

Mike's Advice



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The 2NT response to a takeout double of a weak two-bid

When you double 2♠ and your partner bids 2NT, you should be somewhat nervous. His 2NT bid warns you that he is likely to be broke. Remember that 2NT is a relay — he is asking you to bid 3♣. Most of the time he will either pass 3♣, which says he has a bad hand with a club suit, or he will bid a suit at the three level, which says he has a bad hand with the suit he just bid.

♠873 ♥973 ♦Q4 ♣107632

He could have this terrible hand and intend to pass your 3♣ bid.

♠872 ♥942 ♦9862 ♣Q87

He could have this terrible hand, intending to bid 3♦ over your 3♣ bid.

Remember these hands. If you have a nice double and partner makes the weak bid of 2NT, always ask yourself how many tricks you can expect to take if partner is broke.

This brings up the question of what you should do when you have a great hand and partner bids the (ostensibly) negative 2NT. You are not obliged to bid 3♣. You may, with a good enough hand, do something else. Here are some examples of what you should bid. Notice that you will have some hands that do not offer clear choices.

You are South in this auction:

West	North	East	South
		2♠	Dbl
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

♠743 ♥AK108 ♦AQJ4 ♣K10

Bid 3♣. Your double did not work out as you had hoped. If partner

has a poor hand with clubs, he can pass your 3♣ and that may be bad. But if you consider the alternatives, you may decide that nothing is good here.

You hope, reasonably, that your partner will bid three of a red suit over your 3♣ bid. That could happen and you would end up in a fair contract. Note that if your partner bids 3♥ over 3♣, you should still pass. His auction warns you that he has a weak hand of 0–6 support points, and that is probably not enough for you to make game.

♠K7 ♥AK2 ♦AK83 ♣AJ86

Bid 3NT. An awful decision to have to make. If North has a weak hand with no five-card suit, you will not make 3NT. (Actually, your partner will not make 3NT because your auction has made him the declarer.)

♠73 ♥A63 ♦AKQJ7 ♣AK6

Bid 3♠, asking if North has a spade stopper. You need a terrific hand to make this bid because if he does not have a little something, you will be stuck at the four level.

Another possible bid with these cards is 3♦ over 2NT. Anytime you bid a new suit instead of 3♣, you are showing a big hand that

had intended to double and then bid your suit. I would reject a 3♦ bid here because the hand is a little stronger than partner would expect.

♠K3 ♥KQJ107 ♦AKQ3 ♣53

Bid 3♥. This is about what you should have when you double and then bid a suit instead of bidding 3♣.

♠2 ♥AQJ2 ♦AK83 ♣AKQ7

I hope never to have this hand. I know that if I bid 3♣ as asked and my partner passes it, I will fear we have missed a game. (Perhaps bidding 4♣ should show a huge 4-4-4-1 hand.)

My guess is to bid 3♠ and see if 3NT is playable. □



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