

♠♥♦♣ INVITATIONAL CHECKBACK ♠♥♦♣

Two-way checkback is a convention designed to uncover major suit fits, whether the responder has an invitational or a game forcing hand.

Your partner opens 1♦ and the opponents are silent.

S	South
♠	A9875
♥	Q106
♦	832
♣	A10

Your first priority is to search for a major suit fit. You respond 1♠ and partner rebids 1NT. It's back to you. Checkback is used by the responder when the opener makes a limited rebid of 1NT. He is saying he has between 12 and 14 total points and a hand that would have opened 1NT, but was too weak.

When responder has an invitational hand or better, he can "check back" to find out if his partner has three spades. If so, spades would serve as a trump suit. Most players use New Minor Forcing for this purpose. Two-way checkback has the advantage of separating invitational response hands from game forcing hands.

With 10 HCP and a 5-card suit, you have a hand that can play in game if partner is at a maximum or part score if he is at the minimum. The hand can be played in spades if partner has three. (He doesn't have four, because he didn't raise your response). If he doesn't have three spades, notrump is the desired strain.

The invitational form of checkback begins with your rebid of 2♣. All invitational hands begin with the 2♣ rebid. With 13 or more points, you would rebid a game forcing 2♦. In this form of checkback, the responder tells his partner about his hand. He is very limited in strength, between a good 10 to a bad 12 points. Therefore, the opener makes an artificial "relay" bid of 2♦. Now you describe your hand. If you have only a 5-card spade suit, you rebid spades. If you also have a 4-card heart suit, you rebid 2♥. If you only have a 4-card spade suit, you rebid 2NT. Your partner places the contract; either in spades or notrump – at game or part score.

This is how the bidding should proceed using two-way checkback.

North	South
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣!
2♦!	2♠
3NT	Pass

Both the 2♣ and the 2♦ bids are alerted.

North is the declarer. Take over for him. The opening lead is the ♥2.

S	South
♠	A9875
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East leads ♥ 2

N	North
♠	32
♥	A84
♦	KQJ96
♣	K42

You have 4 top tricks and you can get 4 more from diamonds, once the ♦ A is knocked out. The additional needed trick will have to come from hearts.

It pays to spend a little time analyzing the opening lead. You are going to have to decide whether to duck it or win it. With standard leads, East is showing a 4-card heart suit. That means they cannot get more than 3 heart tricks, which along with the ♦ A will not set you. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to duck.

You want to play low from dummy and see what West plays. This will guide you to how you will play the hearts.

West puts up the ♥ K. What does that tell you? Since the defenders have only 2 heart honors, the ♥ J must head East's 4-card suit. This confirms that you should win the first heart with the ♥ A and finesse against the "known" ♥ J in East. You now have 3 hearts, 1 spade, 4 diamonds and 2 club tricks – 10 in total.

This is the entire deal:

D	N undefined	W	N	E	S
1	♠ 32			1♦ P	1♣
	♥ A84			P 1NT P	2♣
	♦ KQJ96			P 2♦ P	2♣
	♣ K42			P 3NT P	P
				P	
W undefined		E undefined			
♥ Q106		♠ KJ4			
♥ K73		♥ J952			
♦ A54		♦ 107			
♣ Q976		♣ J853			
	S undefined				
	♠ A9875				
	♥ Q106				
	♦ 832				
	♣ A10				
				3NT N	NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yck4279u>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.

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