

Lebensohl

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The first problem

LHO opens a weak 2♠, partner doubles and RHO passes.

Unless you have good spades and are willing to convert the take out double to penalty, you must bid!

But what??

A	B	C	D
♠32	♠32	♠432	♠32
♥7654	♥KJ7654	♥AQ654	♥KJ7654
♦10987	♦KJ8	♦KJ8	♦AQ98
♣Q75	♣75	♣75	♣75

A bid 3♥ since very weak.

B bid 3♥. Values may be sufficient to make this but not invitational.

C bid 3♥ since we want to invite partner to bid game.

D bid 4♥ since we expect to make game.

The problem is that too many hands want to bid 3♥.

What to do?

The 2nd problem

Partner opens 1 NT, RHO bids 2♠ and it's your bid. But what??

A	B	C	D
♠32	♠32	♠432	♠32
♥K97654	♥KJ7654	♥AQ654	♥KJ7654
♦987	♦KJ8	♦KJ8	♦AQ9
♣75	♣75	♣75	♣75

A bid 3♥ since it might be cheap going 1 or 2 off.

B bid 3♥. Values may be sufficient to make this but not invitational.

C bid 3♥ since we want to invite partner to bid game.

D bid 4♥ since we expect to make game.

The problem is that too many hands want to bid 3♥.

What to do?

More ways to bid 3♥

The answer is to note that 2NT is not a desirable contract to play in and to change the meaning of 2NT in these problem sequences.

- After (2♠)-X-(P)-2NT is always an artificial instruction to bid 3♣.
- After 1NT-(2 suit)-2NT is always an artificial instruction to bid 3♣.
- Bidding 3♥ after 2NT-3♣ is always a weaker meaning.
- Bidding 3♥ without going via 2NT-3♣ is a stronger meaning.

Let us return to the 1st problem now.

The first problem revisited

LHO opens a weak 2♠, partner doubles and RHO passes.

A	B	C	D
♠32	♠32	♠32	♠32
♥7654	♥KJ76	♥KJ76	♥AK76
♦10987	♦Q1098	♦KQ98	♦AQ98
♣Q75	♣875	♣Q75	♣1075

- A bid **2NT**-3♣-3♥ since you are very weak (0-7) and do not want partner to bid again. You do not expect a good outcome!
- B bid **2NT**-3♣-3♥. Still weak (0-7) but may be sufficient to make this but it is not invitational. You hope for a good outcome.
- C bid **3♥** good values (8-11) and we want to invite partner to bid game.
- D bid **4♥** GF values (12+) and we expect to make game.

The problem seems to be solved.

More ways to bid 3♥: Part 2

We were compelled to bid by partner's take out double so the ranges are

- 0-7, goes via 2NT-3♣, weak and partner is expected to pass
- 8-11, bids directly at the 3 level, invites partner to bid game.
- 12+, bids game (or cue bids opponents' suit forcing the auction to game)

The 2nd problem

Partner opens 1 NT, RHO bids 2♠ and it's your bid holding:-

A	B	C	D
♠32	♠32	♠432	♠32
♥K97654	♥KJ7654	♥AQ654	♥KJ7654
♦987	♦KJ8	♦KJ8	♦AQ9
♣75	♣75	♣75	♣75

- A need to pass since don't have invitational values.
- B bid 2 NT-3♣-3♥. This is invitational.
- C bid 3♥ directly since we want to force the auction to game but 3 NT is an option.
- D bid 4♥ directly since we know this is the correct game.

The problem seems to be solved.

Lebensohl (..-2 NT-3♣-..)

This use of 2 NT forcing a response of 3♣ gives us 2 different ways of making a bid at the 3 level.

After 1 NT and interference, we are not compelled to bid so

- we do not need a weak bid - just pass
- bidding via 2 NT-3♣, shows invitational values
- bidding directly at the 3 level, forces the auction to game.
- cue bidding the opponents' suit is GF but only a 4 card major and no stopper in their suit
- bidding via 2 NT-3♣ then cue bidding the opponents' suit is GF but only a 4 card major but does have a stop in the opponents' suit (**slow shows**).
- bidding game shows a 5+card suit with game values.

Sometimes we can get more meaning: Part 1

Suppose LHO opens a natural weak $2\diamond$, partner doubles and RHO passes, we now have more possibilities viz.,

- $2\heartsuit$ or $2\spadesuit$ shows 0-7 and 4+cards. Partner will pass unless very strong (18+ maybe).
- $2NT$ - $3\clubsuit$ - $3\heartsuit$ (or $2NT$ - $3\clubsuit$ - $3\spadesuit$) shows 8-11. It is invitational, partner may bid on.
- $3\heartsuit$ or $3\spadesuit$ is forcing to game.
- $4\heartsuit$ or $4\spadesuit$ shows game values somewhat based on long trumps.
- cue of opponents' suit shows game values but only a 4 card major so start showing major suits at the 3 level.

Sometimes we can get more meaning: Part 2

Suppose partner opens 1 NT and RHO bids a natural 2♦, we now have more possibilities viz.,

- 2♥ or 2♠ is competitive; i.e. we expect to have a reasonable chance of making but it is not invitational.
- 2NT-3♣-3♥ (or 2NT-3♣-3♠) shows 8-11 and invites partner to bid to game.
- 3♥ or 3♠ is forcing to game.
- 4♥ or 4♠ shows game values somewhat based on long trumps.
- cue of opponents' suit shows game values but only a 4 card major so start showing major suits at the 3 level.

Summarising getting more meaning: Part 3

When the opponents' bid still allows us to bid at the 2 level, we get

- a bid at the 2 level is the weakest response. It is constructive i.e. expects to make but is not invitational.
- bidding **2NT**-**3♣** and then a bid at the 3 level, is the next strength up. It is invitational.
- bidding directly at the 3 level is stronger again. It is GF.
- bidding at the 4 level or cuing opponents' suit is also a strong option.

Summary

- Using the 2NT puppet to 3♣ to give us two ways of bidding at the 3 level is a very useful tool.
- It is almost impossible to bid effectively without it.
- diamonds can be bid exactly like hearts or spades but we usually prefer to find major fits.
- ..2NT-3♣-P can never be invitational (only constructive or, if you bid again, FG).
- It avoids the illegal methods of looking closely at partner or gauging their hesitation, to work out whether to bid again or not.
- The method appears in other auctions as "Good-Bad 2NT".
- A similar use is Kokish over a 2♣ opener to get two ways to bid 2NT (with different ranges).