

The Walsh Club Convention

By Neil H Timm

When opening one club, we have said that the first priority is to bid the major to show 6+ HCP; however, playing the Walsh Club Convention you do not show your **four card major**, but instead when holding a hand with 13+ points (a game forcing hand) and diamonds (at least two), your bid is 1♦* (alert and explained as may be short and forcing for one round). This asks the opener to bid 1NT* (alert since you may have a 4-card major) with a minimum hand, 11-12 HCP; with 13+ points opener bids his 4-card major (hearts or spades). With a 3-3-3-4/3-3-2-5 hand and 13+ point's opener bid is 2♣, this denies a 4-card major. In summary, opener bids: 2♣ (3334/3325) or 1♥ (with 4 hearts or if 4-4 in the majors) or 1♠ (with 4 spades) over 1♦* to show 13+ points. With 3-3-5-2 or 3-3-4-3, opener would bid 2♦ to deny a 4-card major.

If opener bids 1NT* over partners bid of 1♦* it shows an 11-12 point hand. Responder next bids his 4-card major and without a major bids 2♣ with 3-3-3-4/3-3-2-5 shape; or, if responder is 3-3-4-3 or 3-3-5-2 bids 2♦. This asks the opener to bid 2NT.

With a major fit you will play in the major and if not usually play in notrump. The primary advantage of the convention is that you now have a game forcing bid over the bid of 1♣, just like 2♣ clubs is a game forcing bid over 1♦ playing the 2/1 game force convention.

Suppose opener has this hand ♠A872 ♥AK4 ♦83 ♣J1065; and playing the Walsh Club Convention, suppose the auction goes: 1♣-1♦*(alert). Opener will bid 1NT* to show a minimal hand. If partner bids 2♥ you may pass (partner must bid 3♥ to force game in hearts). If partner bids 2♠ you may raise the bid to show a fit. If partner bids 2♣ he is denying a 4-card major. You may bid 3♣ to show a fit. Since partner now knows that you have 11-12 HCP, partner will set the contract.

Holding ♠AK87 ♥AK43 ♦83 ♣K106 opener would bid 1♥ over 1♦* to show 13+ points and four cards in the major. If partner has a four card heart suit he will raise your bid, if he has spades and not hearts he will bid 1♠ and bid 1NT without four spades. This allows you to play in a major or notrump game.

As responder holding ♠AJ875 ♥AK43 ♦83 ♣K10, you would bid 1♠ over the bid of 1♣. This now shows a 5-card major. If partner next bids 2♠ showing a 4-card fit, you must bid 3♠ to show 13+ points. If partner bids 2♥, with less than 13 points, bid only 2♠.

When holding a 5-card major, over the bid of 1♣, if you bid the major: 1♥/1♠; this shows 6+ HCP. After, partner's bid of say 2♣/2♦, to show 13+ HCP jump you must bid at the 3-level of the major suit bid. If partner supports your major suit bid, again invite by bidding at the 3-level. Instead of bidding at the one level with a 5+ card major with 13+ points, some may bid 1♦*. If partner does not bid 1NT, but your major you know immediately that you have game and a fit in the major suit bid. If partner does not support your major, but bids the other major you again

know that he has more than 11-12 HCP and a 4-card major. If he bids 2NT he is showing 13+ points and you probably have a game in notrump.

What happens when they interfere? The convention is OFF. Over a double, a redouble shows 10+ HCP; bidding at the two level also shows 10+ HCP and a 5-card suit unless, you play negative free bids.

How does the Walsh Club Convention affect the inverted minor raise? Clearly, 1♦-2♦ applies as and so does 1♦-3♣; both deny a 4-card major. With clubs, 1♣-2♣ denies a 4-card major with 13+ points and clubs; and 1♣-2♦ shows 10-12 with clubs. 1♣-1♦- now shows 13+ with a 4-card major or perhaps diamonds/clubs.