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Michaels and Unusual NT Notes

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2-Suited Hands

When we have an unbalanced 2-suited hand that has at least 5-5 distribution, we strive to compete in the bidding. With a minimum hand (about 5-11 HCP), we want to do this ASAP – “*Get into and out of the auction as quickly as possible.*” That means we want to find a way to show both of our 5-card suits as quickly as possible. We will use some gadgets to help us show these weak and shapely hands immediately, before the auction gets too high. We will discuss two useful conventions - *Michaels* and *Unusual Notrump*. Think of these bids as preempts with two suits (at least 5-5) instead of just one long suit.

Michaels - Both Majors OR Major & Minor 2-Suiter, 5-11 HCP

- (1♣) 2♣ 5+/5+ in the Majors
- (1♦) 2♦ 5+/5+ in the Majors
- (1♥) 2♥ 5+♠ and a 5+ card minor
- (1♠) 2♠ 5+♥ and a 5+ card minor

What if we have Michaels shape, but stronger hands?

- With 12-15 pts, we overcall our suits naturally. We start by bidding our higher-ranking suit first and bid our lower-ranking suit later if we get a chance.
- With 16+ pts, we can use Michaels as well. This treatment is called “Max-Michaels” and is far less common. When we bid Michaels, partner will always assume we have a “Min-Michaels” (5-11 pts) unless we do something to demonstrate we have this rare maximum hand. This approach is called Min-Max Michaels.

Examples

1♥ 2♥ P 2♠ 16-19 HCP, 6+♠, 5+minor
P 3♠

1♥ 2♥ P 2♠ 16-19 HCP, 5♠, 5+♣
P 3♣



Advancer Asks for the Unknown Minor

If the Advancer does not know both of partner's suits,

- (1♥) 2♥ or
- (1♠) 2♠,

then Advancer can use 2NT to ask the Michaels bidder for the minor suit.

Example

1♥ 2♥ P 2NT
P 3♣

This shows a 2-suited hand with 5+♠ and 5+♣.

Meckstroth Advances (Advanced)

Some players play that they have two ways to ask partner for the "other suit" – minor. If you play this special agreement, then you use both 2NT and 3♣ to determine partner's other suit.

- 3♣ is "Pass or Correct." The Michaels bidder passes with ♣ or corrects to 3♦ with ♦.
- 2NT is an invitational asking bid. 2NT shows a very good hand and asks the Michaels bidder to make a strong bid with a good hand (8+ to 11 pts) or show their side suit with a bad hand (5 to 8- pts.)
- 3♦ is a game try in partner's Major suit.

Unusual NT – The Two Lowest Unbid Suits

We have Michaels available to preempt the bidding with high-ranking suits (Majors or Major-minor).

Now we want to have a way to preempt the bidding with low-ranking suits (minors or minor-♥). This is done with a gadget called the *Unusual Notrump*. This is a direct seat jump to 2NT:

- (1♠) 2NT 5+/5+ minors, 5-11 pts,
- (1♥) 2NT 5+/5+ minors, 5-11 pts,
- (1♦) 2NT 5+♣/5+♥, 5-11 pts,
- (1♣) 2NT 5+♦/5+♥, 5-11 pts.

We are free to define this jump to 2NT as a preempt since we do not need it for a natural call. We overcall 1NT with 15-18 pts and double and then bid notrump with 19+ pts.

Note: We do not use the Unusual NT with strong hands because if we play in game then we are likely to play in 3NT (since we have minors.) In this case we will likely want partner, the player that is long in the opponent's suit, to be the declarer. But if we bid 2NT we will have wrong-sided the contract. Thus, with these strong hands we just overcall our suits naturally.