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Weak jump shifts

In the last issue I discussed strong jump shifts and showed briefly how they help with strong hands when your partner opens the bidding. In this issue, I will discuss weak jump shifts and at the end, will offer my opinion of them. Note that I have previously written about weak jump shifts in competition. If you saw that article, you will recognize some similarities between weak jumps in competition and weak jumps without competition.

First, a suggestion: You might prefer to play weak jump shifts to two of a major only. The auction 1♣–Pass–2♦ has many possible meanings. Among them are: a strong jump shift; a weak jump shift; a club raise; five spades, four hearts and invitational values; a transfer bid; preemptive with both minors; and a forcing 2NT response. Some of these are serious treatments, some of them are ideas in progress.

Whether you choose to play all jumps to the two level as weak or just jumps to two of a major, you still have to answer these questions: What is the minimum/maximum hand you can have if not vulnerable? What is the minimum/maximum hand you

Mike's Advice

can have if vulnerable?

If your partner makes a weak jump shift (WJS), what do your rebids mean? For instance, after 1♦–Pass–2♠–Pass, what does 2NT mean? Is this natural or something else? What about 3♣, *i.e.*, a new suit lower than your original suit? What does rebidding your suit (3♦) mean?

How about 3♥, a new suit higher than your original suit? Or take the case of a simple raise: Is 3♠ preemptive or invitational? What about a jump in a new suit?

Here are a few suggestions. Whether you agree on them, you and your partner should definitely use these thoughts in deciding on what you prefer.

The range for a WJS

If not vulnerable, it's okay to make a WJS on 3 to 5 points.

After 1♣ from partner, you might jump to 2♠ on these hands:

♠Q 10 9 7 6 5 ♥5 4 ♦4 2 ♣J 9 4

This is a minimum jump shift when not vulnerable.

♠K J 8 7 5 4 ♥J 4 ♦8 7 4 3 ♣9

This is a maximum jump shift when not vulnerable.

♠Q J 10 7 5 ♥5 4 ♦9 4 ♣J 8 5 4

This is an acceptable jump shift when not vulnerable *if and only if* your partnership agrees that making this bid with a five-card suit is allowable. Do not assume this is agreeable to your partner until you have discussed it.

If vulnerable, I suggest making a WJS on 4 to 7 points. The 4-point requirement is made in deference to the vulnerability, and the 7-point requirement is acceptable when vulnerable and you have a really rotten

hand with a six-card suit. Here are some examples.

Partner opens 1♦ and right-hand opponent passes.

♠4 ♥K 10 8 7 6 3 ♦Q 6 3 ♣8 7 3

2♥ is fine. You are in the proper high-card range, and you get this hand off your chest in one bid. One of the benefits of weak jump responses is that when you respond at the one level and then rebid your suit (such as in the auction 1♦–1♥; 1♠–2♥), your partner will expect you to have a fair hand on the theory that you would have made a WJS with a bad hand.

♠A J 9 8 7 3 ♥4 3 ♦Q 9 8 ♣4 3

This is too good for 2♠. Bid 1♠. As per the previous paragraph, your partner will play you for having something better than a WJS.

♠J 10 8 7 6 3 ♥5 4 3 ♦K 8 4 ♣4

I vote for 2♠. Vulnerable, this is a minimum hand.

Continuations

One important thing that you need to discuss is the ensuing auction. Here are some suggestions. After a WJS, 2NT is a forcing enquiry, similar to Ogust after a weak two-bid opening. Responder bids artificially. Say the auction begins 1♦–Pass–2♠–Pass; 2NT. Here are the suggested responses:

3♣ = minimum hand and a minimum suit.

3♦ = minimum hand and a maximum suit.

3♥ = maximum hand and a minimum suit.

3♠ = maximum hand and a maximum suit.

Test Your Play

Eddie Kantar

Be careful that you use good judgment. Considering that you may have as few as 3 points, the words "minimum and maximum" are relative. For instance, if you responded with 2♠ and partner asked about your hand via 2NT, this hand would be a 3♦ bid showing a minimum hand and a good suit:

♠QJ9754 ♥43 ♦873 ♣43.

Continuing with opener's rebids after the example auction 1♦ - Pass - 2♠ - Pass.

If opener has a minimum hand, he should pass.

If opener bids a new suit (such as 3♣), it's forcing, showing a strong hand.

If opener rebids his suit (3♦), it is a clear signoff. This is the one bid opener can make with a weakish hand. Opener is now at the three level facing a weak hand so he should have a very good suit to do this.

If opener raises partner's major

(3♠), it's preemptive. Responder is not invited to bid again.

Lastly, if the opponents overcall after your partner makes a WJS, a double is penalty. It is as close to a command as there is.

So now we need an opinion about weak jump shifts. For years I have leaned in favor of strong jump shifts. But now I am not so sure. Because the world is bidding better than they did years ago, I find the weak jump shift has value in obstructing the opponents' bidding. Further, since there are better agreements available to use when your partner makes a WJS (the Ogust 2NT response, for example) I think that players using weak jump shifts will get better mileage from the convention today than 30 years ago.

My suggestion is simple: Choose strong or weak jump shifts and be comfortable that you are doing something good. If your partner is adamant, play his choice of weak or strong. Both work well. □

1. Dlr: East ♠ K 7 3 2
 Vul: N-S ♥ 6
 IMPs ♦ A 4 3 2
 ♣ A Q 10 5

♠ Q 6
 ♥ Q J 8
 ♦ K Q J 10 9
 ♣ 7 4 3

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Dbl	3♥	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the ♥4 (fourth best). East wins the ace and returns the ♥3 to your queen and West's king. West exits with the ♥2 to the 10 and jack. How do you continue?

2. Dlr: North ♠ 3
 Vul: None ♥ K 7 4 2
 IMPs ♦ A K Q 2
 ♣ J 10 9 6

♠ A J 8
 ♥ A Q 6
 ♦ 10 7 6
 ♣ K Q 8 7

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Don't expect to win any bidding competitions with this sequence. Here you are in a sketchy 3NT with 6♣ being odds on. Play well! You are going to have to bring back this result to your teammates.

West leads the ♠5 (fourth best). East plays the ♠K. Plan the play.

Solutions are on page 57.

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