



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(469) Meckstroth Advances**

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Level: 9 of 10 (5 of 6)

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#### **General**

When the opponents open the bidding with a Major suit at the 1-level and partner makes a Michaels cuebid, showing 5+cards in the other Major and a 5+card minor suit, then Advancer has only a small amount of space to describe their hand and figure out the best place to play. Most partnerships use a 2NT bid by Advancer to ask the Michaels bidder to bid their minor suit, while some partnerships use 3♣ to accomplish the same thing with the Michaels bidder passing or correcting to 3♦. *Meckstroth Advances* are a system of bids for Advancer that allow us to describe a large variety of hands in these highly competitive auctions.

#### **More Options for Advancer after Michaels – *Meckstroth Advances***

The idea behind Meckstroth Advances is to give Advancer ways to show a variety of different strength hands in support of each of Interferer's suit. In this system named for Jeff Meckstroth, Advancer has the ability to stop in either of partner's suits or invite game in either of partner's suits, and sometimes even more options. Let's look at the two common situations in detail to understand how Advancer shows these various different hand types.

One of the first things to take into consideration is what we expect in terms of HCP for a Michaels cuebid. Depending on our partnership agreements, it could be 5-11 HCP or simply 5+ HCP. This range can also vary quite a bit based on vulnerability and position in which the Michaels bids is made. Whatever we expect partner to have will affect our bidding as Advancer. The values need to invite game will not be the traditional 10-12 points opposite an opening hand. Invitational values will vary based on what we expect partner to hold.

#### *Example 1*

If partner's bid has a range of 5-11 points, then an invitational bid will invite partner to bid game with the top of that range – about 8-11 HCP. That means that Advancer needs to have more than an opening hand's worth of playing strength to invite game.



### Meckstroth Advances

1♥ 2♥ P \_\_\_?

- 2♠ To play, 2+card ♠, less than invitational values.
- 2NT\* Game try with fit for both minor suits. Invitational+ values.
- 3♣ Pass or Correct
- 3♦\* Invitational with a ♠ fit, 3+card ♠.
- 3♥ Game Forcing, Western Cuebid. Usually no Major suit fit.
- 3♠ Shapely invite, 4+card ♠, fewer values.
- 3NT To play
- 4♣ Pass or Correct. Large fit, 4+cards, for both minors. Less than invitational values.
- 4♦\* Game Forcing ♠ raise. 3+card ♠. *Forcing Passes On!*
- 4♥\* Splinter in support of ♠
- 4♠ To play, shapely hand. Not a lot of values.
- 4NT Game Forcing raise to 5-minor. Asks opener to bid minor. Strong hand.
- 5♣ Pass or Correct. Large fit, 4+cards, for both minors. Not a lot of values.

1♠ 2♠ P \_\_\_?

- 2NT\* Game try with fit for both minor suits. Invitational+ values.
- 3♣ Pass or Correct
- 3♦\* Invitational with a ♥ fit, 3+card ♥.
- 3♥ 2+card ♥ support, to play.
- 3♠ Game Forcing, Western Cuebid. Usually no Major suit fit.
- 3NT To play
- 4♣ Pass or Correct. Large fit, 4+cards, for both minor. Less than invitational values.
- 4♦\* Game Forcing ♥ raise. 3+card ♥. *Forcing Passes On!*
- 4♥ To play, shapely hand. Not a lot of values.
- 4NT Game Forcing raise to 5-minor. Asks opener to bid minor. Strong hand.
- 5♣ Pass or Correct. Large fit, 4+cards, for both minors. Not a lot of values.

### Follow-up Bids After a Minor Suit Game Try

After a 2NT bid by the Advancer, trying for game in Interferer's minor suit, then the Michaels bidder can stop in a part score by bidding their minor suit at the 3-level. With a game forcing hand, the Michaels bidder can bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit, cuebid the opponent's suit without a stopper, or even bid their Major at the 3-level to show a 6-card suit.



## Other Situations Where Meckstroth Advances Apply

This bidding system is an effective tool for Advancer to try for a variety of different game contracts. This system of Meckstroth Advances can be used in other situations where partner has shown a 5-card Major and a 5-card minor suit. Some examples of these are Woolsey and Modified Cappelletti vs. 1NT Opening bids.

### *Example 2*

1NT    2♥\*    P    \_\_\_?

- 2NT    Invites game with a minor suit fit
- 3♣    Pass or Correct
- 3♦\*    Invites game in ♥.
- 3♥    Mild invite with ♥ fit

## Conclusion

Meckstroth Advances are a sophisticated system of raises when partner (the Interferer) has shown a 5+card Major and a minor suit. This bidding adds some complexity to the partnership's communication but it gives us some tools for investigating a variety of games and including partner in the decision-making process. If you have a sophisticated partnership give this a try with your regular partner.