

AN "UNUSUAL" BIDDING SEQUENCE

This is your hand as dealer.

| | |
|----------|-------|
| S | South |
| ♠ | QJ95 |
| ♥ | 73 |
| ♦ | A94 |
| ♣ | A1094 |

West opens 1♣ and your partner overcalls 2NT. East raises his partner to 2♣. What is going on here? Could partner have a 20 point hand with clubs stopped? That is, could his 2NT be a natural bid. No way! Your 10 points and the opener's 12 minimum points is already 22. East supported so he has at least 6 point. There can only be a maximum of 12 point across the table. That sure was an unusual bid.

In fact, the bid was conventional and is called the "unusual" notrump. It is the flip side of another bid we discussed a short time ago – the Michaels Cuebid. When partner makes a 2NT overcall that can't be natural, he is showing the two lowest unbid suits. In this case, it is diamonds and hearts. He may be weak, but he is about 5-5 in the red suits, so his shape rather than his points is going to win tricks.

He is asking you to bid the longest of the two suits and you should therefore, bid 3♦. This is passed out and West leads a low club. What are your thoughts after you see this dummy

| | |
|----------|---------|
| N | North |
| ♠ | 6 |
| ♥ | QJ962 |
| ♦ | K108532 |
| ♣ | 6 |

West leads ♣2

| | |
|----------|-------|
| S | South |
| ♠ | QJ95 |
| ♥ | 73 |
| ♦ | A94 |
| ♣ | A1094 |

You have only 3 top tricks and you need 6 more. These must come from a cross ruff. You have 9 trump so if you can take each of these diamonds individually, you have all the necessary tricks – plus. But there is some setting up to do and the opponents won't be cooperative.

Win the club and lead low heart to the dummy. It is clear to East and West what you're planning to do, so when East wins he will return a diamond, trying to cut down on your cross ruff. Win the trick and play another heart. West wins and plays his last trump. You win this and ruff a low club and another low heart. Your ♥Q is good in the dummy and you can take the rest of the diamonds. You lost the two high trump and the two top hearts, making four diamonds on a total of 17 points.

This is the entire deal:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | N North ♠ 6 ♥ QJ962 ♦ K108532 ♣ 6 | W N E S 1♣ 2NT 3♣ 3♦ P P P |
| | W West ♠ A843 ♥ K104 ♦ Q7 ♣ KJ32 | E East ♠ K1072 ♥ A85 ♦ J6 ♣ Q875 |
| | S South ♠ QJ95 ♥ 73 ♦ A94 ♣ A1094 | 3♦ S NS: 0 EW: 0 |

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/y8j3sbq8> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.