

Chalk Talk

I didn't know that — part 11

What would you open with
♠KQJ3 ♥AKQJ8743 ♦A ♣—?

Why sweat it? Open 4NT.

35. An opening bid of 4NT asks for specific aces, not number of aces. The bid is particularly effective when you hold a void.

Responses to 4NT are:

5♣ = no ace;

5♦, 5♥, 5♠ = the ace of the bid suit and no other ace;

5NT = two aces;

6♣ = the ♣A.

If partner responds 5♣ denying an ace, bid 6♥. If partner responds 6♣ showing the ♣A, bid 6♥. If partner responds 5♦ showing the ♦A, check the backs of the cards. If partner responds 5♠ showing the ♠A, bid 7♥.

It all looks simple enough, but you have to be prepared to play at the six level if partner responds 6♣ or shows an ace in a higher-ranking suit than your long suit.

36. When the opponents have bid one suit and your side voluntarily bids to the five level of the agreed major or jumps to the five level of the agreed major, that bid is considered to be asking partner what he has in the opponents' suit.

The bidder denies a control in the opponents' suit (he usually has x-x or x-x-x) and is looking for first-round control (the ace or a void) or second-round control (the king or a singleton) in order to get to slam.

Sitting South, you hold
♠84 ♥AKJ8753 ♦AQ ♣AK
and the bidding goes

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	2♠	3♥
Pass	4♥ ⁽²⁾	Pass	?

(1) Non-committal.

(2) Positive response. 3♠, by partnership agreement, would be a

double negative. (I know, you didn't know that either.)

This is a perfect opportunity to use your 5♥ toy and ask partner about spades, the suit the opponent has bid.

The responses are:

Pass = denies first- or second-round spade control;

5♠ = cuebidding the opponent's suit shows the ace or a void; partner may be interested in a grand.

5NT = shows the guarded king. Partner frequently raises to 6NT to protect the king from attack on opening lead;

6♥ = raising to the six level of the agreed suit shows a singleton.

Suppose North, your partner, holds
♠K3 ♥Q106 ♦9876 ♣Q1054.

In response to your 5♥ spade ask, partner bids 5NT showing the guarded ♠K. This allows you to raise to 6NT, protecting the ♠K from an initial attack.

Not only are you bidding beautifully, but you don't have to worry about how to play 6NT with a diamond lead — partner does.

You can also use your toy when the opponents are not in the bidding and there is one unbid suit. Now the raise (or the jump) to the five level asks about the unbid suit.

You	Partner
♠AK8753	♠J964
♥3	♥AJ87
♦AKQ4	♦J872
♣Q3	♣J

You	Partner
1♠	3♠ ⁽¹⁾
4♦ ⁽²⁾	4♥ ⁽²⁾
5♠ ⁽³⁾	6♠ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass ⁽⁵⁾	

(1) Limit raise.

(2) Cuebid.

(3) Asks about clubs, the unbid suit.

(4) Singleton club.

(5) What a great partner.



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37. As a defender you decide to attack this suit, holding the J-9-7-(x) or Q-9-7-(x). You see the A-8-x or the K-8-x in dummy (your right). Your proper play is to start with the 9, "surrounding" the 8 with your 9-7 plus the jack or queen. This is why you do it:

♠ J 5 4	♠ K 8 2
	♠ Q 9 7 3
	♠ A 10 6

If you attack with the 9, declarer is limited to two tricks. If instead you lead low and declarer plays low, partner must play the jack and this leaves your queen finessable.

As an added bonus this might be the position:

	♣ K 8 2
♣ 6 5 3	♣ Q 9 7
	♣ A J 10 4

You lead the 9, declarer plays the jack and partner plays low. Now it is likely declarer will play your partner for something like Q-x-x-x and lead low to the 8. □

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