

**"Touching" Sequences are VERY Important, in Both Bidding and Playing, Especially in NT Contracts, or in Trump in Suit Contracts**

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## Concepts

1. Cards in the 8-10 range are called "**beef**" by some players. These can really strengthen your hand in either a **NT** contract, or when these cards are in your trump suit. The "beef" should be considered in both bidding, and during play.
2. Touching **card sequences**, including sequences of "beef" cards, can be really, really important in **NT** contracts, or and should be considered in bidding and playing **NT** contracts, or when they occur in trump in a suit contract.

## Board #18

499er Game

Thursday P.M. 10/28/20

Dealer: EAST

Vul: N/S

		NORTH				EAST				
	<b>S:</b>	J	7	6	5	4				
	<b>H:</b>	2								
	<b>D:</b>	A	Q	3						
	<b>C:</b>	K	7	6	3					
WEST		SOUTH								
<b>S:</b>	A	Q	8			<b>S:</b>	K	T	3	2
<b>H:</b>	9	7	3			<b>H:</b>	K	J	T	6
<b>D:</b>	K	T	7			<b>D:</b>	J	5		
<b>C:</b>	A	Q	4	2		<b>C:</b>	J	T	9	

## Bidding

EAST: PASS	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: 1 <b>NT</b>	NORTH: PASS
EAST: 2 <b>C!</b>	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: 2 <b>D</b>	NORTH: PASS
EAST: ???			

## East's Thought Process

WEST has 15-17 HCPs and a square hand with no more than 1 doubleton. WEST has denied any 4-card Major. Therefore, we most likely have 7 Hearts and 7 Spades, although either only 6 Hearts or 6 Spades is a possibility. I have 9 HCPs, so together we have between 24 and 26 HCPs, which means we may be a little light for a 3**NT** bid. After all, Yoda teaches, "Points are for No Trump (not suit contracts so much)," so points are important here.

But I have "beef" in each suit, and especially in Hearts. And moreover, I have touching card sequences in both Clubs and Hearts! Now if we bid and make 3**NT**, probably most other pairs in this 499er game will not bid this, so we would get a top Board! But if we don't make it, we will likely get a bottom Board.

And Yoda also teaches, "play the room." If you are the Shark Tank, the Sharks will be very aggressive, and they will all bid 3**NT**. And if they're all bidding a not making 3**NT**, we will simply get an average Board Matchpoint score if we also do not make 3**NT**. This protection may not occur in a 499er game!

But what the hell, I'm feeling lucky. And then EAST bid 3**NT**, and the contract was set.

## West's Thought Process in Formulating His Line of Play

NORTH leads the 5 of Spades. The Board comes down.  $11 - 5 = 6$ . This means there are 6 cards higher than the 5 of Spades in the Dummy, SOUTH's hand, and my hand as Declarer. There are 2 Spades higher than the 5 of Spades in the Dummy (K, T). There are 3 cards in my Declarer's hand (A Q 8) higher than the 5 of Spades. Therefore, SOUTH has exactly 1 card higher than the 5 of Spades. We hold  $4 + 3 = 7$  Spades. N/S holds 6 Spades, and NORTH holds at least 4 Spades. So Spades are either 5-1 or 4-2 in North, South, respectively. I am going to cover the 5 of Spades with the Ten of Spades, and see if it wins.

Now in suit contracts you count losers, and then develop a plan on dumping losers or converting losers to winners. In **NT**, however, you count winners instead. I am most likely going to take exactly 4 Spade winners. We are 4-3 in Clubs, holding 9, Ten, Jack, Queen, and Ace (missing only the King), and I am going to take either 3 or 4 Club winners. That leaves me short from making my 3**NT** contract by either 1 or 2 tricks.

Where can I create additional tricks in order to make my contract? I have Spades and Clubs certainly "stopped." And I can at some point "stop" Diamonds being run. This means that I need to leave my "banked" Spade tricks untouched for now, and promote winners elsewhere. So, I need to promote my Hearts, with their lovely touching card "beef" sequences!

We hold 9, Ten, Jack, and king of Hearts, and I am missing only the Ace and Queen of Hearts. I am going to lead the 9 of Hearts from the dummy. If NORTH ducks by not using a higher Heart, or has no higher Heart, I will then play the 6 of Hearts from the Dummy. SOUTH will cover with the Queen of Hearts.

Whenever I get back in the lead, wherever I am in the lead, I will play the Ten of Hearts from the Dummy, or play the 3 of Hearts in Declarer's hand toward the Dummy's Ten of Hearts. This will knock out the remaining higher Heart honor, the Ace of Hearts, promoting Dummy's King and Jack of Hearts to both be sure winners.

Every time SOUTH leads a suit other than Spades, I will duck in Declarer's hand and in the Dummy either play low, thus promoting remaining cards, or if possible win in the Dummy. Every time NORTH leads a suit other than Spades, I will duck in the Dummy, and either in Declarer's hand play low, thus promoting remaining cards, or if possible win in the Declarer's hand.

In short, I am going to win 4 Spade tricks, either 2 or 3 Club tricks, 2 Heart tricks, and 1 Diamond trick. Contract making!

### "The Rest of the Story..."

In actuality, I was WEST, and my wife Kelly was EAST. And we did bid the auction in *exactly* this way. But, in actuality I did not play the hand this way, and we went down 1. Everybody made 2 in **NT** contracts at various levels. But Kelly saw this was makeable. And, so, I again renew my request for an alternative living location. My clothes were once again all piled by the curb in the front yard.