

Tournament to Expert Talk Notes

Evaluation - 3 pieces S,P,L

We learn with points(P) we get better incorporating shape(S) we go the next step by building in location(L).

Lets look at engaging with L:

After you open 1NT with

♠ AQ3
♥ Q953
♦ QJ
♣ A1064

Partner transfers to ♦s, then bids 3♠, you?

Lack of P (min – 15), lack of fit S, suggests 3NT, but great L (all points great except ♥Q, especially ♦QJ and ♠Q) - clear to me to bid 4♦. Give partner typical hands and 6♦ is likely.

♠ K1086
♥ 4
♦ 97
♣ AKQJ105

“L” of all the ♣ honours = 6 tricks, plus the ♠K working in 4c suit. This is not close to being a min opener: After

1♣ 1♥
1♠ 1NT

3NT is right on evaluation

Rule of 20:

Is only 2/3s of the pie. Better than just P, but it's only P+S, there's no L.

For me this is a good opening hand (1♠) but only “19”

♠ AJ1086
♥ AJ74
♦ 9
♣ 1052

Not just 54 but 5431, better than 5422.

Whereas this is “20” but a pass.

♠ Q8642
♥ KJ74
♦ Q7
♣ K2

So build “L” into your Rule of 20 (if you use it), so use S,P and L.

Bergen Raises – one way street, too often:

Responder Bergen raises, then Opener guesses.

Poorest Bergen raises are:

1♥/♠ : 3NT now opener guesses if good, and four of the opened major may not be the best contract at other times (too high? What about 3NT?, what about 44 fit in other M?)

1♠ : 3♥ (3c limit raise) is so bad just don't do it

1♥/♠ : 3♥/♠ as 0-6, 4c sup, is partner torture. They are going down mostly and if they might be making with their 18 count it's often down one in game.

Suggestion: (see appendix for details)

1♥/♠ : cheapest jump shift = 3c support, 11-14. Now opener can engage with the step as either a game try or a hand interested in slam. Get a partnership investigation and other strains may come to light.

1♥/♠ : next jump shift = 4c support, 10-13. Similar continuations. (Jacoby 2NT = 14+)

1♥/♠ : most expensive jump shift = can be a very tight good 8-9 with 4c support or alternatively define it as natural invite 9-11 6c suit. After 1♠ a difficult hand is 9-11 with 6♥s, so 1♠ : 3♥ may be a good choice for this hand.

1♥/♠ : 3♥/♠ (jump raise) = about 5-7, 4c trumps and some shape, the key criteria is that you expect opener to bid and make four of the major with 17-19 counts.

Other hands up to about 8 hcp, flatish with four trumps best make a simple raise. No rush, partner has room to invite (especially if you have a good partner), why preempt and guess and go down?

Why splinter ?

Never splinter because you have a singleton.
You splinter because it will help partner better judge the location (L) of their cards.

So before you splinter ask yourself will this help partner better evaluate?

If not a clear yes do something else (as splinters chew up bidding space - they have cost)

An example of a hand not to splinter on:

Partner opens 1♠, you hold:

♠ J986
♥ A75
♦ A
♣ KJ964

Sadly I've seen many a splinter on such hands. Yes you know singleton Aces are bad, if partner has:

♠ AK1042
♥ 86
♦ KQ54
♣ A7

They may devalue their ♦KQ and signoff – but their ♦KQ are two tricks = great cards
Splintering on singleton kings is similarly poor.

Whenever you have potential source of tricks such as ♣KJ964 the key L cards are the ♣A and ♣Q. So respond 2♣ to 1♠ and get partner suitably involved.

Remember never splinter because you have splinter, splinter to help partner evaluate the L.

Michaels – should you?

Only if you think it will help partner win the auction (you do not Michaels because you are 5/5... only Michaels for partner's benefit)

So if not vul you may be weak in high cards hopeful of a sacrifice but if Vul you have a serious hand.

If you Michaels and do not win the auction, you have just handed a strong declarer a blue-print of your hands. Use with care.

Support Doubles ?**Compulsory with 3c support?, or...**

First ask yourself why make a support double?

Answer: To encourage partner to compete in their major when they have five.

Logic: Only make a support double if you are keen for partner to compete in their major.

You open 1♣ partner responds 1♥, they overcall 1♠, you hold:

♠ KJ86
♥ J75
♦ K108
♣ A104

This is a 1NT bid not a support double, 1NT best communicates your hand to partner.

♠ Q86
♥ J75
♦ K108
♣ AQ84

Pass looks best to me, do you really want to encourage partner to bid more ♥s with this?

♠ 86
♥ Q75
♦ K108
♣ AK1084

Now this is a good support double, keen for you to bid ♥s partner, if you want to.

Similarly after partner opens 1♦, they overcall 1♥, you hold:

♠ Q863
♥ KJ85
♦ 108
♣ K104

This is a 1NT bid, not a hand to show you hold 4♠s, look at your hand not your convention card.

Partner will like you choice, freely bidding 1NT limits you to about 8-10 and grabs 1NT, whereas showing 4♠s, may have anything from 6 to 18 hcp, and do you really want to play in ♠s if partner has four ♠s (and a balanced hand)? No.

So do not let your system be prescriptive in that it removes your (better) evaluation from the bidding.

Transfer Responses to 1♣:

Should opener routinely show 3 card support when responder shows a major? (No)

It seems routine practice for many to bid:

1♣ : 1♦ (♥s)
1♥ with nearly all hands with 3♥s !

What should 1♥ show?

I suggest 1♥ showing 3♥s, should show a hand "suitable" for playing in ♥s. For me it's a hand that would raise a 1♥ standard response to 2♥, with 3c support.

Such as:

♠ AJ96
♥ A105
♦ 42
♣ K1064

Or better:

♠ J96
♥ A105
♦ 42
♣ AK1064

Not:

♠ AQ86
♥ 1075
♦ K84
♣ K64

This is a 1NT rebid, look at your hand. Responder can still use Checkback and when you show 3♥s, you are showing, within context, an "unsuitable" hand to play in ♥s.

(For my European partner; for opener to rebid 1♥ (showing 3♥s) they promise an unbalanced hand, typically 5♣3♥-"41", never a weak NT. I think this goes a bit too far.)

Engage with partner, if you show them 3 card support you are saying your hand is "suitable" to play this suit as trumps. Use L and your judgment, do not be prescribed by system.

Opener's Rebid of 1 Suit – does it promise an unbalanced hand or ?

After you open 1♣, partner bids 1♥, what do you bid with:

♠ AJ96
♥ 85
♦ 942
♣ AK104

Bidding 1♠ feels right, think L, all your stuff in ♣s+♠s. Bidding 1NT seems wrong, and likely to wrongside.

What if your red suits were reversed, so you have three small ♥s and two small ♦s, now 1NT is "worse".

I think you should be able to bid 1♠ on these hands promising at least 4♣s (so always 4-4 in bid suits). Engage your L/judgment, rather than be prescribed by system = better outcomes!

Frequency is a consideration, 4432 is the most common hand shape, if you lump all of them into a 1NT rebid (and never rebid 1♠), good luck in sorting it out.

Jump Overcalls

Why jump overcall – to pre-empt? To get to a tight 3NT with nine tricks due to a fitting long suit? Or? To encourage partner to get involved?

You need to answer these questions before having an idea of what your jump overcall shows.

Key is position.

Are you vul or not?

Are you bidding at the two or three level?

Has Partner passed (had an opportunity to bid)?

Have the opponents both bid? And if they have do their bids give a reasonably defined picture of their hands?

A starting point for the strength of a jump overcall might be:

If RHO deals and opens 1♥ you might bid 2♠ with this not vul:

♠ KJ9643

♥ 85

♦ Q942

♣ 4

And then if the position were different your hand would roughly change (get stronger):

If vul add 2 hcp

If partner has passed add 2 hcp

If at 3 level add 2 hcp

If both opponents have bid add 2 hcp (much harder to effectively pre-empt them if they have both got a bid in), so you should have a “good” hand!

In summary think about what you are trying to achieve when you make a bid, is there a clear upside? If not, do not make the bid, even if it fits your system card.

Tournament player to expert is about better evaluating and acting on it, and being able to act on it within your system. Bring in the “L”. Make the best partnership bids, do not just systemically bid, consider better options..

So prescriptive system agreements may need to be carefully considered – and often relaxed.

When people ask me why I made a bid or pass - my normal answer is:

“I had a good hand” or “I had a bad hand”

My “good” and “bad” is derived from many factors, especially from the “S” and “L” of my hand.

Following are some detailed system notes as I referred to above.

Matthew

An alternative to Bergen:

1♥ Opening:

1♥ : 2♥ = nat, 6-10. NS = nat game try,
 2♠ = 3♥s, 11-14. Now 2NT=ask, 3NT nat.
 2NT = 4♥'s, bal'd 14+ or unbal'd, GF
 3♣ = 4♥'s, 10-13. Now 3♦=ask, 3NT nat.
 3♦ = 4♥'s, 8-9. Now 3NT=SS.
 3♥ = 4♥'s, say 5-7, some shape
 3♠/3NT(♦)/4♣ = spl's, 12-13 hcp(outside ♥s)

Poor hands with ~4-6 and 3c support can respond 1NT; with bal'd 5-8 and 4c support respond 2M.

After 1M : 3c or 4c Limit Raise+:

The step by opener is the ask, only an immediate 3NT by opener is natural(TP), and suit bids above 3M are splinters. Responder co-operates with 11+hcp outside splinter suit or with 8 hcp outside and the ace in the splinter suit. Later bids of 3NT are SS.

In reply to the ask: the next step accepts and suit bids above 3M are splinters.

1♥ : 2♠
 2NT = ask
 3♣ = 4♠s, now 3♥=NF, other GF
 3♥ = min
 3♠/4♣/♦ = splinters (suit bids above 3♥)

1♥ : 2♠
 2NT : 3♣ = 4♠s, now 3♥=NF, other GF.
 : 3♦ = accepting game try, GF (♥s set)
 : 3♥ = NF, min
 : 3♠/4♣/♦ = splinters

1♥ : 3♣
 3♦ = ask
 3♥ = min
 3♠/4♣/♦ = splinters (suit bids above 3♥)

1♥ : 3♣
 3♦ : 3♥ = NF, min. Now 3NT=SS.
 3♠ = accept, GF (♥s set)
 4♣/♦ = splinters (3NT=♠ spl)

Responses by PH:

1♥ : 2♣ = 3♥s, 9+. Op'r bids 2♦ w int.
 2♦ = 4♥s, 8+
 2♠ = 4♥s w spl: 2NT asks; LS,MS,HS
 2NT(♠)+ = FSJ's

After Simple Raise:

1M : 2M raise
 2NT = F1, F to 3M

After 2NT Jacoby Response to 1♥ or 1♠ :

1M : 2NT
 3♣ = min
 3♦ = 15+ no shortage (6c or 5422)
 3♥/♠/NT = 15+, LS, MS, HS
 4♣/♦/M = 5/5, 15+

1M : 2NT
 3♣ : 3♦ ask
 3♥/♠/4♣ = LS, MS, HS
 3NT = no spl

1M : 2NT
 3♣ : 3♥/♠/NT = 14+, LS, MS, HS

1M : 2NT
 3♦ : 3M = waiting, tell more
 : 3oM/4♣/♦ = 14+, LS, MS, HS
 : 3NT = SS

After A Raise of ♥ or ♠s and in a Game Force; 3NT = slam keen, extras, better than cueing.

This applies after **any** raise to 3M when there is an established **GF**. If ♠s are agreed and you bid 3♠, you deny being slam serious.

After a Rebid of 3M (6+) in a GF Auction (no suit yet agreed): Agree the M by a cuebid (eg NS at 4 level), then can KCB if choose. A jump to 4NT over 3M is quant (if logical option).

1♠ Opening:

1♠ : 3♣ = 3♠s, 11-14. Now 3♦=ask, 3NT nat.
 3♦ = 4♠'s, 10-13. Now 3♥=ask, 3NT nat.
 3♥ = 4♠'s, 8-9. Now 3NT=SS.
 3♠ = 4♠'s, say 5-7, some shape
 3NT(♥)/4♣/♦ = spl's, 12-13 hcp(outside ♠s)
 4♥ = **to play**

Poor hands with ~4-6 and 3c support can respond 1NT; with bal'd 5-8 and 4c support respond 2M.

After 1M : 3c or 4c Limit Raise+:

The step by opener is the ask, only an immediate 3NT by opener is natural(TP), and suit bids above 3M are splinters. Responder co-operates with 11+hcp outside splinter suit or with 8 hcp outside and the ace in the splinter suit. Later bids of 3NT are SS.

In reply to the ask: the next step accepts and suit bids above 3M are splinters.

1♠ : 3♣
 3♦ = ask
 3♥ = 4♥s, now 3♠=NF, other GF
 3♠ = min
 4♣/♦/♥ = splinters

1♠ : 3♣
 3♦ : 3♥ = accept, now GF (♠s set)
 3♠ = NF, min
 4♣/♦/♥ = splinters

1♠ : 3♦
 3♥ = ask, GF unless Resp rebids 3♠.
 3♠ = min.
 4♣/♦/♥ = splinters

1♠ : 3♦
 3♥ : 3♠ = NF, min. Now 3NT=SS.
 3NT = accept (F)
 4♣/♦/♥ = splinters

Responses by PH:

1♠ : 2♣ = 3♠s, 9+. Op'r bids 2♦ w int.
 2♦ = 4♠s, 8+
 2NT =

4♠s w spl: 3♣ asks; LS,MS,HS
 3♣+ = FSJ's

Some Transfer to 1♣ System Notes:

Openings

1♣ bal'd 12-14, 5+(4)♣s unbal'd, 18-19 bal'd
 1♦ 5+♦ unbal'd, 4=4=4=1, 18-19 bal'd 4+♦s
 1M 5+
 1NT 15-17, may have 5cM
 2♣ GF or 22-23
 2♦ 4♠s and 5+m, 11-14
 2♥ 4♥s and 5+m, 11-14
 2♠ weak
 2NT 20-21
 3NT 6♥s+5♠s, 9-13
 4♣/♦/♥/♠ pre-empts
 4NT 6/5 minors weak
 5♥/♦ pre-empts

1♣ Opening

Responses:

1♣ 1♦ = 4+♥s
 1♥ = 4+♠s
 1♠ = bal'd no M, 6-12 hcp; 6♦s, 9-11 and 5-8
 weak ♦s; ♣&♦s 9-11; 5+♣&4♦, 5-9.
 1NT = 5+♣s, GF. No 4M unless 6♣ or 15+.
 2♣ = 5+♦s, GF. No 4M unless 6♦ or 15+.
 2♦ = 5+♦s, 4+♣s, 5-9
 2♥ = 5+♥s, 4+♠s. 5-9
 2♠ = 6♣s, 9-11
 2NT = balanced GF. 4432 & 13+; 4333
 & 15+; 5m332 & 12-13.
 3♣ = 6♣'s, 6-8
 3♦ = 6♦'s, 6-8, good ♦s
 3♥ = 4♠333, 13-14.
 3♠ = 4♥333, 13-14. After 3M: 4♣ KCB, 4♦
 says cue, 4NT KCB in M.
 3NT = 4333 on a minor, 13-14. Now 4♣ KCB.
 4♣/♦ = Texas, good suit 7-8 tricks
 4M = 8c, 4-7 hcp

Responses by PH

1♣ 1♦/♥
 1♥/♠ accept transfer = 12-14 bal'd w 3c support
 or unbal'd w ♣s.

1♣ : 1♦(♥) Auctions:

1♣ : 1♦
 1♥ = 3♥s, unbal'd or "suited" 44♣32/5♣332
 1♠ = 4♠ & 4+♣s unbal'd or "suitable" 4=32=4
 1NT = 12-14 bal'd not 4♥s, now 2 way Checkback.
 2♣/3♣ = 6+♣
 2♦ = reverse or g 6♣+3♥ hand, now Blackout
 2♥ = 4♥s, 12-14 bal'd; 2425, 11-14; 11-12 unbal'd
 2♠/3♦ = mini-spls or 18+
 2NT = all 18-19 bal'd hands. See below.
 3♥ = 15-17, assume 2425
 3♠/4♦ = spls, 15-17
 4♣ = 4♥s, 5+♣s to AKQ, 15+
 4♥ = shapely

1♣ : 1♦

1♥ : 1♠ = nat, 4♠s, F1 (1♥ ~ max of 16)
 1NT = 8-10
 2♣ = preference NF (Op'r often 5+♣)
 2♦ = Art GF. Op'r bids 2♥ if bal'd.
 2♥ = 5♥s, 6-10
 (2♠ = a mini spl, now 2NT asks)
 2NT/3♣/♥ = inv
 3♦ = 4♥ & 5♦, 12-14 GF
 3♠/4♣/♦ = spls

Checkback Responses:

1♣ : 1♦
 1NT : 2♣ = Invite Checkback, Fs 2♦.
 2♦/♥/♠ /NT = transfers, either to play in
 transfer suit(5+) or GF
 3 suit = shapely game invite hands

1♣ : 1♥(♠) Auctions:

1♣ : 1♥

1♠ = 3♠s, unbal'd or "suited" 44♣32/5♣332

1NT = 12-14 bal'd not 4♠s, now 2 way Checkback.

2♣/3♣ = 6+♣

2♦ = reverse or g 6♣+3♠ hand, now Blackout

2♥ = reverse, now Blackout

2♠ = 4♠s, 12-14 bal'd; 4225, 11-14; 11-12 unbal'd

2NT = all 18-19 bal'd hands. See below.

3♦/♥ = mini-spls or 18+

3♠ = 15-17, assume 4225

4♣ = 4♠s, 5+♣s to AKQ, 15+

4♦/♥ = spls, 15-17

4♠ = shapely

1♣ : 1♥

1♠ : 1NT = 8-10

2♣ = preference NF (Op'r often 5+♣)

2♦ = Art GF. Op'r bids 2♠ if bal'd.

2♥ = 5/4, F1

2♠ = 5♠s, 6-10

2NT/3♣/♠ = inv

3♦ = 4♠ & 5♦, 12-14 GF

3♥/4♣/♦ = spls