



Bidding Basics

BY LARRY COHEN larryco.com

Responder's rebid after responding on the two level

In this article, we are discussing responder's second bid when his first response was on the two level. The two-level response to 1NT was discussed last month. This time, the two-level response is to one of a suit.

After responder's raise

If responder has raised from one to two (1♥-2♥ for example), opener will sometimes try for game by bidding a new suit. If opener does so, responder evaluates two things: the holding in the game-try suit and the overall strength of the hand. With a maximum (9-10 points), responder should go to game regardless of the holding in the help-suit. After 1♥-2♥; 3♣, for example, responder should jump to 4♥ with:

♠A x ♥K J x ♦J 10 x x ♣x x x x.

With a minimum (6-7), responder will likely signoff regardless of his holding in the help suit. For example, responder should sign off with:

♠Q x x ♥Q x x ♦Q x x ♣J x x x

regardless of what game-try opener uses.

With a medium hand, responder should go to game with help in the suit such as K-J-x or a low doubleton and four trumps. For example, after 1♥-2♥; 3♦, responder should bid 4♥ with:

♠A x x ♥K 10 x x ♦x x ♣J 10 x x,

but sign off in 3♥ with:

♠K J x ♥K x x ♦x x x ♣J x x x.

After responder's weak jumpshift

If responder has jumped (weak), and opener bids again, opener must have a strong hand. The only exception is if opener supports. In that case, responder should just pass. For example 1♦-2♥; 3♥ is a signoff/preemptive. If opener repeats his suit, he has overruled responder, and responder should pass. For example, after 1♦-2♥; 3♦, responder shouldn't bid again. If opener bids a new suit, however, it is forcing with a big hand. Responder can support either of opener's suits or retreat to his own suit.

After responder's 2/1 game-forcing response

This entire series has used the modern method where a two-level response in a lower-ranking suit than the opening bid is game forcing. So 1♦-2♣, 1♥-2♣/2♦ or 1♠-2♣/2♦/2♥ is natural and game forcing. The follow-ups are not all universally agreed upon, but in this series, we are looking at the most common methods.

After 1♦-2♣; 2♦: Opener has shown five-plus diamonds and any strength. Responder will next bid a four-card major if he has one. If not, he can bid notrump, repeat his clubs (showing six or more) or raise diamonds (at least three-card support). So bid 2♥ with:

♠A x ♥A x x x ♦x x ♣K Q J x x.

Bid 2♠ with:

♠K J x x ♥x ♦Q x x ♣A Q J x x.

Bid 2NT with:

♠K Q 9 ♥K J 10 ♦x x ♣A Q x x x.

Bid 3♣ with:

♠A K x ♥x x ♦Q x ♣A K J 10 x x.

Bid 3♦ with:

♠A Q x ♥x x ♦A Q x ♣K 10 x x x.

After 1♦-2♣; 2♥/2♠: Opener has four cards in the major and usually just four diamonds. Responder can raise diamonds or the major (with four), bid notrump (natural) or repeat the clubs (six or more clubs). So after 1♦-2♣; 2♠, bid 2NT with:

♠x x ♥K Q J x ♦x x ♣A K 10 x x.

Bid 3♣ with:

♠x x x ♥x x ♦A x ♣A K Q 10 x x.

Bid 3♦ with:

♠x x ♥x x ♦A Q 10 x ♣A K J x x.

Bid 3♠ (stronger than a jump to 4♠) with:

♠A Q 10 x ♥x x ♦K x ♣A Q J x x.

Jump to 4♠ (weaker than 3♠) with:

♠K Q x x ♥x x ♦x x ♣A Q J x x.

After 1M (major)-2m (minor); 2M rebid: Opener has repeated his major showing six or more. Responder's bids are natural, but jumping to game in the major is the weakest action.

After 1♠-2♦; 2♠, bid 2NT with:

♠x x ♣K Q J ♦A 10 x x x ♣K x x.

Bid 3♦ with:

♠x ♥x x x ♦A K Q 10 x x ♣A x x.

Bid 3♠ with:

♠ A x x ♥ K Q J x ♦ A Q 10 x ♣ x x x.

Bid 4♠ with:

♠ J x x ♥ x x ♦ A K Q x x ♣ Q x x.

After 1M-2m; 2NT: Opener has a flat, balanced hand, so responder bids naturally. Responder repeats the minor with slam interest and a decent six-plus card suit; raises opener's major with three (but raises to game with a dead minimum); raises to 3NT with a balanced minimum; and raises to 4NT to invite. So after 1♥-2♦; 2NT, bid 3♣ with:

♠ A x ♥ x ♦ K Q J 10 x ♣ A Q x x x.

Bid 3♦ with:

♠ A Q ♥ x ♦ K 10 9 8 x x x ♣ A K J.

Bid 3♥ with:

♠ x x ♥ K Q x ♦ A K Q x x x ♣ A x.

Bid 3NT with:

♠ A x ♥ K x ♦ K Q J 10 x ♣ J x x x.

Bid 4♥ with:

♠ x x ♥ K Q x ♦ K Q J x x x ♣ Q x.

This covers most of the 2/1 auc-

tions. Over anything not mentioned here (such as 1♠-2♣; 2♥), all natural bidding applies, with jumps to game in a suit the weaker action (raises below game are stronger).

After responder's Jacoby 2NT response: After 1M-2NT, opener uses conventional responses as discussed in October 2019 issue. If opener jumps to 4M (showing a flat minimum), responder will usually pass, but if he bids on, 4NT is RKCB (or plain Blackwood if the partnership isn't using Roman key card). Over any other rebid by opener, 4NT is still RKCB. Bids in new suits are control-bids showing slam interest and the ace or king (or a singleton or void in the suit bid). For example, after 1♠-2NT; 3♠ [showing spade shortness], bid 4♣ with:

♠ A Q x x ♥ x x ♦ A K Q x ♣ K 10 x

to show the club control. (Even though the diamonds are a better control, the controls are shown in order up the line). Bids of three of the agreed major are stronger than jumping to four of the agreed major, which is an attempt to sign off. ■

What is responder's second bid after 1♠-2♠; 3♦ with:

1. ♠ Q 10 x ♥ Q J 8 x ♦ x x x ♣ K x x

2. ♠ K Q x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ x x ♣ x x x

What is responder's second bid after 1♠-2♦; 2♥ with:

3. ♠ A x ♥ K J x x ♦ A K J x x ♣ x x

4. ♠ K x ♥ K x x ♦ K Q x x x ♣ K x x

5. ♠ J x x ♥ K x ♦ K Q J 10 x x ♣ Q x

What is responder's second bid after 1♥-2♦; 2NT with:

6. ♠ K Q x ♥ x x ♦ K Q 10 8 x x ♣ K x

7. ♠ A K x ♥ Q x x ♦ A K x x x ♣ K x

What is responder's second bid after 1♥-2NT; 3♣ with:

8. ♠ K Q x ♥ K Q x x ♦ x x x ♣ K J x

Answers

1. 3♠. A "medium" in high-card points, but no diamond help, so reject the game try.
2. 4♠. Enough to accept any game try.
3. 3♥. A stronger raise than a 4♥ signoff.
4. 2NT. Natural, still game forcing. (If opener bids 3♥ next, he has 5-5 shape, and you can raise to 4♥).
5. 4♠. The weakest raise.
6. 3NT. Rebidding the diamonds would show interest in slam or something other than 3NT.
7. 3♥. Set trumps, with RKCB likely to be in the future. Don't jump to 4♥ (minimum).
8. 4♥. The weakest possible bid. Opener's 3♣ response, showing shortness, does nothing for responder's already minimum hand.