



Ask Jerry

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Dear Jerry,
The other day my partner and I
had the following auction:

<i>Me</i>	<i>Partner</i>
1♦	1♥
1♠	2NT
3♥	Pass

I intended 3♥ as a choice of
games, but partner thought I was
just trying for a safer partscore.
Could you settle our dispute?

B.D.

Hi, B.D.,

I am on record as saying that while I may often be wrong, I am never without a strong opinion. I am also on record espousing the following view: In most sequences, use your bids to reach the best game or slam rather than trying to stop on a dime in the perfect partscore. I will elaborate.

For starters, partnership agreement comes into play. Most players use all second-round jumps in previously bid suits or jumps to 2NT as invitational to game. With this agreement, your partner should be suggesting around 11–12 points. Typical holdings for her 2NT could include either of the following:

- (1) ♠A Q 7 ♥K Q 9 6 ♦7 5 4 ♣A 10 9 3
 (2) ♠A 7 4 ♥Q 8 7 4 2 ♦J 2 ♣A 9 6.

Note that on the second example, rebidding 2♥ would show 6–10 points and suggest at least a six-card suit, and

a jump to 3♥ would be invitational, also showing at least a six-card suit.

You, opener, hold:

♠K 10 9 8 ♥J 10 5 ♦A K Q 6 3 ♣J.

With 14 high-card points, you clearly want to accept partner's game invitation. You do that by "patterning out" with 3♥. Let's see ... you bid diamonds, you bid spades and then gave delayed support to partner's original 1♥ response. That sounds like a person with length in the three suits bid and therefore shortness in clubs. This description maximizes the chances of reaching the best strain.

After you've patterned out, responder simply bids 3NT with the first hand. With the second, she happily bids 4♥. If opener had simply raised to 3NT rather than bidding 3♥, the wrong game would be reached on the second example.

Now, suppose you deal and pick up:

♠A K 8 7 ♥A 5 2 ♦8 ♣K Q 9 4 2.

A similar auction ensues:

<i>You</i>	<i>Partner</i>
1♣	1♥
1♠	1NT
2♥	

Your partner's 1NT rebid shows 6–10 points, making game a distinct possibility, but not a certainty. Additionally, responder could easily hold a five-card heart suit. Your delayed raise to 2♥, while nonforcing, should be a forward-

going game invitation, not an attempt to reach a better partscore. Because you have patterned out and shown extras, responder knows whether to pass, bid 2NT, 3NT, 4♥ or even 3♣.

<i>You</i>	<i>Partner</i>
1♣	1♥
1♠	2♣
2♥	

Just like the previous hand, your 2♥ is a constructive move towards a possible game.

Repeat after me:

When opener shows delayed support for responder's first suit in a nonforcing auction, it is always a forward-going bid.

Note the word *always*. That's not a word that appears in my bridge vocabulary very often! ■