

Barbara's Bridge Tip: UNBALANCED HANDS

You are the opener on each of the following hands:

Hand A:

S K5
H AQJ65
D AK643
C 2

Hand B:

S K54
H AQJ6
D AKQ43
C 2

Both hands are unbalanced and also are big hands. Happy hands!

Hand A: Do not fall into the trap on this hand: Some feel they should reverse with this hand and start with 1D, later bidding Hearts.

When you have two five-card or two six-card suits, ALWAYS open with the higher ranking. No matter what.

Open 1H, if partner now bids 2C or 1S, jump shift into 3D. Playing Two Over One, if partner had bid 2C, just bid 2D now since you are in a game-forcing sequence.

If you choose to open 1D first and then bid Hearts, you are promising more Diamonds than Hearts, which mis-describes the shape of the hand.

Hand B: On this hand, you have more Diamonds than Hearts so DO open 1D. If partner bids 1S, now bid 2H. You are showing MORE Diamonds than Hearts and you have reversed so you are promising 17 or more points including distribution.

The reverse always shows an unbalanced hand.

Hand C:

S 54
H AK76
D AJ862
C 87

On this hand, you open 1D. Partner responds 1S. You may not bid 1NT now because you do not have a stopper in Clubs and you do not even have three clubs. A useless doubleton is not acceptable as an opener rebidding NT. You must rebid 2D. You may not show your Heart suit as bidding 2H next would show 17 or more points. If responder has five Spades and four Hearts, she will next bid her Heart suit and your fit will now be discovered.

NEW MINOR FORCING. An important convention.

You have this hand:

S Q52
H AQ862
D AJ8
C 32

Your partner opens 1D. You respond 1H. Partner now bids 1NT. Your bid.

If you bid 3NT, as the cards lie, you go down. BUT partner had three-card support for your Hearts and you could have made 4H. BUT if you bid

2H it shows 6-9 points and this is non-forcing

3H it shows 10-12 points and this is non-forcing.

4H it shows 13 points but partner may have two little Hearts.

This is why you need NEW MINOR FORCING as part of your tool box. It is an important convention.

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP

First paragraph from the excellent Grand River Bridge Club (Kitchener/Waterloo) newsletter called ALERT!

Never add a convention to your methods if you have not agreed on how to play the convention. Saying you will use Jacoby is not sufficient. When you use a convention, you have to know all the parts to it. It's like going to an auto dealer and buying a quart of oil for your ailing car. You better know where to put it. If you put it in the window washer system.....

(From Insights on Bridge, Book 2, by Mike Lawrence)

Avoiding misunderstandings with your partner is the first step to a successful partnership. This means you must talk to partner about any convention or auction that has not been discussed in detail by the partnership.

e.g.

1N - 2C
2D - 2S*

*If the opening bidder has no clue what that bidding sequence shows, then how can the auction proceed with any expectation of success? It is all by guess or by golly if this has not been discussed.

In Standard American, this *2S bid shows 8-9 HCP with 5 Spades and 4 Hearts.

If you are playing Smolen, then perhaps it shows 8-9 HCP with 4 Spades and 5 Hearts.

If you have never discussed it, then you may think you just have a confused partner who forgot to make a transfer and now wants to say "By the way, I have five Spades!"

Another example:

1C - 3C Limit raise with 5 or more Clubs
3N - 4C*

Just what is 4C? Maybe partner just wants to say: "Hey, I like Clubs!!!"

Once again, you have to discuss this. Alex and I would play this as Gerber because we prefer to play hands in NT than in five of a minor. Try not to think that you should try to save partner. If she does not make 3NT, that is partner's problem.

OK, what is this auction, one that we hear WAY too often.

1NT - 2C
2NT*

There is no such auction. Does it mean that the Opening bidder miscounted the first time around and now finds that he has 18 HCP?

And what is this auction?

1H - 3S*

Is this a Splinter showing 13-15 dummy points and a singleton or void in Spades with four-card support for Hearts? Or does it show a weak hand with seven Spades? Discuss, discuss, discuss.

There's more! You open 1NT and your LHO bids 2S and partner bids 3C. What is that? Is this Stayman? Or does it show long Clubs and 10 or more points? Or a weak hand with Clubs? Just how many points? Is this forcing?

Playing Standard, partner would have to bid 3S to bid Stayman (cuebid of opponent's suit). 3C should NEVER be Stayman. So once again: Discussion is needed. If you are playing Lebensohl, then there are further innuendos.

You open 1NT and your LHO bids 2S and your partner says Double. Is that a relay to 3C (Stolen bid)? Or is it a penalty double? Or does it merely show 7 or more HCP (called "showing values"). Stolen bids are not played by good players. It should show 7 or more HCP and the opening bidder will now decide what to do next.

You open 1NT and your LHO bids 2S and your partner says 3D. Is this a transfer to Hearts? Playing Standard, it should show 10 or more HCP and at least five Diamonds. The ability to transfer is gone so if you had five Hearts and 10 or more HCP, you would have had to bid 3H which is forcing.

All of these auctions and lots more all need to be discussed if you want your telephone to ring and you wish to achieve good results!

BRIDGE JARGON: TEST YOURSELF!

There are many bridge expressions used commonly in the world of more experienced players. Test your knowledge of the jargon. Answers are at the bottom of this article (No Peeking)

1. COFFEEHOUSING

- a) Getting your cup of coffee just before your virtual or live game.
- b) Making improper remarks in order to mislead or distract your opponents.
- c) The coffee shops closest to your house.
- d) Storing your coffee supplies in your pantry.

2. COLD

- a) A contract that a player cannot fail to make regardless of the best defence.
- b) When you mis-bid or misplay a hand, partner's attitude towards you.
- c) Someone who is aloof or unfriendly at the table.
- d) Playing bridge in northern climes.

3. CONTROL

- a) A dominating partner.
- b) Stopping partner from overbidding by underbidding your hand.
- c) A feature in your hand that stops the opponents from taking two tricks in that suit.
- d) Resisting the temptation to snack at the table.

4. ELIMINATION

- a) Losing a match in teams and being knocked out.
 - b) When you cannot work out what to do, work out what not to do. Then you are left with only one choice.
 - c) Going frequently to the washroom.
 - d) The removal of safe exit cards from defenders' hands in preparation for an end play.
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BARBARA'S BRIDGE TIP: THE "SHORT" DIAMOND

There are innumerable partnership misunderstandings over this subject!

THE SHORT DIAMOND: The only time you would ever open 1D, with only three cards in the suit, is when you are 4-4 in the majors and have a doubleton club.

e.g.

S KQxx
H KQxx
D 543
C K3

You open 1 D with this hand because when you do not have a 5 card suit, you always open with your longest minor. Some believe they should always have four diamonds in order to open 1D and so they would choose to open the above hand with 1C but we think that is madness. Those who play "short club" (as in two or fewer clubs) end up short on the score sheet also!!! This above-shaped hand, with 4-4-3-2, when you must open 1D with only three diamonds, occurs only 4% of the time. BUT if you

agree with partner that you must have FOUR diamonds, then when you open with 1C, partner is left thinking that you may have only two clubs. Why let her suffer with that possibility?

So, you must understand and fully accept that when your partner opens with 1 D and only has three of them, she will also have 4-4 in the majors.

Let us look at some subsequent deductions that must now be made:

1D - 1H
1NT - ?

You, the responder, now know that opener has four diamonds, NOT three. If he had three diamonds only, he would have had 4-4 in the majors and thus would have raised your hearts.

N.B. Anytime that partner opens 1D and does not support your major suit response directly, he cannot have a short diamond. He has perforce at least four Diamonds.

With this next hand:

S AKQ4
H 432
D KJ3
C J32

You must open with 1 C. When you have two three-card minors, you open with 1C. Always. This allows you the best and most economical choice of rebid. Do not choose to open with 1 D on this hand above because you have heard that you should open with your "better minor." Because if you open with 1D and partner now bids 2C, you cannot now bid 2NT with three baby hearts.

One more:

Partner (North) opens 1D and your RHO (East) bids 3S (very rude of this person!!)

South has

S 876
H A2
D KJ95
C K876

What should he now do?

East is marked with seven spades and South has three spades. Therefore North cannot have four spades. If he opened 1 D with only three diamonds on this hand, he would have to have four spades. He cannot have four spades, thus he must have four diamonds. Therefore, South should now bid 4D.

Once you find out from the bidding that opener cannot have 4 hearts or 4 spades, then she must have at least four diamonds!

THINKING BRIDGE by EDDIE KANTAR

Dlr: East				North			
				S. 8764			
				H. 107			
				D. K84			
				C. K1064			
		West				East	
		S. 932				S. AKQJ105	
		H. 654				H. AQ32	
		D. 9632				D. A7	
		C. J98				C. A	
				South			
				S. -			
				H. KJ98			
				D. QJ105			
				C. Q7532			
East	South	West	North				
2C	Pass	2D	Pass				
2S	Pass	3C	Pass				
4S	All Pass						
				Opening lead: DQ			

Bidding Commentary: The bidding needs a little explanation. 2C is strong and artificial, 2D is a waiting response (waiting for disaster!) and 2S is forcing. 3C, as many play after a 2D response and a major suit rebid, shows a bust hand denying an ace, a king or two queens. Knowing what is opposite, East bids 4S looking at close to 10 tricks. No matter how you and partner play, you have to have a way to show a bust hand facing a 2C opener.

Defensive Commentary: North plays the D8 at trick one to show partner the king.

Play Commentary: The title of this hand should be 'resisting temptation'. There is a strong temptation to cross to the S9 and take a heart finesse. However, it is a very risky play as you have 10 sure tricks no matter who has the heart king. Count tricks! You have 6 top spades and three aces for 9. If you ruff a heart in dummy with the S9, that makes 10. Do it. Win the DA and play the ace and a heart. No matter what the opponents do, you are in great shape. Just keep that S9 over there. When next on lead, concede a second heart and then, finally, ruff your HQ with the S9, your 10th trick. Notice that if you take the heart finesse it loses (what else is new?) and you will not be able to trump your fourth heart in dummy, North will overtrump.

As declarer, when you have a 4-3 side suit (hearts) with a high trump in dummy, consider ruffing that fourth card with a high trump in case the suit does not break 3-3

ANSWERS TO BRIDGE JARGON QUIZ:

1. COFFEEHOUSING

b) Making improper remarks in order to mislead or distract your opponents. This is considered unethical.

2.COLD

a) A contract that a player cannot fail to make regardless of the best defence.

3.CONTROL

c) A feature in your hand that stops the opponents from taking two tricks in that suit.

4.ELIMINATION

d) The removal of safe exit cards from defenders' hands in preparation for an end play.