

The "Jacoby 2NT" Bridge Convention for Responding to Partner's 1-Level Opening Bid of a Major

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The best bids in duplicate "limit" your hand for Partner, and are precise with respect to both (1) HCPs and (2) card distribution. For example, for many players a 1NT opening bid promises (1) 15 to 17 HCPs and (2) **no** singletons or voids, and (3) **no more than 1** doubleton. (Note: A 1NT opening bid **does not deny** holding a 5-card major!!!!)

There are many **response bids** you can use to tell Partner very specific importation about both point count and distribution. For example, many pairs find response bids involving (1) Bergen Limit Raises and (2) Drury to be very useful. In a similar vein, I consider "2 Over 1" response bids to probably be the most useful and important bid in bridge.

For the same reason, one of the most (and pretty simple) response bids in bridge is "Jacoby 2NT". Jacoby 2NT is only made by a Partner who is (1) not a Passed hand, and (2) **only** when responding to your Partner opening either 1H or 1S.

Whenever you respond to Partner's 1-level opening of a Major by bidding 2NT!, your Partner, the opening bidder of a Major, **must Alert** this bid, because in this sequence the 2NT response has an *unusual*, "artificial" meaning. When Responder bids 2NT over Opener's 1-level bid of a Major, Responder is telling Opener, "I have (1) **4+** of your Major and (2) an opening hand."

Example

NORTH: 1H EAST: PASS SOUTH: 2NT!

The Jacoby 2NT! convention honors the *supreme importance* that more experienced players place on communicating exact Trump card counts in Suit contract bids. This emphasis was popularized

by Larry Cohen in his *massively influential* 1992 bridge book, To Bid or Not to Bid: The LAW of Total Tricks. The "**Law of Total Tricks**"¹ says that "even in a competitive auction you can safely bid to a Suit-contract level that does not exceed the number of Trump cards that your Partnership holds, pretty much irrespective of HCPs!"

When Responder bids "Jacoby 2NT!", **both** Partners then immediately know that the Partnership has a game-going Board, and indeed may even have slam potential. The remaining bidding space should then be used to further elaborate holdings, and determine the optimal safe contract. The old saying in bridge is, "The more your Partnership has, the more Partners should discuss their holdings!"

Opener Showing Responder Singletons and Voids

Any bid at the 3 level in a suit other than the opened major is an *artificial* bid, which therefore must be alerted, and shows a singleton or a void in the bid 3-level suit.

Example

NORTH: 1H EAST: PASS SOUTH: 2NT! NORTH: 3D!

or

NORTH: 1H EAST: PASS SOUTH: 2NT! NORTH: 3S!

In the first instance, Opener NORTH is showing either a singleton or a void in Diamonds. In the second instance, Opener NORTH is showing a singleton or a void in Spades.

¹ Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons", see: "Lesson #19: The 'Law of Total Tricks'", and "Lesson #43: Are the 'Rule of 20' and the 'Law of Total Tricks' Both Broken?"

If Opener NORTH later **rebids** the same 3-level suit at the **4-level**, Opener NORTH is then telling SOUTH, "It wasn't a singleton! It was a **void!!!**"