

THE MARSHALL MILES CONVENTION

The standard method of responding to a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C” opening bid by one’s Partner, absent the use of “2D- Waiting,” “Roth,” “Jacoby Steps,” or “Controls,” utilizes (a) a bid of 2-NT as a positive response evidencing 8-9 HCP’s without a 5-card Major suit; and (b) a bid of 2H or 2S as a positive response evidencing the same 8-9 HCP’s with a reasonably good 5-card or longer Heart or Spade suit holding, respectively. Traditionally, as well, (c) re-bids by the Opening bidder of 2H following a negative bid of “2D” by the Responder evidences a 5-card or longer Heart suit held by the Opener; (d) a 2-NT re-bid evidences a balanced hand with 23-24 HCP’s; and (e) a jump to 3-NT evidences a balanced hand with 25-27 HCP’s.

Several of the above-listed bidding sequences, however, present problems. In example (a), should the Partnership decide upon a final No-Trump contract, the strong opening hand becomes the tabled Dummy with the weaker hand becoming the Declarer; and the opening lead comes through the weaker hand, not through the stronger. In example (b), the same problem of the wrong hand becoming the Declarer exists, should Hearts become the final contract; and Responder’s ability to utilize Stayman or a Jacoby Transfer in example (e), are precluded in that an unsuccessful attempt will necessarily take the Partnership beyond the 3-NT level.

Examples: **Opener** **Responder**

“2C” “2D” Responder holds: (QXXX JXXX XXXX X)
3-NT ????? (Responder must “pass.” Opener might

not have a 4-card holding in one or both of the Major suits, and the Partnership would have to exceed the 3-NT level if there would have been a Stayman attempt to find one.)

“2C” “2D” Responder holds: (AXXXX XX XXXX XX)
3-NT ????? (Responder is similarly precluded from

a Jacoby transfer in an attempt to find a 5-3 Spade fit, should there be one.)

The Marshall Miles Convention uses a reversal in meaning of both the Heart and No-Trump responses by both the Responder and the Opener, in order to eliminate the above-listed, potential, bidding problems.

A. Marshall Miles Re-bids By the Opening “2C” Strong, Artificial, and Forcing Bidder:

In the Marshall Miles system, if the Responder were to make a “2D” first response, and Opener were to make a re-bid of “2H,” it is either a true Heart suit, or a hand where Opener would have otherwise jumped to 3-NT, evidencing a 25-27 HCP count evenly-balanced hand. Opener, thus, uses a “2H” re-bid as a 2-way response; i.e., evidencing either (a) a natural 5-card or longer Heart suit, or (b) a very strong, 25-27 high-card point, evenly-balanced, No-Trump holding.

Subsequent to Opener’s first re-bid of “2H,” Responder must then “puppet” “2S” in order to allow the Opener to show his real holding, (a) or (b). If the Opener then re-re-bids 2-NT, he/she has the 25-27 HCP balanced hand allowing for either **Stayman** or **Jacoby Transfers** to be employed by the Responder without by-passing 3-NT, and if the Opener re-re-bids anything other than 2-NT, he/she has a legitimate 5-card or longer Heart suit. Responder then acts accordingly.

