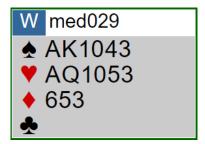29/09/2021 Hand of the Week 76: Responding to 1NT with 5-5 in the majors

Back in week 31 I talked about showing 5-4 in the majors after partner open 1NT, there are a number of options but the system I described was, in summary:

5-4, weak hand (<10 points)	Bid 2♣- covert to better major at 2 level if partner bids 2♦
5-4, intermediate hand (10-12 points)	Transfer to the 5 card major, then bid 2♠ or 3♥
5-4, strong hand (13+)	Bid 2♣- convert to your 4 card major at 3 level if partner bids 2♦

But what are the options if you are 5-5 in the majors?

We have given up a number of the potential sequences with the responses that show a 5-4 major

With a weak hand you can still use Stayman with a conversion to your preferred major if partner responds 2♦.

There are a few options that are available with stronger hands, so it is worth a discussion with your partner. The 1NT open guarantees at least one 3 card major so you should always be able to find a fit:

1/ Direct bid to 3♥

2/ Stayman followed by 4♥

3/ Transfers followed by a 4♥

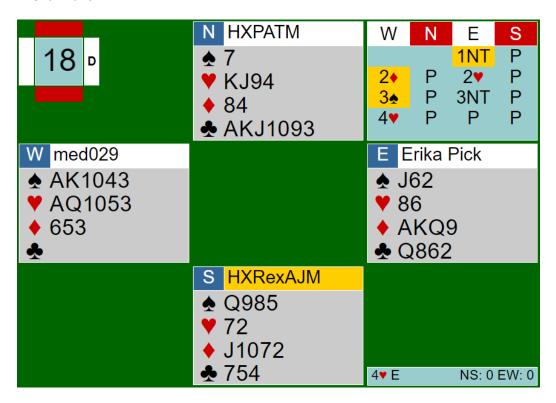The first option is probably most useful to show an intermediate hand- partner has the option of passing, converting to 3♠, or bidding the appropriate game

There isn't much to choose between 2 & 3 as you end up in the same place, giving partner the option of which major game to play in. I would probably suggest using Stayman as it would give your partner the chance to show you a 4 card major, this may help you re-evaluate your hand if you are considering going to slam

So let's look at tonight's hand. 13 points, so we are going to game.

I would suggest bidding 2♣, partner responds 2♦, and then jump to 4♥- partner will convert to 4♠

The full hand:

	N HXPATM		W	N	E	S
18 D	♠ 7 ♥ KJ94 ♦ 84 ♣ AKJ1093				1NT	P
			2♦	P	2♥	P
			3♠	P	3NT	P
			4♥	P	P	P

W med029		E Erika Pick
♠ AK1043 ♥ AQ1053 ♦ 653 ♣		♠ J62 ♥ 86 ♦ AKQ9 ♣ Q862

	S HXRexAJM	
	♠ Q985 ♥ 72 ♦ J1072 ♣ 754	4♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0

As it happens myself and Erika hadn't encountered this position previously so, I ended up bidding a transfer and we ended up in 4♥ going 1 off. This ended up scoring 50%- 3 pairs were in the same contract and we were somewhat fortunate that with the bad break in spades, 4♠ goes off as well.