



By: Don Rogers

II. Invitational Hands (8 to a bad 10)

With a hand in this range there may be a game if partner is on the top of their NT range (a very good 16 or 17). As captain your responsibility is to invite partner to game, and to abide by their decision.

The first question is do you have a five or four card major. If not, you simply raise to 2NT and let partner decide. There are more options if you do have a 5 card or longer major. (Note that with a long minor suit and 8-10 pts, you should prefer to play in NT as that scores better than a minor.)

With one or more 4 card majors, you start by bidding 2C (Stayman). Remember that usually the hand will play one trick better in a 4-4 major fit than in NT. If partner bids 2D (no four-card major), then you bid 2NT. Partner can bid 3NT or pass. If partner bids 2 of the major that you do not have, again you can bid 2NT, and partner will know what you have – an invitational hand with 4 cards in the other major.

If partner bids the major you do have, then you should confirm the suit by bidding 3 of the major. This is invitational – opener can pass with a minimum NT opener, or carry on to 4 of the major with a little extra.

With a 5-card major suit and an invitational hand, you start with a transfer bid in the usual way. (At this point the 1NT opener does not know the strength of your hand, only that you have 5 of the suit. Opener absolutely needs to follow “instructions” and accept the transfer!) After opener bids 2 of your major, with the invitational hand you bid 2NT. Now partner knows you have an invitational hand and 5 cards in your major, and can choose between pass (playing 2NT), 3 of your major (which you should pass!), 3NT or 4 of the major. Opener's decision will depend on how well they fit your suit, and the strength of their hand.

Remember, when you show an invitational hand, opener makes the final decision about the final contract. If opener bids 3 of the major, do not succumb to temptation to bid 4! Opener knows what they have in their hand better than you do.