

Getting Serious About Nonserious

TO THE EDITOR:

After a major-suit has been agreed in a game-forcing auction, to narrow a bidder's wide range, three notrump is commonly used artificially, showing one range of slam-try ("serious" if relatively strong, "nonserious" otherwise), while any control-bid shows another. We prefer to use three notrump to show the nonserious range, because that will more often prevent the unnecessary disclosure of controls when slam is not an issue. Furthermore, as three notrump is often a desirable contract, we suggest restricting this treatment to auctions in which (a) a major suit was agreed as early as possible after a game-force was established, and (b) neither partner's strength has been narrowly limited.

In standard methods, there are three auction types where these two criteria apply: (1) responder bids two-over-one and next supports opener's major at the two- or three-level; (2) a one-spade opener raises responder's two-heart response to three; (3) after a two-club opening, opener shows a major and responder's next bid is three of that major.

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