

DEFENCE AGAINST MULTI 2 DIAMONDS

More players are choosing to play the Multi these days. Even if you do not wish to play it yourself, you should be able to competently defend against it. To do this, you need to have a basic understanding of the system.

Although the Multi bid itself and most of the responses should be alerted, you should be wary of asking for explanations unless you have a need to do so. Asking gratuitously may be construed as giving your partner unauthorised information. You can always ask for explanations of the bids when the bidding is concluded.

The Multi 2D can show any of five bids (although there are other variations; e.g. 4-4-4-1 hands of intermediate strength, I am not aware of anyone playing these in Javea):

A weak two in either Hearts or Spades (similar to a Benji 2H or 2S). The hand should contain exactly six cards and 4+ points in a major suit and 6 - 10 points overall. It should not contain a void, two singletons, or four cards in the other major. Approximately 80% of Multi hands fall into this category.

A NT hand with a point range of at least 19 - 20 or higher range. The point range should be announced. If the hand contains a singleton (usually an Ace) this should also be announced and explained if required.

A hand containing 8 playing tricks in a minor suit

Lets assume that N opens 2D and E passes, S cannot pass; in the majority of cases, three bids are available:

2NT, shows a hand that is able to play in at least 3H, 3S, or better even if the Multi bidder has a very weak hand. It is a request for the opener to describe his hand further. These responses should be alerted.

2S, shows a hand that is willing to play in 2S or 3H depending on the opener's hand. It should contain a minimum of three hearts headed by the queen or 4+ hearts.

2H, shows any other hand.

There are other bids (e.g. 3S showing a willingness to play in 4H or 4S), but these rarely occur and you can always ask!

Now let's look at a defence. Most defences are based on the Dixon defence; there are variations, but the following is fairly simple and easy to remember. It takes advantage of the fact that the direct defender (2nd seat) always gets two opportunities to bid whilst the 4th seat may only get one chance to bid. Let's look at the available bids for the 2nd seat:

Pass, the most common option; it could be any hand type up 15 HCP (high card points)

Double, 16+ HCP, but not suitable for no trumps

2H, natural with a six-card suit or a very good five; it is unlikely, but always possible, that the Multi opener also has hearts. If unsure you can always pass, but bear in mind that if the Multi has spades you will have to bid your hearts at the three-level on the next round. With a good heart suit I would bid on the first round.

2S, again natural with a six-card suit or a very good five; again you have to decide whether to bid on the first round. If your LHO (left hand opponent) bids 2S showing a willingness to play in 3H, you will have to show your spades at the three level. Again, with a good suit, I would bid on the first round.

2NT, 15-18 HCP and with both majors stopped, NT systems on (Stayman, transfers etc.)

3C or 3D, a good hand with a good suit

3NT, based on a long running minor with both majors stopped

Turning now to the 4th seat; you may only have one opportunity to bid, but there is no need to rush the Multi bidder may have one of the big hands. If the Multi opener passes 2H or bids 2S then a good partner, knowing that the opponents are weak, can always bid or double to allow you to show your hand. This is known as balancing.

The options are the same as for the 2nd seat except that you will not be able to bid 2H. If your RHO bids 2S (showing a willingness to play in 3 hearts), and you have good suit with 5+ spades, then I would double.

Now back to the 2nd seat; if the Multi opener has either passed 2H or converted to 2S, then both opponents are weak. If the opener has passed 2H then you are in the balancing seat. Your partner, having passed on the first round, will not get a chance to bid, so you should bid if at all possible to protect his pass. If the opener has converted 2H to 2S only bid if you have something to say. (Think how you would bid over a weak 2H or 2S opening). Your partner has another bid and knows that your opponents are limited.