

Tidbit 5

“If it doesn’t fit, quit”

Interpretation: This relates to misfits between your hand and partner’s. The most common instance of this becoming a problem is when you both have six or more cards in a suit and keep outbidding your partner until you reach a level where neither suit will make.

Example:

Dir: East
Vul: All

♠AQ109763
♥2
♦1052
♣A2

♠K84
♥Q984
♦QJ7
♣1074

West	North	East
10		
South		

♠52
♥6
♦AK83
♣QJ9853

10	10
8	10
12	

♠J
♥AKJ10753
♦964
♣K6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	2	3	2	
S	-	2	3	2	
E	2	1	-	-	
W	2	1	-	-	

The bidding on this hand might go:

East	South	West	North
1C	1H	1NT	2S (forcing)
Pass	3H	Pass	3S?
Pass	??		

Even with 8 card fits, game in a major is not possible. With 7-1 shape, the partnership can only finesse once in the trump suit and the partnership has no control of diamonds.

Another mistake made in this area is taking partner’s pre-empt out into NT when you have a strong hand but a misfit without a runnable suit of your own. This can often end in disaster when partner’s hand lacks the entries to ever set up its long suit.

In considering the rationale for this, compare it to the reason for partner transferring or bidding her long suit with a weak hand when you have opened 1NT. This is because this suit will make a few tricks with its raggedy collection in trumps but would be useless in support of your NT contract due to lack of entries.

Example:

Dir: East
Vul: N/S

♠A43
♥4
♦A1072
♣K7642

♠1096
♥62
♦K643
♣AJ83

West	North	East
18		
South		

♠K852
♥KJ53
♦QJ5
♣Q10

11	12
8	12
9	

♠QJ7
♥AQ10987
♦98
♣95

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	1	3	1	
S	1	1	3	1	
E	-	-	-	-	
W	-	-	-	-	

Let’s say East opens 1C (short) and South makes a weak jump into 2H on this hand. West passes. South should have a good quality pre-empt for her bid since they are vulnerable against not. With a reasonable hand and stoppers in the other suits, North may be tempted to bid 2NT with only a singleton heart. However, hearts cannot be set up as a long suit in NT and this contract goes down while the computer can actually make 9 tricks in a heart contract.

Exercise: If declarer looks at losers in the hand above she has 1 x spade, 1 x diamond, 1 x club and 2 x hearts (K and J) because she can finesse trumps only once. And yet, the computer says 3H is makeable? Declarer can actually avoid losing a heart trick as if by magic, but how? I won't bore you with the play in the first part of the hand but it is possible to lose two tricks (AC and KS) along the way and arrive in hand after the 10th trick with the position below.

What card does declarer lead from hand to ensure that she wins one more trick to make 3H?

S ----	S ----
H ----	H K J
D 10 7	D J
C 7	C ----
S ----	S ----
H Q 9	H Q 9
D 9	D 9
C ----	C ----

Answer to Exercise Tidbit 4

BOARD 7					
BD: 7	♠ KT865		Dir:		
	♥ K2		Vul: AL		
	♦ J				
	♣ KQ853				
♠ 94			♠ AJ732		
♥ 94			♥ AJT3		
♦ AKQ842			♦ T5		
♣ AT4			♣ 92		
	♠ Q				
	♥ Q8765				
	♦ 9763				
	♣ J76				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	2	1	4
W	-	4	2	1	4
					12
				13	10
					5

If partner has 2 x diamonds, it is likely you have seven tricks by way of 6 x diamonds and 1 x club. Partner has a spade stop and maybe something else that could produce a trick. You should avoid playing in your minor and either pass partner's 1NT or invite partner, by bidding 2NT, should they hold a maximum.

For interest, note that the diamond suit has to be managed carefully on the actual hand.