

Jacoby 2NT and the Major Suit Bidding Ladder

(HOW TO SHOW A STRONG FORCING RAISE (of your partner's Major suit))

Originally the "Standard American" bidding system offered the responder four ways to raise partner's major suit. In response to an opening bid of let's say 1 Heart...with 3 card support one might raise to:

1. 2 level...minimum hand (6-10) points
2. 3 level...maximum hand (13-16) points
3. With a medium hand we had to bid a new suit...then support next bid!
4. 4 level...5 card support & less than a medium hand (11-12pts) this was used as a super blocking bid!

As time has gone by Standard American has changed. In the 70's about 30% of tournament players and a good portion of the British players were using the 3 level jump as a "limiting" raise. By the 80's the limit raise was adopted by about 80% of all tournament players. Now in the 90's...the limit raise has become one of the cornerstones of Standard American. It allows us to show medium support and block the opponents all with one bid! Now if our partner opens the bidding 1 H...we can bid 3 H to show 3 card "limited" support (11-12). **However, as in the case of most conventional bids...when you gain one thing you also lose something else...in this case it's a strong forcing raise!**

"Standard American" uses 3NT to show a hand that is 15-17 HCP and "Balanced"...since this bid comes up so rarely, and when it does it is most often misunderstood...(most players will take it as a "shut-out" bid) therefore it could be used in place of the old standard 2NT. You must remember that since this bid shows a balanced hand, no singletons, no voids and only one doubleton...**you are promising exactly 2 card support for your partner's major suit!!!** For the majority of hands this arrangement of 3NT (in place of the old 2NT) will be sufficient because the bidding will be stopping at game and 3 NT, even if misunderstood, gets you into the game.

1H...P...3NT identical to 1 H...2NT under the old system.

Therefore...when you may be interested in slam, there will be a much more efficient way of handling your forcing raises. 1H...2NT! Remember those hand where you and your partner only bid game, but because of your super "fit" everything worked and you made a slam? Your bidding was probably correct...that is, your side didn't actually have slam points...but the distribution was so great, or partner had all your

weaknesses covered...In other words there were no "wasted" values. All of your points were working. There was no way to know partner had a void in your worthless suit of xxx...or was there?

ANYTIME YOUR SIDE CAN DETERMINE YOU HAVE A 9 CARD FIT, YOU CAN SHAVE OFF AT LEAST 2 OR MORE POINTS TOWARDS GAME OR SLAM!!!

The 32 pt estimate for a small slam may now be shaved to as little as ??

There is a way to get the information needed..this bid is called **Jacoby 2NT...**

IT ALSO FITS IN NICELY WITH THE MODERN STYLE BASED ON THE PRINCIPAL OF FAST ARRIVAL VS SLOW ARRIVAL...WHEREBY THE SLOWER YOU GO THE STRONGER YOU ARE!

Remember the Principle of slow and Fast Arrival

These are the Bidding exchanges between the partnership...

Opener

1H or 1 S... Majors only!

RESPONDER(with no intervening bid)

2NT...says "Partner, I have 4-card support for your Major, and I have an opening hand or better myself...

(If you should choose to make this bid with 3 card support, because you have top honors...

DO NOT HAVE 4 CARDS IN THE OTHER MAJOR!!

With 4 Spades and 3 Hearts, bid 1 S

3 of a suit ..shows a singleton or void (Min or max hand..

Opener is duty-bound to show their singleton or void if they have one! Remember responder's hand is unlimited as yet!

3 of same suit...shows extra Pts. not necessarily extra length...16+

3NT...shows a 1 NT opening hand ...15-17 with a 5 card major!

4 of a suit...shows another good 5 card suit w/2 of top 3 honors

With a minimum hand and no extra values and no singletons or voids...jump directly to game...Using the principle of "Fast Arrival"...This IS a SHUT-OUT...no slam interest...

Jacoby 2-NT is a bid which requests (*demands!*) more information about strength and distribution of the opener's hand. Just getting the information is not the final step. Interpreting this information is the judgment that increases or decreases the value of the combined hands. If the answer in response to 2NT is 3D and the responder holds the AKQ of Diamonds...then there are duplicated or "wasted" values in the hands. However, if the opener replies 3NT, then the points have to be elsewhere and are therefore not wasted. Once you are into the "system" all bids should be alerted since they have a special meaning to the partnership.

O.K So far we have a bidding sequence of 1 H...2NT...(?)... after this bid has been made the responder should be able to decide whether or not to proceed any further. If there is a chance of slam, you may proceed one of two ways. There is always good old Blackwood...or a cheaper way is to start "cue-bidding" controls (usually Aces). Blackwood should never be initiated if your hand contains a worthless doubleton or a void...(you will not be able to accurately evaluate your partner's answers!) Also remember...Blackwood was designed to **STAY OUT OF** unmakeable slams...not to find good ones...

When you use the cue bid to investigate for slam, the 2NT bidder is the first to cue bid first round control...it may be an ace or it may be a void! 1H...2NT...3D...3S this bidding shows a singleton or void in the openers diamond suit and 1st round control of spades by the responder. Without the next control (up the line) you may bid the 2nd next in line control, **UNLESS IT TAKES YOU PAST GAME!!** 1H...2NT...3S...4C...If you don't have the Ace of Diamond you must simply bid 4 Hearts. **THIS DOES NOT PROMISE THE ACE OF**

HEARTS...YOU NEVER CUE BID THE ACE OF TRUMPS!!! Taking the bid back to the trump suit merely denies the next in line control. (Or the extra values needed to show the controls if it is past game level)

1H...2NT...4 of a suitmost partnerships are comfortable using this bid to show another **GOOD 5 card suit (others insist that 4 level should show a void and the 3 level shows a singleton) This is a partnership decision!**

By the way...if you are the defenders and this sequence of bidding is happening... you should be visualizing these hands...so you can use this information to help make your lead...

Opener **1H...**I have 5 Hearts and opening hand...

Resp **2NT...**I have opening also and 4 card support for hearts...

Opener **3S...**I have a singleton (or void) in spades...

Resp **4D...**I have the 1 round of Diamonds covered...

Opener **4H...**I don't want to go past game...and I may even have the Ace of Clubs but without any extra values...I don't want to bypass game...What now Partner?

When using conventional bids, a sound policy for the partnership to adopt is that all bids should be "natural" when the opponent's interfere in your auction.

CUE BIDS ARE ALWAYS FORCING....AND SIMPLY ASK PARTNER TO FURTHER DESCRIBE THEIR HAND Knowing the purpose of the cue bid isn't the most important part...(there could be many reasons to ask for more info) You might be:

1. Looking for a game in your suit...
2. Looking for game in 3 NT...
3. You were planning on bidding game in hearts..but 4 H is a shut-out!
4. You are looking for slam and want to make sure partner doesn't pass because you have 19 points and a jump-shift cuts out bidding room!

Many people think only 4 applies...actually all are options of the cue-bid.

The main thing to remember is **NEVER PASS YOUR PARTNER'S CUE BID!!**

If you and your partner will be using 2NT as a strong forcing raise it must be alerted!!

Responder now has one bid still available for use...3NT

This bid is very logical...3NT means 3 NT...or in other words, " Partner, we really should be in game, I have a 13-15 point balanced opening hand, the only place to play it is 3 NT. My "Balanced" hand contains no singleton, no voids and only one doubleton, therefore I promise exactly 2 card support for your suit."

There are many options you should work out with your partner before you incorporate this bid into your system. However once you have agreed upon the options I believe you will find you have added a very powerful weapon to your bidding arsenal!

Instead of using the Jacoby 2NT convention. Responder could choose to "SPLINTER"... ..make a double jump shift to show 4-card support, opening hand and a singleton or void in the "Splintered" suit..