

THIRD HAND OPENERS AND THE REVERSE DRURY CONVENTION

More important than asking you to memorize or even familiarize yourself with a fun gadget to add to your repertoire, I thought we might address why the Drury convention was invented in the first place.

Why should we open "light" in third seat? Besides the lead direction aspect of your bid, your opening bid will make life difficult for your left hand opponent. He might not be good enough to double and bid his own suit, yet, it's possible that game may be missed if he just makes a simple overcall.

Many hands with 10 points in third seat should be opened if they have one of the following redeeming features:

A strong suit
Convenient rebids
Safe pass of partner's response
Safe Pre-empts
Attractive distributions

Two passes to you. What would you do with these third seat hands?

1. QT9xx, x, AQx, Qxxx
2. KQxxxxx, xx, x, Kxx
3. Kxx, Qxx, AKx, xxxx
4. Kx Qxx, KQx, Jxxxx
5. xx, x, AJTxxx, Qxxx
6. JTxx, AQTxx, xx, xx
7. xxx, KQTxx, KQxx, x

Answers:

1. Open 1♠: This is one where Drury would come in handy
 2. Open 3♠: At equal vulnerability, 4♠ non-vul vs. vulnerable
 3. Open 1♣: if partner responds 1♦ 1♥ or 1♠, just pass.
 4. Pass: No length in majors – do you really want a club lead?
 5. Open 3♦: you have no interest in hearing from partner
 6. Open 2♥: make life difficult for your left hand opponent
 7. Open 1♥: Another hand where Drury would be useful

Be sure to discuss with your partner that in third seat, you tend to be aggressive so that partner will not go crazy.

In fourth seat, partner should follow the Rule of 15 (number of high card points, plus the number of spades...if he reaches 15, he opens the hand; if not, he passes). Drury is ON after a fourth seat major opener.

Now...let's talk about the Drury convention...

There are different ways to play Drury - this is the style which the "pros" believe is the most effective.

REVERSE DRURY CONVENTION

What is it?

Drury is an artificial bid of 2♣ (alertable) response that is used only by a passed hand after partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ in third or fourth seat when responder has at least 3 card support in partner's major and 10+ support points.

Why use it?

In third seat, after two passes, how many of you open with less than an opening hand? As we saw above, many people will bid with as few as 10 points. Drury was designed to help responder find out if partner opened light.

Here's an example...

You are in first seat with the following hand:

♠ Q32 ♥ A64 ♦ KJ1087 ♣ 95

You pass, your left hand opponent passes and partner opens the bidding with 1♠. Without Drury, you have a choice of four possible bids:

1. 3♠ - limit raise - you go down because partner opened light.
2. 2♠ - conservative raise - this time partner has a full opener and you missed a game.

3. 1NT. Partner passes and you get a bad score because everyone else is in their 8 card spade fit.
4. You try to temporize with 2♦. Partner passes and you get an even worse score.

A Drury 2♣ response tells partner right away that you have a limit raise for him, but allows him to play at the two level if he has a minimum hand. If Opener bids anything else but 2 of his major, he is either invitational or wants to hear more about your hand before he sets the contract. If he bids 2 of his major, responder should pass. If he bids 3 of his major, he is invitational, and asking partner to go to 4 if he likes his limit raise (for example, responder has 4 trump and/or a second suit, etc.). If opener bids 2♦, it is an artificial bid; he promises a full opener. Responder further describes his hand. Here is an example:

N	E	S	W
	♠83		♠A52
	♥Q73		♥KJ1092
	♦AJ954		♦32
	♣K54		♣AQ2
	P	P	1♥
P	2♣	P	2♦*
P	2♥**	P	4♥ - All Pass

*This is an artificial bid which tells responder you have a full opener.

**I don't have anything more to tell you, partner.

Since opener has 14 good points, he carries on to game. As it turns out there are only three losers (a spade, a heart and a diamond.).

By the way, ALL bids, starting with the 2♣ bid, are ALERTABLE because each bid has a special meaning.

How about slam bidding?

Let's say you hold the hand shown in the first example:

♠ Q32 ♥ A64 ♦ KJ1087 ♣ 95

The bidding goes:

N	E	S	W
P	P	1♠	P
2♣ ^A	P	3♦	P
4♦ [*]	P	4NT	P
5♦ ^{**}	P	6♠	P
P	P		

Opener's hand: AKJ984 KQ AQ65 3 (Slam is a laydown!)

*Whether partner is exploring for game or slam, you want to encourage by raising diamonds because you love his diamond bid. On the other hand, if partner bids clubs instead, repeat partner's major at the lowest level because you have no help for partner in clubs. Partner sets the contract.

**Showing one ace.

Summary:

After a third seat or fourth seat 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid and a 2♣ Reverse Drury bid:

2♦: An artificial rebid promising full opening values. Forcing to at least the two level of opener's major.

Original suit at the two level: Shows minimum values and does not promise any additional length in the original suit. Responder should pass.

2♥ after opening 1♠: This rebid denies full opening values but promises at least a 4-card heart suit. May be passed or corrected to spades.

3♣,♦ or 3 of the other major: Second suit, exploring for slam. Forcing to at least game.

Original suit at the three level: No second suit, but is almost there – inviting partner to go to game if he likes his limit raise (has 4 trump and/or a second suit, for example). Invitational.

Now let's look at a hand with minimum values:

♠ K102 ♥ AK962 ♦ 43 ♣ 972

You open the bidding in third seat with 1♥, partner bids 2♣ (Alert!). Opener has nothing further to say and repeats his major at the 2 level. End of story. If the opponents decide to compete at the three level, it is up to partner to decide whether to compete at the three level. You have said your all.

What if there is competition (someone overcalls partner's third-seat major opener)?

Be sure to discuss this with your partner. My recommendation is that you play Reverse Drury ON over a double and a bid of 1♠.

Drury is not an essential convention such as Stayman or Blackwood. It requires memorization and a partner who agrees to play it. And...you need to foul it up at least once. Several years ago, I passed my partner's 2♣ response and she played it in our combined 3 card club suit – disaster! The good news is that I now perk up my ears whenever I hear a 2♣ bid.