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This Week in Bridge

(103) Responder's Rebid

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Level: 2

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General

When Opener starts the auction with 1-suit, Responder is usually the Captain of the auction. They start the process of looking for a fit (usually a Major suit fit) and they tend to drive the auction to the appropriate level – correct, compete, invite, bid game, invite slam, or bid slam.

If Responder immediately discovers a fit (Opener raises their suit) then the auction proceeds relatively simply – Responder passes, invites game (usually with a Help Suit Game Try), or bids game. But if Opener does not show support then Responder will need to make use of the hand type and bucket information Opener has given them – they will make some kind of corrective bid, invitational bid, or forcing call. Let's see how Responder does this (places themselves in a bucket) through some examples.

Opener Shows a Balanced Hand

Example

1♣ 1♠

1NT

If Opener rebids 1NT (showing a balanced 12-14 points with 2-3 card support) then Responder will continue the auction by describing their hand, both in terms of their bucket and length in their Major suit. Let's look at what Responder does with each of their buckets (values.)

Minimum Bucket (6-9 points)

With a minimum hand, Responder just makes a corrective bid. Let's look at some corrective bidding options in our example auction:

Example

1♣ 1♠

1NT __?

- 2♣ 5+♣, 6-9 points, non-forcing
- 2♠ usually 6+♠, 6-9 points (could be 5-card suit), non-forcing
- 2♥ shows 5+♠, 4+♥, 6-9 points, non-forcing



Note: This 2♥ bid is non-forcing since Responder did not reverse or use a convention like New Minor Forcing. New suits by Responder are not always forcing, especially after the first round of the bidding.

Invitational Bucket (10-11 points)

With invitational values, Responder will make a forward-going bid and make an effort to get to game. If Responder only has a 4-card Major, then they will invite game with 2NT or 3♣ (3♣ shows 5+card ♣) – allowing Opener to play in 3♣ if they have a minimum.

If Responder has a 6-card ♠ suit they can rebid 3♠ to invite as well.

With only a 5-card suit and invitational values, Responder needs to look for a 5-3 fit and invite game. They do that by using New Minor Forcing, which shows 10+ points and asks Opener if they have 3-card ♠ support.

Game Forcing Bucket (12+ points)

With no slam interest and either a 4-card or 6-card Major suit, the auction is easy – Responder rebids either 3NT or 4♠. With only a 5-card Major suit, Responder will still use New Minor Forcing and then drive to the right game -- 4♠ if they have a fit or 3NT without one.

Slam Interest

With a hand that is interested in more than just game (slam interest), Responder can make a 4NT Quantitative bid or ask for Aces with 4♣ Gerber. Otherwise, they will need to find a forcing bid (which will often be New Minor Forcing) to find out more information about Opener's hand. Responder can use New Minor Forcing and then show their fit to investigate slam in a suit.

Example

- | | |
|-----|------|
| 1♣ | 1♠ |
| 1NT | 2♦ |
| 2NT | ___? |
- 3♣ 5+♣, Slam Try (does not promise 5-card ♠ suit)
 - 3♠ 6+♠, Slam Try



Other Auctions

If Opener rebids something other than 1NT, then the auction proceeds in a similar fashion. Responder attempts to show their strength (bucket) and explore for a fit (particularly Major suit fit). They have similar tools as in the 1NT rebid auctions:

- Corrective Bids,
- Invitational Bids (usually raises or jumps),
- New Minor Forcing,
- 4th Suit Forcing,
- Responder's Reverses

Example

1♣ 1♠
2♣ 3♠ Invitational (10-11 points) with 6+c♠ suit

Conclusion

Responder is the Captain of the auction. They search for Major suit fits (and minors less so) and use information from Opener (especially their bucket) to determine how to drive the auction forward. Opener's rebid is the most descriptive bid in the auction. Opener will likely limit their hand (place themselves in a bucket) with their rebid and then Responder will use that information to make their rebid – correct, invite, or force the auction on to game. Responder should remember they are the Captain of the auction and they are responsible for investigating game and ensuring our side reaches the right final level and contact!