

# The Coolest Gizmos and Gadgets



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What could be more fun than having a cool gizmo or gadget come up at the bridge table? Whatever level of your partnership, it is so much fun to have an agreement actually come up, have both partners remember it, and have it lead to a good result. Casual partnerships usually start with the basics, and as you grow, you add to your bidding and defensive arsenal with more potent stuff. It's one thing to say you are playing 2/1, Jacoby transfers, negative doubles, etc., but what do you do when an opponent doubles Stayman? Do you sit there and continue the auction? Do you sit there and take it? It's great to use an opponent's bid to your advantage, to turn the tables and end up on top. It's great to use idle space to describe information that leads to achieving an optimal result. Let me lead you down the path of fun bridge, better bridge and added enjoyment of the game.

## The impossible 2♠

No matter what system you are playing, chances are that you have had the following auction and that it comes up every so often:

Partner	You
1♥	1NT
2♥	?

Sometimes you have responded 1NT with the idea of jumping to 3♥ to show a three-card limit raise. Now what? Sometimes you have honor-doubleton of hearts and now that partner has shown six or more, you want to invite game by raising to 3♥. How would one tell the difference?

### Part 1 of this very cool gizmo

A raise to 3♥ shows a three-card limit raise, whereas a 2♠ continuation shows honor-doubleton and limit-raise values. Since you have already denied spades when you responded 1NT, 2♠ is an impossible bid! Therefore, this unmistakable bid can now be used for some other purpose. Use it to show a two-card limit raise in hearts. Also, play that it specifically shows Q-x or better. This will help partner evaluate where to place the final contract. Do we play 3♥, 3NT or 4♥? This gizmo helps.

### Part 2 of this gizmo

Use the extra space that this artificial but easily recognizable 2♠ bid has created to your advantage with a really cool continuation. Opener now bids 2NT as an inquiry as to where responder's worst side suit is! Show three low cards, four low cards, J-x-x or J-x-x-x. Do that by bidding the suit or bid 3♥ to show either no "perfectly bad" fragment or a bad spade fragment. You would be amazed at how improved your judgment is when you know more information. Consider that a singleton or doubleton is a potential ruffing value, but a bad fragment can lean partner towards 3NT or 4♥, depending on his holding in that suit. (Make sure to Alert the 2♠ bid, the 2NT inquiry and the responses to 2NT.)

If for some reason you feel that by bidding 2NT the answer to the question cannot possibly help you decide, you are still free to make your own help-suit game try by bidding three of a minor over the impossible 2♠ bid. I can only caution you that you are not going to want to do that! You are going to be too excited to pass up the chance of bidding 2NT to ask for partner's worst suit. You just can't resist. You understand.

Having developed this gizmo more than 25 years ago with George Mattos, we were patiently waiting for it to come up. Sure enough, it came up at the next NABC! When George bid 2♠, I proudly Alerted and my RHO inquired as to the meaning of the bid. I explained that he had a two-card limit raise with at least Q-x of hearts. He smirked and passed. Now I trotted out "Part 2," 2NT, which George Alerted. LHO said nothing as we both looked at him. George said, "Don't you want to know what it is?" He said, "Not interested." We were both annoyed because we couldn't wait to explain it. "Pass," LHO snorted. George next bid 3♣, which I Alerted, and RHO did not ask. It showed a bad club fragment. I happened to hold ♣Q J 7 and figured 3NT looked right opposite my hand, which was:

♠A 3 ♥A Q 10 9 6 4 ♦7 5 ♣Q J 7.

I also knew by agreement that partner must have the K-x of hearts which filled in the heart suit. I could start to add the tricks. Sometimes counting tricks is better than adding up points. Partner produced:

♠K 8 4 ♥K 3 ♦K J 10 3 2 ♣9 8 2.

After RHO led from K-10-x-x-x of clubs, LHO won and returned a