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The Lisa Convention

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In the July, 2007 issue of *Bridge News* we discussed the Bart Convention. Where the auction goes 1♠ - Pass - 1NT – Pass - 2♣ - Pass - 2♠ has little meaning. Responder can have a minimum hand or a hand just short of a game-invitational action. If opener has modest extra values, he must guess whether to risk raising the level or to stay safe at the two level. Responder faces a dilemma when he has exactly two Spades and five Hearts, but not game forcing values.

This problem was been addressed by Les Bart using his *Bart* convention. After the bidding sequence: 1♠ - Pass 1NT – Pass - 2♣ - Pass - ?, the responder bids two Diamonds as an artificial forcing bid (*alert*). This sequence is used to show opener one of the following hands:

1. five Hearts and two Spades. Responder plans to pass opener's rebid (hopefully two Hearts).
2. a doubleton Spade honor with 9-11 high card points. Responder plans to correct two Hearts to two Spades, pass a rebid of two Spades, or raise two No Trump to three No Trump.
3. a weak/invitational hand with a good Diamond suit. Responder plans to bid three Diamonds.
4. a good hand with a club raise. Responder plans to bid three Clubs over partner's rebid.
5. a raise of two No Trump with four Clubs. Responder plans to bid two No Trump.

Aside from giving up the "natural" two Diamonds bid, the Bart convention has two serious drawbacks. When opener has extra values but fewer than two Hearts, the partnership might miss a game when responder is unable to show a strong simple preference; and when opener has good Heart support, he cannot safely bid past two Hearts, because responder might not have Heart length. What do you do?

You may adopt the *Lisa Convention*, Bart's smarter little sister.

Basic Lisa

Bidding Sequence

1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass

2 ♣ Pass ?

2 ♦: Artificial; usually six plus Hearts or weak Spade preference.

2 ♥: Exactly two Spades and five Hearts.

2 ♠: Exactly two Spades; strong simple preference.

2 NT: Invitational; fewer than four Clubs.

3 ♣: Invitational; five plus Clubs.

3 ♦: Invitational; six plus card suit.

Bidding Sequence

1 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

2 ♣ Pass 2 ♦ Pass

2 ♥ Pass ?

Pass: Weak; six plus card suit.

2 ♠: Weak simple preference.

2 NT: Invitational; exactly four Clubs.

3 ♣: Moderate values; five plus Clubs.

3 ♦: Weak; six plus card suit.

Bidding Sequence

1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass

2 ♣ Pass 2 ♦ Pass

2 ♠ Pass ?

Pass: Weak suit preference.

2 NT: Invitational; exactly four Clubs.

3 ♣: Moderate values; five plus Clubs.

3 ♦: Weak; six plus card suit.

3 ♥: Sign off.

4 ♦: Transfer to Hearts.

The Basic Lisa Convention does not have Bart's shortcomings, and compared to other methods the only significant disadvantage is the loss of the natural two Diamonds rebid. In addition, the basic *Lisa* bids are easily extended to non-Bart situations using for example, *Extended Lisa* and *Fourth-Suit Lisa*.

For the bidding sequence 1♥ - Pass - 1NT - Pass - 2♣ - Pass ... neither the bid of two Spades nor two Diamonds followed by two Spades is needed in a natural sense. Recall from the forcing No Trump article (July 2007 issue of *Bridge News*) that 1NT denies four Spades and that opener may have as few as two Clubs ... (perhaps 4-5-2-2 or 3-5-3-2).

Extended Lisa

Bidding Sequence

1♥ Pass 1NT Pass

2♣ Pass ?

2♦: Artificial (alert); various possibilities.

2♥: Exactly two Hearts; strong simple preference.

2♠: Invitational exactly five Clubs.

2NT: Invitational; fewer than four Clubs.

3♣: Invitational; six plus Clubs.

3♦: Invitational; six plus card suit.

Bidding Sequence

1♥ Pass 1NT Pass

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass

2♥ Pass ?

Pass: Weak simple preference.

2♠: Moderate values; exactly five Clubs.

2NT: Invitational; exactly four Clubs.

3♣: Moderate values; six plus Clubs.

3♦: Weak; six plus card suit.

Finally, the Lisa convention may be modified to replace Fourth-Suit Forcing (*FSF*) as discussed in the September 2007 *Bridge News* issue.

Fourth Suit Forcing Lisa

After 1 Heart - 1 Spade - 2 Clubs - ?, then 2 Diamonds is no longer Fourth Suit Forcing, but *Fourth Suit Lisa*.

Bidding Sequence

1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

2 ♣ Pass ?

2 ♦: Artificial (alert); various possibilities.

2 ♥: Exactly two Hearts; strong simple preference.

2 ♠: Artificial game-force.

2 NT: Invitational; fewer than four Clubs.

3 ♣: Natural; game-force.

3 ♦: Natural; game-force.

3 ♥: Natural; game-force.

3 ♠: Natural; game-force.

Bidding Sequence

1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

2 ♣ Pass 2 ♦ Pass

2 ♥ Pass ?

Pass: Weak simple preference.

2 ♠: Natural; weak.

2 NT: Invitational; four plus Clubs.

3 ♣: Moderate values; four plus Clubs.

3 ♦: Natural; invitational.

3 ♥: Natural; invitational.

3 ♠: Natural; invitational.

Responder's continuation has the same essential meanings if opener bids two Spades (showing three-card support) over two Diamonds.