

The Drury Two-Club Convention

Introduction by Alfred Sheinwold, editor of The Bulletin

For this issue we present a new convention that has swept down from the plains of the North and threatens to subjugate the entire continent. In accordance with The Bulletin's standard policy of pussyfooting whenever possible, we neither recommend nor condemn the Canadian invader. If you like it, use it; if you don't like it, learn it anyway so that you can tell what's being done to you.

The Drury Two-Club Convention attempts to solve the problem of the third-hand opening bid: *Is it a real bid, or is it garbage?*

There are other approaches to this problem, not the least of which is mind-reading. In order to conform to postal regulations, The Bulletin will not advertise courses in sorcery nor list the prices of crystal balls or other useful bridge apparatus.

The article that follows is reprinted from a recent issue of *The Bridge World*, by kind permission of A. Moyses, Jr., its distinguished editor, and of Eric Murray, the no-less distinguished author of the article. (We promised faithfully to say something nice about these two gentlemen, and we keep some promises.) We might add that the serious bridge player who does not regularly read *The Bridge World* magazine is patronizing the wrong dentist or the wrong bridge club.

For those who want a counter weapon, we have only this to suggest: A double of the Drury Two Clubs should be used as a takeout double of the *original* bid (showing support for clubs as well as for the two unbid suits).

For example:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|--------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | double | | |

West has nearly the value of an opening bid, with support for clubs and both red suits.

If West has a sound overcall in hearts or diamonds, he bids it. If he then goes for a "number," he should remember that South has shown some sort of maximum pass and that his partner has been busy saying nothing. In this situation, West should step in only if he has excellent values or a generous disposition.

What should West do if he has clubs? Should he let the enemy steal the hand and likewise steal his suit? Yes. He must probably suffer in silence.

West must decide whether a double of two clubs should call for a lead or should ask for a takeout. The double cannot mean both.

Most experts think that the double should be used competitively, for takeout. If you have a very strong club suit, you may either bid it originally and avoid this whole mess, or you may wait to see if you can bid three clubs when the dust has cleared. There is no overpowering need to bid three clubs immediately, since you will get a chance later if North has a weak hand. You don't want to bid anything if it turns out that North has a strong hand.

The Convention

by Eric Murray, co-author of the convention with Doug Drury.

"We play simple Stayman (excuse me, Sam) and the Drury Two Clubs, Ma'am."

"What, young man, is the Drury Two Clubs?"

"Two clubs is an artificial one-round force by a passed hand responding to partner's third or fourth-hand major suit opening bid. Opener negatives with two diamonds."

"You are out of your mind, young man. Why don't you learn to play bridge?"

* * *

Partner opens third-hand with one spade, and you, South, gaze at something like this:

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|
| ♠ Q x x x | ♥ K x x | ♦ A J 9 x | ♣ J 10 |
|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|

What do you bid? Three spades, I suppose. Now partner holds:

| | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------|-----------|
| ♠ A K J 10 x | ♥ x x x | ♦ x x | ♣ Q 9 x x |
|--------------|---------|-------|-----------|

Of course, he passes, but you still get a disgusting minus. (Naturally, the ace of hearts is wrong.)

We bid two clubs, not three spades, with the passed hand. Partner, with a holding that he would open in any position, i.e., a normal opening bid, rebids normally. But with a light third or fourth-hand opening, he negatives with two diamonds. Thus, in our example, opener bids two diamonds and responder bids only two spades. All pass.

As a passed hand, we might jump to three spades with

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------|-----|
| ♠ K J 10 x x | ♥ K x x x | ♦ x x x | ♣ x |
|--------------|-----------|---------|-----|

i.e., a distributional mess with fewer than 9 high-card points.

This method was invented for the express purpose of mitigating the losses suffered by my partners because of my uncontrollable mania for opening balanced Yarboroughs in third or fourth position with one spade. The bidding used to go:

| North | East | South | West |
|-------|------|-------|-----------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | Pass | Double |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | .Down six |

Now the bidding goes:

| North | East | South | West |
|-------|------|-------|---------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠xxx | Pass |
| North | East | South | West |
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | Double* |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

* Not as loud a double.

And the result is: down only five. A nice savings over the years.

Then again, up hereabouts, we play the dummy one trick worse than everywhere and so it's nice to be one level lower.*

Perhaps the prime reason for the Drury Two Clubs – named for Douglas Drury, one of the best bidders in the game, and a long-suffering partner – is the avoidance of minor suit contracts at matchpoints. Viz:

| West | East |
|-------------|-------------|
| ♠ J 6 4 | ♠ A 8 5 3 2 |
| ♥ K 6 2 | ♥ A 7 3 |
| ♦ A J 9 5 3 | ♦ Q 10 6 |
| ♣ Q 10 | ♣ J 5 |

The bidding

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

Without the convention, the responder, West, has quite a problem: Two diamonds might be passed; two spades is an underbid; three spades is a wild stab; and two notrump is fatal.

There are quite a few other vagaries of this ill-conceived convention.

Example 1:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |

2♥

The two heart bid shows four hearts and fewer than three spades. With five hearts, South would have bid two hearts directly; or with three spades he would bid two spades over two diamonds, ignoring a five-card heart suit and thus sometimes achieving the zenith in bridge: the Moysian 4-3 fit in preference to a much distained possible 5-4 heart fit.

Example 2:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2NT | | | |

South does not hold four hearts, nor three spades, nor five clubs. Nor does he hold five diamonds, because with that length, he would have bid a normal two diamonds over one spade.

Example 3:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 3♣ | | | |

Egad, South has many clubs.

Example 4:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
|-------|------|-------|------|

| | | | |
|------|------|----|--------|
| Pass | Pass | 1♥ | Double |
| 2♣ | | | |

This two club bid is not Drury – with a good hand, South redoubles.

Example 5:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Pass | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2NT | | | |

The two notrump, naturally, shows a balanced hand, without four spades and probably without four hearts.

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| Pass | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♦ | |

North shows a genuine opening bid with spades and diamonds – not a light fourth-hand opening.

Summary

The convention may not be too effective against the American Experts, but it plays havoc with the Indians and Eskimos up here.

* We can't stand for this, though we enjoy the spoofing. Mr. Murray is one of that select group of Canadian experts who are held in the highest esteem by every American expert who encounters them. The names of Sheardown, M.M.Miller, Boland, Gowdy, Drury, Elliott

and Murray – we hope we haven't overlooked others – are widely known and deeply respected on both sides of the border. – ED.

(Reprinted from The Bulletin, March/April 1957)

About Doug Drury

Doug Drury (1914-1967) of Sebastopol, CA was a stockbroker, bridge teacher and club owner. He was best known for his invention of the Drury Convention. He made his mark early as a tournament player while living in Toronto. A capable and popular bridge administrator, Drury served on the ACBL Board of Governors and the Systems and Conventions Committee.