

HANDS ON

WEAK TWO-BIDS

♦-GUIDELINES ♥-BIDDING QUIZZES
♠-36 PRACTICE HANDS

by Joan Anderson

ABTA
2008 BOOK
OF THE YEAR

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♠-36 PRACTICE HANDS

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How and Why This Book Came to Be

This book is the culmination of lectures and practice hands I've written and used over the years. I am not espousing anything "new", but rather offering a review culled from any number of sources. I want to provide a vehicle that will offer students an opportunity to understand the underlying concepts of this mini-preempt and hands to practice many weak two-bid situations.

From someone who used to do handouts in longhand, this has been a challenging project. I learned the computer because of my students. We made a pact: if they would learn bridge, I would learn the computer—easier said than done, in both cases. To keep me going, I had to remind myself many times, how nice it would be to have all this material organized and easily available.

Support from my three children, Terry (my critical eye on formatting), Cristie and Mark, for 40+ years of my "bridge career" also made this project possible. A thank you to Harriet, Jessie, and all my students (I've still got all 40 years of class lists), partners, and opponents. My mistakes and their mistakes, my successes and their successes, all taught me that "the best way to be a teacher is to remember to be a student."

Mentioned last, but of paramount importance, a very special thanks goes to Gerry Fox for his time and effort in editing this project and helping to bring it to fruition. His critical eye saved me from certain technical errors, and he was also an invaluable source for his take on the basic theory for students.

Contents

This book focuses on three areas:

- Opening a weak two-bid 1
- Responding to a weak two-bid 27
- Competing against an opening weak two-bid 73

Each chapter explores the underlying concepts of sound bidding and options that are available for your partnership. Quizzes, summaries, and practice hands round out the discussion.

The practice hands are presented in two ways:

- Even numbered pages have the hands facing out so you can easily make them up. Sequential cards are used to facilitate this process.
- Odd numbered pages are set up with the hands reproduced and an explanation that focuses on the recommended bidding. Good bidding makes a hand easier to play so only a few play pointers are included due to space constraints.

PRINCIPLES AND UNDERLYING CONCEPTS OF A WEAK-TWO OPENER

A DISCIPLINED APPROACH

Before starting our discussion take a moment and consider this:

As you see it today, what is the first purpose of a weak two-bid?

HISTORY OF WEAK TWO-BIDS

The beginning of weak two-bids dates back to the 1920's, but it was not until the 1960's that they first became popular. For years the general bridge population played the following system:

- An opening bid at the two level as a hand *too strong* to open at the one level.
- An opening bid at the three level or higher as a hand *too weak* to open at the one level, but showing six or seven playing tricks, depending on the vulnerability.
- As the evidence began to build that very few hands actually qualified for a strong two opening bid and that preemption could be upsetting for the opponents, the weak two-bid became a viable alternative, given its easy application, its accuracy in describing a particular type of hand, and how it can obstruct the opponent's bidding, converts were born.

The weak-two bid, a mini preemptive bid, is now the norm for many players. Opening bids of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ are limited preemptive bids that describe opener's HCP (High Card Points), hand pattern, and the offensive and defensive potential of the hand. It allows an easy explanation of what otherwise might have been a difficult hand to portray.

When playing weak two-bids, another technique is required for showing very strong opening hands. The artificial bid of 2C is reserved for this purpose.

GETTING STARTED

Because weak two-bids and regular preempts are so alike, there is no better way to start our discussion than to take a page out of Audrey Grant's **Bridge Basics 2** book*. The first chapter starts with the concepts for opening 3-level bids. Compare the following hands:

Hand #1 ♠-x ♥-AKxx ♦-AKxx ♣-AKxx

- High card points? ____
- Points in the remaining three hands? ____
- If the 19 points are evenly divided, do you have enough for game? ____
- Do you expect to win the auction? ____
- Do you expect to make whatever contract reached? ____
- If the opponents get the contract, do you expect to defeat it? ____
- How many playing tricks do you have? ____

You hold 21 HCP, while the other three players hold a combined 19 HCP. If partner holds 1/3 of those, you expect to be in a makeable game with your total points and six playing tricks. If the opponents get the bid, you expect to double and set the contract.

*Used with permission

Weak two-bids are well ensconced in the bridge world and are now part of any beginning program of lessons. They are, however, in that class of “most abused” conventions. An understanding of all the important tools that are at your fingertips will serve you well in making these decisions at the table. This book will walk you through the solutions to the problems you meet every day in offensive and defensive situations, delving into the more intricate aspects of the weak two-bid.



Joan's love of bridge and her passion for teaching have been a part of her life for over 45 years. Her underlying guideline for reaching the student is to lay a solid foundation of fundamentals and also help them develop a bridge to new friendships.

Holding a Diamond Life Master ranking, directing and managing a club for over 20 years have helped Joan understand the risks and rewards of playing and promoting the game. In July of 2007 a Master Teacher award was presented to her by the American Bridge Teachers' Association. She is currently serving on the ACBL Educational Foundation board.

