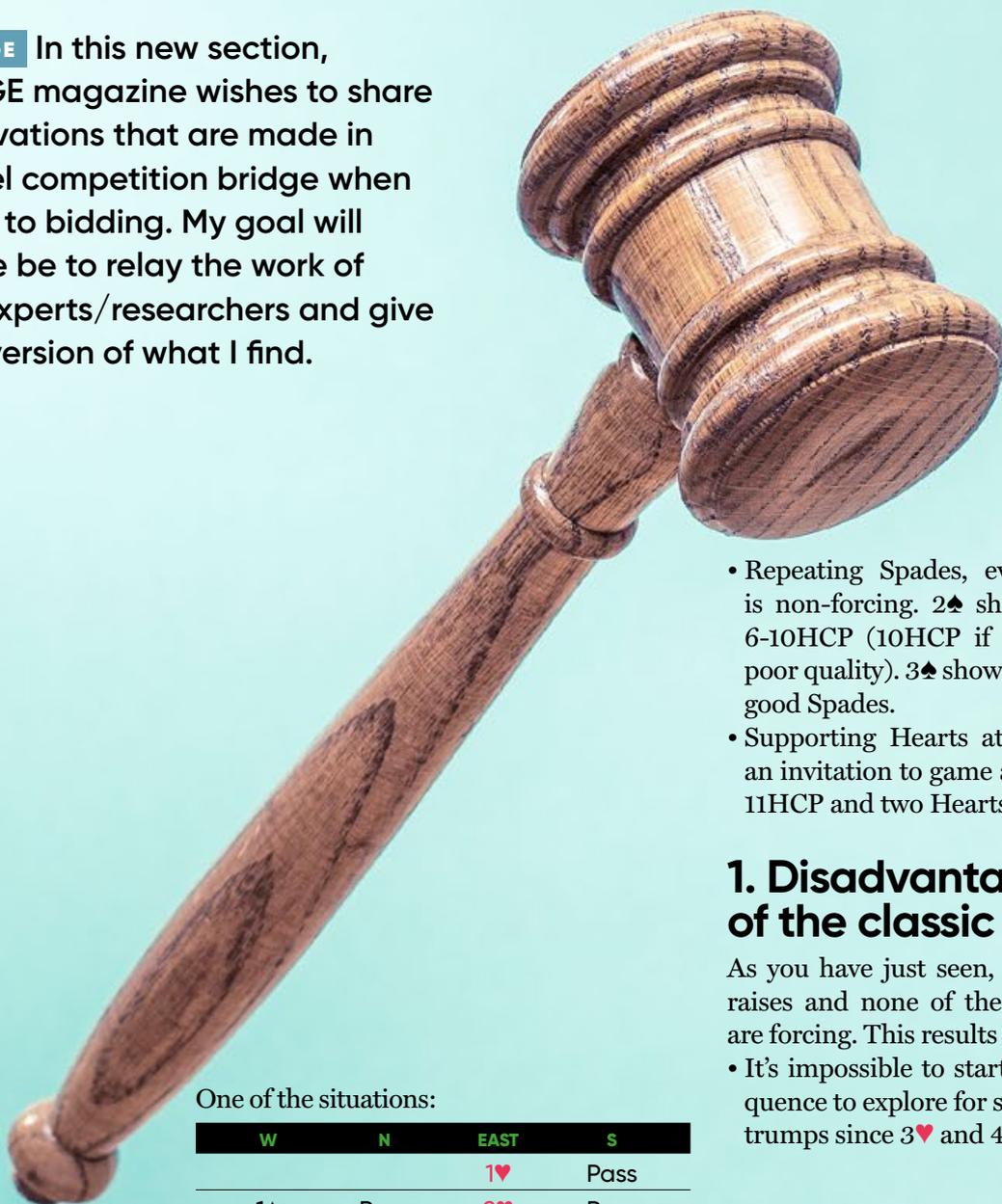


A conventional and forcing 2NT after 1♥-1♠-2♥

CHALLENGE In this new section, BeBRIDGE magazine wishes to share the innovations that are made in high level competition bridge when it comes to bidding. My goal will therefore be to relay the work of bridge experts/researchers and give you my version of what I find.



- Repeating Spades, even with a jump, is non-forcing. 2♠ shows six cards and 6-10HCP (10HCP if the Spades are of poor quality). 3♠ shows 10-11HCP and six good Spades.
- Supporting Hearts at the three-level is an invitation to game and guarantees 10-11HCP and two Hearts.

1. Disadvantages of the classic system

As you have just seen, none of the Heart raises and none of the Spade repetitions are forcing. This results in many problems:

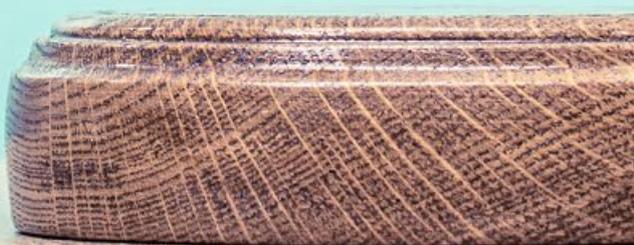
- It's impossible to start a cue-bidding sequence to explore for slam with Hearts as trumps since 3♥ and 4♥ are non-forcing.

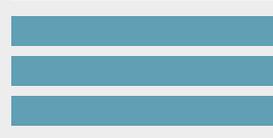
One of the situations:

W	N	EAST	S
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
	?		

Let me remind you the standard system:

- 2NT shows a hand of 10-11HCP with stoppers in the minors and no interest in a Heart contract, even though opener has promised six Hearts.





BIDDING EXPERT LEVEL

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

- Difficulties exploring a Spade fit, whether in the range for game or slam.

What must responder do when he wants to make the situation forcing? He is forced to bid a new suit. He will therefore bid a minor at the three-level. The bidding is therefore going relatively high and you haven't even given vital information about your distribution or your Heart fit:

- How will you set Hearts as trumps over a possible 3♠ when it goes 1♥-1♠-2♥-3♣-3♠?
- How can you tell opener if you want to play a slam in Hearts or Spades over a possible 3NT bid when it goes 1♥-1♠-2♥-3♦-3NT?

I guess you have faced the plethora of those issues before. We will offer you the solution. The price to pay? Forgo the natural 2NT bid. This is not an excessive cost when opener guarantees six cards (it is by the way for this reason that you can use the same principle after 1♦-1♥-2♦, but then it is less indispensable), since you can pass with no hard feelings when you have 10 or 11HCP and a singleton Heart.

2. Presentation of our innovation

As you start to understand, you will use this 2NT bid, which has become conventional and forcing, with all game forcing hands or better that have hope for a slam in Hearts or with one-suiters in Spades with which you want to play in game or higher. But you can also use this bid with 4-1-4-4 hands with four small cards in a minor.

♠ AJ9732	♠ AQ9732	♠ AQ32	♠ AJ32
♥ 8	♥ 7	♥ 7	♥ KQ3
♦ AQ6	♦ K86	♦ 8642	♦ AK86
♣ AK5	♣ A104	♣ AK94	♣ Q8

2NT is a Puppet for 3♣. This means opener is forced to say 3♣, unless he has seven Hearts (then he bids 3♦). Next, responder describes his hand, specifying distribution and strength.

Over opener's forced relay at 3♣, responder can describe his hand as follows:

- 3♦ to show a 4-1-4-4 in the game zone with a problem in one of the two minors.
- 3♥ to set Hearts as trumps and start cue-bids.

- 3♠ to show a one-suited slam hand with a solid Spade suit.
- 3NT to indicate that he has six Spades and wants to play in 4 Spades or 3 No-trump.
- 4♥ to show six Spades and two Hearts and let partner choose between Four Heart and Four Spades.

Opener's reactions after responder has described his hand:

- Over 3♦, opener will say 3NT with no singleton in a minor or may bid 3♥ to show a singleton Club or 3♣ to show a singleton Diamond.
- Over 3♥, opener reacts as usual over a "trigger bid". 4♥ is very negative, 3NT is "yes, but..." with medium hands, and with rather maximum hands he will show his controls.
- Over 3♠, opener can bid 3NT without a fit or 4♠ with a minimum hand or start with cue-bids if he has a hand that warrants slam interest.

Small differences if opener bids 3♦ to show seven Hearts:

- With 4-1-4-4 hands, responder no longer procrastinates and concludes at 4♥ since opener described a seven-card suit.
- 3♠ remains a natural slam try for Spades showing at most one Heart and at least six Spades (4♥ by opener shows he really wants to play Hearts and not Spades).

On the other hand, from now on, bidding a new suit (3♣ or 3♦) over 2♥ will be reserved for hands with five Spades and at least values in the given suit.

3. Some sequences to better understand how it works

1.

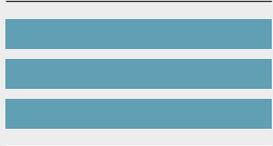
♠ J53	N	♠ AQ8642
♥ AK8632	W	♥ 5
♦ 2	E	♦ AK5
♣ A94	S	♣ KQ3

WEST	E
1♥	1♠
2♥	2NT
3♣	3♣
4♣	4NT
5♥	6♠



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by
Wilfried Libbrecht



BIDDING

EXPERT LEVEL

Request a description

After the start 1♥-1♠-2♥, a 2NT bid is a relay which allows responder to describe his hand: 3♥ and 3♠ show slam ambitions; 3♦ shows a 4-1-4-4 distribution including a problem in one of the minors after which opener will bid 3♥ to show a singleton in Clubs and 3♠ to show a singleton in Diamonds.

By bidding 3♣, West confirms that he only has six Hearts. East's 3♠ bid indicates that he suggests a slam in Spades. West only has 12 HCPs but he has three Spades when he could have only one. He also has a singleton and only useful honors. He therefore accepts the invitation by showing his first control, 4♣.

2.

♠ K32		N		♠ AJ97
♥ AQ9763				♥ J
♦ K72	W		E	♦ AQJ3
♣ 7				♣ 10865
		S		

	WEST	E
	1♥	1♠
	2♥	2NT
	3♣	3♦
	3♥	4♥

In the classic system, we would certainly choose to sign off in 3NT. This contract is not optimal because even if the opponents don't lead a Club, they can still switch to a Club when they get in with a Heart or a Spade. In the suggested new system, East's 3♦ bid describes a 4-1-4-4 with a problem in a minor. If West doesn't have a singleton in a minor, he signs off in 3NT. If, as here, he does have one, he shows it in steps (here 3♥ for the Club singleton). If East had Ace-Queen-Jack in Club instead of Diamonds, he would again sign off in

3NT. But here he knows that the 3 No-trump contract is bad and he therefore moves towards 4 Hearts, which is lay-down.

3.

♠ 2		N		♠ AJ93
♥ A986532				♥ KQ
♦ AK5	W		E	♦ 8642
♣ J6				♣ AKQ
		S		

	WEST	E
	1♥	1♠
	2♥	2NT
	3♦	3♥
	4♦	4NT
	5♥	5NT
	6♦	7NT

In this last example, West's 3♦ describes the seventh Heart; a decisive bid. The following 3♥ is a slam invitation that West must accept on behalf of his seventh Heart. True, he already said he had it, but his partner doesn't know that when he decides to say 2NT, already planning to later suggest the Heart slam, and therefore the nine-card fit must lead to a re-evaluation of the hand. The bids that follow are classic (controls, RKCB, asking for Kings) but what is interesting is that East was able to set trumps thanks to the space left by 3♦ and, most importantly, that he can count thirteen tricks (seven Hearts, one Spade, two Diamonds and three Clubs).

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