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This Week in Bridge

(514) 1m – 2NT (or 3NT) Auctions and Follow-ups

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

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General

When partner opens the bidding with 1-minor and we have a good hand we usually still start out the auction by searching for a Major suit fit. If we do not have a 4+card Major suit, then with a distributional hand we may bid our long minor suit or support partner's suit. But it is more common that with no Major suit we will simply respond with a NT bid. After a minor suit opening, a jump to 2NT shows an invitational hand (a good 10 to bad 12 HCP) and a jump to 3NT shows a game forcing hand (a good 12 to 15 HCP). Let's look at the types of hands we have for these auctions.

Responding 2NT (or 3NT) to a 1-minor Opening Bid

When our partner opens the bidding with 1♦, our first priority is to respond with a 4+card Major. If we do not have one of those and we have an invitational or better hand, 10+ points, then we can look to raise partner's minor suit if we have a way to do so. This may mean using inverted minors. But raising partner's minor suit is not a desirable action, especially with a balanced hand. Instead, we usually simply bid NT with these hands.

A 2NT or 3NT response can be made with a variety of different hand shapes and strengths.

Example 1

1♦ ___?

♠ Q93

♥ Q83

♦ K932

♣ A83

With this scattered 11 HCP hand it is best to respond 2NT to partner's 1♦ opening bid.



Example 2

1♦ ___?

♠ A4

♥ J93

♦ J72

♣ KQ532

With 11 HCP and a 5-card ♣ suit, we can respond 2NT to our partner's 1♦ opening bid.

When partner opens the bidding with 1♣ we take a similar approach to responding. The primary difference is that we have ♦ responses available. The most commonly used ♦ response is a 1♦ bid, instead of a 2NT or 3NT response.

Example 3

1♣ ___?

♠ 93

♥ 843

♦ KQ92

♣ AKJ2

With this hand we have the right shape and strength to bid 3NT, but a better option is to respond 1♦ and let partner rebid NT if that is the right place to play.

Follow-up Bidding after 1-minor – 2NT (3NT) Auctions

When the auction begins with 1-minor – 2NT then the opening bidder has corrective and forward-going options.

Responder's 2NT Auctions

1♣ 2NT

___?

- 3♣ 5+card ♣ suit, To Play
- 3♦* *Worry Ask*, short ♦ (singleton or void), 14+ points (GF)
- 3♥* *Worry Ask*, short ♥ (singleton or void), 14+ points (GF)
- 3♠* *Worry Ask*, short ♠ (singleton or void), 14+ points (GF)
- 3NT To Play, Good 14+ points.



1♦ 2NT

___?

- 3♣ 4+card ♣ suit, Choice of partscores
- 3♦ 5+card ♦ suit, To Play
- 3♥* *Worry Ask*, short ♥ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3♠* *Worry Ask*, short ♠ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3NT To Play, Good 14+ points.

Summary: When we rebid a suit below the suit we opened, it is natural, non-forcing, and corrective. When we rebid a suit above the suit we opened, it is shortness – a worry ask.

Responder's 3NT Auctions

1♣ 3NT

___?

- 4♣ ♣ Slam Try; asks to start showing controls (or minorwood)
- 4♦* ♣ Slam Try, *Control Showing ♦ Bid*,
- 4♥* ♣ Slam Try, *Control Showing ♥ Bid*,
- 4♠* ♣ Slam Try, *Control Showing ♠ Bid*
- 4NT Quantitative, 18-19 balanced

1♦ 3NT

___?

- 4♣ Natural, 4+♣, Slam Try
- 4♦* ♦ Slam Try; asks to start showing controls (or minorwood)
- 4♥* ♦ Slam Try, *Control Showing ♥ Bid*,
- 4♠* ♦ Slam Try, *Control Showing ♠ Bid*
- 4NT Quantitative, 18-19 balanced

Conclusion

When partner open the bidding with 1-minor and we respond 2NT (or 3NT), we show an invitational (or game forcing hand) with no 4-card Major suit. We then need to have some good agreements about how to continue the auction in ways that get us to the best game and/or explore slam. Make sure that you have discussed these bids with your partners so that you can use them to show your concerns in these auctions.