

Tip of the month

This month's tip concerns the **directional asking bid** (DAB) and the pursuit of a no trump contract when the opposition have intervened.

The DAB is a specialised use of a low level cue bid in the opponent's suit to invite partner to bid NT. Partner is invited to bid NT with a partial stop, eg Qx, or Jxx, or better in the opponent's suit. The DAB bidder may have one of two objectives:

- to discover if his side has a combined stopper in the opponent's suit if he holds Qx, Jxx or a singleton K, or
- to steer the contract into his partner's hand. A player with Axx or Kxx may wish to be dummy if his right hand opponent has bid the suit, so that the expected lead comes up to partner holding Qx or Jxx.

Here are two examples:

South	West	North	East
1C	Pass	1D	1H
3C	Pass	3H	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South's rebid of 3C shows 7 playing tricks and North holds:

S K65
H Q6
D A9762
C J84

So if South holds a heart half stop, 3NT should be possible. South

holds:

S A43
H J73
D 8
C AKQ976

You will see that 3NT makes 9 or 10 tricks, whereas 5C may be difficult on a spade lead (unless the 5th diamond can be set up which may require West to have C10 to allow an extra entry to dummy).

South	West	North	East
1C	1H	X	Pass
2C	Pass	2H	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North holds:

S K653
H A64
D KQ7
C Q84

Here it may be preferable for the lead to come up to the South who

holds:

S A84
H J73
D 86
C AK976

South should make at least 9 tricks (assuming West has HKQ and DA) whereas the same contract played by North would be in somewhat greater danger on a heart lead.

An instructive point arises from the last example following the recommended sequence. If West leads a low heart, what do you play from dummy at trick 1? The instinctive line would probably be to play low but your presumption should be that West does not have KQ10 otherwise he would have led an honour. That means East has a singleton or doubleton K, Q, or 10 and it is 2:1 in favour of rising with the ace. Even if East has a doubleton K or Q and chooses to unblock his honour, provided West has the expected DA, your remaining HJ7 will be protected. If East doesn't unblock, the hearts can't be run without setting up your jack. The consequence of playing low at trick 1 is that, with a doubleton K or Q, East can clear the hearts before the DA is forced out.

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