

Baron 3♣

When partner opens 2NT (or it goes 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT etc.) then we need a mechanism to find our 4-4 or 5-3 major suit fits etc. as over a 1NT opening. Now over 1NT everything is pretty easy, but over 2NT there is not so much room and it really is important to play a combination of things that actually works! For example, with hands that want to go no further than game we need to be able to locate 4-4 and 5-3 major suit fits. And there are a few problems. For example, suppose partner of the 2NT bidder has 5 ♠'s and 4 ♥'s – should he bid 3♣ Stayman or transfer?

There are numerous combinations around and I cover a number of them in the Responding to 2NT section.

Now in the States and other countries, 3♣ is usually played as some form of Stayman (either normal Stayman or Puppet Stayman are quite common). But another very good scheme, popular in the UK, is Baron 3♣. There are two common combinations: -

- 1 Baron 3♣ together with Flint 3♦.
- 2 Baron 3♣ together with Transfers.

Baron 3♣ asks for 4 card suits and they are bid up the line. If the 2NT bidder bid 3NT directly over the Baron 3♣ then he denies a 4 card ♦/♥/♠ suit and so he must have a ♣ suit. Flint 3♦ was basically a fore-runner of Jacoby transfers. It was a weak bid which asked the 2NT bidder to bid 3♥ which the Flint bidder would either pass or correct to 3♠. There really is no point in playing Flint these days and transfers are to be preferred. So let's cover: -

Baron 3♣ together with Transfers

3♣ is Baron. Baron 3♣ asks for 4 card suits and they are bid up the line. If the 2NT bidder bid 3NT directly over the Baron 3♣ then he denies a 4 card ♦/♥/♠ suit and so he must have a ♣ suit.

3♦ = transfer to 3♥

3♥ = transfer to 3♠

3♠ = Minor suit Stayman or a transfer to 4♣. Up to you.

3NT = to play (no 4 or 5 card major).

4♣ = Gerber

* Note

Note: There is the problem with a hand with 4 ♥'s and 5 ♠'s. If you start with Baron 3♣ then you cannot subsequently show a 5 card ♠ suit. And if you transfer with 3♥ into 3♠ then you are up at the four level when you show your ♥ suit.

With 3♣ as Puppet Stayman in the Neimeijer complex this problem is solved by using a direct 3NT to show 4 ♥'s and 5 ♠'s and to play in 3NT one goes via 3♣. You can also adopt this philosophy here (so go via 3♣ Baron) even though you have no intention of finding a 4-4 fit.

Thus with this alternative approach we have: -

3NT = shows 5 ♠'s and 4 ♥'s

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