

FIRST END PLAY of the NEW YEAR

75 DEALER – 1 Heart
 AKQ43 2 Spades
 A107 # NT
 AQ5

94
 109872
 QJ94 Pass
 102 Pass

AQJ862
 6 1 Spade
 65 Double
 KJ83 Pass

K103
 J5 Double (Negative)
 K832 2 NT
 9764 Pass

West leads the 9 of spades, you play the 5, East plays the Ace and returns the Q.
 You win the K. Cash 4 rounds of hearts and pitch a diamond and a club. East
 pitches the 8 of clubs, 5 of diamonds and 2 of spades. What do you do next?

AKJ10 Double
 QJ 3 Spades
 AKQ8
 642

4 DEALER – 1 Heart
 AK10943 2 Hearts
 1065
 AQ9

762 Pass
 5 Pass
 J9743
 10873

Q9853
 8762 1 Spade
 2 4 Spades
 KJ5

West leads the A and K of hearts. How do you defend? What 4 tricks can you take to set the contract?

What's 3 NT by you, responder, when partner opens 1 of a major? It shows 13-15 high card points, 3 bad trump, and a balanced hand with stoppers in the other 3 suits.

Partner opens 1 spade and you hold: 962 KJ3 AJ94 KJ7. You can't bid 4 spades. You don't have a long suit, no Jacoby, you don't have 4 trump. You can't splinter, no singleton or void. 3 NT describes your hand perfectly.

Don't bid 3 NT over 1 spade if you have 4 hearts. Partner might also have 4 hearts. Partner opens 1 Heart, bid 1 spade with 4 or more. Bid 3NT with 13-15 and honor 3rd in spades.

You open 1 spade holding: QJ1054 6 KQ7 AQ93, partner bids 3 NT, 13-15 HC Pts. Partner has 3 bad trump, balanced hand with stoppers in the unbid suits. You correct to 4 spades with a distributional hand. You can cue bid an Ace if you have slam interest. 4 NT would be ace asking by you.

More conventions aren't the way to improve your game. Even experienced players who really like gadgets still bid "naturally" 90% of the time. When you are thinking about adding a new convention, ask yourself:

What bid we now use will no longer be available?

How often will I need this new convention?

I will master the conventions I've already acquired before I add new ones.

When you have a powerful trump suit and being forced to ruff, tend not to ruff with your lowest trump. That tiny trump may be your only entry to dummy.

When drawing trump, try to keep a flexible entry position after trumps are drawn.

If you decide the best way to make a contract is to crossruff, remember (normally) to cash out your side-suit winners first.

Consider eliminating side suits and then throwing an opponent in so they may have to lead into your tenace or do something else favorable for you.