

WEAK DISTRIBUTIONAL HANDS FACING 1NT OPENING

Question : Partner opens 1NT (Playing 15-17 NT), I have--♠ 98754 ♥ void ♦ 6 ♣ KJ97643-- We play transfers, what should be my response.

If partner transfer bids 2 spades what should be further response. How to tackle double suiter weak hands with 5 carder major.

Sridhar's views :

The theory of HCP requirements on games loses its applicability significantly in case of distributional freaks ; opposite such hands, honors in the long suits of responder along with the aces and kings outside, play the deciding role ; the HCP system of hand evaluation fails here. To illustrate , opposite the hand given by you , namely ♠XXXXX ♥VOID ♦X ♣KJXXXXX , even a strong hand such as ♠QX ♥AKXX ♦KQXX ♣QXX cannot produce game , whereas a hand like ♠QJXX ♥XXX ♦AXX ♣AQX (weak NT hand) will lead to an overtrick in a spade game !

My suggestion at IMPs is to drive to game , when partner opens a strong NT, with distributional freaks – 6-5; 7-5 hands – via two transfers , asking opener to bid game where there is a fit – for eg with your stated hand I will transfer to 3C and bid 3S, followed by 4S showing 5-6 or 5-7 ; opener may choose 4S or 5C depending on his relative lengths in the black suits. Never mind the paucity of HCP when you hold 6-5 or 7-5 facing strong 1NT opener ; go down cheerfully if cards don't mesh well – the risk vs return ratio justifies such game bidding in IMPs or Rubber bridge.

At Match points the consideration is somewhat different in the sense your results compare numerically with a field of Pairs whose bidding style is unpredictable ; even here it is true that the HCP system of hand evaluation is invalid for distributional freaks , but the cost of going down in game when it is right to stay out is higher compared to IMPs. Here my suggestion is to choose an invitational sequence and leave the decision to opener .