



GBC Online Lessons

Distributional Hands – Unusual 2NT¹

Introduction

You have learned that the Michaels Cue Bid is a way to preempt the bidding with 2-suited hands that contain “high-ranking suits” (both Majors OR the unbid Major and a minor). The Unusual 2NT is a way to preempt the bidding and show “low-ranking suits” (both minors OR the two lowest unbid suits). This is a direct seat jump to 2NT after a 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ opening bid.

Unusual 2NT Examples

1♠ 2NT 5+/5+ minors, 5-11 pts.

1♥ 2NT 5+/5+ minors, 5-11 pts.

1♦ 2NT 5+♣/5+♥, 5-11 pts,

1♣ 2NT 5+♦/5+♥, 5-11 pts.

Considerations

Since this jump to 2NT is, essentially, a preempt, you should take the following into consideration before making that bid:

- *Vulnerability* – Use caution at unfavorable vulnerability, i.e., vulnerable versus non-vulnerable. Bidding Unusual 2NT in this situation requires better quality in your two suits. There is more leeway when non-vulnerable versus vulnerable or both sides non-vulnerable. Vulnerability is the most important consideration in determining whether to use Unusual 2NT.
- *Opening Points* – Many experts advise against using Unusual 2NT holding a hand with opening points. In this case, overcall in your highest suit first, rebidding in the lower suit twice, if you have a chance.
- *1NT Opener* – Do not use Unusual 2NT in direct seat after a 1NT opener. This will conflict with defensive conventions to 1NT openers. You will learn these conventions in later lessons.
- *Big Hands* – Do not use Unusual 2NT after artificial openings showing a big hand such as Precision 1♣ showing 16+ HCP or the 2♣ opener showing 22+HCP or 4 losers.
- *Balancing Seat* – Do not use Unusual 2NT in balancing seat. 2NT in balancing seat shows 18-19HCP.

Partner’s Responses

- Partner usually bids the suit that she has the most tolerance for. With equal length in both suits, especially with two doubletons, she bids the cheapest suit.

Note: When responding to the Unusual 2NT with equal length in both advertised suits, bid the cheapest suit first, e.g. 3♣ with ♣xx ♦Kx. You can run to diamonds if the opponents double.

- If partner has a weak hand with at least 4-card support, she can consider making a preemptive jump bid:

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♥ | 2NT | Pass | 4♣ |

4♣ is preemptive and non-forcing, promising at least 4 clubs.

¹ Robert Todd, Audrey Grant, Larry Cohen, Bridgebum, Jim Ricker, Barbara Seagram



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Partner's Responses Continued

- With a good hand, partner can cue bid the opponents' suit. This typically shows support for at least one of partner's suits, and interest in game or slam. A cue bid is forcing for one round and asks the 2NT bidder to bid her cheapest suit at the cheapest level with a weak hand (around 0-10 points), or to make any other bid with a "fair" hand (around 10+ points).
- If, by chance, partner bids the "fourth suit", i.e. the suit not bid by the opponents or shown by partner, that bid is natural and nonforcing, showing a very good suit (usually 6+ cards), a decent hand, and no support for either of the 2NT bidder's suits.

Rebids by the 2NT Bidder

Raises are natural and non-forcing. All other bids show a very good hand (in terms of points and/or shape) but, with the exception of a cue bid, are non-forcing.

Conclusion

When the opponents open the bidding and you have a shapely hand, it is important for the partnership to compete in the auction immediately. You want to show partner as much information about the hand as possible on the first round of the bidding. A simple overcall or a preemptive jump overcall allows you to show a hand with 1-long suit and a variety of different strengths. When you have two long suits, you try to show both of your suits to partner on the first round of the bidding so that the partnership can find its fit and compete to the appropriate level as quickly as possible. Both Michaels Cue Bid and the Unusual 2NT do this.

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