

LESSON 8

Strong 2♣ Opening



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Strong 2♣ Opening

This lesson covers the strong artificial 2♣ opening, responses, and subsequent auction. It assumes that the participants are familiar with weak two-bids from the previous lesson. Since a 2♣ opening often leads to slam-going auctions, some of the material addresses this issue. It may be a little awkward because slam bidding is not covered in detail until the next course, although some of your students will be familiar with some of the methods. Nonetheless, most of the participants should be familiar with Blackwood. The auctions in which a cuebid is suggested can be skipped, if you don't feel the class can grasp the concept.

The Bidding

The 2♣ opening bid that is recommended is one where the partnership is forced to game on most hands if opener bids a suit after a 2♦ response. The exception is when opener immediately bids the suit again after responder's next bid. **For a basic group, you might simply treat the 2♣ opening as forcing to game unless opener rebids 2NT, but you will have to adjust a couple of the examples.**

The 2♦ response is treated as a waiting bid, rather than a negative response. With more experienced players, you can point out that there are other treatments.

Here are the topics covered:

Opening 2♣ with Strong Unbalanced Hands

This is the introduction to the use of the 2♣ opening. Most players will be familiar with this bid. You can put the emphasis on the type of hand that is opened 2♣. Many players open 2♣ with "good" hands that don't really qualify for a 2♣ opening. While a guideline of 22 or more points is used, the real emphasis should be on trick-taking potential with some defensive values.

Opening 2♣ with Strong Balanced Hands

Lesson 1 introduced the concept of opening 2NT with 20 to 21 points. That can be reemphasized here, now that 2♣ is available for stronger balanced hands. For basic players, you could briefly include a review of the entire structure of opening bids with balanced hands.

Responding to 2♣

The response structure used here is only one of many. It assumes that 8 or more points are required for a positive response. A *good* five-card suit or longer is required for a positive response in a suit. Most responses fall into the 2♦ *waiting* category.

Opener's Rebid

The concept of opening 2♣ with a strong hand is not too difficult but the follow-up is more complex, especially when responder makes a response other than 2♦. Go through this section carefully to make sure that the class is comfortable with this part of the auction.

The Rest of the Auction

This section goes through several examples of the complete auction following a 2♣ opening. If the players are unfamiliar with slam bidding techniques, you can skip those examples. However, the players can probably follow most of the ideas.

The auctions following a 2NT rebid are a good review of the earlier lessons on Stayman and Jacoby transfers.

Handling Interference

The methods recommended are only a few of the many possibilities. Point this out to more experienced players. The important concept is that any agreement is better than no agreement in these situations.

Play & Defense

The deals are all examples of the 2♣ opening bid in action. There's only one slam deal, and it doesn't really require the use of Blackwood.

The deals in this lesson have many challenging play concepts:

- Simple squeeze.
- Trump management.
- Suit establishment.
- Safety play.

The first deal contains an example of a simple squeeze. This is likely to be a completely new concept for the participants. The deal is set up so that players may fall into making the contract if they are observant. The key concept is not to give up when the situation looks hopeless. Take all of your winners and something good might happen. For basic players, an introduction to the concept is enough. For more experienced players, you might want to spend some time looking at the basic position and why it works.

The second deal looks deceptively easy, but requires careful management of the trump suit when there are losers to be ruffed. Most of the declarers are likely to be defeated. Go over the deal carefully, pointing out the importance of planning the sequence of plays.

The third deal involves suit development through promotion, but it may present a challenge to many declarers at this level. Declarer has to spot the opportunity and then handle a side suit correctly to get the necessary entries.

The fourth deal involves a standard safety play in the trump suit. This is a topic that will be quite challenging for inexperienced players. For more experienced players, you can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of safety plays at duplicate bridge.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The previous lesson introduced the concept of weak two-bids and discussed reserving the 2♣ opening for strong hands. This lesson concentrates on the 2♣ opening bid and responses. Since 2♣ openings usually lead to game or slam contracts, they are an exciting part of the game, and you want to emphasize this with the class.

You might start the lesson like this:

“In this lesson, we’ll focus on those big hands you occasionally pick up — the ones where slam is in the air. So, let’s get ready for some excitement. You’ll probably see more big hands in today’s lesson than you’ve seen in most of the games you’ve played in so far.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Opening 2♣ with a Strong Unbalanced Hand

Introduction

“In the last lesson, the concept of the weak two-bid was introduced. Opening bids of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ can be used to show a good six-card suit that doesn’t have enough values for an opening bid at the one level. That’s great — and I hope you’ll decide to add the weak two-bid to your list of conventions — but what do you do when you hold an old-fashioned strong two-bid in hearts? You can’t open with 1♥, since an opening bid of one-of-a-suit is not forcing. And now you can’t open with 2♥ or 3♥ or more, since those are all preemptive bids.

“As you might have guessed, this is why the 2♣ opening was reserved when we discussed weak two-bids. You can open a weak two-bid in diamonds, hearts or spades, but not in clubs. We’ll use 2♣ as a conventional opening bid with all strong hands of about 22 or more points. Let’s see how that works.”

Instructions

“The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit and construct the following hand for South.

“In spades: the ace, the king and a low card.

“In hearts: the ace, the king, the queen, the jack and three low cards.

“In diamonds: a low card.

“In clubs: the ace and the queen.

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣

SOUTH

♠ A K x

♥ A K Q J x x x

♦ x

♣ A Q

“This is the type of hand I like to pick up. 23 high-card points plus 3 length points — a total of 26. You have game in your own hand. Even if partner has nothing, you should take two spade tricks, seven heart tricks and the ♣A.

“**You can’t afford to open 1♥. Why not?** (Not forcing.) Partner could pass 1♥ with a weak hand, and you would miss a game.

“**What’s wrong with opening 4♥ to make sure you get to game?** (Might miss a slam.) First, an opening bid of 4♥ is a preemptive bid, not a strong bid. Partner would expect you to have a good eight-card suit with little strength outside the suit. Second, if you did use 4♥ to show a strong hand, there wouldn’t be much room left to explore slam possibilities. On this

hand, you don't need much from partner to make a slam. As little as the ♣K might be enough.

“So, what do you open? (2♣.) You use 2♣ as a strong, artificial, opening bid. It says nothing about clubs. It says you have a hand too strong to open at the one level.

“What's the one thing partner can't do when you open 2♣? (Pass.) 2♣ is artificial (conventional) and forcing, so partner can't pass. We'll look at how you respond to 2♣ in a moment, but, for now, assume partner bids something.

“How will you describe this hand? (Bid hearts.) You'll show the heart suit on the rebid. That way, you'll be telling partner that you have a strong two-bid in hearts. The heart rebid also will be forcing. It's as if you had opened with a strong 2♥ bid.

“Of course, not all hands will be quite this strong. Sometimes you can't wait until you have game in your own hand before opening a strong two-bid.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In hearts: take away the jack and a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

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NORTH	SOUTH				
	2♣				

“What would you do with this hand as dealer? (2♣.) This hand isn't as strong as the previous hand. There's no guarantee that you can make game if partner has nothing. You might even struggle to take more than seven or eight tricks, if you can't find a suitable trump fit. Still, you do have 22 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit. You don't need much from partner to make game. A well-located king or queen might be enough. If you open 1♥, partner will pass with fewer than 6 points, and you could miss a game. Instead, take your chances and open 2♣.

“The basic guideline for opening 2♣ is a hand worth 22 or more points. That's only a guideline, however. The real criterion is whether you think you'll miss a game, if you open at the one level and partner can't scrape up a response.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the jack.

“In hearts: take away the ace and a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♠

SOUTH
 ♠ A K J x x
 ♥ K Q x
 ♦ x
 ♣ A Q x x

“**What would you open with this hand? (1♠.)** This is a strong hand, but not strong enough for an opening 2♣ bid. There are 19 high-card points plus 1 for the five-card suit. Open 1♠. If partner doesn’t have enough to respond, you probably won’t miss a game. Even taking five or six tricks might be a challenge if partner has nothing. Of course, if partner does have enough to respond, make sure the partnership gets to game.

“Even with a hand containing 22 points or more, it’s not always a good idea to open 2♣.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the jack.

“In hearts: add the ace.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♣

SOUTH
 ♠ A K x x
 ♥ A K Q x
 ♦ x
 ♣ A Q x x

“This hand has 22 high-card points, but many players would open 1♣ rather than 2♣. Hands with 4–4–4–1 distribution don’t always play very well if you can’t find a suitable fit. In addition, if you do open 2♣, you’re going to have a difficult time describing this hand on your rebid. It’s an unbalanced hand, but you don’t have a good five-card or longer suit. Will you tell partner you have a strong opening bid in hearts or in spades ... or in clubs? Better to open 1♣. If partner can’t respond, maybe the opponents will bid and give you a chance to show your strength. If partner does respond, you’ll be better placed to determine the best contract.

“On the other hand, with good distribution, you don’t need 22 or more points all of the time to open 2♣.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the queen and the ten.

“In clubs: take away the ace and the queen.

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q 10 x x
 ♥ A K Q x
 ♦ x
 ♣ x x

“What about this hand? (2♣/1♠.) Only 18 high-card points plus 2 points for the six-card spade suit, but most players would open this hand 2♣. You don’t need much in partner’s hand to make a game.

“Construct a hand for North with no high cards.

“In spades: three low cards.

“In hearts: three low cards.

“In diamonds: four low cards.

“In clubs: three low cards.

NORTH ♠ x x x ♥ x x x ♦ x x x x ♣ x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">NORTH</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH		2♣	SOUTH ♠ A K Q 10 x x ♥ A K Q x ♦ x ♣ x x
NORTH	SOUTH					
	2♣					

“Would North say anything but ‘pass’ if South opened 1♠? (No.) Certainly not. North wouldn’t dream of saying anything.

“Yet how many tricks is South likely to take? (10.) If the spades aren’t 4–0, South should get six spade tricks and three heart tricks for sure. South will get a 10th trick if the hearts divide 3–3 or if South can ruff a heart in the dummy. In fact, if the defenders’ spades divide 2–2, South will take 10 tricks, since there will be a trump left in dummy to ruff the heart loser.

“So, you can see why you would want to open the South hand with a strong forcing bid of 2♣, even though it doesn’t satisfy the requirements on point count alone.

“Contrast this with the earlier 22–point hand for South.

“In spades: take away the queen and the ten.

“In clubs: add the ace and the queen.

NORTH ♠ x x x ♥ x x x ♦ x x x x ♣ x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">NORTH</td> <td style="text-align: center; width: 50%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♣</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH		1♣	SOUTH ♠ A K x x ♥ A K Q x ♦ x ♣ A Q x x
NORTH	SOUTH					
	1♣					

“You have more high-card points, but how high would you like to be? (One level.) If you get much beyond the one level, you may be in trouble. If you bid 1♣ and partner passes, you’re in as good a contract as any.”

Summary

“With an unbalanced hand, the opening bid of 2♣ shows a hand of about 22 or more points or a strong playing hand that can take nine or more tricks.”

Opening 2♣ with a Strong Balanced Hand

Introduction

“The 2♣ opening can be used with strong balanced hands as well as unbalanced hands. In our first lesson, it was mentioned briefly that most players use a range of 20 or 21 points for an opening bid of 2NT when they play weak two-bids. That’s because balanced hands of 22 or more points can be opened 2♣.”

Instructions

“Turn the cards in the North hand face down for the moment, and rearrange the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the king.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

NORTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣
	2NT

SOUTH
 ♠ A K x x
 ♥ A Q x
 ♦ A x
 ♣ A Q x x

“**How much is this hand worth?** (23 points.) There are 23 high-card points.

“**What will you open the bidding?** (2♣.) The hand is too strong for an opening bid of 2NT if you use a range of 20 or 21 points.

“**What do you plan to rebid after partner’s response?** (2NT.) Opening 2♣ and rebidding 2NT shows a balanced hand of 22 to 24 points. Of course, you won’t always get to rebid 2NT, depending on what partner responds, but that’s the basic plan.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the king.

NORTH	SOUTH
Pass	3NT

SOUTH
 ♠ A K x
 ♥ A Q x
 ♦ A K x
 ♣ A Q x x

“**What would be your opening bid with this hand?** (3NT.) There are 26 high-card points, so start with 3NT.”

You can skip the following examples with an experienced group, but they might serve as a useful review for a more basic class.

“Now you have a way of handling any balanced hand. Let’s take a moment to review the complete structure.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and add a low card.

“In hearts: take away the ace and add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the ace and add a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1 ♣

SOUTH

♠ K x x

♥ Q x x

♦ K x x

♣ A Q x x

“**What would you open with this hand?** (1 ♣.) With a balanced hand too weak to open the bidding 1NT, open one-of-a-suit, planning to rebid notrump at the cheapest available level.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1NT

SOUTH

♠ K Q x

♥ Q x x

♦ K x x

♣ A Q x x

“**What’s your opening bid with this hand?** (1NT.) With a balanced hand of 15 to 17 points, open 1NT. This hand has 16 high-card points.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1 ♣

SOUTH

♠ K Q x

♥ K Q x

♦ K x x

♣ A Q x x

“**Now what do you open?** (1 ♣.) This hand has 19 high-card points. With a balanced hand of 18 or 19 points — too strong to open 1NT but not strong enough to open 2NT — open one-of-a-suit, planning to jump in notrump at the next opportunity. For example, 1 ♣–1 ♦–2NT.

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

“In clubs: add the jack.

NORTH	SOUTH
	2NT

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q x
 ♥ K Q x
 ♦ K x
 ♣ A Q J x x

“**What about this hand?** (2NT.) There are 20 high-card points plus 1 point for the five-card suit. With 5–3–3–2 distribution, the hand is still balanced. Open 2NT with a balanced hand and 20 or 21 HCP.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts; take away a low card and add the ace.

“In diamonds: take away the king and add the jack.

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q x
 ♥ A K Q
 ♦ J x
 ♣ A Q J x x

“**What’s the opening bid?** (2♣.) With a balanced hand and 22 to 24 points, open 2♣, intending to rebid 2NT. There are 22 high-card points in this hand plus 1 length point for the five-card suit. The hand is balanced, since there is no void, no singleton and no more than one doubleton.

“**Are you worried about the diamonds?** (Yes.) So am I, but that shouldn’t prevent you from treating it as a balanced hand. There was a time when you needed stoppers in all four suits for a notrump bid, but that notion has lost support over the years. If you open 2♣, planning to rebid 3♣ over partner’s response, you will be showing an unbalanced hand. You’re free to use your judgment on any given hand, but the modern guideline is to treat this as a balanced hand.

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q x
 ♥ A K Q
 ♦ K J
 ♣ A Q J x x

“How do you plan to describe this hand? (2♣ followed by 3NT.) With a balanced hand of 25 high-card points and a five-card suit, open 2♣, planning to jump to 3NT on your rebid. That shows a balanced hand of 25 to 27 HCP.

“So, you have the general idea for opening a balanced hand of any strength. Just to test that out, change the South hand again.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH	
	2♣	

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q x
 ♥ A K Q
 ♦ A K J
 ♣ A Q J x

“If you are ever lucky enough to pick up a hand like this, what would you do? (2♣ followed by 4NT.) With 29 high-card points, you would start with 2♣, intending to jump to 4NT on your rebid. That shows a hand too strong to rebid 3NT — a hand with about 28 to 30 HCP. If you keep picking up hands like this, you should start playing the game for high stakes, not just for fun!”

You might leave this final example for experienced players only. If you skip the review examples, you will need to construct this hand from scratch.

“Since you now have a way of showing any balanced hand with 22 or more points by opening 2♣, what does an opening bid of 3NT show? It used to show a balanced hand of 25 to 27 points, but that hand is covered by opening 2♣ and jumping to 3NT. 3NT can be put to some fancy conventional uses. The most common approach is to use an opening bid of 3NT to show a hand which doesn’t have 25 to 27 high-card points, but is a hand on which you think you can make 3NT, because you have a long solid suit. For example ...

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the king (or reconstruct the whole hand.)

“In hearts: take away the ace and the queen and add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the king.

“In clubs: add the king and two low cards.

NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH ♠ Q x ♥ K x ♦ A J ♣ A K Q J x x x
	3NT	

“Some players would open this hand 3NT. You expect to take at least the ♦ A and seven club tricks. If you can find one more trick, you’ll make 3NT. If the defenders lead a heart, for example, and you get a trick with the ♥ K, you’ll have nine tricks even if partner has no help for you. It’s a bit of a gamble, however. The defenders might be able to take a lot of spade tricks — and perhaps a lot of heart tricks after that if the ♥ A is unfavorably placed. They may make nine tricks before you do! That’s why this bid is called a gambling 3NT opening. You might need a little help in partner’s hand — such as the ♠ J — but it’s a worthwhile chance to get the game bonus.

“Some players take this a little further and open 3NT with fewer high cards outside the long suit. There are lots of different styles, so you may want to discuss this with partner before trying it out.”

Summary

“With a balanced hand and 22 or more high-card points, open 2♣.

- With 22 to 24 HCP, you plan to rebid 2NT;
- With 25 to 27 HCP, you plan to rebid 3NT.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise One – Strong Opening Bids

What is your opening call with each of the following hands?

1) ♠ K Q 9 4
♥ A K Q 10 8 4
♦ A K
♣ J

2) ♠ A K J 4
♥ K 3
♦ A J 10 8
♣ A K 9

3) ♠ K J 9 5 3
♥ A K J 6
♦ A 4
♣ Q J

Exercise One Answer – Strong Opening Bids

- 1) 2♣. You plan to show the heart suit on your rebid.
- 2) 2♣. You plan to rebid 2NT.
- 3) 1♠. This hand is a little short of a strong opening two-bid.

Responding to 2♣

Introduction

“Now that you know what a 2♣ opening bid looks like, let’s turn our attention to responder. You need to know what to do when partner opens 2♣.”

Instructions

“Pick up all of the cards in the South hand and turn the North hand face up on the table.”

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH
♠ x x x	2♦	2♣
♥ x x x		
♦ x x x x		
♣ x x x		

You may need to get the class to lay out the North hand, if it’s not available from the earlier discussion.

“This is probably more typical of the type of hand you pick up at the bridge table. Perhaps you even like to get this type of hand, since you won’t have any tough decisions to make during the auction — or the play, for that matter.

“There are times when you have to make decisions with hands like this. I’m your partner, South, and I open the bidding 2♣. West passes, and it’s your turn to bid.

“What are you going to do? (Pass/2♦/2NT?)

“What’s the one thing you can’t do? (Pass.) The 2♣ bid doesn’t say anything about clubs. It’s artificial, and it’s a forcing bid. So, you can’t pass. When playing strong two-bids, the negative response was to bid 2NT. Over an artificial 2♣, however, you bid 2♦ with a weak hand. It doesn’t say anything about diamonds. It’s an artificial bid, like the 2♣ opening. It just sends the message that you don’t have enough for a positive response.

“Why do you think a response of 2♦ is used with a weak hand, rather than 2NT? (Leaves opener more room to describe the hand.) Opener hasn’t yet described the hand. All the 2♣ opening bid says is that opener has a strong hand. Responding 2♦ leaves the maximum amount of room for opener to further describe the hand. For example, opener can now bid 2♥ or 2♠ to show a strong two-bid in a major suit, or 2NT to show a strong balanced hand.

“In fact, 2♦ is such a useful response that you don’t use it only with weak hands. You respond 2♦ with most hands. The 2♦ response is called a *waiting* bid, rather than a negative response. You are waiting to see what opener has to say.

“There are a couple of situations in which you don’t make the automatic

response of 2♦. The first is when you have a good five-card or longer suit of your own and 8 or more points.

“Let’s look at an example. Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add the king and the queen.

“In diamonds: take away three low cards.

“In clubs: add the king.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH
♠ x x x	2♥	2♣
♥ K Q x x x		
♦ x		
♣ K x x x		

“**There are 8 high-card points. What do you know for sure?** (Headed for game.) Since 2♣ shows a hand worth 22 or more points, the partnership is headed for at least game. In fact, you must be close to a slam, since there are at least 30 combined points. In this situation, you want to make a positive response and tell opener about your suit. Since there is so much combined strength, you don’t have to worry about getting the partnership too high before opener has had an opportunity to describe the hand.

“The partnership should agree on the meaning of a *good* suit for a positive response. A typical agreement is that a good suit is a five-card suit containing two of the top three honors or any six-card or longer suit. Here, the heart suit qualifies. It’s only five cards long but it contains the ♥K and ♥Q, two of the top three honors.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the king.

“In hearts: take away the king and add a low card.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH
♠ K x x	2♦	2♣
♥ Q x x x x		
♦ x		
♣ K x x x		

“Here you have enough strength for a positive response, but your heart suit isn’t very good. It’s only five-cards long and has only one honor. Rather than respond 2♥, you can make a waiting response of 2♦. After hearing about opener’s hand, you’ll be in a better position to know where your side is headed.

“Remember, opener will have one of two types of hands: either a strong balanced hand, or a strong unbalanced hand. If opener has a strong balanced hand, opener will rebid in notrump, and you can then start looking for a heart fit. We’ll talk more about that later. If opener has an unbalanced hand, then opener probably has a strong suit to show. Opener is unlikely to be interested

in a weak suit in your hand. That's why you usually make a waiting bid when you have an unbalanced hand without a good five-card suit.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In hearts: add a low card.

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NORTH	SOUTH										
♠ K x	2♣										
♥ Q x x x x x											
♦ x											
♣ K x x x											

“Now you have a six-card suit. What would you respond over 2♣? (2♥.)

With 8 or more points and a six-card or longer suit, you can give a positive response in the long suit. Even if partner has an unbalanced hand — with a lot of diamonds, for example — hearts might be the best trump suit. Partner might have ♥A K or ♥A J, for example. If partner has a balanced hand, it is almost certain that hearts will make the best trump suit.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away the queen and three low cards.

“In diamonds: add the ace, the queen and three low cards.

“In clubs: take away the king.

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♠ K x	2♣										
♥ x x											
♦ A Q x x x x											
♣ x x x											

“What would you respond with this hand if partner opened 2♣? (3♦.)

Since 2♦ would be a waiting bid, saying nothing about the hand, you have to jump to 3♦ to show a positive response with a good diamond suit. This is a little awkward, so you should have a good hand and a good suit to take up this much bidding room. If the diamonds weren't this good, you could start with a waiting response of 2♦.

“There's one other type of positive response that responder can make.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add the queen.

“In diamonds: take away the ace and a low card.

“In clubs: add the queen.

NORTH	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">NORTH</td> <td>SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♠ K x</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ Q x x</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ Q x x x</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ Q x x x</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	♠ K x	2♣	♥ Q x x		♦ Q x x x		♣ Q x x x	
NORTH	SOUTH										
♠ K x	2♣										
♥ Q x x											
♦ Q x x x											
♣ Q x x x											

“With a balanced hand and 9 high-card points, what do you think you can respond? (2NT.) A response of 2NT shows 8 or more high-card points and a balanced hand. There’s no need to jump to game with a strong balanced hand, since the positive response already commits the partnership to the game level.

“The 2NT response takes up bidding room before opener has made a descriptive rebid. Some partnerships prefer to restrict the 2NT response to a narrow range, usually a balanced hand of 8 to 10 points with no aces and scattered high cards. This hand would fit those criteria.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In hearts: add three low cards.

“In diamonds: take away the queen and a low card.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH
♠ x	2♦	2♣
♥ Q x x x x x		
♦ x x		
♣ Q x x x		

“Partner opens 2♣. What would you respond with this hand? (2♦.) With only 4 high-card points, this hand doesn’t qualify for a positive response. Make the waiting response of 2♦. You’ll have plenty of time to show the heart suit later in the auction.”

Summary

“When partner opens the bidding 2♣:

- Responder usually makes a waiting response of 2♦. The 2♦ response may be based on a weak hand, but it is used also when responder has a good hand that is unsuitable for an immediate positive response.
- With 8 or more points, responder can make an immediate response of 2NT with a balanced hand or bid a good five-card or longer suit. If the suit is diamonds, responder will have to jump to 3♦.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Two — Responding to 2♣

What do you respond with each of the following hands when partner opens the bidding 2♣ and the next player passes?

1) ♠ 9 8 7 4
♥ J 8 6 5 2
♦ 8 3
♣ 7 4

2) ♠ J 5
♥ A Q J 8 3
♦ 8 7 6 3
♣ 9 4

3) ♠ K 2
♥ 9 5 4
♦ A J 10 8 6 3
♣ 7 2

4) ♠ Q 9 3
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ Q J 4
♣ J 5 4

5) ♠ 6
♥ J 7 6 5 3
♦ K 8 5
♣ A 8 7 4

6) ♠ Q 9 7 5 4 2
♥ 8 3
♦ J 6 2
♣ 5 3

Exercise Two Answer— Responding to 2♣

- 1) 2♦. Make the waiting response of 2♦.
- 2) 2♥. Make a positive response of 2♥.
- 3) 3♦. A response of 2♦ would be a waiting bid.
- 4) 2NT. A positive response with 8 or more points and no good five-card suit.
- 5) 2♦. This hand is good enough for a positive response, but your five-card suit is too weak.
- 6) 2♦. You don't have enough for a positive response.

Opener's Rebid

Introduction

“Now that you’ve looked at responder’s initial action, let’s move back across the table and look at opener’s second bid. Remember, except for announcing a strong hand of 22 or more points, opener still hasn’t described anything about the distribution. It’s a good thing that responder usually bids 2♦. Not much bidding room has been used up to this point.”

Instructions

“Turn the cards in the North hand face down. We’ll return to this hand in a moment.

“In front of South, construct the following hand.

“In spades: the ace, the king, the queen, and three low cards.

“In hearts: the ace.

“In diamonds: two low cards.

“In clubs: the ace, the king, the jack and a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣	♠ A K Q x x x
	2♠	♥ A
		♦ x x
		♣ A K J x

“I told you there would be a lot of nice hands today.

“**You’re the dealer. How are you going to start?** (2♣.) Start with the artificial (conventional) opening 2♣ bid.

“**What’s partner going to respond most of the time?** (2♦.) Partner usually will make the artificial waiting response of 2♦. Let’s assume that’s what happens.

“**What do you do now?** (2♠.) It’s time to describe the hand by rebidding 2♠.

“Notice how economical the bidding is to this point. You haven’t lost any bidding room by using the 2♣ opening. If you were playing strong two-bids, you would have opened 2♠. Now you can play weak two-bids and still show a strong 2♠ opening by using the conventional 2♣ opening.

“When the 2♣ opener rebids a suit, that is still a forcing bid. Responder can’t pass. It’s as though you opened with a strong 2♠ bid. So there’s no need to jump to game at this point. Wait to see what responder has to say.

There still could be enough combined strength for slam.

“With an unbalanced hand, you’ll generally show your long suit, even if responder bids something other than 2♦.

“**Suppose responder bids 2♥, for example. What would you rebid?** (2♠.) You would still show your long suit. The only difference is that the partnership is committed to at least the game level, and the likelihood of reaching a slam contract has increased.

“**What if partner responded 2NT to the strong 2♣ opening?** (3♠.) Opener can show the long suit by bidding 3♠. Once the trump suit is established, the partnership can go in search of a slam contract.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣
	2♠

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q x x
 ♥ A
 ♦ x x
 ♣ A K J x x

“**What do you bid?** (2♣.) You still have more than enough to open 2♣.

“**Suppose partner responds 2♦. What do you rebid?** (2♠.) With a choice of five-card suits, bid the higher-ranking. It’s the same as opening the bidding — start with the higher-ranking of two five-card or six-card suits. You can show the club suit at your next opportunity. Remember that partner can’t pass the 2♠ bid. The auction is forcing.

“You would make the same bid if partner makes a positive response of 2♥. If partner responds 2NT or 3♦, you would have to start showing your suits by bidding 3♠.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣
	3♣

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q x
 ♥ A
 ♦ x x
 ♣ A K J x x x

“**Again you start with 2♣. What do you do when partner responds 2♦?** (3♣.) You have to show your club suit at the three level. Start with the longest suit. Remember, the strong 2♣ opening bid didn’t say anything about clubs. It was totally artificial (conventional).

“This is a disadvantage of the artificial 2♣ opening. With a strong hand containing a long minor suit, you’re at the three level before describing the hand. Playing strong two-bids, you would open this hand 2♣, but that would show the long club suit right away. However, that’s the price you pay for using weak two-bids.

“If partner made a positive response of 2♥, you would start describing this hand by rebidding 3♣, but it’s a little awkward if partner were to respond 2NT to the strong 2♣ opening. After a 2NT response, most partnerships play that 3♣ is the Stayman convention, asking for a four-card major. That’s okay. You can bid 3♣. If partner responds 3♦, showing no major, or 3♥, showing a four-card heart suit, you can bid 4♣, telling partner you really have clubs. You might get a bonus, however. If partner bids 3♠, showing a four-card spade suit, you don’t have to mention the clubs at all. You can go looking for slam in the eight-card spade fit.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: add the king.

“In clubs: take away two low cards.

NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣ 2NT	♠ A K Q x ♥ A x ♦ K x x ♣ A K J x

“What do you do with this hand after opening 2♣ and getting a 2♦ response from partner? (2NT.)

“How many points do you have? (24.) The rebid of 2NT shows a balanced hand of 22 to 24 HCP. This is not a forcing bid. You’ve limited your hand to at most 24 points. This is different from the previous examples where you rebid a suit to show an unbalanced hand. Then you were still unlimited in strength, so responder had to keep the bidding going. The 2NT rebid limits your hand. With a very weak hand, responder can pass.

“What if responder made a positive response of 2♥ over your 2♣ bid? (2NT.) Without three-card support for hearts, you can make the descriptive rebid of 2NT. There’s a difference now, however. Partner can’t pass the 2NT rebid. The partnership is forced to at least the game level once responder makes a positive response. You’re merely describing the hand. It’s now up to partner to decide whether to move toward a slam.

“Suppose responder bids 2NT over your 2♣ bid. Now what? (3♣.) As discussed on the previous hand, a bid of 3♣ by you at this point is the Stayman convention. That’s a good choice with this hand. You’ll discover whether the partnership has an eight-card spade fit. Then you’ll want to at least try for slam, or perhaps bid it. Partner has 8 or more points, and you have 24 — there’s at least 32 combined points.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
2♦	2♣ 3NT	♠ A Q x ♥ A x ♦ A K x x ♣ A K J x

“**What’s your rebid with this hand after opening 2♣ and hearing partner respond 2♦?** (3NT.) A jump to 3NT shows a balanced hand and 25 to 27 points. Here you have 25 points. Don’t raise diamonds. Partner’s 2♦ response is artificial and says nothing about diamonds.

“**What would you do if partner responded 2♠?** (3♠.) That’s a positive response showing a good five-card or longer suit. Raise to 3♠, agreeing to spades as the trump suit. Now the partnership can go in search of a grand slam. There must be at least a small slam based on the combined strength.”

Summary

“If responder bids 2♦ following partner’s strong 2♣ opening bid, opener proceeds to describe the hand:

- Opener rebids the long suit with an unbalanced hand;
- Opener rebids 2NT with a balanced hand and 22 to 24 points;
- With 25 to 27 points, opener would start with 3NT.
- Opener rebids 3NT with a balanced hand and 28 to 30 points.

“If responder makes a positive response:

- Opener makes the planned descriptive rebid or raises with a fit for responder’s suit.
- The only wrinkle is when responder bids 2NT. A 3♣ rebid by opener is now the Stayman convention.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Three — Rebids after 2♣

As West, what would you rebid with each of the following hands after the auction starts:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
?			
1) ♠ A Q 10 7 5 ♥ A K Q J 3 ♦ 7 ♣ A Q _____	2) ♠ — ♥ A K Q 3 ♦ A K J 10 4 2 ♣ K Q 4 _____	3) ♠ A Q ♥ K Q 8 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ K Q 10 6 2 _____	
4) ♠ A ♥ A K Q J 10 7 5 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ A 3 _____	5) ♠ K J ♥ A K Q ♦ A K J 3 ♣ K Q J 5 _____	6) ♠ A Q 9 6 ♥ A ♦ A K 8 4 ♣ A Q 10 3 _____	

Exercise Three Answer — Rebids after 2♣

- 1) 2♠. Bid the higher-ranking suit first. Show the hearts on the next round.
- 2) 3♦. Bid the longer suit first. When you later bid hearts, partner will know you have longer diamonds.
- 3) 2NT. This shows a balanced hand with 22 to 24 points.
- 4) 2♥. There's no need to jump. The 2♥ rebid is forcing.
- 5) 3NT. This shows a balanced hand with 25 to 27 points.
- 6) 2NT. Awkward. The hand isn't balanced, but there's no five-card suit to bid. Treat the hand as balanced ... and hope for the best!

The Rest of the Auction

Introduction

“The auction can branch off in many directions once opener has made a descriptive rebid. If responder has made a positive response, the partnership is probably on the way to slam. If responder has made a waiting bid of 2♦, the partnership may be searching for the best game. If opener bids a suit after the 2♦ response, the partnership is forced to the game level, unless opener immediately bids the suit again after responder’s next bid. If opener shows a balanced hand, the partnership uses the same methods that it would use over an opening notrump bid — the Jacoby transfer, for example.

“Let’s look at some examples of the complete auction.”

Instructions

“Turn up the cards in the North hand and change the South hand.

“In spades: add the jack.

“In clubs: take away the king.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x</p> <p>♥ Q x x x x x</p> <p>♦ x x</p> <p>♣ Q x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♦	2♣	3♦	2NT	4♥	3♥		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J x</p> <p>♥ A x</p> <p>♦ A K x x</p> <p>♣ A J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH											
2♦	2♣											
3♦	2NT											
4♥	3♥											
	Pass											

“South is the dealer. Discuss with the others at your table how you think the auction would proceed on this hand. (2♣–2♦–2NT–3♦–3♥–4♥–Pass.)

“**How strong is the South hand?** (23 points.) South has a balanced hand with 23 high-card points. That’s too strong to open 2NT, so South starts with 2♣.

“**What does North respond?** (2♦.) With 4 high-card points, North doesn’t have enough to make a positive response in hearts. Instead, North makes the waiting bid of 2♦. North is probably expecting South to show a strong two-bid in spades.

“**What does South rebid?** (2NT.) South rebids 2NT to show a balanced hand of 22 to 24 points.

“**What does North do now?** (3♦/4♥.) After the 2NT rebid, the partnership uses the same methods it would use over an opening bid of 2NT.

“**Where does North want to play the hand?** (4♥.) North has 4 high-card points plus 2 length points. That’s enough to put the partnership in a game

contract. North also knows the partnership has at least an eight-card heart fit.

“If the partnership uses Jacoby transfers, North bids 3♦. What does South do? (3♥.) South accepts the transfer by bidding 3♥.

“Now what does North do? (4♥.) North now puts the partnership in game in hearts. 4♥ is a good contract.

“If the partnership doesn’t play Jacoby transfers, North would simply jump to 4♥. North would be the declarer, and the strong hand would be on the table. That shouldn’t matter too much on this hand.”

If some of the more experienced players are familiar with Texas transfers, you can mention that North could jump to 4♦ to transfer to 4♥. (Using a Jacoby transfer and then raising to game is treated as a slam try by most partnerships when the Texas transfer is available.)

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the king.

“In hearts: take away the queen.

NORTH ♠ K x ♥ x x x x x ♦ x x ♣ Q x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♦	2♣	3♦	2NT	3NT	3♥		Pass	SOUTH ♠ A Q J x ♥ A x ♦ A K x x ♣ A J x
NORTH	SOUTH											
2♦	2♣											
3♦	2NT											
3NT	3♥											
	Pass											

“Discuss with the others at your table how the auction would proceed this time. (2♣–2♦–2NT–3♦–3♥–3NT–Pass.)

“What would South open? (2♣).

“What would North respond? (2♦). North doesn’t have enough for a positive response and would make a waiting bid of 2♦.

“What would South rebid? (2NT). South rebids 2NT to show a balanced hand.

“What does North do now? (3♦.) Playing Jacoby transfers, North shows the five-card heart suit by bidding 3♦.

“South accepts the transfer by bidding 3♥. What does North do next? (3NT.) With only a five-card heart suit, North bids 3NT, asking opener to choose between 3NT and 4♥.

“What does South do? (Pass.) With a doubleton heart, South would pass 3NT, and the partnership arrives at the best contract. If South held three or four hearts, South would go to 4♥.

“If the partnership isn’t using Jacoby transfers, the auction would still start 2♣–2♦–2NT, but now North would bid a natural 3♥, showing a five-card suit. With only two hearts, South would bid 3NT and reach the same spot.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add two low cards.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

“In clubs: take away the queen.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K x x x</p> <p>♥ x x x x</p> <p>♦ x x</p> <p>♣ x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♦	2♣	3♣	2NT	4♠	3♠		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J x</p> <p>♥ A x</p> <p>♦ A K x x</p> <p>♣ A J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH											
2♦	2♣											
3♣	2NT											
4♠	3♠											
	Pass											

“Discuss with the others at your table how the auction would proceed this time. (2♣–2♦–2NT–3♣–3♠–4♠–Pass.)

“The auction would begin the same way. South would open 2♣, North would make the waiting response of 2♦ and South would rebid 2NT.

“**Does North have to bid after the 2NT rebid?** (No.) The 2NT rebid is not forcing, since it limits opener’s hand to a maximum of 24 points. North can pass with a very weak hand.

“**Does North have enough to take the partnership to game?** (Yes/No.) It’s borderline. Since South has 22 to 24 points, the partnership has a combined total of 25 to 27 points. That’s in the game range, so North will probably take a chance.

“**What should North bid over 2NT?** (3♣.) North can use the Stayman convention to look for an eight-card major suit fit on the way to game.

“**When North bids 3♣, what does South do?** (3♠.) South shows the four-card spade suit.

“**What does North do?** (4♠.) North raises to game in the eight-card fit. 4♠ is an excellent contract on these two hands — far better than 3NT.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away three low cards and add the queen.

“In diamonds: add the jack.

“In clubs: add the queen.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K x x x</p> <p>♥ Q x</p> <p>♦ J x x</p> <p>♣ Q x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2NT	2♣	3♠	3♣	Pass	4♠	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J x</p> <p>♥ A x</p> <p>♦ A K x x</p> <p>♣ A J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2NT	2♣									
3♠	3♣									
Pass	4♠									

“Discuss how the auction might go this time. Be careful, this one’s a little trickier. (2♣–2NT–3♣–3♠–4♠–Pass.)

“**South starts with 2♣. What does North respond?** (2NT.) With 8 high-card points and a balanced hand, North can respond 2NT, rather than the waiting bid of 2♦.

“**What does South do?** (3♣.) South can now use the Stayman convention to check for a major suit fit by bidding 3♣. North bids 3♠ to show the four-card spade suit, and South raises to game. With only 8 points, North has nothing extra to show, and the partnership stops in the best contract.

“Again, the strong hand is the dummy. Some partnerships prefer to play 2♦ as a waiting bid even with the North hand. South would rebid 2NT, and North would Stayman leaving South as declarer.

“Modify the hands and see what happens when opener has an unbalanced hand.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In hearts: take away the queen and add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add two low cards.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x x x</p> <p>♥ x x x</p> <p>♦ J x x</p> <p>♣ x x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♦	2♣	2NT	2♠	3♠	3♦	Pass	4♠	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J x x x</p> <p>♥ A</p> <p>♦ A K x x</p> <p>♣ A J</p>
NORTH	SOUTH											
2♦	2♣											
2NT	2♠											
3♠	3♦											
Pass	4♠											

“South is the dealer. Discuss how the auction would proceed. (2♣–2♦–2♠–2NT–3♦–3♠–4♠–Pass.)

“**What would South open?** (2♣.) South has 23 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit. South would start with 2♣.

“**What would North respond?** (2♦.) North can’t pass, so North makes the artificial waiting response of 2♦.

“**What does South bid now?** (2♠.) South shows the spade suit.

“**Can North pass?** (No.) The situation is the same as if South had opened with a strong 2♠ bid. North can’t pass, because partner’s hand is unlimited.

“**What does North bid?** (2NT/3♠/4♠.) There are a number of ways that North can show a very weak hand at this point. Most partnerships use a bid of 2NT by responder to show this type of hand. It says, ‘Partner, don’t count on me for any help.’ That’s what we’ll use here. Although you have some trump

support, a raise to 3♠ would show a little something and would encourage partner to look for a slam. That's not what you want on this hand."

With a more experienced class, you can refer the students to using the cheaper minor as a second negative found in the Appendix of the student text. You also could mention the immediate jump to 4♠. That shows trump support but no aces, kings, singletons or voids. Responder usually should have four-card support to make this bid. Unless the partnership plays the 2♠ rebid as forcing to game, responder should make a negative bid at this point, hoping opener rebids 3♠ and the partnership can stop in partscore.

"After North bids 2NT, what does South do? (3♦.) South should show the second suit by bidding 3♦. It's possible that North has a singleton or void in spades and a string of diamonds. Diamonds could be the best trump suit. Also, a new suit is forcing to game. Most partnerships play that a rebid of 3♠ at this point would not be forcing. South has too much to stop short of a game contract.

"What does North do after the 3♦ bid by partner? (3♠.) North tells partner about the spade support by bidding 3♠. Bidding 3♠ at this point doesn't promise any strength. North is simply showing a preference for spades over diamonds."

Again, with a very experienced class you might discuss the merits of bidding 4♠ with the North hand at this point. Since the partnership is now in a game-forcing auction, some partnerships use the principle of fast arrival. A jump to 4♠ is weaker than bidding 3♠. However, this is an advanced concept. Most players will be content to bid 3♠ at this point.

"What does South do over 3♠? (4♠.) South puts the partnership in game in spades.

"Does South have any interest in looking for slam? (No.) North's actions have not been encouraging. With a little something, North could have raised spades immediately. South should be satisfied with game.

"Change the South hand.

"In spades: add a low card.

"In diamonds: take away the ace.

NORTH
 ♠ x x x
 ♥ x x x
 ♦ J x x
 ♣ x x x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♠
2NT	3♠
Pass	

SOUTH
 ♠ A Q J x x x x
 ♥ A
 ♦ K x x
 ♣ A J

"Would South still open with 2♣? (Probably.) South has 19 high-card points and can add 3 points for the seven-card suit. 22 points are enough to open with 2♣. South doesn't need much in partner's hand to make game.

"What would North respond? (2♦.) North will make a waiting bid of 2♦.

“What does South rebid? (2♠.) South will bid 2♠ to show the spade suit.

“What does North do now? (2NT.) North will bid 2NT as a negative bid, keeping the auction going.

“What does South do now? (3♠.) With no other suit to show and with nothing extra, South rebids the spade suit.

“What can North do now? (Pass.) When opener immediately rebids a long suit after responder has shown no values, most partnerships allow responder to pass. On this hand, that would be a good decision, since even a 3♠ contract is in jeopardy.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the king.

“In clubs: take away a low card and add the king.

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH ♠ K x x ♥ x x x ♦ J x x ♣ K x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NORTH 2♦ 3♠ (5♣) (Pass) </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> SOUTH 2♣ 2♠ (4NT) (6♠) </td> </tr> </table>	NORTH 2♦ 3♠ (5♣) (Pass)	SOUTH 2♣ 2♠ (4NT) (6♠)	SOUTH ♠ A Q J x x x x ♥ A ♦ K Q x ♣ A J
NORTH 2♦ 3♠ (5♣) (Pass)	SOUTH 2♣ 2♠ (4NT) (6♠)			

“Discuss with the others at your table how the auction would proceed when these are the combined hands. (2♣–2♦–2♠–3♠–4NT–5♣–6♠.)

“What is South’s opening bid? (2♣.) South starts with a strong 2♣ opening bid.

“What does North respond? (2♦.) With only 7 points, North doesn’t have quite enough for a positive response and makes a waiting bid of 2♦.

“What does South bid? (2♠.) South shows the spade suit.

“What does North bid? (3♠.) This time, North has a little something and spade support. North raises to 3♠. There’s no need to jump to game, since the partnership is already committed to game once North supports partner’s major suit.”

You can tailor the following remarks to the level of the class.

“How the auction proceeds from this point depends on the partnership’s slam bidding methods. South might simply jump to 6♠. It’s unlikely there’s enough for a grand slam, since North didn’t make a positive response initially. On this deal, slam is likely to have a play opposite a little something in the North hand. Another approach would be to use the Blackwood convention. South can bid 4NT to ask for aces. When North responds 5♣ to

show none, South can settle for a small slam.

“A more scientific approach might be to start a cuebidding sequence. Once North agrees on spades as the trump suit, South can cuebid 4♣. North doesn’t have anything in diamonds or hearts to show, but might show second round control in clubs by cuebidding 5♣. That’s enough for South to take a chance on slam and jump to 6♠. South knows North doesn’t have the ♦A and that slam should be on a finesse at worst.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king and a low card.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away two low cards.

“In diamonds: add two low cards.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x</p> <p>♥ x x x x</p> <p>♦ J x x x</p> <p>♣ K x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">(6♦)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">(Pass)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH		2♣	2♦	2♠	2NT	3♦	4♦	(6♦)	(Pass)		<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J x x</p> <p>♥ A</p> <p>♦ K Q x x x</p> <p>♣ A J</p>
NORTH	SOUTH													
	2♣													
2♦	2♠													
2NT	3♦													
4♦	(6♦)													
(Pass)														

“Discuss how the auction might proceed on these two hands. (2♣–2♦–2♠–2NT–3♦–4♦–5♦.)

“**South would start with 2♣, and what would North respond?** (2♦.) With 4 high-card points, North would make a waiting bid of 2♦.

“**What’s South’s rebid?** (2♠.) With a choice of five-card suits, South starts with the higher-ranking, 2♠.

“**What does North bid now?** (2NT.) With no support for spades and no suit to bid, North would bid 2NT.

“**What does South bid?** (3♦.) South now shows the second suit by bidding 3♦.

“**What does North bid next?** (4♦.) North prefers diamonds to spades and can raise to 4♦. North can’t pass. The bid of a new suit by South is forcing to game.”

Again, the following remarks should be tailored to the level of the class.

“What happens next depends a little on how aggressive South is. Since North hasn’t shown any strength, South can simply bid 5♦ and settle for game. An aggressive South might jump to 6♦. 6♦ isn’t a hopeless contract, but it will require a little work and a little luck to avoid losing a spade trick. Declarer probably will have to guess which defender holds the ♠K.

“Incidentally, who is declarer in this contract? (North.) North bid diamonds first, so North will be declarer.

“South might be unwilling to settle for 5 ♦ without at least one try for slam. South could bid Blackwood. On finding that the partnership is missing an ace, South could settle for game. In a more experienced partnership, South might cuebid 4♥ over 4♦. North will probably sign off in 5♦, and the partnership will rest there. 5♦ is a better contract than 3NT, which would be precarious after a heart lead.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add the queen and a low card.

“In clubs: take away the king and a low card.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the king.

“In hearts: add two low cards.

“In diamonds: take away the king and two low cards.

NORTH

♠ x
♥ Q x x x x x
♦ J x x x
♣ x x

NORTH

2♦
3♥
Pass

SOUTH

2♣
2♠
4♥

SOUTH

♠ A K Q J x x
♥ A x x
♦ Q x
♣ A J

“Discuss how the auction would proceed on these two hands. (2♣–2♦–2♠–3♥–4♥–Pass.)

“How does South start the auction? (2♣.)

“What does North respond? (2♦.) North doesn’t have enough for a positive response and bids 2♦.

“What is South’s rebid? (2♠.) South rebids 2♠, showing the long suit.

“What does North bid now? (3♥.) North can afford to mention the six-card heart suit. Opener won’t be expecting too much, since North didn’t make an immediate positive response of 2♥.

“What does South do? (4♥.) South shows heart support by raising to game. South isn’t interested in a slam since North didn’t make a positive response. 4♥ is a good contract.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away two low cards and add the king.

“In clubs: add the king.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add the jack.

“In diamonds: take away the queen.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x</p> <p>♥ K Q x x x</p> <p>♦ J x x x</p> <p>♣ K x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>NORTH</p> <p>2♥</p> <p>(5♣)</p> <p>Pass</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♥)</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>NORTH</p> <p>2♥</p> <p>(5♣)</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♥)</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A K Q J x x</p> <p>♥ A J x x</p> <p>♦ x</p> <p>♣ A J</p>
<p>NORTH</p> <p>2♥</p> <p>(5♣)</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♥)</p>			

“What does South open? (2♣.)

“What does North respond? (2♥.) With 9 high-card points and a good five-card suit, North can make a positive response of 2♥.

“What will happen next? (South will take the partnership to slam.) Knowing that North has a good heart suit and a positive response, South might not even bother mentioning the spades. Hearts should be a good trump suit. With such a good fit, South shouldn’t stop short of slam. South could jump to 6♥ immediately or use a more conventional approach. If South bids 4NT, the Blackwood convention, North will show no aces, and South will settle for a small slam in hearts.”

Summary

“After the strong 2♣ opening and initial response, opener will make a descriptive rebid. Now the partnership is in a good position to judge whether to head for game or slam. The partnership will use the same slam bidding methods that it uses in other situations. We’ll discuss more about slam bidding in the next course.”

Handling Interference

You can skip this section if you are running short of time.

Introduction

“When there is a strong 2♣ opening bid, you don’t expect too much interference from the opposition because opener is promising strength. Still, in competitive bridge, there will sometimes be competition. Knowing opener has a strong hand, the opponents may want to make the auction difficult. Also, if the 2♣ opening bid is based on an unbalanced hand with a long suit, there’s a good possibility that the opponents may have a long suit of their own. As in any situation where there is interference, it’s a good idea for the partnership to know how it affects any conventional bids:

- If the 2♣ opening is doubled:
 - No room is used up in the auction, and responder’s bids can retain their usual meaning, including the use of 2♦ as a waiting bid.
- If there’s an overcall:
 - Responder can pass with a weak hand.
 - With enough for a positive response, responder can bid a five-card or longer suit or bid notrump with some strength in the opponent’s suit.
 - Responder can double the overcall for penalties; or
 - Responder can cuebid the opponent’s suit with a positive response and nothing better to do.”

Instructions

“Start with the hands as they are.

NORTH ♠ x ♥ K Q x x x ♦ J x x x ♣ K x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Double</td> <td>2♥</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH				2♣	Double	2♥			SOUTH ♠ A K Q J x x ♥ A J x x ♦ x ♣ A J
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
			2♣											
Double	2♥													

“Suppose South opens 2♣ and, instead of passing, West doubles. What does North do? (2♥.) No room has been taken up by the double and North can show the good heart suit by bidding 2♥.

“What if West overcalled 3♦ instead of doubling? (3♥.) With enough for a positive response and a good five-card suit, North can bid 3♥. It’s a good idea to show the suit now. It might get awkward if North passes and East raises diamonds. Once North bids hearts, the partnership should have no trouble reaching the slam despite the interference.

“Change the North hand.
 “In spades: add a low card.
 “In hearts: take away the king and the queen.
 “In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH ♠ x x ♥ x x x ♦ J x x x ♣ K x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♣</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Double	2♦		2♣	SOUTH ♠ A K Q J x x ♥ A J x x ♦ x ♣ A J
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
Double	2♦		2♣							

“Again South opens 2♣. What happens if West doubles? (2♦.) There’s still room for North to make a waiting response of 2♦.

“What if West overcalls 2♦ instead of doubling? (Pass.) When there is an overcall, responder can pass with a weak hand. South will have an opportunity to show the spade suit, but won’t be expecting too much from responder. With a little something, North may get the partnership to game. 4♠ isn’t a great contract, but has some chances.

“What if West passes the 2♣ bid? What does North respond? (2♦.) North makes the usual waiting response of 2♦.

“Now East comes into the bidding with 3♦. What does South do? (3♠.) The interference hasn’t prevented South from showing the spade suit — even though it’s at one level higher than usual.

“North will have to decide what to do over 3♠. With the ♦10 to go with the ♦J, North might try 3NT, which would be a good contract. Even without the ♦10, North might make 3NT if East holds all of the high diamonds. Once there’s competition, you’ll have to rely on your judgment a little more to get to the best contract.

“Change the North hand.
 “In hearts: take away a low card.
 “In diamonds: add the queen.

NORTH ♠ x x ♥ x x ♦ Q J x x x ♣ K x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♣</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	2♦	Double		2♣	SOUTH ♠ A K Q J x x ♥ A J x x ♦ x ♣ A J
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
2♦	Double		2♣							

“What would North do with this hand if South opened 2♣ and West overcalled 2♦? (Double.) With a good hand for defending, North can double the overcall for penalties. South doesn’t have to pass the double but has that option. If South does bid spades, the partnership may finish in a contract of 3NT. Whether South chooses to defend may depend on the vulnerability.”

With a basic class, you might skip the next example.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add two low cards.

“In hearts: add the king and the queen and take away a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the queen, the jack and a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x x x x</p> <p>♥ K Q x</p> <p>♦ x x</p> <p>♣ K x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	2♦	3♦		2♣	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A K Q J x x</p> <p>♥ A J x x</p> <p>♦ x</p> <p>♣ A J</p>
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
2♦	3♦		2♣							

“**What can North bid if South opens 2♣ and West overcalls 2♦? (3♦.)**

With a positive response but no good five-card or longer suit, North can cuebid the opponent’s suit by bidding 3♦. This lets opener know that North has some values but can’t double for penalties, and that North doesn’t want to bid 2NT to show a stopper in the opponent’s suit. This will help South judge that slam is a possibility. There won’t be much of a problem if North–South have the rest of the auction to themselves, but perhaps East will make a preemptive jump to 5♦, or even 6♦. When that happens, South will be glad to know that North has some values.”

Summary

“If the strong 2♣ opening bid is doubled:

- Ignore the double and bid as if there were no interference.

“ If there is an overcall:

- Pass with a weak hand or double for penalties.
- With enough for a positive response, bid a good five-card or longer suit or bid notrump with a stopper in the opponent’s suit.
- There is also the option of cuebidding to show a positive response without enough strength in the opponent’s suit to double or bid notrump.“

➔ “Let’s do Exercises 4 & 5 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Four — The Subsequent Auction

You hold the following hand as West:

♠ A K Q J 9 6
 ♥ K Q 4
 ♦ 3
 ♣ A Q 3

What is your next bid in each of the following auctions?

- 1) **WEST** NORTH EAST SOUTH
 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2♠ Pass 2NT Pass
 ? _____
- 2) **WEST** NORTH EAST SOUTH
 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2♠ Pass 3♥ Pass
 ? _____
- 3) **WEST** NORTH EAST SOUTH
 2♣ 2♦ Pass 3♦
 ? _____
- 4) **WEST** NORTH EAST SOUTH
 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2♠ Pass 3♠ Pass
 ? _____

Exercise Four Answer— The Subsequent Auction

- 1) 3♠. Partner's 2NT rebid shows a weak hand. With a positive response, partner would bid 2NT right away. The 3♠ rebid isn't forcing; but if partner passes, you are unlikely to make game.
- 2) 4♥. Show the fit with partner. Partner may have a very weak hand since partner didn't respond 2♥ initially, but partner still has an opportunity to move toward slam with a little something.
- 3) 3♠. Time to show your suit. If you had a balanced hand, you could pass and leave any decision to partner.
- 4) 4♣ or 4NT. Having found a fit, you can make a move toward slam — either cuebidding the ♣A or using the Blackwood convention. Partner should have some high cards. With a weak hand and a fit, partner could have jumped directly to 4♠.

Exercise Five — Handling Interference

As East, what would you rebid with each of the following hands?

	WEST 2♣	NORTH 2♥	EAST ?	SOUTH
1)	♠ 8 6 3 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ J 9 8 6 4 ♣ 10 3		2) ♠ K Q 10 8 5 ♥ 9 7 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ 8 4	3) ♠ 8 2 ♥ K J 8 ♦ Q 10 7 2 ♣ Q J 7 4

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

Exercise Five Answer— Handling Interference

- 1) Pass. You don't have to bid with a weak hand when there is an overcall. Partner will get another chance to bid.
- 2) 2♠. The opponent's overcall doesn't prevent you from showing your good suit with enough for a positive response.
- 3) 2NT. This shows a positive response with 8 or more points and some strength in the opponent's suit.
- 4) Double. With partner holding a strong hand, your best spot may be defending. Let partner know.
- 5) 3♥. A cuebid of the opponent's suit shows a positive response, but no good suit of your own and no stopper in the opponent's suit.
- 6) Pass. You have a little something, but it's best to wait and see what partner has to say. Your pass is forcing — partner will have to do something.

NOTE: Sample Deals Review the instructions on page 44.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 8

Guidelines for Teachers: The deals in this lesson are all examples of the 2♣ opening bid in action. There is only one slam deal, and it doesn't really require the use of Blackwood. The deals have many challenging play concepts: simple squeeze, trump management, suit establishment and the safety play.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: An Introduction to the Squeeze Play

Guidelines for Teachers: On this first deal, South has a really strong hand and starts with an artificial 2♣. After bidding to 6♠, declarer has to find the simple squeeze to manufacture the 12th trick and bring home the contract. This is likely to be a completely new concept for the participants. The deal is set up so that players may fall into making the contract if they are observant. The key concept is not to give up when the situation looks hopeless. Take all of your winners and something good might happen. For basic players, an introduction to the concept is enough. For more experienced players, you might want to spend some time looking at the basic position and why it works.

Introduction

“Let's play an interesting deal where declarer has to find the squeeze play in order to make a tough contract.”

Instructions

“North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Play out the final contract when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North	♠ Q 10 6					
Vul: None	♥ 9 6 3 2					
	♦ K J					
	♣ K 8 7 2					
♠ 8	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 5 4 3	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ J 10 8 7		♥ A 5 4				
♦ 9 7 6 5		♦ 10 8 4 3 2				
♣ J 6 5 3		♣ Q 10				
	♠ A K J 9 7 2					
	♥ K Q					
	♦ A Q					
	♣ A 9 4					

Suggested Bidding

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the bidding first and agree on a final contract.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT (6♠)
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“After two passes, South opens the bidding. With 23 high-card points plus 2 points for the six-card suit, South has more than enough to open a strong two-bid. South starts with an artificial forcing 2♣. North has 9 high-card points, enough for a positive response. With no good five-card suit, North bids 2NT. South now shows the spade suit, and North raises to game with three-card support. Since partner has shown 9 or more points with the 2NT response, South knows the partnership has a chance for slam. South might simply jump to 6♠ or take the more scientific route of asking for aces using the Blackwood convention. When North shows no aces with the 5♣ response, South settles for a small slam.”

Suggested Opening Lead

“Now that we have agreed on a contract of 6♠ by South, let’s review the play and defense.

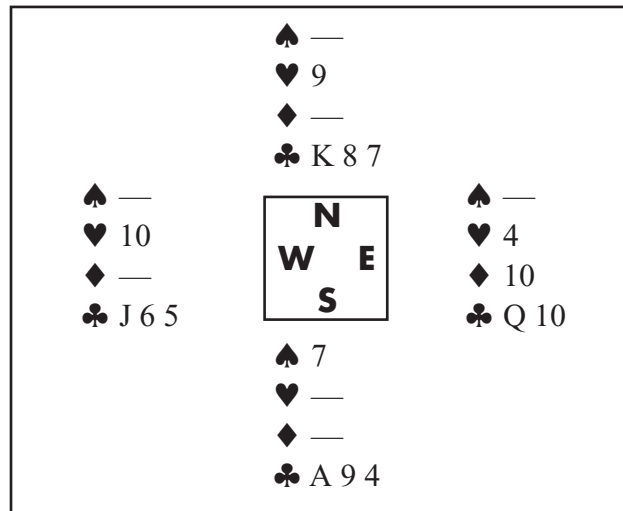
“West is on lead and would start with the ♥J, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“The duplication of values in the diamond suit is unfortunate for declarer. If one of North’s low hearts or clubs were a low diamond, South would have 12 easy tricks. As it is, there is some work to do. There’s a sure loser in hearts and another in clubs. The contract might look hopeless since there’s no place for the club loser to be discarded, but declarer shouldn’t give up hope. There’s always the possibility that the defenders will discard incorrectly or that something unforeseen will happen. Declarer should take a careful look at the ♥9 in dummy. It’s surprising how valuable it may prove to be.

“When West leads the ♥J, suppose East wins the first trick with the ♥A and returns a heart. After winning the second trick, declarer has nothing better to do than to draw the defenders’ trumps. With this done, declarer should continue leading spades, hoping the defenders may carelessly discard too many clubs. Declarer can take the two diamond winners, but should play all the spade winners before touching the club suit. Good things may happen, especially if declarer keeps that ♥9 in the dummy.

“Why is the ♥9 so important? If West originally led from a holding such as ♥J 10 x x — as looks likely — West will have to hold on to the ♥10 to prevent dummy’s ♥9 from becoming a trick. That means that West can’t hold on to clubs. If East started with only two clubs, or throws some away, declarer can take three club tricks. On the actual layout of the cards, this is the position when South leads the last spade winner after taking the diamond tricks.



“When South leads the last spade winner, West must find a discard. If West discards the ♥10, dummy’s ♥9 is a winner. Declarer can cross to dummy’s ♣K and discard the club loser on the ♥9. If West discards a club, declarer takes the last three club tricks, since East started with only two clubs.

“It’s a bit like magic — manufacturing an extra trick out of thin air. The technical term is a squeeze. When South plays the last spade, West’s hand is squeezed out of one of its winners. There’s nothing West can do, provided South was carefully watching the heart suit and that precious ♥9 in the dummy.

“Will declarer find this line of play? Perhaps not, but in such situations — where you are one trick short of your contract — it is generally a good idea to run all of your winners and make the defenders discard. Anything may happen. On this hand, something does.”

Suggested Defense

“Can the defenders defeat the contract? Although the ♥J is the standout lead from West’s hand, an original club lead could defeat the contract if East returns a club after winning the ♥A. It’s difficult to see why this works even when you play out all of the cards, but it does. Squeeze plays and defense can become quite complicated, but it’s a fascinating area of the game. On this hand, East–West will probably have to hope that declarer doesn’t put dummy’s ♥9 to good use.”

Bid and Play – Deal 2: Make the Most of Your Trumps

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal looks deceptively easy, but requires careful management of the trump suit when there are losers to be ruffed. Most of the declarers are likely to be defeated. Go over the deal carefully, pointing out the importance of planning the sequence of plays.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where the contract could be in jeopardy if declarer doesn’t handle the trump suit carefully.”

Instructions

“East is the dealer. Take your hands out and start the bidding. Play out the final contract when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)

Dealer: East	♠ 7 2					
Vul: N-S	♥ 8 7 5 4					
	♦ Q J 5 2					
	♣ A K 2					
♠ 5		<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A K Q 9 4
N						
W E						
S						
♥ J 9 6 2			♥ A K Q 10 3			
♦ 10 8 7 4			♦ K 6			
♣ 8 6 5 3			♣ Q			
	♠ J 10 8 6 3					
	♥ —					
	♦ A 9 3					
	♣ J 10 9 7 4					

Suggested Bidding

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the bidding first and agree on a final contract.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

“With 23 high-card points plus 1 point for each of the two five-card suits,

East has a hand strong enough to open at the two level. East starts to show this hand by opening with an artificial, strong, 2♣ opening bid.

“After South passes, West must respond to partner’s forcing bid and uses the artificial waiting bid of 2♦. East rebids 2♠, the higher-ranking of the two five-card suits. This is still a forcing bid, so West must say something. With no support for spades and no good suit to bid, West bids 2NT. East now shows the second suit by bidding 3♥. This is another forcing bid, so West shows support for hearts by raising to the game level. West probably didn’t expect to make three bids with this hand! Having forced the partnership to the game level and hearing no encouragement from West, East has nothing further to add and settles for a contract of 4♥.”

Suggested Opening Lead

“Now that we have agreed on a contract of 4♥ by East, let’s review the play and defense.

“South is on lead. Since East has bid spades, South should avoid leading that suit and would start with the ♣J, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“Declarer has two potential losers in spades, two in diamonds and one in clubs. If the defenders’ spades divide 4–3, East can establish an extra winner in that suit through length. There is also the possibility of ruffing one or two spades in the dummy. In diamonds, East could try leading toward the ♦K, hoping that North holds the ♦A.

“The safest play for the contract is to plan to ruff both spade losers in the dummy. That way, East doesn’t need to rely on a favorable division of the spade suit or a favorable location for the ♦A. To follow this plan, declarer must be careful of three things. Since the defenders have led clubs and may continue leading them, declarer must be careful not to run out of trumps while ruffing the spade losers. Declarer must be careful to make the best use of entries. Finally, declarer wants to avoid having North overruff when ruffing losers in the dummy.

“Suppose North wins the first club trick and leads another club which East ruffs. East should immediately play a high spade and then ruff a low spade with dummy’s ♥9. Declarer crosses back to the East hand with a trump — discovering the 4–0 break in that suit — leads another low spade and ruffs with dummy’s ♥J. Declarer leads dummy’s last trump to cross back and draw the remaining trumps in North’s hand. After drawing all of the trumps, declarer takes the last two spade winners.

“The ♦A is unfavorably located. The spades divide 5–2, and the trumps divide 4–0. The contract can be defeated if East isn’t careful. If East tries to play three spade winners early, North will ruff one of them. If East ruffs the third round of spades with a low trump, North will overruff. Because

of the bad trump break, East can't afford to play even one round of trumps before ruffing a spade loser. For example, if the defenders lead two rounds of clubs, declarer must ruff and has only four hearts left. If declarer has to ruff again to get back to the East hand, North will have more trumps than declarer and will eventually get a trump trick. When the hearts break badly, declarer can't afford to try the diamond finesse by leading toward the \spadesuit K. When it loses, the defenders can force declarer to ruff and North will again have more trumps than declarer."

Suggested Defense

"After winning the first trick with the \clubsuit Q, North's best defense is to lead another club, forcing East to use a trump to win the trick. Holding four trumps, North would like to run declarer out of trumps. It won't do any harm if North switches to a diamond after winning the first club trick. South can win two diamond tricks and then the defenders can lead either a club or a diamond to force declarer to ruff.

"As outlined above, declarer can make the contract with careful play. Declarer may play a round of trumps too soon and that will give the defenders an opportunity to defeat the contract. For example, suppose the defenders start with two rounds of clubs. Declarer ruffs and plays one round of trumps. On seeing the bad break, declarer plays a high spade and ruffs a spade in dummy. Declarer crosses back with a trump and ruffs another spade in dummy. Now declarer has no quick entry back to the East hand to draw trumps. Whether declarer leads a diamond or a club from dummy, the defenders can force declarer to ruff again, and North will get a trump trick.

"If declarer doesn't ruff two spades in the dummy, South can defeat the contract by holding on to all of the spades. Since East bid spades in the auction, South should be aware that it's important not to discard one during the play."

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Make the Most of Your Entries

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal involves suit development through promotion, but it may present a challenge to many declarers at this level. Declarer has to spot the opportunity and then handle a side suit correctly to get the necessary entries.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where a strong opening bid leads to the correct contract.”

Instructions

“South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Play out the final contract when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #8, Hand 3 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: South																
Vul: E-W		♠ A J 9 7														
		♥ 8 5														
		♦ J 10 7 6 3														
		♣ 7 4														
♠ K 10 4 3			<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S			♠ 6 5 2		
	N															
W		E														
	S															
♥ A Q 6					♥ K J 10 3											
♦ A K 5 2					♦ 9 4											
♣ A K					♣ J 10 6 2											
		♠ Q 8														
		♥ 9 7 4 2														
		♦ Q 8														
		♣ Q 9 8 5 3														

Suggested Bidding

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the bidding first and agree on a final contract.”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

“South passes. With 23 high-card points, West is too strong to open 2NT. A

2NT opening bid would show only 20 or 21 high-card points. Instead, West starts with a strong, artificial 2♣ bid. After North passes, East makes the artificial waiting response of 2♦. This allows West to describe the nature of the hand by rebidding 2NT, showing a balanced hand of 22 to 24 points. With 5 points, East has enough to take the partnership to game. Holding a four-card heart suit, East can use the Stayman convention to discover if the partnership has an eight-card major-suit fit. When West responds 3♠, showing a four-card spade suit, East signs off in 3NT. East was able to make three bids with only 5 points!”

Suggested Opening Lead

“Now that we have agreed on a contract of 3NT by West, let’s review the play and defense.

“North is on lead against 3NT and should start with the ♦6, fourth from the longest and strongest suit. North should avoid a spade lead, since West showed a four-card spade suit.”

Suggested Play

“Declarer starts with eight sure tricks: four hearts, two diamonds and two clubs. One possibility for a ninth trick is the spade suit. West could try leading a spade from dummy toward the ♠K, hoping South holds the ♠A. If that doesn’t work, there’s still the possibility that the missing spades might divide 3–3. But there’s a much safer alternative in the club suit. Declarer can use dummy’s ♣J and ♣10 to promote a trick in that suit by driving out the ♣Q.

“To develop and take an extra trick in the club suit, declarer must be careful with entries to dummy. After winning a diamond trick, West starts by playing the ♣A and ♣K to unblock that suit. West then plays the ♥A and the ♥Q, overtaking with the ♥K in dummy — or West can play the ♥6 to dummy’s ♥J or ♥10. Next, declarer leads a club from dummy to drive out the defenders’ ♣Q. On regaining the lead, declarer can cross to dummy with a heart, take the established club winner and the remaining heart winner and finish with nine tricks.

“Having spotted the possibility of developing an extra club trick, declarer must be careful to use the heart suit to provide two entries to the dummy.”

Suggested Defense

“The defenders should try to develop enough winners from North’s diamond suit to defeat the contract. There’s no way to defeat the contract if declarer plays carefully. But if declarer fails to take proper advantage of the club suit, the defense will have a chance, provided they don’t give West a ninth trick in another suit. North must be careful not to lead a spade, giving West a trick with the ♠K. South can lead a spade to trap declarer’s ♠K, but the defenders can’t continue leading the suit before establishing their diamond winners, or West will get a trick with the ♠10.”

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Careful Play in the Trump Suit

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal requires careful play in the trump suit to be successful. This hand teaches declarer to look for possible pitfalls and work to avoid them. This is a topic that will be quite challenging for inexperienced players. For more experienced players, you can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of safety plays at duplicate bridge.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where the defenders can’t do much to defeat the hand if declarer handles the spade suit correctly.”

Instructions

“West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Play out the final contract when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)

Dealer: West	♠ A K 9 7 5											
Vul: Both	♥ A K Q 3											
	♦ A											
	♣ A 10 3											
♠ Q 10 8 3		<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 10 8			♥ 7 6 5 4									
♦ 10 9 8 7 2			♦ K Q J 5									
♣ K J			♣ Q 9 6 4									
	♠ J 6 2											
	♥ J 9 2											
	♦ 6 4 3											
	♣ 8 7 5 2											

Suggested Bidding

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the bidding first and agree on a final contract.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

“With 24 high-card points plus 1 for the five-card suit, in our system, North starts with the strong, artificial (conventional) 2♣. After East passes, South has to say something. South responds 2♦, an artificial (conventional) waiting bid, showing a weak hand or a hand unsuitable for a positive response in notrump or a suit.

“North now gets to bid the spade suit, and the bidding comes back to South. North’s 2♠ bid is forcing — just as if North had opened a strong 2♠ bid. With nothing much to say, South bids 2NT to keep the bidding going. North now can show the second suit by bidding 3♥. This is another forcing bid, so South gives preference back to 3♠. Needing very little from partner to make game, North continues to 4♠.

“(North might suggest 3NT on the fourth round of bidding — having shown five spades and four hearts — but South should correct back to 4♠, knowing there is an eight-card fit.)”

Suggested Opening Lead

“Now that we have agreed on a contract of 4♠ by North, let’s review the play and defense.

“East is on lead and has an easy choice, the ♦K, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“There are two sure losers in the club suit, so North’s main concern is to avoid losing more than one trick in the trump suit. If the missing trumps divide 3–2 or the ♠Q is singleton, there will be no problem. So, declarer should concentrate on the possibility that the missing trumps might divide 4–1.

“After winning the ♦A at trick one, North can afford to play the ♠A to see if the ♠Q is singleton or if the defenders’ spades are divided 5–0. When both defenders follow suit with low cards, the missing trumps can be divided no worse than 4–1. Declarer must be careful. If declarer plays the ♠K at this point, the contract will be defeated if the missing spades divide 4–1. The defenders will get tricks with the ♠Q and the ♠10. To guard against this, North should lead a low spade toward dummy’s ♠J. This virtually guarantees the contract.

“If both defenders follow suit, their trumps have divided 3–2 and declarer’s ♠K will pick up the last trump later. If East has the ♠Q, declarer will get a trick with dummy’s ♠J, even if East started with four trumps. If West started with all four trumps, as on the actual layout, declarer can make the contract. When East shows out, declarer plays dummy’s ♠J, losing to West’s ♠Q. On regaining the lead, declarer plays the ♥3 over to dummy’s ♥J and leads dummy’s remaining spade. When West follows with a low spade, declarer finesses the ♠9 and draws West’s last trump.

“Notice how declarer makes good use of both of dummy’s jacks. South’s 2 points were just enough to let declarer make the contract despite the unfortunate trump division.”

Suggested Defense

“The defenders can’t do much if declarer handles the spade suit correctly in a contract of 4♠. If declarer does give up two trump tricks, the defenders should defeat the contract if East holds on to clubs.

“If North–South play in 3NT, the defenders can lead diamonds to defeat the contract. If South is declarer and West leads the ♦10, East must be careful to unblock the ♦K under North’s ♦A. Otherwise, East won’t have a low diamond left to lead back to West’s winners.”

