remember that your partner may have only 6 points.

So, how many points does it promise?

NOT 13-15 ...a minimum hand...as you would have passed with that hand.

NOT 15-17 HCP balanced as you would have opened 1NT.

Therefore your rebid of 2NT promises 18-19 HCP, even though you have not jumped.

By the way, one more tip:

You have

S 4
H A762
D KJ65
C AJ93

You open 1D, partner responds 1S, you must NOT bid 1NT now. This bid promises 12-14 HCP indeed BUT also promises to have a reasonably balanced hand and you do not. A balanced hand promises no singletons or voids. Thus you must rebid 2C with this hand NOT 1NT. If you rebid 1NT, you guarantee two or three cards in the Spade suit.

KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

		10872	
		AK762	
		K73	
		A	
AQJ6			43
95			J8
4			QJ8652
J108753			Q94
N	S	K95	
		Q1043	
1H	3D *	A109	
Pass		K62	

* Bergen Raises are a great convention but sometimes we all have a brain freeze and forget what we are playing.

Partner (North) alerted 3D but then passed. She thought the partnership was playing weak jump shifts which is also a very common treatment. Indeed, they were playing other jumps to be weak but not 1 of a major - 3C or 1 of a major - 3D. In the world of Bergen, 3C here would show 6-9 points and 4 card support for the major and 3D shows 10-12 and 4 card support. The latter was the scenario for this hand.

So South played the hand in 3D on a 3-3 fit when the partnership had a NINE card Heart fit.

It might not have been so bad but lo and behold, East showed up with SIX diamonds. Alas.

On this hand, North's rebid would have been 4H after the 3D Bergen Raise, which makes easily. It is a game of mistakes. They seldom happen twice!