

The “Ingberman 2-NT” Convention

(Responding To Opener’s “Reverse”)

Basic Bridge bidding, especially in the 5-card Major **Standard American** system, is based upon the so-called "**up-the-ladder**" principle, which implies that after one opens with one-of-a-suit, Partner's 1-level response and Opener's first re-bid are always made in the *cheapest* of their 4-card suits. For example, if one opens **1C** and Partner has two 4-card Majors, he/she always bids **1H** to keep the bidding low and to give Opener room to show a possible 4-card Spade suit. This assures that the Partnership will find any Major-suit fit, if present, and effectively keeps the bidding low until the Partnership has exchanged complete information about their individual suit lengths.

If Partner by-passes a suit he could have shown at the 1-level, you should always assume (at least temporarily) that he/she does *not* have 4-card length in that suit which was skipped. *For example:* You open **1D** with ♠94 ♥KQ103 ♦AJ764 ♣K10 and Partner responds **1S**. With your minimum opening, it's pointless, here, to bid **2H**, a suit which Partner has already denied, and a bidding sequence which could force the bidding to the 3-level. Opener should re-bid **1-NT** with this hand in order to show minimum point-count values and to keep the auction as low as possible. Responder could possibly hold 5 spades and 4 hearts, but in that case, he/she would bid **2H** over your **1-NT** re-bid. (By the way: - this is the only bidding sequence in bridge where a new suit by Responder is *not* forcing; i.e., **1C** or **1D** – **1S** – **1-NT** – **2H**.)

Opener can afford to take the bidding higher, however, if he/she holds a stronger hand such as ♠4 ♥KQ103 ♦AKJ76 ♣A102. In order to show extra strength, Opener would be permitted to *Reverse*; i.e., a bid of a suit at the 2-level which Partner has already by-passed. In the above example, Opener's re-bid of **2H** would be such a "**Reverse**." Putting it in another way, it's a bid that would force Partner to bid at the 3-level if he/she prefers Opener's first-bid suit.

Modern Bridge technique calls for a "**Reverse**" by Opener as forcing for one round. However, although both Partners usually recognize this, many do *not* know how to put on the skids if each Partner were to hold the minimum of their respective high-card point values. In these instances, Responder has shown at least 6 or more HCP's and Opener 17 or more. When they both hold minimums, the Partnership holds only about 23 HCP's, and Game is seldom present; yet, there is strong tendency, if they are not careful, for most Partnerships to wander into an unsound Game, not knowing how, or even if, to stop short of a Game-level contract, when necessary.

The "**Ingberman 2-NT**" bid, when played, solves this potential problem and enables Partnerships, under these conditions, to put on the brakes in order to avoid this disastrous pitfall. "**Ingberman**" is, therefore, a convention used to allow a Partnership to stop below Game, after Opener's 2-level "**Reverse**" bid. (Definition of a "**Reverse**" by Opener: Any rebid by Opener which forces a potential preference of the opening suit to the 3-level.)

Following a 1-Level suit response by Responder, and a “**Reverse**” by Opener, a “**2-NT**” bid, by Responder (The “*Ingberman 2-NT*” bid), shows a minimum holding of 5-7 HCP’s by Responder, and seeks to extract whether or not Opener, likewise, holds the minimum of 17-18 HCP’s, thereby stopping the Partnership from overbidding. If Opener holds the minimum, he/she must “*puppet*” a conventional “**3C**” response to Responder’s “**2-NT**” thus requiring the Partnership to stop at the 3-level in whatever suit best applies.

Both the bid of “2-NT” by Responder, if invoked, and a “*puppet*” bid of “3C” by Opener used by this Convention are both alertable.

<u>Example:</u>	<u>West</u> XX QX AKXX AKJXX	<u>East</u> KQXX XXX JXXX XX
	1C 2D (A “ Reverse ”) <u>“3C”</u> (showing a Minimum) Pass	1S <u>“2-NT”</u> (Ingberman) 3D (To play)

In this example, had East not bid “**2-NT**”, or if having done so, if West had not bid “**3C**” in response, then the Partnership would be committed to a final Game-level contract.

In Summary, following a call of one of a suit by Opener, a new suit bid by Responder, and then a “**Reverse**” by Opener, if either Responder does not bid “**2-NT**,” initiating the convention, or if Opener does not “*puppet*” a bid of “**3C**” after the “*Ingberman 2-NT*” is invoked by Responder, then the Partnership **is committed** to Game. **With a departure from the two Ingberman bids by either Partner, the Partnership is automatically committed to a Game-level contract.**

Note: The situation is different, however, if Responder’s first response is a new suit at the 2-Level. Such a first response shows at least 10 or more HCP’s under standard play, and 12 or more if the Partnership is using a “**Two-Over-One**” bidding system. Since a sequence such as **1H - 2D - 2S** is Game-forcing anyway, Opener with no fewer than 17 HCP’s and Responder no fewer than 10 or 12 HCP’s, a continuation of **2-NT** by Responder would be natural and would not be **Ingberman**. It would show at least one stopper in Clubs, here, the un-bid suit.