

Constructive Raises

A modified version of Stayman

By Mick Riccio

dynamick747@gmail.com



Some people play that an immediate raise to the 2 level of partner's open of 1 of a major (1♥ or 1♠) shows support with 5-9 or 5-10 evaluation points. You must agree that 9 or 10 evaluation points is far better than 5 or 7 HCP. Of course, with 4 trump and 10 evaluation points one should make a limit raise.

Many people today want to be able to distinguish between a raise to the two level which shows 5-7 evaluation points and one that shows 8-10 with support for partner opening major. One method of showing this is to implement the Constructive raise. Not all bridge players are a fan of this technique, so if it does not appeal to your partnership, do not implement it. I happen to like it.

For example:

Hand 1:

Partner: 1♥ (Opponents are passing)

You hold: ♠A653 ♥Q42 ♦753 ♣652

Clearly this can likely guarantee 1 Trick.

Hand 2:

Partner: 1♥ (Opponents are passing)

You hold: ♠AK53 ♥Q42 ♦7532 ♣65

It must be clear that this hand could likely deliver 3 tricks, but it is shy of a limit raise. The difference between Hand 1 and Hand 2 is huge. The difference between 1 trick and 3 tricks is ENORMOUS.

Hand 2 above is considered CONSTRUCTIVE, while Hand 1 is not considered constructive. I think you can see why.

This means that with 5 - 7 HCP and support, partner must bid 1NT. This bid is now FORCING. Opener must show a sixth Heart by rebidding Hearts or begin bidding 3+ card minor suits up the line, as in Two over One. Responding partner now bids 2 Spades to show the poorer hand.

Hand 1:

You hold: ♠A653 ♥Q42 ♦753 ♣652

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	

As in any other technique, once in a while, 1NT turns out to be the best contract, but you cannot play there. It does not happen very often. Actually, it happens less than 20% of the time.

What about **Hand 2**:

You hold: ♠AK53 ♥Q42 ♦7532 ♣65

In this case one should make an immediate and constructive raise.

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

In general, the first pattern (bidding NT first) shows support with 5-7 evaluation points. (Sometimes only a doubleton honor in Hearts). This is a poor hand, with responder trying to slow the opener down.

The second pattern shows a good raise for Opener's major, usually 8-10 HCP but shy of a limit raise.

Let's consider an added blessing:

If the bidding goes:

1♠ by your partner in first seat, DOUBLE by your RHO, an immediate raise to 2♠ by you is now a poor hand with support. To show a constructive raise in Spades you would bid 2♥. (This is called 1 under constructive). You must alert this bid.

1♥ by your partner in first seat, DOUBLE by your RHO, an immediate raise to 2♥ by you is now a poor hand with support. To show a constructive raise in Hearts, you would bid 2♦. This is called "One Under Constructive". You must alert this bid.

It is advisable to raise to 2 of partner's major even when vulnerable with as little as 3 points and 3-4 of partner's major when your RHO doubles. This is good bidding technique. The following are examples of various raises

Constructive Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	2♥	

Non-Constructive Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	

One Under Constructive Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	X	2♦	

May Be Junk

North	East	South	West
1♥	1♠	2♥	

Limit Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	1♠	2♠	

Limit Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	X	2NT	

Preemptive Jump Raise

North	East	South	West
1♥	1♠	3♥	

A constructive raise shows 8-10 HCP, whereas a non-constructive raise shows fewer points. One under constructive bids show a constructive raise in partner's major following a double by your RHO. Immediate raises to opener's major following a double show support with few HCP. A cuebid of your RHO's suit after partner opens 1♥ or 1♠, shows a limit raise. Bidding 2NT when your partner opens with a major, 1♥ or 1♠ and RHO Doubles, shows a limit raise. (Some people call it Jordan).

This leaves a jump to the three level following opener's 1♥ or 1♠, and RHO either bids a suit or doubles, to show a weak hand with at least 4 trump.