



# Adventures in Bridge

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## ***This Week in Bridge***

### **(269) The Impossible ♠ Bid**

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Level: 3

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#### **General**

When partner opens the bidding with 1♥ and we respond 1NT, we deny holding a 4+card ♠ suit. Once we have denied holding length in the ♠ suit, we might ask what it means if we later come back and bid 2♠. The act of doing so is called “The Impossible ♠ Bid” and here we look at the ways we may make use of this bid.

#### **The Impossible ♠ Bid**

Take a look at the following auction:

Example 1

1♥ 1NT<sup>^</sup>

2♣

<sup>^</sup>Auction is similar whether 1NT Forcing or 1NT Semi-Forcing.

If Responder now bids 2♠, this is an example of the impossible ♠ bid, since Responder has already denied holding a 4-card ♠ suit. Before we decide about how to use this bid, let's try to better understand the auction and what types of hands Responder needs to show.

In this auction, Opener has shown 5+card ♥, usually 4+♣ (if 1NT is Forcing then 2♣ could be bid on a 3-card suit) and about 11-17 HCP. This leaves Opener with a very wide range of values (minimum, 12-14 pts, or medium, 15-17 pts). With Opener having up to as much as 17 HCP, this leaves Responder in a difficult position. If Responder has a fit for Opener's second suit, then they need to raise that suit with as few as 8 points. Since Opener could have as many as 17 HCP then game is still possible if Responder has 8-9 pts, and even opposite some good 7 pt hands, but using a raise to 3♣ to show 8-11 pts leaves Opener not knowing what to do with some extra values. For example, should Opener bid a game with 14 pts? If Responder has 10-11 points, then yes; but if Responder has only 8-9 points, then this is not enough.

Here is where the impossible ♠ bid can be helpful. We can use this impossible 2♠ bid to show a good raise of Opener's second suit, 10-11 pts, and use a simple raise as a "courtesy raise", showing 8-9 pts.

*Example 1*

1♥ 1NT\*

2♣ \_\_?

- 3♣ Courtesy Raise, 4+card ♣, 8-9 pts
- 2♠\* Limit Raise, 4+card ♣, 10-11 pts (Impossible ♠)

We use similar bidding agreements when Opener rebids 2♦.

*Example 2*

1♥ 1NT\*

2♦ \_\_?

- 3♦ Courtesy Raise, 4+card ♦, 8-9 pts
- 2♠\* Limit Raise, 4+card ♦, 10-11 pts (Impossible ♠)

**The Impossible ♠ Bid Over a Single-Suiter**

If the auction starts the same way but Opener rebids 2♥, showing a 1-suited in ♥, then we can continue this auction in a similar way. In this auction 2♥ is a more tightly defined bid, 11-14 HCP with 6+card ♥. Responder does not need to invite with 8-9 pts. In this case we use our two raises (simple raise and impossible ♠ bid) to differentiate the size of our fit, instead of the strength of our hand.

*Example 3*

1♥ 1NT\*

2♥

- 3♥ Invitational, 2-card ♥, 10-11 pts
- 2♠\* Limit Raise, 3-card ♥, 10-11 pts (Impossible ♠)

In all of these auctions the impossible ♠ shows the best raise possible, given the context of the auction!

**Conclusion**

The best kind of conventions are the ones that replace a little-used bid. In this case with the impossible ♠, we make use of a completely unused bid to help us better describe our hand. Discuss the impossible ♠ with your regular partners and improve your bidding in these inexact auctions.