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This Week in Bridge

(266) Dealing with Interference Over a Conventional 2NT Response

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Level: 3

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General

Usually when the opponents interfere in our auction, we give up most of the conventional bids we were planning to use and adopt a different approach, more geared towards competitive bidding. But when partner has used a conventional 2NT bid, they often have expressed a fit for our suit and are looking for some specific information about our hand to allow them to make a good decision about what to bid next. In these situations we should strive to communicate this same information to partner, even when the opponents have interfered in our auction. Here we look at how we adjust our agreements when the opponents interfere after we have made a conventional 2NT bid.

Dealing with Interference After Partner Bids Jacoby 2NT

If we open 1-Major and partner bids Jacoby 2NT, showing 4+card support and game-forcing values, then they are asking us to further describe our hand – show shortness and/or values. If our RHO interferes in our auction after partner bids Jacoby 2NT, then we want to have good agreements about how the meanings of our bids change. Let's look at some examples so we can understand these agreements.

Example 1

1♠ P 2NT* X

___?

In this auction we generally ignore the opponent's double and bid as we would with no interference.

- Pass "nothing to say", interested in letting partner decide what to do.
- XX Usually balanced or semi-balanced with interest in penalizing the opponents.
- Other Unchanged by the double

When the opponents make an overcall in our auction, they start to take away some of our bidding space and they specifically name a suit that they want led by their

partner. We adjust our agreements to help us explore slam and determine if we have a control in the opponent's suit, the likely opening lead.

Example 2

1♠ P 2NT* 3♣

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- Pass Balanced or Semi-balanced, no ♣ control.
- X Penalty, ♣Hxx+ or better
- 3♦* ♦ shortness with ♣ control
- 3♥* ♥ shortness with ♣ control
- 3♠* ♠ shortness
- 3NT Balanced, ♣Kx+ (2nd round control)
- 4♣ Balanced, ♣A (1st round control)

Example 3

1♠ P 2NT* 3♦

—?

- Pass Balanced or Semi-balanced, no ♦ control.
- X Penalty, ♦Hxx+ or better
- 3♥* ♥ shortness with ♦ control
- 3♠* ♠ shortness
- 3NT Balanced, ♦Kx+ (2nd round control)
- 4♣ ♣ shortness with ♦ control
- 4♦ Balanced, ♦A (1st round control)

Example 4

1♠ P 2NT* 3♥

—?

- Pass Balanced or Semi-balanced, no ♥ control.
- X Penalty, ♥Hxx+ or better
- 3♠* ♠ shortness
- 3NT Balanced, ♥Kx+ (2nd round control)
- 4♣ ♣ shortness with ♥ control
- 4♦ ♦ shortness with ♥ control
- 4♥ Balanced, ♥A (1st round control)

Example 5

1♠ P 2NT* 3♠
_?

This 3♠ bid ususally shows ♥ and a minor, so we treat this as similar to a 3♥ overcall.

- Pass Balanced or Semi-balanced
- X Penalty oriented, ♥Hxx+ or better
- 3NT Balanced, ♥Kx+ (2nd round control)
- 4♣ ♣ shortness with ♥ control
- 4♦ ♦ shortness with ♥ control
- 4♥ 1st round ♥ control, Void or Balanced with ♥A

Overview of Meaning of Bids

Our general summary of these agreemetns is as follows:

- Pass Nothing to say (X by partner after we pass is penalty).
- X Penalty
- New Suit shows shortness and promises a control in the opponent's suit.
- 3NT Balanced with 2nd round control in their suit (Kx+)
- Cuebid Balanced with 1st round control in their suit (Ax+)
- 3M Shortness in their suit (rebidding our suit shows a control in their suit).

Dealing with Interference After Partner Bids 2NT Ogust

If we open the bidding with a 2-level preempt and partner responds 2NT, then standard bidding calls for us to show a feature, but many partnerships use an artificial response structure in an attempt to better describe their hand. After we preempt and partner responds 2NT Ogust, if RHO interferes in the bidding by overcalling at the 3-level, we lose valuable bidding space. There are two ways to handle this:

Example 6

2♠ P 2NT 3♦
_?

The first approach is to use a mostly unchanged system with stolen bid double.

- Pass* My bid is below their 3♦ bid (which means 3♣* was my bid - Bad Suit, Bad Hand).
- X* 3♦ was my bid (Good Suit, Bad Hand)
- Other Bids unchanged

Another approach is step-based, using X as Step 1, pass as Step 2, and then bids to show Step 3+.

- X* Step 1 = Bad Suit, Bad Hand
- Pass* Step 2 = Good Suit, Bad Hand
- 3♥* Step3 = Bad Suit, Good Hand
- 3♠* Step 4 = Good Suit, Good Hand, etc.

The system that is best to play usually is what fits with other partnership agreements for dealing with interference – ignoring the interference as much as possible or changing to a step-based approach.

Conclusion

When partner makes an artificial bid of 2NT, it often shows a fit for our suit and is trying for game or slam. When the opponents interfere in this type of auction, we need to change our approach to the bidding so that we are able to penalize them when it is right to do so and we can deal with the fact that we know what suit is likely to be led. If you have a regular partnership, you should spend some time discussing how your bidding changes when you are using a convention and the opponents interfere. 2NT is a convention that usually shows a fit and is at a low enough level that it is interfered with more often than others (like Blackwood). Take a look at these auctions and come to some agreement with partner about how you are going to handle them. You will improve your partnership bidding and you are more likely to punish the opponents for coming into your auction.