

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

Meets every Thursday at 7.25 for 7.30
at Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Essex, England, CM15 0UG

“2020” Comments on “The non-fitter of the year?” Submission by Frank Tomlin (Deceased): [Click here](#) Commentary by Alaric Cundy

The first thing I did with this hand when reviewing it was to analyse it using *Bridge Solver*, which can be downloaded for free, and used to analyse different contracts, Declarer plays and / or defences, on any hand – such as this one! The on-line version can be accessed through this link: <https://mirgo2.co.uk/bridgesolver/upload.htm>.

Bridge Solver confirms that the only makable Game Contracts on the North / South cards are 5♣, as discussed in the original report, and also 3NT. Both these contracts can be made from either hand on any defence. 9 tricks is the limit in a diamond contract, and, bizarrely, 9 is also the limit in a *heart contract*, despite the 4-2 fit! Indeed, 4♥ can be made if the Defenders start off with a diamond, providing that the Ace is conceded at trick 1.

The play in 5♣ is trivial: basically, play two rounds of trumps, then cross to Dummy by any of the entries in the major suits, and discard a heart on the second top Spade. Declarer will only lose to the Queen of trumps, plus either a heart or a diamond for 2 losers. Either a Diamond or a Club lead from West allows Declarer to make 12 tricks.

The play in an improbable-looking 3NT looks to be more of a challenge with such awful communications between the two hands – unless a Club is led, in which case, courtesy of the finesse, there are 12 tricks to be enjoyed!!!!

Say North is Declarer and East chooses a heart lead against 3NT. Declarer wins in hand and has a choice of winning plays, but might well choose a top Diamond in practice. Should the suit break 3-3, 12 tricks will be made. But of course they don't break well West will probably win the second Diamond, and continue hearts, unblocking as necessary. Cash the Jack of Diamonds, then exit to West with a small Diamond. Declarer will discard small clubs on these diamond tricks. West can lead the third heart to East's two winners, on which Declarer parts with the two small spades. Now if East leads a spade, Declarer can claim the last five tricks; if East chooses a Club, Declarer doesn't even need to risk a Club finesse – rise with the Ace, cross to hand with a spade, and Declarer's hand is high! Other winning options are also available – try it for yourself with *Bridge Solver's* help.

If South is Declarer in 3NT, the play will be much the same on a likely heart or Spade lead.

So, let's turn to the bidding: how could / should North / South come to rest in a making Game contract?

The first issue is how should North open / seek to describe that hand? I would favour calling it a “Strong 2 in Diamonds” through whatever route your bidding style dictates.

The rules about “Strong 2 openings / 8 Playing Tricks” hands have changed since 2009. Now, if you want to describe a hand as ‘8 playing tricks’ then it must contain 16+ HCPs and also it must provide 8 tricks on the assumption that your partner has a void, and that the outstanding trumps break in the second-worst way possible. On this hand, ‘second worst’ would be 5 – 1, with the long suit headed by the Ace. It meets those criteria. A more flexible way of describing a strong two opening is to state that it satisfies the ‘Rule of 25’, which means that it should include 16+

MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB

*Meets every Thursday at 7.25 for 7.30
at Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, Essex, England, CM15 0UG*

HCPs and also the length of the two longest suits, when added together and to the number of HCPs, is equal to, or greater than, 25. It comfortably meets those criteria..

My regular partner and I play a Multi Style, so for us I think that the bidding would go:

North	South
2♦	2S♠ (1)
3D♦ (2)	5C♣ (3)
End	

(1) We bid aggressively! The default relay is 2♥; 2♠ means “if you have a weak 2 in hearts, partner, I have interest in Game, if you have a weak 2 in spades, please pass”.

(2) Eight tricks / Rule of 25 in Diamonds

(3) Surely, this bid can't be a Splinter or a Cue or anything like that? It must mean “You have described your hand partner; I want to play in 5♣!!! Even though North has a ‘bit to spare’ for his bidding, the void in Clubs should cause him to give up meekly. Besides, if it turns out that the hand makes 12, or even, 13 tricks, then you can always blame partner for such silly bidding!

Perversely, I think that it is more difficult to stop short of a slam if North chooses a meek 1D♦ opening. Even if South upgrades the hand a bit and deems it worthy of a 2♣ response to the opening, a 2♠ reverse bid from North hardly describes the powerhouse that it is. South would do best to apply the brakes, courtesy of a 3♣ rebid; on a good day, North might get the message and sign off in 3NT, but in practice, he may well still head off into the stratosphere.

But there is a useful general message on this hand: misfit = lower your horizons!

