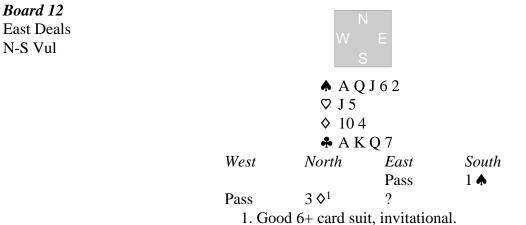
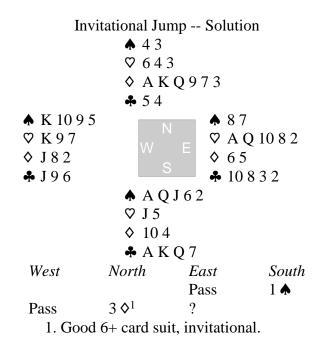
Invitational Jump -- Problem



My new theory is to play the invitational jump only in clubs. That way, $3 \diamond$ can be a limit raise and the jump raise to $3 \blacklozenge$ becomes a mixed (4-card constructive) raise.

However, we were playing all 3-level jump shifts as invitational. Playing in a club matchpoint game, what's your call?

Board 12 East Deals N-S Vul



Our general agreement is that a bid of $3 \heartsuit$ would show a secure stopper, because two suits (hearts and clubs) are in doubt.

Experts sometimes ignore the minor, and their bid of $3 \heartsuit$ would *ask* for a stopper. We did not have that agreement. Still, if partner has \heartsuit Q-3-2, 3 NT should have play. That's what I bid. Good news - the opening lead was a "safe" diamond! I took ten tricks, eschewing the spade hook.

When not playing the invitational jump, this type of auction still cannot be avoided. Here is an equivalent:

1 ◊ - 1 ♠; 3 ◊

Clubs and hearts are still in doubt, but this time the weaker hand has to sort it out. My proposed solution:

3 NT shows both side suits can stand the incoming lead.

 $3 \heartsuit$ asks for a club stopper, showing a heart stopper that can stand a lead across, for example, K-10-3, Q-J-3 or better.

3 A is ambiguous, suggesting a club stopper that can stand a lead across. If the spade-bidder pulls 3 NT, that cancels the club message and shows extra length in spades. Usually, pulling 3 NT shows slam interest, but here we are just trying to get to the best game.

If North did not have the invitational jump available, they would have responded 1 NT, and we would have rebid 2 \clubsuit . North has two ways to bid diamonds, and chooses the invitational 3 \diamondsuit . Partner could have bid 2 NT with a secure heart stop, but maybe not with Q-x-x. We could pass, or bid 3 \heartsuit , asking (hearts is the only suit in doubt). Either way, we play a diamond partial, making ten tricks.

With this hand, North would have limited options over opener's $2 \heartsuit$ rebid, but that is less common than $2 \clubsuit$. The invitational jump gives by far the most bang for the buck in clubs.

So, we got a great score on the deal, as played, while "better" methods produce a ho-hum diamond partial. Luck trumps science, as usual.