



Bidding Basics

BY LARRY COHEN larryco.com

Responder's rebid after an initial response to 2♣

Partner has opened 2♣ and we have responded. What about our second bid? We are assuming the most common method of responding (see the April 2018 issue) where 2♦ is “waiting.” On probably about 90% of the deals, we would have responded 2♦. Let's get the other 10% out of the way first. If we have both 8-plus high-card points and a good five-card or longer suit (two of the top three honors or three of the top five honors), we will have responded in that suit.

After 2♣-2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦: Opener and responder both bid naturally, and we are in a game force. Jumps to game are the weakest actions. For example, after 2♣-2♥; 2♠, notrump bids are

► **Lessons Learned** *continued*
the principle of “fast arrival.”

Jumps to 3NT should have a special understanding. Generally, I like it to show 18-19 balanced. So 1♠-(Pass)-2♣-(Pass); 3NT shows 18-19 balanced and partner can choose whether to go further. This keeps you out of 4NT when you might otherwise have had to do that to make a slam try.

Jumping in opener's suit should show a solid seven-card or longer suit. 1♠-(Pass)-2♣-(Pass); 3♠ doesn't show 16-18, rather it should show a particular “picture” of a hand that wants partner to control bid in support of spades. Typically you'll hold:

♠A K Q J 5 4 3 ♥A 7 ♦8 6 3 ♣5
or something similar.

natural with stoppers in the other suits, and bidding 3♠ is stronger than 4♠ (raising shows at least three-card support).

For example, after 2♣-2♠; 3♦, bid 3♠ with:

♠K Q J 6 3 2 ♥A 7 ♦10 ♣8 7 6 4.

Bid 3NT with:

♠K Q 10 8 5 ♥K 10 3 ♦7 ♣J 10 7 6.

Raise to 4♦ with:

♠A Q 10 5 4 ♥9 2 ♦K Q 8 ♣9 8 3.

Raise to 5♦ with:

♠K Q J 3 2 ♥6 5 ♦Q 3 2 ♣7 6 5.

Responder's second bid after responding 2♦

After 2♣-2♦, responder could have anything. He could have zero points, or he could have a flat 12 (*never* respond in notrump). If opener next bids 2NT, then Stayman and Jacoby transfers apply. The auction continues as if it were a 2NT opening, but the range is now 22-24 HCP. After an unlikely 2♣-2♦; 3NT (25-27), Stayman and Jacoby transfers are still on. So after 2♣-2♦; 2NT, bid 3♣ with:

♠Q 10 8 7 ♥7 ♦Q 8 7 6 ♣7 6 5 2.

Bid 3♦ with:

♠7 6 ♥Q 10 8 7 6 ♦3 2 ♣J 10 8 7.

Raise to 3NT with:

♠Q 5 4 ♥J 5 4 ♦J 6 5 ♣Q 7 6 5

or

♠7 6 5 ♥6 5 ♦5 4 3 ♣K Q 10 7 6.

If opener shows a suit on his second bid (promising five or more), a new suit

by responder would show five or more cards and is game forcing. For example, the sequence 2♣-2♦; 2♠-3♥ shows something like:

♠7 ♥A J 8 6 3 ♦8 7 3 2 ♣7 6 2.

If responder bids notrump at his second turn, it is natural (game forcing). For example, after 2♣-2♦; 2♥, bid 2NT with:

♠J 9 6 4 ♥5 ♦Q 10 5 3 ♣Q 9 5 2.

What about raising opener's suit? If opener shows a suit, a raise would be three-plus card support and game forcing. The most important issue here is raising opener's major. It is important to know that raising to four of a major is weaker than raising to three of the major. 2♣-2♦; 2♥-4♥ is something like:

♠10 3 2 ♥Q 10 4 ♦8 5 ♣J 7 6 5 4.

With 6-7 or more points in support, raise instead to three of opener's major to show some slam interest. Raise to 3♥ after 2♣-2♦; 2♥ with:

♠A 9 2 ♥K 8 6 ♦4 3 ♣Q 8 6 4 2.

There is a conventional follow-up (which occurs once every few years) whereby responder can say he is really broke (0-3). That would be for responder to bid the cheapest minor at his second turn. So 2♣-2♦; 2M-3♣ is artificial and says: “Partner, if you repeat your suit, I might drop you in a partscore.” Note that after 2♣-2♦; 2NT, 3♣ is still Stayman, not the super-bust hand. (With such a hand, responder can simply pass 2NT.)

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

► *continued from pg. 39*

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

1. ♠Q76 ♥AQ7652 ♦K2 ♣76
2. ♠5 ♥KQ1076 ♦KJ765 ♣K2

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

3. ♠QJ87 ♥Q1065 ♦2 ♣7652

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

4. ♠7654 ♥4 ♦8765 ♣5432
5. ♠AJ652 ♥7 ♦7654 ♣542
6. ♠K65 ♥54 ♦J1076 ♣Q765
7. ♠A65 ♥A76 ♦KQ32 ♣432
8. ♠865 ♥Q108 ♦J7652 ♣32

Answers

1. 3♠. Jumping to 4♠ would be weaker. Blackwood and a small or grand slam are likely on the horizon.
2. 3♦. Natural. No reason to do anything else.
3. 3♣. Stayman. Needing 8 HCP for Stayman is associated with 1NT, not here!
4. 3♣. Artificial prelude to showing a bust (you have it). You can (and will) pass if partner bids 3♥. Much as you want to, you are not allowed to pass 2♥.
5. 2♠. Natural, five-plus cards, game forcing.
6. 2NT. Natural, game forcing (fewer than three hearts).
7. 3♥. Stronger than 4♥. No hurry for Blackwood. Set trumps and have a good auction.
8. 4♥. Weak with three-plus card support (less than 6-7 in support).

Pass isn't available to Robinson, who also bids 5♣. "I assume this auction is forcing. I'm bidding 5♣ to give partner a choice. What's forcing or not forcing is not clear, and some might think this auction is not forcing."

Poor Mel, such a pushover. "5♥. Again they've pushed me. I don't think

this is a forcing pass situation, so partner is no doubt limited in high-card points. But:

♠x ♥QJxxx ♦Qxxx ♣Axx
gives us a good shot at 11 tricks. If not, they may be able to take 10." ■