

RESPONDING TO A WEAK TWO BID BY PARTNER

Be cautious when partner has opened a weak 2 bid and you do not have a fit i.e. 2 small or fewer in her suit.

W N	East	W N E	East	W N E	East
E					
	43	2S P P	86	2S P P	5
2S P P	A532		AKQ7		KQJ8
	K852		QJ84		KQ63
	J94		J52		KQ42

But...with 3 card support:

If you have a weak hand, raise to the 3 level

If you have a strong hand and think you can make game, raise to 4.

Count the tricks for your side, based on the fact that your partner will usually have 5 tricks in the trump suit.

W N E	East	W N E	East	W N E	East
2S P 3S	Q52	2S P 4S	Q52	2S P 4S	Q52
	76		76		AKJ6
Opener must pass.	A7543		AK853		5
	752		AK6		A8643

With 4 card support and a weak hand, raise partner to game.

With 4 card support and a strong hand, raise to game.

How will she know which hand you have? She won't but she must not bid again anyway so she will either have a happy surprise when she sees the dummy or groan while she struggles with the contract.

If she doesn't make it, then most of the time, your opponents could have made lots of tricks.

W N E	East	W N E	East
2S P 4S	Q542	2S P 4S	Q542
	43		65
	K874		AKQ7
	954		KQJ7

If you have holes in your side suits and you are responding to partner's weak 2 bid, then you can ask partner whether she can fill those holes by bidding 2NT. This asks her if she has a FEATURE. A FEATURE is an Ace or a King in a suit other than the suit with which she opened. You should agree with partner on whether or not you are playing this part of the convention.

W N E	East	
2S P 2NT	Q65	If opener responds 3D or 3C to your 2NT query, your hand has now improved and you bid 4.
	65	
	AQ765	If she has no feature, she will rebid her suit at the cheapest level and you will pass.
	KQ7	



PREVENTING A RUFF

From Planning the Play: The Next Level

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Sometimes it is entirely obvious that the defenders are planning a ruff. Would you have stopped them on this deal?

S J 7 5

H 8 4 3

D Q 7 5 2

C A K 6

S 9 8 4

S A

H 9 5

H A J 10 6 2

D 10 9 6

D A J 4 3

C J 10 5 3 2

C 9 8 4

S K Q 10 6 3 2

H K Q 7

D K 8

C Q 7

West

North

East

South

pass

2H

1H

pass

1S

4S

all pass

North bids 2H to show a limit raise or better in spades and West leads the H 9 against your spade game. East wins with the H A and returns the H J, West follows suit as you win in your hand. A count of your losers seems to reveal no apparent problem:

Losers: S 1 H 1 D 1 C 0 Total: 3

Not so fast! You know from the opening bid that East began with five hearts. If you simply play a trump at trick 3, East will win and give his partner a heart ruff. You will lose a diamond trick subsequently and that will be one down. What can you do about it?

As soon as you win the lead, you must play three rounds of clubs and discard the H Q, even though it is a winner. Only then do you play a trump. East wins and plays the H 10 but now you can ruff high and draw trumps. You can then claim the contract for the loss of one further trick in diamonds.

PLAN: Before drawing trumps, I will discard the H Q to avoid a heart ruff.

Another one! No magical powers are needed to foresee an impending ruff on the next deal, either. Can you spot an escape route?

S A 7 5 4

H 9 4 2

D A 7 5

C A 6 4

S 9 3

S K 8

H 5

H Q J 10 7 6 3

D K J 9 6 2

D Q 10 4

C J 10 5 3 2

C 9 8

S Q J 10 6 2

H A K 8

D 8 3

C K Q 7

West

North

East

South

2H

2S

pass

4S

all pass

West leads the H 5 to East's H 10 and your H A. You start with these potential losers:

Losers: S 1 H 1 D 1 C 0 Total: 3

Only three losers, it may seem, but suppose you 'do what comes naturally', leading the S Q and ducking in dummy. East will win with the S K and return the H Q. West will ruff your H K and suddenly you will have four losers. You will lose one heart, one diamond and two trump tricks!

Since you can afford to lose one trump trick (but not two), you should play the trumps in a different way. You should draw one round of trumps with the S A and then lead a second round to the S Q. When the cards lie as in the diagram, East will win with the S K but West will have no trump left and cannot ruff the heart continuation.

Suppose instead that West had begun with S K93. He would win the second round of trumps with the king but he would have no route to the East hand to get his heart ruff.

PLAN: I will win and play the Ace and another trump, to avoid losing two trump tricks (one to a high trump, one to a ruff).

SLOW DOWN, YOU PLAY TOO FAST!

654
Q32
Q1032
AKJ

109872

A3

76

J1098

J987

54

76

85432

S N

KQJ

2C 2D

AK54

2N 6N

AK6

Q109



North knows that South has promised 22-23 HCP by his rebid of 2NT. Simple arithmetic: $22 + 12 \text{ HCP} = 34 \text{ HCP}$. North knows that NS cannot be missing two aces as that would add to 8 HCP so he bids 6NT with gay abandon.

Declarer counts tricks. West leads the S 10. East wins the S Ace and leads back a Spade. S wins it with the King.

Count your winners!

S 2 H 3 D 3 C 3

That's only 11 winners and you need 12 to make 6 NT.

If Hearts break 3-3, all will be well. If Diamonds break 3-3, you are all set but odds are not with you. Missing 6 cards, they rate to divide 4-2.

Diamonds offer you the best possibility for an extra trick because yours side also owns the D 10.

You must **postpone playing the D suit for now** because you first need to discover more information about the other suits and how they are behaving.

Cash the third Spade now. East fails to follow.

Deduction: West started with 5 Spades.

Cash three rounds of Hearts. West fails to follow on third round.

Deduction: West started with 2 Hearts.

Cash 3 rounds of Clubs. West fails to follow on third round.

Deduction: West started with 2 Clubs.

ERGO...drumroll please! West started with 4 Diamonds. East only has 2 Diamonds. East COULD have the doubleton D Jack, so you first cash D Ace and King and now finesse West for the D Jack, KNOWING with confidence that East cannot have another Diamond.