

## Three In one

Board 25 was an example of this.

A combined 25 points, but only two tables reached 3NT and only one declarer made the contract. Someone did make nine tricks, but they played in 1NT.

North	♠AQ642
	♥42
	♦K85
	♣AK5
South	♠73
	♥A86
	♦A976
	♣J863

This hand shows that system does matter. North was the dealer and the opening bid is dependent on your NT range. Playing weak NT, everyone would open 1♠ with South responding 1NT. Now we look at hand evaluation, North has to decide whether to pass or make an invitational raise. Good high card points, but no stuffing to the hand. Partner has 6-9 points and only with the top of the range would make game a possibility. You do have a five-card suit, but even that has holes. It seems correct to pass as I suspect most did playing weak NT.

The two pairs reaching 3NT play a strong NT, one 16-18, I can well see how they reached game. Does South have enough to invite opposite a 15-17 NT opener? Let's evaluate the hand, nine points but only two tricks, no stuffing and an unsupported jack. Does the scoring method influence South? Playing aggregate, making tight games pays off. +400 making, but only -50 for eight tricks as opposed to +120. The gain is greater than the potential loss. Cathy went through five-card Stayman then invited with 2NT. I have the same decision as the weak no trumps, but I know that Cathy has 8+ points. It easier for me to bid a bad game.

It is a recurring theme of mine when looking at a potentially hopeless contract, place the cards where you need them to be to make the contract. At all tables a heart was led presumably ducked to the third round. You have six tricks. Possibly a long diamond and probably a third club. A successful spade finesse would help, but by this time the defence would have five tricks. Where are the potential tricks coming from? It must be the spade suit, if you can garner four spade tricks to go with your five top tricks voila! To achieve this the spades need to break 3-3 with the finesse working, about a 19% contract. You have two entries to dummy, but it doesn't really matter how you play the suit. I ran the three then on the second spade finessed the queen. Finessing on the first round works equally well.

Remember the old saying "better being lucky than good".

Those playing in a part score have the moral high ground.