LIMIT BIDS & FORCING BIDS



This terms course is designed to recap on basic bidding and to suggest some more precise methods for *intermediate players with regular partners.* **Although limit bids do not necessarily close the auction, they warn partner that any further action should only be taken if they have extra strength that has not yet been shown.**

Strong bids are often limit bids, 'Invitional bids' are actually limit bids. and, weak hands are initially often forcing.

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I CANNOT AFFORD TO BID ANY HIGHER 1.



There are three types of LIMIT BID that tell partner that you have bid as high as you can afford:
1. When you ***return partner to their suit*** - you do so AT THE LEVEL YOU CAN AFFORD
2. When you ***rebid your own suit*** - you do so AT THE LEVEL YOU CAN AFFORD
3. When you bid No Trumps*

In the examples shown below green shows FORCING bids, red shows LIMIT bids.

1. RETURN PARTNER TO THEIR SUIT - AT THE LEVEL YOU CAN AFFORD

W	E
1♥	2♥

One/two that'll do! West should only bid again with 17+ (or a 5 loser.)

W	E
1♥	3♥

Still a limit bid with 10/11pts. (8 loser)

W	E
1♥	1♠
2♣	2♥

Suit preference. East is weak & prefers hearts. Maybe no fit!

W	E
1♥	1NT
2♣	Pass

East has at least ***two more*** clubs than hearts. and only 6-9 pts.

W	E
1♦	1♠
2♥	3♦

West's reverse bid shows 17+pts. East has only 6 ish pts. & no club stop!

2. REBID YOUR OWN SUIT - AT THE LEVEL YOU CAN AFFORD

W	E
1♥	2♣
2♥	

East shows 10 pts. West *could* have four spades but has only 11-13 pts.

W	E
1♥	1♠
2♥	

Not 5/4 so west is likely to have six hearts but not strong. (6 or 7 loser)

W	E
1♥	1♠
2♣	2♠

West has 11-16 pts East rejected both of west suits, so has 6+ spades and 6-9 pts.

W	E
1♦	1NT
2♣	Pass

East has at least TWO MORE clubs than diamonds. 6-9 pts.

W	E
1♦	1♠
3♣	3♠

West's jump shows 17+pts. East has 5/6pts. & 6 spades No heart stop.

3. MOST NATURAL NT BIDS ARE LIMIT BIDS

W	E
1♥	1NT

East does not have four spades, or four hearts. 6-9 pts.

W	E
1♥	1♠
1NT	

West does not have four spades but has 15/16 pts. A limit bid.

W	E
1♣	1♥
1♠	1NT

East has something in diamonds 6-9 pts. A mis-fit!

W	E
1♠	1NT
2♥	3♣

3C is a FULL STOP East has 6/7 clubs and very few pts.

W	E
1♥	1♠
2♦	2NT

East has 4+ spades, a stop in clubs and 11ish pts.

*All the red bids shown above are advising partner that you have reached the limit of what you can afford.
BUT if you are in a GAME FORCING SITUATION e.g. 1♥ - 2♣
2NT - 3♥ shows three hearts ***on the way to game!***

Of course making a LIMIT BID does not necessarily close the auction - but it is a warning that IF partner bids on, s/he does so because of extra strength that s/he hasn't yet had a chance to show.

PARTNER BIDS ON - AFTER PARTNER'S LIMIT BID

W	E
1♥	1NT
2NT limit	

East has 6-9 pts. West has **17/18** to bid on. (Not 15/16)

W	E
1♥	1♠
1NT	4♠

East has six spades and 10-12 pts. West will have at least two!

W	E
1♣	1♠
2♣	2♥ forcing

East has 12+, 5/4 in spades & hearts. 13+ *A responder's reverse.*

W	E
1♥	2♣
2♥	2♠ forcing

2♠ forces west to bid again. (*A responder's reverse.*)

W	E
1♠	2♣
2♦	4♠

West's 2♦ rebid shows five spades. East has 12+ pts. and three spades.

I CANNOT AFFORD TO BID ANY HIGHER 2.

RESPONDER'S LIMIT BIDS

1

W	E
1♥	1NT

East
♠ 1087
♥ 7
♦ Q432
♣ KJ853

6 HCPs and a singleton in partner's suit is not good. Limit your hand using the dustbin bid of 1NT. on a good day west will rebid 2♣ or 2♦ which you can pass!

2

W	E
1♥	*2♥

♠ Q87
♥ 1097
♦ 43
♣ KJ853

Same number of HCPs but with three of partner's suit, the most sensible bid would be 2♥. This limits your hand and although partner will expect four hearts your hearts will be good for ruffing diamonds. (*Only support on three if you have a shortage in another suit!)*

3

W	E
1♥	3♥

♠ QJ7
♥ Q872
♦ 43
♣ KJ98

3♥ is NOT a forcing bid! It describes an 8 loser with 10ish pts. **IF** opener is better than a 7 loser s/he can bid game but west should pass UNLESS they have something extra.

4

W	E
1♥	1NT/2♣

♠ QJ7
♥ Q87
♦ 43
♣ KJ983

Although we recommend that your change of suit at the 2 level will promise 10 HCPs, this is a ***good 9*** with a decent five card suit and three of partner's major. Although 1NT is not wrong, east can afford to make a forcing bid!!

OPENER'S LIMIT REBIDS WITH A MAJOR FIT

5

If east had any interest in a game contract he would do something other than respond 2♥. Do you have anything extra? Well despite the fact that you are a 6 loser, it is not enough to investigate any further PASS!

West
♠ K9
♥ AQ863
♦ 65
♣ A1064

W	E
1♥	2♥
Pass	

6

This time west is a 5 loser.
and is entitled to have one more try for game with a rebid of 3♥. (This guarantees FIVE hearts. but can be passed if responder is a 9/10 loser or has only 5/6 points)

♠ AK
♥ AJ863
♦ 65
♣ A1064

W	E
1♥	2♥
3♥	

7

*On hand 2, east correctly supported on only three hearts.
If you have the hand on the right, with only four hearts your rebid is 2NT to show 17+ and NOT five hearts.
With fewer than 17 pts west should PASS east's limit bid.

♠ A9
♥ AKJ3
♦ K65
♣ Q1095

W	E
1♥	2♥
2NT	

8

East is promising an 8 loser hand with four or more hearts, There may be fewer than 10 HCPs. Do you have anything extra to bid on to game?

♠ K9
♥ AJ63
♦ K65
♣ Q965

W	E
1♥	3♥
Pass	

I CANNOT AFFORD TO BID ANY HIGHER 3.

OPENER'S LIMIT REBIDS



West

1 West has only 11 HCPs but plenty of 'shape'
East's response of 1NT denies four spades and limits the hand to a maximum 9 HCPs. Many would rebid 2♥ but 2♣ would show where 9 of your 13 cards are. Let east decide!

♠ K9 ♥ AJ8632 ♦ 65 ♣ K965

W	E
1♥	1NT
2♣	

2 West has a normal opening hand. It is two suited in hearts & spades. West opens 1♥ but after after a forcing 2♣ response, west is not strong enough to show the spade suit because that would be higher than his rebid barrier of 2♥

♠ KJ94 ♥ AJ863 ♦ 65 ♣ A10

W	E
1♥	2♣
2♥	

3 With a balanced hand and two four card suits of the same rank it is correct to open the lower suit first, then rebid in NTs. East's 1NT response (*6-9 HCPs*) ***denies*** a spade suit and because game cannot be reached, west passes.
West's pass shows a balanced 15/16 pts. .

♠ AK94 ♥ A863 ♦ 65 ♣ A95

W	E
1♥	1NT
Pass	

4 Another case where, because of partner's responding bid, opener cannot show his 2nd suit. West's only rebid is 2♦.
*IF east held the strong grey hand shown, east would not pass west's limit bid, but would make another forcing bid of 2♥.

♠ K9 ♥ AJ63 ♦ KQJ65 ♣ 96

W	E
1♦	1♠
2♦	

*East
♠ AJ942 ♥ KQ54 ♦ A4 ♣ 87

5 East's 1♠ is totally forcing.
West's rebid is a LIMIT BID of 1NT promising a balanced hand with 15/16 HCPs. ***East*** must decide whether game is on. 2♥ or 2♠ from east would close the auction.

♠ KJ ♥ AJ63 ♦ K65 ♣ K965

W	E
1♥	1♠
1NT	

6 Again, east forces with 1♠.
West has already decided that s/he will not rebid higher than 2♥ because that would show a MUCH stronger hand *(17+)*. Fortunately west CAN rebid 2♣ to show five hearts and four clubs and a normal opening hand of 11-16 pts. Non-forcing!

♠ K9 ♥ AK632 ♦ 65 ♣ K965

W	E
1♥	1♠
2♣	

7 13 HCPs with a 5/4 shape. East's response shows 10+ pts. Game looks a distinct possibility! BUT - west does NOT have the 15 pts. required to make a reverse bid of 3♣.
(only 15 needed because partner has shown 10pts.)

♠ K9 ♥ AJ863 ♦ Q5 ♣ K965

W	E
1♥	2♦
2♥	

8 Again a weak opening and east's response of 2♦ means that you cannot show your 2nd suit (*2♠ is over the barrier of 2♥)*
All you can rebid is 2♥. This shows five and limits the hand.

♠ KJ94 ♥ AJ632 ♦ 65 ♣ K9

W	E
1♥	2♦
2♥	

I CANNOT AFFORD TO BID ANY HIGHER 4.

SUIT PREFERENCE BID 1.

♠ 62
♥ AJ743
♦ AQ63
♣ A3

♠ J95
♥ K109
♦ KJ2
♣ K542

N	S
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♥
pass	

♠ A1043
♥ Q52
♦ 874
♣ Q109

♠ KQ87
♥ 86
♦ 1095
♣ J876

North's rebid shows 5/4 in hearts and diamonds, AND the rebid is below the barrier. This limits the strength of the hand to 11 pts up to a maximum of 16.

North has offered two suits. South has a minimum hand and needs to stop the auction. S/he does this by returning partner to the preferred suit at the level that south can afford.
NOTICE this does not show a FIT. It is simply the better of the two suits offered. North must not get excited thinking that there is a fit.
It is a FULL STOP!!!



SUIT PREFERENCE BID 2.

♠ 62
♥ AJ743
♦ AQ63
♣ A3

♠ J95
♥ K109
♦ KJ2
♣ K542

N	S
1♥	1♠
2♦	pass

♠ A1043
♥ Q52
♦ 87
♣ Q1096

♠ KQ87
♥ 86
♦ 10954
♣ J87

A similar hand, but this time south has TWO MORE of north's 2nd suit than the first suit. After north's limit bid of 2♦, south recognises that a game contract cannot be reached. Therefore south gives suit preference to the 2nd suit BY PASSING!!



IF north had held 17+ pts. the rebid would have been higher than the barrier of 2♥! i.e . the rebid would have been 3♦

SUIT PREFERENCE BID 3.

♠ 62
♥ AJ743
♦ AQ63
♣ A3

♠ Q95
♥ K109
♦ KJ2
♣ K542

N	S
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠
pass	

♠ A10
♥ Q52
♦ 8754
♣ Q1096

♠ KJ8743
♥ 86
♦ 109
♣ J87

North's hand hasn't changed and south is STILL sitting with a weak hand. This time however south has a SIX card suit and is therefore entitled to reject both of partner's suits and give preference to his own suit, spades.

NOTE that this is also a LIMIT BID which north should respect. It will close the auction.



INVERTED MINOR RAISES

INVERTED MINOR RAISE 1.

♠ K872
♥ Q87
♦ Q
♣ AKJ85

♠ AJ43 ♥ K643 ♦ A54 ♣ 42	N 1♣	S 3♣	♠ Q96 ♥ AJ52 ♦ 97632 ♣ 9

♠ 105
♥ 109
♦ KJ108
♣ Q10763



North opens the bidding with a five card minor suit.

The hand could be many shapes and any strength from 11 up to 19 pts. It might 5/4 with a major, it might be 6/5 in clubs and diamonds , it could be a balanced 15+ hand.

South has minimum responding values and a fit with partner's minor. (Where are the majors you might ask?)

South could show weakness and a fit by responding 2♣ but that is unlikely to stop west from showing one (or both majors) Before west gets a chance to show what he has, a responding bid of 3♣ from south might make it difficult. How does north know that south is weak? 3♣ normally shows 10-12 points!
Well, like all bidding you must agree this with partner before you start playing!!!!

INVERTED MINOR RAISE 2.

♠ KQ32
♥ 10
♦ AK9
♣ KJ854

♠ A1096 ♥ 87632 ♦ Q8 ♣ 32	N 1♣ 2♠ 3NT	S 2♣ 3♥	♠ 754 ♥ AJ54 ♦ J10532 ♣ Q

♠ J8
♥ KQ9
♦ 764
♣ A10976

Hand 2. illustrates another reason why this convention is worthy of consideration.

This time south has a much better hand and would normally respond 3♣ (10/12 pts.) This would unfortunately take up a lot of bidding space, making it hard to explore a NT contract.

North *knows that 2♣ shows about 10 pts and bids 2♠ to tell partner that this suit is OK for NTs.
South can now show north a good stop in hearts and this makes it easy for north to bid 3NT.

INVERTED MINOR RAISES
1♣ - 2♣ = 10 ish pts.
1♣ - 3♣ = 6 - 8 pts.
* Because they have agreed before hand!!!!

ANOTHER SUBTLE MINOR SUIT RAISE.

♠ AQJ
♥ 764
♦ Q32
♣ AK85

♠ K932 ♥ Q83 ♦ A105 ♣ J104	N 1♣ 3NT	S 1NT	♠ 754 ♥ KJ92 ♦ J864 ♣ 32

♠ 1086
♥ A105
♦ K97
♣ Q976

While on the subject of LIMIT raises in minor suits, here is a very specialised responding bid in clubs.
This ONLY applies to CLUB opening and responses!
After a 1♣ opening, and responder does not have a four card suit to bid - other than clubs!

Responder bids 1NT to show PRECISELY 9 HCPs.

If you decide to play INVERTED MINOR RAISES
With 6-8 pts. respond 3♣. With 10ish pts. respond 2♣

If you don't play INVERTED MINOR RAISES
With 6-8 pts. respond 2♣ .With 10ish pts. respond 3♣

LIMIT YOUR HAND AFTER INTERVENTION

COMPETING - WITHOUT EXCITING PARTNER TOO MUCH

In the examples shown below green shows FORCING bids and red shows LIMIT bids

W	N	E	S
1H	1S	P	P
X	P	2C	

EAST

♠ 94
♥ 85
♦ 9852
♣ Q7542

With only 2 pts you must bid!



W	N	E	S
1H	1S	*P	P
X	P	1NT	

EAST

♠ K943
♥ J5
♦ K98
♣ 7542

*With only 7 pts. and no fit - but holding a decent stop in the opponent's suit - we suggest PASS.
When partner doubles, you do not have the HCPs to set 1♠, so bid 1NT to show the stop, fewer than 3 hearts and fewer than 9 HCPs.

W	N	E	S
1H	1S	1NT	P
3H	P	4H	

EAST

♠ K943
♥ J52
♦ K98
♣ Q42

With 9/10 pts., no obvious fit, but a SPADE STOP, bid 1NT at your 1st turn. On this auction, west has 6 hearts and close to a 5 loser
If west had game values and five-hearts, west can cue bid 2♠ to find whether east has three hearts.

The main tip here is that after intervention, your1NT, should be stronger. Not 6-9 - but around about 9/10

W	N	E	S
1H	1S	2H	

EAST	EAST	*EAST
♠ K94	♠ K94	♠ K9
♥ J62	♥ J652	♥ J8652
♦ K982	♦ J832	♦ 98632
♣ 54	♣ 54	♣ 5

At equal vulnerability and assuming that your partner knows "1 - 2 that'll do," east could show support AND weakness on each of these hands.

After a single raise west should NOT bid freely again unless he is a 5 loser or has 17 ish points.
IF, after west's pass, north were to bid 2♠, east must leave any further action to west who is in 'protective position'. If west then bid 3♥, it is merely competitive. NOT an invitation to bid 4♥.

W	N	E	S
1H	X	3H	

EAST	*EAST
♠ K94	♠ K9
♥ J652	♥ J8652
♦ K982	♦ 98632
♣ 54	♣ 5

After a X by opponents east could 'stretch' a little, again to make it harder for opponents to get into the auction. This raise, *after the double,* must not be seen as an invitation to bid on.
It is merely competitive.
In grey is the same hand as shown previously as a *2♥ response. The reason that you might bid 3♥ on this auction is that the 5 card spade suit has not been shown. Make it hard for them.

W	N	E	S
1H	P	1NT	X
2C	2S	3D	P
P			

EAST

♠ 943
♥ J
♦ K986432
♣ Q4

After 1♥, east makes a limit bid of 1NT. West rebids 2♣. East rejects both of these suits to bid 3♦. East was wise to make a 1NT LIMIT BID first! - 3♦ MUST be passed.

You cannot make a forcing bid after having made a limit bid.

W	N	E	S
1H	1S	X	P
2C	2D	2H	P

EAST

♠ K10
♥ J96
♦ A982
♣ J432

This time east does have an 8 card fit in hearts
East's original X showed the other two suits (6+)
Although you have 4 clubs, the 5/3 fit in hearts looks like the best spot. A major suit and one trick fewer to find.

WEAK OPENINGS & POOR RESPONDING HANDS

In the examples shown below green shows FORCING bids & red shows LIMIT bids

WEST
♠ Q5
♥ AK9763
♦ A72
♣ 76

W	E
1H	1S
2H	P

EAST
♠ K9432
♥ J
♦ K986
♣ 542

With 8 pts. and no fit, the contract is going nowhere. East should not dig the hole any deeper.

W	E
1H	1S
2H	2S

EAST
♠ KJ9432
♥ 6
♦ K982
♣ 54

Although opener's 2♥ is a limit bid, with six good spades, east can make a limit bid which should be passed. With a long suit in *each hand*, it is better to play the contract from the weak hand.

W	E
1H	1S
2C	2H

EAST
♠ K9432
♥ J6
♦ Q82
♣ 542

*EAST
♠ K9432
♥ J
♦ 982
♣ K542

West's 2♣ rebid shows 5 hearts, 4 clubs and 11-16 pts. Game is not possible. East should return partner to the 5-2 fit which will play better than 4-3.
This 'suit preference' bid does not guarantee a fit!
*With the 2nd hand, east will pass 2♣ because east has TWO MORE clubs than hearts.

W	E
1H	1S
2C	3H

EAST
♠ K10943
♥ J96
♦ A982
♣ 4

This time east does have an 8 card fit in hearts AND the 8 HCPs have become 11 (*3 for a singleton.*)
So with an 8 loser hand east can jump to 3♥,
but this is still a LIMIT BID. West should ONLY bid on if he is *better* than a 7 loser!

W	E
1H	1NT
2C	2D

WEST
♠ KQ
♥ A9863
♦ Q10
♣ J853

EAST
♠ 943
♥ J
♦ K986432
♣ Q4

After 1♥, east makes a limit bid of 1NT. West rebids 2♣. East rejects both of these suits to bid 2♦. East was wise to make a 1NT LIMIT BID first! - 2♦ MUST be passed.

West would only pass 1NT with a balanced 15/16 count! (See below)

W	E
1H	1S
2H	
or	
1NT	pass

WEST
♠ A43
♥ J9632
♦ AJ9
♣ Q2

EAST
♠ 9752
♥ 10
♦ KQ852
♣ J43

OPTIONS - CHOICES - DECISIONS

West could reasonably open 1♥ and rebid 2♥, but having to rebid such a poor suit, works badly here. A 1NT opening (12-14 balanced) - works better with this west hand - but not always!!

W	E
1H	1NT
pass	

WEST
♠ KQ5
♥ Q10863
♦ Q10
♣ AK8

EAST
♠ 943
♥ J
♦ K986432
♣ Q4

After 1♥, east makes a limit bid of 1NT.
The only time that west will pass, will be when s/he holds a BALANCED hand with 15/16 HCPs

If diamond break 2-2 east could end up making 9 tricks!

W	E
1H	4H

WEST
♠ J43
♥ AQ632
♦ K
♣ QJ72

EAST
♠ 97
♥ KJ10954
♦ Q852
♣ 6

Before sacrificing in 4♥ east's only question should be whether or not west has four tricks to set 4♠!
East cannot realistically provide any defensive tricks - if N/S buy the contract.
Therefore a pre-emptive raise to 4♥ might be the best course of action.

THE BARRIER

The concept that many still seem to be struggling with, is that opener should not rebid higher than 2 of the opening suit - UNLESS opener has a very good opening hand of 17+.
Having opened 1♣, with 11- 16 pts., there is a barrier for the rebid of 2♣



WEST	EAST
♠ 107	♠ K7632
♥ KJ75	♥ Q2
♦ Q9	♦ K83
♣ AQJ32	♣ 987

W	E
1C	1S
2H ✗	

W	E
1C	1S
2C ✓	pass

OPENER'S REVERSE BID A RECAP

As you can see, if west's rebid is higher than 2 of his opening suit, east would be forced to bid at the 3 level to show suit preference for clubs.

WEST	EAST
♠ **A7**	♠ K7632
♥ **KJ75**	♥ Q2
♦ **Q9**	♦ K83
♣ **AQJ32**	♣ 987

W	E
1C	1S
2C ✗	

W	E
1C	1S
2H ✓	3NT

Having opened 1♣, west should have 17+ points to make any bid above the barrier of 2♣.
When west DOES HOLD 17+ pts. it is equally wrong to rebid only 2♣.

Opening hands with 12 -16

With only 12-16 pts, opener's rebid is limited to bids which are not higher than two of the opening suit.

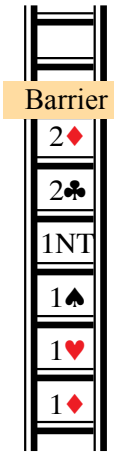
If you open 1♥ your rebid should not be higher than 2♥



Your hand
♠ KJ72
♥ AQ832
♦ 97
♣ Q9

You	Partner
1♥	2♦
2♥ (NOT 2♠)	

If you open 1♦ your rebid should not be higher than 2♦



Your hand
♠ 92
♥ A732
♦ AK873
♣ K10

You	Partner
1♦	- 1♠
2♦ (NOT 2♥)	

Opening hand with 15+

However
If your partner bids a new suit at the 2 level, showing 10+ pts. you could make a reverse bid on 15 pts. to ensure that you bid to game.

♠ KJ72
♥ AQ832
♦ K7
♣ Q9

You	Partner
1♥	- 2♦
2♠	

♠ Q2
♥ A732
♦ AK873
♣ K10

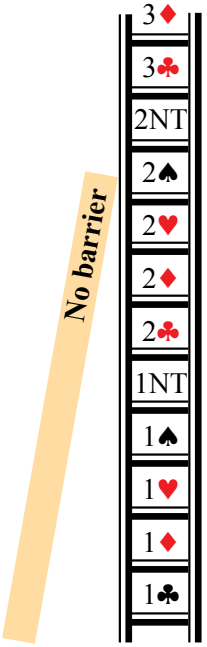
You	Partner
1♦	- 2♣
2♥	

Showing four card support to partner's major is NOT a reverse! e.g. Although 2♠ is over your 'barrier', you are simply showing four card support.

You	Partner
1♥	- 1♠
2♠	

Opening hands with 17+

With **17+** pts. your rebid should be a ***reverse bid*** to show your strength. e.g.



Your hand
♠ A
♥ A732
♦ AK873
♣ K104

You	Partner
1♦	1♠
2♥	

♠ K5
♥ A7
♦ AK87
♣ K10932

You	Partner
1♣	1♠
2♦	

When your second suit is ***lower*** ranking than your first suit, you need to jump a level of bidding to show the reverse.

♠ K5
♥ A7
♦ AK873
♣ K1093

You	Partner
1♦	1♠
3♣	

REVERSE BIDS 1.

1. A 'Reverse bid' is a dreadful term that confuses most people.
2. A 'Reverse bid' is not always 100% forcing. It can sometimes be passed if partner has a bare minimum.
3. Opener's 'Reverse bid' describes a strong hand. (17+ after a 1 level response) or (15+ after a 2 level response and forcing to game.)
4. IF partner were to bid again after a 'reverse bid' they would usually have to do so at the 3 level.

On these three sequences, west's rebids are described as 'Reverse Bids'. Each of west's rebids is higher than 2♦.

W	E	W	E	W	E
1♦	1♠	1♦	1♠	1♦	1♥
2♥	?	2NT	?	3♣	?

You may be tired of me saying that "Opener's rebid defines the hand" BUT - -

Hand shapes are important and I am sure you recognise that in the following sequence, west - -

W E
1♦ 1♠
2♣

- - has 5+ diamonds and 4+ clubs - a two suited hand.
But you should also recognise that the *strength* of west's hand has been clarified!

♠ K9
♥ J5
♦ AQ874
♣ Q862

After opening 1♥, west's HCP count is very wide ranging. Anything from 11 - 20.
After west's 2♣ rebid, the hand is **limited** to 11 -16 and could be passed.

♠ K9
♥ K5
♦ AQ874
♣ AQ62

To describe this **strong** opening hand, west has to excite east, with a jump to 3♣
Although some might say that this reverse bid at the 3 level should show 19 HCPS and that it is forcing, others will agree to keep reverse bids constant at 17+ HCPs.

Here is a 5/4 shape, where west can reverse at the 2 level to show a strong 17-20 HCPs.

W E
1♦ 1♠
2♥- - - - - - - - West has rebid HIGHER than the barrier of 2♦

♠ K9
♥ KQJ3
♦ AQ874
♣ Q8

2♥ is a reverse because the rebid is HIGHER than 2♦. It shows a strong hand of 17+

♠ J9
♥ KJ32
♦ AQ874
♣ Q8

Identical shape but on this hand, with fewer points, west is not strong enough to rebid ***above the barrier***. West must simply rebid the five card diamond suit.
(It doesn' look as though east has hearts anyway, but IF east is strong, east can bid hearts now)

W E
1♦ 1♠
2♦ 2♥

Reverse bids' are often described as rebidding **OVER** the 'Barrier.'
After a 1 level response, opener should NOT rebid higher than 2 of the opening suit (*the Barrier*) unless opener has 17+ pts. **(or is a 5 loser)**

W E
1♠ 1NT
3♥

♠ AK874
♥ KQJ103
♦ 4
♣ 98

Here is an example of a hand that does not have 17 HCPs but is strong enough to reverse. After opening 1♠, a reverse bid of 3♥ would be more accurate than 2♥.
The 5 loser hand would have very good playing strength!

REVERSE BIDS 2.

OPENER'S REVERSE REBIDS

1

West has 18 HCPs and opens 1♥. East responds 1NT.
With a 'normal' opening hand west would rebid 2♣ to show the 5/4 shape but this would not show the extra strength of west's hand.
To show the strength west rebids 3♣, not 2♣. A 'reverse'!

West
♠ K9
♥ AJ863
♦ AK
♣ K965

W	E
1♥	1NT
3♣	

2

This time, west has five hearts, four spades and 17 HCPs.
After east's limit bid, west can rebid 2♠.
Note that this is higher up the bidding ladder than 2♥.
(If east wished to support hearts east would have to bid **3**♥.)
West should only reverse with a strong hand (*East may only have 6 pts.*)

♠ KQ109
♥ AJ863
♦ K5
♣ A10

W	E
1♥	1NT
2♠	

3

After west opens 1♥, east responds 1NT. (denying four spades)
East has 6 - 9 pts. If west had 15/16 pts., west should pass!!
So the rebid of 2NT shows a balanced hand with 17/18 pts.
Note that this is higher than 2♥ so it is a 'reverse!' Not 100% forcing!

♠ A105
♥ AQ863
♦ KJ5
♣ K9

W	E
1♥	1NT
2NT	

4

West has a balanced hand with 18 HCPs and opens 1♦.
East responds 1♠. Remember that with a strong opener, west ***should rebid*** HIGHER than 2♦. 1NT will not do! To show the strength, west must rebid 2NT. Recognise that this is a LIMIT bid showing 17/18 pts. East should bid on to game with 7+.

♠ Q4
♥ AJ6
♦ KQJ63
♣ KQ5

W	E
1♦	1♠
2NT	

5

Opener's rebid should be the same whether they are a 7 loser hand or a 6 loser. The support for east's spade suit here is a reverse bid and consistently for reverse bids, shows a 17+ count OR a FIVE loser hand! Remember that east may have a miserable 6 HCPs.
The rebid defines the hand!

♠ KQ104
♥ AQ654
♦ A63
♣ 5

W	E
1♥	1♠
3♠	

RESPONDER'S REVERSE

6

W	E
1♦	1♠
2♦	2♥

♠ KQ1065
♥ AJ63
♦ 65
♣ K9

West opens 1♦. East has 13 pts. so game must be bid!
West may have five diamonds & four hearts - East can respond 1♠ first, because east is strong enough to bid hearts later.
West makes a limit bid of 2♦ but east does not pass.
East bids a new suit!! This forces west to bid again. IF west could only bid diamonds s/he has been forced to bid at the 3 level!
This is a forcing 'Responders Reverse'.

7

W	E
1♦	1♠
1NT	3♠

♠ KQ1065
♥ AJ6
♦ 65
♣ K95

West's rebid of 1NT shows 15/16. It is a limit bid!
If east were to bid 2♠ this would be rebidding his suit at the level he can afford and west should pass this limit bid. BUT
a jump to 3♠ shows FIVE and is forcing. It asks west to bid 3NT with only two spades or to bid 4♠ with three.

HOW TO FORCE PARTNER TO BID AGAIN

Interestingly there are many more ways to force partner to bid again than there are for stopping partner.

1. SIMPLE CHANGE OF SUIT
2. TRANSFERS
3. STAYMAN
4. 4TH SUIT FORCE
5. STRONG TWO OPENINGS



6. 2C OPENING (2D BENJI)
7. BLACKWOOD (RKCB)
8. CUE BIDS (VARIOUS)
9. JACOBY 2NT
10. SPLINTERS

1. SIMPLE CHANGE OF SUIT

W	E
1H	1S

East 1.	East 2.
♠ K943	♠ KJ983
♥ J8	♥ A8
♦ K986	♦ AK108
♣ 542	♣ Q5

Respond 1♠ on both of these very different hands. (100% FORCING) The final denomination is not clear. The contract may be played in spades, hearts, NTs or diamonds? (Maybe even a slam on hand 2.) You have the high card strength to jump shift, but why take up your own bidding space when you are still unsure of the final contract? Opener's rebid will define more clearly where you are going. On hand 1, pass partner's rebid (*unless west rebids 3♠*).

On hand 2,*DO NOT respond 2♠ (a jump shift).
These jump shift responses should have ALL of the following:
A solid SIX card suit, 17ish HCPs, some support for partner's suit.
(They occur once a year if you're lucky.)

2. SIMPLE TRANSFER

W	E
1NT	2H

East 1.	East 2.
♠ K9432	♠ KJ983
♥ J	♥ A
♦ 9865	♦ AK1087
♣ 542	♣ 54

It is exactly the same here. With an incredibly weak hand and a strong hand your 1st response is the same - 2♥ (100% FORCING) It tells opener to transfer into 2♠.

With hand 1 east will pass after the completion of the transfer. With hand 2 east will bid 3♦ (100% FORCING). If opener shows spades or diamonds, investigate slam. If not settle in 3NT.

3. STAYMAN

W	E
1NT	2C
2H	3NT

East 1.	East 2.
♠ K943	♠ KJ98
♥ J9865	♥ A85
♦ 98	♦ AK108
♣ 52	♣ 97

Again, a weak hand & a strong hand. but the 1st response is the same. Hand 1. Normally responder needs 11+ pts. to use Stayman, but with 5/4 in the majors, responder can use Stayman. East will pass opener's 2♥ or 2♠ reply. If opener rebids 2♦, responder signs off in 2♥, (*the five card major*). Stayman can also be used on a weak hand with a singleton club. 4-4-4-1 BECAUSE 2♣ is (100% FORCING)

Hand 2. Responder will sign off in 3NT - but if west had four hearts AND four spades opener would correct to 4♠

4. 4TH SUIT FORCING

W	E
1D	1H
2C	2S
2NT	3NT

East 1.	East 2.
♠ AQ	♠ 985
♥ Q5	♥ AK875
♦ KJ985	♦ A10
♣ Q952	♣ K87

This time responder has a hand that would have opened the bidding. So when partner opens, responder must bid on to game ***but there is no need to jump***! East simply responds 1♥ (100% FORCING). West shows 5/4 in diamonds & clubs. East now needs to know whether west has a stop in spades OR three card support for hearts. IF east had a stop in spades east could bid 3NTs but may still prefer to look for a 5 /3 heart fit.
The only way to find out is to FORCE partner to bid again by bidding the 4th suit. MANY partnerships have agreed to play that bidding the 4th suit is not 'natural' but is 4TH SUIT FORCING.

4TH SUIT FORCING

4. 4TH SUIT FORCING

Most pairs play, that in an uncontested auction, the bid of the fourth suit, is conventional. (*It must be alerted*). The bid is simply asking partner to show a little more about the shape of his hand.

Partner	You
1♣	- 1♥
1♠	- ?

You hold
♠ KJ3
♥ KJ962
♦ J8
♣ A82

You clearly have enough points for game but what can you bid?
2NT or 3NT would promise a diamond stop.
2♣ is a limit bid simply giving suit preference. (3♣ would show four.)
2♥ is showing a bit more than minimum, but may be passed.
3♥ would suggest six hearts.

The solution, is to make a conventional bid of the ***fourth suit***. Your rebid is 2♦ *which must be alerted*.

There are two approaches to 4th suit force and it is best you discuss and agree with your partner which you are using. The standard treatment is that the 4th suit bid is forcing for only one round.
many people, however, play it as forcing to game. Discuss this with any new partner.

WHEN to use the 4th suit force.

West	East
1♥	- 1♠
2♣	- 2♦

"Tell me more"



East 1.
♠ AJ75
♥ 94
♦ KQ4
♣ A842

NO
With a stop in the 4th suit, and no prospect of finding a fit, east should simply bid 3NT.

East 2.
♠ AJ752
♥ 94
♦ J94
♣ J84

NO
With only 7 HCPs, east would simply sign off, giving suit preference. 2♥

East 3.
♠ AJ752
♥ 984
♦ K9
♣ K84

NO
With this hand east would make a strong, but not forcing, rebid of 3♥

East 4.
♠ AJ752
♥ 52
♦ KQ4
♣ K72

YES
Here east should bid 2♦ (*4th suit forcing*). If west cannot show three spades, east can bid game in NTs

East 5.
♠ AQJ753
♥ 52
♦ 42
♣ K32

NO
Here east would bid 3♠. Strong, unlikely to be passed but not 100% forcing.

HOW to respond to partner's 4th suit force.

West 1.	West 2.	West 3.	West 4.	West 5.
♠ QJ3	♠ 103	♠ 103	♠ -	♠ 103
♥ AQ962	♥ AQ962	♥ AQ962	♥ AQ962	♥ AQ962
♦ 5	♦ AQ	♦ Q	♦ Q1085	♦ Q5
♣ K862	♣ K862	♣ KJ862	♣ KJ86	♣ KJ86
W E	W E	W E	W E	W E
1♥ 1♠	1♥ 1♠	1♥ 1♠	1♥ 1♠	1♥ 1♠
2♣ 2♦	2♣ 2♦	2♣ 2♦	2♣ 2♦	2♣ 2♦
2♠	**2NT**	**3♣**	**3♦**	**2♥**
Yes partner, I have three spades for you. **3 - 5 - 1 - 4**	Yes partner, I have stop in diamonds. **2 - 5 - 2 - 4**	I have 5 clubs, not 4. **2 - 5 - 1 - 5**	5 hearts, 4 clubs, 4 diamonds. **0 - 5 - 4 - 4**	I haven't a diamond stop or 3 spades. **2 - 5 - 2 - 4**

East
♠ AK965
♥ 83
♦ J102
♣ AQ7

THE 'STRONG TWO' OPENING

5. STRONG TWOS

In England, a hand can only be described as STRONG if it conforms to one of these 3 criteria.

a. 16 HCPs

b. 12 HCPs with at least 8 PLAYING TRICKS

c. RULE OF 25 (HCPS + two longest suits.)



'STRONG TWO' OPENING BIDS - ACOL

In 'Acol', opening bids of 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠ are defined as "STRONG and FORCING with 8 PLAYING TRICKS".
(As well as the very good trump suit there should be at least two defensive tricks in another suit.)

Open 2♠
♠ AKQ943
♥ 76
♦ AKQ
♣ 54
5 SPADES
3 DIAMONDS
Hand 1.

Open 2♥
♠ A
♥ QJ1076542
♦ 3
♣ AJ4
6 HEARTS
2 ACES
Hand 2.

Open 2♥
♠ 5
♥ KQJ1075
♦ AK86
♣ A2
5 HEARTS
2 DIAMONDS
1 CLUB
Hand 3.

Open 1♠/4♠
♠ AKQ1084
♥ 4
♦ K73
♣ J109
Only 6 TRICKS

Open 1♠
♠ AKJ75
♥ K6
♦ AK98
♣ 54
Only 6/7 TRICKS

Open 2♣
♠ AKQJ8
♥ K73
♦ AK
♣ A4
24 HCPS

'STRONG TWO' OPENING BIDS - BENJI 2♣

In Benji Acol, the opening bids of 2♥ or 2♠, are weak (6-10).
To show a STRONG TWO, there is a little step that you have to go through first.

W	E
2♣	2♦
2♠	

W	E
2♣	2♦
2♥	

W	E
2♣	2♦
2♥	

2♣ = Strong 8 playing tricks. 2♦ = Forced relay bid.

Using Benji on hands 1, 2 & 3, above, the opening bid would open 2♣ (alertable).
Responder is FORCED to bid 2♦ whatever strength of hand he has. (This is called a RELAY bid).
Opener now bids his suit and the auction proceeds as it would after an Acol Strong Two.

RESPONDING TO STRONG TWOS

With 0-8 pts. responder bids 2NT - a negative response! Anything else is positive and game going!
A 'Strong Two' opening does not guarantee that game is on! Whether you play Acol or Benji,
'Strong Twos' are forcing for 1 round only! Game depends on the strength of responder's hand.

WEST
♠ AK5
♥ AKJ1075
♦ A6
♣ 43

EAST 1.
♠ 863
♥ 84
♦ 109542
♣ KQ10

Not worth the risk!



BENJI

W	E
2C	2D
2H	2NT
3H	pass

ACOL

W	E
2H	2NT
3H	pass

Just worth the risk!



EAST 2.
♠ 86
♥ 842
♦ 109542
♣ KQ10

ACOL

W	E
2H	2NT
3H	4H

EAST 2. Holding the same HCPs but with 3 trumps and a doubleton spade, many players would bid game hoping to provide two extra tricks to add to the eight promised by opener.

Anything other than a negative 2NT would promise 8+ HCPs and of course a guarantee that game will be reached.

In Benji Acol, you can also show strong balanced hands more precisely.

ACOL 2NT = 20-22

BENJI 2NT = 19/20
2♣ with a 2NT rebid = 21/22
2♦ with a 2NT rebid = 23+

THE "STRONGEST" OPENING BID!

ACOL 2♣



In 'Acol', the strongest opening bid is 2♣.
I am disappointed to hear people describe this bid as simply 23+HCPs
IF the hand is balanced it does promise 23+HCPs

BUT 2♣ also describes a hand where game is on with virtually no help from partner.
Normally responder cannot stop bidding until at least game is reached.

With fewer than 8 pts, responder gives a NEGATIVE response of 2♦ suggesting that slam is unlikely.
(Responder should count an ace and king as the equivalent of 8 - and respond positively).
(*Holding 0-2 HCPs responder can often give a 2nd negative of 2NT)

BENJI 2♦

In ' Benji Acol', the strongest opening bid is 2♦. Criteria are similar to an Acol 2♣ opening and the developing auction will be more or less the same. Responder's NEGATIVE is 2♥.

Balance Openings & Weak Responses

ACOL

West	W	E	East
♠ AKJ6	2C	2D	♠ Q53
♥ AQ	2NT	3C*	♥ K864
♦ KJ8	3S	3NT	♦ 105
♣ KQ93			♣ 8632

BENJI

W	E
2D	2H
2NT	3C*
3S	3NT

*3♣ is Stayman

Game Force Openings & Weak Responses

ACOL

West	W	E	East
♠ AKJ106	2C	2D	♠ Q53
♥ AK3	2S	4S	♥ 9865
♦ 4			♦ 7532
♣ KQ103			♣ 86

BENJI

W	E
2D	2H
2S	4S

Green = FORCING Red = LIMIT BID

Balance Openings & Strong Responses

ACOL

West	W	E	East
♠ AKJ6	2C	2NT	♠ Q53
♥ AQ	4NT	5D	♥ K864
♦ KJ8	6NT		♦ A52
♣ KQ93			♣ 863

BENJI

W	E
2D	2NT
4NT	5D
6NT	

Game Force Openings & Strong Responses

ACOL

West	W	E	East
♠ AK9864	2C	2NT	♠ Q53
♥ AQ	3S	4NT	♥ K864
♦ 8	5S	6S	♦ K52
♣ AK			♣ 863

BENJI

W	E
2D	2NT
3S	4NT
5S	6S

REMEMBER

1. Responder can use Stayman and transfers if opener rebids in NTs
2. In a game forcing situation, bidding game is weaker than showing support at the 3 level.

JACOBY 2NT

Responding with



12+ & a major fit!

1♠ - 4♠ is a 'fast arrival' method of bidding game with *no* slam aspirations.
It is made on a good fit, and a 7 loser, but lacking in controls.

In the past, to avoid missing slams, when responder had a big hand and a fit for partner's major, they would use a ***delayed game raise***.
Today there are better methods and one of the best is ***Jacoby 2NT***

Jacoby 2NT shows a fit, and a balanced or semi balanced hands with 12+pts.
(if responder holds a singleton or void, Splinter bids can be used. (More later)

RESPONDER'S Options with a Major Suit Fit

1♥/♠ - 2♥/♠ = limit bid (9 loser / 5-8 pts)
1♥/♠ - 3♥/♠ = a limit bid (8 loser /8/11 pts.)
1♥/♠ - 4♥/♠ = a limit bid (7 loser / 8/11 pts.)
1♥/♠ - ***2NT*** = **a game forcing hand, 12+ HCPs with four hearts/spades.**

See Sheet 17 for 'Splinter' responses.

It is often difficult to bid slams if both partners are only slightly better than minimum for bidding game, A bid of 2NT *after partner has opened a major* can be played as Jacoby 2NT. It would show a hand strong enough to bid game in the major. The purpose of the bid is to provide space to look for a slam.

OPENER'S REBIDS after 1♥/♠ - 2NT (Jacoby)

4♥/4♠ = Weakest bid possible.
3♥/3♠ = Stronger hand with slam interest. 16+pts. *(Maybe extra trump length or 5/6 loser)*
3NT = Balanced hand, only four of suit and 15+ pts.
3 of new suit = Singleton or void in the suit bid.
4 of new suit = 5+ card suit with at least 2 of top 3 honours

♠ AJ952 ♥ A7542 ♦ 4 ♣ K6	♠ K8743 ♥ Q3 ♦ A96 ♣ A75
W 1♠	E ?

West opens 1♠. East is strong enough to respond 4♠. West is better than minimum, with 13 pts. and a good distribution, but is not strong enough to look for a slam so without Jacoby 2NT, would be forced to pass.

Playing ***Jacoby 2NT***, east would respond 2NT.
West would bid 3♦, to show a singleton or void in diamonds.
East has an excellent diamond holding opposite this, and would bid Blackwood or RKCB and arrive in 6♠, which makes on just 23 HCPs.

West		West		West		West	
♠ AK932 ♥ 2 ♦ AJ9 ♣ AJ98		♠ AQ952 ♥ A3 ♦ KQ64 ♣ 9		♠ K1043 ♥ K98 ♦ AQ64 ♣ KJ9		♠ AJ952 ♥ K3 ♦ AQ64 ♣ K7	
W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
1♠	2NT	1♠	2NT	1♠	2NT	1♠	2NT
3♥		3♣		3NT		3♠	

PLEASE NOTE - Jacoby 2NT is cancelled if opponents overcall or X, or if responder is a passed hand.

W	N	E	S
1♥	1♠	2NT	

After an *overcall* 2NT is 10-12 with spade stop.

W	N	E	S
1♥	X	2NT	

After a *double* 2NT is 10-12 HCPs.
Maybe only two hearts.

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	P
2NT			

After *west has passed* 2NT is 11ish balanced 3-4-3-3

SPLINTER BIDS.

In trump contracts, singletons and voids are almost as good as aces and kings.
We have already seen how Jacoby 2NT can show a fit and game values early in the auction.
Usually, the 2NT response will not have a singleton or void. Splinter bids cater for this possibility
They show : 1. a fit with partner (*4+ card trump support*)
2. game values.
3. a singleton or void in the suit bid.

Splinter bids by Responder - after a MAJOR suit opening by partner.

Splinter bids are used to show singletons & voids by responding to opener with a double jump in the short suit.

W	E		W	E	
1♥	1♠	is a normal response	1♥	2♠	is a '***Jump Shift***' showing 6+spades and a 17+ count

The 'Splinter Bid' is made 1 LEVEL HIGHER than a 'Jump Shift'

e.g. W 1♥ E 3♠, (or 1♠ – 4♦) etc.

East
♠ 4
♥ KJ43
♦ A52
♣ A8643

East
♠ AJ84
♥ KJ4
♦ 2
♣ AQ643

After a 1♥ or 1♠ opening bid, responder 'splinters' by making a double jump into the suit where he has shortness.

Splinters by Responder - after a MINOR suit opening by partner.

1♣ : 3♦/3♥ /3♠
1♦ : 3♠ /3♥ /4♣
Responder promises: at least 5+ card support ***NO*** 4+ card major, a singleton or void, 12+ HCP
If opener has a strong holding in the splinter suit, the final contract is often 3NT

Splinters by Opener - after a MAJOR suit opening by partner.

Opener can also show a Splinter raise of partner's 1♥ or 1♠ response by making a double jump into a new suit e.g.

West
♠ AJ8
♥ KQJ4
♦ 2
♣ AQ643

W	E
1♣	1♥
3♦	

(2♦ *would be a reverse*)

The bid shows four card trump support, a singleton or void in diamonds & 17 ish pts.
Remember that responder might only have 6-7 pts. and has only promised a four card major suit.

Cue Bidding After a Splinter Raise

Any new suit bid is a slam try, showing first round control in the bid suit. (***a cue bid***.)
Partner may cooperate with a cuebid of his own, or return to the agreed trump suit to sign-off.
4NT by either partner is RKCB (The Splinter bid sets partner's suit as trumps).

Hand Evaluation after a Splinter Raise

Axx is an optimal holding opposite a Splinter raise: the partnership's honours are all located in the remaining three suits where they will complement each other, and slam is likely even without 33 HCPs.
Other honors (especially queens and jacks) in the splinter suit are mostly waste paper.
Do not Splinter with a singleton ace or king. Partner will expect values in ***the other suits***.

3 TYPES OF CUE BIDS

On the basis that you would never bid a suit that the opponents have bid NATURALLY, bidding their suit is an excellent way of making sure that partner does not pass. But why would we do this?

LOOKING TO PLAY IN NTS

When your side are heading for a NT contract but opponents have overcalled a suit THAT YOU CANNOT STOP.

W	N	You	S
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	

You hold
♠ K109
♥ KJ2
♦ A85
♣ K743

With this hand your 2nd bid is easy.



W	N	You	S
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	

You hold
♠ KQ1097
♥ J2
♦ A85
♣ K43

With this hand the final contract is less clear.
Still 13 pts but NO STOP in the opponent's suit and a five card spade suit. CUE BID the opponent's suit to ask partner to make another bid. West can choose between:

2NT	3♦	3♠	3♣	2NT
♠ 85	♠ A	♠ A64	♠ A6	♠ 6
♥ A9	♥ 104	♥ 4	♥ 4	♥ AJ84
♦ KQJ97	♦ KQJ97	♦ QJ1097	♦ QJ1097	♦ QJ109
♣ AJ95	♣ A1096	♣ AQ96	♣ AQ962	♣ AQ96
WEST	WEST	WEST	WEST	WEST

NOTE: Without the overcall, the bidding would be very similar. 2♥ would be 4th suit forcing.

CUE BIDS THAT SHOW FIRST ROUND CONTROL

If a major suit fit and slam possibility become evident early in the auction, cue bidding 1st round control can be better than leaping to the 4 level to use 'Blackwood'.

♠ 1076	♠ 8
♥ AK987	♥ Q1064
♦ K2	♦ A974
♣ AQ9	♣ K6

W	E
1♥	3♥
4♣	4♦
4♥	4♠
5♦	6♥

In this auction, 4♣ is showing either the ♣A or a void in clubs. It is also denying 1st round control in spades.
East is sufficiently interested in slam to cue bid the ♦A. West can now decides that slam is unlikely without the ♠A.
East however carries on to show 2nd round control in spades. After west shows ♦K, east bids the slam

UNASSUMING CUE BID

Your partner, north, has made an overcall of 1♥
This shows anything from a poor 8 up to 15 HCPs.

W	N	E	You
1♦	1♥	pass	2♦
pass	?		

♠ KJ5
♥ K97
♦ 97
♣ AJ954

You could bid 4♥ and find partner with only 8 pts. Down 2.
You could bid 3♥ and find partner with only 8 pts. Down 1.
You could bid pass and find partner with 13 pts. Missed game!
OR - *with about an opening hand - and game interest* -
You could bid LHO's suit (2♦) and find out how good partner's overcall was!
With a poor overcall, partner can sign off in 2♥
With a good overcall, partner can bid a high card feature. Not necessarily a suit - just an ace or king or QJ etc.

The bid is called an ***Unassuming Cue Bid*** and it simply asks partner ***"How good was your overcall?"***

SLAM BIDDING

QUANTITATIVE RAISE TO 4NT

Remember that after a 1NT opening by partner, 4NT is NOT ace asking. It is quantitative asking partner to rebid 6NT with a maximum, or to pass with a minimum. After a 2NT opening 4NT requires the same decision.

'GERBER'

After a 1NT opening, some pairs agree to use 'Gerber' (4♣) asking for aces.
Responses are 4♦ = 0 aces, 4♥ = 1, 4♠ = 2, 4NT = 3.(*We do not recommend using 'Gerber' at any other time.*)

'BLACKWOOD'

Most pairs of course use 'Blackwood'. (4NT)
Responses are 5♣ = 0 or 4, 5♦ = 1, 5♥ = 2, 5♠ = 3. IF *and only if*, your side has all four aces, 5NT asks for kings.

'ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD'

Roman Key Card Blackwood is used alongside ordinary Blackwood - NOT instead of!
Use RKCB when a trump fit has been established.
Use ordinary Blackwood when no fit is found.

It was popularised in the 1980's by Eddie Kantar and it counts ***key cards***, rather than simply aces.
The king of trumps becomes a fifth ace and it is sometimes referred to as "*Five Ace Blackwood*".

Responses to 4NT in RKC Blackwood are :

5♣	= 0 or 3	of five key cards.
5♦	= 1 or 4	of five key cards.
5♥	= 2	of five without the queen of trumps.
5♠	= 2	of five with the queen of trumps.

If partner subseqently bids 5NT asking for kings, use the normal Blackwood scale, but obviously exclude the king of trumps if you've already shown it.

Trump agreement is often obvious e.g. 1♠ - 3♠, but is sometimes shown by implication.
If partner jumps to 4NT from a suit, it is assumed that the last bid suit will be the trump suit.

1♠ - 3♠
4NT - 5♣
5♠ - 6♠

3♠ sets spades as trumps.
4NT = RKCB
5♣ = 0 or 3 key cards
5♠ = to play, if no key cards
6♠ = 3 key cards

1♠ - 2♣
2♥ - 4NT
5♠ - 6♥

5♠ = 4NT RKCB sets hearts as trumps.
either two aces with ♥Q.
or one ace & ♥K with ♥Q.
(*2 key cards WITH trump queen.*)

If over 4NT partner responds 5♣ or 5♦, your bid of the next suit up (excluding the trump suit) would specifically ask partner whether they hold the ***queen of trumps***.
S/he answers using (***stepped responses.***)
If partner **DID NOT** have the queen of trumps s/he would bid the cheapest suit.
If partner **DID** have the *queen of trumps, s/he would bid one suit higher than the cheapest suit. e.g.

1♠ - 2♣
2♥ - 4NT
5♣ - 5♦
5♠ - 7♥

4NT sets hearts as trumps.
5♣ = 0 or 3
5♦ = Have you the ♥Q?
5♠ = Yes I have it!

1♠ - 2♣
2♥ - 4♠
4NT - 5♦
5♥ - 5♠
6♠

4NT sets spades as trumps.
5♦ = 1 or 4
5♥ = Have you the ♠Q?
5♠ = No, I don't have it!

With the trump queen, some partnerships agree to show an outside king instead of stepped responses.

WEAK TWOS - IN THREE SUITS

Benji & Multi

Benjaminised Acol is the most popular system to use Weak Twos, but there are other systems that use them. One of these is the '***Multi Coloured Two Diamonds'*** where an opening bid of 2♦ shows any one of a number of hands. The hand may be a weak two in the majors, or a strong two in the minors, or a strong balanced hand with a specific range. Thankfully this is now a rare animal in our area. Unless you have masochistic tendencies avoid using this bid.

Weak Twos in Three Suits

Another system which is much simpler, uses 'Weak Twos' in diamonds, as well as for the majors.
The disadvantage is that your *only* strong opening bid now is 2♣, and you need to be convinced that an opening bid of 2♦ has sufficient pre-emptive value to compensate for this lack of clarity with big hands.
Of course you still have the limit bid of 2NT to show a balanced 20-22 count, but you lose the distinction between the traditional Acol opening bid of 2♣ and the Acol 'Strong Twos' (2♦, 2♥, and 2♠)

In 'old' Acol, 2♣ was forcing to game but the ' Acol Strong Two' openings were not.
Therefore if you decide to play this system you need to have an agreement as to whether 2♣ is, 100% forcing to game. You may decide for instance that after a 2♦ negative response to 2♣, 2♥ and 2♠ are strong but not forcing.

2♣ opening shows either 23+ balanced, or a 4 loser with at least 7 controls

(*'Co*ntrols' are aces and kings, where an ace = 2, *king = 1*).
So, the hand should have at least three aces and a king, or two aces and three kings.

Try opening these hands using this system

1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
♠AKJ952 ♥KQ ♦AKJ10 ♣7	♠KJ9874 ♥83 ♦K52 ♣J2	♠J98 ♥KQJ653 ♦J8 ♣74	♠ 7 ♥ 852 ♦AK7652 ♣ J83	♠AQJ543 ♥ 86 ♦AKQ ♣A2	♠ AKQ92 ♥ AQ ♦ KJ5 ♣ KQ8
Open 2♣	Open 2♠	Open 2♥	Open 2♦	Open 2♣	Open 2♣
4 loser 7 controls REBID 2♠				4 loser 7 controls REBID 2♠	23+HCPs balanced REBID 2NT

SUMMARY

Standard Weak Twos:

Defined as 6-10 points and a six card suit of reasonable quality. Agree the range with partner.
'Weak Twos' must be ANNOUNCED as "Weak"

Responses 2NT shows game interest. (***Ogust responses*** are popular but need to be learned/agreed).
3 of opener's suit is pre-emptive not invitational.
Decide with partner whether a change of suit is forcing!

The 2♣ Opening:

Defined ***as*** EITHER " Strong" and forcing (At least 7 controls and no worse than a 4 loser) or 23+ HCPs
2♣ opening bids ***must be alerted***. (*Not announced*)

Responses 2♦ = Relay. (only broken if responder has a long suit headed by at least 2 of the top 3 honours.)

WEAK TWO OPENING BIDS

Weak Two bids

Essentially Weak Twos are an extention of the traditional pre-emptive bids which were based on a seven card suit, and opened at the three level. 3 level pre-empts are very difficult to counter, but fortunately for defenders, they do not crop up frequently.

Weak hands with SIX card suits are much more common.
Weak Twos are NON-FORCING! They are pre-emptive limit bids!!
Previously these hands were passed and you had to wait for a chance to overcall.
This meant that their pre-emptive value was lost.

There are four main types of weak 2 level opens.
1. A three way Multi Two Diamond bid. (only for Masochists and thankfully rare in this area.)
2. Weak Twos in diamonds, hearts & spades.
3. Weak Twos in the majors. The most popular variation is Benjaminised Acol or Benji for short.
4. Lucas Twos are gaining in popularity They show 5 of a the major AND a four card side suit.

When to open a Weak Two (showing a 6 card suit)

If you decide to make a weak two bid, the hand should ideally fulfill all of the following criteria:-

1.) The hand has a decent six card suit.
2.) The hand (if your suit is a major) should not have four cards in the other major.
3.) The hand has between 6 and 10 HCPs
4.) The hand will be read by partner, as an 8 loser.
5.) The hand DOES NOT have the criteria for a one level opening.

Would you open these hands as a 'WEAK TWO'?

1	2	3	4	5	6
♠ KQJ9862 ♥ J4 ♦ J96 ♣ 8	♠ AK7432 ♥ 83 ♦ J95 ♣ 74	♠ 74 ♥ AQ10853 ♦ A1064 ♣ 9	♠ QJ10974 ♥ K106 ♦ 9732 ♣	♠ K98754 ♥ QJ7 ♦ J96 ♣ K	♠ KQ86 ♥ QJ9742 ♦ ♣ 864
No 7 card suit. Open 3♠	Yes	No Too strong! open 1♥	Yes 7 loser but well short of controls	Yes	No 4 of other major Pass

If your *Weak Two* is doubled, partner should pass even with a void in your suit, - ***unless,*** they ***also*** hold a six or seven card suit and a void in your suit. (***Opener should then pass partner's bid!***)
Otherwise never rescue! e.g. 2♥ X 3♣ = 6 or 7 clubs - non-forcing
2♥ pass 3♣* = forcing for one round

*Occasionally, responder will have a big hand and may want to bid or investigate a game contract.
To develop the auction you could agree that any responding bid by partner is forcing for one round.
If you are at the ***top*** of the 6-10 range, you could then bid any high card feature outside your six card trump suit.
An immediate raise to game by responder should have around 15+ HCPs

Many club players use the more precise ***'Ogust'*** responses
but they are difficult to remember and not recommended unless you are playing a lot of competitive bridge.

OGUST RESPONSES TO WEAK TWOS

When partner has opened a 'weak two' in hearts or spades, responder should read it as an 8 loser.
Options as responder are as follows :-

- With fewer than three of partner's suit and fewer than 16 H.C.P.s - generally pass.
- With three cards in opener's suit you can continue the pre-empt according to the L.T.C.
- **2NT** is **'OGUST'** showing game interest.
  It is asking partner for a clearer definition of the strength of the hand AND the suit.

A strong HAND is defined as being 9/10 H.C.P.s.
A strong SUIT is defined as having ***two of the top three honours***. i.e. AK or AQ or KQ.

After an opening bid of 2♥ or 2♠ by partner **- 2NT is FORCING and asks for more definition.**
Opener will rebid as follows:



3♣ = WEAK HCPs. and WEAK suit
3♦ = WEAK HCPs and STRONG suit

Rebid a minor to show weak points
MINOR = MINIMUM HCPs (5-8 pts.)



3♥ = STRONG HCPs and WEAK suit
3♠ = STRONG HCPs and STRONG suit

Rebid a major to show strong points
MAJOR = MAXIMUM HCPs (9/10 pts.)

3NT = A K Q x x x (Top three honours)

When you play with a new partner DOUBLE CHECK
that you are playing Benji, AND whether or not you are playing Ogust responses.

TRY THESE
After a 2♥ open by partner,
pass the 1st hand,
bid a pre-emptive jump to
game on the 2nd hand and
use an Ogust 2NT on the
last two.

♠ AJ986 ♥ 5 ♦ 94 ♣ AQ92	♠ 86 ♥ J7542 ♦ K4 ♣ AQ92	♠ A3 ♥ Q6 ♦ AQ943 ♣ KQ42	♠ 87 ♥ K96 ♦ AKJ43 ♣ A92
Pass	Bid 4♥	Bid 2NT (Ogust)	Bid 2NT (Ogust)

After a 2♠ opening on each of the following hands, partner responds 2NT. What is opener's rebid?

♠ AQ8732 ♥ 4 ♦ K43 ♣ 642	♠ QJ9862 ♥ 753 ♦ K8 ♣ K6	♠ KJ9872 ♥ 753 ♦ 9 ♣ K65	♠ AQ10872 ♥ 73 ♦ J542 ♣ 8	♠ AKQ872 ♥ 73 ♦ 1095 ♣ 86
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

WEAK TWOS IN THREE SUITS

Using this system means that you only have one bid available to show very strong hands.
2♣ has to cover game force bids AND the old Acol 'Strong Twos'.

The 2♣ opening bid shows either
23+ balanced, or a 4 loser with at least 7 controls

♠ KQJ732 ♥ AK ♦ AJ9 ♣ K5	**Open** **2♣**	Partner responds 2♦	**Rebid** **2♠** Showing a 'Strong Two in spades
♠ KQJ73 ♥ AK ♦ AJ9 ♣ KQJ	**Open** **2♣**	Partner responds 2♦	**Rebid** **2NT** Showing a balanced hand 23+
♠ KQJ732 ♥ 97 ♦ J95 ♣ 85	**Open** **2 ♠**	Partner responds 3♠	**Pass** Hoping that 3♠ will silence your opponents

Other strong bids with a 5 or 6 card major are exactly the same as in normal 'Acol'.

♠ KQJ73 ♥ AK ♦ AJ9 ♣ K53	**Open** **2NT**	Partner responds 3♣	**Rebid** **3♠** Showing four spades. (or five *if 3♣ is Puppet Stayman.*)
♠ KQJ73 ♥ A7 ♦ A95 ♣ K5	**Open** **1♠**	Partner responds 2♣	**Rebid** **2NT** Showing 15+ HCPs. FORCING. (Giving partner space to show 3 card spade support)

JACOBY 2NT - HANDS

♠ J763
♥ Q1083
♦ AK
♣ K107

♠ 82
♥ 642
♦ 8632
♣ 9643

♦4 LEAD

♠ Q109
♥ AKJ5
♦ QJ10
♣ QJ2

♠ AK54
♥ 97
♦ 9754
♣ A85

PREFER 3NT DESPITE THE FIT

With two balanced hands and plenty of points south chooses to play in 3NT and north agrees by passing

S	N
1H	**2NT**
3NT	P

JUST BID GAME
LEAD S3

North is not strong enough to use Jacoby 2NT

♠ KJ985
♥ 43
♦ AQ109
♣ 42

♠ 1063
♥ AJ105
♦ 763
♣ 763

♠ AQ742
♥ KQ
♦ J8
♣ KJ109

♠ -
♥ 98762
♦ K542
♣ AQ85

S	W	N	E
1S	P	4S	P
P			

♠ A7
♥ KQ84
♦ K
♣ QJ10975

♠ 98543
♥ A965
♦ J108
♣ 2

♠ K62
♥ J1073
♦ AQ52
♣ AK

♠ QJ10
♥ 2
♦ 97643
♣ 8643

BALANCED
LEAD SQ

4NT = RKCB
5H = 2 without the trump queen

S	W	N	E
1H	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	4NT	P
5H	P	6H	

BALANCED !
LEAD SQ

4NT = RKCB
5C = 0 or 3

♠ K6
♥ AQ73
♦ Q3
♣ AJ1092

♠ QJ1043
♥ J62
♦ 98
♣ 643

♠ A98
♥ K985
♦ AJ65
♣ KQ

♠ 752
♥ 104
♦ K10742
♣ 875

S	W	N	E
1H	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	4NT	P
5C	P	5NT	P
6D	P	6H	

♠ KJ86
♥ AQJ53
♦ 9
♣ A92

♠ 5
♥ 1042
♦ K82
♣ QJ843

♠ AQ932
♥ K7
♦ AQJ65
♣ 7

♠ 1074
♥ 96
♦ 10743
♣ K1065

CUE BIDS GALORE
LEAD H10

South's singleton does nothing to improve north's hand

S	W	N	E
1S	P	2NT	P
3C	P	3H	P
3S	P	4C	P
4NT	p	5C	P
6S			

MINIMUM OPENING
LEAD DK

South with an average opening hand, signs off in 4H.
North has no reason to go any further.

♠ K983
♥ K742
♦ A9
♣ K32

♠ 65
♥ 53
♦ KQJ87
♣ J1087

♠ AJ7
♥ AJ1098
♦ 1065
♣ Q6

♠ Q1042
♥ Q6
♦ 432
♣ A954

S	W	N	E
1H	P	2NT	P
4H	P	P	P

♠ KJ32
♥ 4
♦ AKQ9432
♣ A

♠ 54
♥ QJ1087
♦ 75
♣ K1052

♠ AQ976
♥ A962
♦ 108
♣ J7

♠ 108
♥ K53
♦ J6
♣ Q98643

ACES NEEDED
LEAD HQ

North only needs to know about south's aces and trump queen.

S	W	N	E
1S	P	4NT	P
5S	P	7S	

NOT FITTING!
LEAD H10

South's singleton does nothing to improve north's hand

♠ QJ3
♥ AJ72
♦ 84
♣ KQJ3

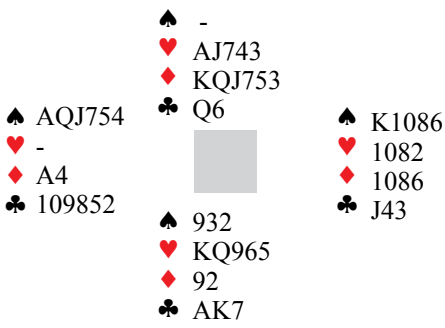
♠ 1084
♥ 103
♦ A963
♣ 7542

♠ AK2
♥ KQ984
♦ QJ72
♣ 8

♠ 9765
♥ 65
♦ K105
♣ A1096

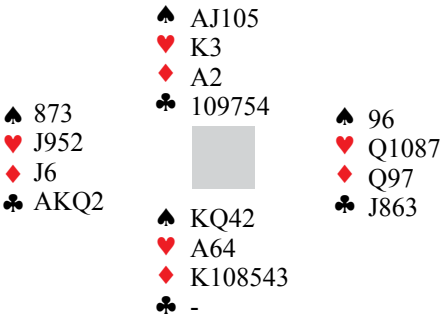
S	W	N	E
1H	P	2NT	P
3C	P	4H	

SPLINTER BIDS - HANDS



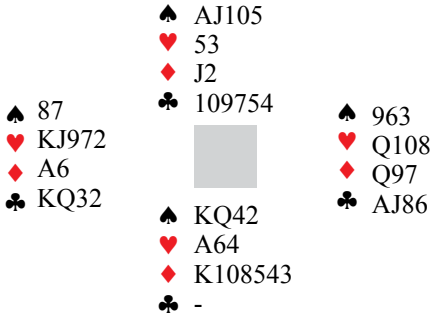
S	W	N	E
1H	1S	**3S**	4S
5C	P	6H	

SPLINTER IN ENEMY SUIT.



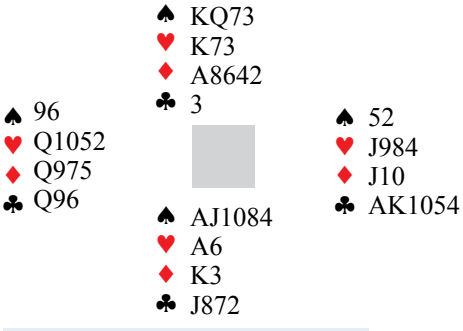
S	W	N	E
1D	P	1S	P
4C	P	4D	P
4H	P	4NT	P
5S	P	6S	

OPENER'S SPLINTER



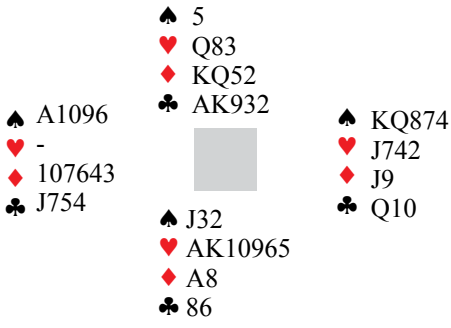
S	W	N	E
1D	1H	XX	P
4C	X	4S	

NEGATIVE DOUBLE, & SPLINTER



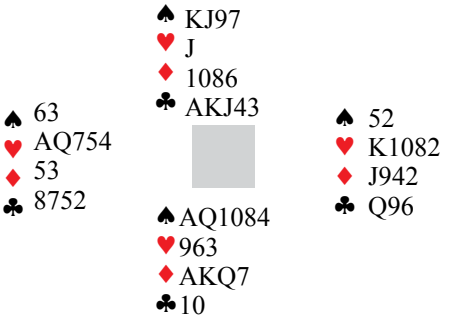
S	W	N	E
1S	P	4C	P
4NT	P	5S	P
6S			

1ST ROUND SPLINTER. RKCB.



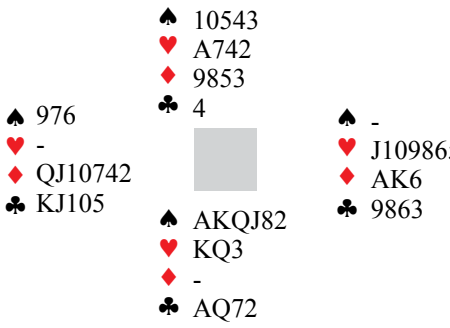
S	W	N	E
1H	P	2C	P
2H	P	3S	P
4D	P	4NT	P
5C	P	6H	

SPLINTER AFTER 5/3 FIT REVEALED.



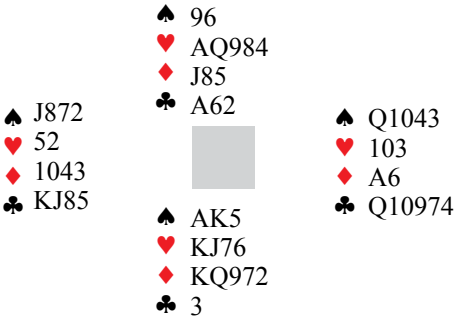
S	W	N	E
1S	P	4H	P
4NT	P	5H	P
6H			

SIMPLE 1ST ROUND SPLINTER.



S	W	N	E
2C	P	2D	P
2S	P	4C	P
4D	P	4H	P
7S			

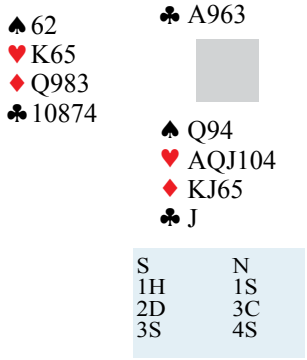
RESPONDER SPLINTERS AFTER 2C OPEN



S	W	N	E
1D	P	1H	P
4C	P	4NT	P
5H	P	6H	

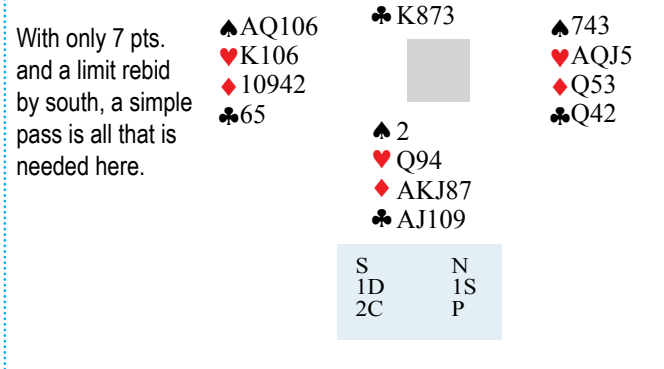
SPLINTER BY OPENER.

FOURTH SUIT FORCING HANDS



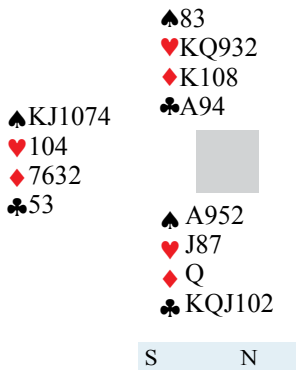
GAME GOING 4TH SUIT FORCE

With a 5 card major, you can use 4th suit force to find whether partner has 3 card support. (Using the 4th suit neither promises or denies having the 4th suit)



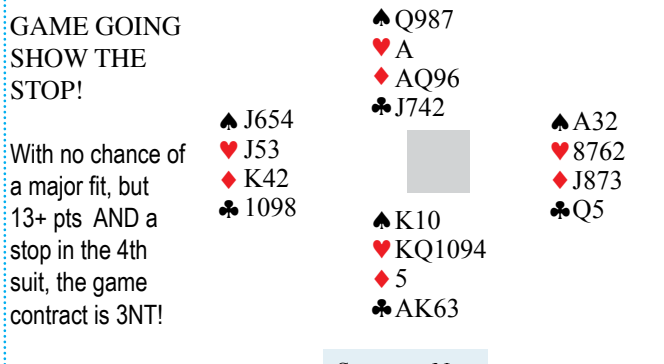
WEAK SUIT PREFER-ENCE

With only 7 pts. and a limit rebid by south, a simple pass is all that is needed here.



GAME GOING 4TH SUIT FORCE

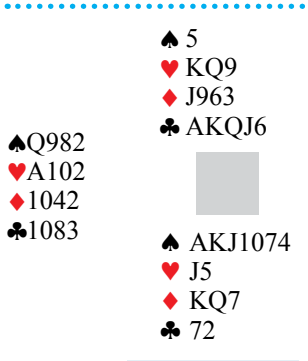
With a 5 card major, you can use 4th suit force to find whether partner has 3 card support. (Using the 4th suit neither promises or denies having the 4th suit)



GAME GOING SHOW THE STOP!

With no chance of a major fit, but 13+ pts AND a stop in the 4th suit, the game contract is 3NT!

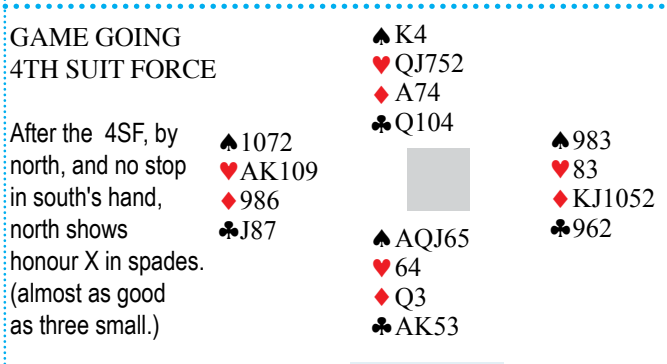
So bid it!



GAME GOING 4TH SUIT FORCE

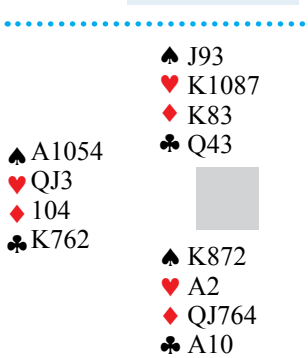
After the limit rebid of 2S, north makes a forcing bid of 3D. It is now opener who has to use 4th Suit Force looking for the heart stopper.

North obliges!



GAME GOING 4TH SUIT FORCE

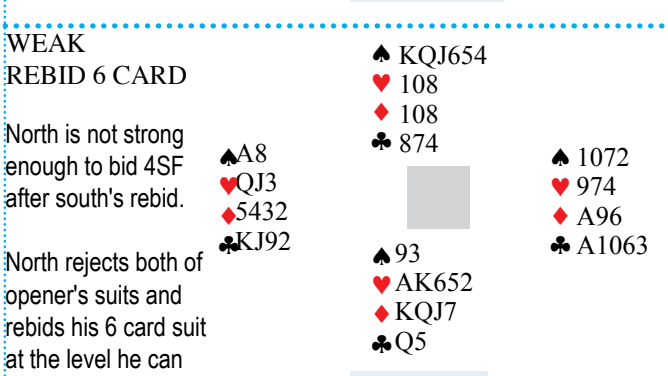
After the 4SF, by north, and no stop in south's hand, north shows honour X in spades. (almost as good as three small.)



WEAK SUIT PREFERENCE

North is not strong enough to bid 4SF after south's rebid.

North's suit preference rebid of 2D should be passed by south.



WEAK REBID 6 CARD

North is not strong enough to bid 4SF after south's rebid.

North rejects both of opener's suits and rebids his 6 card suit at the level he can afford.

PUPPET STAYMAN OVER 2NT

One of the problems about the opening limit bid of 2NT is that, although you have the required 20 - 22 points, you have a five card major that you may never get to mention especially if partner is sitting with a balanced six points. e.g.

♠ 9 6	♠ J 7 4 2
♥ A Q J 8 4	♥ K 5 3
♦ K Q J	♦ 9 8 6 2
♣ A K 4	♣ J 7

Without Puppet Stayman the bidding will almost certainly go
2NT - 3C
3H - 3NT 3NT could be tricky on a spade lead.

After a 2NT opening bid, responder can still transfer with a 5 card major.
Otherwise, assuming 4+ pts., responder will use ***3♣ Puppet Stayman.*** The 3♣ enquiry, asks whether opener has a ***four***, or a ***five*** card major. NOTE - *The two exceptions given below,**

2NT - 3♣
Opener makes one of the following rebids

3♥	=	five hearts	Responder can now bid 3NT or 4♥ with three hearts
3♠	=	five spades	Responder can now bid 3NT or 4♠ with three spades
3NT	=	no four or five card major	Pass
3♦	=	at least one four card major	Responder, holding four hearts, bids 3♠ Responder, holding four spades, bids 3♥ This ensures that the strong hand plays the contract!

NOTE - 2NT - *3NT shows both majors. (4 hearts AND 4 spades.)
2NT - *3♠ shows 4 hearts AND 5 spades. (You cannot use transfers can you?)

The following six examples show you how the bidding works in practise

♠ A 6	♠ 9 7 2
♥ A Q 8 4	♥ K 6 5 3
♦ A K 9 3	♦ 8 2
♣ K 5 3	♣ Q 8 7 2
West	East
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
4♥	

♠ A 6	♠ Q 9 7 2
♥ A Q 8 4	♥ J 6 5 3
♦ A K 9 3	♦ 8 6 2
♣ K5 3	♣ Q 8
West	East
2NT	3NT
4♥	

♠ A 6 4	♠ Q 9 7
♥ A Q 8	♥ K 3
♦ A K 9 3	♦ J 8 7 6 2
♣ K J 3	♣ 8 7 2
West	East
2NT	3♣
3NT	

♠ A 6	♠ 10 9 7 2
♥ A Q 8 4 2	♥ K 7 5
♦ A K 9	♦ Q 7 6 2
♣ K 5 3	♣ 7 4
West	East
2NT	3♣
3♥	4♥

♠ A 6	♠ Q 9 7 2
♥ A Q 4	♥ J 6 5 3
♦ A K 9 3	♦ 8 6 2
♣ K J 5 3	♣ Q 8
West	East
2NT	3NT
pass	

♠ A K 6 4	♠ Q 9 7 2
♥ A Q 10 8	♥ K 3
♦ A K 9	♦ Q 10 8
♣ J 3	♣ 10 8 7 2
West	East
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♥
3♠	4♠

Remember that responder still transfers into 5+ card majors.