

strength awkwardly placed after opener rebids two hearts (or two diamonds when responder's minor is clubs). Here, Janus Jumps of three of a minor show invitational strength with five spades and five or six of the minor. It is more tempting than in the case of a one-heart opening to assign these jumps to show *four* of the unbid major and a six-card minor, as a four-four spade fit may be missed. But that will happen only rarely, when opener is not strong enough to reverse; if (as in BWS) responder can bid two of his minor without forcing

to game, opener may reverse without enormous extras.

When the major is weak enough, a Janus Jump can be used on a hand with *six* cards in the unbid major and five (or six) cards in the bid minor. There is no way to avoid taking some risk with that sort of holding: failing to invite game might miss one; inviting in the unbid major may lead to three (or four) of that suit with inadequate trumps. A Janus Jump reduces the chance of disaster by giving a good overall picture of responder's hand.

EIGHT EVER, NINE OFTEN

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For hundreds of years, players of whist-like games have searched for compact guidelines. Even those that are generally reliable have exceptions, and some may have more exceptions than not. For example:

IMPs; South dealer; both sides vulnerable

NORTH
 ♠ 10 9
 ♥ 6 4
 ♦ A J 10 9
 ♣ 9 6 4 3 2
 SOUTH
 ♠ A K
 ♥ A K 5
 ♦ K 8 7 6 5
 ♣ Q J 8

After two notrump — three notrump, West leads a presumably fourth-highest spade, and you capture East's jack. *Plan the play.*

Ducking a heart in the hope of getting a better count could cost extra undertricks, so you need to guess diamonds. In the absence of other clues, the literature advises that you are supposed to play for the drop of the di-

amond queen. However, *the size of the spade spot led* can be significant. West's expected spade length and thus expected diamond length vary significantly depending on the specific lead.

I asked my computer to generate the 10,400,600 possible East-West layouts, then to discard (a) any where spades was not West's longest suit and (b) any where West held equal lengths in the majors with stronger hearts. From what remained, *when West led the deuce*, his average diamond length was 2.78, and the chance of five diamond tricks by playing the king and finessing was about 82 percent (versus some 61 percent for the drop). *When West led the spade six*, he held on average 5.86 spades and only 1.75 diamonds; in that case, playing dummy's ace of diamonds and finessing wins some 64.2 percent of the time (versus around 60 percent for the drop). Following traditional wisdom and playing for the drop is best only when West leads the four.



Robert F. MacKinnon's **Probability and Intuition** (Inter Point Press; 240 pages; paperback) appears to be aimed at advanced players (and intermediates not interested in mathematical discussions).

MacKinnon begins with a relatively young history, noting that the subject of probability in the 17th Century was not understood until the material became so fascinating that there are only a couple of examples that have been analyzed. Although the book contains many examples throughout, there are no quizzes or challenges to enable the reader to test the advice. Most of the examples are from championship play by well-known players, and merely illustrate the concepts of probability and have little to do with the probability theory.

The author has a theme to declare: breaks until the end of the game. Otherwise: "Gather information as you safely can, and split as evenly as you can. The best chapter is on leads. After noting that a lead rarely reveals a probability, MacKinnon says: "(The) less probability appears to be, the more it provides," with a note on how to deduce from an unusual situation. The book usefully discusses seldom-discussed distribution probabilities.