

Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

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35. Variation on a Theme of Two Way Game Try Method

In my column #17 on Loser Count Math Part II, I alluded to introducing a “very sophisticated yet simple game try structure” in a future column. Mr. Mike Hancock of Hertfordshire, England reminded me that 17 more columns have passed and yet I have not written about this game try method. So here it is.

First a little background. When the auction goes 1M – 2M opener can invite game in many ways such as:

- 1) **Mama-Papa method:** This is a popular method where opener bids 3M and asks responder to bid game if she is on top of her range. Obviously, this method is not very accurate as in suit contracts, combined high card points are not good indicators of how many tricks the declaring side can win.
- 2) **Texas Game Try Method:** Bid game and then try to make it. Texans are different from the rest of us.
- 3) **Help Suit Game Try Method:** This is also a popular method. Opener bids his side weak suit (with 2+ quick losers in it such as xxx, Qxx, Jxx etc.) as a game try and responder bids game if she has help in that suit (such as x, Axx, KQx etc.). This method exposes the opener’s hand and tells the opponents what to lead. **A cautionary note, however:** If the opponents make a help suit game try and then bid game be careful about leading that “help suit”. I have seen a lot of charlatans using “help suit” game try with holdings like AQx or KJxx expecting the defenders to lead that suit.
- 4) **Long Suit Game Try Method:** Opener bids his side long (4+ Cards) suit as a game try and responder tries to work out how the two hands fit together in that context. It is a fairly good method.
- 5) **Short-Suit Game Try Method:** Opener bids his shortness (singleton or void) as a game try and responder tries to work out how the two hands fit together in that context. It is a very good method as well. Even though it exposes the opener’s hand, how many tricks can they take in that suit? The weakness of this method is that sometimes you have a balanced hand without any shortness. How would you make a game try with such a hand?

Enters Canadian superstar Peter Nagy with his two way game try method (2WGT). In a Two Way Game Try Method (2WGT), the opener has two ways to make a game try: a short suit game try if he has shortness or a balanced game try. In the balanced game try, he avoids exposing the shape of his hand.

There are many variations of this method as described in these links:

<http://www.bridgeguys.com/Conventions/NagyGameTries.html>

<http://www.d17acbl.org/index.php?page=major-suit-game-tries-august-2012>

Here are some of the details of a variation of the 2WGT method that I have designed:

1. The auction goes 1S – 2S

Besides deciding whether to be in game or not, an added complexity in this auction is not to miss a hidden 4-4 H fit as that would play better than the 5-3 S fit. The variation of 2WGT method that I have designed would be able to find that hidden H fit.

Opener's rebids:

- 3C, 3D, 3H = short suit game try. Opener has singleton or void in the suit bid.

Responder's bids after 1S-2S -3C/3D

Responder has 2 sign-offs available: 3H and 3S. They show either very weak hands or hands that do not fit very well because responder has wasted values in opener's short suit.

3H = sign off; But I have 4Hs; it might play better in Hs.

3S = sign off; I do not have 4 Hs.

4H = Yes, my hand fits very well with your shortness and I have 4Hs.

4S = Yes, my hand fits very well with your shortness but I do not have 4Hs.

Responder's bids after 1S-2S -3H

3S = sign off

4S = Yes, my hand fits very well with your shortness.

- 2N = a GT without any shortness (might have 4Hs). It asks the responder to further describe her hand.

Again Responder has two sign offs:

3S = Weak hand; no 4 Hs

3H = Weak Hand with 4Hs

On the other hand, Responder's 3C bid shows interest in game.

Opener now bids:

3S = Bid 4S if you really have C help. Otherwise pass.

3D = Bid 4S if you have D help. Otherwise sign off in 3S.

3H = Clarify the H situation

3S = do not have H help or 4Hs

4H = have 4 Hs

4S = don't have 4Hs but have help in Hs

2. The auction goes 1H – 2H

If the responder has a “one bid” hand with 3 Hs and 4Ss, she will respond 2H to partner’s 1H opening (and not 1S) following Billy Miller’s principle of “Don’t Hide the Ball”. At the same time, if opener does have a good hand with 5+H and 4S, we do not want to miss the 4-4- S fit. The variation I have designed finds a hidden S fit.

Opener’s rebids:

3C, 3D = short suit game try. Opener has singleton or void in the suit bid. Opener denies 4S.

2N = short suit game try with S shortness

2S = a) either a balanced game try without any shortness or b) hands with 4S; this hand might have shortness.

Responder’s bids after 1H-2H -2N/3C/3D

3H = sign off; my hand does not fit very well.

4H = Yes, my hand fits very well with your shortness.

Responder’s bids after 1H-2H-2S

Responder has two sign offs available:

2N = Weak hand with 4S

3H = Weak Hand; no 4S

On the other hand, Responder’s 3C bid shows interest in game.

Opener now bids:

3H = Bid 4H if you really have C help. Otherwise pass.

3D = Bid 4H if you have D help. Otherwise sign off in 3H.

3S = Clarify the S situation

4H = don’t have 4 Ss

4S = Have 4S.