

VII. Responder Bids 2♦ to Show Four Spades and a Minor Suit.¹

A. In Summary.

1. **Opener's 2♥** asks *Tell me more.*²
2. **Opener's 2♠** asks *How many faces?*
3. **Opener's 2NT** is *Point Asking Bid*.
4. Opener's 3♣ is a *Support Asking Bid* in clubs requiring three card support.
5. **Opener's 3♦** is a *Support Asking Bid* in diamonds requiring three card support.
6. **Opener's 3♥** is a *Support Asking Bid* in hearts requiring three card support.

B. **Opener's 2♥** asks "Tell me more." Opener has heard about Responder's four spades but denies a fit. Instead, he pursues Responder's minor suit holding.

1. **Responder's 2NT** shows both minors. Responder must be 4144, 4045, or 4054. Opener's next bid will be a *second trump asking bid* to learn how many honors Responder holds in that trump suit. Thereafter, Opener's bid of four in the minor is *Roman Key Card Blackwood* in that suit.

2. **Responder's 2♠** promises a five card minor suit to go

with the known four card spade suit.³ Opener can use 2NT to ask for the minor. Responder uses split range calls to show both his suit and his strength.

- a. 3♣ shows five clubs and 8–11 HCP. Responder has 4315, 4225, or 4135.
- b. 3♦ show five diamonds and 8–11 HCP. Responder has 4351, 4252, or 4153.
- c. 3♥ shows five clubs and 12+ HCP. Responder has 4315, 4225, or 4135.
- d. 3♠ shows five diamonds and 12+ HCP. Responder has 4351, 4252, or 4153.

3. **Responder's 3♣** shows six clubs. Responder has 4036, 4126, 4216, or 4306.
4. **Responder's 3♦** shows six diamonds. Responder has 4063, 4162, 4261, or 4360.
5. **Responder's 3♥** shows seven or more clubs. Responder has 4027, 4117, or 4207.
6. **Responder's 3♠** shows seven or more diamonds. Responder has 4072, 4171, or 4270.

C. Because Responder has already shown exactly four spades, **Opener's 2♠** is a *Second Trump Asking Bid in spades* ("How many faces?")

D. **Opener's 2NT** is a *Point Asking Bid*. This inquiry makes sense only if Opener has each suit well stopped and is looking for slam.

1. **Responder's 3♣** shows 8–9 HCP.
2. **Responder's 3♦** shows 10–11 HCP.

1. **Special Auction:** If Responder's 2♦ bid is doubled for a lead, Opener can redouble to show diamonds and deny clubs and spades. If Responder has diamonds, he can sit for the redouble. If Responder does not have diamonds, he can pull the redouble showing his clubs by steps: 2♥ five, 2♠ six, 2NT seven or more. Now Opener can make an informed choice of the final contract. If Opener passes the double, he shows two or three diamonds and a balanced hand, usually without four spades.

2. If an Opponent overcalls 2♥ over Responder's 2♦, then Opener's pass is *Tell Me More*, and Opener's double is for penalties.

3. Responder must have at least five cards in the minor. Responder denied a balanced hand when he bid 2♦. He must have a singleton or void. He has now denied having both minors. With at most four cards in hearts and the other minor—three cards and a singleton—and only four spades, he must have at least five cards in his minor.

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3. **Responder's 3♥** shows 12-13 HCP.
4. **Responder's 3♠** shows 14-15 HCP.
5. **Responder's 3NT** shows 16+ HCP. Over Responder's 3NT,
 - a. **Opener's 4♣** is Gerber (1,2,3,40)
 - b. **Opener's 4♦** asks by step how much over 16 HCP Responder holds.
 - c. **Opener's suit bids {4♥-5♦}** are *Control Asking Bids* for face cards only.

E. Opener's 3♣ is a *Support Asking Bid* in clubs, requiring at least three cards for support. Responder has promised something in the minors but has not specifically promised clubs.

1. **Responder's 3♦** shows neither three card club support nor 12 or more HCP. Responder must have at least five diamonds: 4351, 4360, 4252, 4261, 4270, 4162, 4171, or 4072. Open can sign off in 3NT but should take heed that the diamond suit may be extra long.
2. **Responder's 3♥** shows the same shape as 3♦ but promises 12+ HCP. Open can sign off in 3NT but should take heed that the diamond suit may be extra long.
3. **Responder's 3♠** shows three card support but less than 12 HCP. Opener's 3NT is to play.
4. **Responder's 3NT** shows both three card or longer support and 12+ HCP.

F. Opener's 3♦ is a *Support Asking Bid* in diamonds, requiring at least three card support.

1. **Responder's 3♥** shows fewer than three diamonds and less than 12 HCP. Responder must have at least five clubs. **Opener's 3NT** is to play but Opener should take heed that Responder may have a very unbalanced

hand.

2. **Responder's 3♠** shows fewer than three diamonds but more than 11 HCP. **Opener's 3NT** is to play but Opener should take heed that Responder may have a very unbalanced hand.
3. **Responder's 3NT** shows three or more diamonds but less than 12 HCP.
4. **Responder's 4♣** shows both three or more diamonds and more than 11 HCP.

G. Opener's 3♥ is a *Support Asking Bid* in hearts.

1. **Responder's 3♠** shows fewer than three hearts and less than 12 HCP.
2. **Responder's 3NT** shows fewer than three hearts but more than 11 HCP.
3. **Responder's 4♣** shows at least three hearts but less than 12 HCP.
4. **Responder's 4♦** shows at least three hearts and more than 11 HCP.

VIII. OPENER BIDS 1♣: Responder Has Three Suits and 14+ HCP.

A. Simple Unusual Positive

The three-suited hand with 8+ HCP but lacking a five card suit can be difficult for Responder to show in customary Precision Club systems that require a five card suit for a positive response. It does not meet the requirements for a suit bid and has bad distribution for no trump. Standard Precision Systems have two approaches. The simpler approach, the unusual positive, is to give up weak jump shifts over 1♣. A jump shift over 1♣ then shows three suits with a singleton in the suit of the jump shift.⁴

B. The Impossible Negative.

The next alternative, the impossible negative, requires Responder first to bid 1♦, an apparent negative response, and then to jump shift. In the impossible negative, if Opener shows a suit over 1♦, and if Opener's suit is Responder's singleton, then Responder rebids 2NT.⁵ While the *impossible negative* is easier to remember and to recognize, and allows the use of the weak jump shift in the majors, it has a serious flaw in competitive auctions. If either opponent competes, it may be difficult for Responder to show his hand.⁶

C. Italian Tri-Color.⁷

Wei and Radin recommend using 3♣ to show a weaker, positive three suiter

4. *Goren and Wei*, pp. 44-45.

5. *Goren*, pp. 27-29; *Jannersten*, pp. 104-106. It might be playable to use the jump to 2NT if Opener shows a major, but to show a four card major if Opener bids a minor.

6. The auction 1♣, (Pass), 1♦ is an irresistible opportunity for the fourth seat to compete. Opener may never learn that Responder has values. Worse, if the overcall is in Responder's short suit, then the defensive prospects may be limited.

7. This form of the unusual positive may be borrowed from *Belladonna* and *Garozzo*, *Precision and Superprecision Bidding*.

with shortness in clubs or spades, 3♦ to show a weaker, positive three suiter with shortness in diamonds or hearts, and 3♥, 3♠, 4♣, and 4♦ to show stronger three suiters with shortness in the suit above the suit shown. The stronger hands have *both* 11+ HCP *and* at least three controls. The weaker hands either have only 8-10 HCP or lack three controls.⁸

1. Weaker Three-Suited Hands.

a. **3♣** Shows at least 8 HCP, lacks three controls, and has 1444 or 4441 distribution. Opener's 3♦ asks which suit.

- (1) **Responder's 3♥** shows a singleton club.
- (2) **Responder's 3♠** shows a singleton spade.

b. **3♦** Shows at least 8 HCP, lacks three controls, and has 4144 or 4414 distribution. Opener's 3♥ asks which suit.

- (1) **Responder's 3♠** shows a singleton diamond.
- (2) **Responder's 3NT** shows a singleton heart.

2. Stronger Three-Suited Hands.

a. **3♥** Shows at least 11 HCP, at least three controls, and 1444 distribution.

b. **3♠** Shows at least 11 HCP, at least three controls, and 4441 distribution.

c. **4♣** Shows at least 11 HCP, at least three controls, and 4414 distribution.

d. **4♦** Shows at least 11 HCP, at least three controls, and 4144 distribution.

3. If Opener cue bids Responder's singleton, he asks

8. *Wei and Radin*, pp. 122-134.

Responder for his total controls.

	Responder bid 3♣ or 3♦	Responder bid 3♥, 3♠, 4♣, or 4♦
First Step	0-2 Controls	3 Controls
Second Step	3 Controls	4 Controls
Third Step	4 Controls	5 Controls etc.

Subsequent bidding is natural and follows the principles of slow and fast arrival.

D. Our approach. Because we bid 1♥ and 2♦ over 1♣ when holding unbalanced four card majors in hearts and spades, respectively, and because a three-suited hand must contain at least one four card major, we don't need a special bid to show weak three-suited responses. We can bid naturally (sic) according to our principles.

1. Responder has 8-13 HCP.

- a. With a singleton club, Responder bids 1♥.
 - (1) If Opener rebids 1♠, a *Support Asking Bid*, then Responder can show good support with either 2♦ or 2♥ depending upon strength.
 - (2) If Opener rebids 1NT, then Responder can bid 2♣ to check show a four card spade suit.
 - (3) If Opener rebids 2♣, also a *Support Asking Bid*, then Responder must reply either 2♦ or 2♥, depending upon strength.
 - (4) If Opener rebids 2♦, also a *Support Asking Bid*, then Responder can show support with 2NT or 3♣ depending upon strength.

- b. With a singleton diamond, Responder has similar responses. He begins with 1♥, can support spades and clubs, and uses 2♣ over 1NT.

- c. With 8-13 HCP and a singleton heart, Responder's first bid will be 2♦ showing exactly four spades and minor suit values. If Opener uses 2♥ to ask for more information, Responder's 2♠ shows 4144, 4054, or 4045.
- d. With a singleton spade, Responder can again begin with 1♥. If Opener then asks for more information with 1NT, then Responder can begin to show both minors with a rebid of 2♠.

2. Responder has 14+ HCP.

- a. If Responder has more than 13 HCP and a three suited hand, then he has the wrong shape for 2NT and is too strong for an ordinary, unbalanced, positive response. He must jump in the singleton at the three level to show both the three-suited distribution and more than 13 HCP.
- b. Opener's choice of a suit sets the trump suit and is RKC Blackwood in that suit.⁹
 - (1) Opener's no trump bid asks for Kings (0, 1, 2, 3).¹⁰
 - (2) Opener's cheapest suit bid other than trumps is a Queen ask.
 - (a) Responder shows the Queen by bidding an undisclosed king or no trump if the king is in the Queen-ask

9. We need to explore how to show a void in the short suit.

10. Because Opener should not ask for Kings without having found all five keycards, Responder can have at most three Kings.

- suit.
- (b) Responder denies the Queen by stopping at five of the trump suit.
 - (3) If Opener has asked for Responder's Kings, Opener's 5NT asks for Responder's Queens (0, 1, 2, 3 or 4).¹¹ Opener should know about all four Kings lest a singleton King in Responder's hand leave a hole in another suit.
 - (4) Opener's rebid of the suit at any level is a sign off.
 - (5) For example, if the auction has gone:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ ¹²
3♠ ¹³	4♥ ¹⁴
4NT ¹⁵	5♦ ¹⁶
5NT ¹⁷	6♦ ¹⁸

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- 11. If Responder has already disclosed or denied the Queen of trump, then he does not show it again.
 - 12. Responder shows 4414 with 14 or more HCP.
 - 13. Let's play this in spades. How many keycards?
 - 14. Fourth step shows two keycards and the Queen of spades.
 - 15. We have all five keycards. How many Kings do you have?
 - 16. Second step shows One King.
 - 17. We have all the Kings. I heard about the Queen of Spades. Any others?
 - 18. Second step shows one Queen besides the previously shown Queen of trump.

7♠¹⁹

Pass

Opener has KJxxx, Axx, Axx, KJ. With AKQJ and nine trump, he plans on five trumps in his hand, the AK of hearts,²⁰ the A of diamonds, two diamond ruffs, the AK of clubs, and plus Responder's odd Queen to cover his third heart. If Responder's Queen is the Queen of diamonds, then Opener needs either a three-three heart split or the Queen of clubs onside. The probability of all three chances failing is very small.²¹ Everyone should get to six spades with 16 opposite 15, but not everyone will find seven.

c. Opener's 3NT over the jump is to play. Opener must take full responsibility for stopping the known singleton suit. In compensation, the two hands have at least 30 HCP. Because Opener may have a minimum and has not found even a useful eight card fit, all of the tricks must come from high cards. Responder must have aces, a royal honor singleton and at least 18 HCP to bid further.

- (1) Responder's 4♣ is Gerber (1, 2, 3, or 40)
- (2) Responder's 4♦ asks for Opener's point count beginning with 16.
- (3) Responder's 4♥ shows 18+ HCP and the

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- 19. I count thirteen tricks with spades as trump.
 - 20. If Responder's second King is the singleton King of Diamonds, the hand won't play nearly as well. The small chance reduces the likelihood of success by about 10%. Responder should not count a singleton King at full value.
 - 21. As a crude approximation, given the known side Ace and King, there are seven unknown cards. Six of those are not the diamond singleton. The missing Queen then is going to be the diamond roughly one time in seven. The hearts will split three-three about 36% of the time. The club Queen will be on-side about half the time. The probability of losing all three is the product of the three losses: (1/7 times 64% times 1/2) about 5% just over the standard for social science.

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- singleton Queen.
- (4) Responder's 4♠ shows 18+ HCP and the singleton King.
 - (5) Responder's 4NT shows 18+ HCP and the singleton Ace.
- d. Opener's 4NT is a *Point Count Asking Bid*. Responder can pass with exactly the 14 HCP he promised. Each step above 4NT shows an additional HCP. Opener's subsequent no trump bid, including 5NT, signs off.²²

22. Worst case, we play 5NT with 31 HCP, but shame on Opener if it goes down.