

AUDREY GRANT'S BETTER BRIDGE: HELPFUL HINTS

NEW MINOR FORCING CONVENTION: ALERT PROCEDURE

Many partnerships agree to play the bid of a new minor suit by responder as forcing after opener's 1NT rebid, using the New Minor Forcing (NMF) convention. Since the bid is strictly conventional and says nothing about the new minor, it needs to be alerted.

In face-to-face games, the partner of the bidder alerts the bid. However, the procedure is different when playing online. *The bidder self-alerts – but must do so BEFORE the bid is made.* Here's an example of how to correctly alert the NMF bid on BBO and in face-to-face games.

The screenshots show a bridge hand in progress. The bidding sequence is: 1♣ (North), Pass (East), 1♠ (South), Pass (West), 1NT (North), Pass (East). The player South (jcheung72) has a hand with 13 HCP and a 5-card spade suit. The bidding interface shows the alert line with the text 'Artif/forcing, asking for 3 S or 4 H' and the bid '2♦' selected.

1 Partner, North, opens 1♣ and East passes. Sitting South, with 13 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card spade suit, you respond 1♠. West passes, and partner rebids 1NT. East passes. It's your turn again. You have enough to take the partnership to game, but are uncertain WHERE the best game is, 4♠ or 3NT. You can use NMF, 2♦, to ask for a further description from partner. However, **before bidding 2♦**, you need to alert and explain the bid. Simply type in the description of the 2♦ bid on the Alert line.

2 You can now select the 2♦ bid.

3 After bidding 2♦, the opponents will see a pop-up box with your alerted bid and explanation. Partner, North, will not see it.

The auction proceeds.

FACE-TO-FACE GAMES: ALERT PROCEDURE

In face-to-face games, the bidder does not self-alert. Instead, the partner of the bidder alerts the bid.

In the above auction, the auction will proceed normally until South's 2♦ rebid. When South bids 2♦, North needs to immediately say "Alert." However, North does not offer an explanation unless asked by West, the opponent who is next in turn to bid. If asked, North could simply state something like: "2♦ is artificial and forcing, asking about the major suits – three spades or four hearts."

The auction proceeds.

For further questions about rules and procedures, please email Martin Hunter, Better Bridge Game Director: martinhunter@rogers.com