

32. Failing to Live In Sin

You have opened 1NT and your partner has raised to 2NT, inviting game. Would you accept with these 13-counts (in the middle of your point-range).

♠ 107	♠ AJ6	♠ KJ105
♥ QJ6	♥ Q83	♥ QJ3
♦ A106	♦ AJ7	♦ AJ107
♣ AQ985	♣ J732	♣ J9

I hope the answer is, “Yes, with the first and third; no with the second.” Let’s think beyond the mere number of high-card points you hold. Let’s think about winning TRICKS. Consider the following three “LIS” factors, which are not taken into account simply by counting up your high-card points.

L for Length. If you have a five-card suit in your 1NT, that’s good news. And it’s better to be 4432 than 4333 — two four-card suits to work on. The first hand ticks the length box.

I for Intermediate cards ie tens and nines. The first and third each have two tens and a nine. The second is an intermediate-free zone.

S for Sequences. It’s much easier to win tricks when your high cards are sequential, not “gappy”. The third hand, in particular, is replete with sequences: ♠ J10, ♥ QJ, ♦ J10. When backed up by other high cards — ♠ KJ10, ♦ AJ10, so much the better.

What Happened

South went on to 3NT — a near-hopeless contract. Declarer won the ♠10 lead with ♠J and, playing for miracles, led ♣2 to ♣Q. East won ♣A and found the lethal switch to ♥J, a surround play.

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

♠ 10982	♠ KQ3	♠ 754
♥ A52	♥ 1064	♥ KJ97
♦ 62	♦ KQ103	♦ 9854
♣ K1095	♣ Q64	♣ A8

What Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT(1)	end		

(1) South thought, “I have stoppers everywhere, should be fine.” Instead of, “I have no TRICKS, resoundingly failing LIS.”

Contract: 3NT, Opening Lead: ♠ 10

What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT	Pass	2NT	end

Contract: 2NT, Opening Lead: ♠ 10

Declarer covered with ♥Q (or ♥J would have won) and now West won ♥A and returned ♥5. East won ♥9, cashed ♥A and enjoyed ♥7. He then led ♣8, declarer forlornly trying ♣J (ducking saves a trick), West winning ♣K and cashing ♠109. Down four.

What Should Have Happened

You stop in 2NT and, after winning the spade lead, immediately cash your four diamond winners to force West to make two discards. You’ll make your seven top tricks and an eighth may easily emerge.

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