

BRIDGE at SEA

Exercising the Roles of the “Captain” and the “Crew”

1. As we discussed in Lesson #1, during the “Captaincy” Phase, once one Player has limited his/her holdings as to its size and shape, his/her Partner automatically becomes the “Captain.” It is then the “Captain’s” responsibility to manage the bidding process further to carry the Partnership to its final contract in both denomination and level.

2. The Role of the “Captain”:

- a. *Once it is clear what the final contract will be*, the “Captain” simply bids directly to the final denomination and level. Example auctions showing this process are as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1H – 2H | 1H – 2H | 1D – 1H | 1D – 1S |
| P | 4H | 1-NT – 4H | 3D – 3-NT |

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1-NT – 4S | 3S – 4S | 1-NT – 3-NT | 1-NT – 6-NT |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|

In each of the cases shown above, the last call is a “shut-out,” effectively ending the auction.

- b. *If it is not clear what the best final contract will be*, the “Captain” seeks more information from Partner (“Crew”). Typically, this is accomplished by asking specific questions about the size and shape of the “Crew’s” hand.

- (1) For size, the question is usually, “Do you have minimum or maximum points within your previously-promised range?”

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1-NT – 2-NT | 1H – 2H | 1-NT – “2C” |
| | 3H | 2H – 3H |

- (2) For shape, the question is usually about the length of a specific suit.

1-NT – “2C”
2H – 3S (“Do you have at least 3-Spades?”)

1D – 1H
1-NT – “2C” (“Do you have 3-Hearts?”) (NMF)

- (3) It is even possible for the “Captain” to ask two questions with the same bid, one about size and the other about shape.

1-NT – “2C”
“2D” – 2S (“Are you minimum or maximum?”)
 (“Do you have 2- or 3-Spades?”)

- (4) In some instances there is a specific set of answers from which the “Crew” must select the one that best applies.

1-NT – “2C” (“Do you hold a 4-card Major?”)

The answers, here, are only **2D**, **2H**, or **2S**

1H – “4-NT” (“How many Aces {Controls} do you hold?”)

The answers, here, are only **“5C”**, **“5D”**, **“5H”**, **“5S”**, **“5-NT”**, & **“6V”**

- (5) Lastly, the “Captain” might choose not to issue a question, but rather to issue a command, mostly to force the “Crew” to bid again or to take a preference.

1H – 1S

2H – 3D (“Bid again. Tell me more about your hand!”)

1S – 1-NT

2D (“Take a preference between Spades and Diamonds!”)

(“Or, bid an undisclosed 6-card or longer other suit!”)

3. The Role of the “Crew”:

- a. If the “Captain sets the contract, the “Crew” is obliged to “Pass.”

3C – 3-NT (A Pre-emptor is barred from bidding again, unless the “Captain” introduces a request for further information (2-NT or new suit).

- b. If the “Captain” asks a question, the “Crew” is obligated to respond, but must stay within a prescribed set of answers.

1-NT – 2-NT

? = **P** (Minimum) or **3-NT** (Maximum)

1H – 2H

3H – ? = **P** (Minimum) or **4H** (Maximum)

1-NT – “2H”

? = **2S** (In all but one instance) or
“3S” (A “Super-Acceptance”)
(4-Spades + Maximum Count)

1H – 1S

2H – 3D

?

= **3S** (To show 3-Spades) or
3-NT (To show a Club stopper) or
4C or **4D** (To show a 4-card suit) or
3H (To show 7{+} Hearts)