

TWO BIDS TO SUCCESS.



Some bidding sequences can be very drawn out and can take many minutes to conduct. Others are very succinct....and I do not just mean ones like 1NT – 3NT. This particular sequence following involves a bid which many players do not like or use, the Gambling 3NT opener.

It can be a little abused and changed but in its original form, an opener in 1st or 2nd seat promises a long (7+ cards) and solid minor suit with no ace or king outside the solid minor suit. In 3rd or 4th seat, the criteria can be relaxed just a little though changes to these rules make it harder for opener's partner to judge what to do.

Imagine, therefore, you are third to speak and see your partner open in first position, not vulnerable (though for this bid, the vulnerability is insignificant), 3NT and you hold:

♠ AK72

♥ K987

♦ 2

♣ AKJ2

There is no brilliancy test required to know which suit partner has! What do you bid?

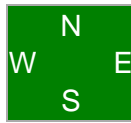
The answer must surely be 6♦, the bid you certainly did not contemplate when you first picked up your hand. You can count 7 diamond tricks and 2 AKs while a heart or club lead will immediately give you a 12th. There are two reasons to bid slam in your singleton as opposed to 6NT:

To protect your HK from a lead at trick 1.

To give yourself chances of setting up the ♣J by say ruffing the third round of the suit.

Indeed, this was partner's hand:

Board 11 ♠ A K 7 2
 South Deals ♥ K 9 8 7
 None Vul ♦ 2
 ♣ A K J 2



♠ 6 4
 ♥ 10 2
 ♦ A K Q J 10 9 3
 ♣ 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			3 NT
Pass	6 ♦	All pass	

After a spade or trump lead, you can draw trumps and play 3 rounds of clubs ruffing the ♣2. If the queen appears, you can claim but if not, you just have to fall back on West holding the ♥A. (The rules do allow that to happen!).

Only two pairs bid to 6♦ by North with only one succeeding when this was the full lay-out:

Board 11 ♠ A K 7 2
 South Deals ♥ K 9 8 7
 None Vul ♦ 2
 ♣ A K J 2

♠ J 10 5
 ♥ J 5 4 3
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ 10 5 4 3



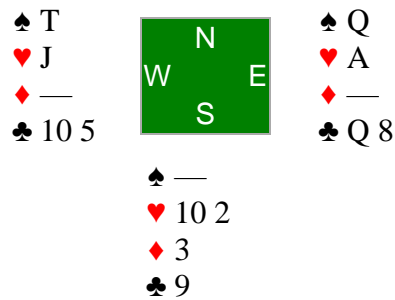
♠ Q 9 8 3
 ♥ A Q 6
 ♦ 8 7 6
 ♣ Q 8 6

♠ 6 4
 ♥ 10 2
 ♦ A K Q J 10 9 3
 ♣ 9 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			3 NT
Pass	6 ♦	All pass	

Two other tables saw 6NT as the contract, once by North on a diamond lead (successful) and the other by South on the ♠J lead, being unsuccessful. One top club, two top spades and 6 rounds of diamonds would leave East in a rather unenviable position, prior to the play of the final diamond:

♠ 7
 ♥ K
 ♦ —
 ♣ K J



On the last diamond, West can discard a club while declarer throws the ♠7 from dummy. East throws the ♠Q and would not enjoy the heart exit at trick 11.

An initial heart lead from West would have saved the defenders a lot of sweat!

What though of the other 7 tables? They all played in 3NT making 11, 12 or 13 tricks and might be asking themselves either why they did not have the Gambling 3NT opener (most played from the North seat) in their artillery or why North did not bid to the excellent slam in just one leap. No more information required.... It's all in the explanation of the 3NT opening bid!

They were far too modest to mention but well done to club President, Mark Hangartner and his brother Paul, the only pair to bid and make 6♦ from the safe North seat.

Richard Solomon