

Karose! 2D

Karose! 2D is a bidding system devised by Charles L. L. Dalmás
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In German, the word for the suit "diamonds" in a card game is Karo; therefore, this bidding system (based on an opening bid of 2 diamonds) is called Karose! as a play on words. The system is designed to handle awkward point distribution as an opening bidder. The system has been in use since approximately July 2000. It has been used at both sectional and major regional tournaments; it is tournament director approved (and upheld by the Laws, which state that an opening bid of 2D can be "a strong hand"). The convention was published in its original form in the ACBL Bridge Bulletin

Most pairs today open the bidding at 1NT with a point range of 15-17. Some open 1NT with a 5 card major, and some don't. Puppet Stayman and other conventions allow players to open the bidding with unusual shapes. Most pairs also don't bid 2NT as an opening bid unless they have at least 20 points. Some pairs open a strong 2C with as little as 19 HCP, but most pairs use the strong 2C to show about 22 or more points, or 8 quick tricks. That leaves a point range of 18-19 with no clear bid to show opener's strength. The usual treatment is to open the hand 1 of a major with 5 of that major, or 1 of the better minor with the intention of bidding 2NT at the next opportunity. This works well if the opponents don't bid, but if the opener's LHO bids 2NT unusual, then you're sunk, and you will have a tough time finding the proper contract. Over the 1NT opening, you have Lebensohl or another convention to deal with interfering bidding; however, if you have to open a 19 point hand 1 of a suit, you don't have that luxury. If the LHO bids at the three level or higher, then there are few ways to show your strength. You could cue bid after a negative double by partner, but partner still would only know that you had a strong hand. There would be information lacking. The Karose! 2D bid is designed to fit this 18-19 point niche. The sequence of bidding would therefore be:

15-17 points, 1NT
18-19 points, Karose! 2D
20-22 points, 2NT
23+ points or 9 tricks, 2C strong

There is no way for a system to cover all the possible distributions, so Karose! 2D is limited to hands with no worse than 7-2-2-2 distribution (no singleton, and no void) and exactly 18 or 19 HCP. If you have a void or singleton you can still open 1 of a suit and respond accordingly based on what partner says (see Carriage, below). This gives your partner the advantage of knowing whether or not you have a strong hand with distribution, or a balanced strong hand. As with all strong opening bids, the opener's partner becomes captain.

Karose! Basics

There are twelve responding bids to a Karose! 2D opening, eleven of which are covered in "The Basics." The 3NT response is covered below in the advanced section. Granted, this is a lot of bids to remember, but they cover almost all possible situations. The responses are as follows:

Pass - Responder passes with a 5 card diamond suit and nothing else (usually less than 3 points)

2H - Negative. Shows 0-5 points. This bid forces the 2D opener to bid 2NT to play unless the opening bidder has a 6 card suit, which he bids if prudent.

2S - This bid is used as minor suit stayman, exactly as if it were over a 1NT opening. Here, it shows at least 5-4 distribution in the minors and 6+ points. It is game forcing and shows strong slam interest.

2NT - This bid shows a two suiter in the majors. Opener chooses a major by bidding 3H or 3S. Responder is then free to bid game if he so chooses (or invite for slam if he is strong enough).

3C - This bid is Puppet Stayman, exactly as if opener bid 2NT. Since you can open Karose! 2D with a 5 card major, it works the same way. Opener bids his 5 card major if he has one, or 3D without one. If opener denies a 5 card major, responder bids 3S with 4 hearts, 3H with 4 spades, or 3NT with two 4 card majors.

3D - This is a transfer to hearts. It shows at least three points and 5 trump. After the transfer, the opener's partner can bid 4S to initiate Roman Keycard Blackwood 1430 (Sometimes called Redwood). Opener's partner needs 13 or more distributional points to do this. This 4S bid is a very strong slam invitation. Otherwise, responder can either bid 3NT or 4H or cue bid looking for slam without the aforementioned 13+.

3H - This is a transfer to spades that works exactly the same way as a 3D transfer to hearts, except the RKC 1430 bidder uses 4NT.

3S - Sometimes, you have a good supporting hand that just is not good enough to invite slam. With a balanced hand and good 5 - a bad 11 points, you bid 3S. This forces the Karosel 2D opener to bid 3NT to play.

3NT - See below

4C - This is Gerber. Responder needs 13 or more distributional points. This bid is slam forcing, usually in NT.

4D - This is a Texas transfer to hearts. Responder must have six trumps to make this bid. It is obviously a game force, and shows some possible slam interest. With a good hand, responder can explore for or bid the slam over the transfer.

4H - This is a Texas transfer to spades that works exactly the same way as the 4D Texas transfer.

Karosel Over Interference

Those are the bids that the Karosel 2D side makes with no interference. Usually, though, good pairs will interfere to gum up the works. Lebensohl solves most of these interference problems the same way as it does over a 1NT opening.

Lebensohl is on over 2H and 2S. Since the Karosel 2D opening bid is stronger than a 1NT opening, the Karosel 2D bidder's partner only needs three points to use the 2NT Lebensohl response. With 5 or more points, responder will double to show a desire to play 3NT (or another game) if the interfering bid is 2H or 2S. 2D opener then bids 3NT with a stopper in the enemy suit (or suits if the overcall is conventional, e.g. Cappalletti). Without a stopper, any call made by 2D opener is natural (including a penalty pass). Responder is then free to bid 3NT with a stopper.

Over any other interfering bid, a double is the same as takeout for the unbid suits, i.e. asking for clarification of opener's hand. With a desire to play a suit contract, opener bids that suit; otherwise opener will simply bid the cheapest NT with a stopper in the enemy suit (or suits if the overcall were conventional). Opener also has the option of making a penalty pass.

With values and a long suit (6+), the responder will bid a Lebensohlish NT at the cheapest level indicating an unbalanced hand. For example, over a 3H interfering bid, 3NT would not be directly to play (who's got the stopper?), it would ask opener to bid 4C, which responder would pass with a desire to play clubs, or correct as necessary. With stoppers in the opponent's suit, the opener may pass responder's 3NT ("Who's got the stopper?" judgment call). The concept of direct denies also applies in all cases (stayman for the unbid major and denying a stopper in the enemy suit).

If there is any overcall at all and responder has a near or total yarborough, he passes. 2D opener is then free to pass, bid, or double the opponent's as he sees fit.

Sometimes, an opponent will either have a huge hand as well, or feel lucky, and will double your Karosel 2D bid. In this case, responder will redouble with 3 or more points. Opener will then bid suits naturally or penalty pass.

There are also times when LHO doubles and partner has nothing. With a near or total yarborough, opener's partner passes the double. In this case, all other agreements are off. The pair then shifts to rescue mode. Rescue mode works like this: If opener's RHO bids, opener passes. If the opener's RHO does not bid, opener bids a 5 card suit at the cheapest level. If the RHO has not bid and opener has no 5 card suit, he redoubles. If opener's LHO then penalty passes, opener's partner bids his longest suit, or the better of two suits if equal length. Obviously, if opener's LHO bids, opener's partner passes.

In short, Karosel 2D offers a partnership the ability to handle hands too strong for 1NT but not strong enough for either 2NT or a strong 2C. It is easier to find the right contract using the responses listed above. Also, if a person opens 1D and then raises to 2NT, it tells the person's partner one of the following: opener has a singleton or void (see Carriage below). Partner can make better informed decisions if he knows possible distributions of opener's hand.

Karosel Advanced Rebids and cuebids

Now that we've discussed Karosel basics both with and without interference, it's time to get into the possibilities with each response.

=== Response #1 - The Pass ===

Well, there's not much to say here. If responder has nothing but a 5 card diamond suit, there's not much point in going any higher with the 2H 0-5 response. Such a hand would be:

S - x x
H - 10 x x

D - x x x x x
C - Q x

The pass is limited to 0-3, and a bad three at that. A King is good enough to bid 2H as a transfer to 2NT. A Q-J is not. If responder has 5+ cards in a suit other than diamonds, he uses the 2H response, even if a Yarborough.

=== Response #2 - The 2H Negative ===

This response is only slightly better than the Pass. Even with a total Yarborough 4-3-3-3, responder makes this bid. It encompasses any holding up to and including a crappy 5 points. "Crappy" is defined as kingless (all quacks). After the 2H response, opener has three options. With six hearts, opener passes. With six of something else, opener bids that suit as a drop dead bid (either 2S, 3C, or 3D). With no six carder, opener bids 2NT. After a 2NT bid by opener, if responder has a six card minor (with at least a king in his hand if bidding diamonds), he bids them as a drop dead bid, as well.

=== Response # 3 - 2S, Minor Suit Stayman ===

This response has grown in the last months to more than the simple 6+ points looking for a minor suit slam. Responder still needs at least 6 points to make this bid, but it's his rebid that makes a difference. After responder bids 2S, opener denies a four card major with 2NT. Responder then has the option to bid 3C, 3D, 3NT, or a major suit at the 3 level as a cue bid. Bidding 3C denies any major suit stoppers and asks opener to pass with minimum club support and no major suit stoppers, cue bid with a stronger club tie in and a major suit feature, bid 3D with diamond support and no major suit stoppers, or bid 3NT with major suit stoppers. Bidding 3D denies any major suit stoppers and asks opener to pass with minimum diamond support, cue bid with a stronger diamond tie in and a major suit feature, or bid 3NT with major suit stoppers. If responder bids 3NT straight up, he guarantees one major suit stopper but denies further slam interest.

If opener shows a four card minor, any bid by responder in a suit other than the now agreed trump suit is a first round control bid in search of the minor suit slam (or no trump with major suit stoppers). Even if opener denies a four card minor, responder can still cue bid with extreme shape (6-6-1, 6-5-2, 7-5-1, or even 7-6). The following hand would qualify to cue bid 3S:

S - Void
H - 2
D - K J 8 6 5 4
C - Q 10 7 5 3 2

It only has the bare minimum 6 HCP, but opposite a mere 18 such as:

S - Q 5 4
H - A K 10 7 5
D - A 6
C - A J 9

6C is a rock, and 7C is on if the KC is onside.

Also, opener can simply cue bid after minor suit stayman if he, too has the proper hand. For example, with:

S - A Q
H - K 5
D - K Q 10 8 5
C - A 9 7 4

Opener can cue bid 3S because of the massive fit in either minor. Again, give responder:

S - 5 3 2
H - 8
D - A J 6 2
C - K J 7 5 3

And slam in either minor suit is a foregone conclusion.

Further, even if opener denies a four card minor and responder bids 3C, opener has the option to cue bid looking for a slam. Such a hand might be:

S - K 8 4
 H - A K Q 7 5
 D - K 10
 C - K 8 2

A 3H cue bid makes perfect sense here since 1) it doesn't go past 3NT, and 2) gives responder the chance with the following 9 count:

S - 3 2
 H - 4
 D - A 9 8 6
 C - A J 9 7 4

To bid 6NT on the club hook (diamond losers go away on KQ of hearts) since the presumed spade lead doesn't hurt one bit.

Lastly, in any instance, a bid of 3NT after a minor suit stayman response by either person (even if a cue bid is shown), is to play.

=== Response #4 - 2NT "Pick a Major, Partner" ===

This bid shows at a minimum a very good 5-4 major two suiter. More often, it will show 5-5 or better. It asks partner to bid his better major at the 3 level. Opener will sometimes, though, have a hand with two major suit doubletons. In this instance, opener bids 3NT to play.

If responder is very strong (12-13+), he has the option to bid 6NT. After opener picks a major, though, responder has the option to 1) pass with less than 6 points, 2) bid game with 6+, or 3) cue bid/ace ask for the major suit slam.

=== Response #5 - 3C Puppet Stayman ===

This bid shows a major suit preference, but doesn't deny the ability to effectively play 3NT, either (as the 2NT bid above does). Usually, the maximum major suit distribution is 4-4 for the responder. Also, as usual, any cue bid after setting the trump suit is to look for slam.

=== Responses #6 and #7 - 3D and 3H Transfers ===

These responses are identical to 2D and 2H over 1NT as described above in the "Basics." Cue bids below game are Help Suit Game Tries. Cue bids above game are for slam.

=== Response #8 - 3S "Let's play 3NT, partner!" ===

Nothing special here. This bid shows a good 5 (KQ or better) to a bad 11 (no slam interest) and is basically a transfer to 3NT.

=== Response #9 - 3NT "I have at least a seven bagger. Looking for slam." ===

3NT by responder is asking if opener has any aces since responder has at least a seven bagger headed by the A-K-Q. The idea is to find the proper slam if the partnership has enough controls (without the requisite HCP) or to pass the 3NT bid without anything extra. With no aces, Karosel opener passes. Opener bids 4C with anything else. This is a forced response and is artificial. It asks clarification of responder's hand. Responder's next bid shows the seven card suit promised by the 3NT bid:

4D = hearts
 4H = spades
 4S = clubs
 4NT = diamonds

This 3NT response differs from the normal transfer bids (3D/3H/4D/4H) in that it indicates a much stronger hand (the solid seven bagger and possible outside values).

Cue bids after transfer acceptance are for slam, either in responder's long suit or NT.

It is not required, however, that opener accept the transfer. For example, with a seven card suit himself, opener can simply bid 7NT with stoppers. Or, if opener has a long suit of higher rank than responder, he has the option of bidding that suit at the 5 level.

With something like, opener can simply bid the 7NT:

S - A 5
H - J 6
D - A 10
C - A K Q 7 4 3 2

Opener can also bid what he thinks the partnership can make.

=== Response #10 - 4C Gerber "Slam, here we come!" ===

This bid shows a more conventional push to the NT slam, promising at least a very good 12 (A, A, A or A Q, A Q with many high spots), but more likely 13+. It is slam forcing. This bid shows a more balanced hand than the 3NT response which shows a "one suit source of tricks."

=== Responses #11 and #12 - 4D and 4H Texas Transfers ===

These bids are exactly the same as if opener said 1NT instead of Karosel 2D.

The 2NT adjunct ("Carriage")

The 2NT adjunct is called Carriage (short for Karosel Adjunct, or Kar-adj). In any event, it is a variant of the 2NT rebid by opener. If opener bids 1 of a suit and responder bids one of a suit, 2NT traditionally shows 18+ points (this is the bidding sequence Karosel replaces). Carriage has a very specific meaning. A rebid of 2NT by opener on the following auctions:

1C-1D-2NT
1D-1H-2NT
1H-1S-2NT
1C-1H-2NT
1D-1S-2NT
1C-1S-2NT

shows an 8 trick hand that contains a singleton or void, six cards or better in the suit opened, and not enough tricks in hand to simply open 2C. The following is a perfect Carriage hand:

S - 8
H - A 6 4
D - A K Q 8 7 5
C - A 5 2

This sequence is basically a "mini-2C." After the 2NT rebid, 3C is now the "waiting" bid (5-9 HCP). There is no bust response since responder responded in the first place. 3NT by responder is the "positive response," showing 10+ points. In either case, any bid by opener in a suit other than his already shown six bagger shows his singleton or void and asks for a stopper in that suit (for either 3NT if responder has 5-9 or a NT slam if responder has 10+). If responder has a stopper (the ace, or K-x-x only), he bids either the cheapest NT available with K-x-x or the suit in question with the ace. If not, he either bids game in opener's long suit or cue bids looking for the suit slam in opener's long suit. If opener's singleton or void is clubs, he bids 3NT after the 3C waiting bid. This 3NT bid is like Lebensohl. Responder cannot pass without a club stopper (again, either the A or K-x-x only). After responder shows the ace/K-x-x in opener's singleton/void, opener can also bid game, slam, cue bid, or anything he wants.

The only difference to Carriage is if opener's suit is spades. If this is the case, unless responder supports spades, with 5-9 HCP he bids 1NT. Opener's rebid of 2NT here means exactly the same thing (indicating a spade six bagger and a singleton or void somewhere). If instead opener has a normal hand but wants to invite 3NT, he bids whichever minor he holds with 3 or more cards. With two minors of three cards or more, he bids the longer of the two. With 10+ HCP, responder simply bids a new suit at the two level. In this case, opener bids 3NT right away to show a Carriage hand. Responder then has the option to pass, bid the spade game, or cue bid looking for slam.