

How to Continue After Finding a Game Forcing Major Suit Fit at the 2 Level

This may seem like a niche auction, but it comes up frequently enough that I like to have discussed it with my partners. Basically the 4 auctions we are talking about are the following:

1S-2C	1S-2C	1S-2D	1H-2C
2D-2S	2H-2S	2H-2S	2D-2H

Whether you are playing "standard" or "2 over one" these auctions should show a real fit with game forcing values¹.

Using the "principle of fast arrival" the difference between these auctions and jumping to 4M means that you have some thought that slam might be possible. That doesn't take much. Say with at least 2 keycards or 14+ HCP you should probably make this bid rather than jumping to 4M.

Now we are in an enviable position. We know we are going to game and we know that we have a fit. Furthermore, responder knows 9 cards in opener's hand. What opener should now do is take the time to describe the rest of their hand to responder. Using the guiding principle of always describing more of your hand to partner, here's what opener's 3rd bid should show:

- 2N - 2-2 in the unbid suits
- A 3rd suit (partner's or the unbid one) - 3+ cards in the suit
- 3 of the second suit - 5-5 and not 3 cards in another suit
- 3 of the first suit - 6-4 and not 3 cards in another suit

Using these rules you can really help partner know almost your entire shape below 3N.

Let's see this with a specific auction:

1S-2C
2D-2S

2N= 5422
3C= 5043 + 1 more card, so 5044², 5143, 5053 or 6043
3D = 55 and not 3 cards, so 5521, 5512, or longer majors
3H = 5340 + 1 more card, so 5440, 5341, 5350 or 6340
3S = 64 and not 3 cards, so 6421, 6412 or 7+ spades and shorter minors

You can expand on this agreement for specialized meanings for 4C or 4D, but this basic understanding will let you mostly describe your shape to partner and allow them to evaluate their hand better.

¹ With less than game forcing values you should make an immediate raise in standard rather than explore for an alternative contract

² Rare. Likely raise to 3C immediately with this shape.