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This Week in Bridge

(488) Modern Gazzilli

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Level: 10 of 10 (6 of 6)

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General

When we open the bidding with a Major suit and hear partner respond 1NT we next make a rebid to describe both our shape and strength to partner – our hand type and bucket. But this can be a challenge and there are lot of different shapes and strengths to describe while keeping the auction at a relatively low level. Gazzilli is a conventional system of rebids (built around an artificial 2♣* rebid by Opener) that attempts to give us more ways to effectively describe our hand. Gazzilli is a relatively new convention, becoming popular with experts in the last decade or so. It is another example of giving up a natural minor suit bid in favor of a convention (using a 2♣* rebid by Opener as a convention). I'm going to introduce you to the basic auctions and then quickly dive into a modern sophisticated version of this convention.

Gazzilli Auctions

There are two fundamental auctions where we can adopt an artificial rebid of 2♣*.

Example 1

1♠ 1NT

2♣*

Example 2

1♥ 1NT

2♣*

In both auctions we use 2♣* as artificial and forcing, usually showing a good 16+ HCP – though there will be some less-than-16 pt hands as well. By doing so, we can better define our hand as having good playing strength because of shape and good playing strength because of HCP (similar to the way Precision players get to describe their hand).



Non-Gazzilli Rebids

When we play traditional Gazzilli, almost all hands with 16+ HCP start with a 2♣* rebid. Let's look at how we can use all the other rebids to describe our hands.

Example 3

1♠ 1NT

—

- 2♣* Gazzilli, Artificial and Forcing, usually 16+ HCP (or natural with ♣)
- 2♦ Natural, 11-15 HCP, 4+♦
- 2♥ Natural, 11-15 HCP, 4+♥
- 2♠ Natural, 11-14 HCP, 6+♠
- 2NT Big Balanced Hand (about 17-19 depending on our 1NT and 2NT openings)
- 3♣ Natural, 13-15 HCP, 5+♣, Good Suits (Precision style jumps), NF
- 3♦ Natural, 13-15 HCP, 5+♦, Good Suits (Precision style jumps), NF
- 3♥ Natural, 13-15 HCP, 5+♥, Good Suits (Precision style jumps), NF
- 3♠ Natural, 14-15 HCP, good 6+♠ (Precision style jumps), NF

Example 4

1♥ 1NT

—

- 2♣* Gazzilli, Artificial and Forcing, usually 16+ HCP (or natural with ♣)
- 2♦ Natural, 11-15 HCP, 4+♦
- 2♥ Natural, 11-14 HCP, 6+♥
- 2♠ Natural 5♠, 6+♥, 12-15 HCP, NF
- 2NT Big Balanced Hand (about 17-19 depending on our 1NT and 2NT openings)
- 3♣ Natural, 13-15 HCP, 5+♣, Good Suits (Precision style jumps), NF
- 3♦ Natural, 13-15 HCP, 5+♦, Good Suits (Precision style jumps), NF
- 3♥ Natural, 14-15 HCP, good 6+♥ (Precision style jumps), NF

Note: When we upgrade the modern version, we may switch a few of these bids around to give us better follow-up bidding, but I wanted to start with the basics.



Responses after 2♣* Gazzilli Rebid

After a 2♣* Gazzilli rebid, Responder needs to let Opener know if we are going to game or if we are potentially stopping in a partscore.

Example 5

- 1♠ 1NT
2♣* —
- 2♦* Artificial, 8+ pts, GF – if opener has 16+pts
 - 2♥ 5-7pts, 5+♥ (if only 5-card ♥ then not 2-card ♠)
 - 2♠ 5-7pts, 2-card ♠ (occasionally 3-card “limping raise”)
 - 2NT 5-7pts, usually 4-card ♣, not 2-card ♠
 - 3♣ 5-7pts, 6+card ♣
 - 3♦ 5-7pts, 6+card ♦

Example 6

- 1♥ 1NT
2♣* —
- 2♦* Artificial, 8+ pts, GF – if opener has 16+pts
 - 2♥ 5-7pts, 2-card ♥ (occasionally 3-card “limping raise”)
 - 2♠* 5-7pts, 0-1♥, 0-3♠, lots of cards in the minors (often long ♣, e.g., 3-1-4-5)
 - 2NT 5-7pts, 0-1♥, 0-3♠, longer ♦ than ♣ (e.g., 3-1-5-4)
 - 3♣ 5-7pts, 6+card ♣
 - 3♦ 5-7pts, 6+card ♦

Modern Gazzilli Improvements

Now that we have an introduction to Gazzilli, let’s go a step further with a full modern “upgraded” version of Gazzilli (many thanks to Adam Kaplan for this). We start with a “switch” which will help us with our follow-up bidding. We will make the one hand that is not 16+pts in the 2♣* rebid the “1-suiter” and make a rebid of Opener’s suit show that Major and ♣ (like a natural 2♣ rebid).

Example 7

- 1M 1NT
—
- 2♣* Gazzilli, Artificial and Forcing, usually 16+ HCP (or Natural with a 6+card Major)
 - 2♠ Natural, 11-14 HCP, 5+♠ and 4+♣ (like a natural 2♣ rebid)

When we have ♠ and ♣, partner can pass 2♠ commonly with 2-card support. When we have a 6-card suit (in our 2♣* rebid), we have more “unknown” cards, which means we are more likely to want to hear what partner has to say if they bid something other than 2♦.



Now let's see how this makes our follow-up bidding work after a 2♦* bid by Responder!

Example 8

1♥ 1NT
2♣* 2♦*

—

- 2♥ Natural, 1-Suiter, 11-14 HCP, NF (this is the non-strong hand in 16+pts)
- 2♠* Artificial, some 4-card suit (relay to ask Low-Middle-High)
- 2NT* Artificial, 6+card ♥ and some 4+card side suit (relay to ask LMH)
- 3♣ Strong and Natural, 5+♣, 16-21 HCP
- 3♦ Strong and Natural, 5+♦, 16-21 HCP
- 3♥ Strong and Natural, 6+♥, 16-20 HCP

Example 9

1♠ 1NT
2♣* 2♦*

—

- 2♥* Artificial, some 4-card suit (relay to ask LMH)
- 2♠ Natural, 1-Suiter, 11-14 HCP, NF (this is the non-strong hand in 16+pts)
- 2NT* Artificial, 6+card ♠ and some 4+card side suit (relay to ask LMH)
- 3♣ Strong and Natural, 5+♣, 16-21 HCP
- 3♦ Strong and Natural, 5+♦, 16-21 HCP
- 3♥ Strong and Natural, 5+♥, 16-21 HCP
- 3♠ Strong and Natural, 6+♠, 16-20 HCP

Note: "Relay to ask LMH" means that if we want to know partner's 4-card suit, we can make the cheapest bid ("relay") and partner shows their suit artificially with the next cheapest bid being a low suit (♣), then the next step showing the middle suit (♦), and the next step showing the high suit (the other Major).

Conclusion

As we can see, the addition of this artificial 2♣ rebid gives us lots of interesting rebid options as Opener. First, it allows us to make jump rebids that are "Precision Style", showing playing strength but not too many HCP. This can help our side get to some games that we would otherwise miss. Second, when we get to use 2♣ with 16+pts and partner gets to bid 2♦ with 8+pts, this gives us lots of space to communicate and figure out our shape more precisely. If you have a serious partnership and want to add a sophisticated bidding tool, give Gazzilli a try!