

Jacoby 2NT Raise

(Friday mini-lesson – 21 February 2020)

About a month ago, I gave a mini-lesson on the **Splinter Bid**, which is a convention whereby a **double-jump bid in a side-suit** indicates a game-going trump fit and a singleton or void in the suit bid. This bid works very well in conjunction with the topic of today's lesson – the **Jacoby 2NT Raise**.

Like the Splinter Bid, the **Jacoby 2NT Bid** shows at least a 4-card fit with partner and enough values for game. The main difference is, the Jacoby 2NT shows a hand that does not have a shortage (singleton or void), thus is a balanced or semi-balanced hand. The other difference is that the **Jacoby 2NT raise is only used over a major suit opening**.

In summary - the Jacoby 2NT convention is an artificial, game-forcing response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid. The 2NT response shows 4+ trump support with 13+ points. The bid asks partner to describe her hand further so that slam prospects can be judged accordingly.

Jacoby 2NT fits well with 5-card major systems that employ limit raises for game invitations (i.e., 1♥ – 3♥ and 1♠ – 3♠, invitational). Thus, it fills the need for a game-forcing raise with unlimited strength. The convention doesn't come up often, but is precious in its role.

How Does One Respond to Jacoby 2NT?

The opener can have three basic hand types for their bid of 1♥/1♠.

1. A hand with a strong second 5+ - card suit.
2. A hand with a singleton or void (but no long, strong second suit).
3. A balanced or semi-balanced hand.

With hand type 1, a strong second suit with 5 or more cards, jump to the 4-level in that suit. E.g., after 1♠ – 2NT, then 4♣/4♦/4♥ shows a long strong second suit.

With hand type 2, a singleton or void in a side suit, bid at the 3-level in that suit. E.g., after 1♠ – 2NT, then 3♣/3♦/3♥ shows a singleton / void.

With hand type 3, a balanced or semi-balanced hand, then there are three bids available to show your point range. E.g., after 1♥/1♠ – 2NT, bid as follows:

1. Jumping to 4-level in your major shows a very **minimum** hand, 11-13hcp.
2. Bidding 3NT shows a **medium**-strength hand, 14-16hcp.
3. Bidding 3 of your major shows a **maximum** hand, 17-20hcp.

How is all this helpful to the partnership? Let's look at some examples:

A. You and partner have the following hands:

♠ K 5 3	♠ A 2
♥ K Q J 6 4	♥ A T 9 4
♦ 6	♦ 9 7 4 3
♣ A J 5 2	♣ K Q 4

You open 1♥, and partner, with game values and 4 trumps, bids 2NT.

Your response is 3♦ – “I have a singleton in ♦s”.

Partner’s hand is so good opposite a ♦ shortage (no wastage) that she looks for slam with cue-bids or 4NT and the excellent 6♥ slam should be found.

However, change partner’s hand slightly to:

♠ K 5 3	♠ A 2
♥ K Q J 6 4	♥ A T 9 4
♦ 6	♦ K Q 4
♣ A J 5 2	♣ 9 7 4 3

And she will simply sign off in 4♥, since K-Q opposite a shortage is wasted values.

B. You and partner have the following hands:

♠ 8	♠ A J 2
♥ K Q T 8 7 3	♥ A T 9 4
♦ 5	♦ 9 7 4 3
♣ A Q T 8 3	♣ K 4

You open 1♥, and again partner bids 2NT.

Your response is 4♣ – “I have a second long strong suit in ♣s”.

Partner should now recognise that the K♣ is a magic card, fitting with your second long suit and will press on looking for slam, which is a good contract. With the K♦ instead of the K♣, partner would now not be interested (you must be short in ♠s and ♦s, since you have two other 5-plus-card suits.)

C. You have a balanced or semi-balanced hand minimum, e.g.

♠ 9 8	♥ K Q T 8 7	♦ Q 5	♣ A J T 3
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After 1♥ – 2NT, simply jump to 4♥ to warn partner of your minimum.

With a stronger hand: ♠ K 8 ♥ K Q T 8 7 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A J T 3

After 1♥ – 2NT, bid 3NT to show a medium strength hand.

With an even stronger hand: ♠ A 8 ♥ K Q T 8 7 ♦ K 5 ♣ A J T 3

After 1♥ – 2NT, bid 3♥ to show a maximum.

Jacoby 2NT does not apply, if the 2NT bidder was a **passed hand** initially, or if there is **opposition interference** bidding (apart from a double).