



JUST FOR NEW PLAYERS

It's a bidder's game

By Bruce Greenspan

It doesn't matter how good your declarer skills are if you're not in the right contract. Bidding is learning a foreign language. As you develop your skills, you will add conventions that will help elicit information from partner. However, you need a solid understanding of the basics before you start adding sophisticated gadgets to your repertoire.



In any auction, the idea is to find the proper level and the right denomination. Usually it is best to seek out an eight-card major-suit fit. If the first two bids are suit bids at the one level, we know very little about where this auction is headed.

Let's say you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♠. All we know of opener is that he has at least 12 or 13 high-card points and three or more clubs. Responder has at least 6 HCP and four spades. Opener may have 16 points and six clubs and responder may have five spades and 14 HCP. You will not know until later in the auction.

Both opener's and responder's rebids are value bids. You must tell partner if you are in the minimum, medium or maximum range. Many times you may not bid your shape in order to tell your partner what is your range.

Opener's three ranges are minimum, 13-16; medium, 17-18, and maximum, 19 or more.

Responder's three ranges are 6 to a bad 10; medium, 11-12, and maximum 13 or more.

The mantra for minimum hands for both opener and responder is, "Rebid your suit, rebid partner's suit or rebid 1NT." Opener has one more option. If his second suit is of a lower denomination, he may bid that suit at the two level. For example, in the following auction:

1♥ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass; 2♣, we know opener most likely has five hearts, four clubs and a minimum or medium hand.

Okay, before going on take two aspirin, this is going to hurt.

Suppose the auction goes this way:

1♥ - Pass - 1♠ - Pass; 2♣ - Pass - 2♥.

How many points and how many hearts does responder have?

Responder has 6-9 points and exactly two hearts. This is responder's hand.

♠ K 9 8 7 6
♥ 7 4
♦ K J 7 6 5
♣ 8 6

After partner responds 2♣ showing five hearts, four clubs and a non-maximum, you may not bid your shape. Remember the mantra. With a minimum, rebid your suit, rebid partner's suit or rebid 1NT. These are your only options. If you bid 2♦ now and partner bids either 2NT or 3NT, they will have to call the director because after the opening lead you won't want to put dummy on the table.

You hold:

♠ K 9 8 7 6
♥ 7 4 3
♦ K J 7 6
♣ 8 6

Partner opens 1♥. Your bid is 2♥. To paraphrase the bandit in Treasure of Sierra Madre, "We don't need no stinking spades in this auction." It's not often you can describe your hand in one bid. This bid tells partner you have at least three-card support and 6-9 points, perfect. The previous auction is just taking a false preference because you have no other bid.

With a minimum response versus a minimum opener, stop as soon as possible. With a medium hand, invite to game. With a maximum, get to the right game.

An auction such as this usually ends with a double.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♥			

One important note, a rebid of 2NT by responder is always invitational. If you play that a response of 2NT to a minor is 13 to 16 points, this is an entirely different auction.



Cartoons Jude Goodwin, from the book Go Ahead, Laugh, published by Master Point Press.

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	

Responder has 11-12 points. A rebid of 1NT would show 6 to a bad 10 points, 2NT 11-12 and a jump to 3NT is 13 or more.