



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(257) Reverse Flannery

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Level: 5

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General

Another approach for using 2♥ and 2♠ responses to 1-minor suit opening bids is to use these bids to show a variety of problematic hands that have length in both Major suits. This method, called *Reverse Flannery*, is particularly effective after a 1♦ opening bid. It originally comes from Precision where 1♦ is the only “natural” 1-minor opening bid. Let’s look at how this works and see what types of hands these agreements can help us bid better.

Reverse Flannery

Here are the meanings of the auctions 1m – 2M* when playing Reverse Flannery.

1-minor	2♥*	5-card ♠, 4-5 card ♥, less than invitational values (usually 5-9 pts)
1-minor	2♠*	5-card ♠, 4-5 card ♥, invitational values (10-11 pts)

Let’s look at an example where using these bids can be useful in getting us to the best final contract.

Example 1

West	East
♠ T	♠ KJxxx
♥ KJxx	♥ Qxxxx
♦ Axxx	♦ x
♣ KJxx	♣ xx

1♦ 1♠
2♣ __?

Playing standard bidding, West opens 1♦ and East responds 1♠. Opener rebids 2♣ and East passes, not knowing what to do?!?

1♦ 2♥*
Pass!

Playing Reverse Flannery, West opens 1♦ and East bids 2♥*. West passes and they play 2♥ making!

It is difficult to find our fit when the fit suit is Opener’s third suit and Responder’s second suit. This is particularly true when we do not have many values and must keep the auction low. Reverse Flannery can help us locate our Major suit fit as quickly as possible, helping us find a fit at a reasonable level.



Reverse Flannery in Competition

Many partnerships that choose to play Reverse Flannery also choose to play Reverse Flannery when Opener starts with 1-minor and the next player makes a takeout double. This is a good treatment in this situation:

1m	X	2♥*	Reverse Flannery, Weak
1m	X	2♠*	Reverse Flannery, Invitational

Follow-up Bids to Reverse Flannery

After responder makes a Reverse Flannery 2♥ or 2♠ bid, Opener may need tools to determine the best final contract. A 2NT bid (as is often the case) is our tool to find out more information about partner's hand. Here is how we continue the bidding after Responder shows an invitational hand.

Example 2

1♦ 2♠*
___?

- Pass Minimum with some ♠ fit.
- 2NT Asks about Responder's hand, Invitational or better values.
- 3♣* 4th Suit GF, asking for a ♣ stopper
- 3♦ 6+card ♦, To Play
- 3♥ To Play
- 3♠ 3+card ♠, Invitational
- 3NT To Play

Note: The bidding by Opener is similar if Responder bids 2♥ or 2♠*.*

Here is one way that Responder can describe their hand after Opener bids 2NT asking for more information:

Example 3

1♦ 2♠*
2NT ___?

- 3♣* 5-4 Majors, minimum values.
- 3♦* 5-4 Majors, maximum values, no stopper in other minor (♣ in this case).
- 3♥ 5-5 Majors, minimum values, NF
- 3♠* 5-5 Majors, maximum values, GF
- 3NT 5-4 Majors, maximum values, stopper in other minor (♣ in this case).

Note: There are many different approaches to how to use these follow-up bids. This is just one option.



Example 4

West	East
♠ x	♠ Axxxx
♥ AQJx	♥ KTxx
♦ AJxx	♦ x
♣ KQTx	♣ Jxx

In standard bidding, Opener starts with 1♦, Responder bids 1♠, and Opener rebids 2♣. Responder does not have enough values to bid 2♥* (4th suit GF), or 2NT (invitational). Responder probably just passes and plays there. Playing Reverse Flannery 2♥, Opener then continues with 2NT to explore game.

- 1♦ 2♥* Weak, 5-9 pts, at least 5-4 in the Majors
- 2NT 3♦* Maximum (for 5-9 pts), and no stopper in the ♣ suit.
- 4♥!

Conclusion

Responding to a minor suit opening with both Majors usually goes well when partner rebids notrump, showing a balanced hand. But often when we have the Major suits, partner will have the minor suits and the hand will become difficult to describe while keeping the auction low (especially if Responder has limited values). Reverse Flannery is a nice structure for allowing Responder to deal with these problem hands. If you are looking for an improvement to Weak Jump Shifts (WJS) or Strong Jump Shifts, then give Reverse Flannery a try.