

GAMBLING 3NT

By Neil H Timm

How often do you pick up a hand with 25-27 HCP, not too often and if you did you would open it 2♣, playing the 2/1 Game Force System, and then bid 3NT*. Today, most 2/1 partnerships play 3NT* as Gambling. The bid must be alerted, hence the asterisk.

The bid promises a long running minor suit. "Long and running" means at least AKQxxxx (yes, seven of them). In 1st, 2nd, or 3rd positions, you do not have any outside aces or kings. In the 4th position, partner should usually have stoppers in two side suits so partner may pass the bid (referred to as ACOL 3NT*). If you do not have side suit stoppers, it is best just to make a preemptive minor suit bid in the fourth seat.

I recommend that the 3NT* bidder have at least Qxx in the other minor. Then, if partner has the majors stopped, it allows partner to pass the 3NT gambling bid. Not all play it this way; however, then the bidding sequences become more complicated.

**Responses to gambling 3NT* – Be Careful, there are many options.
The bids here follow many suggested by Marty Bergen.**

4♣ says let's play in a Part Score 4♣ or 4♦

4♦ usually played two ways:

- (a) Asking opener to bid a singleton: responses are 4♥=Heart singleton, 4♠=Spade singleton, 4NT=minor suit singleton, and 5♣=no singleton.
- (b) Gerber

Depending on the location of the singleton and your hand, responder is usually interested in playing in a game, 5♣/5♦ or a slam, 6♣/6♦.

Example: Responder has

Spades: AKQ x Hearts: xx Diamonds: AKQx Clubs: xxx

With a heart singleton, you want to play in 6♣ clubs otherwise you would bid 5♣.

4♥ and 4♠ are 6-card suits. Opener must pass.

4NT is invitational to slam (Quantitative), asking opener to bid a minor suit slam

Example: Opener has a hand like

Spades: xx Hearts: x Diamonds: Qxxx Clubs: AKQJxxx

5♣ signoff play in club game or correct to 5♦; not slam interest.

5♦ signoff by responder, responder knows that the opener has long diamonds and wants to play game from his side.

5NT is a grand slam try, to play in 7♣/7♦. Responder has no losers outside the trump suit, but is usually void of the trump suit and is afraid of a trump loser. Opener bids 7♣/7♦ with a suit like A-K-Q-J-x-x-x or A-K-Q-x-x-x-x-x-x. With A-K-Q-x-x-x-x-x, opener would sign off in 6 of the suit.

6♣ is to play slam in 6♣/6♦, opener is to pick the suit. Again, a bid of 6♦ by responder is to play slam in diamonds, responder knows that it is the long suit.

How do you defend against the dreaded 3NT* bid?

X = strong and balanced

4♣ = both majors

4♦ = one major (6+)

4M = 5-card bid major and a 5+ card minor

4NT = suit asking bid: bid your 5-card suit at the 5-level (♣♦♥♠) and 5NT = you pick the suit, usually the other minor

5m = to play, in the other minor

Pass the double if the opponents run and you are 3-suited and short in their minor; otherwise bid your longest major.

What do you lead against the 3NT* bid?

An ace if you have one, fourth best with a 5-card major and without a long major, your shortest major; try to find partner's major.