

TATA DRURY-FIT

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Responder to a third- or fourth-position major-suit opening will hold a hand too strong for a single raise far more often than a natural two-diamond bid (even when a two-diamond opening is not a weak two-bid). TATA (for tell-ask-tell-ask) Drury-Fit, where a two-club response shows three-card support, and a two-diamond response four-card (or longer) support, allows opener to make better judgments and, when necessary, conduct a scientific inquiry.

After either response, opener can inquire about responder's range by making the next available suit bid outside of the agreed suit. Responder replies in steps: minimum, no shortness (singleton or void); minimum, some shortness; maximum, no shortness; maximum, club shortness; maximum diamond shortness; maximum other-major shortness. Should opener want to discover the location of minimum-responder's shortness, he relays with the next non-signoff bid, to which the replies, in steps, are: club shortness; diamond shortness; other-major shortness.

Gains and Losses

Advantages: Devoting roughly twice as many sequences to responder's strong raises allows highly scientific bidding when it is likely to matter. Game-bidding accuracy will increase when, in close cases, opener can determine responder's trump length and general shape. Slam diagnosis is aided

by the shape descriptions, which occur at a low enough level to provide for below-game slam-tries.

Disadvantages: In addition to the loss of the low-frequency natural two-diamond response, there are some minor technical problems in the TATA mechanism itself. When hearts is the trump suit and opener wants to investigate:

(a) the partnership is forced to the three level when responder has three trumps, a minimum and some shortness.

(b) game must be reached when responder has a maximum, four-plus trumps, and spade shortness. (Not that this a such a big deal—you probably want to get to game anyway.)