

Bourke Relay by Chris Ryall

This article can be found online at: [source](#). It is a post written by Mr. Chris Ryall to a online question by Larry Stuart-Jones regarding the Bourke Relay inquiring about the conventional method. Although not in online format, but rather in question and answer mode we present this write-up about this conventional method.

The heading is as follows without releasing the email addresses of either questioner or inquirer. The question is formatted in italic form whereas the answer by Mr. Chris Ryall is presented in non-italic format.

Article 112304 of rec.games.bridge:
From: Chris Ryall <chris@>
Subject: Re: The Bourke Relay
Date: Wed, 28 Jul 1999 22:39:56 +0100

Larry Stuart-Jones <lsjwsj84@> wrote
Can anyone summarize the convention, or direct me to a complete description of the convention?

One of the chapters of Tournament Acol, by David Bird & Tim Bourke, (Gollancz 1995, ISBN 0575061138) discusses the Bourke Relay. I think of it as "3rd suit forcing", by analogy with 4th Suit Forcing.

Not quite - the relay is a *game* force 1S 2D
Defined as the lowest unbid suit. 2S 3C*
It denies a natural limit bid so with 12 and 2-3 Spades a natural 3 Spades might be best here. You should adjust the soundness of your openings (ours are light, especially if suit rebid). In response show the following in order of economy (except suits before NT).

- Qx or better support for responder.
- Any unbid 4 card major.
- Min NT with a balanced hand and values elsewhere.

Opener may raise the relay suit if it is their own 2nd suit.

I'm not sure if 'raise' means anything as 1H 2C
the relay is totally artificial. However 2H 2S*
'raise' of a major would show four and 3S!
deny Qx or Jxx in clubs - (in our style)

Instead of using the relay, responder at their 2nd turn may jump in a new suit, which is a support splinter bid, according to the book. (I don't remember whether this is "officially" part of the BR itself - have lent the book to someone else!)

As it's Bourke's bid he can define what he wants!
 Certainly the relay allows special meanings for quite a few bids. I think this would be a splinter in anyone's methods though (on the new suit would be forcing, so jump=splinter rule)

1D 1H
 2D 3S!

There are a number of spin off benefits to the relay. It makes 3 level support of opener's suit totally forcing allowing low level cues. Similarly a return to responder's suit becomes a strong one suited hand needing (logically)

1C 1S
 2C 2D*
 2NT 3C(F)

less than Qx support If it suits your style - you no longer need to employ the strong jump shift.

1C 1H
 2C 2D*

We have abandoned 1st round game forces entirely and use eg 1D-2S! as a non-forcing fit jump.

2NT 3H (F)

Bourke uses the relay after 2/1 as well. That would depend on your style. 2/1 auctions eat some space but this doesn't affect the relay too much. If you play 2/1 GF you don't need it. We play 2/1 GF - unless either of us rebids our suit - and we don't use it either. Our problem auction would be a strong 1 suiter after opener rebids simply.

Note: Using the relay the game force always occurs on the second round of bidding. So you have to be able to make a game force opposite *any* opener's rebid. ie you need structures over 1NT rebids and probably play 4th-suit=GF (or something in the 3rd round to the same effect). The relay affects all your approach forcing sequences and is particularly important when you *don't* use it. Some sequences need no longer be forcing. Tim and David say 'tournament Acol' in their book but like Klinger's power 2D I see this as merely a marketing ploy. This isn't Acol, and I have taken that word off my own system card.

Anti's: The main problem is when you want to express a limited hand that has both majors naturally. Problem is that the second major may become the relay and 3 of it may be too high. A couple of years ago we discussed 1C - 2D! as a sort of 9-11 Flannery with 5H+4S. I quite fancy this as we play a 3+ club opening, and the fit jump preempt is bettr bid as a straight 3C! It's 1D opposite both majors that's the real bugbear - but not a common problem in practice

I have found it *very* liberating with many more solid, expressive 3 level sequences. I also looked at Klinger and found 'power' rather scripted and less fluid in action. BR is Recommended. Our best results at the table have come from those 1st round fit jumps!

Chris Ryall (in France 5-25 August)