

## 5 of a minor or 3NT ?

A perennial problem of course.

Partner opens 3D and it is you to bid. You know that you need approximately 17 pts to bid but there may still appear to be choices what to bid.

N	E	S	W
3D	P	?	
		AQ76	
		Q102	
		A87	
		KQ4	

While you are thinking what to do you check the vulnerability and notice that you are Vuln ; you wonder if partner knows that too and if so perhaps her preempt will be a bit stronger than usual and ..and .. . But you are just procrastinating of course.

A decision has to be made. 3NT or 5 D.

Noone is over the moon about bidding 3NT on such hands - if a Hrt is led then you will be particularly worried ; there is no law that says that partner can't have the J H or K H though.... And anyway perhaps the opponents will not lead Hrts .

So 3NT is uncertain but you feel if you can survive the lead then 9 tricks will often be made.

What of 5D ?

The opponents can still lead a Hrt again { people who bid 5D never think of that } and 11 tricks anyway seem to be further out of reach than 9.

Which will make ? Maybe neither BUT 3NT is the experienced players choice.

For duplicate players there is no debate ; in a duplicate tournament overtricks are an important consideration and there *could* be extra tricks to be made in 3NT but there hardly ever will be in 5 D. This is not important for rubber or chicago bridge but even so a 5 D contract usually needs 28+ pts and although partners long diamonds may allow us to bring in game with less points than that it all seems a bit of a stretch.

3NT is the best bid.

Suppose your responding hand was even weaker in a suit

N	E	S	W
3D	P	?	
		AQ76	
		J52	
		A87	
		AQ4	

3NT is even less likely to succeed on a Hrt lead than before and no doubt you will get the brickbats if 3NT goes down but as above 5D too would have been uncertain. 3NT is the best bid.

So far a bid of *Pass* has been ignored - is there any merit in such a bid ?

Well 3D will make ! so it isn't totally wrong but really it is a bid for the care home resident. A little youthful courage in such situations is called for.

