

Competitive Bidding – With Discipline

Free Bids are not a convention but rather a partnership understanding. A Free Bid occurs when partner opens and opponent overcalls and responder bids a suit (the Free Bid) at the two-level or higher (non-jump). Why is it called a free bid? It is called a free bid because you could have passed.

- 1. A non-jump two-bid shows 10+ HCP and always a five-card suit (major or minor).**

I call this suggestion the "Rule of 10 and 5" you must have 10 HCP and at least 5 cards in your suit to bid your suit at the two-level after opponent has overcalled.

Why use this suggestion?

- The purpose of the Free Bid is to show a five-card suit;**
- and, Show at least a game-invite type of hand.**
- Used in conjunction with the Negative Double. The Negative Double will usually promise the unbid suits, especially the unbid major(s). The Negative Double requires about 8+ HCP at the two-level and 10+ HCP at the three level, with no upper limit.**

If the bidding goes: 1D 1S and you hold:

**A5
KJT53
K42
K83**

Make a Free Bid of 2H.

**A5
KJT3
K965
K82**

**You have the values for a Free Bid but don't have the 5 card -suit requirement.
Make a Negative Double.**

**64
KQ853
KT5
842**

You have the 5-card suit requirement but not the values for a Free Bid. Make a Negative Double.

Q87

65

AKJ98

JT3

Make a Free Bid of 2D.

When you have a one-suited hand but can't make a Free Bid, you make a Negative Double then rebid your long suit. This warns partner that your Negative Double was an excuse to show your length and that you do not have values for a Free Bid, nor did you promise support in the major(s).

The bidding goes: 1D 2C and you hold:

KQT984

K6

73

864

You don't have the values to make a 2S Free Bid. You make a Negative Double, partner assumes you have hearts and spades. If partner rebids 2H (expecting you to have hearts), or 2D, or 2NT -- you rebid the spade suit telling partner you have a one-suited hand in spades with 7 – 9 HCP and no heart suit as initially believed. Of course if partner rebids 2S you jump to 4S ("Fast Arrival").

Note: There are rare occurrences when neither a Free Bid or a Negative Double can be made when holding some values:

The bidding goes: 1C 1S and you hold:

875

65

AKJ98

JT9

Can't make a Free Bid (only 9 HCP). Can't make a Negative Double (no heart support; if partner rebids 2H after your negative double, the diamond suit is not long enough to rebid 3D). This is one of those "tweeners" that should be passed. If partner reopens with a double, you now rebid 3D.

This systems works well with partnerships that always stretch to reopen with a double whenever possible. Most experts suggest reopening with a double with almost any hand if possible.