



Stay low on a misfit probably dates from the earliest years of contract bridge. It is a most useful maxim. By definition, you and your partner do not have a trump fit, so playing in a suit contract is probably not a good idea. The trouble is, you might arrive at an uncomfortably high level before you can figure this out.

When we have a misfit type hand we will often end up in Notrump – This is not a good thing, but just a byproduct of not finding a Major suit fit. Notrump is better played when we have a minor suit fit – it is easier to take tricks with a suit to setup (more than just HCP to help us take tricks.)

♠ A Q 7 6 5 2		♠ Void
♥ 5 2		♥ K J 7 6 3
♦ A		♦ Q 10 6 5 2
♣ A J 8 5		♣ K 7 3

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	?	

East-West have lurched up to the three level, are still in a forcing situation and have failed to find a trump fit. As you can see, no game contract looks very appetising on these cards. Unfortunately, the chances are that East-West, having failed to find a fit, will end up in 3NT. Of course, that has its own problems. Suppose the defence lead a club. Where are nine tricks coming from? There are only four tricks on top. You will need a lot of luck to bring the total up to nine. With the void in spades, East might have foreseen the misfit and responded INT. Why does 3NT fare poorly on this sort of deal? There are two reasons. Firstly, no suit is able to act as a source of tricks -not surprising, given the misfit. Secondly, transport between the two hands is often difficult. With misfitting hands, there tend to be few entries from hand to hand. Even if you seem to have plenty of tricks, it may be hard to reach them. If you set up one hand, the defenders put you in the other.

As soon as you diagnose that the hands do not fit well, drop the bidding as soon as possible. The correct auction with these two hands is: 1♠-1NT-2♣ -End.

When we are thinking about how to evaluate our hand in the face of a misfit we need to adjust our values **down** based on our holding in partner's suit. If we have shortness in partner's suit, then the suit will be more difficult to setup and we know that partner's hand is not likely to play as well as they are expecting. We subtract points from our hand for a misfit.

With a misfit try and keep the bidding low, choose a bid that allows partner to pass rather than a forcing bid

Therefore, with honour cards and some length in partners suit upgrade your hand, however with a shortage in partners suit downgrade.

If one player has a good, long suit, but otherwise weak hand then that suit should be trumps – not no trumps – there is likely to be no entry to the long suit.

Don't enter into a battle with partner. **Two opponents are plenty – three are too many!**

I will end with a wonderful story of one of the world's top players, learning the game at the age of 12 by playing with his father. Each of them had a long suit. The auction went:

DAD	JUNIOR
1H	1S
2H	2S
3H	3S
7S!	

Opponents doubled and Junior was furious, demanding an explanation from Dad.

Dad was exceedingly laid back, answering: "I thought 7S would save four rounds of bidding!"