



## ALEX'S BRIDGE TIPS

In Auction one (below), the bidding has gone 1H by your RHO (Right Hand Opponent) and you said "Double". Pass by LHO and your partner responded 1S. Pass by RHO and you now bid 1NT.

How many points are you promising? And describe your hand.

In Auction Two below, this time you are the Dealer and you open 1C. Your LHO bid 1S. Pass by Partner and Pass by RHO. You now bid 1NT. How many points are you promising? And describe your hand.

### AUCTION ONE:

North	East (you)	South	West
1H	Double	Pass	1S
Pass	<b>1NT?</b>		

### AUCTION TWO:

North	East (you)	South	West
	1C	Pass	Pass
1S	<b>1NT?</b>		

**On Auction one**, your takeout double promised 13 or more points. AND with only 13-17 points, you promise also to have at least three-card support for all the unbid suits. Your partner bid his best suit at the cheapest level promising 0-8 points. The

Your partner could have had

S 5432  
 H 543  
 D 543  
 C 543

He was forced to respond to your takeout double. He did not promise you a rose garden. In this case, you as the Doubler

Must next pass with only 13-15.

With 16-18, you as doubler can now raise 1S to 2S.

With 15-18 and a stopper in Hearts, you the doubler would have overcalled 1NT at first opportunity instead of doubling.

Remember that playing a hand in NT when partner has potentially nothing is a very tough contract to make. You have always heard that 1NT is very challenging when partner has nothing.

This means that to bid 1NT on your second bid (as above) shows 19-20 HCP, on a process of elimination.

NOT 13-15 or you would have passed.

NOT 15-18 HCP or you would have overcalled 1NT.

Ergo, you have 19-20 HCP and a balanced hand with a stopper in Hearts.

This could have been your hand:

S AJ10

H KJ3

D AJ4

C AJ105

**On Auction Two**, your partner failed to bid at her first opportunity so has 0-5 points only. Warning bells sound loudly.

With 13-15, you should now be terrified ( $13 + 0 = 13$ ) and you must pass.

With 15-17 HCP, you would have opened 1NT.

Therefore to rebid with 1NT after Responder has PASSED, the opener is showing 18-19 HCP and a Spade stopper (opponent's suit).

Your hand is identical to the one above, just a different sequence of auction:

S AJ10

H KJ3

D AJ4

C AJ105

Hope you scored 100% on this test! SO many have trouble with this. If you already knew these answers, go to the head of the class!

## WHEN NOT TO USE STAYMAN by Barbara Seagram

	S A876 H QJ6 D Q92 C AK8	
S J4 H K1072 D10854 C 762		S 932 H A95 D K73 C Q1043
	S KQ105 H 843 D AJ6 C J95	

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	2C	Pass
2S	Pass	4S	All Pass

On this auction, East led a trump. This was a passive lead in an attempt to note help Declarer, since West was marked with not many points on this hand. Declarer tried but could only manage to take 9 tricks even though the Diamond finesse worked.

However NS did not own the D 10 so he had to lose one Diamond, two Hearts and one Club. Down one.

After the hand was over, NS realized that while they could not make 4S, they could have made 3NT. So, they pondered, what went wrong?

**Just because you have a tool in your shed, it doesn't mean that you have to use it, no matter what.**

**South used Stayman just because he owned a four-card major. He failed to consider that with a perfectly balanced hand and NO ruffing values (short suits) that it would be easier to make nine tricks in 3NT than ten tricks in a major.**

**RULE:** Do not use Stayman when you have a 4-3-3-3 hand.

No shortness, no Stayman!

We are programmed to always want to play a hand in a major when we have an eight-card fit. We can draw trump and still have one trump left in declarer's hand

and one in dummy. These trumps can then be scored separately by means of ruffing (trumping), allowing declarer to win one more trick in the major than he could in No Trump (420 versus 400 on the score sheet).

BUT for this to be able to happen, there must be a short suit somewhere. With no short suit, avoid using Stayman. Responder to a 1NT opener holding 10+ HCP and a four-card major and 4- 3-3-3 should simply bid 3NT.

Responder with 9 HCP should raise merely to 2NT: This asks opener if he has 15 to pass and if he has 17 to bid 3NT...With 16, opener should decide if he likes his hand: 10's and 9's versus 2's and 3's. Possession of a 5 card suit would also be a reason to accept the invitation and bid 3NT. There is one other factor: He should check to see who he is playing against. If they look like gentle souls , he should bid 3NT !

ALSO NOTE: Responder to a 1NT opener with 4-3-3-3 and exactly 8 HCP should pass. It will be right most of the time.

**AMENDMENT TO THIS RULE:** If you play Puppet Stayman, you should use this convention even when you are 4-3-3-3 or even with 3-2 or 3-3 in the majors. IN case opener has a five-card major. If opener has a five-card major, opener must have a short suit and now ruffing can take place. If opener is found to NOT have a five-card major, Responder reverts to 3NT.

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### REBIDS BY THE RESPONDER BY MAX HARDY

In all of these cases, your partner opened 1C.

You responded 1H. Opener has rebid 1S. What is your rebid?

1.  
S Q93  
H K1064  
D 8754  
C 53

2.  
S Q3  
H K10764  
D Q9872  
C 8

3.  
S Q3  
H J874  
D 95  
C KJ873

4.  
S 8  
H AQJ9765  
D 86  
C K104

5.  
S J8  
H AQ1074  
D KQ6  
C J104

6.  
S 108  
H KQ95  
D AQ104  
C 852

7.  
S KJ84  
H Q1073  
D 5  
C J763

8.  
S Q3  
H KJ10964  
D AJ5  
C K4

## ANSWERS

1. Pass. You know that you have reached a 4-3 fit, but with your meagre values, you don't want to get any higher. 1S will be as good a contract as any.

2. 1NT. Not the description you would like to make, but no other call will show your limited values. You cannot rebid hearts with only 5 (on this auction) and you do not have enough points to bid 2D.  
(This bid shows 6-9 points)

3. 2C. This shows your minimum response (6-9 points) and only 4 hearts with longer clubs.

4. 4H. Your heart suit is self-sufficient and your 10 HCP grow up to be enough for game when you factor in your seven card suit.

5. 2D. This is 4th suit forcing. It says nothing about the Diamond suit but makes the auction forcing to game. With your game-going values, you really want to know if partner has a three card fit for your five card suit.

6. 2NT. You have game invitational values (11-12 HCP) and you have a stopper in Diamonds.

7. 2S, A courtesy raise since your minimum is maximum and you do have 4 card support. **Responder should never raise opener's second suit holding only 3 card support.**

8. 2D. once again, this is 4th suit forcing (the convention). You know that game should be reached but do not know what game. You cannot bid 3H as that would only be invitational. NEW suits are forcing...OLD suits are NOT forcing.

ED. NOTE: Do make sure you learn Fourth Suit Forcing (the convention). It is so important.

## LET'S BID THIS HAND by Rob Drummond

North

S K64  
H K7654  
D AK54  
C 7

South

S A932  
H AJ3  
D 63  
C A953

South is the dealer. East-West pass throughout.

1C - 1H

1S

What should North bid next?

2H shows 6-9 points and is not forcing.

3H shows 10-12 points and is not forcing, only invitational.

4H is very risky since South could have a void in Hearts.

3NT is in trouble on a Club lead.

So this is why you MUST Learn Fourth Suit Forcing. The Convention. It allows you to find out if South has three-card support for your major.

1C - 1H

1S - 2D (Fourth Suit Forcing)

2H - 4H

Do study up on this convention. If you need a refresher or only know page ONE, do click on this link and it is a full write-up of this convention that I have written. Do print and study!!

<https://barbaraseagram.com/pdf/FOURTH-SUIT-FORCING-Student-handout.pdf>

## Play Like an Expert! By Greg Coles

### Play Like an Expert!

In a recent Virtual Club game, a hand came up that I felt touched upon a lot of important topics. So much so that I decided to write an article about it. I was north and I picked up:

<b>N</b> North
♠ AK4
♥ AQ62
♦ K962
♣ J10

My partner, the Dealer (South), opened 1NT (15-17). I knew we had somewhere between 32 and 34 high card points and therefore I wanted to probably be in a slam. My hand was balanced, my partner's hand was balanced – this is a good time to be in a no-trump contract even if we do happen to have a fit in hearts (a little more on that later). I had a couple of ways of inviting slam but I decided that as long as we weren't missing 2 aces, I wanted to be there. I therefore bid 4♣, Gerber.

**Important Topic #1 – Ace asking conventions like Gerber and the various forms of Blackwood are over-used by many players. Think of them like this – they are to keep you out of slam, not to get you to slam. This hand is a great example – there was a very small chance that we were missing both aces and if that was the case, I'd want to stop in 4NT. If I'd had just one more point in my hand, I would have known that we couldn't be missing 2 aces and I would have jumped right to 6NT.**

Back to our regularly scheduled programming. Partner bid 4♣ showing 2 aces and I jumped to 6NT ending the auction. West started with a heart and here are the two hands:

<b>N</b> North
♠ AK4
♥ AQ62
♦ K962
♣ J10

<b>S</b> South
♠ Q85
♥ K109
♦ A75
♣ AK53



**Important Topic #2 – It doesn't matter if you are a total novice or if you've won multiple World Championships, the process should always start the same way when you're declaring in a no-trump contract. You START by counting your TOP tricks, your WINNERS (the ones you can win without losing the lead).**

Here we have 3 spade tricks, 4 heart tricks (due to the opening lead giving us a free finesse of the jack), 2 diamond tricks and 2 club tricks. We are up to eleven so we only NEED one more. There is a guaranteed extra trick in clubs so the slam is now secured. After winning the first trick in our hand, we should IMMEDIATELY cross to Dummy and put the ♣J on the table. At the table, Declarer did this and the ♣J won the trick. We are now up to twelve tricks.

**Important Topic #3 – It always amazes me how many people don't really understand how matchpoints work. Nearly all the pair games played in North America are scored using matchpoints. A board is played multiple times; you get one matchpoint for every score you beat and you get ½ of a matchpoint for every score you tie. Your percentage at the end of the game is the percent of the total matchpoints available that you got. In other words, to have 100% game you'd need to have a higher score on every single board than every other pair that played it. An example – every pair in the room bids the exact same game contract. If everyone makes an overtrick but you only make the game, your +420 (as an example) might as well be -1 billion because you get 0 matchpoints on the board. Of course, if everyone else only just makes the game and you make an overtrick, your +450 might as well be +1 billion because you get 100% on the board. I mentioned at the beginning that there would be more later about my decision to not explore for a heart fit. I was taking the chance that, even if we had a heart fit, that we could score the same number of tricks in notrump. That extra 10 points in notrump can be worth so much more.**

The bottom line is, now that we had 12 tricks, it certainly can't hurt to try to take all 13! There is only one chance (and it's a small one) that will allow us to take the rest of the tricks. Before reading on, try to figure out what it is.

Our 3 spade tricks and 4 heart tricks are definitely all that we will take in those two suits. Diamonds could produce a third trick if the opponent's diamonds are split 3-3 but in order to get that extra trick we would need to lose one so that's not going to help. The answer is that because we started with 6 club cards, only one of the opponents can guard that suit. If the same opponent



that started with 4 or more clubs also started with 4 or more diamonds, they will be squeezed.

**Important Topic #4 – Squeezes aren't as complicated as you might think. The important points to understand are that they generally materialize when you have all of the top tricks except for one (as we do here) and to be able to identify the "threats". Here, we have a club threat and a diamond threat so, if the same person guards both of the suits, they are going to be squeezed.**

After the ♣J wins, we simply cash the ♣A and ♣K, our three winning spades, our 3 other heart winners (discarding a small diamond from the South hand on the last heart) and then play a small diamond to the ace. This whole time, do we need to be counting every single suit? Watching all of their discards? The answer is no. There is no need to pay any attention to anything at all except to watch to see if the 13<sup>th</sup> club gets discarded. What if it doesn't? If it doesn't then we just play another diamond to the king and play our last diamond. It will either win or it won't.

Bidding and making 6NT was an above-average board (about 65%). Making the overtrick? That wins all of the matchpoints – a 100% board.

The full hand:

11 D	N North	W N E S
	♠ AK4 ♥ AQ62 ♦ K962 ♣ J10	P 4♣ P 1NT P 6NT P 4♣ P P
W West		E East
♠ 7632 ♥ 8754 ♦ 104 ♣ 872		♠ J109 ♥ J3 ♦ QJ83 ♣ Q964
	S South	
	♠ Q85 ♥ K109 ♦ A75 ♣ AK53	6NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

## WHEN THE BRAIN GOES ON VACATION

Alex and I recently played against a delightful professional, Jeff Hand, from New York City in a club game on BBO.

Jeff is West in 3NT and part way through the hand (the rest does not matter), I won a trick and led the C 10. Club Jack was played from dummy. Alex covered with the K and Declarer won the Ace. I thought to myself that all was not lost because after the C Q was played, my 9 would be high.

Time went by and other suits were played and now Jeff led the C 2 towards Dummy. I was half asleep and should have played the 9 but failed. Jeff thus assumed I could not have the 9 and played the C 6 from Dummy instead of the 8. Alex, sitting South felt so sure that Jeff was playing the C 8 from Dummy that he failed to win the C 7. It was a happy day for Jeff who now managed to wrap up FOUR Club tricks and was left thinking that the bridge teacher from Toronto really doesn't have a clue.

All quite mortifying. Bridge is a humbling game. So when you do something dumb at the table, just remember, we all do!

	North (me) C 1094	
West (Jeff) C AQ32		East (Dummy) C J86
	South (Alex) C K75	