

INTRODUCTION

Most of us use the standard American system of 5 card majors. When there is no interference by the opponents, our normal responses to an opening bid of one of a major are:

1. Single raise of two of the major which shows 3 card support and 6-9 HCPs.
2. Jump raise to three of the major to show 4 card support and 10-12 HCPs. (Those partnerships that do not use One Notrump Forcing might only have 3 card support).
3. Jump to 4 of the major to show a preemptive raise with 5 card support.

A responder with 4 card support and an opening hand needs a GAME FORCING BID to tell partner the good news. Two such bids are splinters and Jacoby Two No Trump. These two conventions go hand and hand with 5 card major suit openings and nine card trump suits. With them, the partners can set the trump suit early and have room to explore for slam. When partner opens with one of a major, a responder with 4 pieces and enough distribution and HCPs for an opening bid should always consider using one of these bids to get the partnership to game or slam.

JACOBY TWO NO TRUMP

Responder uses this bid with an opening hand, 4 trumps, and no other suit with less than 2 cards. (See back of this page for example hands). Opener must alert the two no trump bid. The bid is forcing to game. The partners can now describe their hands. Opener's rebid choices are as follows:

A. Opener is first required to show either shortness by bidding three of the short suit to show a singleton or void, or show a good 5 card second suit by bidding 4 of that suit.* With no shortness, Opener must choose one of the following three bids:

B. Four of the major. This utilizes the principle of "fast arrival" and shows a minimum opening bid with no interest in slam. Responder can also use "fast arrival." Thus, holding

♠Q 7 5 2 ♥K Q J 7 ♦A 8 ♣9 7 4

and partner has opened 1 ♠ and rebids 3 ♥s to your Jacoby two no trump you should jump to 4 ♠s because your hearts aren't that useful opposite a stiff or void.

C. Three no trump. This shows a good balanced opening bid with interest in slam. (This could be passed with the right hand).

D. Three of the major. This shows extras and a serious interest in slam.

The approximate point count ranges are 12-15 for B, 15-17 for C, and 18+ for D. See the back of this page for appropriate hands for each of the above bids.

Because Jacoby two no trump sets the trump suit at a low level and is forcing to game, it sets the stage for cue bidding controls to see if slam is a good possibility. There is no rush to bid Blackwood (key card or standard) or jump directly to slam. EXPLORE BY CUE BIDDING. Responder should start the process AFTER Opener has made the first rebid in response to the Jacoby two no trump. Bid your controls (Aces before Kings) "up the line," (i.e., lowest ranking suit first. Note that if you skip a suit, you are denying a control in it). Let's look at how Responder should react to Opener's rebids. For this review, your hand will always be

♠9 2 ♥Q 10 8 5 ♦A 7 4 2 ♣A K 2 13

and you have responded 2 NT to partner's 1 ♥ opening bid. What do you do after partner has made the following rebids to your Jacoby bid?

- 1) 4 ♥ 2) 3♦ 3) 3 ♣ 4) 3 ♠ 5) 3NT 6) 3♥

(Answers on back of page)

* Such a hand might be:

S: AQ1042 H: 6 D: KQJ54 C: Q7 NOTE: Bid the good Diamonds rather than the singleton heart.

RESPONDER BIDS TWO NO TRUMP AFTER OPENER BIDS 1 ♠

	♠	♥	♦	♣
1.	A 8	K Q 7 3	K 9 5 2	A 7 4
2.	A	A J 8 5	Q 10 3	J 9 6 5 3
3.	A 7 6 5	A 10 8 2	K 4 3	Q 8
4.	K 7	10 8 5 4	K Q 9	K Q J 5 13

OPENER'S THREE REBIDS IF HOLDING NO SHORTNESS

After you open 1 ♠ and your partner bids a Jacoby two no trump you should bid 4 ♠ with these hands:

	♠	♥	♦	♣	
1.	K J 8 5 3	A 3	K 5 2	J 5 2	4 S
2.	J 9 8 7 4	Q 10 6	K 5	A K 5	4 S
3.	10 9 6 4 2	6 4	A K 10 7	A 8	4 S

With these hands you should rebid 3NT: *- stronger -*

1.	K J 10 8 6 3	K 5	A 3	J 6 4	3 N
2.	A Q 6 5 2	A 9	K J 5 3	9 5	3 N
3.	A 10 9 4 3	K J 3	A Q J	8 6	3 N

With these hands rebid 3 ♠ *slam certain*

1.	A K J 7 4	A 9 4 3	K 4	J 7	3 S
2.	A Q J 8 4 3	9 4	K 5	A 10 5	3 S
3.	K Q 9 7 2	A 8 3	K Q 8	K 5	3 S

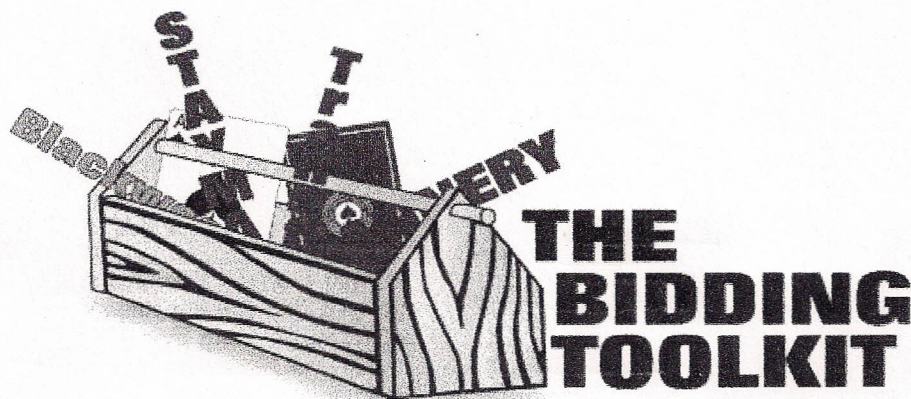
ANSWERS TO WHAT RESPONDER SHOULD BID

1. Pass. Partner has a minimum hand and is not interested in slam.
2. Great! If partner has a Spade control, we can drive to slam. Rather than show our Club control, we should bid 3 ♥s because it is encouraging and allows partner to bid 3 Spades.
3. Bid 3 ♦s. Even though partner shows shortness opposite our two controls, we have at least one discard for him and enough to make one more move for slam.
4. Bid 4 ♣s. It would be better if we had more baby Spades. If partner has diamond length we might have an unavoidable loser there. We need to be careful.
5. Slam doesn't look good because of Spades and Diamonds. Bid 4 ♣s and see what partner does.
6. Slam is almost certain. Bid 4 ♣s to start the ball rolling.

fast arrival - bid 4

cue bids 1-2-3





Splinter raises

The splinter bid is a useful addition to any pairs' bidding arsenal. It is a specialized type of raise that sometimes allows a partnership to bid a game or slam that might otherwise be missed.

A splinter raise is an unusual jump that shows four-card or longer support for the last bid suit, game-going values and shortness (a singleton or void) in the suit in which the jump occurred. For example:

Opener	Responder
1♥	4♣

Responder shows at least four hearts, opening values (approximately; more on this later) and club shortness.

How can you tell which jumps are splinters? They're usually defined as any new-suit response higher than a jump raise. That means that after a 1♥ opening, 3♠, 4♣ and 4♦ are all splinter raises, each showing a different singleton or void. After a 1♠ opening, 4♣, 4♦ and 4♥ are all splinter bids.

Why are these bids useful? Let's look at an example:

Opener	Responder
♠AK654	♠Q10987
♥KQ6	♥A542
♦862	♦5
♣A6	♣KQJ

After opener begins with 1♠, responder bids 4♦. From opener's point of view, this is good news. She knows that her partner has at most one diamond, making it safe to explore for slam. Why? Opener doesn't have to worry about the three low diamonds in her hand.

Whether opener uses Blackwood

or cuebids, 6♠ is easy to reach and almost certain to succeed. Notice that the partnership has a combined total of only 28 points, far less than the textbook 33 points suggested for bidding a small slam.

If responder had splintered in a different suit (hearts, for example) opener should take a more pessimistic view of things and settle for game only.

How strong does responder need to be to make a splinter bid? Partnerships may, of course, define them as they please, but many players have found that restricting responder to 13 to 15 points (which includes distribution) makes it easier for opener to know what to do. With a weaker hand, other types of raises are available to responder. The same is true for stronger hands.

Opener may make a splinter bid as well. Here's an example:

Opener	Responder
♠AJ65	♠KQ743
♥9	♥876
♦KQJ4	♦932
♣AQ102	♣J4

After 1♦ by opener, responder bids 1♠. Opener then jumps to 4♥, a splinter bid. What does it mean when opener uses this type of jump? It shows a fit for responder's suit (at least four cards), an excellent hand (remember, responder could have a minimum hand, as in the example) and shortness in the bid suit.

Responder will retreat to 4♠ after the 4♥ splinter, but will be pleased when he sees the dummy. With only 22 combined HCP, the spade game

is a virtual lock, and 11 tricks are possible if the club finesse works.

Note that if splinters weren't being used on this deal, opener might have rebid 3♠. Responder, with such a weak hand, would certainly have passed, and the good game would have been missed.

Can you use splinters after a 1♣ or a 1♦ opening? Yes, as long as you discuss this with partner. After a 1♣ opening, 3♦, 3♥ and 3♠ would all be splinter bids. If opener starts with 1♦, 3♥, 3♠ and 4♣ would be splinters.

There are other applications for splinters in different auctions. Consider this:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2♥	3♠

Since the partnership has already agreed on hearts, should 3♠ be a natural bid? Many partnerships believe that it should not. Instead, they treat it as a splinter raise, showing game-forcing values and spade shortness.

Remember, you must discuss this treatment with partner. It's important to specify the strength of splinter raises as well as whether they can be used in other constructive auctions such as the last example. □

Did you know?

ACBL Hall of Famer Dorothy Truscott (formerly Hayden) is credited with popularizing splinter raises in the early Sixties.