

Game Tries and New Minor Forcing (December 27, 2021)

Game Try Bids

Previously, I discussed game try bids known as the Rodwell Bids. Your partner has opened either a club or a diamond and you have responded with either a heart or a spade. If the opener raises your heart/spade to the two level, normally, he is indicating four-card support and 12-14 HCP.

If you hold about 11 HCP or a total (adding distribution) of 11/12 points, you want to explore game in the major suit. By using the Rodwell Bids, your partner can signoff in three of the major with a minimum or bid game with a maximum.

For examples, refer to the lesson on Minor Suit Openings (December 6).

Today, I want to focus on game tries when your partner has opened 1H/1S and you have raised him to the two level of the suit. Your bid is known as a **constructive raise showing 3-card support and 7/8 – 10 HCP**.

Should the opener hold about 16 HCP or total points (counting distribution), he can make a major suit game try in a number of different ways. He can make a help suit asking bid; or, he can ask you about the quality of your trump holding.

Help Suit Game Tries:

NOTE: Help suit bids MUST be Alerted.

Your partner has opened 1H and you raise him to 2H. Many players use the following bids:

2S = Asks for help in spades

3C = Asks for help in clubs

3D = Asks for help in diamonds

3H = Asks about the quality of your heart holding

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- 3D = Asks for help in diamonds
- 3H = Asks for help in hearts
- 3S = Asks about the quality of your spade holding

Guidelines for Accepting Help Suit Game Tries

The following guidelines may be of help in deciding whether to signoff at the three-level or to bid game. NOTE: These guidelines assume that the opener has 2-3 losers in the suit in which he is asking if you have help.

You should bid game if:

- You have zero losers in the help suit.
- You have one loser in the help suit.
- You have two losers in the help suit; but, maximum values for a single raise.

You should signoff if you hold two losers in the help suit and minimum values for a single raise.

When your partner is asking about the quality of your heart/spade suit, i.e., 1H-2H-3H, he is saying that the quality of his trump suit is something similar to J10xxx, Q10xxx, KJ9xx, etc. He doesn't need any help outside the trump suit itself. If you hold two of the top three honors in the trump suit, you should bid game.

Let's look at some examples:

| Example 1. Opener | Responder |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 6 | AJ8 |
| AK1053 | 987 |
| KQJ | A763 |
| Q743 | 962 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|
| The bidding: | 1H | 2H |
| | 3C* | 3H |
| | Pass | |

***A help suit game try in clubs**

The responder correctly signs off in 3 hearts. He has no help in the club suit for his partner.

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Example 2. | <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
| | K10 | QJ5 |
| | KJ10632 | Q94 |
| | AK | 65432 |
| | J92 | A5 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|
| The bidding: | 1H | 2H |
| | 3C* | 4H |
| | Pass | |

***A help suit game try in clubs.**

The responder correctly bids 4H. He has help for his partner in the club suit.

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Example 3. | <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
| | AK6 | J82 |
| | J8532 | 1074 |
| | 3 | KQJ2 |
| | AKJ3 | Q65 |

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| The bidding: | 1H | 2H |
| | 3H* | Pass |

***Asking for the quality of partner's heart suit**

Pass. Responder has no help in the trump suit. If he had held KQ4 in hearts, then he should bid 4H.

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Example 4. | <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
| | AKQ | 982 |
| | KQ975 | 1083 |
| | 532 | QJ |
| | J3 | AK972 |

NOTE: Don't open 1NT with two suits wide open

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|
| The Bidding: | 1H | 2H |
| | 3D* | 4H |

***A help suit game try in diamonds.**

Whenever you hold specifically the QJ doubleton in which your partner is asking for help, use the above **Guidelines for Accepting Help Suit Game Tries**. You may have two losers; but, you have a maximum for your 2H raise. Bid 4H.

Many players are now using a system known as Kokish to make long and short-suit game tries. This system gives them a way to show long suit (help suit) game tries, short-suit game tries, and trump suit game tries. I advise you to focus on the long-suit (help suit) game tries and trump suit game tries for now. At a future time, I can present the Kokish game try bidding system to you.

The main advantage to using the Kokish game try bids is that when the opener makes a help suit game try and gets rejected, the defense knows exactly where the declarer's weakness lies. By using the Kokish bids, the opener is asking his partner to tell him in which suit he would accept a game try. Therefore, the defense does not know where the opener may need help.

New Minor Forcing

Using traditional bidding methods, either of the following bidding sequences would illustrate the use of new minor forcing (NMF).

a) 1C 1H
 1NT 2D* (the other minor or “new” minor)

*Bid must be alerted.

b) 1D 1S
 1NT 2C* (the other minor or “new” minor)

*Bid must be alerted.

The NMF bid after a one notrump rebid by the opener is forcing for one round. It promises at least game invitational (GI) values (about 11 or more HCP). It is most frequently used when the responder has a five-card suit. He is trying to find out if his partner has three-card support for his major. If he doesn't, he either rebids 2NT or 3NT depending on the strength of his 1NT rebid (showing 12-14 HCP).

Example 1. 1D 1H
 1NT 2C* (NMF)

Your Hand: Axx AKxxx xxx xx

Your 2C bid is artificial and must be alerted. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to find out if your partner has three hearts and a maximum for his 1NT rebid? The opener can rebid 2H to show three hearts and a minimum hand; 2NT to deny three hearts and a minimum hand; 3H to show 3 hearts and a maximum hand; or, 3NT to deny three hearts and a maximum hand. Another possible rebid is 2S by the opener—denying three hearts but showing four spades. NOTE: The responder could also hold 4 spades in this bidding sequence.

NOTE: NMF is also effective when the responder holds 5S and 4H (after a minor suit opening bid). It is used to ask partner if he has a four card heart suit or three-card spade support in Example 2.

Example 2. 1D 1S
 1NT 2C* (NMF)

Your Hand: AKxxx AQxx x Jxx

In this hand, you have the high card points needed for game after your partner opens the hand. You want to explore for a possible major-suit fit, either 5-3 spade fit or 4-4 heart fit.

The opener can bid 2H to show four hearts; 2S to show 3 spades and a minimum; or, 2NT to show 2 spades and a minimum. A bid of 3S could be used to show three spades and a maximum. Three notrump would show two spades and a maximum.

After the responder has bid NMF, the opener should rebid to further describe his distribution in an attempt to find the best final contract. In most cases, the opener can also show whether he holds a minimum or maximum hand for his rebid of 1NT.

NOTE: On the above hand if you held 11/12 HCP and if you play Reverse Flannery (see August 16th lesson), you can bid 2S over the 1C/1D opening to show 5S/4H and 11/12 HCP. But, you hold 14 HCP in this hand. You KNOW this hand is going to game somewhere.

Example 3. 1D 1S
 1NT 2C* (NMF)
 2H

Opener's Hand: Axx KJxx Q98x Kx

Your first priority is to show 4 hearts. Later, you can show that you also hold three-card spade support, if there is no 4-4 heart fit between the two hands.

Example 4. 1C 1S
 1NT 2D* (NMF)
 2S

Opener's Hand: Kxx Axx Kxx Qxxx

You are showing a minimum hand with three-card spade support.

Example 5. 1D 1H
 1NT 2C* (NMF)
 3H

Opener's Hand: Ax QJx A10xx Kxxx

You are showing a maximum hand with three-card heart support.

Example 6. 1D 1H
 1NT 2C* (NMF)
 2NT

Opener's Hand: K10x Qx K10xx AJxx

Your rebid of 2NT shows a minimum hand and denies 3 hearts or 4 spades. The responder can assume that the opener has a spade stopper for his bid.

Example 7. 1D 1H
 1NT 2C* (NMF)
 3NT

Opener's Hand: K10x Kx K10xx AJxx

Your rebid of 3NT shows a maximum with a spade stopper.

Example 8. 1D 1H
 1NT 2C* (NMF)
 2D

Opener's Hand: xxx Ax KJxxx AQx

Your rebid of 2D shows five plus diamonds with no stopper in spades. Note: at this point you are unable to tell partner whether you have a maximum or a minimum. If he makes another bid, then you need to be in game because you do hold 14 HCP.

Last Week's Lesson: Telling/Asking Bids—Part I

Recall from last week's class that the Western Cuebid is a 3-level cuebid that asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit.

Example 1. Opener Responder
 A10 K8652
 J102 A3
 AK3 J842
 AQ1087 93

The Bidding: Opener Opp 1 Responder Opp 2
 1C (1H) 1S (2H)
 3H* (P) 3NT** All Pass

- * A Western cuebid. Opener has a strong hand; but, lacks spade support. Opener wants to probe for 3NT contract.
- ** Partner's first priority is to bid 3NT with a heart stopper.

Note: You do not have a trump suit agreement; therefore, the 3H bid is an asking bid.

Example 2. Opener Responder
 K4 AQ52
 942 T87
 AK109872 J3
 K AJ92

The Bidding: Opener Opp 1 Responder Opp 2
 1D (P) 1S (2H)
 3D (P) 3H* (P)
 4D All Pass

- * Western Cuebid. 3NT is logical contract if opener has heart control
- **4D denies a heart stopper or spade support.

Western Cuebid Rules

Rule #1. Western Cuebids only occur at the 3-level.

| <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
|---------------|------------------|
| 96 | A52 |
| KQ943 | A1087 |
| A87 | KJ103 |
| K92 | 83 |

The Bidding:

| | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Opener | Opp 1 | Responder | Opp 2 |
| 1H | (1S) | 2S* | |

The 2S bid is a limit raise or better in hearts. NOTE: does not have to be alerted.

Rule #2. Western Cuebids don't replace limit raises.
As a corollary to the example above:

| <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
|---------------|------------------|
| AK965 | QJ107 |
| 74 | K95 |
| A87 | KQ103 |
| K92 | 83 |

The Bidding:

| | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Opener | Opp 1 | Responder | Opp 2 |
| 1S | (2H) | 3H* | |

The 3H bid here is a limit raise or better in spades, not a Western Cuebid.

Rule #3. Western Cuebids are not “jump” cuebids.

| <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
|---------------|------------------|
| 964 | 5 |
| KQ943 | A1087 |
| A87 | KJ103 |
| K9 | AQJ10 |

The Bidding:

| | | | |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Opener | Opp 1 | Responder | Opp 2 |
| 1H | (1S) | 3S* | |

The bid of 3S is a splinter bid in most experience partnerships, showing a singleton or void in spades and slam interest. A jump cuebid is never a Western Cuebid. You have the 2S bid available to show 3+ hearts and a limit raise or better.

Rule #4. Western Cuebids are off if you've agreed on a major suit fit.

| <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
|---------------|------------------|
| A10 | 543 |
| KJ105432 | A98 |
| AQ | K10932 |
| KJ | 102 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| The Bidding: | Opener | Opp 1 | Responder | Opp 2 |
| | 1H | (1S) | 2H | (2S) |
| | 3S | | | |

Your 3S bid shows first round spade control and slam interest. Hearts have already been agreed as trumps; so, this is not a Western Cuebid.

Let's finish the telling/asking cuebids by looking back at an example I presented in the December 6 lesson on Minor Suit Openings.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| The Bidding: | East | South | West | North |
| | (1H) | 2NT | (P) | 3C |

South's Hand: A8 9 KQ872 AKJ76

North takes preference for clubs after South bids the unusual 2NT, showing at least 5/5 in the minors. You have the strong unusual 2NT hand. If your partner has a stopper in hearts, you want to be in 3NT. A bid of 3S might be your best bid. You cannot possibly have a spade suit. It has to be a cuebid of a spade stopper. You are asking your partner to bid 3NT with a heart stopper. You are telling your partner that you do not hold a heart stopper. Perhaps a bid of 3H would be telling your partner that you hold a heart stopper; but denies a spade stopper. I am not certain here.

Recall if the opponents have bid two suits that a three level cuebid by you is a telling bid.

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
| (1H) | P | (1S) | 2C |
| (P) | 3C | (P) | 3S* |

Your Hand: A109 87 K3 AKJ642

Your 3S bid TELLS your partner that you have a stopper in spades. If you had bid 3H, you would be TELLING your partner that you have a heart stopper. Usually a telling bid is made after the opponents have bid two different suits. An asking bid is made after they have bid one suit only.

Assignment: **K106**
 J94
 975
 AQ54

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| A85 | 972 |
| 863 | KQ752 |
| QJ1062 | K3 |
| 93 | 1086 |

QJ43
A10
A84
KJ72

| | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| The Bidding: | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> |
| | (1NT) | P | (3NT) | All Pass |

West leads the queen of diamonds against 3NT and the five of diamonds is played from the dummy.

What do you expect your partner's diamond holding to be?

When your partner leads an honor against a notrump contract, you can expect this to be from a sequence of honors. A queen lead usually will be from a suit headed by the QJ10, QJ9, or (occasionally) AQJ.

What is your plan for defeating this contract?

If you play the 3 of diamonds on the first trick, the declarer will win with his ace and knock out the ace of spades at trick two. When your partner leads a second diamond, you are forced to win with your king of diamonds. You have no more diamonds to return to your partner. Unfortunately, the only entry West had was the ace of spades. Even though all of his diamonds are now ready to cash, he has no entry to his hand.

When you hold a doubleton honor in the suit led by your partner, most of the time you should play your honor. The one instance you would not play the honor would be if the holding in the dummy's hand (i.e., 9xxx) would indicate that by doing so, you will set up a second trick in the suit for declarer.

On this particular deal, you need to play your king of diamonds on your partner's queen of diamonds. South will hold up his ace. You lead your 3 of diamonds. West will win and clear the rest of the suit by playing his highest diamond (suit preference implying a spade entry).

When you play the king at trick one, you are **unblocking in the suit**.
 Refer to the lesson Defensive Unblocking at Bridge (August 23rd).
**When you hold a doubleton honor in the suit led by your partner,
BEWARE OF BLOCKING THE SUIT.**

Bidding over Opponent's Opening Preempt

See Convention Card: Under vs. Opening Preempts, a double is:

Takeout ____ thru ____.

Most players play that a double is takeout through (4H). Thus, a double is a three-suited takeout asking partner to bid one of the other three suits.

| | | |
|------|----|------------------------------|
| (4C) | X | Asks partner to bid 4D/4H/4S |
| (4D) | X | Asks partner to bid 4H/4S/5C |
| (4H) | X | Asks partner to bid 4S/5C/5D |
| (4S) | X | Penalty Double |
| (4S) | 4N | Asks partner to bid 5C/5D/5H |

Recall in the November 22nd lesson, I presented the topic of Leaping Michaels.
 Below are the most common bids:

| | | |
|------|----|-----------------------------|
| (2D) | 4D | 5/5 in majors |
| (2H) | 4H | 5/5 in minors (very strong) |
| (2H) | 4N | 5/5 in minors (very weak) |
| (2S) | 4S | 5/5 in minors (very strong) |
| (2S) | 4N | 5/5 in minors (very weak) |
| (3C) | 4C | 5/5 in majors |
| (3D) | 4D | 5/5 in majors |
| (3H) | 4H | 5/5 in minors (very strong) |
| (3H) | 4N | 5/5 in minors (very weak) |
| (3S) | 4S | 5/5 in minors (very strong) |
| (3S) | 4N | 5/5 in minors (very weak) |

When an opponent preempts at the 5-level, a double is cooperative, meaning that partner can convert the double to a penalty double. If an opponent preempts 5C/5D, normally, the doubler is asking his partner to bid his better major.

January 3, 2022 Lesson: Basic 2/1 bidding, Jacoby 2NT, and Puppet Stayman
NOTE: Gonna be a very long lesson!!!!!!

January 10, 2022 Lesson: Forcing/semi-forcing 1NT Bid
 Recap of the 53 lessons and major points of each lesson
 Play of a final hand and analysis
 Concluding remarks

