



# Ask Jerry

opening bid. Perhaps your partner could profit from this Jerry-ism:

**The one who  
knows is the one  
who goes.**

What should 2♠ actually mean in this auction? By partnership agreement, anything you think:

1. Forcing. Six hearts, five spades.
2. Invitational. Six hearts, five spades.
3. Forcing. Five or more hearts, spade values, not necessarily a real suit.
4. Forcing. 4-4-3-2, balanced minimum ... oops, probably not!

A good idea is to never intentionally toss partner a curve ball in the bidding. An equally important idea is to never pass if there is any doubt.

Dear Jerry,

RHO opened 1♦ and I held:  
♠QJ ♥AJ82 ♦1073 ♣AKQ4.

I elected to pass since no bid seemed attractive. The players I asked about what to bid all said I needed to bid with 17 points. The suggestions were 2♣, 1NT or double. What do you advise?

Jackye, Paris TN

Jackye,

I have often told people that I think I am one of the world's great bridge analysts ... right after seeing all four hands.

The options I see that are reasonable include: pass, 1♥, double, 1NT or 2♣. I confess I might be tempted to overcall 1NT at matchpoints. A good partner would either transfer to a major or if we played notrump, provide a diamond stopper. The good thing about matchpoints is that when you are wrong, you only have to apologize to one person. At a team game, where there are three people to be offended by your bad decision, I would be more inclined to consider taking one of my clubs, which is black and mix it with my spades, which are also black, and make a takeout double. At least when I tabled dummy, partner would be more critical of my eyesight than my intellect. In reality, I think pass was a very reasonable decision. I am going to do a poll of my expert friends and get their best guess ... no actually, I am not because there is no right answer. Hands like this are what make bridge such a great game. Nothing is always right or always wrong, and sometimes things that seem wrong work out right. □

*Jerry Helms*  
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Dear Jerry,

In the following auction, what is the meaning of 2♠?

You	Partner
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♠

I thought this was a weak hand with six hearts and five spades, so I passed. My partner had an opening hand with 4-4-3-2 distribution.

Annette, Dallas PA

Hi Annette,

For starters, any hand with a six-card suit and a five-card suit opposite a partner who has at least tolerance if not support for both, can never be that weak! If responder actually held a hand as bad as:

♠J8754 ♥J76432 ♦K ♣J,

a simple 2♥ rebid would leave the partnership in an eight- or nine-card fit at the lowest possible level. On your auction, the 1NT rebid would tend to deny holding four spades, so the actual meaning of 2♠ by responder would be impacted by your partnership conventions (New Minor Forcing, etc.) Under all circumstances, I would play a new suit reverse by an unpassed responder as forcing.

Your partner created a problem where one never existed. Apparently, the 2♠ reverse in this auction was undiscussed, so why make the bid?

Once you rebid 1NT to describe a balanced minimum, he should simply raise to 3NT with his balanced