

2.3.9 Weak Jump Shifts, 1♣/♦ -2♥/♠

When partner opens say 1♣ or 1♦, then a jump to 2♥ or 2♠ is normally played as strong - a good hand with a good suit; forcing to game and slam seeking. However, there is an alternative to the traditional strong jump shift: -

Consider this hand, partner has opened 1♦. You have totally insufficient values to bid, but wouldn't it be nice to be able to stick your oar in? If you could safely bid 2♠ without exciting partner, that would be super.

♠ Q97542 ♥ 5 ♦ 42 ♣ 7653

And how about this hand? Partner has opened 1♣. You do not really want to pass, but you 'know' that if you bid, then partner will jump in a black suit. Is there a solution? Enter the (very) weak jump shift.

♠ 42 ♥ KJ9652 ♦ 9542 ♣ 7

After a 1♣/♦ opening, a jump to 2♥/♠ may be played as a weak hand, too weak for a 1-level response; with a 6 (possibly 7) card suit and typically 2-5 pts. Now this has numerous advantages, you have described your hand perfectly and the only person who really knows what is going on is your partner!

Before we discuss the theory, let's have an example of a hand that went wrong at the club. The partnership were playing a 'system' whereby a 2♣ opening showed 19-21 points, any distribution.

		Actual bidding		Recommended Bidding (playing weak jump shifts)	
West	East	West	East	West	East
♠ KQ98	♠ 97	2♣	4♥	1♦	2♥
♥ 7	♥ A98652	pass		pass	
♦ KQ653	♦ 2				
♣ AKQ	♣ 974				

Clearly they were well overboard. I was asked how they could have avoided disaster. First of all, I do not like this 'system', especially if bids after a 2♣ opening are ill-defined. So let's suppose that we are playing a sensible system and open 1♦ with the West hand. East then has an easy bid. 2♥ sums it up nicely. With a total mis-fit, West will pass and the best contract is easily reached.

Let's get back to the theory. Consider the following sequence: - 1♣ - 2♠ - 4♠, is this to make or simply to stop the opponents from competing? And it would be the same if South had doubled or stuck in a ♥ bid. Is the complete layout :-

West	or	West	or	West	East
♠ K1063		♠ K1063		♠ KJ6	♠ Q97542
♥ J64		♥ Q63		♥ AKQ9	♥ 75
♦ J		♦ 8		♦ J	♦ 542
♣ AK542		♣ KQJ52		♣ AK542	♣ 73

With the first layout, opponent are probably cold for 4♥ or 5♥, which they doubtless would have found but for East's bid (and West's rebid). With the second layout, 6♥ looks good for them and with the third layout West knows exactly what to do with a 5♥ bid.

If opener does not have a strong hand and/or fit, he will normally pass. In that case, your bid has had the desired pre-emptive effect. Partner may well have a strong hand with no fit and his pass may prompt opponents to bid too high. All in all, this treatment really has all to gain and nothing to lose for experienced pairs.

Of course, opener has other options open to him, and he should use the Law of Total Tricks (or, at least, our simplified version of it).

♠ K42 ♥ 652 ♦ KQ542 ♣ KJ A raise to 3 of partner's major is 3 card support and is simply upping the pre-empt. With this hand, after the bidding starts 1♦ - 2♠, raise to 3♠. With 9 trumps, the 3 level is relatively safe.

There are other possibilities for an opener's rebid, consider 2♠ after the sequence 1♣/♦ - 2♥, which I have read in another book where it is defined as:-

2♠ (over 2♥) = natural, very unbalanced hand with no fit for responder, non-forcing.

Of course, this is nonsense. Opener would not introduce a 4 (or possibly 5) card suit when he knows that his partner is weak with a 6 card suit. The only logical explanation is a psyche, more of this in a minute. Other possible rebids by opener (with their 'accepted' meanings) are:-

2NT = forcing. Generally a game try with a doubleton in responder's suit.

Rebid of opener's suit = non-forcing, long suit.

New suit = non-forcing, very distributional hand

As I said, opener is in total control; he knows exactly (+/- 1) how many high card points each side holds, and also how many of responder's major each side has. Because of this, opener is often in a position to psyche. Consider the sequence 1♣ - 2♠ - 3♥. This is clearly psychic, and if responder knows this and simply returns to 3♠ then it is a controlled psyche and should be reported as such. The 2NT bid mentioned above could also be used psychically to indicate values you do not have (when you have the sanctuary of a fit with partner). Now the reason I am writing this down is not to encourage it, but the complete opposite. If you and your partner have read this book and use these devious methods, then they are controlled psyches and illegal in my view. At the very least, you should alert the opponents that they may be psyches. Weak jump shifts are becoming ever popular, so be aware of these dubious tactics if the opponents use them.

2.3.9.1 Ogust over a weak Jump Shift

Now there is just one of the mentioned bids that can be used as a genuinely constructive. In section 4.1.1 we will discuss the Ogust convention, this is in reply to a weak two opening and asks opener to clarify his holding. In the current situation, if opener is really interested in game (usually with about 18+ pts), he may ask responder's strength and high card distribution by bidding 2NT, Ogust. Responses (in this situation) are as follows: -

After 1♣/♦ - 2♥ - 2NT	After 1♣/♦ - 2♠ - 2NT
3♣ = min points, bad suit	3♣ = min points, bad suit
3♦ = min points, good suit	3♦ = min points, good suit
3♥ = max points, bad suit	3♥ = max points, bad suit
3♠ = max points, good suit	3♠ = max points, good suit
3NT = 7♥'s with a top honour	3NT = 7♠'s with a top honour

Now everything is relative. Max pts here is 4-5 and min is 2-3. A good suit is half or more than half the points in the suit (and at least the queen). If responder has a 7 card suit, then he should upgrade by about 2 pts. The 3NT bid should be a 7 card suit headed by the Ace or King.

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5
♠ J86542	♠ Q98764	♠ J876432	♠ K98654	♠ KJ98642
♥ J8	♥ 98	♥ 8	♥ 8	♥ -
♦ 962	♦ 652	♦ J6	♦ J86	♦ 86
♣ 95	♣ 95	♣ 952	♣ 986	♣ 10653

All of these hands replied 2♠ to opener's 1♣ opening. Opener then enquired with an Ogust 2NT: -

Hand 1	Bid 3♣.	Absolutely minimum. You should not 'encourage' partner by bidding 3♦. Even though half your points are in the suit, it really is pathetic.
Hand 2	Bid 3♦.	Min, but points in the suit.
Hand 3	Bid 3♥.	Points outside, but upgrade to max because of the 7 card suit and shape. You cannot bid 3♠ as partner will then expect ♠A,K or Q.
Hand 4	Bid 3♠.	Max with points in the suit.
Hand 5	Bid 3NT.	With a void and a fit for partner, this is an absolute moose.

Just to see how it can work: -

Example 1	West	East	West	East
(1) Weak Jump Shift	♠ AQ7	♠ K98654	1♣	2♠ (1)
(2) Ogust enquiry	♥ 9642	♥ 8	2NT (2)	3♠ (3)
(3) Max, points in suit	♦ AQ5	♦ J86	4♠ (4)	pass
(4) OK.	♣ AK7	♣ 986		

Example 2	West	East	West	East
(1) Weak Jump Shift	♠ AQ7	♠ K986542	1♣	2♠ (1)
(2) Ogust enquiry	♥ K964	♥ 87	2NT (2)	3NT (3)
(3) Max points in 7 card suit	♦ A5	♦ J8	pass (4)	
(4) Then we have 9 tricks	♣ AJ54	♣ 98		