

## Introducing Dickson or How to Avoid a Hopeless 3NT Contract

By Dick Yuen

Consider these two hands:

Hand 1:

♠	KJ8
♥	KJ
♦	KQ987
♣	J109

Hand 2:

♠	KJ8
♥	A9
♦	KQ987
♣	J109

You open 1♦ and partner bids 2NT, showing 11-12 HCP with no 4-card major. You have an automatic 3NT bid, right?

Partner's hand is: ♠ A76 ♥ Q10 ♦ J1065 ♣ KQ87

Alas, 3NT rates to go down when the opponents lead hearts. On the first hand, you will lose 4 heart tricks and 2 aces. On the second, you might have a chance if the opening leader has the ♥K, but if it is offside, you will lose the same 6 tricks.

Clearly, all bids are according to the book, so it is nobody's fault. Bad luck or bad system? Once partner has denied a 4-card major, the opponent has at worst a 50% chance to find the right lead!

Instead of bidding 3NT, do not waste available space! There is a **risk-free** way to solicit partner's input to place the final contract.

Presenting Dickson, an alertable treatment after the auction begins 1m - 2NT. Why 'Dickson'? Well, 'Stayman' has been serving bridge players very well. 'Stay-man' **asks** partner for a 4-card major while 'Dick-son' **shows** partner your doubleton major.

After the auction

1♣ or 1♦ - 2NT

3♣ shows a doubleton ♥

3♦ shows a doubleton ♠

This allows partner to discover mirror doubletons which can be a real killer in 3NT. In the worst case scenario, you may end up playing 3 of a minor in a 4-3 fit but that must be better than attempting a hopeless 3NT. An extra benefit is that you may be able to find a 4-3 **major** suit contract.

When should you use Dickson to show a major suit doubleton? The obvious hints are:

- your 5-card minor suit is not ready to run (missing an honour)
- you have fewer than two aces

- a good portion of your HCPs, say one-third or more, are quacks (queens and jacks)

Even with AK doubleton in a major, Dickson is still a useful treatment, since after the opening lead, you have only one stopper remaining unless partner has Qxx.

Let's examine the treatment in more detail. The auction has started 1m - 2NT.

Since opener can pass 2NT with a light opening, bidding on promises sound opening values. One would usually bid 3NT with a running 5-card or longer minor suit. If the opponents interfere, all doubles are for penalty!

After

1♦ - 2NT

3♣ shows exactly 2 hearts in one of four hand patterns

3-2-4-4

3-2-5-3

4-2-4-3 with weak spades

2-2-5-4 with weak diamonds

3♦ shows exactly 2 spades in one of four hand patterns

2-3-4-4

2-3-5-3

2-4-4-3 with weak hearts

2-2-5-4 with good diamonds

3♥ shows 4 good hearts (at least 2 of the top three honours or AJ10/KJ10) in one of five hand patterns

1-4-4-4

1-4-5-3

1-4-6-2

4-4-4-1 with better hearts than spades

2-4-4-3

3♠ shows 4 good spades (at least 2 of the top three honours or AJ10/KJ10) in one of five hand patterns

4-1-4-4

4-1-5-3

4-1-6-2

4-4-4-1 with better spades than hearts

4-2-4-3

All these bids are non-forcing and partner places the final contract based on the additional information about distribution. The main goal is to avoid landing in a hopeless 3NT or 5♦ contract. The additional benefit that you may uncover a Moysian major suit game or partial which is otherwise impossible with a direct jump to 3NT.

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3NT is to play with one of three hand types

3-3-4-3

3-3-5-2

any hand with a running diamond suit

Higher level bids are **picture bids** showing opener's specific distribution:

4♣ shows 5-5 in ♦ and ♣

4♦ shows 6+ ♦, no other 4-card suit

4♥ shows 6-5 in ♦ and ♥

4♠ shows 6-5 in ♦ and ♠

4NT is Keycard for diamonds

5♣ shows 6-5 in ♦ and ♣

5♦ shows specifically 2-2-7-2

All the above bids are alertable as they carry specific meanings.

After 3♣ (showing a doubleton heart), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - with a mirroring doubleton in hearts, to rest peacefully in a playable club fit (4-4, 5-3 or better) but lacking the controls for a club game

3♦ - signoff, better diamonds than clubs, not enough controls for a diamond game

3♥ - forcing, shows 3 hearts with one and a half stoppers (e.g. AJx), promises one of the top three diamond honours

Opener continues with

3NT with help in hearts (10x or better)

3♠ shows A or K of spades

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3♠ - forcing, shows 2 heart stoppers with worry about spades, promises one of the top three diamond honours

Opener continues with

3NT with spade stopper(s)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3NT - to play

4♣ - shows 5+ clubs, invitational to 5♣ or 5♦

4♦ - shows 4+ diamonds

After 3♦ (showing a doubleton spade), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - with a mirroring doubleton in spades, to rest peacefully in a playable diamond fit (4-4, 5-3 or better) but lacking the controls for a diamond game

3♥ - forcing, shows 2 spade stoppers with worry about hearts, promises one of the top three diamond honours

Opener continues with

3NT with heart stopper(s)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3♠ - forcing, shows 3 spades with one and a half stoppers (e.g. AJx), promises one of the top three diamond honours

Opener continues with

3NT with help in spades (10x or better)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3NT - to play

4♣ - shows 5+ clubs, invitational to 5♣ or 5♦

4♦ - shows 4+ diamonds

After 3♥ (showing a good 4-card heart suit), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - to rest peacefully in a playable heart fit with poor game prospects

3♠ - 100% forcing, last train to 3NT, shows ♠A, one of the top three diamond honours, weak hearts

Opener continues with

3NT to play

4♣ weak retreat with 3+ clubs (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

4♦ weak retreat with fewer than 3 clubs

3NT - to play, two spade stoppers and help to run diamonds

4♣ - non-forcing, shows 5+ clubs, invitational to 5♣

4♦ - non-forcing, shows diamond preference, invitational to 5♦

4♥ - to play in the Moysian fit

4♠ - **DOES NOT EXIST**

4NT - game-forcing to 5♣ or 5♦, shows 3-2-3-5 with a maximum, asks opener to choose the game

Note: only opener can use 4NT to ask for aces

5♣ - to play, doubleton diamond

5♦ - to play, at least 4-4 fit (rare)

After 3♠ (showing a good 4-card spade suit), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - to rest peacefully in a playable spade fit with poor game prospects

3NT - to play, two heart stoppers and help to run diamonds

4♣ - non-forcing, shows 5+ clubs, invitational to 5♣ (opener's 4♦ is to play)

4♦ - non-forcing, shows diamond preference, invitational to 5♦

4♥ - **DOES NOT EXIST**

4♠ - to play in the Moysian fit

4NT - game-forcing to 5♣ or 5♦, shows 2-3-3-5 with a maximum, asks opener to choose the game

Note: only opener can use 4NT to ask for aces

5♣ - to play, doubleton diamond

5♦ - to play, at least 4-4 fit (rare)

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After opener makes a picture bid (4♣ or higher), responder can follow-up naturally.

Let's go back to the two original hands:

Hand 1:

♠ KJ8	♠ A76
♥ KJ	♥ Q10
♦ KQ987	♦ J1065
♣ J109	♣ KQ87

Hand 2:

♠ KJ8	♠ A76
♥ A9	♥ Q10
♦ KQ987	♦ J1065
♣ J109	♣ KQ87

Using Dickson, it is easy to avoid the hopeless 3NT with this auction:

1♦ - 2NT  
 3♣\* - 3♦  
 Pass

\* alertable, shows a doubleton heart

Let's look at two more examples:

Hand 3:

♠ AQ87	♠ K76
♥ KJ	♥ Q10
♦ KJ98	♦ Q1065
♣ 1097	♣ KQ87

Hand 4:

♠ AQ87	♠ K76
♥ A9	♥ Q10
♦ KJ987	♦ Q1065
♣ 109	♣ KQ87

The auction becomes:

1♦ - 2NT  
 3♠\*\* - Pass/4♠ depending on your mood

\*\* shows 4 good spades, usually short hearts

3NT is out because of the potential problem in the heart suit.

### Dickson Extension After 1♣ - 2NT

The Dickson treatment can be applied to this sequence as well, mostly by simply interchanging the diamond and club bids. Opener is expected to pass with a light opening, so bidding on promises sound opening values. 3NT is automatic with a running 5+ card club suit. If the opponents interfere, all doubles are penalty.

After

1♣ - 2NT

3♣ shows exactly 2 hearts in one of four hand patterns  
 3-2-4-4  
 3-2-3-5

4-2-3-4 with weak spades  
 2-2-4-5 with weak clubs

3♦ shows exactly 2 spades in one of four hand patterns  
 2-3-4-4  
 2-3-3-5

2-4-3-4 with weak hearts  
 2-2-4-5 with good clubs

3♥ shows 4 good hearts (at least 2 of the top three honours or AJ10/KJ10) in one of five hand patterns

1-4-4-4  
 1-4-3-5  
 1-4-2-6

4-4-1-4 with better hearts than spades  
 2-4-3-4

3♠ shows 4 good spades (at least 2 of the top three honours or AJ10/KJ10) in one of five hand patterns

4-1-4-4  
 4-1-3-5  
 4-1-2-6

4-4-1-4 with better spades than hearts  
 4-2-3-4

All these bids are non-forcing and partner places the final contract based on the additional information about distribution. The main goal is to avoid landing in a hopeless 3NT or 5♣ contract.

3NT is to play with one of three hand types

3-3-4-3  
 3-3-2-5

any hand with a running diamond suit

Higher level *picture bids* show opener's specific distribution.

4♣ shows 6+ ♣, no other 4-card suit

4♦ shows 6-5 in ♣ and ♦

4♥ shows 6-5 in ♣ and ♥

4♠ shows 6-5 in ♣ and ♠

4NT is Keycard for clubs

5♣ shows specifically 2-2-2-7

After 3♣ (showing a doubleton heart), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - with a mirroring doubleton in hearts, to rest peacefully in a playable club fit (4-4, 5-3 or better) but lacking the controls for a club game

3♦ - signoff, 5+ diamonds, heart weakness, not enough controls for the diamond game

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3♥ - forcing, shows 3 hearts with one and a half stoppers (e.g. AJx), promises one of the top three club honours  
Opener continues with

3NT with help in hearts (10x or better)

3♠ shows A or K of spades

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3♠ - forcing, shows 2 heart stoppers with worry about spades, promises one of the top three club honours  
Opener continues with

3NT with spade stopper(s)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3NT - to play

4♣ - shows 4+ clubs

4♦ - shows 5+ diamonds, invitational to 5♣ or 5♦

After 3♦ (showing a doubleton spade), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - with a mirroring doubleton in spades, to rest peacefully in a playable diamond fit (5-2 or better) but lacking the controls for a diamond game

3♥ - forcing, shows 2 spade stoppers with worry about hearts, promises one of the top three club honours  
Opener continues with

3NT with heart stopper(s)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3♠ - forcing, shows 3 spades with one and a half stoppers (e.g. AJx), promises one of the top three club honours  
Opener continues with

3NT with help in spades (10x or better)

4♣ weakest (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3NT - to play

4♣ - shows 4+ clubs

4♦ - shows 5+ diamonds, invitational to 5♣ or 5♦

After 3♥ (showing a good 4-card heart suit), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - to rest peacefully in a playable heart fit with poor game prospects

3♠ - 100% forcing, last train to 3NT, shows ♠A, one of the top three club honours, weak hearts  
Opener continues with

3NT to play

4♣ weak retreat (responder's 4♦ is signoff)

3NT - to play, two spade stoppers and help to run diamonds

4♣ - non-forcing, club preferences, invitational to 5♣

4♦ - non-forcing, shows 5+ diamonds, invitational to 5♦

4♥ - to play in the Moysian fit

4♠ - **DOES NOT EXIST**

4NT - game-forcing to 5♣ or 5♦, shows 3-2-5-3 with a maximum, asks opener to choose the game  
Note: only opener can use 4NT to ask for aces

5♣ - to play, at least 4-4 fit (rare)

After 3♠ (showing a good 4-card spade suit), responder's follow-ups are:

pass - to rest peacefully in a playable spade fit with poor game prospects

3NT - to play, two heart stoppers and help to run clubs

4♣ - non-forcing, shows club preference, invitational to 5♣

4♦ - non-forcing, shows 5+ diamonds, invitational to 5♦

4♥ - **DOES NOT EXIST**

4♠ - to play in the Moysian fit

4NT - game-forcing to 5♣ or 5♦, shows 2-3-5-3 with a maximum, asks opener to choose the game

Note: only opener can use 4NT to ask for aces

5♣ - to play, at least 4-4 fit (rare)



## Annual General Meeting

The Calgary Duplicate Bridge Association UNIT 390

**When:** Saturday, May 14, 2016

**Where:** Kerby Centre

**Time:** Light Lunch: 11:00 a.m.  
Meeting: 12:00 noon  
Pairs Game: to follow

- Card fees \$5.00
- Unit championship points

### Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome and Introduction
3. Confirmation of Quorum
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes from 2015 AGM
6. President's Report
7. Treasurer's Report - Approval of Financial Statements
8. Appointment of Auditor for 2016/2017
9. Presentation of Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney Awards
10. Election of Directors
11. Questions from the floor
12. Adjournment

Please RSVP by May 7, 2016 if you are coming. Contact Ken Anderson at 403-547-4781 or [nek.nosredna@icloud.com](mailto:nek.nosredna@icloud.com)

An attendance estimate is needed to finalize the catering arrangements.