



In fact, South has a pretty good hand for North's poor bid to come off as a No-Trump contract is hardly cast-iron. But even with South holding the sort of hand where North might justify his aversion to No-Trumps, the result was poor (though a bit of bad defending may have helped those playing in No-Trumps). It's true that on best defence, 3S makes and so does 2NT, so the advantage goes to the players in Spades but this doesn't detract from the doubtfulness of the strategy of avoiding No-Trumps.

Players who regularly avoid bidding No-Trumps because they're 'taking a view' that a suit may not be stopped are on to a loser (unless they're international standard players).

*The fact is that you very often have to bid No-Trumps because that's the only bid which shows the value of your hand, you cannot fiddle around trying to make sure all the suits are stopped. Acol is not that precise (it's precise enough to get you top results at club bridge, however -- assuming of course, you play it properly).*

There are two specific situations where you need to worry about bidding No-Trumps because of a suit weakness:

a) When the opponents have bid a suit. Here you can be sure they will lead that suit and there are clear indications that your partner does not hold, say AKQ in their suit. Also, there is an easy enough way to find out whether he has the suit stopped, just bid the opponent's suit e.g.

1C – [1H] – 3C – [P]

3H

b) Where your side has bid three suits e.g. 1H -- 2C -- 2D --- ?. If responder were to bid 2NT or 3NT here without a Spade stop, this would be reckless. Again, the opponents are bound to lead Spades and again, there is an easy way to find out if partner has a Spade stop – just bid 2S (Fourth Suit Forcing. This is rarely needed as a natural bid).

To reiterate:

**In many situations, you must bid No-Trumps because that bid shows the point range of your hand. Don't look to see that all suits are stopped.**

And again, as I've said in many previous posts, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If you've spent years or decades avoiding No-Trump contracts, you must be oblivious to the poor results it's given you. Try doing things properly, you'll find yourself laughing more often than crying. If you don't change your ways, you must like getting bad results, which is your privilege, but at least be honest. Tell your partner: *I like bidding this way because I want to do badly, is there a problem?*