

FALSE PREFERENCE (Article 13)

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This term is well-named, because "false preference" is exactly what it is. One player (typically opener) has bid 2 suits. The responder takes a "preference" (by showing delayed support) for the suit in which he actually has fewer cards. That's a mouthful, but some examples will help:

| Opener | Responder |
|---------|-----------|
| 1 Club | 1 NT |
| 2 Heart | 2 Spade |

Responder can take this "preference" to spades even with longer hearts.

For example, responder might hold the hand shown here.

♠Q 2 ♥8 7 3 ♦A K 7 4 ♣9 8 6 2

Why take a "false" preference? For starters, passing 2♥ could lead to a missed game. It's a good idea to keep the auction alive in case opener has extras. Furthermore, opener will often have only 4 hearts and a 4-3 fit is not attractive. A 5-2 (maybe even a 6-2) is usually better. If opener has 5 hearts and a decent hand, he can next bid 3♥ and responder can then raise to 4♥ and play in the 5-3 fit.

A false preference is often taken after a jumpshift, for example:

| Opener | Responder |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1 Heart | 1 NT |
| 3 Diamond | 3 Heart |

Responder could easily have longer diamonds than hearts. He does not want to go past 3NT with a hand such as:

♠Q 6 4
♥J 3
♦J 10 2
♣A 10 8 7 5

To bid 4♦ needlessly escalates the auction. Furthermore, the 3♦ bid could have been made under duress and could contain only a 3-card diamond suit (♠A ♥A Q 8 7 6 5 ♦A K Q ♣J 4 2). As the experts say, 3♥ is the most "flexible" call.

Can the preference be "true"? Sure, sometimes, the responder will actually have as many (or even more) cards in the suit he prefers. For example, after 1♠-1NT-2♦, responder will bid 2♠ with two cards in each spades and diamonds.

Nothing discussed here is alertable.

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