

Picture Jumps Part 1 [<http://andrew-gumperz.blogspot.com/2011/12/picture-jumps-part-1.html>]

Picture Jumps Part 2 [<http://andrew-gumperz.blogspot.com/2011/12/picture-jumps-part-2.html>]

Frivolous 3NT is a method for resolving when the partnership is or is not in the slam zone after a game forcing major suit raise. Picture Jumps provide more certainty in jump raise auctions, but they introduce uncertainty into minimum raise auctions. Frivolous 3NT fixes this problem.

What Is The Problem?

Let's look at one auction and how it differs when using Fast Arrival and Picture Jumps.

Hand:

KJTxx

xx

AKx

Qxx

Auction

1S -- 2C

2S -- 3S

?

Playing Fast Arrival, responder's 3S call has shown extra values. Therefore, when opener holds a prime minimum like this one, opener knows the partnership is in the slam zone. Opener has an easy 4D cuebid to announce a control in diamonds. All well and good--the slam machinery is working fine.

Playing Picture Jumps, the situation is different. Because the 4S jump shows a precise type of raise, most minimum GF raises must bid 3S instead and hence 3S has not guaranteed extras. Responder might hold either:

- Hand 1: AQx, Ax, xx, AKxxxx
- Hand 2: AQx, xx, QJxx, KJTxx

Opener's bidding must cater to the minimum GF hands like hand 2 which occur most often. Opposite hand 2, an opening hand would require significant extra values to put the partnership in the slam zone. The actual hand is nowhere close. A cuebid by opener would send the message, "partner, slam should be cold if you have a good fitting minimum" hence opener's hand is too weak to cuebid. On the other hand, you'd hate to bid 4S and preempt responder if it turns out responder has a good hand like hand 1.

Frivolous 3NT

If we give up the ability to play 3NT when holding an 8-card major suit fit, we can use 3NT for another purpose. 3NT *after a forcing major suit raise* becomes an artificial bid saying, "My hand is too weak to try for slam but too strong too sign off in 4S." Playing Frivolous 3NT

1S -- 2C

2S -- 3S

?

3NT = A hand strong enough to cooperate with a slam search if partner has extras but only willing to play game opposite a minimum. This is sometimes called a "mild" slam try.

4C/D/H = A control bid that announces the partnership is in the slam zone and invites responder to cooperate with any good-fitting minimum.

4S = a terrible hand so poor it would sign off over any slam try made by partner.

Example Hands

1S -- 2C

2S -- 3S

?

Hand 1: AQxxxx, Axx, Qxx, x

Bid 3NT.

This is the hand the convention was designed for. A highcard minimum but with good shape and mostly prime cards. Slam could easily be on if responder holds extras.

Hand 2: KQT9x, KJx, xx, Qxx

Bid 4S.

A soft 11 count should signoff immediately. Slam will require a very big hand from partner.

Hand 3: AKxxxx, Axx, Kx, Qx

Bid 4D.

This hand will make slam opposite a min like: Qxx, x, xxxx, AKJxx. Since you are certain that the hands are in the slam zone, make your cheapest cuebid to inform partner.

Hand 4: KJxxxx, KQx, x, Kxx

Bid 3NT.

The fit for clubs and good shape means that slam is possible opposite some good hands even though you lack aces.

Hand 5: KJxxx AKx, xx, xxx

Bid 4S.

3-small clubs is a very bad sign for slam purposes. If partner's clubs are not solid slam is on a finesse at best, and even that is going to require him to hold a rock.

Hand 6: Kxxxxxx, AKx, x, Jx

Bid 4H. Slam makes opposite a min like: Axx, xx, xxx, AKxxx

When Does Frivolous 3NT apply?

Frivolous 3NT applies when:

- A major suit has been bid and raised
- A game force has been established

- The bidder does not know yet whether the partnership is in the slam zone

In all the following auctions, 3NT is frivolous:

Auction 1

1S -- 2C

2S -- 3S

3NT

Auction 2

1S -- 2H

3H -- 3NT

Frivolous may be used by either partner.

Auction 3

1S -- 2H

3H -- 3S

3NT

Frivolous 3NT may be used after an intervening control bid.

Auction 4

1S -- 2C

3C -- 3S

3NT

Frivolous 3NT may be used after an intervening raise of responder.

Auction 5

1S -- 2C

2H -- 2S

3C -- 3H

3NT

Frivolous 3NT may be used after intervening natural calls.

Auction 6

1S -- 2C

2NT -- 3S

3NT

Frivolous 3NT applies even if opener rebid a natural 2NT as long as the major is raised.

Auction 7

1S -- 2NT!

3C! -- 3D!

3S! -- 3NT

2NT = Modified J2N [<http://andrew-gumperz.blogspot.com/2011/12/improving-jacoby-2nt.html>]

3C = Any min opener

3D = Establishes game force and asks "Do you have a singleton?"

3S = Yes--it is in clubs

3NT = I have mild slam interest.

Frivolous 3NT applies after any game forcing raise of a major, even without a 2/1.

Some 3NT Calls That Are Not Frivolous

Auction 1

1S -- 2D

2S -- 2NT

3C -- 3S

3NT

Frivolous 3NT only applies after a 3+ card raise. A weak preference like the 3S call in this example is not enough to setup a Frivolous 3NT situation.

Auction 2

1S -- 2C

2H -- 2S

3NT

jumps to 3NT are not Frivolous 3NT

Auction 3

1S -- 2C

2H -- 3S!

3NT

3S = strong picture jump raise

Frivolous 3NT is not needed when the partnership is already known to be in the slam zone.

Auction 4

1S -- 2C

3S -- 3NT

3S = strong picture jump suit rebid

Frivolous 3NT is not needed since the partnership is already known to be in the slam zone.

Auction 5

1S -- 1NT

2C -- 3S!

3NT

3S = 3-card limit raise

Frivolous is off since responder's 3S raise did not create a game force.

Why Frivolous not Serious 3NT?

The original version of this convention was called "Serious 3NT". Using Serious 3NT, 3NT showed the strong slam try, while direct cuebids were mild slam tries. There are two reasons why the reverse treatment is better:

- When you hold a mild slam try and partner is minimum, frivolous allows you to get to 4M without providing a cuebid to help the defense.
- When you hold a mild slam try some times your only control to cuebid is the highest ranking side suit. This can lead to an awkward follow up auction. In contrast when you have the serious slam try, you virtually always have multiple controls to cuebid, allowing you to start with a cheap cuebid.

Concluding Thoughts

Using Frivolous 3NT, you choose which of three messages you want to send:

- my hand has no slam interest (signoff)
- my hand has extras--I want you to cooperate on any good minimum (cuebid)
- my hand is in between--I can cooperate if you have extras, but if you are min let's play game (3NT)

This convention applies in constructive auctions where:

- A major suit has been bid and raised
- A game force has been established
- The bidding has not yet established that the partnership is in the slam zone

Posted 29th December 2011 by [Andrew Gumperz](#)

Labels: [advanced](#), [bidding](#), [conventions](#), [slams](#)

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Adam Meyerson [December 30, 2011 at 9:22 PM](#)

I've seen people play frivolous 3NT this way, but it's not the way I play it and very much not the way I believe it should be played.

The problem hand is something like Qxx xxx AK AKQJx for responder. After 1S-2C-2S-3S-4S, what do you do? You have "a rock" but the five level may not even be safe opposite a hand like AKJxx Qxx QJx xx. Of course, slam is pretty cold opposite your KJTxx AKx xx xxx example where you would bid 4S.

Thus my view is that there are only TWO ways to distinguish strength and not three. 3NT says "I have a bad hand, but you can cue with extras" and a direct cue promises extras. A 4S bid is more of a picture, strong trump suit but no outside controls.

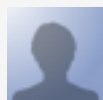
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Andrew Gumperz [December 30, 2011 at 9:35 PM](#)

Adam, That's a reasonable counter point. Thanks for the comment.

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Harpaz Doron [August 3, 2015 at 6:13 AM](#)

Why you need the restriction "The bidding has not yet established that the partnership is in the slam zone"? without this in the following auction: 1S-2CL-2D-3S(we are in slam zone)-? opener can bid 3NT - to show normal opening hand , Q-bid - with extra value , bid 4S - real bad hand (sorry i opened 1S)

With above restriction opener "must" q bid with normal open or with extra values and 3S bidder can not distinguish between the two cases

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Andrew Gumperz [August 3, 2015 at 8:15 AM](#)



You can play it in that auction, if you want, but there are probably better uses:

1S -- 2C

2D -- 3S

In this auction since we already know the partnership has significant extra strength, our priority is finding controls and then bidding RKC if all suits are controlled. The amount of values opener has are less important--we already know that if the controls and key cards are present we want to be in slam and we know we should be safe at the 5-level, if are a key card or the queen of trump short of bidding a slam.

3NT is useful to send the message "I have some useful cards but no obvious Q-bid." perhaps opener has AKJxx, Qx, JTxx, Qx. And with a hand like: AQxxx, Axx, Kxxx, x there is no reason not to just bid 4H--3S was an invitation to Q-bid.

In contrast:

1S -- 2D

3C -- 3S

?

In this auction we might still be on a combined 24 points or perhaps we have a combined 32. Our primary bidding objective at this point is to identify when it is safe to pursue a slam search at all, rather than to show controls. We only want to start showing controls if we know we have the combined values to justify it.

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