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Better Bridge with Bergen

2NT — part 3

The past two months we've discussed the Jacoby 2NT raise of one of a major. After 2NT, with 15-17, opener rebids 3NT. With 18+, he rebids three of the agreed trump suit. Why? Good hands go slowly, so the cheaper bid shows a better hand.

Let's look at some slam decisions:

1.	♠ K Q 3 2	
	♥ J 9 7	
	♦ A 6	
	♣ K J 4 3	
	♠ A J 8 7 6	
	♥ 2	
	♦ 7 2	
	♣ A Q 9 7 5	
North	South	
	1 ♠	
2NT	4 ♣ ⁽¹⁾	
4 ♦	4 ♥	
4NT	5 ♥	
6 ♠	Pass	

(1) Strong five-card suit, minimum values.

After South's very descriptive 4♣ bid, North knows that South must have the ♣A Q to justify the strong suit promised by the 4♣ bid.

North pictures declarer drawing

trumps, running clubs and discarding the ♦6 on the fifth club. But, first things first. If South's three red cards include two heart losers, an opening heart lead would prove fatal. Therefore, North control bids 4♦ to give South a chance to clarify the key question: Does he, or doesn't he, have a heart control?

South does, and says so by control bidding 4♥. That's all North needs to bid 4NT. The 5♥ response confirms that only one ace is missing, and North, as planned, jumps to 6♠.

The play follows the script to the letter. Diamond lead, three rounds of trumps, five rounds of clubs — making six.

2.	♠ A 8 7 4 2	
	♥ 10 7 6	
	♦ A J 6	
	♣ A K	
	♠ K Q 9 6 5	
	♥ K	
	♦ K Q 10 4 3	
	♣ 8 4	
North	South	
2NT	1 ♠	
5 ♣	4 ♦	
Pass	6 ♠	

North has a big hand and is not unhappy when South shows a long, strong diamond suit. North does, however, have a heart problem. With no heart control, it would be wrong for North to bid 4NT. If South has one key card, North won't know what to do. Therefore, North should control bid 5♣.

After 5♣, South stops to reflect. His 4♦ bid said he had a minimum

opening bid. North's failure to bid 4♥ means that he lacks a heart control. Even so, North feels safe venturing to the five level. South doesn't love his singleton king, and is also not thrilled about his lack of aces, but North's auction makes it clear that he has a big hand. North is dying to hear about a heart control, so South duly jumps to the cold slam.

By the way: This auction was complicated. If South had bid 3♥ over 2NT, that economical bid would have solved all of North's problems and made this an easy hand. As usual, slower is better.

3.	♠ 9 2	
	♥ K J 6 3	
	♦ K 2	
	♣ K Q 7 5 3	
	♠ A 3	
	♥ A 7 5 4 2	
	♦ A 10 8 7	
	♣ 8 6	
North	South	
	1 ♥	
2NT	3NT	
4 ♥	Pass	

South likes his hand. After a Jacoby 2NT response, never rebid four of your major with three aces. South's 3NT rebid promises more than a minimum, but North can see that the two hands are not strong enough for slam, so he signs off in 4♥. □

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