

BARBARA & ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP

You are NORTH. Your RHO (WEST) opens 2S . You Pass, LHO (EAST) passes and your partner (SOUTH) doubles. RHO passes and it is your bid with this hand:

S A2
H 109763
D K63
C K76
Do you bid
a) 3H b) 4H c) 1NT

If you had

S 32
H 5432
D 7642
C 432

What would you bid when partner doubles? You would have to bid 3H, yes?

You HAVE to respond to her takeout double, unhappy as you are with the situation. So, the first hand above is way better, do you agree?

S A2
H 109763
D K63
C K76

If you bid 3H, you really are promising 0-8 points. You have more than that so you have to jump to 4H to show more points.

Over to partner. Imagine her surprise when she hears 4H from you.

She has
S K3
H AKQJ542
D AJ
C A2

The worrisome part is that South (with above hand) is going to be dummy and her Spade King is not happily placed. From her point of view, if partner does not have the Spade Queen or Ace, your side could lose two tricks quickly when East leads through the S King.

South bids 4NT, ever optimistic, and hears 5C (1 key card) from North. South settled in 6H but actually should have bid 5NT asking about Kings. Then NS would have got to the grand slam. Had West not opened with 2S, for sure NS would have reached the Grand Slam. South would have opened 2C.

2C - 2D
2H - 3H
4N - 5C
5N - 6H (2 kings using old-fashioned Blackwood for the King-ask)
7NT because South can now count 13 tricks and 7NT provides the very best possible score!

EDDIE KANTAR FACTS OF BRIDGE LIFE

Good Advice To Give Your Partner By Eddie Kantar

Surely a player of your bridge skills is familiar with most or all of the following tips you are about to read. But is your partner?

a) After you open 1H or 1S and partner responds 1NT (possibly denying support for your major, don't rebid your major unless you have a six-card suit.

b) A takeout double by a passed hand shows 9-11 points with shortness in the opener's suit. If the opponents have bid two suits, the double promises at least four-card support for both unbid suits.

e.g. You hold: S AJxx H xx D KJ10xx C xx

You should make a takeout double. You show both unbid suits with your double. A 2D overcall might lose a spade fit.

c) A 2NT response to a takeout double shows 11-12 HCP and is not forcing. A 1NT response to a takeout double shows 8-10 HCP. Notrump responses to a takeout double guarantee at least one stopper (hopefully two), in the opponents' suit.

e.g. You hold: S KJ9x H xx D Q10x C Qxxx

Your LHO opens 1S and partner makes a takeout double. Pass by RHO.

Respond 1NT. With the C AJxx, respond 2NT. You don't need stoppers in the other suits. Partner is supposed to have stuff in those for the double.

d) You should only ever open the bidding with 1D holding only three Diamonds when you are 4-4 in the majors, three diamonds and two clubs. The incidence of a 1D opening bid with this exact distribution is less than 3%. Translation: When partner opens 1D, assume partner has four or more diamonds.

e) After partner opens the bidding and second hand overcalls 1NT to show the strength of an opening 1NT bid, double for penalty if you have 9 or more HCP. Bidding a suit denies the strength to double.

e.g. You hold: S 10x H KJxx D AJxxx C J10

1S by partner and 1NT overcall by your RHO. You should double.

You have them outgunned. You should be able to defeat 1NT easily. If you bid 2D, you are showing fewer than 9 HCP with at least five diamonds, usually six. Don't always be in such a hurry to play the hand. BEAT your opponents, doubled, and get better scores!

DECLARER PLAY

by Jack Brawner. St Petersburg (FL) Bridge Club

The single biggest mistake that declarers -- not just new ones! -- make is quite simple: ruffing in the long hand. (The long hand is usually declarer's hand: It usually has MORE trump than dummy)

Let's look at an example situation. Dummy has
S A54 (which are trump)

C Axx

Declarer has

S KQJ32

C 2

We are only showing you some of the cards.

A club is led by Declarer's LHO. So many times I see declarer take the Ace and ruff a club. This is NOT a good play. You expect to get five spade tricks with normal play. If you ruff a club in your hand, that does NOT gain a trick -- now you will get four spade tricks and one ruff. The same five tricks as before! Ruff the other club in your hand, and you still only have the same five tricks, but now you only have three spades to draw trumps with -- you better hope nobody started with four of them or they will now have more than you do!

Now let's reverse the clubs. Give dummy the singleton club and give declarer the Axx. Ruff twice in dummy and now your spade tricks have IMPROVED from five to seven tricks! And you still have the five trumps in your hand to draw the opponents' trumps.

With rare exceptions, remember this:

RUFFING IN THE LONG HAND BREAKS EVEN OR LOSES

RUFF IN THE SHORT HAND! You ALWAYS gain tricks that way!

BIDDING BRUSH UP

Hand by Rob Drummond: Toronto Bridge

You are North. 1C by your RHO (West) and you have these cards:

S 732

H 8

D AKQJ987

C A6

Let's say you bid 1D. Now 2C by your LHO (East) and your partner (South) holds these cards:

S A1094

H KJ54

D 1032

C 75

What should partner (South) bid?

If South bids 1H, he may find partner with shortness in Hearts and more Spades. If he bids 1S instead, he may find partner with shortness in Spades and more Hearts. i.e. Whatever suit South chooses to bid will be wrong. ENTER the Responsive Double. This is only used when the opponents have opened and raised. Sometimes called OBAR: Opening Bid and Raised. You can make a Responsive Double with 8 or more points when partner has either overcalled or made a takeout double and the opponents have opened the bidding and opener's partner has raised. The bid shows 4-4 in the majors after Clubs and Diamonds have been bid. The two unbid suits.

1C - 1D - 2C - Double

Now West bids 3C. What should you (North) bid next?

The answer will surprise you.

You have 8 tricks in your own hand and your partner has promised 8 or more points with at least 4-4 in the majors.

S 732

H 8

D AKQJ987

C A6

What should you now bid? 3NT. Count those tricks!

Thanks to Rob Drummond for this hand.

BIDDERS' CHALLENGE (FREE)

This is an excellent opportunity to test your bidding and learn from the best. Plus, this year there are cash prizes! Good luck!!!

Suggestion from Marc Smith (co-author of 25 Conventions)

Explanation by Barbara Giesbrecht

1. When you login to BBO, you will be in the Lobby. Along the right hand side you will see news daily News items, usually headed by "This Week's Highlights". One of the items will be "Bidders Challenge". Click on that item.

2. A small box will pop up on your screen. It will contain information about this month's challenge and, if you scroll down within the box, a place to enter your contact details and your bids (when you are ready to submit).

3. The eight hands given in the challenge will be hard to bid. So, before submitting your bids, it is good to take your time and consider 2 or 3 possible bids for each hand. There will be a link in the box (usually shown in blue) that allows you to see all the hands in advance of bidding. Click on this link and, if possible, print out the sheet of questions. At this point, you can close the window and come back to it when you are ready.

4. If you would rather just shot gun your bids, scroll down in the box and enter your BBO name and other contact details. As BBO will be telling everyone that you won the contest (😊), they will need your permission to display your name and location to other participants. Please click on the circle to allow BBO to do that.

5. Click on dark blue "Start Bidding" button.

6. Each problem will appear on the screen along with bidding options. Click on the bid of your choice for each problem before going on to the next.

7. After completing the bidding for all eight problems, hit the Submit button.

8. That is all there is to it. Once you have done your submission, you will get an email immediately to acknowledge your entry. When the competition closes (28th of each month) you will receive an email from BBO giving you your score. There will also be a link to an article that shows the bidding panel's comments, an analysis of each hand, and a list of winners.

TEST YOUR BRIDGE by ANDREW ROBSON

West and East have each dropped a card. Can you find the missing cards?

WEST'S POSSIBLE MISSING CARD: Club Ace, Spade 10, Diamond Jack

EAST'S POSSIBLE MISSING CARD: Heart Ace, Spade 7, Diamond 2

♠ K J 9 6 4 3				
♥ 8				
♦ 5 3				
♣ Q 10 9				
	West	North	East	South
				1 ♥
1 ♠		2 ♥	3 ♠	4 ♥
4 ♠		Pass	Pass	Pass

West's card: ♠ A is correct.

If West had the ♠ 10 he would have jumped to 3 ♠ on their first turn to bid.

With the ♦ J, West would have made a weak jump overcall of 2 ♠ on the first round.

Had West held the ♣ A, he would have been too strong to preempt on the first round. He would have bid 1 ♠. When he hears partner's preemptive raise of 3 ♠, (showing 2-6 points and 4 card support) he would know that their side held 10 trumps and thus would bid 4 ♠ based on the Law of Total Tricks. Even though East-West cannot make 4 ♠, it is better to be down than allow NS to make 4 ♥.

East's card was the ♦ 2.

If East had held the ♠ 7, he would have initially have bid 4 ♠ (The Weak Freak), knowing their side had ten trumps.

Had East held the ♦ 2, East could only guarantee the partnership had nine trumps, and would bid 3 ♠.

With the ♥ A in East's hand, he would have had 10 high card points, strong enough for a cuebid raise showing 10+ points and a fit (3+ cards in trumps).

UNUSUAL NT

by RICHARD ROSS DIRECTOR & MANAGER
OF STEPHEN'S BRIDGE CLUB

The Unusual 2NT overcall is used after the opponents open the bidding. A 2NT overcall is artificial, showing the two lowest unbid suits (at least 5-5 shape). There is no point minimum, although obvious factors like vulnerability should be considered.

Overcall Meaning

A 2NT overcall of 1H 5+ diamonds and 5+clubs.

A 2NT overcall of 1S 5+ diamonds and 5+clubs.

A 2NT overcall of 1C 5+ hearts and 5+ diamonds.

A 2NT overcall of 1D 5+ hearts and 5+ clubs.

The Unusual 2NT is possible if one or both opponents have bid:

You are South:

S 76

H 9

D AJT84

C KJ982

West North East South

1H Pass 1S 2NT (1)

(1) 5+ clubs and 5+ diamonds.

or

South

S 7

H A9832

D AJT842

C J

West North East South

1C Pass 1NT 2NT (1)

Partner's Responses:

Partner usually bids the suit that he has the most tolerance for. With equal length in both suits, especially with two doubletons, he bids the cheapest suit.

Rebids by the 2NT Bidder:

Raises are natural and non-forcing (Ed note: These show extra values: 16+ points) All other bids show a very good hand.

Other Considerations:

The Unusual Notrump is a useful convention because:

It immediately shows partner a specific two-suited hand that would otherwise take two bids to illustrate.

It pre-empts the opponents.

CARD SENSE

by Barry Crane

Card sense is when it's technically right to do something, the little man that sits on my shoulder says: "Don't do that." And you say to yourself, "Well, wait a minute, that's the right way to play." And he says, "Yeah, but you don't wanna play that way."

That instinct is card sense. It's almost an ability to feel where the cards are. It's something you can't buy, you can't find; you're born with. The ability to do the right thing at the wrong time or really to do the wrong thing at the right time.

AUTHOR: Barry Crane, long considered the best bridge player ever in the world, although now deceased. He also produced Mission Impossible, and The Incredible Hulk, The Six Million Dollar Man, Mannix and many other great shows. Sadly, he was murdered in his home in 1985. The person who wins the most master points in a year wins the Barry Crane Trophy, and the list of top players is known as the Barry Crane Top 500.

ED NOTE: Do not despair if you do not have this mystical ingredient called card sense. VERY few bridge players have this. Less than 1 % in my opinion. The other 99% (in other words, the normal mortals) rely on studying the game and learning by rote how to bid and how to play and how to defend.