

XYZ Basics

A 21st Century Replacement for New Minor

Presented by Mike Savage

XYZ is a convention similar to New Minor Forcing or Two-way New Minor Forcing. Here is how it works: Over any (x-y-z) sequence of bids when opener rebids at the 1-level, responder invokes **XYZ** by bidding an artificial **2C** to show **all** invitational hands and **2D** with most game-forcing hands.

XYZ always begins the checkback process over a 1H or 1S rebid by opener and this version incorporates playing the same continuations after a 1NT rebid by opener as well (the continuations after a 1NT rebid are also known as Modified Two-Way Stayman). **X** and **Y** can both be minors, both can be majors, or (most frequently by far) **X** will be a minor and **Y** will be a major. In this version of **XYZ**, you can play the same checkback structure over **Z**—whether **Z** is 1H, 1S or 1NT.

XYZ has many advantages over New Minor, such as you can make an invitational bid in a major and if partner doesn't accept, still be at the 2-level. You also can show six diamonds and a four-card major with invitational values after bidding 1D over 1C, followed by bidding **2C** over **Z** and then bidding your major over the forced 2D rebid. Another advantage of this version is that you can early on distinguish between various types of game-forcing hands—which you can't if you play New Minor.

Here is the basic structure after *any* one-level rebid by opener if you play this version of **XYZ**:

2C = Forces opener to bid 2D which responder may pass or follow up with an invitational bid.

2D = Game forcing, responder's hand pattern not yet disclosed, leaving a lot of bidding space. After 1X-1M

1Z-**2D**: opener should show 3-card major support or without it, bid 2NT, if appropriate.

2H or **2S** = Not invitational if responder is rebidding his major or bidding 2H after having bid 1S.

2NT = Invites 3NT.

3C = It's always to play—a signoff bid whether it's opener's minor or not.

3D, 3H, 3S = Game forcing, good suit quality with slam potential whether a new suit or a suit rebid.

To invite game in opener's suit after bidding his own, responder rebids **2C** over **Z** and after the forced 2D response by opener, responder bids *two* of opener's suit with support and invitational values.

To invite game in his own suit, responder rebids **2C** over **Z** and after 2D by opener, he rebids *two* of his suit with a fair to good 5-card (or poor to fair 6-card) suit and jumps to three with a good 6-card suit.

Here are some ways with game forcing hands to show if responder has good suits or if he doesn't:

To force to game in opener's suit when both responder's suit and support are *not* great, after bidding his own suit, responder rebids **2D** over **Z** and supports opener's first suit on his next turn to bid.

To force to game in opener's suit when responder *has* a very good suit of his own along with very good support for opener's suit, over **Z** responder simply jumps to three of opener's suit on his 2nd bid.

To force to game in his own suit when his suit isn't very good, responder bids **2D** over opener's rebid and then rebids his suit. If a major, other suit bids now are cue-bids and 3NT and 4M are sign-offs.

To force to game in his own suit when it *is* very good, responder simply jump-rebids three of his suit. If responder's suit is a major this sets trumps; suit bids by opener are cue-bids and 4M is a sign-off.

To force to game with two suits and both are *not* very good, responder rebids **2D** and then bids his second suit (usually at the three-level) on his next turn to bid.

To force to game *with* two very good suits, responder simply jump shifts into his 2nd suit on his rebid.

Passed Hand and One-Level Interference

Most partnerships play that the XYZ **2C** invitational relay sequences are still “on” by a passed hand. XYZ *might* be played over 1-level interference but if so, needs partnership discussion and agreement.

Legend

m = Any Minor	Z = Any Suit (including 1NT)
M = Any Major	2X = Two of the same suit (X)
X = Any Suit	2Y = Two of the same suit (Y)
Y = Any Suit	2Z = Two of the same suit (Z)

There are possible subtleties of meaning on various rebid sequences. Here are some *suggested* agreements that allow you to more precisely define the differences between these sequences.

1m-**1Y** 1Z-**2NT** = Natural and invitational and denies 4-card support for opener’s minor.

1m-**1Y** 1Z-**2C** 2D-**2NT** = Natural and invitational with at least 4-card support for opener’s minor.

1m-**1Y** 1Z-**2C** 2D-**3m** = Invitational with at least 5-card support for opener’s minor and is shapely.

1C-**1M** 1NT-**2C** 2D-**3D** = Shows five of the major and five diamonds with invitational values.

1H-**1S** 1NT-**2C** 2D-**3D** = Shows five spades and five diamonds with invitational values.

1m-**1S** 1NT-**2C** 2D-**2H** = Shows five spades and four hearts with invitational values.

1m-**1S** 1NT-**2C** 2D-**3H** = Shows five-five in the majors with invitational values.

1m-**1M** 1Z-**3NT** = To play, and doesn’t show a five-card major.

1m-**1M** 1Z-**2C** 2D-**3NT** = Shows a five-card major and a balanced hand (giving a choice of games).

1C-**1D** 1S or 1NT-**2H** = Game forcing with four hearts and five or more diamonds.

1C-**1D** 1S or 1NT-**2C** 2D-**2H** = Invitational with four hearts and six diamonds ☺.

1C-**1D** 1Z-**2D** = Game forcing and can have various hands. For instance, it could be made with long diamonds and slam interest or could have both diamonds and club support with more interest in game or *slam* in a minor than in 3NT, or could have support for either one of opener’s suits and slam interest.

After 1m-**1Y** 1M-**2C** opener could refuse the “forced” relay to 2D when he has a four-card major and a one or no-loser six or seven-card minor and a minimum—and rebid his minor instead of bidding 2D.

Splinters by Responder:

A direct splinter by responder when opener rebids 1NT is always in support of opener’s suit. Responder must go through the **2C**-2D relay in order to make a splinter with his own suit as trumps. Examples:

1C-**1H** 1NT-**3S** = A splinter raise of opener’s suit (clubs in this case).

1C-**1H** 1NT-**2C** 2D-**3S** = A splinter raise of responder’s own suit (hearts in this case).

If opener rebids one of a suit (not 1NT), a direct splinter by responder is in support of opener’s 2nd suit. To make a splinter in opener’s first suit, responder must go through fourth suit first. Examples:

1D-**1H** 1S: **4C** = A splinter in support of spades.

1D-**1H** 1S-**2C** 2D: **4C** = A splinter in support of diamonds.

Remember, in order to play in *diamonds* with a weak hand with a four-card major and six diamonds, bid your major and then bid **2C** over opener’s 1-level rebid and when opener bids the forced 2D—pass.

In order to play in *clubs* at the cheapest level possible with a weak hand with a four-card major and six *clubs*, after opener’s one-level rebid, simply jump straight to 3C—which is to play.

XYZ is basically a simple convention used after opener has rebid at the one-level. Its structure keeps the bidding low in order to more precisely explore the best part-score or game contract while facilitating slam bidding after a game force is established at a low level. In some expert partnerships there are different (often more complicated) meanings to some of the continuation subtleties suggested above. Your partnership needs to agree on what meanings for these continuations seem best to you.