



Marshall Miles

**MORE
ACCURATE
BIDDING**

AN HONORS eBook FROM MASTER POINT PRESS



Marshall Miles

**MORE
ACCURATE
BIDDING**

AN HONORS BOOK FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

Text © 2011 Marshall Miles

All rights reserved.

Honors Books is an imprint of Master Point Press. All contents, editing and design (excluding cover design) are the sole responsibility of the author.

Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2
(416) 781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com
Websites: www.masterpointpress.com
www.bridgeblogging.com
www.teachbridge.com
www.ebooksbridge.com

ISBN: 978-1-55494-515-3

Layout and Editing: Marshall Miles
Cover Design: Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

MORE ACCURATE BIDDING

By Marshall Miles

Since this is not a book for beginners, I will not bore you with rehashing things you already know. I have chosen topics that are somewhat controversial, and have urged my point of view. You may not be persuaded by everything I recommend, but perhaps you will adopt part of it, and it won't hurt you to discover how some other people play, even if you refuse to play that way, yourself. If what I recommend is contrary to Bridge World Standard, what a majority of experts play as indicated by a poll, I say so; you don't need to worry about being misled. Let's start with a very common sequence.

GAME INVITATIONS AFTER A RAISE OF OPENER'S MAJOR

Suppose, as dealer, you open 1♠ and partner raises to 2♠. If you want to invite a game, how do you go about it? Most players make a help-suit game try. With ♠AQxxx ♥Kxx ♦x ♣AQxx they would bid 3♣ or 3♥. Either bid would get them to a good game opposite ♠Kxx ♥Q10x ♦Jxxxx ♣Kx, an excellent game opposite ♠J10xx ♥Ax ♦Jxxx ♣Kxx, but to a very poor game opposite ♠Jxx ♥xxxx ♦KQxx ♣Kx or ♠9xxx ♥QJx ♦KJxx ♣Kx. This time, a short suit try for game would work far better, at least in a bidding contest, but short suit tries for game help the opponents too much. Often, after a short-suit try, and a spot card lead (lowest from even, 3rd best from odd) your RHO will be able to figure out your exact distribution. If so, the defense may be double dummy. It is very undesirable for the player who will be declarer to show his distribution to the opponents. It is far less harmful for the dummy to describe his hand, since the opponents will see it anyway after the opening lead. I believe Peter Nagy was the first person to suggest that opener should bid 2NT to ask his partner to show where he has the most secondary values that would be wasted opposite a singleton. With the last two hands, responder would bid 3♦. If he has possible wasted values in two suits, he shows the suit where most of the wasted values are, or with close to a tie, he bids the cheaper suit. Some people play that opener can make a second game try (if there is room without forcing to game) by showing his shortest remaining suit, but that defeats the purpose of concealing his hand.

Obviously, over the 2NT bid, responder can bid 3♠ to show a bad raise or 4♠ to show a very good raise. It is only with a medium or medium plus raise that he shows a concentration of values which would be wasted opposite a singleton. This method often works well, even when opener does not have a singleton. Suppose he holds ♠AKxxxx ♥Axx ♦Kx ♣Jx. If, over 2NT, his partner bids 3♥ with ♥KQx or ♥QJ10x plus an ace or king in the minors, there must be a reasonable play for 4♠. If his partner bids 3♣ with the ♣AK10x and not much else, or ♣KQx and an honor in the red suits, there will probably be a

better play for 3NT than for 4♠. The nice thing about this convention is that the defenders don't know why the opening bidder, who will be declarer, likes or doesn't like his hand. If the uncontested bidding goes 1♠ 2♠, 2NT 3♦, 4♠ the opponents don't know whether opening bidder likes concentrated honors in diamonds (to go with his ♦Axx) or likes the fact that responder doesn't have many wasted values opposite his singleton club, or that opener had such a strong game try, that he planned to bid game over any response except 3♠.

If the bidding starts 1♥ p 2♥, opener can bid 2♠ to ask about secondary values. This is the equivalent of 1♠ p 2♠ p, 2NT. With ♠KQxx or ♠QJxxx responder would bid 2NT, not 3♠, to show possible wastage in spades—since 3♠ would force to game.

The 2NT bid over 2♠ and the 2♠ bid over 2♥ should be used for about 80% of your game tries. If opener has a true two-suiter, like ♠QJxxx ♥AQxxx ♦x ♣AJ, he should bid his second suit. Even though this gives information to the opponents, the benefits outweigh the detriments. Responder will know that his honors in opener's two suits will be valuable, while honors, other than aces, in the other two suits are of dubious value. Suppose that opener has ♠AKxxx ♥KQ10 ♦Kxxx ♣x. Over a raise to 2♠ he should bid 3♦ because his honors in spades and diamonds are crucial, and high cards, other than aces, in the other two suits will probably be wasted. The purpose of these conventions is to allow both opener and responder to evaluate their hands accurately.

After 1♠ p 2♠ and 1♥ p 2♥, there is one remaining game try. Suppose opener has ♠Jxxxx ♥x ♦AKQJx ♣Ax. The king of clubs might be of value, but he is primarily interested in good spade support, and to a lesser extent, in any other ace that responder might hold. With ♠AQxx or even ♠KQxx and nothing else of value, responder should raise to game. Also with ♠K10xx ♥Axx ♦xxx ♣Jxx. With ♠xxx ♥KQx ♦KJ10xx ♣xx, opener should pass and hope the partnership isn't too high already. Opener may also "psyche" a bid. After 1♥ p 2♥ p, ? opener might bid 3♥ with ♠xx ♥AKQJxx ♦Kxx ♣xx. He doesn't really want to get to game), but in a strong field, if he passes, his LHO is almost certain to reopen with a double or an overcall. Since your trumps are so good, partner is unlikely to accept your "try" except with four or more trumps and two aces. Even that may not be enough unless one of the aces is in diamonds, and it has to be singleton or doubleton. However, with that holding he might have made a limit raise. My guess is that the opponents have a far better chance of making game, probably in spades, than you do, and almost a cinch to be able to outbid you at the part-score level. 3♥ is a somewhat greedy bid. If you are not vulnerable, it might be right to bid 4♥ atimps. Since neither opponent has bid nor doubled so far, which one could logically double a 4♥ bid without a trump trick? But I would probably just bid 3♥ since it is dangerous for the opponents to reopen at the three level, and I am too stingy to give away 50 points or 190 points (or 2 to 5imps) when it probably won't be necessary.

Suppose the bidding starts as follows:

Partner	Opponent	You	Opponent
Pass	pass	1♥	pass
2♣	pass	2♦	pass
2♥	pass	?	

You are playing reverse Drury, guaranteeing at least three card heart support, and the way I play, 2♦ by opener simply shows a sound opening bid (not necessarily a hand good enough to accept a limit raise). Responder, having shown his values, does not need to jump to game himself unless he has a super hand (maybe ♠Ax ♥QJxxx ♦KJxx ♣xx) with which he would have jumped to game directly except that he didn't want to trap you if you had made a very weak 3rd hand lead-directing bid. He would plan to bid 3♥ even after you attempted to sign off in 2♥. With ♠Kxx ♥QJxx ♦x Axxxx he should bid 3♦ to *show his singleton* (and get to game opposite ♠Axx ♥A109xx ♦xxx ♣Kx and stay out of game with his minors reversed). Responder has shown roughly 10-13 support points (counting distribution) instead of 6 to 10. Except for the ability of responder to show a singleton and the fact that the ranges are different, the bidding now should follow the same pattern as after 1♥ p 2♥ p, 2♠ or 1♠ p 2♠, p, 2NT.

When bidding or inviting game, it usually is a bad idea for the eventual declarer to describe his distribution. Many game contracts would be defeated if the opponents were to make the right opening lead. Declarer often makes a game, even after the best opening lead, when the defenders can't figure out, or are too lazy to count, his distribution. But when you are contemplating a slam it usually pays for both partners to describe their hands as accurately as possible. If the slam is makable, the opponents will only be on lead twice—on opening lead and possibly once more. When the bidding goes 1M 2NT, 4x (the "x" being any new suit), it should show 5-5 or 6-5 distribution. But I also think this sequence should deny two quick losers in either of the unbid suits. Some players say the second suit should be strong (like headed by two of the top three honors). They would open 1♠ and jump to 4♦ over a 2NT response with ♠KJxxx ♥Qx ♦AKJxx ♣x. I would just bid 3♣, showing my singleton with this hand. Why? Because almost any king or queen partner has, other than in clubs, will be of potential value. If responder has ♠AJ10xx ♥Kxx ♦Qx ♣AJx, he will know that the king of hearts won't be wasted. What if partner has ♠Axxxx ♥Ax ♦Qxx ♣Axx? Won't the king of hearts be worth a trick opposite ♠KJxxx ♥Qx ♦AKJxx ♣x? Probably not, since partner should be able to discard his losing heart on your diamond suit.

I have a suggestion. After 1M p 2NT (which guarantees four card trump support, no singleton or void,¹ and at least enough values for game), if opener jumps to the four level, responder should show in steps how many useful points he has, counting 2 for each ace, 2 for each king in the two suits shown, and 1 for each queen in the two suits. The cheapest bid would show a maximum of three points, the next bid would show 4, still the next bid after that would show 5, etc. Let's see how that would work. After 1♠ p 2NT, opener bids 4♣ with ♠AQxxx ♥Ax ♦x ♣Q10xxx and responder has ♠KJxx ♥J10x ♦Qxx ♣AKx. He has 6 “Jacoby points”—2 for the ace and 2 for each black king. Unless the clubs break badly, he will get rid of his heart loser on the club suit. Suppose responder holds ♠KJxx ♥Qxx ♦Axxx ♣Kx. Missing either two aces or king in the black suits or one ace or king plus both black queens, declarer would sign off. Usually declarer has more “Jacoby points” than in my example, and responder has fewer. With an ace or king in the black suits plus a black queen missing, responder will often bid a small slam with a doubleton in opener's second suit, and if he is missing the queen of trumps, he will have, at worst, a 40% play for no trump loser, and better than that when either hand has the jack or a combined total of 10 trumps.

DO YOU OR DON'T YOU?

There are four main issues over which bridge players are almost evenly divided.

- (1) If you open one of a major and partner makes a 2/1 response, does your rebid of a major show a six card suit?
- (2) If you open a suit and partner bids a higher ranking suit, do you ever rebid notrump with a singleton in partner's suit?
- (3) If you open a suit and partner bids a suit at the one level, do you usually (or always) refuse to raise with three card support?
- (4) Do you play 2/1 forcing to game?

Let's consider the pros and cons of each issue. There is an advantage, when you open a major and partner responds at the two-level, in letting him know right away whether you have a five or six card suit. The argument in favor of showing a six card suit by rebidding it is that you have already shown a at least five, so why not tell partner whether you have five or six (plus) rather than making an ambiguous bid that tells him nothing more about your hand? The counter

¹ If responder intends to take control of the bidding on the following round by RKCB, it is permissible for him to bid 2NT to agree upon the suit first. With ♠A ♥AJ10x ♦KQJxxx ♣x responder could bid 2NT over partner's 1♥ bid so that when he bids 4NT next round, he can find out about the missing heart honors as well as the minor suit aces. However, unless he takes immediate control of the bidding, he denies a singleton or void.

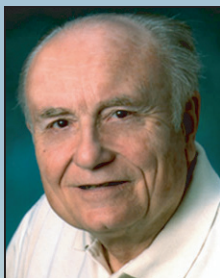
ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF BIDDING

This is not a book for beginners, and will not bore you with rehashing things you already know. Some of the topics are somewhat controversial, and as always Marshall Miles urges his own, often original, point of view. You may not be persuaded by everything he recommends, but perhaps you will adopt part of it, and it won't hurt you to discover how some other people play, even if you refuse to play that way yourself.

Here are some of the topics discussed:

- Game invitations after a raise of opener's major
- Fast arrival and picture bids
- When the opponents double a transfer or Stayman
- Mini splinters
- Mini Roman 2♦
- The Kaplan Interchange
- Rubens advances of overcalls
- Ways to show two-suiters
- The Wolff signoff
- Inverted minors
- Playing in the opponents' suit
- Balancing

As he often does, Miles ends this book with an 'It's Your Call' bidding quiz, with detailed discussion of options and the rationale for his own choices.



MARSHALL MILES (California), though now in his eighties, is still regarded as one of the world's leading bidding theorists. His long and successful playing career includes a World Senior Teams Championship in 2004, and his book *How to Win at Duplicate Bridge* is considered among the all-time classics on the game.

