

**and bids four spades which is Roman Key Card. If the king is missing, a small slam will be adequate. But if the queen is the missing honor, responder will bid seven hearts.**

**Example 91d) relays by bidding four diamonds, then makes the Asking Bid of five clubs. If opener has second round club control it will be safe to bid a slam.**

### *Responses to Weak Two Bids* \_\_\_\_\_

In Volume I you learned to raise a weak two bid preemptively and to bid two notrump to seek further information about the nature of the weak two bid. You learned that opener should return to the suit with minimum values, but should show a feature in another suit when the weak two bid was maximum. You also learned how opener should show or deny a fit for responder's two level major suit response. Those methods are the oldest and simplest available, but better methods have emerged in later years.

In Chapter Six you learned the **Ogust** convention to be used in auctions in which responder made a preemptive jump shift response. This convention was created for auctions beginning with weak two bids. Responder to the opening weak two bid uses two notrump to seek information which is expressed by the opening bidder using step rebids. Reviewing those steps:

1. Three clubs shows a bad hand with a bad suit.
2. Three diamonds shows a bad hand with a good suit.
3. Three hearts shows a good hand with a bad suit.
4. Three spades shows a good hand with a good suit.
5. Three notrump shows a solid suit.

The fifth item was not included earlier because the preemptive jump shift response shows the values of about 2 to a bad 5 HCP. However, the weak two bid is descriptive and not preemptive and normally in the range of 5 to 11 HCP. That makes it possible for opener to hold a suit including all four top honor cards.

Bear in mind that the number of high card points in a hand is not the factor

that determines whether the hand is bad or good. Hands that are 6-3-2-2 have the worst possible distribution and are generally considered bad. Hands with better shape can be classified as good.

We recommend the use of **Ogust** facing a first or second seat weak two bid. In those two positions the gamut of possible hands is extensive. Using **Ogust** to determine qualities will enable the bidding side to know whether or not to bid game or seek slam. Opener is able to express far more easily than through the older method of showing a feature with a maximum and repeating the suit with a minimum.

One advantage of **Ogust** is that opener does not need as robust a suit to open with a weak two bid. Responder has a quality control that relates to the nature of the suit. Older weak two bids virtually promised two of the top three, or three of the top five honors. When **Ogust** is available, the suit quality can be considerably less impressive.

The one concern about quality is that the weak two bidder must be happy to have the suit led on defense, virtually regardless of partner's holding. If the weak two bid is made on a headless suit, it would be disastrous for partner to be on lead with doubleton king and place the king on the table. To forestall that possibility, agreement should be that in first or second seat the minimum quality for the suit should be that it is headed by the queen. When the queen is the only face card in the suit, prudence suggests that it be fortified by excellent spot cards. Queen-ten-nine sixth is a far safer holding than queen empty sixth.

We believe that the suit shown by an opening weak two bid should be the prime candidate to be the trump suit. Certain distributional patterns have more than one true trump candidate. If opener has a six-five pattern and opens a weak two bid, when responder has no fit for the six card suit but an excellent fit for the five card suit, opener will often languish in a poor contract. A far better one may be available but cannot be reached. When opener holds a six-four-three pattern, the problem is similar. Responder may have a five card or longer fit for one of opener's side suits. After the weak two bid is made, the chance of reaching a contract in the superior fit is reduced drastically. If opener does hold a second four card suit, it should be a minor.

So, our rules for a weak two bid in first and second seat are these:

1. The suit will usually be six cards. The requirements for seven card and five card weak two bids were spelled out in Volume I.
2. The suit will be headed at least by the queen. If only the queen, the suit will include good spot cards.
3. Six-five hands and hands that are six-four-three are not included as acceptable weak two bid patterns because of the good chance of better trump fits.
4. A side four card suit is permitted if it is a minor suit. Hands that include a superb six card major and a poor four card holding in the other major are allowable exceptions.

**Example 92)**

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| a) ♠ KQ10953<br>♥ 62<br>♦ Q94<br>♣ Q6 | b) ♠ 7<br>♥ AJ8632<br>♦ K1052<br>♣ 83   |
| c) ♠ 63<br>♥ J863<br>♦ KQ10943<br>♣ 8 | d) ♠ 9753<br>♥ KQJ1082<br>♦ K4<br>♣ 7   |
| e) ♠ 54<br>♥ 96<br>♦ AKQJ83<br>♣ 852  | f) ♠ J63<br>♥ AQJ106<br>♦ 1054<br>♣ J10 |
| g) ♠ QJ9863<br>♥ 102<br>♦ K75<br>♣ QJ | h) ♠ 6<br>♥ KJ10742<br>♦ K7632<br>♣ 8   |

Example 92a) is a classic weak two spade bid. If partner bids two notrump to get an Ogust rebid, three diamonds will show your bad hand with a good suit. Do not count nine high card points and believe that makes this a good hand in the range of five

to eleven. The shape is as bad as it can be, and the two minor suit queens might be entirely useless.

Example 92b) is a clear two heart bid. The shape makes this a good hand, but the suit is obviously poor. Your Ogust rebid will be three hearts to show a good hand with a bad suit. Note that the presence of one and one half plus defensive tricks does not preclude the weak two bid which is descriptive, not preemptive.

Example 92c) should not be opened with a weak two bid in first or second seat. Even though the diamond suit is wonderful, major suits are too important and you might miss a heart fit. In third seat, anything goes, so two diamonds is acceptable.

Example 92d) is a weak two bid despite the four card spade holding. A heart suit that good should be trumps. If partner bids two notrump, bid three spades to show a good hand with a good suit.

Example 92e) opens two diamonds and, if partner bids two notrump, rebids three notrump to show a solid suit.

Example 92f) is fine for a weak two heart bid in first, second, or third seat because of the good suit. If partner asks this is a bad hand with a good suit.

Example 92g) should open two spades in any seat except fourth. Despite nine high card points, this is a bad hand with a bad suit.

Example 92h) should not open with a weak two bid in first or second seat because of the two possible trump suits. However, in third seat do what you must and bid two hearts.

All hands of Example 92) should pass in fourth seat. None has adequate values to believe that a plus score is likely opposite a passed partner.

When weak two bids were introduced, the only forcing response was two



notrump, and all new suits were non-forcing. Progress does change things. The standard today is that all new suits are forcing and assumed to be natural. We believe that it is important for a response in a major suit to be forcing for obvious reasons. We cannot find many reasons for a new minor suit to be forcing. Our preferred approach—new majors forcing and new minors non-forcing—must be expressed on the convention card, and when a non-forcing call in a new minor occurs, it must be alerted since in standard the call is forcing.

Remember that when responder bids a higher ranking suit at the two level in response to an opening weak two bid, opener is required to show a fit for the suit of the response when possible. Holding ace, king, or queen third, opener will raise the suit of the response to the three level. With a lesser three card holding or doubleton ace, king, or queen, opener bids two notrump to show a marginal fit for responder's suit. The new major response is forcing and assumed to be natural, but opener has the obligation to rebid to show or deny a fit.

When **Ogust** has been agreed, it still applies after responder bids a higher ranking suit at the two level. Holding two small cards or less in responder's suit, opener makes an **Ogust** rebid. The minor suit rebids retain their meanings, but one major suit step is lost. The major suit rebid that would raise responder's suit is removed from the **Ogust** steps. Opener must rebid in the other major to show any good hand.

Following an opening bid of two diamonds, responder may use a new suit to ask for opener's holding not to discover a fit for the major as a possible trump suit, but rather to find stoppers for play in notrump. When opener shows a good fit for responder's major suit and responder then bids three notrump, opener may not remove. Responder has placed the contract and opener has no power of override. The probe may have been for the purpose of determining stoppers for notrump rather than to try to play in the major suit that was bid in response to the weak two bid.

### Example 93)

a) ♠ 863  
♥ —  
♦ K42  
♣ AQJ9763

b) ♠ KJ963  
♥ AQ5  
♦ Q92  
♣ K10

c)    ♠ QJ6  
       ♡ Q3  
       ♦ A842  
       ♣ J854

d)    ♠ J85  
       ♡ AK2  
       ♦ A853  
       ♣ AQ4

With Example 93a) you are responding to an opening bid of two hearts. You are pleased that when you respond three clubs your call is non-forcing (alert).

With Example 93b) you are responding to an opening bid of two diamonds. Do not make the error of bidding two notrump. Your best game contract could be in spades. Respond two spades, and if partner shows a spade fit by bidding either three spades or two notrump, play four spades. If partner denies a spade fit and shows a bad hand, play three diamonds. If partner denies a spade fit but shows a good hand by bidding three hearts, you can gamble three notrump or play five diamonds.

With Example 93c) you are responding to an opening bid of two spades. Bid three spades to try to steal the hand by shutting out your opponents. They can probably make some number of hearts, but may not be able to find a heart contract after your raise.

With Example 93d) you are responding to an opening bid of two diamonds. Bid two spades to find out what partner's spade holding is. If partner shows some spades by either raising to three spades or bidding two notrump, play three notrump. If partner shows short spades and a bad hand and a bad suit by bidding three clubs, settle for three diamonds. If partner shows a good suit by bidding three diamonds, you can gamble three notrump hoping that the defense has no more than four spade tricks, or (less attractive) can gamble five diamonds playing partner for a stiff spade and a secondary card in either hearts or clubs. If partner bids three hearts to deny spades and show a good hand, five diamonds is clear.

**Example 94)**

a) ♠ 106  
♥ Q85  
♦ AK10972  
♣ 54

b) ♠ J106  
♥ K3  
♦ QJ9765  
♣ Q6

c) ♠ 6  
♥ AQJ954  
♦ K62  
♣ 854

d) ♠ KJ10962  
♥ 85  
♦ K6  
♣ 843

With Example 94a) you have opened two diamonds. If partner bids two spades or two notrump, bid three diamonds to show a bad hand with a good suit. If partner bids two hearts, raise to show a top honor.

With Example 94b) you have opened two diamonds. If partner bids two notrump, bid three clubs to show a bad hand with a bad suit. If partner bids either major suit, bid two notrump to show a partial fit—either high honor doubleton or three cards without a high honor.

With Example 94c) you have opened two hearts. If partner bids two notrump, bid three spades to show a good hand with a good suit. If partner bids two spades, bid three hearts. You cannot show both a good hand and a good suit by bidding three spades. That would promise three spades to a high honor.

With Example 94d) you have bid two spades. If partner bids two notrump, you will show a bad hand by rebidding in a minor suit. If vulnerable bid three clubs to show a bad suit. If not vulnerable it is reasonable to bid three diamonds to show a good suit. If partner bids three of a minor suit, alert, because it is non-forcing, and pass. If partner bids three hearts, bid three spades. Partner's response is forcing, and you have no other expressive rebid.

This structuring of weak two bids applies only when the weak two bid is

made in first or second seat. In third and fourth seats there are entirely different considerations that apply.

Third seat weak two bids are left to the imagination of the bidder. If partner has passed and you have a poor hand in third seat, it is reasonably clear that the opponents have the values to make at least a game, maybe even a slam. The discipline that applies in the first two seats is completely set aside in third. Don't be unreasonable, but make a weak two bid on any holding that seems right.

Fourth position has yet another face. After three passes you can also pass to end the auction, knowing that you will not get a minus score on the hand. You should only keep the auction alive if you believe that your side will achieve a plus score. This means that there are no minimum weak two bids. A weak two bid in fourth seat should be very substantial. In fact, often it will be made with a hand that might have opened with a one bid in an earlier position.

In fourth position the high card point range changes. It is no longer 5 to 11—it becomes about 10 to 13 HCP. It is expected that after this fourth seat weak two bid, neither opponent will be able to compete. On some occasions partner will seek game, but **Ogust** serves no purpose. The fourth seat weak two bid is always a good hand and a good suit.

When partner has a fit and a near opening bid, if game is to be bid and made there must be good fits in the rest of the hand. For this reason we suggest that facing a weak two bid in fourth seat, when responder bids two notrump as a try for game, opener is asked to show shortness. We have learned that evaluation is facilitated when one partner can show shortness. That is very true in this instance.

Game is less likely when the opening weak two bid has been made in third seat. Therefore, facing a weak two bid in either third or fourth seat, two notrump is not **Ogust**. It asks if the weak two bidder holds shortness in any suit. If opener does show shortness that fits with the hand of the passed responder, a fitting game may easily be bid.

**Example 95)**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a) ♠ AQJ965<br>♥ 6<br>♦ K94<br>♣ 1083 | b) ♠ AQJ965<br>♥ 6<br>♦ A104<br>♣ 1083 |
| c) ♠ 63<br>♥ AQJ965<br>♦ J1054<br>♣ 4 | d) ♠ K2<br>♥ KQJ854<br>♦ A102<br>♣ 105 |

With Example 95a) open two spades in any seat. If you have opened in first or second seat and partner bids two notrump to ask for an Ogust rebid, bid three spades to show a good hand with a good suit. If you have opened in third or fourth seat and partner bids two notrump to ask for shortness, bid three hearts to show your singleton.

With Example 95b) open one spade in first, second, or third seat. In fourth seat open two spades, and if partner bids two notrump to ask for shortness, bid three hearts to show your singleton.

With Example 95c) open two hearts in first, second, or third seat. If you have opened in first or second seat and partner bids two notrump to ask for an Ogust rebid, bid three spades to show a good hand with a good suit. If you are in third seat and partner bids two notrump to ask for shortness, bid three clubs to show your singleton. In fourth seat, be grateful that the opponents have not found their spade fit, and pass. If you open two hearts, the door is opened for them once again. Don't do it!

With Example 95d) open one heart in first, second or third seat. In fourth seat open two hearts and if partner bids two notrump to ask for shortness, bid three notrump. You want to be in some game, and this should show no singleton and sound opening bid values. Partner knows to pass with scattered values or convert to four hearts with a distributional hand.