

Some Tips and Perspectives

Declarer Tip

When winning the first trick in a suit headed by AK, especially when the suit is visible in dummy, unless you plan to cash both tricks now, win with the King! This is because if you win the Ace and leave the King to much later in the hand, you may forget that the King is good, but you will always know the Ace is good.

If the suit is hidden from the defence in Declarer's hand, then unless you want to conceal the position of the King to the defence, also win with the King. In a suit contract, where the opening lead will rarely be from the Ace, if you win with the King, you are known to have the Ace as well, because third in hand would normally play the Ace even on the opening lead of the Queen, just in case you had a singleton King.

Dummy Tip

It is important that Declarer looks at all of the dummy before they play to trick 1. To assist in this regard, I suggest that the dummy place the suit led ON THE TABLE LAST. It does not matter where it goes (on the right if it is the trump suit), as long as the rest of the dummy is on show first.

Hand Evaluation

We get used to evaluating our hand by counting HCPs on the Milton-Work 4321 basis, and if the count comes up to around 12 or more, we open the bidding, otherwise pass or preempt.

1 What about this hand?

AT7543

-

AJ86532

-

This hand has only 9 HCPs, but has great shape and therefore great potential. I would open this hand 1D because no response from partner will prevent you from describing your hand shape. As long as you open 1D you can always bid spades again to show 6-5 or 7-6 and not promise reversing values. If the major suit was hearts, a 1S response from partner would force you to rebid 2H, which would be seen as a reverse, so maybe not so clear, but still great potential and now maybe you open hearts and rebid diamonds twice.

2 What about this hand?

AQ9643

J

-

QJ9732

This hand has only 10 HCPs but also great shape and is also worth an opening bid, which would also be true if the major suit was hearts, but then you should open 1H. Holding the black suits it is easy to open 1C and rebid spades twice, although this will tend to show longer clubs.

3 What about this hand?

AK9865

AKT732

-

A

Everyone will agree that this is an opening bid, but what? It only has 18 HCPs, but is only a 2-loser hand and therefore seems to qualify for a strong 2C opening, but some

would consider that it does not have enough defensive tricks. If you open 1S it is unlikely to be passed out with 22 HCPs missing, but you will never convince your partner of the power of the hand. I would open 2C, rebid 2S and if that does not provoke any interest from partner I would go for broke and rebid 6H – pass or correct!

Bd4	T		<p>When I held this hand at a club Duplicate, I opened 1S and partner's 4C response showed 4-card support, 10-12 HCPs and a singleton or void in clubs, which was not likely to be the King or even less likely, the Ace.</p> <p>This did not look good to me with my very minimum hand, so I signed off in 4S and North led the ST.</p> <p>The lead was a safe ST, everything was very friendly, clubs were 3-3 and spades 2-1, so 12 tricks were easy and I did not need the DA, but I still did not think slam was worth bidding.</p>		
Dir W	Q943				
Vul All	K8754	K752			
	KT4	AT752			
AQ9643		K752			
J		AT9			
-		5			
QJ9732	J8				
	K86				
	QJ632				
	A86				
W	N	E			S
1S	/	4C!			/
4S	//				

Bd 5	8		<p>When my partner held this hand at the club Duplicate, he opened 1S and found it very difficult to describe his hand, but this is how I think it should have gone.</p> <p>South's bidding 2NT on the second round suggests a hand too strong to overcall 1NT, and even too strong to rebid 1NT (showing 18-19), but East should follow through and rebid 3S.</p> <p>When East rebids 3S, West shows preference for spades but is not suitable for a raise to game, so 3S would likely be the final contract unless South got carried away with their 21 HCPs and doubled for penalties.</p> <p>This would not have been a good time to double as 10 tricks are easy with everything friendly, and even 11 tricks are there on a 3-2 spade break.</p>		
Dir N	98754				
Vul NS	T74	AT7543			
	QJT6	-			
J9		AT7543			
QJT32		-			
9		AJ86532			
K9742	KQ62				
	AK6				
	KQ				
	A853				
W	N	E			S
/	/	1D			X
/	1H	1S	2NT		
/	3C	3S	//		

Bd 16	AK9865		<p>When I held this hand at another club Duplicate I opened 2C and partner responded 3C, showing a positive response with at least 5 clubs, and likely an Ace and a King. I bid an obvious 3S, intending to bid 6H next and force a preference if partner did not support spades.</p> <p>To my surprise he showed 3-card support by raising to game, so I simply signed off in 6S.</p> <p>East led the H9 which cleared up that suit, but with spades 2-2 and hearts 3-3, 13 tricks were always there.</p> <p>Did I want to be in 7S? No, as this combined break of the key suits is well below the odds suggested for a grand slam.</p>		
Dir W	AKT732				
Vul EW	-	J4			
	A	985			
Q7		J4			
Q64		985			
KT873		QJ952			
QJ8	T32				
	J				
	A64				
	KT9732				
W	N	E			S
/	2C!	/			3C!
/	3S	/	4S!		
/	6S	//			