

# Difficult Bids

Points Are Important,  
But They Don't Tell All

# Here's a Hand to Illustrate

West's Hand

♠ A

♥ K 10 9 7 5 4

♦ 9 7 3 2

♣ K 4

North East South West

Pass 1 ♠ 3 ♦ ??

- Whatever you do might be wrong.
- What should you be thinking about?
- What are your options?

# Consider These Two Hands

**Is this an opening bid?**

♠ A J 7  
♥ K Q 9  
♦ Q 7 3 2  
♣ 8 6 4

- 12 points
- No!

**Is this an opening bid?**

♠ K J 7  
♥ Q J 10 9  
♦ Q 7 3 2  
♣ K 6

- 12 points
- Yes!
- 2 4-card suits
- A doubleton
- Intermediates.

# Consider These Two Hands

## Rule of 20+ 2?

♠ A J 10 4 3

♥ 10 2

♦ K Q J 2

♣ 6 4

Rule of 20 + 2 quick tricks  
Points stacked in long suits.

## Rule of 20 + 2?

♠ K 8 7 5 3

♥ A 9

♦ Q 7 3 2

♣ Q 6 4

Rule of 20 but 1 quick trick  
Points not stacked

# Some Difficult Hands Over Partner's 1 No Trump Opening

- There are many systems and conventions that can be used over a 1 no trump opening bid.
- Most of them, I suggest you should avoid.
- However, there are a few worth learning.
- I will show you some examples.

# Partner Opens 1 No Trump

**Invite or pass?**

♠ 8 4 3

♥ 9 7

♦ A Q 10 2

♣ Q 10 9 3

8 points. Should you invite?

No!

**Invite or pass?**

♠ Q 10 3

♥ K J 6

♦ J 10 9 2

♣ J 6 3

8 points. Should you invite?

Yes!

# Bid 2 ♠ - Transfer to a Minor Suit

- What kind of hand will you have?
  - 6+ cards in the minor suit.
  - A hand with 6 or fewer points.
  - When you have a singleton or void and a six-card minor.
  - With 6 or 7 points and no singleton or void, pass. We play matchpoints.
  - If you have 8 points and a 6-card minor, bid 2nt.

# Partner Opens 1 No Trump

## Transfer or Pass?

♠ 8  
♥ A 9 7  
♦ 10 5 2  
♣ Q J 10 9 6 3

Bid 2 ♠!

You have six points, but  
your singleton suggests 3  
clubs is likely to be better.

## Transfer or Pass?

♠ 8 5  
♥ Q 9 4  
♦ A 10 9 7 5 2  
♣ 6 3

Pass!

You have 6 points and a  
relatively balanced hand.  
Making 2nt beats 3  
diamonds.



# Partner Opens 1 No Trump

## Transfer or Pass?

♠ 8 5 3

♥ Q J 7

♦ 2

♣ 10 9 6 5 3 2

Bid 2 ♠!

With only 3 points and a singleton, 3 clubs is likely to be better.

## Transfer or Pass?

♠ 8 5

♥ Q 10 7

♦ K 9

♣ 10 9 6 5 3 2

Pass!

With 5 points, partner has a chance of making 1 nt.

3 clubs is likely down 1 or 2.

# Partner Opens 1 nt, You Have 5-5

♠ A J 10 5 3

♥ K J 7 5 3

♦ 2

♣ 3 2

- With 9+ points and 5-5 in the majors, bid 3 ♠, to show partner a game forcing hand.

♠ A 10 5 4 3

♥ K 9 7 5 3

♦ 2

♣ 3 2

- With this hand, bid 3 ♥, to show a game invitational hand.
- Let partner choose.

# Partner Opens 1 nt, You Have 5-4

♠ A 10 9 5 3  
♥ K J 7 5  
♦ 2  
♣ 5 3 2

- With 8 points and 5-4 in the majors, bid 2 ♣. If partner shows a major, raise to 3, as an invite.
- If partner bids 2 ♦, sign off in your 5-card major.

♠ Q 10 5 4 3  
♥ K 9 7 5  
♦ 2  
♣ 7 3 2

- With a weak hand and 5-4 in the majors, bid 2 ♣.
- If partner bids a major, pass. If partner bids 2 ♦, sign off in your 5-card major.

# In Competitive Auctions

- Some partnerships play weak jump shifts in competition only.
- Others play them in any auction.
- For this lesson, I'm referring only to competitive auctions.
- In competition, a weak jump shift shows:
  - At the 2-level, a 6 card suit and 2-5 points, non-vulnerable.
  - 4-6 points vulnerable.
  - At the 3-level, same points, with a 7-card suit.

# Partner Opens 1 ♠, RHO Bids 2 ♣

♠ 3  
♥ J 7 5  
♦ Q J 9 8 5 3 2  
♣ 5 3

- Bid 3 ♦!.
- 4 points and a 7-card suit.

♠ 3  
♥ J 7 5  
♦ Q J 9 8 5 3  
♣ 8 5 3

- Pass!
- With only 6 cards, you have no bid here.

# Partner Opens 1 ♠, RHO Bids 2 ♣

♠ 9 7 3

♥ 5

♦ Q J 9 8 5 3 2

♣ K 3

- Bid 2 ♠!.
- Forget about diamonds.
- You have 6 points and a fit with partner.

# Partner Opens 1 , RHO Bids 1

♠ Q J 8 6 5 3

♥ J 7 5

♦ 3

♣ 8 5 3

- Bid 2 ♠!
- 4 points and a 6-card suit.

♠ K Q 8 5 4 3

♥ K 7 5

♦ 5 3

♣ 8 5

- Bid 1 ♠!
- You have 8 points.
- If partner shows a minimum hand, bid 2 ♠.
- Partner should pass.

# Balancing: Some Points to Consider

- When an opponent opens a minor suit and it is passed around to you:
  - You may want to pass, thinking that opener has 18 or 19 points.
  - If you have 9 or fewer points and some length in the opener's minor, think about passing.
- Be cautious about balancing with shortness in the unbid majors.
- With length in the unbid majors be bolder.



# Balancing: Some Points to Consider (2)

- With a balanced hand and 11-14 (some play 10 points) balance with 1nt.
- With 15-17 points double first then bid 1no trump.
- 2 no trump in the balancing seat:
  - Some play it as unusual.
  - Some play it as 18 or 19 balanced hand.
- With 20 or 21 double first then bid 2 nt.
- With 16-18 points and a 6-card suit, double first then bid your suit. (note: in the direct seat that bid would be a little stronger hand.)

# 1 ♣... pass... pass

♠ 6 5 3  
♥ A 9 7 5  
♦ 10 9 3  
♣ K 8 6

- Pass
- You have less than 9 points.
- Opener might have a big hand.

♠ A 6 5 3  
♥ Q 10 5  
♦ Q 9 3  
♣ A 10 6

- Bid 1nt!
- You have 12 points.
- You also have a few 10s and 9s.
- You've made your bid. Anything further is up to partner.

# 1 ♦ ... pass... pass

♠ A K J 10 5 3

♥ K Q 5

♦ 9 3

♣ 8 6

- Bid 2 ♠!
- Jump bid shows an intermediate hand,
- With a good 6-card suit.

♠ A K J 10 5 3

♥ K 5

♦ A Q 3

♣ J 6

- Double!
- Then bid ♠.
- Partner will know you have 16+ points, with a good suit.

# A Couple of Final Points About Competitive Auctions

- If they don't have a fit, then you probably don't have a fit.
- Conversely, if they do have a fit, you likely have one too.
- There are exceptions and vulnerability is a factor, but try not to let opponents play a contract below 2 spades.

# More Final Points

- When competing alone (without support from partner) you should either have long suit or a two-suited hand.
  - With a two-suited hand, count losers and deduct one loser. Expect partner to pick it up.
  - With a long suit, count your losers and deduct two. You hope partner can pick them up.
  - You should be more aggressive with a one-suiter.