

Mini-Roman

The mini-roman is a variation on a convention referred to as the Roman bid. The difference is that the original bid required 17+ HCP. The mini-roman only requires the bidder to have the 11-15 HCP for an Mini-Roman opening bid.

To use this convention the partnership is required to 'give-up' the weak 2♦ bid, which is in my opinion a very poor and usually unsuccessful opening bid (showing a weak hand and a long minor presents an opportunity for the opponents to find a fit in a major and in a competitive bidding situation the weak 2♦ bidder will generally not get the contract).

Many experts (I am not an expert) consider the distributions required for the mini-roman bid to be limiting; however I view them as very opportunistic in the sense that having either 4441 or 5440 distribution (the distributions promised by the bid) provides an excellent chance that the partnership can find a 4-4 or better fit with very little risk. Thus the mini-roman conditions are: 11-15 **HCP** and either 4441 or 5440 distribution. With this holding the opening bid (or jump over-call) is an **alert-able** 2♦. If asked about the alert – say “it’s a 3-suited hand with opening points” Note the HCP requirement – not Playing Points.

The Responder has two options (neither of which is PASS, because the 2♦ is conventional)

(1) OPTION 1: Weak hand (no interest in looking for game) is shown by bidding up the line showing his first 3-Card suit 2♥ or 2♠ or 3♣ or 3♦.

In the case that Responder's suit is the opener's void or singleton Opener corrects to next higher suit

- 3-
- (a) If the Responder holds 3 or more of that suit the bid is PASS (partnership plays a 2-level or level contract in a 7+card fit)
 - (b) If Responder holds fewer than 3 in that suit he corrects to his best minor (3♣ or 3♦) and opener passes.

(2) OPTION 2: Invitational (or better) hand: (10+ HCP) bid 2NT which asks opener to bid his short suit

If after Opener bids short suit the response reveals 8+ card fit:

a) with 10-12 PP bid that suit at 3 level

Opener can advance bid to Game Level with appropriate points.

b) with 13+PP bid that suit at 4 level

Note: unless Responder holds a 4333 distribution where the 4-card suit is the opener's singleton* an 8-card fit is practically automatic.

Important: Opener with minimum hand PASS 3-level bid. Remember reaching game is not always the object; the 2♦ bid is like a preemptive 2-level bid – it makes it harder for the opponent to enter the bidding; in this case it is constructive in the sense that it makes finding a fit less than hit or miss. Most important, it impeccably describes your hand.

(3) OPTION 2 – extended: Game Forcing response (13+ HCP): 2NT – same as Invitational hand

Opener bids short suit (same as before) now Responder has more options

- (a) With 2 stoppers in short suit bid Responder can bid 3NT or
- (b) Choose appropriate game contract
- (c) Continue with standard slam attempt methods

Caveat: What happens if Responder holds a (6+) long suit in opener's short suit?

- (1) Responder can choose to play in 7+ card fit in that short suit, or
- (2) start a special control bid process by rebidding that suit

example: 2♦ – P – 2NT – P ← 2NT as always, asks for short suit
3♦ ← diamonds is opener's short suit,

Responder holding: ♠Q, ♥AT9, ♦AKT653, ♣KT8 might choose

- (a) 3NT – knows for sure there are 2 (maybe 3) 7-card fits or with bigger hand
- (b) jump to 4 NT – RKC or Blackwood or
- (c) 4♦ by Responder starts control bidding (note: once control sequence starts 4NT is used as escape (shutout) bid and thus is not in control sequence

CONTROLS are shown as follows:

0 or 4 controls - bid 4♥ (up the line) ← opener showing controls

5 controls bid 4♠

6+controls bid 5♣#

After opener shows controls Responder chooses contract;

CONTROLS ARE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS A= 2, K=1 CONTROL(S)

ex: ♠AK86, ♥K765, ♦A, ♣QT97 – this hand has 6 controls (note controls is a euphemism for (pretty) sure tricks. An **A** is only 1 trick but in any 7-card suit it provides some confidence that there will be another trick available).

* If this happens upon you just remember: 'the gods won't always be on your side'**

**if you feel the gods are never with you: 'don't use mini-roman'

Since 4NT is the escape bid normal RKC or Blackwood becomes unavailable so with partnership agreement a bid of 4♠ by Responder can be RKC or Blackwood

Flannery

Like the mini-roman bid this convention makes use of the 2♦ opening bid to describe a hand that is particularly hard to describe otherwise. Recall that if you hold a hand with 5♥'s and 4♠'s you can not show your 2 suits unless you have a BIG hand. Bidding ♥'s first followed by ♠'s is a reverse showing that hand shape but with 17+ HCP – some say 16+ HCP. So if you have a minimum hand 11-15 and 5♥'s and 4♠'s you can only bid your ♠'s and then 1NT. The Flannery bid to the rescue so if your partnership agreement includes the Flannery convention. Isn't that simple? The hard part comes with the follow-up bids; but it can be simplified a bit if you want to. First the complete Flannery sequence which is prompted by the opening 2♦ which is **alertable!** **The Responder then bids:**

Pass → 6+ ♦'s and a weak hand. It's a signoff bid!

2♥ Natural showing ♥ support and a weak hand

2♠ Natural showing ♠ support and a weak hand

2NT* – strong and artificial asking for further description of opener's hand

3♣ Natural showing 6+ ♣'s and a weak hand. Another signoff bid!

3♦ showing 6/7+ ♦'s and invitational!

3♥ Natural showing ♥ support and invitational!

3♠ Natural showing ♠ support and invitational!

3NT – Natural – Signoff bid!

4♣ is a Transfer to ♥'s i.e. Opener plays the hand

4♦ is a Transfer to ♠'s i.e. Opener plays the hand

4♥ Natural Responder plays the hand

4♠ Natural Responder plays the hand

After 2NT asking Response:

3♣ shows 5-4-3-1 i.e. ♣ singleton

3♦ shows 5-4-1-3 i.e. ♦ singleton

3♥ shows 5-4-2-2 shape with minimum hand (i.e. 11-12 HCP)

3♠ shows 5-4-2-2 shape with maximum hand (i.e. 13-15 HCP)

3NT shows 5-4-2-2 shape both minors stopped

4♣ shows 5-4-4-0 i.e. ♣ void

4♦ shows 5-4-0-4 i.e. ♦ void

Pretty complicated huh! Here's where [we](#) can simplify just bid your singleton or void at the 3-level, i.e. 3♣ or 3♦.

Note that after the 2NT ask bid any bid of 3♠ or better can be considered game force and slam interested!

Mexican 2♦

This is probably the least desirable of the popular options for replacing the weak 2♦ bid. Opening 2♦ when you use this convention says you have 18-19 HCP and No Trump Distribution possibly with a weak 5-card Major. Since you shouldn't open 1NT with 18 or 19 HCP this takes the place of that bid. The reason this is the least desirable is that we have other means for showing that point range we shouldn't need a special bid to show it. In any case the bid asks for partner's point range. The responses are geared to show point range and also, in notrump fashion, transfer declarer-ship when appropriate. Here's the meanings of the expected responses:

Pass → 6+ ♦'s and 0-4 HCP It's a signoff bid!

2♥ transfer to ♠'s with 0-4 HCP , responder passes or rebids 3♣ or 3♦

2♥ transfer to ♠'s with 5-6 HCP , responder rebids 2NT

2♠ transfer to 2NT with 0-4/6 HCP responder rebids Pass

2♣ transfer to 2NT with 7+ HCP responder rebids 3NT

2NT show balanced 10+ HCP (looking for slam)