

A flat board

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As dealer, you hold:

♠A3
♥Q94
♦QJ952
♣AJT

You open 1D, LHO overcalls 1S and partner bids 2C. What will you do now?

Partner has promised 10+ hcp and a 5+ club suit. She does not have 4 hearts as she didn't make a negative double. It's quite possible that she has a fit with diamonds. Meanwhile, you have a fit with clubs. So with a sure stopper in spades and at least a half-stopper in hearts, a rebid of 2NT seems quite reasonable. Certainly at matchpoints you want to keep open the option of a game in notrumps – almost always a much easier proposition than 5-of-a-minor.

If you do rebid 2NT, what happens next on this deal may in part depend on whether your 1D opening promises 4+ cards. If it does, with ♦AK, a respectable club suit and 12 hcp, partner ought to be happy to raise to 3NT. This makes easily – in fact it makes 11 tricks on the likely spade lead, because this was the full deal:

BD: 9	♠A3	Dlr: N
	♥Q94	Vul: EW
	♦QJ952	
	♣AJT	
♠T84		♠KQJ92
♥K7632		♥AJT
♦83		♦T76
♣874		♣53
	♠765	
	♥85	
	♦AK4	
	♣KQ962	
	♣♦♥♠	N
		T
N	5 5	4 14
S	5 5	2 3 11
E	1 2	12
W	1 2	

However, on Monday 24 August when this turned up, it was an absolutely flat board across the field:

Contract	Result	Score	Frequency
4♣ by NS	+1	150	1
3♣ by NS	+2	150	1
3♦ by NS	+2	150	2
2♣ by NS	+3	150	1

Not one pair reached a contract in notrumps but everyone made 11 tricks in a minor suit part-score!

Of course as the cards lie, 3NT only makes 10 tricks on the double-dummy lead of ♥J and if the heart holdings of West and East had been reversed the contract could go down. However, timidity achieves nothing. Bidding on in the minors when notrumps is a live possibility is not the way to earn matchpoints ...



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