



Director: Dave Smith
Scores: Kay and Randy Joyce

From Polish Bridge magazine

1. IMPs. East-West vulnerable.

♠Q 6 4 3 ♥A J 5 3 ♦A J 9 ♣8 7

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	?

(1) Splinter.

Call	Votes	Award
4♦	9	100
4♥	8	90
4NT	1	20
3NT	0	0

Does a cuebid promise extra?

After North's 3♠ splinter bid, your hand has decreased in value because the ♠Q is no longer useful. Eight panelists decide, therefore, to sign off in 4♥.

"4♥," says Baze. "The first message is to tell partner that I have a bad hand."

The Colchamiro's agree. "Maybe we should do more, but we're down to a 10-count."

"This is not a mandatory cuebidding situation," says Walker. "If holding two aces is all partner needs for slam, he'll be using Blackwood next."

"I've only got a working 10-count for partner, and no source of tricks," says Falk. "If instead I held:

♠Q 4 ♥A J 5 3 ♦A J 9 5 3 ♣8 7,

then I would cuebid 4♦."

"This does not seem to be a suitable hand for slam with a minimum and the ♠Q wasted," says Rival. "If you play 3NT as a non-serious slam try, then that might be worth considering."

Rival refers to something that needs explaining. Eric Rodwell invented and popularized a treatment called serious 3NT. It depends on this principle: When one side, in an uncontested auction, has found an eight-card (or longer) major-suit fit, 3NT is never going to be the final contract. If you accept that this is the case, one can use the bid of 3NT to help differentiate between hands with extra values and those worth mild cooperation in a slam try. Here is an example:

1♥	2♦
3♦	3♥
?	

Playing 2/1 game-forcing methods, the partnership has agreed on a major suit in a game-forcing auction. 3NT

is sufficiently unlikely to be the right contract that it can be discounted. Both hands are unlimited at this point in the bidding. Therefore, one hand might be suitable for cooperating in a slam probe, or it might contain extra values. It is unsatisfactory to have to make the same control bid with both hands. The solution would be to use a cuebid of 4♣, for example, as a bid showing willingness to cooperate in a slam try, but not enough values to make a serious slam try. Conversely, a call of 3NT would show extra values and suggests real slam interest.

Some experts reverse the meanings: A cuebid is a serious slam try and 3NT is the weaker, non-serious bid. This is the situation that Rival refers to.

Half the experts disagree with signing off in 4♥ — they feel a cuebid is justified.

"4♦," say the Coopers. "Our strategy is to cuebid here unless we hate our hand. We have the serious 3NT treatment available, however, in other methods. We think the cuebid is important because sometimes partner cannot proceed without knowing about the diamond control."

"4♦," says Freeman. I would rather play 3NT as indicating slam interest but I think standard practice says