

Dealer: N  
Vul: NS

♠ J72  
♥ 98  
♦ 74  
♣ AQJ985

N	E	S	W
P	P	1NT (15-17)	P
?			

What should North bid?

## Bidding 10 - Length Points and Shortage Points

Dealer: N  
Vul: NS

	♠ J72 ♥ 98 ♦ 74 ♣ AQJ985		♠ K10986 ♥ 10762 ♦ 1086 ♣ 3
♠ AQ3 ♥ QJ5 ♦ KQ952 ♣ 104	♠ 54 ♥ AK43 ♦ AJ3 ♣ K762		

N	E	S	W
P	P	1NT	P
?			

What should North bid?

Before you have found a trump fit, remember to add length points when assessing your hand. The basic starting point is adding 1 point for a 5 card suit headed by at least the A or K, 2 points for a 6 card suit headed by at least the A or K, and so on.

Why do we add length points?

- Because we are hoping the suit will run and be a source of tricks for us.

Why do we require the suit to be headed by the A or K?

- Because this will increase chances the suit will run successfully. We don't like the chances of setting up a suit 65432.

Do **NOT** add shortage points before you have found a trump fit. Voids do not take tricks in no trumps – they are a liability.

If you find a trump fit, forget length points and add shortage points instead (1 for a doubleton, 3 for a singleton and 5 for a void). Your shortages are now likely to be a source of tricks in the form of ruffs.

**REMEMBER: ADD LENGTH POINTS BEFORE A TRUMP FIT, SHORTAGE POINTS AFTER A TRUMP FIT. NEVER BOTH TOGETHER.**

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		♠ J72	
		♥ 98	
		♦ 74	
		♣ AQJ985	
♠ AQ3			♠ K10986
♥ QJ5			♥ 10762
♦ KQ952			♦ 1086
♣ 104			♣ 3
		♠ 54	
		♥ AK43	
		♦ AJ3	
		♣ K762	

N	E	S	W
P	P	1NT	P
?			

On the above hand, North should add 2 length points for the good club suit to their 8 HCPs for 10 total points. And bid an immediate 3NT opposite partner's 1NT (15-17) opening. Do not transfer to 3C on the way and point out to the defence that you have a long suit.

But you might protest, can't EW run 5 spade tricks and put you down? Yes, but who leads A from AQ3, above the declarer, in 3NT? Everyone will lead a diamond.

You mainly worry about stoppers in no trumps in 2 situations:

1. The opposition have bid a suit. You must have a stopper here as 90+% of the time they lead this suit, and
2. You have bid 3 suits. You must have a stopper in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit as again 90+% of the time they lead this suit.

Otherwise, in general, don't worry too much about stoppers in no trumps. The defence have to jump through a number of hoops to get you:

1. They might not find the right lead,
2. Partner might a stopper or stoppers in the suit, or
3. The suit might break 4-4 or might block.