

## Difficult to bid Two-Suited Hands

The bidding required to show your partner that you have a two-suited distributional hand can be beset with problems.

### (1) Rockcrusher:

Let's start with the hand that is both game strength and two-suited. Playing a natural system, the holder of this hand is forced to open 2C lest partner passes. Be sure that your hand deserves a 2C opening because this immediately forces the bidding to the two level and there is less room to describe your hand to a partner who may hold very little but, nonetheless, just the right cards to make a slam a good prospect.

Consider the hand below played on Tuesday p.m. 7/7/22.

BOARD 5					
<b>BD: 5</b>	♠ T7				<b>Dlr: N</b>
	♥ 962				<b>Vul: NS</b>
	♦ J954				
	♣ 7653				
♠ 85				♠ AKQ62	
♥ T75				♥ AKQJ4	
♦ Q73				♦ A	
♣ AKQ98				♣ JT	
	♠ J943				
	♥ 83				
	♦ KT862				
	♣ 42				
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N					
S					
E	7	2	7	6	7
W	7	2	7	6	7

There are many possible sequences but the bidding might go, for example, 2C-3C-3S-3NT-4H-4NT-5C(4 key cards in hearts)- 6H or 2C-2D(waiting)-2S-3C-3H-3NT-4H etc but it will still be difficult to find the Grand Slam because responder cannot envisage just how powerful opener's hand is, alongside her own, even given a fit.

Because the 2C opener's major suits are so strong in their own right, it would be better for the opener to take control of the auction and investigate the possible weakness in clubs. Somewhat reassured by partner's 3C bid, which should show 5+ cards, opener should use Minorwood in clubs to discover that partner's response of 4NT shows two key cards plus the QC. Opener can now bid 7NT with confidence. 2/13 pairs bid a Grand Slam on the day.

*(thanks to Alison Dawson for recognising the value of Minorwood in this analysis)*

Some partnerships use Control Responses to a 2C opening where a King=1 and an Ace=2. With this hand partner will respond 2S which shows 1x Ace and 1 x King, in this case AC and either KC or KD. In either case, assuming a major fit, opener probably has no losers in the minor suits, although a club lead could be problematic if partner holds the KD and no other entry. Opener could go on and probably find the heart fit. Making a Grand Slam on the information obtained would be better than odds-on but not a certainty.

## (2) Overcalling Weak or Strong 6-5 Distributions:

Michael's Cue Bids were devised to describe two-suited hands when overcalling. An overcall of 1C or 1D with a 2C or 2D bid respectively shows at least 5-5 in the majors and, depending on partnership agreement, either simply a weak 6-10 point type hand or either this type of hand or a strong 16+ point one. With minimum opening points, the two suits are just bid one at a time.

An overcall of 1H or 1S with a 2H or 2S bid respectively shows at least 5-5 in the other major and a minor. An overcall of 1H or 1S with a 2NT bid shows at least 5-5 in the minors while an overcall of 1C or 1D with 2NT shows 5-5 in the two lowest unbid suits.

Here is an example played on Friday 1/7/22:

<b>BD: 19</b>	♠ 98	<b>Dir: S</b>	
	♥ 94	<b>Vul: EW</b>	
	♦ K72		
	♣ KT9642		
♠ J7432		♠ Q65	
♥ AJ7652		♥ 3	
♦ JT		♦ A853	
♣		♣ AQJ87	
	♠ AKT		
	♥ KQT8		
	♦ Q964		
	♣ 53		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N	1 1	1	6
S	1 1	1	7 13
E		1 1	14
W		1 1	

Following a 1D opening by South, West bids 2D to show at least 5-5 in the majors and 6-10 points. Assuming the partnership is playing Michael's Cue Bids as weak only, East may bid 3S as an invitation to game in case West has the maximum for a weak hand. West will pass. With East's points loaded into the minors, the board does not play that well but the three pairs in spades made more tricks than the six in hearts demonstrating the value of being able to show both long majors.

Michael's cue bid on Tuesday 2/7/22.

<b>BOARD 11</b>			
<b>BD: 11</b>	♠ QT3	<b>Dir: S</b>	
	♥ K74	<b>Vul: Nil</b>	
	♦ JT85		
	♣ AT8		
♠ J75		♠ 4	
♥ AQ982		♥ T	
♦ 64		♦ AKQ973	
♣ KQ7		♣ J9632	
	♠ AK9862		
	♥ J653		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 54		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
N		2 1	10
S		2	12 10
E	4 5		8
W	4 5		

This one requires more thinking. South opens a weak 2S and West and North pass. East deduces that since North did not even invite South to game it is likely she holds less than an opening bid which leaves her partner, West, with close to an opening bid at minimum. If West has a fit for her clubs or diamonds she alone should not have more than five losers. With the help of partner, game in a minor is possible.

East bid 4NT which asks West to bid her better minor. West bid 5C which went down because of a diamond ruff by South. 5D also only makes 10 tricks unless declarer takes a deep finesse against North.

The 4NT bid is a type of "Leaping Michaels" bid where 6-5 distributions with very good playing strength are described by multi-step jump bids. eg An overcall of a 1C or 1D opening with 4C or 4D respectively could show at least 6-5 in the majors while an overcall of 1H or 1S opening with 4C or 4D, at least 6-5 in that minor and the other major.

### (3) Opening 6-5 Distributions:

Opening very strong (game going) distributional hands has already been discussed. One system to accommodate opening weak hands with at least 5-5 in two suits and 6-10 points is part of the Multi-Two bidding system whereby the 2H opening shows at least five hearts and at least five of another suit and the 2S opening at least five spades and at least five of a minor suit. This is fairly commonly used at our Club and won't be discussed further here.

Describing intermediate to strong opening hands, **specifically 6-5 distribution**, can be a problem if the 5 card suit is higher ranked than the 6 card suit. (*The following discussion is sourced from Karen Walker's article entitled "Coming alive" with 6-5 openers.*)



4



KQJ86



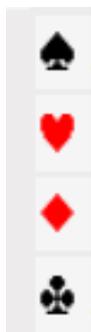
AJ10765



5

If you had had 6 x hearts and 5 x diamonds, bidding would not be a problem but, with this distribution, even if you open 1H and rebid 2D twice you are still only showing a 5-5 distribution, that is, underbidding your true playing strength. Similarly, if you open 1D and then, over the likely 1S response or possibly 1NT response, rebid 2H and later 3H you are showing your distribution but have over-stated your point range because you have created a reverse auction.

An effective solution is to open your longer suit and then make by agreement a **non-forcing jump reverse bid** into your shorter but higher ranked suit. In this case you open 1D and then rebid 3H



AQJ92



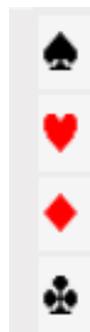
QJ10863



4



A



AK1076



AK10863



4



43

With a stronger 6-5 hand where all the high card points are working with the suits it is totally acceptable to bid your longer suit and make a forcing reverse bid into your second with the intention of rebidding the shorter suit later to show both the high card strength and the distribution.

Both the hands above have 14 high card points but the second has much more playing strength than the first. It is suggested that the first hand be opened 1H with the intention of making a **non-forcing jump reverse rebid** of 3S while the second should be opened 1H, followed by a **forcing reverse bid** of 2S and a subsequent rebid of 3S.