

MIT Intermediate Bridge Lesson Series

**What Contract:
How does this affect the play?**

Brian Duran

Goals

Some times one finds themselves in a less than ideal or non standard contract. A different thought process and approach may be required.

- Why do we get to the wrong contract
- When should this change our play approach
- How do we change out play approach

Why Do We Get To The Wrong Contract

Here are the five common reasons I get to the wrong contract:

- System
- Different Bidding
- Feel its Superior Spot to Play
- Blasting to 3NT
- Bad Bidding

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Wise Words

“It is not always easy to say what the “right” contract is on a particular deal: the right theoretical contract may not be the right practical contract”

Alan Truscott, 1986

Use caution when making a play because you think your in the wrong contract, its easy to be wrong.

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Wise Words

Think about the skill level of the field before trying anything tricky.

- At MIT I do not worry about being in the wrong contract, I just to make as many trick as practical. Plus is good.
- In flighted sectionals, I worry about my contract.

Keep site of context

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Matchpoints

Thinking about the contract is only important in Matchpoints, due to the slight difference in scores when playing in a minor, major or NT.

- In a normal contract, your goal is to do as well as or better than other players
- In an abnormal contract try to equal or beat the normal result, even if this involves an unusual play or extra risk.

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I Want to Cry

The worst thing to do when in the wrong contract is to cry about it.

- Don't let the opponents know by telling partner you missed a major suit fit.
- Don't focus on getting a bad score, but focus on the opportunity to get a good MP score.
- Look at it as an opportunity to try a new skill, like an endplay

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Techniques

There are no techniques which only apply to playing contract in the non-ideal contract.
However, they commonly used

- Safety plays
- Avoidance plays
- Anti percentage plays
- Additional risk

Recognizing an Abnormal Contract

The often occur when:

- Opponents bids don't look reasonable when you see dummy
- You missed a major suit fit
- Your are playing in a 4-3 or 5-2 major suit fit
- 15-17 balance hands with 5 card majors

Example – Blasting to 3NT

Example 6

♠J7

♥KJT954

♦KJ3

♣J8

♠KQ

♥A73

♦QT864

♣AQT

Contract: 3NT

Lead: ♠T

In 1957 Helen Sobel jumped to 3NT when she heard South open 1NT. Like her I often like to bid NT with major suited hands, hoping partner can make as many trick in NT as the majors.

Bill Root sitting south realized most would reach 4H and if they play the Ace and King of hearts dropping the queen would run away if one more trick then him. Thus, he choose to make the non-standard play of the finesse in hearts.

Example – System

Example 6

♠AJ

♥J532

♦764

♣9853

♠K83

♥AK764

♦A9

♣Q62

Contract: 1NT

Lead: ♦Q

Your one NT opening bid is a reasonable choice, but this time it is unfortunate. Playing in hearts figures to be better and your only chance for a good score is to make as many tricks in NT as hearts.

One must figure the plan if playing in hearts. Looks to me, play the hearts from the top, and ruff a spade in dummy. If the heart queen drops I can make 9 tricks. How can I make 9 tricks in NT?

Example – Different Bidding

Example 6

♠A43

♥4

♦QJT76

♣J752

♠KQJ5

♥A85

♦AK4

♣Q84

Contract: 4S

Lead: ♥K

Your opponents are aggressive bidders. Even though you have 27 HCP they both showed hearts which is why you ended up in 4S vs. 3NT. Obviously, most partnerships will be in 3NT..

3NT will yield 10 tricks, but in spade you can ruff a heart. It is tempting to ruff two hearts, using diamonds to enter your hand. Can you see the risk? Is it worth it?

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