

The Real Deal

by Larry Cohen



Larry Cohen, a many-time National champion, is a popular writer and lecturer, living in Boca Raton, Florida. Information on Larry's upcoming activities can be found by visiting www.larryco.com.

One of Larry's favorite teaching methods is to analyze random deals. He feels that any time you deal out a deck of cards, there are numerous lessons that can be learned.

This issue's "Real Deal" was dealt by **Monique Cleland** while on an Alaskan Bridge Cruise.

East deals and passes — hoping to stay awake for this deal! East and West will be passing throughout as we see if North and South will reach slam with their combined 30 high-card points. What should South open?

South has 17 high-card points, but due to the beautiful six-card club suit, the hand is worth more. Some might consider South's shape to be balanced, so should the opening bid be in notrump? Since the hand is worth more than 17 points, South is too strong for 1NT. Is South worth an opening bid of 2NT? I know some players who would think so — and they just love to open 2NT. Realistically, however, this hand is worth something in between 1NT and 2NT, so I would open 1♣.

Should North show the diamond suit or skip directly to 1♠, showing the major suit?

Here is the modern approach: **With only one bid to make — a weak hand — bypass the diamonds and respond in the major.** Here, North is strong enough to show the diamonds first, and then later North can plan to show the spades. So the response to 1♣ is 1♦.

Over South's 2NT, what should North do? North has 13 high-card points plus 1 length point for the fifth diamond, so 14 in total. North expects about 18–19 points opposite, so that makes 32–33 for the partnership — in the range for a small slam. On the downside, there is no established trump suit, and if anything, North's singleton club — in partner's suit — is not good.

To see this, picture North with another low club. That would make it more likely that North-South have six club tricks. There would be only five outstanding clubs, and they could be expected to divide 3–2.

So what should North bid? Since there still might be a 4–4 spade fit, how about 3♠? I like that. This new suit is surely forcing; South can't pass.

With only two spades, South is not interested in spades, so South retreats to 3NT.

North now knows there is no spade fit, but still has slam interest. How should North express this? North should raise to 4NT. This is not Blackwood. Any time the

previous bid was notrump, and you raise to 4NT, it is 'quantitative.' This is a fancy way of saying 'invitational.' North is telling partner: "I am willing to go to slam if you like your hand."

Should South like it? South has only 17 high-card points, but has a nice trick-taking hand. Honestly, I might jump to 6♣ or 6NT with South's hand. If you are the shy, low-going type, you might pass 4NT.

How does notrump do?

THE REAL DEAL

DEAL: 10
DLR: EAST
VUL: BOTH

	NORTH							
	♠ K J 8 2							
	♥ K Q 10							
	♦ A 9 6 3 2							
	♣ 5							
	1♦ 3♠ 4NT Pass							
WEST	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			EAST
W	N	E						
S								
♠ A 9 6 5		♠ 10 7 3						
♥ 7 6 5 3		♥ J 9 8 4						
♦ K		♦ J 10 7 5						
♣ 10 8 6 4		♣ J 3						
Pass Pass Pass Pass		Pass Pass Pass Pass Pass						
	SOUTH							
	♠ Q 4							
	♥ A 2							
	♦ Q 8 4							
	♣ A K Q 9 7 2							
	1♣ 2NT 3NT ??							

What is South's rebid? With the extra strength, South needs to jump, the only question being whether it will be 2NT or a more straightforward 3♣. The 6–3–2–2 shape looks 'balanced' to me, so I think 2NT is the best description. South would be showing 18–19, and counting everything, the hand is worth it. While 3♣ is also acceptable, it wouldn't show the 'balanced' nature of the hand. As to not having pure stoppers everywhere, that doesn't bother me much.

THE PLAY IN NOTRUMP

In notrump, count winners. The opening lead would likely be a heart, the unbid suit. South counts three heart tricks, three club tricks, and the ♦A. Declarer can knock out the ♠A to promote two spade tricks to get the total to nine.

Then it all depends on the club suit. If the missing clubs divide 3-3, declarer has twelve tricks and would like to be in slam. On the actual deal, slam fails when the clubs turn out to be divided 4-2.

Declarer in notrump needs to be careful with the entries. Declarer wants to make sure to be able to reach the established club winners.

Let's say a heart is led. The only sure entry to the South hand is in hearts, so where should declarer win the first trick? In dummy. Win the ♥K and try the clubs. When they prove to be 4-2, give up a club to the defense.

Now declarer has five club tricks and can drive out the ♠A to take the following eleven tricks: two spades, three hearts, one diamond, and five clubs. The fact that the ♦K happens to fall — making the ♦Q a winner — is irrelevant. Declarer loses a club and a spade, so can never take more than eleven tricks.

I suppose there were only 30 high-card points, so maybe I was too excited when I estimated 32-33 combined points, putting the deal in the slam range. On the other hand, if clubs had split 3-3...

This deal is from **Monique Cleland**, born December 18, 1929, in Carouge, a little town separated from Geneva by the river Arve. She was always an avid student, starting with her high school days at École Supérieure de Jeunes Filles. Next she was off to the University of Geneva to study chemistry and biology. Then she worked for a U.S. institute in Switzerland solving chemical problems for the industry.

In 1954, she was offered a position at a Boston research laboratory. Her work on the chemical structure of hyaluronic acid became the subject of a PhD.

Her work continued back and forth between Switzerland and the U.S., where she had met and married Robert Cleland. They had a lot in common. They were both scientists and travelers, studying in many parts of the world.

They had four children, two girls and two boys. When the children were young they lived in Hanover, New Hampshire and stayed at home as much as possible. She got a Master's Degree in Information Science, and when Dartmouth College opened a new science library, she was put in charge. It was an exciting time, the beginning of the computer era in the early seventies. Dartmouth was the first library to have an online catalogue.



Monique Cleland

Recently, at the suggestion of a friend, Monique became interested in bridge. She took lessons from Thomas Kurtz and started to play. "I thought I should be more serious about the game. So I decided to immerge myself in the game. A cruise with bridge three times a day was a good idea. I have been delighted with my decision."

Monique was a favorite during the cruise. Between lessons and games, she had fascinating stories to tell about her many visits to the Sahara Desert, roaming around to look for artifacts, and going to Churchill on Hudson Bay to work on a project studying the disappearance of the permafrost.

She is still an avid traveler, and at age 80 was recently off to Corsica with her older sister as part of a group of hikers from Geneva. She reported that they had a wonderful time together.

The world is Monique's oyster! Her enthusiasm for adventure and learning is contagious. ♦

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