



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(155) McCabe

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Level: 5

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General

When partner opens a 2-level preempt and RHO makes a takeout double, we know that the auction is about to become competitive. Most of the times that we want to compete in the bidding in this kind of auction are when we have a fit for partner's suit. Since this is the case, then it makes sense to assign more than one bid to promise a fit for preemptor's suit – to allow us more than one way to show a fit for partner's suit. This approach is called *McCabe*; let's see how it works.

McCabe

Playing McCabe, we have the agreement that after a 2-level preempt from partner and a takeout double by RHO, a new suit bid is not natural. Instead, these bids show a fit for partner's suit and honors in the new suit that is bid. These bids are "lead-directing with a fit".

Example

2♠ X ___?

- 2NT Feature or Ogust, whatever your partnership plays when there is no competition.
- 3♣* A raise to 3♣, with values in ♣ -- asking for a ♣ lead.
- 3♦* A raise to 3♦, with values in ♦ -- asking for a ♦ lead.
- 3♥* A raise to 3♥, with values in ♥ -- asking for a ♥ lead.
- 3♠* A raise to 3♠, usually wanting a ♠ lead.

We can make one of these McCabe bids with any hand that was planning to compete to the 3-level. By using these bids as we compete to the 3-level, we more accurately help partner defend and/or compete in the bidding.

Note: These McCabe bids are all alertable.



Example

♠ J98

♥ 9862

♦ AQJ8

♣ 82

2♠ X ___?

With this hand, bid 3♦ as a raise to 3♠ while showing good honors in the ♦ suit.

Partner will correct back to 3♠, but will know to lead diamonds if the opponents compete in the bidding and partner is on lead.

Showing a Long Suit

When playing McCabe, we need a way to show a long suit of our own, since a new suit now promises a fit for partner's suit. This is done by using the redouble. A redouble tells partner that you have a long suit of your own that you wish you play in (usually because you have no fit for partner's suit). This redouble asks partner to make the cheapest bid available and then you will show your own suit. You must use this gadget to show your own long suit because bidding any suit directly is no longer a natural bid, it is a McCabe lead-directing raise.

Example

2♠ X XX¹ P

2NT P 3♣²

¹ Redouble tells partner you have your own long suit.

² 3♣ shows a long ♣ suit and is to play.

Conclusion

When partner opens a weak two bid you will often raise that bid to at least the 3-level. This is particularly true when RHO makes a takeout double and you have 3-card support, or even honor doubleton, as you may want to raise partner to compete in the bidding. Use McCabe raises to allow you more ways to raise partner's suit (a frequent trend in modern bidding) and to allow for better communication with partner – simultaneously showing a fit for partner and getting them off to a good opening lead by showing honors in another suit.