

Answers for Quiz 1, March 2020.

The “correct” bids are:

<u>Hand</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1	4Nt	No singleton
2	5D	Singleton Club
3	5C	Singleton Diamond

Thanks to all those who sent in a reply; there was considerable variation. In a way there was no “correct” answer. The important thing was to consider the problem and hopefully discuss with your partners.

We all know that when partner opens a “gambling 3Nt” we will stick it if we can but if it is clearly a no-hoper, we can remove to 4 of partner’s minor by bidding 4C, regardless of what our relative holdings in the minors are. This is a “pass or correct” bid. Partner passes with long Clubs; if has Diamonds he corrects to 4D. If we decide that game in partner’s minor is a better bet, or we want to raise to 5 of partner’s suit as a more pre-emptive move, we bid 5C as a “pass or correct” direction to partner. You could apply the same logic to a response of 6C or 7C.

That leaves a response of 4D to be considered. Of course, a partnership can attach any legal meaning they like but it is important that they are in agreement about it. For many years it was popular that this bid asked the opener to show any singleton he held. With none he bids 4Nt, with a singleton major he bids 4 of that suit and with a singleton minor he bids 5 of his long suit. The partnership is then in the best position to know whether to bid a slam or not. No doubt one can find hands where this treatment is not helpful but on balance it seems like a good agreement to have. However, the rarity of the 3Nt opening and the passage of time seem to have pushed this method off the radar.

I am spared the task of providing a comprehensive model answer thanks to the erudite solution sent in by BRIAN DAVIES, which is reproduced below.

[From Brian Davies]

On the Essex website you ask about the sequence 3NT-4 ♦.

I am replying by email as I think that the question needs a more detailed answer. The answer will of course depend on the meaning of 4 ♦. There are various possibilities:

1. 4 ♦ is to play

The argument is that partner will almost certainly know what your suit is and simply bids 4 ♦ as the fast route to the right contract. I find this argument unconvincing – but I heard it given by a good player during a bridge holiday seminar on pre-empts.

2. All minor suit bids are “pass or correct”.

So 4 ♣, 4 ♦, 5 ♣, 5 ♦, 6 ♣ are all pass or correct bids. If playing this method, you clearly pass on your first two example hands, but bid 5 ♣ on the third hand.

I would assume this method unless the partnership had discussed other methods (3NT is a very low-frequency opening – have many partnerships discussed it?). The pass or correct approach is consistent with other bidding situations.

This method is given in e.g. Klinger's *Bridge Conventions, Defences and Countermeasures*. It would be useful if you hold as responder ♠ KQJ1098 ♥ AKQJ10 ♦ - ♣ 32 when you want to play in six clubs opposite a running club suit, but only four diamonds if partner's suit is diamonds.

3. 4 ♦ is an artificial inquiry

Responder almost certainly knows opener's suit (or is weak and doesn't care), so it can be argued that 4 ♦ is redundant in a natural sense. One scheme of responses would be:

4 ♥ / 4 ♠ = singleton in suit bid; 4NT = no singleton (7222 shape) 5 ♣ / 5 ♦ = singleton in the other minor. But other response structures are possible (e.g. reverse the meaning of 4 ♥ / 4 ♠; or responses that show an eight-card suit).

Using this method, you respond 4NT with your first example to show the 7222 shape; 5 ♦ with your second example to show a singleton club and 5 ♣ with the third example to show the singleton diamond.

I think that this would be considered as “Expert Standard” and I have seen it quoted in text books e.g. *Crowhurst's Precision Bidding in Acol*.