

## DISTRICT 16 LECTURE SERIES



Balancing 101 Nancy Joe February 24, 2024

#### **Balancing Seat**

DISTRICT 16
LECTURE SERIES -MINI
LECCIONES

**Consider this auction:** 

West Partner East You

1C Pass Pass ?

You are in the balancing seat. If you pass, the auction is over. What do you do? These are the things to consider in your decision:

If I reopen the auction, will I get a better score?

Can I trust my partner that his/her pass was correct?

Should I reopen the auction when Partner could not make a call over 1C?

Can I trust the opponents that they have bid correctly?

Can the opponents find a better spot? Who has the Spade suit?

How many points do I need?

What does Partner expect if I overcall or double?





### Why Balance?

The opponents have stopped at a low level. Left Hand Opponent may have opened with 11 points. Right Hand Opponent does not have 6 points. Partner has values, but may not have had a descriptive bid available in direct seat. Partner knows that you are "protecting his hand and "borrowing 3 points from him." Each side has 17-23 points, so it is generally possible for each side to take 8 tricks. Going down 1 or 2 may give you a better score (minus 50 or minus 100) than allowing opponents to play in their 8 card fit (minus 90 or minus 110). You can make a lead directing bid by balancing. You may possibly push the opponents too high and they go down! If you are short in Opener's suit, you and your partner probably have a fit. If the opponents have a fit, you and Partner have a fit. Bridge is a bidder's game. Stretch to keep the auction alive.

Make the opponents earn the auction!







In direct seat, you need 12+ HCP to make a takeout double. In the balancing seat, the requirements for a takeout X are lowered by 3 points. Think of this as "borrowing a king" from Partner's hand. Strive to compete for the contract, especially if you are short in opponent's suit. You can X with 9+HCP. You still must have support (3+cards)for the unbid suits. Partner may have made a "trap pass" with extreme length in opponent's suit and is hoping to defend.

Guideline: Most of your balancing bids promise about a King fewer than you would need to make the same bid in direct seat.





# Example 1



(1C) P (P) ?

- **♠** KQ86
- **¥** K942
- **♦** J976
- **5**





### (1C) P (P) X











We don't have enough for a direct seat double (12+ points) if RHO had opened 1C, but we don't want to defend 1C, so we "borrow a King" from Partner's hand and make a take out double. There is a good chance that our side has a Major suit fit and we may be able to push the opponents up to the 3 level, possibly going down!

Make the opponents EARN the auction!







(1D) P (P) ?

- **KJT86**
- 972
- **A9**
- **J**54





### (1D) P (P) 1S



972

**♦** A9

**J**54

Don't double if your hand is more suited to an overcall. Overcalls in balancing seat can also be light. Prefer to overcall 1S here. A minimum suit bid typically shows 8-13 points, usually a 5+ card suit (but may be a good 4 card suit at the 1 level). The better your suit, the fewer points you need to bid.







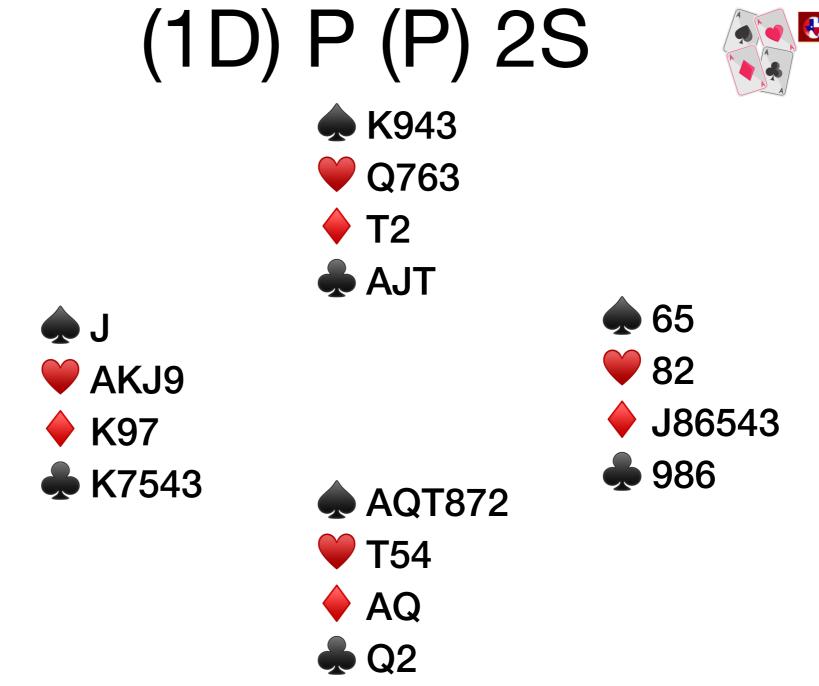
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(1D) P (P) ?

- **AQT872**
- **T**54
- ♦ AQ
- **Q**2







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#### We do not preempt in the balancing seat.

A jump in the pass-out seat is intermediate and shows a decent hand (6 or 7 losers) with a decent 6 card or longer suit and invitational values. Let Partner know that you are not borrowing a King. Game might be possible if Partner has the right 9-11 points!



# Example 4



(1D) P (P)?

- QJT8
- **¥** K97
- AT5
- ♣ K98





### (1D) P (P) 1N









Balance with 1NT showing 11-14 and stoppers (or moderate length) in Opener's suit. A direct NT overcall shows 15-18, but in balancing seat, we "borrow a king" from Partner's hand. Be sure to discuss continuations after a balancing NT. Suggestion: Play Systems on.





#### **Advanced Treatment after Balancing No Trump**



$$(1minor) P (P) 1N = 11-14$$

(1minor) P (P) X followed by 1N = 15-16

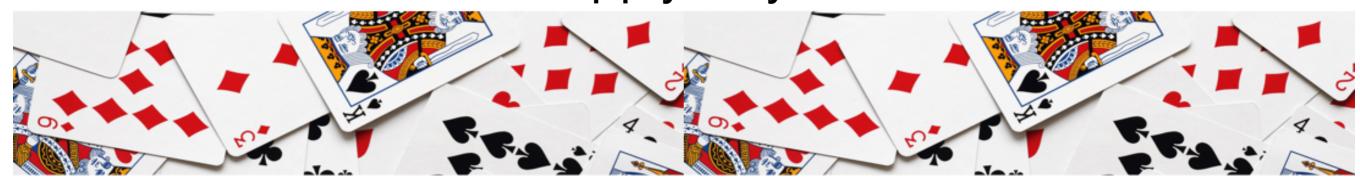
(1minor) P (P) X followed by 2N = 17-18

(1minor) P (P) 2N = 19-21

Systems are on by Advancer. 2C is Stayman.

2D and 2H are Jacoby Transfers.

Note: **The balancing 2N is not "Unusual."** Make sure your partnership clarifies that Unusual 2N bids showing the 2 lower unbid suits apply only in the direct seat.





#### **Advanced Treatment after Balancing No Trump**





#### Range Stayman after 1 Major Opening

(1Major) P (P) 1N = 11-16

(1Major) P (P) X followed by cheapest NT bid = 17-18

(1 Major) P (P) 2N = 19-21

When LHO opens a Major, a wider range is needed for the balancing NT b/c there is less room to operate. Systems are on. 2C is Stayman. 2D and 2H are Jacoby Transfers. If balancer is 11-13, he bids normally at the 2 level. If balancer is 14-16, he bids 2N, delaying his normal Stayman response. Advancer can continue with 3C as re-Stayman.





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(1C) P (P) ?

- **KQT98**
- **AJT92**
- **♦** A9
- **5**





### (1C) P (P) 2C

- **KQT98**
- **AJT92**
- **♦** A9
- **5**

#### Michaels Cue Bid is ON in balancing seat.

Balancing cuebid of Opener's minor shows 5-5 in Majors and strong 16+HCP (after borrowing a king).



# Example 6



(1H) P (P)?

- AQT98
- **9** 84
- ♦ KT
- **KQ753**





### (1H) P (P) 2H









#### Michaels Cue Bid is ON in balancing seat.

Balancing cuebid of Opener's Major shows 5-5 in the unbid Major and undisclosed minor and a strong 16+HCP (after borrowing a king).

Advancer bids 2N to ask what minor Balancer holds.





#### When NOT to Balance

- When you have fewer than 8 points.
- When you have shortage in a Major, the opponents might find a better spot to play if you reopen the auction.
- If you have length in their suit, the hand Opener is most likely to have is the big balanced hand of 18-19 points. Do you really want to give them the opportunity to find their Major suit fit when they could be playing in a silly 1 of a minor? Who has the Spade suit?
- Be cautious if you are Vulnerable. Be careful if you have length in their suit.
- Be wary if you are playing against astute, expert players.



#### **Test Yourself**



- 1. (1H) P (P) ? ♠AQ ♥KQT ♦KJ87 ♣AJ92
- 3. (1D) P (P)? ◆8 ♥AQJT96 ◆752 ♣K5
- 4. (1S) P (P) ? ◆3 ♥K4 ◆QT964 ♣AQT72
- 5. (1H) P (P)? ◆984 ♥QJ6 ◆AQT32 ◆KT
- 6. (1H) P (P)? ◆53 ♥J973 ♦ KQT32 ♣Q9
- 7. (1H) P (P) ? •QJ93 •2 •A874 •KT32
- 8. (1C) P (P) ? •Q75 —AT2 •KQJ •AJ94

#### Answers



- 2N. A jump to 2N in balancing seat shows 19-21with a stopper(s) in Opponent's suit.
- 2. Pass. Sometimes you defend a 1 level contract.
- 3. 2H. By bidding for 8 tricks, you show the ability to win 7 by yourself. This is NOT a weak bid, as it would be in direct seat.
- 4. 2D. Since you cannot bid the Unusual 2NT, it make sense to bid diamonds first. This is unlikely to be passed out. Then you will bid 3C next.
- 5. 1N. 2D is a possibility, but with your balanced shape and heart stopper, 1N is a better description.
- 6. Pass. You have a good suit, but you are very weak. Partner's failure to bid suggests that Opener has a powerhouse, or that the opponents have a better fit somewhere.
- 7. Double. You have minimum points but the right distribution. Borrow a King!
- 8. Double. In direct seat, you would overcall 1N. In balancing seat, over 1minor opening. and rebid NT to show 15-17.



### Questions?

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### Thank you!



