*Is 2♥ forcing or not forcing in this auction:*

*1♣ - 1♠
1N - 2♥*

If this pair plays NMF, 2♥ is 100% non-forcing. For all other pairs, 2♥ should be nonforcing, but invitational.

The reason NMF players use 2♥ as non-forcing is because all invitational and FG hands can be bid via NMF. Say responder is 54xx, invitational. The auction will go:

1♣ 1♠ or 1♣ 1♠ or 1♣ 1♠ and so on…
1N 2♦ 1N 2♦ 1N 2♦
2♥ P 3♥ 4♥ 2N P

The same logic applies to game forcing hands – responder can simply bid game now. It becomes redundant to use a direct 2♥ response as invitational or more, so it is quite logical to use it as a “pick a partscore” bid. Opener may have 3♠ or 4♥ with the 1N rebid, and either 2♥ or 2♠ may play much better than 1N.

This issue is a little more complicated for people who don’t play NMF. Now there is no “one bid” to deal with invitational and game forcing hands.

Consider this hand as responder:

♠KJTxx ♥AQJx ♦xx ♣xx

Clearly, responder cannot just bid 4♥ or 4♠ with this hand – several 4-3 fits will be played when 3N was better. Bidding 3♥ (game forcing) keeps the bidding manageable to where 3N, 4♥, and 4♠ can be bid accurately.

What do you bid with this hand with invitational values? It has to be 2♥ - otherwise, several heart partscores/games will be missed after a 2N rebid when opener passes with 4♥s.

Should 2♥ be forcing? No, and for good reason. 2♥ forcing would bring the bidding to an unnecessarily high level opposite a minimum opening. Why play in 3♥ when 2♥ is playable?

The only flaw in this method is that 2♥ can’t be bid simply “to play”. Occasionally, responder must take the risk of playing in game a little short of HCP when the situation calls for it. Holding

♠KJxxx ♥QT9xx ♦x ♣xx

2♥ is the right bid, even if it is invitational. Worst case scenario, 4♥ is played – but opposite a real max, it might just make. More points will be won in the long run by getting to 2♥ when partner passes or converts to 2♠