

A BAD DAY AT BRIDGE?

For those of you who have bad days at bridge, take heart!

We just learned of two expert teams competing internationally who had a run of misadventures...here are some of the accidents that occurred:

1. Bid a slam missing A & K of trumps
2. Bid slam missing A & K of a side suit (non trump suit)
3. Converted from 6S which makes to 6NT going down
4. Bid a grand slam (redoubled!) missing the A & K of trumps
5. Jumped to 5C going down one ignoring the 6-3 spade fit which makes 10 or 11 tricks
6. Mis-defended 4Cdoubled to allow it to make

Not to be out-done, Alex and I had a couple of bad accidents in a recent club game:

Alex had
S AKQ5
H J1065
D J3
C K96

He opened 1C, I bid 1S, he rebid 2NT. I passed.

He forgot that he opened and thought that I opened so he was using Jacoby 2NT. He was only down 3, not vulnerable but it was a 0%.

And then on a hand shortly after, the auction went:

1H - 1S - 2D - 2H by me which was a cuebid showing 10 or more points and Spade support.

Oops, Alex mis-clicked and passed. So I played it in 2H with 3 Hearts opposite 3 Hearts.

Another 0%. It was a keep me humble day! But we made a lot of friends!

Of course, I had my moments also but we don't talk about those!

HOW DO YOU BID THIS HAND?

S A7
H KQ8
D AKQ107
C A106

You are the dealer with 22 HCP balanced. So you open 2C

Opponents pass throughout.

2C - 2D
2N - 4N

What is 4NT?
What do you bid next?

4N cannot be Blackwood (Key Card or Regular because no trump suit has been bid or agreed upon). If partner wanted to Ace ask, he would have had to use Gerber.

So, what is your response to 4NT?

You should like your hand quite a lot especially with the solidity and length of that Diamond suit.

You could just accept the invitation and bid 6NT but how about giving partner a choice of slams? Bid 6D. If partner likes Diamonds and has a hand that may provide a ruff for Declarer, he passes and if he doesn't like Diamonds, he bids 6NT.

When does a Notrump Bid show a Balanced Hand by Larry Cohen www.larryco.com

No Trump Openers

A 1NT or 2NT opener is presumed to be balanced or flat (no singletons, typically not 2 doubletons). Maybe once a year, I'd open 1NT with a singleton.

Consider this hand:

S K
H KQ65
D AQ2
C Q8762

An opening of 1 C is "normal," but what next? What if partner responds 1 S (that wouldn't be a surprise, since you have only one spade). What would your rebid be? Let's look at the possibilities:

- 1) Rebid 1NT. This would show 12-14 balanced. You don't have 12-14 and you aren't balanced.
- 2) Rebid 2C. Typically this would show 6+ clubs, but it is a possible rebid with this hand.
- 3) Rebid 2H. This is a reverse and shows at least 17+. You aren't worth it.

So, rather than commit one of those misdescriptive rebids, it is possible to open 1NT to begin with. There is nothing illegal about it. You aren't opening it to be a deviant or trouble-maker. It is just a judgement call--and starting with 1NT might be the best lie.

How about two doubletons? With an awkward hand such as:

S A2
H J765
D K10765
C AK

I prefer opening 1NT to 1D (having an impossible rebid if partner responds 1S). With 4 spades and 5-4-2-2 shape, I am okay with opening a 5-card minor (there is no rebid problem with 4 spades, since you don't have to worry about reversing).

Summary of Notrump Opening Bids: Almost always 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2.

Rarely (only if stuck) with two doubletons. Once a year with a singleton (if really, really stuck).

Notrump Response

A 1NT response to 1 of a minor is usually balanced (but denies a 4-card major). When might the 1NT responder be unbalanced? Perhaps if responding to 1D with something like:

S QJ2
H QJ3
D 4
C J87642.

This hand is too strong to pass, but not strong enough for 2C.

A 1NT response to 1 of a major is often unbalanced and can even include a void. For example, partner opens 1S and you hold:

S --
H J876
D K7654
C AJ76

There is no alternative to 1NT (too strong to pass, not enough for anything else). A natural 2NT (or 3NT) response would promise a balanced hand (no singletons or voids).

For example, respond 2NT (invitational 11-12) to 1D with:

S QJ3
H KJ8
D J76
C KJ107

Respond 3NT (13-15) to 1D with:

S KJ3
H AJ8
D Q76
C K1087

You wouldn't make this response with an unbalanced hand.

In competition, the notrump bid should also show a balanced hand. For example, if your partner opens 1S, the opponent overcalls 2D and you jump to 3NT, you should not only have diamonds stopped, but a flat hand. Presumably you have 2 spades (with 3 you would have supported, probably via a 3D cuebid, and with a singleton or void, 3NT is not recommended).

Summary of Notrump responses: A 1NT response can be off-shape (unbalanced)--because it might be the only call available. A response of 2NT or 3NT guarantees flat (balanced) shape. Over interference, the notrump responder usually will not have any singletons or voids.

Notrump Rebids

A rebid of 1NT or 2NT by opener should be balanced, although occasionally players make this call with a singleton in the suit in which partner responded. For example, you open 1C, partner responds 1S and you hold:

S K
H J876
D AQ2
C K8765

Any rebid is a lie. 2C would show 6 or more. 1NT should be balanced. 2H is a reverse (definitely not strong enough for this call). So, perhaps the 1NT rebid with a singleton is the least-bad bid.

In general, though, when opener rebids 1NT or 2NT he is showing a balanced hand (*yes, even though partner has bid the short suit you hold*)

Other Notrump Bids

Later notrump bids tend to show balanced hands, but occasionally the player bidding notrump will have no other **suitable** choice (pardon the pun). If there is shortness, it likely will be in the suit his partner has promised.

For example:

W	N	E	<u>S</u>
1H	1S	P	?

As South, I would have no alternative to 1NT, with say:

S 8
H QJ1092
D KJ6
C Q1087

QUIZ:

Opponents are not bidding. Which (there is only one) auction below by South guarantees a balanced hand (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2):

- A) 1D - 1NT
- B) 1S - 1NT
- C) 2H - 2NT
- D) 1D - 3NT

Answer: D. None of the first 3 auctions guarantee a balanced hand.

HOW DO YOU BID THIS HAND?

S KQJ103
H AQ8
D AK763
C ---

You are about to open with 2C BUT darn it, Partner is the Dealer.
Partner opens with 2H

What will you bid?

4H?
6H?
7H?
4NT?
2NT?

There are even more options than that...

You know that partner's Hearts are good as he opened 2H in first chair vulnerable. The card you REALLY care about is the S Ace. If partner has that card, then all his losers can fly away on your delicious Spade suit in dummy.

How can you discover if he holds the S Ace? Bid 2NT. This is forcing and playing Weak Two's it asks partner to show a feature. A feature is an Ace or King outside the trumps suit. If he has the C Ace or King, he will bid 3C. If he has the S Ace, he will bid 3S. If he has no feature at all, he will bid 3H.

Lo and behold, he bids 3S. JUST what you wanted to hear!

Now you bid 7H.

Here is partner's hand:

S A6
H KJ10942
D 82
C J85

Life is good. Dream big! But don't use Blackwood with a void.

GOOD DEFENCE IS LIKE POETRY IN MOTION

by Eddie Kantar

<u>W</u>		<u>N</u>		<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
	S. A				
			H.A653 D.J1092 C.10872		
S. QJ964 H. K4 D. A7 C. A954				S. K102 H. 108 D. K85 C. KQJ63	
		S. 8753 H. QJ972 D. Q643 C. ----			
<u>W</u>		<u>N</u>		<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>
1S 3C Pass		Pass		2C 4S All Pass	Pass Pass
	Pass Double				

Opening lead: C8

Bidding Commentary: What is North's double all about? If the East-West bidding can be trusted, South either has a singleton or void in clubs. Holding the SA, a quick entry, and the HA, yet another entry, North figures to be able to give South at **least** two club ruffs.

Lead Commentary: North leads a high club. In case South ruffs, hopefully South will consider the C8 as a suit preference request for a return in the higher-ranking side suit, hearts.

Defensive Commentary: South ruffs the opening lead and returns the HQ. Assuming West covers, North wins and give South a second club ruff. South cashes the HJ and gets out with a diamond. Declarer wins and plays a spade. North wins and gives South a third club ruff. Down 3. That's why North doubled.

When the bidding indicates partner has extreme shortness in a side suit and the opening leader has the ace of trump along with a side suit ace, the opening leader should double and lead partner's short suit!