9. - Partner opened on an unbalanced hand – Teachers' notes

Partner opened one of a suit

You will either have raised partner's major with 4-card support, or you will have made a lowest level change of suit if possible.

This topic deals with hands on which opener is unbalanced.
He will therefore rebid in a suit showing an unbalanced hand and either a 6-card suit or at least 5-4 shape if his first suit was a major. (Note that this last consideration covers the case of the 4-4-4-1 hand.)

Responder is minimum

Typically this covers hands of up to 9 points – responder's first bid will have been at the 1-level.
With up to 7 points responder can pass opener's minimum rebid in a new suit, although it will be more common to show a simple preference to the first suit or rebid his own 6-card suit.
With 8 or 9 points responder should find a rebid if at all reasonably possible just in case opener has 17 or 18 - on occasion this will require a slightly non-intuitive false preference to partner's first suit.

Responder has invitational values

Typically this means 10 to 12 points, though the ranges are not set in stone.
With this strength responder will usually force the auction to 2NT or 3 of a suit in which a fit has been located.

Responder has game-going values

Typically this means 13+, but it will also be appropriate on some 12-point hands.
Responder must force to a game contract, either by bidding it, or making a forcing bid such as a new suit at the 3-level (or 4th suit forcing – that's for another day). Either of these bids might be made on a short suit provided that there is an escape route.

Opener is minimum

With up to 15 points opener will typically pass responders rebid if not forcing.
The exception will be when the first response was at the 2-level suggesting 10+ points, in which case a game may well be in sight.
With 16 points, a 6-card major and no second 4-card suit opener should jump in the major;
with 17 or 18 points and 5-4 shape opener should show his hand in 2 bids, and then make a further bid;
and with 19 points opener should force to game which will frequently involve a jump rebid in his second suit.

Partner opened a weak two

A raise of partner's suit is pre-emptive, and frequently weak. Raise to the level of the fit e.g. if you have 3-card support then you have a 9-card fit so raise to the 3-level (contract to make 9 tricks). It won't always work, but it will usually be cheaper than allowing your opponents to find their making contract.

With a stronger hand bid what you think you might make – but remember that partner's hand is limited to a maximum of about 10 points.

Partner opened 2♠

For the moment always relay with 2♦.

Partner's rebid of 2NT promises 23,24 points – continuations as after a 2NT opener.

Any suit rebid by opener is forcing, and all but game-forcing. A major will promise 5+ cards, a minor might be 4-card. Your next bid should be natural based primarily on shape.

Limitations

Note that at this point in our teaching, and in the absence of Stayman and transfers, there are no invitational sequences showing a 5-card or longer major in response to 1NT,
and there are no weak or invitational responses (other than pass) in response to 2NT.