

Declarer Play – Counting Tricks

By Neil Kimelman

On Dec 6th there were 12 teams at the Manitoba Unit team game. Board 6 is a worthy hand to review. At our table the E-W pair bid up to 3NT. I think that this auction probably happened at many tables:

Board 6, dealer East; E-W vulnerable.

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠95	♠AK103
♥A764	♥K5
♦KJ873	♦A10654
♣97	♣A4

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Some astute players will notice 6♦ is a virtual laydown, shrug and move on to the next deal. In reality 6♦ is a realistic contract to reach, if East makes the right rebid choice, 2♠. The meaning of the two choices:

2NT – balanced, 18-19 HCPs, at least four diamonds.

2♠ – 5+ diamonds, 4+ spades, 18-21 HCPs.

Which is a better description of your hand? 2NT is a lazy bid, and will work out ok a lot of the time. However if you want to reach the best contract on every deal, the more you can accurately describe your hand, the better chance you have.

The suggested auction:

West	North	East	South
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	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♦	All Pass

I suspect that the other issue for many pairs is there is no clear agreement on the meaning of subsequent bids. There is a good solution to this problem.

Over a reverse it is important to play the **Lebensohl** convention. Simply put, anytime you have a weak hand you bid 2NT over partner's reverse. It says partner, bid 3xCx, and I will sign off with a weak hand. Any other bid is 100% game forcing and descriptive, and at least moderately encouraging to slam.

So West's above shows at least three diamonds and enough points for game. This is followed by two cue bids, key card ask, and conclusion.