

RESPONSES WITH A WEAK HAND OVER 1 OPENING BID

Mr. Tariq-Al-Masood's Question : Pl explain whether one can respond 1NT over 1H/S with unbalanced hands containing less than 8-9 high card points.? How to bid a hand ---
♠Void, ♥-5 ♦-Q97654 ♣-QJ10875, when partner opens 1S-, I responded 2D, pulled out partner from 3NT by 4C, gave away 500 penalty. Partner was not happy.

Sridhar's views : It is advisable to play either (1) 2 over 1 as GF or (2) 2 over 1 as F1 over which suit re-bid by responder as sign off and non-forcing. In the latter case the opener should not jump to 3N unless he is confident of making it opposite a hand that was weak and intended to re-bid his suit. In my experience the option no 1 namely 2 over 1 as GF works well and is preferable to option no 2.

It is also advisable to :-

(a) play 1N as F1 over 1 Major opening and when the responder bids a new suit at 2/3 level after the forcing 1N, opener should respect it as a weak sign off and bid accordingly. Thus, in the your example hand, over opener's rebid if you bid 3C/3D it should become the final contract ;

(b) to agree with your partner on certain minimum requirements for response to an one opening bid without fit for partner's suit. I recommend that you fix this response as approximately equivalent to an ACE, say good 5 HCP in absence of an ace; thus you can confidently PASS the 1 opening bid with less strength and no fit, irrespective of shape (like the above example hand), in this modern age of balancing you will probably get another chance to compete and may be even reach game, this has happened quite frequently in the modern game. When you hold a shapely hand the chances are that your opponents also hold shapely hands and will balance over the one opening bid.