



Eric Kokish
kokish-kraft@rogers.com

Our Readers Ask

Dear Eric,

IMPs, both vulnerable, you hold as South:

♠K7 ♥AK4 ♦Q96 ♣J9542			
West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Dbl	Redbl ⁽¹⁾
Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	?

(1) Support redouble.

Double by North over 2♦ is undiscussed, but knowing partner's style, my guess is that it would be takeout oriented.

What is the meaning of 2♠? Is it a help-suit game try in hearts? If so, would you accept or decline the invitation?

Can 2♠ show a maximum passed hand and spade values, something like

♠AJ3 ♥Q872 ♦753 ♣A76, or maybe something else?

On the actual deal I chose 2NT, showing a minimum hand, some diamond values (not accepting an invitation) and judging that if partner would prefer to play in hearts he could correct to 3♥ or 4♥. How would you rate this 2NT bid? Does it seem reasonable to you even if you would've chosen something else?

Ilya Kuzkin

2♠ is a one-round force showing something in spades. 2♠ does *not* promise five hearts, but "game try" is correct. Not "help" because when the opponents have shown two suits, you generally bid the one where you *have* values. I wouldn't accept a game try because my own suit is weak, and I have soft values in their suit.

2♠ could indeed show the hand-type you suggested (or one with five hearts).

Your choice of 2NT is 100% clear. Nothing else is close.

Dear Eric,

My partner and I had an auction recently on which we had a misunderstanding.

No one was vulnerable:

West	North	East	South
1♠	4♣	Dbl	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♣
?			

Are we in a forcing auction?

Would it make a difference if 1♠ was in first or second seat?

Would it make a difference if 5♣ came directly over the double?

Junaid Said

The auction is forcing *unless* they are vulnerable and you are *not*, regardless of who bids 5♣. That's the consequence of a four-level negative double, which commits your side to take 10 tricks and therefore is assumed to deliver some high-card values.

First or second seat should make no difference as you're supposed to have an opening bid in both positions.

Dear Eric,

We play NAMYATS. What is the best follow-up system to use after 4♣/4♦? When would you open 4♦ as opposed to opening 2♣ and using "Kokish" to show a strong heart hand?

When would you open 4♥ rather than using "Kokish" to show a game-invitational hand?

Gene

NAMYATS is not my favorite convention. Essentially, the best you can do to try for slam is to use the intermediate step for that purpose, perhaps using bids above the trump suit as more serious slam tries, or specifically as asking bids in those suits, with 4NT as Roman Key Card Blackwood. Over the cheap-step response, opener goes past the trump suit only with extras and that depends on what the 4♣/4♦ opening promises to begin with. If you define the NAMYATS opening in terms of controlled suits — for example, no more than one suit with two fast losers — you might use the cheap step to ask for that suit, coding the replies to include hands with no danger suit.

A 4♣ opening is simply a strong 4♥ opening, not anything like a 2♣ opening, which is a serious hand. You might open NAMYATS with a solid or one-loser seven- or eight-card suit and an ace or king-queen on the side, but that's it. Think more in terms of an Acol two-bid, which promises playing tricks but not enough defensive strength to insist on doubling an opposing game contract.

4♥ is a preempt, according to the rule of 500 or 800, whichever you follow in these discounted times. A 2♣ opening, when it has hearts, is (for me) game-forcing. It is not an Acol two-bid, towards which your question seems to point.

Not everyone shares my views on strong two-bids, of course, and these players believe it useful to incorporate either a "second negative" for responder and/or a non-forcing sequence for opener ending at 3♥.