

The "Impossible" 2S Rebid

Possible meanings for 2S after: 1H-1NT(forcing) 2H

By Mike Savage

If you play that over a major 1NT is a one-round force and two of a minor is game forcing, here are some possible meanings that you might give to an "impossible" 2S rebid by responder. If your partner has opened 1H, you have responded 1NT (forcing and denying a 4-card spade suit) and your partner rebids 2H, what would a 2S rebid by you mean? You, the responder, have already denied having a spade suit—so it can't be natural. There are at least three ways you might play this 2S bid.

#1. 1H-1NT 2H-2S = Shows an invitational 2NT rebid without a spade stopper.

Responses:

2NT = Shows a spade stopper, a minimum opener and no singleton or void.

3C/3D = Shows four cards in the minor (maybe 6 bad ♥'s, 4 of minor, & 2-1 or 1-2 in the other suits).

3H = Shows a good heart suit and no interest in notrump or a heart game.

3NT = Shows a spade stopper with enough values to accept responder's game try.

Using 2S to deny a spade stopper allows you to not play notrump w/o a spade stopper. A disadvantage is that you have only one bid to show a long minor and no heart fit and have to choose between 3C & 3D being weak or invitational. With a heart fit and good values, you must choose between 3H and 4H.

#2. 1H-1NT 2H-2S = Shows a two-suited minor hand with at least 5-5 in the minors.

Responses:

2NT = Shows equal length in the minors and denies a stand-alone heart suit.

3C = Shows at least three clubs (may have three diamonds) and a minimum.

3D = Shows at least three diamonds with shorter clubs and a minimum.

3H = Shows a stand-alone heart suit (0 or 1 loser usually) and *might* have three cards in a minor.

3NT = Shows support for both minors and is game invitational.

Using 2S to show a minor 2-suited invitational hand gets you out of notrump when you don't belong there, finds a minor partscore or game with a fit and w/o one to play in partscore or game in hearts.

Playing this you may play in notrump w/o a spade stopper and you can only invite or bid a heart game.

#3. 1H-1NT 2H-2S = Shows an invitational hand with a stand-alone minor or a very good heart raise.

Responses: 2NT = Forced relay bid.

3C/3D = Shows invitational values with a 6+ card stand-alone minor (should be a 1-2 loser suit).

3H = Shows a very good raise in hearts, usually a three-card forcing 1NT limit raise.

Using 2S to show an invitational hand and a long stand-alone minor or a very good heart raise allows you to do many things.

#1. You can bid 3C or 3D over 2H with a very long minor, no heart fit and a weak hand.

#2. You can relay to 2NT and then bid 3C or 3D to show invitational values and a long, good suit.

#3. You have three different ways to raise hearts:

A. You can make a direct raise to 3H to show some interest in game in hearts.

B. You can go thru the relay (2S-2NT) and then bid 3H to show a very strong heart raise and give your partner a chance to pass if he has opened 1H with six hearts and a super-dog.

C. You can show no mercy and jump straight to 4H with an exceptional hand and good support.

If you play 2S as a relay, you might be playing in notrump w/o a spade stopper with too many spade losers. Also you give up exploring for your best minor fit when responder has a minor two-suiter.

My favorite is option #3 as it handles weak and invitational one-suited minor hands and all kinds of heart raises. Maybe worrying about a spade stopper or the rare 5-5+ minor hand just isn't worth it.