

THE MAGIC CLUB & THE SPARKLING DIAMOND

My explanation with regards these ‘little wonders’ things might at first look seem complicated but, in reality, it is not. The basis of it is this:

When playing five-card Majors and a **strong No Trump** (you choose the range) - 16/18 hcp is my preferred range - and you hold 11/15hcp and the hand is, balanced/semi-balanced/4441 you open, ‘**one Club when you have a Major**’ and ‘**one Diamond when you don’t**’.

When I began developing this idea around twelve years ago I first called it the ‘**big minor**’. I used the name due to the fact that in modern bridge the minors are being forced into the ‘back seat’ due to the dominance attributed to Majors and NT. It is therefore very rewarding to give the Minors some authority and respect. Using a Club as having three possibilities (natural, artificial and balanced/semi-balanced or 4-4-4-1) and a Diamond two (natural and artificial) means they became a massive part a bidding system; they’re ‘big’. Whilst most modern players have become very used to prepared clubs systems, weak twos – now in three suits, and multi-two diamond, you simply cannot believe the looks of astonishment on some opponents faces when you open a Club – alerted by partner – and your partner advises them about the multiplicity of things it might be it can be.

A. NATURAL 11/19HCP, OR

B. ARTIFICIAL SHOWING A BALANCED/SEMI BALANCED (11/15HCP) WITH AT LEAST ONE FOUR CARD MAJOR OR

C. 4-4-4-1 (11/15HCP) HAND WITH AT LEAST ONE FOUR CARD MAJOR

SIMPLY OPENING A MINOR IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SEEMS TO COMPLETELY BEMUSE PLAYERS.

RECENTLY I ATTENDED A BRIDGE SEMINAR HELD BY MR RON KLINGER, THE AUSTRALIAN WRITER ON BRIDGE, AND HE TOLD THE PEOPLE PRESENT THAT IN ‘MODERN BRIDGE’ PARLANCE A SINGLE BID IS OFTEN BEING USED TO SHOW MORE THAN ONE THING – IT SEEMS THE MAGIC CLUB FITS VERY NICELY INTO THIS WAY OF THINKING

After a time, the ‘**BIG MINOR**’ then became the ‘**TWO WAY MINOR**’. Eventually because they proved to be so useful I gave them the exotic name of ‘**THE MAGIC CLUB & THE SPARKLING DIAMOND**’. I have found the whole concept absolutely perfect for finding any ‘**MAGIC 4/4 MAJOR FITS**’. A real bonus is that all the sequences used are permitted under level 3 (the old general licence) of the EBU’S ‘**ORANGE BOOKLET**’ and fit smoothly into any basic modern bidding system, such as ‘**STANDARD AMERICAN**’ OR ‘**ACOL**’. It even enables 4/4 Major fits to be known without either partner ever bidding the suit – that must be pretty unique.

Why I even considered this little gimmick is itself interesting. The original thinking behind opening a Club to show a Major began some twelve plus years ago when i was playing in a regular partnership, at Sheffield Bridge Club, with a gentleman call Barry Turner. He got so frustrated – more annoyed - by my ‘visionary bids’ he decided that we must build some ‘tram lines’ that brought discipline into my bidding. So we decided to play five-card Majors and a strong NT (16/18hcp). There is much I could write about how things developed from there but I will not go into these in this note. Obviously this new system of bidding meant that with some hands, those flat/flattish kinds outside the NT range, we had to open a prepared Minor. After a time of using the traditional ‘better minor’ my ‘vision’ once more took an interest and posed the question. “**WHY ARE WE WASTING THESE WONDERFUL MINORS IN SUCH A USELESS WAY WHEN THERE MUST BE SOMETHING BETTER?**” we were never interested in Minors; we wanted to know about Major fits (4/4, 5/3 and 6/2) or NT. And, so, the ‘**BIG MINOR**’ began. Why, when holding a four card Major, don’t we open a **Club**, and when we don’t open a **Diamond**? And, at the same time, retain them as natural bids – **A TWO WAY MINOR!**

IN THE TWO EXAMPLES THAT FOLLOW,

THE FIRST TWO EXAMPLES BELOW APPLY WHEN PLAYING 16/18HCP NT

THE SECOND TWO EXAMPLES APPLY WHEN PLAYING A 12/14 HCP NT

SHOULD PARTNERSHIPS WANT TO CHANGE THE RANGE OF NT ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS ADJUSTMENTS TO POINT COUNT

ARTIFICIAL, ONE DIAMOND - bal/semi-bal **11-15 HCP** - no 4 card MAJOR

THE SPARKLING DIAMOND

(1) OPENER, ONE DIAMOND

(2)

Rebids by opener when responder has bid two club are below

| | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 2 NT | 11/12 HCP) | ALL |
| 2 HEART | 13 HCP) | BIDS |
| 2 SPADE | 14 HCP) | POINT |
| 3 NT | 15 HCP) | COUNT |

(1) RESPONDER with 10+ bids TWO CLUB

(2)

Only some subsequent bids are **FORCING**

RESPONDER TAKES CHARGE OF AUCTION

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| FORCING/ARTIFICIAL | 3 DIAMOND TRANSFER to HEART |
| FORCING/ARTIFICIAL | 3 HEART TRANSFER to SPADE |
| 2 NT | SIGN-OFF |
| 3 NT | SIGN-OFF |

ARTIFICIAL, ONE CLUB - bal/semi-bal/4441 **11-15 HCP** - at least one 4 card MAJOR

The MAGIC club

(1) OPENER, ONE CLUB

(2)

Rebids by opener after responder has bid one diamond are as below

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 NT | 11/12 HCP) all show) | ALL |
| 1 HEART | 13 HCP) at least one) | BIDS |
| 1 SPADE | 14 HCP) four card) | POINT |
| 2 NT | 15 HCP) MAJOR) | COUNT |

(1) RESPONDER with 10+ bids ONE DIAMOND

(2)

Only some subsequent bids are **FORCING**

RESPONDER TAKES CHARGE OF AUCTION

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| FORCING/ARTIFICIAL | 2/3 CLUB | - PROM-STAYMAN |
| FORCING/ARTIFICIAL | 2 DIAMOND | - TRANSFER to HEART |
| FORCING/ARTIFICIAL | 2 HEART | - TRANSFER to SPADE |
| 2 NT | | SIGN-OFF |
| 3 NT | | SIGN-OFF |

ARTIFICIAL, ONE DIAMOND - bal/semi-bal hand **15-18 HCP** - no 4 card MAJOR

The SPARKLING DIAMOND

(1) OPENER, ONE DIAMOND

(2)

Rebids by opener after two club by responder are as below

2 NT 15 HCP) **ALL**
2 HEART 16 HCP) **BIDS**
2 SPADE 17 HCP) **POINT**
3 NT 18 HCP) **COUNT**

(1) RESPONDER with 7+ bids, TWO CLUB

(2)

Only some subsequent bids are **FORCING**

RESPONDER TAKES CHARGE OF AUCTION

FORCING/ARTIFICIAL 3 DIAMOND - TRANSFER to HEART
FORCING/ARTIFICIAL 3 HEART - TRANSFER to SPADE
2 NT SIGN-OFF
3 NT SIGN-OFF

ARTIFICIAL, ONE CLUB - bal/semi-bal/4441 **15-18 HCP** - at least one 4 card MAJOR

The magic CLUB

(1) OPENER, ONE CLUB

(2)

Rebids by opener after responder has bid one diamond are as below

1 NT 15 HCP) all show at) **ALL**
1 HEART 16 HCP) least one) **BIDS**
1 SPADE 17 HCP) four card) **POINT**
2 NT 18 HCP) MAJOR) **COUNT**

(1) RESPONDER with 7+ bids, ONE DIAMOND

(2)

Only some subsequent bids are **FORCING**

RESPONDER TAKES CHARGE OF AUCTION

FORCING/ARTIFICIAL 2/3 - PROM-STAYMAN
FORCING/ARTIFICIAL 2 DIAMOND - TRANSFER to HEART
FORCING/ARTIFICIAL 2 HEART - TRANSFER to SPADE
2 NT SIGN-OFF
3 NT SIGN-OFF