

Here are a couple of hands I played with Erika last Tuesday. Generally when you have a fit in a minor suit and game going values the preference is to look for 3NT. With fit in a major suit, generally, people look for game in the major. However, with an 8 card fit, there is about a 25% chance that the outstanding trumps are split 4-1 which can cause problems with a 4-4 fit. Occasionally the defence can get in a ruff if one of the defenders has distribution so maybe there are times when looking for 3NT is preferable? Also, in pairs don't forget that 3NT+1 scores better than 4 of a major making 10, which can make a big difference. Hand 1:

Partner is flat as well, so there is little ruffing potential, however, with the cub doubleton there is an argument for 4♠. In 4♠, there was a heart lead and the defence were able to establish a heart trick. Along with A♣, K♦ and the spade finesses offside the contract went 1 down. Unlucky? In 3NT you are likely to either get a heart lead (unbid major) or possible a diamond- although this is the longest suit for South it doesn't look like an ideal suit to lead.

NT might not fare any better if NS find the club suit, but there are chances of 9 tricks with 3 spades, 3 hearts, 2 diamonds and K♣. If NS find the defence before you establish your tricks, then you are 1 down and no worse off.

Hand 2:

N	Erika Pick
♠	86
♥	AKQJ98
♦	J103
♣	Q6

You open 1♥, East doubles and partner bids 2NT- showing 10-12 points without a 4 card heart suit. It looks like you have a game but which one? 4♥ is an option but the hearts should run nicely in NT as well, and with partner having points in the other suits it might be easier to make 9 tricks in NT? If West had a long running suit they might have overcalled that suit rather than doubling?

15 D	N Erika Pick	W N E S			
	♠ 86 ♥ AKQJ98 ♦ J103 ♣ Q6	P	1♥	X	2NT
W AZao		P	4♥	P	P
♠ 732 ♥ 6432 ♦ 862 ♣ A42		P			
	S med029	E hxjohn			
	♠ AJ109 ♥ 105 ♦ KQ95 ♣ J103	♠ KQ54 ♥ 7 ♦ A74 ♣ K9875			
		4♥ N NS: 0 EW: 0			

Erika bid 4♥. East lead K♠ and EW took 4 tricks- 2 clubs, a diamond and a spade.

In 3NT all suits are stopped. You would likely get a spade lead to the Q♠, taken with the A♠. Lead the J♠ or a diamond- either way EW will take their 4 tricks, but when you get back in you have your 9 tricks and the contract.