

ACTION AFTER WE OPEN A WEAK TWO

First assessment: could game be on for us ? If so, either:

- Bid it immediately if you have a reasonable chance of making it opposite a minimum,
OR - Enquire about partners hand

Opposite a weak 2 of 5-9 points, you need around 15 points to make an enquiry. NOTE: at pairs you should have more to enquire than at teams. This is because at teams you want to stretch to bid any games with around a 40% chance, but at pairs you don't want to be in game going off when everyone else is making 9 tricks.

How to judge when to bid/enquire:

Key factors are:

- Do you have a source of tricks ?
- How many losers do you have ?
- Are your points primary ones (A/K) or secondary ones (Q/J) ?
- Imagine a typical hand for partner; how many tricks can you take opposite that hand?

Example hands after partner opens 2H:

- 1) Axx, Ax, KQ10x, Axxx
- 2) AKJxx, KQ10x, Qx, xxx
- 3) Axxx, AKxx, QJ10x, x
- 4) Kx, Axx, AQJ10xx, xx
- 5) KQxx, Qx, AJx, Kxxx
- 6) AKx, K, AQxxx, KJxx

The 2NT enquiry: asks partner to provide more information. Responses are:

3 of the trump suit = weak hand, bottom of the range

3 another suit = values in that suit (defined as Q or better)

3NT = very strong trumps (AKQxxx, or by agreement, AKJxxx, AQJxxx, or AK10xxx)

With a hand with values in 2 suits outside trumps, bid the lower. Partner can then bid another suit to ask if you have help in it –

2S – 2NT – 3D (values) – 3H (have you values in H ?) – 3NT says yes, 3S says no.

With a powerful hand but no support for partner, when you think you could make 3NT, just bid it – don't give away information about partner's hand to help the opponents.

Answers

1 – 4H; 2 – 4H; 3 – 4H; 4 – 2NT, then bid 4H if partner is max.; 5 – 2NT, then bid 4H if partner is max.; 6 – bid 4H (NOT 3NT)

Subsequent assessment: could we have a slam ? Normally with a very strong hand you would first use the 2NT enquiry to get further information. After a positive response from partner, 4 of the suit below trumps is a trump asking bid (how many of the top three honours do you have ?). Responses are steps: first step = 0/1, second step = 2, third step = 3. Other bids are cue bids, looking for partner to show shortages (singleton or void).

After a negative response (3 of the trump suit showing a very weak hand) bids below game are cue bids asking partner to show any values (K or A). Game bids are to play (3NT, 4H, 4S)

When game is not on: consider what the opponents might have. If you have 12/13 points, it is unlikely that they can make game, so just pass the weak 2. If you have 10 points or fewer, it is likely that they have a game, so try to prevent them getting there easily. If you can raise to 4, do so when the vulnerability is suitable, but do it immediately.

This prevents the opponents sharing information about their hands, and may well stop them bidding at all – they would need more to bid after 2H – P – 4H than they would in protective position.

Even a raise to 3 can be difficult for the opponents to handle, so consider doing that if you don't have enough for 4. DO NOT bid 3 and then later bid 4. That just gives the opponents the option of doubling you or bidding on. When you raise to 4 immediately, you could have a good hand, and the next hand will be wary of bidding when their partner appears to have very little.

A bid of 3 of another suit (or 2S over 2H) shows a good suit, and at least tolerance for partner – it is aimed at finding the best defence if the opponents do bid on. It is not forcing; expect partner either to pass or rebid their suit. If the new suit is a major, partner may raise with a reasonable hand and at least a doubleton in support.