

PowerShark Conventions

PowerShark 2/1

A bid at the 2-level in a new suit is natural and game forcing. 1NT is non forcing and can be up to bad 12 HCP.

Enabling the partnership to quickly establish a game forcing auction, leaving room to explore fits, short suits, stoppers, and slam ambitions.

PS Tip: I have been coached by world class players in the new PowerShark 2/1 system. There is nothing I am more drilled in, and you can trust my judgements. The ability to make “relaxing” bids gives us the opportunity to figure out how our hands match up. It is combined with slam invites, Splinter bids, 2NT as a forcing bid with stoppers and much more. I can't wait to play it with you! I strongly recommend checking the meaning of bids by using the Check Bid button.

Two-way Checkback X-Y NT

After 1x-1y-1NT

Enabling the partnership to quickly separate non invitational, game invitational and game forcing hands. A 2C bid is a puppet to 2D, any new bid after that game invitational. A 2D bid sets a game force allowing the partnership to calmly figure out which games or slams that are possible.

PS Tip: So relaxing to play with, but I don't use it for fun. When I know which contract we should be playing I rather bid it straight away.

Simple Raise

Raising your partners opening bid with one level to indicate a weak, non- invitational hand, with 4+ card support (for minors) or 3+ card support (for majors)

Responses: Short suit trial bids over major support and natural bidding after minor support. Pass without extras, Cue Bid when slam interest.

PS Tip: I am pretty much in the middle of the road here, but you might find my raises to 2M to be solid. I will frequently choose to bid 1NT with the weakest hand with 3 card major support.

Limit Raise

Raising your partners opening bid with two levels to indicate an invitational hand with 4+ card support (for minors) or 3+ card support (for majors)

Responses: Pass without extras, Cue Bid when slam interest.

PS Tip: The combination of light opening bids and not playing inverted minors I am careful inviting in the minor suits, having the value for my bid. Some may say I am being to conservative. For the majors it is a different story as I have the 2NT Jacoby bid to my

disposal. I am keen getting to aggressive major games and my invitations can be seen as light, especially when I hold a 4-card support with decent distribution.

Negative Doubles

Making a double after partner has opened at the 1 level and the opponents overcall to show interest for other suits and a positive hand.

Responses: Bid your hand in a natural way.

PS Tip: Many play negative doubles to show both unbid suits, I don't. I will double be holding the other major only. The higher the opponents bid, the more cautious I am to get involved in the bidding without decent values. Especially at the 3 level I may be a bit to conservative.

4th Suit Game Force

Bidding the 4th suit is setting a game force asking for more information about the partners hand.

Responses: Bid NT with stopper as a priority, if not rebid a suit to show extra length.

PS Tip: I used to bash into 3NT without stoppers, just to realise I got the contract wrong handed. I now bid 4th suit to avoid these silly contracts. At the same time, I bid my hand naturally to so don't use the convention unless there is a need for it.

Stayman

After 1NT openings and natural 1NT overcalls. Call: 2C.

One of the best conventions that exists, enabling the partnership to find 4-4 fits in the major suits. PowerShark doesn't promise invitational values using Stayman.

Responses: 2D = No 4-card major, 2H = 4-5 hearts, may have 4 spades, 2S = 4-5 spades and no 4 hearts.

PS Tip: I like to bid 2C Stayman not just to find the major fit and the correct level to play at. I also love bidding it on weaker hands with 5-4 in the majors or a short club suit with 4441/4351.

Puppet Stayman

After Strong 2NT positions and natural 2NT overcalls. Call: 3C.

Enabling the partnership to find both 4-4 and 5-3 fits in the major suits. The bid is game forcing.

Responses: 3D = At least one 4 card major, 3H/S = 5 card H/S, 3NT = No 4 or 5 card major suit.

PS Tip: I started using it when I realised that way too many times we ended up going down in 3NT because we lacked a stopper in a suit. A weak doubleton and 3 cards in at least one major suit are a perfect combination for this convention. The 4-4 fits could get confirmed at the 3-level, allowing me to make a cuebid directly on the 4 level if I got slam interest.

Puppet Stayman over 1NT

After 1NT opening and natural 1NT overcalls. Call: 3C.

Enabling the partnership to find 5-3 fits in the major suits. The bid is game forcing.

Responses: 3D = I don't have a 5-card major, 3H/S= I got 5 of them.

PS Tip: Puppet Stayman is useful in order to find 5-3 fits in the majors. I got tired of going down in 3NT when 4 in a major was laydown. I am not losing out on the possibility of finding 4-4 fits as over a 3D response I will bid the major suit I don't have!

Smolen

After use of the Stayman convention replying 3H or 3S over 2D shows 5 cards in the other major and 4 cards in the bid suit.

Enabling the partnership to find a 5-3 major fit when no fit was found at the 2-level.

PS Tip: Smolen is quite useful, especially when partner makes a cuebid on the 4-level. I know my partner can judge a doubleton in the other major as a positive value and downgrade queens and jacks in the minor suits.

Transfers 2-level

After 1NT opening and natural 1NT overcalls. Calls: 2D = 5+ hearts, 2H = 5+ spades.

Enabling the partnership to find fits and the right level without wasting bidding space.

PS Tip: In my experience we are better off transferring all the time, regardless of how strong we are. When my partner is transferring, I try to be cooperative when I got a fit and a maximum. In my system I can separate the 3-card support by bidding 2NT or a suit at the 3 level. I am rather aggressive with support so if I only complete the transfer, don't get too excited!

Transfers 3-level

After Strong 2NT sequences or 2NT overcall. Calls: 3D = 5+ hearts, 3H = 5+ spades.

Enabling the partnership to quickly establish a fit.

Responses: Accepting the transfer with 3+ cards, 3NT without 3-card support, 3S with 5-card spades and no 3-card heart support, 4x as a strong cuebid with great support.

PS Tip: For years I got problems with exploring slam opportunities at the 4-level. With my new agreements in place, I confirm support on the 3-level so the confusion about which suits we agree are all gone. Without support I would bid my 5-card spade suit or 3NT. My partner

can then come back with a natural bid at the 4-level. The downside is that we no longer can stop at the 3-level, but the benefits are superior in my experience.

Transfers 4-level

After 1NT and Strong 2NT openings, and after 3NT overcalls. Calls: Too many to be listed.

Responses: Too many sequences to be listed. Please check the Check Bids before you make a bid at the 4 level.

PS Tip: I used to run into many situations where there was confusion if 4NT was RKCB or just a natural slam invite. Now I can more easily separate them. When I make a transfer to the majors, I know which level I would like to play at. I would either pass your transfer or bid 4NT as RKCB.

Minor Transfer 2-level

After 1NT and natural 1NT overcalls. Call: 2S.

Enabling the partnership to play 3 of a minor, or to find a minor fit and the right level.

Responses: 2NT = Diamonds are at least as good as clubs, 3C = I prefer clubs over diamonds.

PS Tip: On weaker hands with a long minor suit, I prefer playing the suit at the 3-level rather than having no tricks to partner in a NT contract. With both minors and game forcing values, I have many ways to find good slams after this start.

Lebensohl

After partner has made a take-out double of 2H or 2S by the opponents. Call: 2NT for all weak hands, new suit at the 3-level as a natural invitational bid.

Enables the partnership to separate the weak hands from the stronger hands.

Responses: 3C with ordinary hands.

PS Tip: I am an optimist by nature and will invite to game rather aggressively. I would expect you do the same – we rather go down in one game too many than miss out on lots of game bonuses. I normally play you for something in the middle of the lower range, meaning that I would raise you on hands where I believe game can be on.

Transfer Lebensohl

After partner has opened 1NT and there has been an overcall of 2H or 2S. Call: 2NT in order to compete with a one-suiter, while a new suit is a transfer bid with at least invitational values.

Responses: Natural.

PS Tip: Having the ability to invite and potentially make a game forcing bid at one go was a major improvement. The old-fashioned way of only one player in the partnership making the decisions was overdue. I am an optimist and will invite lightly, and I would expect you to do the same.

Jacoby 2NT

After 1M openings and 1M-overcall-2NT.

Enabling the partnership to quickly establish a fit (5+-4+) and set a game force.

Responses: New suit 3-level = Singleton, new suit 4-level = Void, 3M (17+) and 3NT (14-16) = Balanced hands with extras.

PS Tip: I get excited exploring slam opportunities. Now I have a method to show short suits and balanced hand with values before we get too high in the auction. Do notice that I am optimistic regarding slams, so please have your bid as I frequently use RKCB if we got controls in all suits.

Drury

A passed hand responding to 1M opening. Call: 2C.

Enables the partnership to stay at a lower level when required, and at the same time gives space to explore possibilities for both game and slam. The 2C bid shows 9-11 HCP with 3-card support.

Responses: 2 in the opening suit is sign-off, new suit = Short suit, 2NT = Game try asking bid with a balanced hand.

PS Tip: After being introduced to this convention, I am no longer penalized for opening light in 3rd position. Now we stop when needed, and still got available space to figure out which level we belong at for the better hands. I find it very useful, and I guess you would too.

Reverse Drury

A passed hand responding to 1M opening. Call: 2D.

Enables the partnership to stay at a lower level when required, and at the same time gives space to explore possibilities for both game and slam. The 2D bid shows around 9-11 HCP with 4+ card support.

Responses: 2 in the opening suit is sign-off, new suit = Short suit, 2NT = Game try asking bid with a balanced hand.

PS Tip: After being introduced to this convention, I am no longer penalized for opening light in 3rd position even if partner has a great fit. Now we stop when needed, and still got available space to figure out which level we belong at for the better hands. In my experience the extra trump support is super valuable, so with a 5-4 fit I encourage you to go for the thin games.

Void Jump

Bidding a suit that shows a fit with partner and 0 cards in the bid suit.

Responses: Sign off with wasted values, cuebid when optimistic based on partner's void, RKCB when holding controls in all suits and the short suit fitted very well.

PS Tip: I do quite a bit of calculations when bidding. When you make a void bid, you allow me to get a better picture of your hand, enabling my calculations to be more accurate. I find it very useful to distinguish between voids, singletons and natural cuebids, as I can now much better understand which of my values that provide real value. I devalue honours in the void suit, but I get far more optimistic when holding for example 3 low cards in the suit.

Support Double/Redouble

After partner responding 1M to 1m opening and the opponents overcall a double show exactly 3-cards support for the major suit. The double has priority and doesn't show extra values nor deny other suits/long opening suit. Same if opponents double instead over making an overcall, then redouble will show the 3-card support. Applies only on the 1 and 2 level.

PS Tip: Useful for both competitive reasons, but also easier to find 5+-3 fits for game. Without it I often found myself in a difficult having to guess much more than I now do.

Quantitative 4NT

When exploring the opportunity for a slam after partner's last bid were NT. Call: 4NT.

Responses: Pass with minimum, bid a suit at the 6 level with extra length, bid 5NT if you are uncertain which slam would be the better.

PS Tip: It is not good taking unnecessary risks in a partnership. With this convention we can reduce our punts. My judgement in these positions is pretty good so don't be afraid to take my advice. Sometimes I get too excited bidding 6NT when I should have offered you 5NT Pick a Slam instead. Some patience and I will improve on this part.

Italian Cuebids

When exploring slam opportunities, a cuebid confirms a control in the bid suit and slam interest. Cuebids are Italian style, mixing first and second round controls.

PS Tip: Don't cuebid without a reason for it. If you give me your little finger I might grab the entire hand. If I have denied a control in a bid suit and you make a cuebid, I am expecting you to have a control in the suit where I denied a control. I am not very experienced in this area, but I manage rather well at the 4-level. Advanced cuebids at the 5-level are yet not my thing, I prefer taking my chances using RKCB if I believe the slam is odds-on.

RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood)

When exploring the slam opportunity with controls in all suits. Call: 4NT.

Responses: 0314, 5NT with odd number of aces and a void (unknown), 6x with even number of aces and a void in the bid suit (6 in the trump suit shows a void in a higher ranked suit).

PS Tip: My favourite convention, and I love bidding slams! The disappointment when stopping at the 5-level is big. Still, the disappointment from my partner when we are missing two aces and have no play at the 6-level is bigger. Once we have confirmed all aces I can't

wait to explore the opportunity for a grand slam. I will invite with 5NT, confirming all aces and ask you to show kings from below. If your hand is good enough, don't be afraid to bid 7 as I have values for my bids.

Exclusion Blackwood

When exploring slam opportunities and you want to use RKCB but have a void.

Responses: Same steps as RKCB (0314).

PS Tip: Before being introduced to this convention I ran into RKCB and had to guess if partner's aces were in the right suits. Now I no longer must make these guesses. Unfortunately, there are many situations where we potentially could play this convention where I am not up for it yet.

Splinter

Bidding a suit that shows a fit with partner and shortness in the bid suit. You hold either 0 or 1 card in the bid suit.

Responses: Sign off with wasted values, cuebid when optimistic based on partner's shortness, RKCB when holding controls in all suits and the short suit fitted very well.

PS Tip: I do quite a bit of calculations when bidding. When you make a Splinter bid, you allow me to get a better picture of your hand, enabling my calculations to be more accurate. I find it very useful to distinguish between short suits and natural cuebids, as I can now much better understand which of my values that provide real value. I will throw my K, Q and J values in the suit into the bin as that was not what you were looking for, but I get far more optimistic when holding for example 3 low cards in the suit.

Pick a Slam 5NT

When no fit has been found but there should be values for a slam. Call: 5NT.

Enables the partnership to find fits at high level in tight auctions.

Responses: You suggest a final contract and partner may accept with some fit.

PS Tip: A handy convention for us to use when we are on thin ice or in a position where some guesswork is required. When remembering that we have this convention in our repertoire, I see that we find many good slams.

Near-Far

After opponents have overcalled with Michaels Cue Bid or Unusual 2NT.

Enabling the partnership to distinguish between competitive and forcing bids.

PS Tip: I like to be aggressive in competitive auctions. With this convention I am allowed to be so without my partner overbidding afterwards. It is a convention I believe many players will find very useful when it comes up.

Michaels Cuebid

After an opponent has opened at the 1-level with a suit, a simple cuebid shows 5+-5+ in the major suits if the opening is 1C or 1D. After an opponent opens 1H or 1S, a simple cuebid shows 5+-5+ in the other major and an unknown minor.

Enabling the partnership to quickly find fits at a low level.

Responses: 2NT promises some values, 3C = Pass/Correct. Other bids are natural.

PS Tip: I may be too eager using the Michaels convention, so please don't expect me to hold perfect cards for you. At the same time, I tend to be careful responding to your Michaels Cuebid and may have a bit more than you would expect from other partners.

Leaping and Non-Leaping Michaels

After an opponent has opened with 2H or 2S, a leap to 4 in either of the minor suits shows a game forcing hand with at least 5-5 in the bid minor suit and the unbid major suit. The same goes for a direct overcall of 4 in either of the minor suits after 3H or 3S opening (Non-Leaping Michaels).

Enabling the partnership to find fits and the correct level to play at.

PS Tip: I like to have really good cards making such a bid, allowing my partner to get excited when holding the right cards.

Unusual 2NT

After an opponent has opened at the 1-level, a 2NT overcall would show 5+-5+ in the two lowest ranked unbid suits.

Enabling the partnership to find their best fit at a low level.

PS Tip: On some hands I just want to get into the action, either to find a good contract our way or to make life more difficult for our opponents. I like to have a decent hand using this convention, at least good suits if I don't have compensating values.

Unusual NT

After pre-passing and then entering the auction. Showing at least 5-4 in the unbid suits. Call: 1NT.

Enabling the partnership to get into the auction and compete for the contract.

PS Tip: Do notice I didn't open at either the 1- or 2-level, so my hand is limited in various ways.

Landy

After an opponent has opened with 1NT, an overcall of 2C shows both majors, at least 4-4.

Enabling the partnership to compete with the higher ranked suits.

Responses: 2D = Equal length in the majors, others natural.

PS Tip: I like to get into the auction and are not afraid to step into troubled waters. My goal is to win part scores. I will respond very conservative to your Landy bid.

Killer NT Double

After opponents has opened 1NT and it goes pass-pass a double show about 10-12 HCP balanced.

PS Tip: I like bringing in some action at the lower levels. The hands are normally about 20-20 HCP between us. We got better communications between the hands and the advantage of having the opening lead. I am well prepared to give away some -180 and -380s in order to get many more + 500s. I have moderated myself and will not take the same risk if we are in red and the opponents in green.