

Stamford Bridge Club

30th September 2015

Splinter Bids

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Let's start by looking at and bidding a hand

(Board 1 - Talk)

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**So we bid to 4♠ and we made ten tricks.
Seems all right.**

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**Now we'll change round the minor suit
holding and see how things now go**

(Board 2- Talk)

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Again we bid to 4♠ but we make twelve tricks.

The hands are very similar but there's a two trick difference.

Something doesn't seem right. Why does the second hand make two more tricks?

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The answer lies in how well the hands fit together

On board 2 look at the diamonds

♦ A Q 6

♦ K 5 2

Excellent fit – all honours worth a trick

And look at the clubs

♣ 8 7 4

♣ 3

No wastage – we have small cards that we can always ruff

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And, in contrast, on board 1 we have

♦ A Q 6

♦ 3

Wasted values – we prefer to ruff small cards, not ruff cards of value

And look at the clubs

♣ 8 7 4

♣ K 5 2

Long suits fitting poorly – the king has no support and can be attacked easily

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So can we improve our bidding so that on Board 1 we can judge to bid to 4♠ but on Board 2 we can sail into 6♠?

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Yes, by using **Splinter Bids**

Over an opening 1level bid a **splinter bid** is a response that shows:

Values for game

A void or singleton in the bid suit

Four or more trumps

Looking at these points individually:

1. Values for game

Somewhat self-evident but as we are going to commit to game we should have sufficient values between the two hands

Over a major,

10 hcps may be sufficient

(if you're a losing trick afficianado, a seven loser hand in response will be enough and such hands can contain as few as 10 hcps)

Over a minor,

We should have a little more (12+) since we may have to bid to the 5level if we don't stop off in 3N

Agreeing the minor denies a 4card major

2. A void or singleton in the bid suit

When responder shows where the shortage is, partner can assess how well the two hands fit together. The goodness of the fit is influenced by what cards lie opposite the shortage

Great holdings

A 4 3 2	opposite	5
5 4 3 2	opposite	6

We say there is no wastage (of honours) and we prefer to ruff small cards

Bad holdings

A Q 10	opposite	2
K J 9 8	opposite	2
K Q 6	opposite	2

Here we have much wastage of honour cards, crediting honour points but making tricks often by ruffing them

3. Four or more trumps

Because the hand opposite the shortage will have length there, we want to have sufficient trumps to deal with those (possible) losers

Q : How do we make the splinter bid?

A : After a 1level opening, by making a double jump in a new suit

1♣ 3♦/3♥/3♠
Splinter raise
nb – no 4card major

1♦ 3♥/3♠/4♣
Splinter raise
nb – no 4card major

1♥ 3♠/4♣/4♦
Splinter raise

1♠ 4♣/4♦/4♥
Splinter raise

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Let's return to our hands, now in a World of Splinters

(Board 1 – Talk)

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(Board 2 – Talk)

So, of splinters, we'll find

They lead to greater bidding accuracy – pinpointing shortages puts the high cards in the other suits

Slams, on minimal values, become easier to bid (the power of fit and distribution)

They represent a “negative” control – they have no high card value but limit the defence (to at most one trick in the suit) and make it easier to see what ruffs can be taken

Distinction can be made between positive controls (cue bids) and negative ones (splinters)

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We can use splinters in other situations

1. Opener agrees responder's suit by making a **double jump** in a lower-ranking suit

As responder could have 5/6 hcp for a 1level response, opener should have a good 17+hcp hand [after a 2level response we can bring this down, say, to a good 14+]

e.g. 1♦ 1♠
 4♣

 1♥ 2♣
 4♦

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2. Opener agrees responder's suit by making a **single jump** in a higher-ranking suit at the three level

This is unusual as it isn't forcing to game. Responder can seek to sign-off in 3 of the agreed suit. For this reason the opener can be shaded – down to a good 13 hcp hand.

e.g. 1♦ 1♠
 3♥

 1♣ 1♥
 3♦

These jumps are not needed as natural bids because the reverses into 2♥ (on the 1st hand) and 2♦ (on the 2nd) are natural, forcing and showing extras

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3. Opener agrees responder's suit and responder jumps in a new suit

Opening hand opposite opening hand = game, means responder can do this with 13+ hcp

e.g. 1♣ 1♥
 2♥ 4♦

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Some notes of caution

1. 1♠ – 4♥ is a splinter raise so be careful when you have long hearts

Holding

♠ 2
♥ K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 Bid 2♥ (playing
♦ 7 strength) then
♣ Q 6 5 rebid 4♥

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2. When we make an artificial bid (here the splinter) we give the opponents the opportunity to double

e.g. 1♥ (P) 4♣* (X) ... ?

We're not concerned about them doubling for the lead (we'll only lose one trick) but they might find a profitable sacrifice in 5♣

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3. If we splinter with an honour (especially an ace) partner will devalue his honour holding in the suit

e.g. holding ♦ K Q 2 and hearing a 4♦ splinter (*made with ♦A*) we'll think our holding is wasted ... but it isn't

3. (*continued*) Three things you can do:

Ignore it as a problem

Never splinter with a singleton ace (treat as "balanced" – more in a later workshop on these raises to game+)

Consider whether the ace of the splinter suit could be useful to partner, e.g.

♠ A	
♥ J 6 4 2	Over 1♥ bid 3♠ as
♦ Q J 10 8 7	♠ KQ with partner
♣ K Q 2	isn't useful

But with

♠ A	
♥ J 6 4 2	Over 1♥ don't bid 3♠ as
♦ Q J 10 8 7	♠ KQ with partner
♣ A 3 2	is potentially useful

(club discards)

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**Before we start ... one last hand (Board 3
– Talk) and ...**

Next week

7th October

**Some more discussion
on **splinters** before we
play our usual
supervised pairs session**