

Passed hand bidding *by Derrick Browne*

Today's column continues our occasional series on "what you should play", based on modern ideas from leading American authority Larry Cohen. We consider passed hand bidding, a slightly more obscure area than our usual fare, so one where some of the ideas are not standard – be warned.

You pass and partner opens 1H or 1S in third or fourth seat. You, responder, have at most about 11 HCP, so even a change of suit is not forcing. For a passed hand 2H response to 1S, Cohen would expect something like:

S 54
H AQJ94
D KT8
C 532

Bid 2H. A new suit by responder at the 2-level shows a 5-card suit and about 9-11 HCP. Without a decent 5-card suit to show, Cohen likes a passed-hand 1NT response to be up to 11 points.

More controversially, how would you reply to partner's 1S opening as a passed hand with the following:

S QT98
H 43
D AQJ54
C 54

Cohen likes to play the jump shift by a passed hand as fit showing, with 4-card support and a concentration in the suit jumped into. Hence he would bid 3D with the hand above.

What of a jump raise of partner's major by a passed hand? Cohen recommends a 3-level raise (e.g. P : 1S, **3S**) as weakish (at most 9 points) with 4-5 trumps. How, then, do you handle stronger hands?

As responder to a third or fourth seat major suit opening, Cohen strongly recommends using 2C as an artificial raise, called Drury. It shows at least three trumps and 10 total points. This allows your partnership to get out on the 2-level if the opening was light. Without Drury, the responder would have to make a limit raise and get your side to the 3-level (too high) when opener is on the light side.

How to respond to Drury? Modern methods dictate that opener "signs off" in the major e.g. P : 1S, 2C (Drury) : 2S, with a minimum. Opener's 2S shows no game interest, either a light opener or just some minimum. Technically this is called Reverse Drury but it has become the standard

Anything by opener other than rebidding the major is naturalish and shows at least game interest. Note that Drury is not on in interference, or over competition.

Drury is more widely played in America than in Australia. It affords greater liberty for light openings opposite a passed partner.

Dealer West, EW vul.

NORTH
S 97
H J97
D JT82
C AKT5

WEST
S A
H AT865
D 7543
C Q87

EAST
S KQT84
H K32
D K6
C 432

SOUTH
S J6532
H Q4
D AQ9
C J96

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1S	Pass
2H	All pass		

In third seat, East opened a slightly-light 1S, then passed West's response (non-forcing by a passed hand).

At some tables, 2H made after North started with two top clubs, but that was poor defence. After leading the CA at trick one, North should take heed of partner's discouraging signal to switch suits; best is to the DJ.

Two diamond winners are taken before South returns the CJ, high-low from a remaining doubleton. Soon the defenders have taken five minor suit winners and if North plays the last club, South can ruff with the HQ, a successful uppercut which drives out the HA from declarer's hand, promoting an extra trump trick for North. The contract is thereby taken two light.