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Bridge Bidding: The Next Step · Standard American edition



CHAPTER 5

Michaels and the Unusual 2NT

Showing two suits at once when the opponents open

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1. Two suits in one bid

With two five-card suits, an ordinary overcall shows only one of them, and the opponents may bid so high that you never show the other. Two conventions let you show **both suits at once**.

Michaels cue bid: bid the opener's suit at the two level.
Over 1♣ or 1♦: **both majors**.
Over 1♥: **spades and a minor**. Over 1♠: **hearts and a minor**.

Unusual 2NT: jump to 2NT over an opening bid. It shows the **two lowest unbid suits**: both minors over 1♥ or 1♠, clubs and hearts over 1♦, diamonds and hearts over 1♣.

Both promise at least **five cards in each suit**. Most of your points should be in your two suits: about **8–15** points is typical. Be more careful when vulnerable. With a 5-4 hand, or a very strong one, start with an ordinary overcall instead.

In each example the opponent on your right has opened.

♠ K Q 10 8 4 ♥ A J 10 5 3 ♦ 6 ♣ 7 2	RHO opens 1♦. Both majors, five cards each: **2♦** (Michaels).
♠ 7 2 ♥ K Q J 9 4 ♦ 3 ♣ A J 10 7 4	RHO opens 1♠. Hearts and clubs: **2♠** (Michaels: hearts and a minor).

♠ 5 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K Q J 9 4 ♣ A J 10 6 3	RHO opens 1♥. Both minors: **2NT** (Unusual 2NT).

2. When partner shows two suits

Partner has made the decision easy: choose between their suits. Usually that just means bidding the one you have more of, at the cheapest level, even with a very weak hand. With a good fit and some values, jump; with enough for game, bid it.

When partner's Michaels bid shows a major and an unknown minor (over 1♥ or 1♠) and you do not like the major, bid **2NT** to ask: partner then bids their minor.

♠ J 7 3 ♥ Q 5 ♦ 9 8 4 2 ♣ K 8 6 3	LHO 1♦ – partner 2♦ (both majors) – RHO pass – ?: three spades, two hearts. Bid **2♠**.

> After an Unusual 2NT the opponents often bid on. Even then, with a fit for one of partner's suits, compete: partner's shape means your side may make more tricks than the points suggest.

3. Summary

RHO opens	Michaels cue bid	Unusual 2NT
1♣	2♣: both majors	2NT: diamonds and hearts
1♦	2♦: both majors	2NT: clubs and hearts
1♥	2♥: spades and a minor	2NT: both minors
1♠	2♠: hearts and a minor	2NT: both minors

Partner has shown two suits	Bid
Weak or average hand	the suit you prefer, at the cheapest level
Good fit, some values	jump in it
Enough for game	bid game
Don't like the major (Michaels over a major)	2NT asks for the minor

4. Test yourself

1. ♠ A J 10 6 4
♥ K Q 10 8 3
♦ 5
♣ 7 2

RHO opens 1♣. What do you bid?

2. ♠ 4
♥ J 7
♦ A Q 10 8 6
♣ K J 10 9 4

RHO opens 1♥. What do you bid?

3. ♠ 8 3
♥ A K J 10 4
♦ K Q 10 7 3
♣ 5

RHO opens 1♠. What do you bid?

4. ♠ A Q 10 8 3
♥ 6
♦ K 7 2
♣ Q 10 5 3

RHO opens 1♥. What do you bid?

5. ♠ Q 7 2
♥ 8 4
♦ J 9 6 5 3
♣ K 8 4

LHO 1♦ – partner 2♦ – RHO pass – ? What do you bid?

6. ♠ J 8 6 4
♥ 7
♦ A Q 6 3
♣ K 9 5 2

LHO 1♠ – partner 2♠ – RHO pass – ? What do you bid?

Answers

1. 2♣. Michaels: both majors.

2. 2NT. The Unusual 2NT: both minors.

3. 2♠. Michaels over 1♠: hearts and a minor (here diamonds).

4. 1♠. Only 5-4: an ordinary overcall.

5. 2♠. Three spades, two hearts: prefer spades.

6. 2NT. Only one heart, but good minors: ask partner which minor they hold.

Next: Chapter 6, Splinters and Strong Raises. Free lessons and challenge hands to play: **bridgescorer.com/learn**

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