

## 2H AS A SUPER NEGATIVE OR A BUST HAND??

We are often asked why we do not recommend playing 2H as showing a bust (lousy) hand in response to a 2C opener.

We prefer 2D as a waiting bid. Our reasons follow:

If you are playing 2H to show a really weak, bad hand in response to 2C:

e.g.

You (NORTH) have

S xxxx  
H xx  
D Jxxxx  
C xx

Partner opens 2C. You bid 2H: showing a bust.

Opener (SOUTH) has

S Kx  
H AKQxxx  
D AQ  
C KJx

S      N  
2C    2H  
3H    You can pass.

Opener bids 3H. You are allowed to pass this by the way.

Anyway, the big hand becomes the dummy...not only is that bad because opponents can more readily defend well when they can see the big hand. BUT look at those lovely tenaces in C and D. You really want the player to the LEFT of the strong hand (West) to lead UP to that hand as whatever they lead will give you a trick. But if the weak hand has bid 2H, then the big hand will be the dummy (and exposed) AND the opening lead will be made THROUGH those honours. i.e. we prefer to be last to play to a trick with this hand, not second to play.

e.g. IF the lead had been a Diamond by West from Kxxx, then South's AQ will now win TWO tricks. But if East led a Diamond, dummy will play the D Queen and West's D King will win a trick.

It may be only a difference of one trick but have you ever been down one in a contract???

OR...

You (North)

S xxx  
H AQxxx  
D Xxx  
C Qx

South

S AQxx  
H Jx  
D AKJx  
C AQJ

S        N  
2C     2N  
3N

S opens 2C, you bid 2NT with North hand which shows 8 or more HCP and a good quality 5 card H suit. (That is what you are required to do if you are playing this convention, because 2H would show a bust hand.)

S bids 3NT (because N has shown 5 Hearts and South does not like H). Once again, the contract is wrong-sided. The strong hand is laid down and the opening lead is coming through your tenaces vs up to your tenaces. i.e. the dummy is playing 2nd to the trick vs 4th to the trick. It would have been way better if W had been on lead after this sequence:

2C - 2H  
2N - 3N

If W had led a D, that would give you an extra trick right on opening lead. OR a H or a C or a S. But with East on lead, and the big hand being dummy, it is more perilous.

## DISCARDING

S J105  
H Q65  
D A76  
C K654

S A98643  
H 432  
D J102  
C 8

S ---  
H AKJ9  
D 9543  
C J10732

S KQ72  
H 1087  
D KQ8  
C AQ9

**S**  
**1NT**

**N**  
**3NT**

At trick one of spade suit led by partner, East has no Spades and wishes to tell partner to lead a Heart. If he discards the 9 of Hearts, West will indeed lead a heart to East. BUT then East will have squandered a trick in Hearts by wasting the 9 Hearts.

Instead, especially because this is No Trumps, East should discard the 2 Diamonds. (She could discard first the 2 Clubs, but since it is a black card on West's black card, then West might not notice...better to discard the 2 Diamonds.

Declarer wins the first trick with K Spades and leads another spade as it is imperative that she drive out the Ace Spades in order to make her contract. West wins with the Ace and East now has an opportunity for yet another discard. East must discard the 2 Clubs now. Now the picture is complete. East has said to partner: "Do not lead a diamond. Do not lead a club." It would be insanity for West to lead another spade. This leaves West with no choice but to pick the leftover suit to lead: West should lead a heart. Look what happens now...East will score 4 heart tricks as well as West scoring the Ace Spades. Five tricks. Down one!

Thus versus No Trumps, a negative discard is often the best strategy, saving our high good cards for defeating the contract.