



# Bidding Basics

BY LARRY COHEN larryco.com

## Responder's rebid after responding to 1NT or 2NT

In this installment, the opening bid was 1NT or 2NT. As responder, we took our first call (usually Stayman or a transfer), and now we examine responder's second call. As discussed previously, we will assume in this article that 1NT-2♠ shows clubs and 1NT-3♣ shows diamonds, though I wouldn't spend much mental energy on those two infrequent bids.

If the response to 1NT was 2♣ (Stayman), opener has rebid 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠. Let's examine each.

After 1NT-2♣; 2♦, responder can pass with a lot of diamonds and a weak hand, such as:

♠K x x x ♥x x x ♦J x x x x ♣x.

The sequence 1NT-2♣; 2♦-2♥ instructs opener to pass with three hearts or correct to 2♠. Responder's hand should be something like:

♠A x x x ♥J x x x x ♦x ♣x x x.

The sequence 1NT-2♣; 2♦-2♠ typically delivers five spades in an unbalanced hand with invitational values. For example:

♠A J x x x ♥Q x x x ♦J x x ♣x.

With balanced, invitational hand containing five spades, you would have started with a Jacoby transfer instead.

1NT-2♣; 2♦-2NT is invitational with at least one four-card major; without one, you would have just raised 1NT to 2NT to invite. Example:

♠Q 10 x x ♥x x ♦K Q x ♣Q x x x.

1NT-2♣; 2♦-3♣/3♦ should be natural and game forcing with at least

one four-card major. For example, 1NT-2♣; 2♦-3♦ should show a hand such as:

♠A x x x ♥x x ♦A K J x x x ♣x.

1NT-2♣; 2♦-3♥/3♠ shows 5-4 in the majors and is game forcing. In "standard," you jump into the five-card major. For example, 1NT-2♣; 2♦-3♥ would be something like this:

♠A Q x x ♥K Q x x x ♦x ♣x x x.

1NT-2♣; 2♦-3NT is, of course, a signoff. Example:

♠K Q 10 x ♥K J x x ♦x x ♣Q x x.

After 1NT-2♣; 2♥/2♠, responder can pass with a minimum and a fit. Example:

♠K x x x ♥J x x x ♦x x x x x ♣—.

A raise to 3♥/3♠ by responder is invitational, and a jump to 4♥/4♠ is signoff.

To show slam interest in the major, the technically correct bid is three of the other major, for example, 1NT-2♣; 2♠-3♥, but good luck remembering that! A jump to four of a minor is a splinter raise with slam interest. For example, 1NT-2♣; 2♥-4♣ is something like:

♠A x x x ♥A Q x x ♦K J x x ♣x.

Don't get me started on the misuse of Gerber.

After opener's 2♥ or 2♠, 2NT (or 4NT) by responder is invitational (or slam), and 3NT is a signoff. 1NT-2♣; 2♥-3♣/3♦ is natural, game forcing and likely shows four cards in the other major. For example, after 1NT-2♣;

2♥, bid 3♣ with:

♠A Q x x ♥x ♦x x x ♣A K J x x.

If the response to 1NT (or 2NT) was 3NT, there won't be a second call. If the response to 1NT was an invitational 2NT, the only thing to consider is if opener bids a suit on the three level. 1NT-2NT; 3♣/3♦ is a bailout, to play, with a hand such as:

♠J x ♥Q x ♦K Q x x ♣A Q J 9 x.

Meanwhile, opener's 3♥ or 3♠ is forcing, offering a choice of four of the major or 3NT. 3♠, for example, would be something such as:

♠A Q 10 x x ♥x x ♦K Q x ♣K Q x.

If responder starts with a Jacoby transfer, a 2NT follow-up is invitational, showing five cards in the major. If responder bids a new suit, however, it's natural, showing four or more cards in the second suit, and is game forcing. If responder "raises" 2♥ or 2♠ to three of the major, it shows six-plus cards and invitational values. 3NT, of course, is natural and offers opener a choice of game in notrump or four of the major.

Some examples. After 1NT-2♥; 2♠, pass with:

♠K J x x x ♥x ♦x x x x ♣x x x;

bid 2NT with:

♠A J x x x ♥10 x x ♦J x ♣K x x;

bid 3♣ with:

♠A Q 10 x x ♥x ♦x x x ♣A Q J x;

bid 3♥ with:

♠A Q x x x ♥K J 10 x x ♦x x ♣x.

Note that this particular auction promises 5-5 in the majors because you would start with Stayman with 5-4 in the majors.

Bid 3♠ with:

♠K J 10 x x x ♥x ♦x x x ♣K x x;

bid 3NT with:

♠K Q 10 x x ♥K x x ♦Q x x ♣x x.

If you start with a transfer to a minor (rare), you must have interest in making that minor trump. Don't transfer if you want to play in 1NT or 3NT! So if you do transfer to a minor and then you bid 3NT anyway, you must have slam in mind or you would have just raised 1NT to 3NT. For example, if partner opens 1NT and you have:

♠K Q x ♥Q x ♦x x ♣A K J 10 x x,

you can transfer to clubs and then bid 3NT. Change the spades to x-x-x

and you would just raise 1NT to 3NT. Transferring to a minor and then bidding a new suit requires partnership discussion. Many experts play it as showing shortness. Even though this is in the "Newer Players" section, this material is for the serious newer players. In fact, this entire installment requires a degree of studiousness and a need for some practice and memorization.

After a 2NT opening, all of the same principles as above apply. 2NT-3♣; 3♦-3♥/3♠ shows 5-4 in the majors. After 2NT-3♣; 3♥/3♠, responder should bid the other major to show slam interest. Stayman followed by 3NT guarantees a major(s). Stayman followed by 4NT is invitational, also guaranteeing a major(s). Jacoby followed by 3NT is a choice of games. ■

## BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is your call after 1NT-2♣; 2♦ with:

1. ♠A J x x ♥A 10 x x ♦x x ♣x x x

2. ♠K J x x x ♥Q 10 x x ♦x ♣Q x x

What is your call after 1NT-2♣; 2♠ with:

3. ♠K J x x x ♥Q 10 x x ♦x ♣Q x x

4. ♠A Q x x ♥x x ♦A K x x ♣K x x

What is your call after 1NT-2♥; 2♠ with:

5. ♠K Q 10 x x x ♥x ♦x x x ♣Q 9 x

6. ♠A Q x x x ♥K Q x x ♦x x ♣x x

What is your call after 2NT-3♣; 3♦ with:

7. ♠K J x x x ♥Q 10 x x ♦x ♣Q x x

8. ♠A Q x x ♥A J 9 x ♦10 x x ♣x x

### Answers

- 2NT. Invitational.
- 2♠. Five spades, invitational, unbalanced.
- 4♠. Same hand as No. 2, but with the known nine-card fit, you have enough for game.
- 3♥. Artificial (three of the other major). This sets spades as trump and shows slam interest. (4NT would be quantitative/invitational).
- 3♠. Invitational.
- This is a trick question. You should have started with Stayman (5-4 = Stayman). If you bid 3♥ now, you are promising 5-5 in the majors.
- 3♠. This hand should look familiar by now! This shows five spades, four hearts and a forcing hand. If using a convention called Smolen, you would bid 3♥ instead to play spades from the strong side.
- 4NT. Invitational. ■