

The Flannery Convention
(August 16, 2021)

If the opening bidder holds a hand of moderate strength (11-15 HCP) **and** 5H/4S **and** he plays Flannery, he can convey in one bid (2D) the distribution and range of his hand.

The purpose of Flannery is to avoid rebid problems with this type of hand. A one heart opening sometimes leads to trouble when opener cannot bid 2S (a reverse) at his next turn. Some examples of hands suitable for a Flannery 2D opening include the following:

AKQ2	J862	KJ75
A9854	KQ1075	QJ963
6	93	AJ42
732	AQ	-----

BEWARE: The Flannery bid gives your opponents the same information as your partner!

Most partners use the following responses when partner has opened 2D:

Response	Meaning
Pass	6+ diamonds
2H	Natural, signoff
2S	Natural, signoff
2NT	Strong, artificial and forcing, asking opener to further describe his his hand (see below). NOTE: 2NT bid does not have to be alerted.
3C	6+ clubs, signoff
3D	6+ diamonds, GI
3H	3+ hearts, 10-12 HCP
3S	4+ spades, 10-12 HCP
3NT	Natural, signoff
4C	Transfer to hearts, SI; kickback, keycard Blackwood, or exclusion bid
4D	Transfer to spades, SI; kickback, keycard Blackwood, or exclusion bid

4H To Play

4S To Play

These responses permit you to bid these hands with 4-5 in the majors with little chance either of playing in the wrong suit or of playing at too high a level.

Opener's Rebids After 2NT Bid

After hearing an artificial 2NT response, opener must clarify his minor-suit distribution. This will help the responder decide whether his own minor-suit values are suitable for game or slam. Opener's conventional rebids are as follows:

Rebid	Meaning
3C	4-5-1-3 shape
3D	4-5-3-1 shape
3H	4-5-2-2 shape, minimum
3S	4-5-2-2 shape, maximum
3NT	4-5-Hx-Hx shape, maximum with an honor in both minors
4C	4-5-0-4 shape
4D	4-5-4-0 shape

Let's look at some examples of the above bids:

Opener A1098 K5432 KQ J9	Responder KQ74 87 1076 Q642	Bidding: 2D* 2S P * = Must be alerted
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Opener KQJ4 AK765 9 J43	Responder 5 Q82 KJ765 A1092	Bidding: 2D* 3H 4H P * = Must be alerted
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Opener	Responder	Bidding:	2D*	2NT*
J876	A102		3NT	P
AJ1093	K			
A2	K1085			
A7	KQ65			

* = Must be alerted

Opener	Responder	Bidding:	2D*	2N*
KJ73	A1085		3N	4S
KJ432	VOID		P	
K2	A108643			
A9	KJ10			

* = Must be alerted

How would you bid the following hand?

Q10
Q
107542
A10987

South: Dealer

2D* (P) 2H (P)
P (P)

J642
83
KQ63
K52

853
AK1065
98
J64

*Must be alerted

AK97
J9742
AJ
Q3

The best North can do with his terrible fit in the major suits is to signoff in 2 hearts. The hand has no chance to make. Declarer has to try to take as many tricks as he can.

In competition: the specialized Flannery responses and rebids are on. Any double of an opposing overcall does not indicate a "stolen" bid. IT IS FOR PENALTY!!!!!!

Flannery Defense

Most opponents use the following defensive strategy versus a Flannery 2D opening:

- Double = 15+ HCP (1NT opener)
- 2H = Three-suited takeout, similar to a double over opponent's 1H call.
- 2S = 5+ spades, NF
- 2NT = clubs and diamonds
- 3C = 6+ clubs
- 3D = 6+ diamonds
- 3H = Western Cuebid, asking for a heart stopper

The following example illustrates how effective the Flannery Convention can be in keeping the opponents from finding their contract.

	Q104	
	Q82	West: Dealer
	A972	2D* (P) 2S (3C)
	A97	P (3D) P (P)
		P
KJ95	8732	
AJ1054	96	*Must be alerted
Q3	J654	
64	832	
	A6	
	K73	
	K108	
	KQJ105	

Most N/S pairs played the above hand in a contract of either 3NT or 5C. E/W scored 100% on the board!



Reverse Flannery

Another approach for using 2H and 2S responses to a 1-minor suit opening bid is to use these bids to show a variety of problematic hands that have length in both major suits. This method, called **Reverse Flannery**, is particularly effective after a 1C/1D opening. Playing Reverse Flannery allows the partnership to locate a major suit fit as quickly as possible and at a reasonable level.

Reverse Flannery: 1m-2M*

1C/1D 2H* = 5 spades, 4-5 hearts, less than invitational values (usually 6-10 HCP)

1C/1D 2S* = 5 spades, 4-5 hearts, invitational values (11/12)

Followup Bids to Reverse Flannery:

Example 1. 1C 2H*
 ?

*Must be alerted = 5S/4H, 6–10 HCP

- Pass = Minimum with hearts
- 2S = To play
- 2NT** = Asks about shape/size of responder's hand. ** = Must be alerted
 - 3C = 5-4 minimum
 - 3D = 5-4 maximum
 - 3H = 5-5 minimum
 - 3S = 5-5 maximum
- 3C = 6+ clubs, NF
- 3D = Asks for a diamond stopper
- 3H = 4+ hearts, GI
- 3S = 3+ spades, GI
- 3NT = To play, shows stopper in diamonds and shortness in the majors
- 4H = To play
- 4S = To play

NOTE: Similar bids are used if partner opens 1C and the responder bids 2S*.

Example 2. 1D 2S*
?

*Must be alerted = 5S/4H, 11-12 HCP

- Pass = minimum with spades
- 2NT** = Asks about size/shape of responder's hand ** = Must be alerted
 - 3C = 5-4, minimum
 - 3D = 5-4, maximum
 - 3H = 5-5, minimum
 - 3S = 5-5, maximum
- 3C = Asks for club stopper
- 3D = 6+ diamonds, NF
- 3H = 4+ hearts, GI
- 3S = 3+ spades, GI
- 3NT = To play, shows a stopper in clubs and shortness in the majors
- 4H = To play
- 4S = To play

Note: Similar bids are used if partner opens 1D and the responder bids 2H*.

Let's look at a few examples of these bids:

Opener	Responder	Bidding:	1D	2H*
10	KJxxx		P	
KJxx	Qxxxx			
Axxx	x			* = Must be alerted
KJxx	xx			

Opener	Responder	Bidding:	1D	2H*
A32	KJ1097		4S	P
A6	Q743			
AQJ83	1075			* = Must be alerted
A42	5			

Opener	Responder	Bidding:
x	Axxxx	1D 2H*
AQJx	K10xx	2NT 3D**
AJxx	x	4H P
KQ10x	Jxx	* = Must be alerted
		3D** = 5-4, maximum

Let's look at a complete hand.

Q84	Dealer: West
KJ85	
642	1D (P) 2H* (P)
976	4S All Pass

A32	KJ1097	*Must be alerted = 5S/4H, 6-10 HCP
A6	Q743	
AQJ83	1075	
A42	5	

65
1092
K9
KQJ1083

West opens the hand with 1D, planning to rebid 2NT (18/19 HCP) at his next bidding opportunity. When his partner bids 2H* showing 5 spades and 4 hearts and 6-10 HCP, he should bid 4S with his hand. He knows his partner has five spades. The end result was 4S making 7 for a score of 96% on the board.

NOTE: Reverse Flannery bids are on even if your partner were a passed hand.

NOTE: Many times when your partner opens with 1C/1D, the next player makes a takeout double. The following bids are operational:

1m (X) 2H* Reverse Flannery, weak

1m (X) 2S* Reverse Flannery, invitational

In Conclusion:

Responding to a minor suit opening with both majors usually goes well when partner rebids notrump, showing a balanced hand. But often when we have the major suits, partner will have the minor suits. The hand will become difficult to describe while keeping the auction low (especially if the responder has limited values). **Reverse Flannery** allows the responder to deal with these problem hands.

Assignment: South is the dealer. How would you bid the following hand?

Axx
Kxxx
AKx
AKx

KQxx
AQJxx
xx
xx

Last Week's Assignment: North is the dealer. How would you bid the following hand?

KQx	2C	2D
A	3D	4D*
AKQxxx	4S**	5C***
KQ	5S****	6D
Axxx		
Jxxx		
Jxxx		
x		

4D* = Minorwood, asking for key cards

4S** = shows 0/3 key cards

5C*** = queen ask; outside king ask

5S**** = shows queen of diamonds and king of spades

NOTE: South cannot bid 4NT to ask for the queen of diamonds as 4NT = signoff

Next Week: Defensive Unblocking