

The Beginner's Page - 7

Responder's 2nd bid

We have already looked at the opening bid, responder's bid and opener's rebid. Time to look at what responder should do at his 2nd turn.

What you (as responder) should do depends upon your hand (obviously) but also upon what your partner had done. By the time that partner has opened and rebid you have a fair idea about his strength and shape. Quite often, his 2nd bid will have either shown a strong, invitational or weak hand and you bid (or pass) accordingly. This week we look at the situation where opener simply supports our suit: -

Hand 1	Hand 2	With these hands 1-6 partner opened 1♦. You responded 1♥ and partner bids 2♥. What do you do?
♠ A764	♠ A764	With Hand 1 you should pass. You have a minimum and partner has shown no more than a minimum.
♥ A754	♥ AK54	With Hand 2 you have game values – so bid game! 4♥.
♦ 987	♦ Q87	
♣ 85	♣ 85	
Hand 3	Hand 4	So that's quite simple, pass with a minimum and bid game with game values (an opening hand +). But what if you are non-min but not sure of game?
♠ AJ64	♠ A864	Simple, we invite partner, by bidding 3♥: -
♥ AQ54	♥ AQ542	Hand 3 has 11 points and so you invite game by bidding 3♥.
♦ 987	♦ J8	Hand 4 also has 11 points, but this hand has improved when partner has supported your 5 card suit. So bid game, 4♥.
♣ 85	♣ 85	

Actually, there are more sophisticated ways to invite game rather than simply bidding 3 of the suit (trial bids), but that's for a later date.

Hand 5	Hand 6	Sometimes we will be dealt a hand that is too strong to simply sign off in game.
♠ A764	♠ AJ64	Now you need around 33 combined points to make a small slam in a suit when you have a fit. Opener has promised about 13+ and so both of these hands are worth slam.
♥ AQ1086	♥ AK543	Simplest is just to bid 6♥ with both of these.
♦ K7	♦ K873	
♣ A5	♣ -	

So that's all quite straightforward. If opener supports our suit then we take charge, by either passing, inviting or bidding game or looking for slam. Incidentally, I selected hands 5 & 6 carefully as they do not require to know how many aces partner has, slam is a good prospect whatever. You can establish how many aces partner has by bidding Blackwood (4NT) and I will cover that later.

Summary. When partner opens and you respond in a new suit (a major in our examples), both hands are unlimited. When partner simply supports your suit then that bid is not forcing (about 12-15 points). It is up to you to make the next move. Pass with a minimum (about 6-10), invite (3♥ in our examples) with an invitational hand (about 10-12) and bid game with more (good 12+).

Next week we'll look at what to do when opener has introduced a 3rd suit.