

Don't Forget the Minors



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In Modern Bridge

- We tend to overlook the minor suits.
- Players sometimes have the notion that opening a minor suit is just a step toward finding a major suit fit.
- We often think that when partner opens a minor suit, she will have only 3 cards.
- Opening with a 3 card minor is relatively rare.

Opening a Minor Suit

- Most people play the when you have 3-3 in the minors you always open clubs.
- With ♠ A K 4 2 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ K Q 9 ♣ 10 4 3, open 1♣.
- Then, whenever you open 1♦, you will be around 90% likely to have 4 or more cards.
- So the only distribution, you open 1♦ with 3 cards is: ♠ A K 4 2 ♥ Q 10 9 7 ♦ K Q 9 ♣ 10 4.

When Partner Opens a Minor

- She might have:

♠ A J 4

♥ Q 9

♦ K J 9 7 3

♣ Q 4 3

- Or even this


♠ 4

♥ Q 9

♦ K J 9 7 3

♣ A Q 10 4 3

When Responding to a Minor Suit Opening Bid

- Don't forget the major suits
- Partner opens 1 
- You may want to show your good diamond support, but it is best to show the major suit first.

 K J 8 4

 A 9

 K J 9 7 3

 4 3

When Responding to a Minor Suit Opening Bid

- Partner opens 1 ♦

♠ J 8 4 2

♥ A 9 4

♦ 3

♣ Q J 9 4 3

- You're not strong enough to bid 2 ♣. even in Standard American.
- Bid your spade suit and, unless partner makes a forcing bid, you will pass partner's next bid.

When Responding to a Minor Suit Opening Bid


- Partner opens 1 

 Q J 4 2

 A 9 4

 3

 A Q J 9 4

- Here you are strong enough to bid 2 .
- Show your longest suit then bid spades.
- Partner will know that your clubs are longer than spades.
- And that your hand is strong enough to respond at the 2 level.

When Responding to a Minor Suit Opening Bid


- Partner opens 1 

 Q J 4

 A 9 4

 7 3

 Q J 9 4 3

- When you have a relatively balanced distribution think about bidding no trump.
- Playing standard you could bid 2  with this hand, but 1nt is better.

When You Raise Partner's Minor Describes Your Hand

Partner opens 1 ♣

♠ Q J 4

♥ A 9 4

♦ 3 2

♣ A Q J 9 4

When you directly raise partner's ♣.

- You give information about your distribution as well as your strength.
- When you raise clubs, you inform partner that you do not have a major suit to bid.

Most Players Prefer to Play Inverted Minors

Partner opens 1 ♣

♠ K J 4

♥ A 9

♦ J 10 2

♣ Q J 10 7 4

How would you bid this
hand after partner opens 1
♣

- You have opening count along with partner.
- What contract do you want to reach?
- Most Likely not 5 ♣,
- 3 no trump would seem better but you must be sure you have all the suits controlled.

Most Players Prefer to Play Inverted Minors

Partner opens 1 ♣

♠ Q 3 2

♥ 9

♦ J 10 2

♣ K J 10 7 4

How would you bid this
hand after partner opens 1

♣

- With standard bidding methods, you might bid 2 ♣.
- That would not do much to interfere with the opponents.
- Inverted bidders bid 3 ♣.
- Tells partner I don't have a major suit to bid and my hand is useless unless clubs are trump.

Most Players Prefer to Play Inverted Minors

Partner opens 1 ♣

♠ K J 4

♥ A 9

♦ 10 7 2

♣ K J 10 7 4

The bidding message: I
have a good fit, a good
hand, no major suit, and
game interest.

- Playing standard bidding, you would bid 3 ♣, with this hand.
- Then, it will be difficult to learn whether or not you have all suits controlled, before you are past 3nt.
- Playing Inverted minors, you would respond 2 ♣, with this hand.
- Using the Idea of slow arrival.

Inverted Minors

Partner opens 1 ♣

♠ Q J 3

♥ A 9

♦ 10 7 2

♣ K J 10 7 4

Opener's hand might be

♠ 10 9 5 2

♥ K J 10

♦ Q J 4

♣ A Q 5 2

- With this hand, most players prefer to respond 2 ♣.
- Which communicates the same message: I have a good fit, no 4-card major and game interest.
- Must be alerted.

How Do You Explore for Game After an Inverted Minor Bid?

Responder's hand

♠ Q J 3

♥ A 9

♦ 10 7 2

♣ K J 10 7 4

Suppose this is the opener's hand:

- ♠ 10 9 5
- ♥ K J 10 7
- ♦ K 9 8
- ♣ A Q 5 2

Opener Responder

1 ♣

2 ♣

2 ♦

2 ♥

3 ♣

3nt

Let's Change Responder's Hand

Responder's hand

♠ 7 3

♥ A Q

♦ Q 7 2

♣ K J 10 7 4

Suppose this is the
opener's hand:

- ♠ 10 9 5

- ♥ K J 10 7

- ♦ K 9 8

- ♣ A Q 5 2

Opener Responder

1 ♣

2 ♣

2 ♦

2 ♥

3 ♣

pass

Here's Another Example

Responder's hand

♠ 7

♥ Q 9

♦ A 7 2

♣ K J 10 7 4 3

Suppose this is the
opener's hand:

• ♠ 10 9 5

• ♥ K J 10 7

• ♦ K 9 8

• ♣ A Q 5 2

Opener Responder

1 ♣

2 ♣

2 ♦

2 ♥

3 ♣

5 ♣

Finding a Minor-Suit Slam

Responder's hand

♠ Q J 9

♥ A Q

♦ K J 7 5 2

♣ 7 4 3

Suppose this is the
opener's hand:

• ♠ K 7 5 3

• ♥ K 9 5 2

• ♦ A Q 10 9 8

• ♣

Opener Responder

1 ♦ 2 ♦

2 ♥ 2 ♠

4 ♣ 4 ♥

6 ♦

Key Bid ➡

Finding a Minor-Suit Slam

Responder's hand

♠ A Q 9

♥ A Q

♦ K J 7 5 2

♣ 7 4 3

Suppose this is the
opener's hand:

• ♠ K 7 5

• ♥ 9

• ♦ A Q 10 9 8

• ♣ A K 8 2

Opener Responder

1 ♦

2 ♦

2 ♠

3 ♥

4 ♣

4 nt

5 ♠

6 ♦

Final Thoughts

- When partner opens a minor suit, chances are strong that she has 4 or more cards.
- Especially if it is diamonds.
- Only one hand, where partner will open a three card diamond suit. 4-4-3-2
- You should play inverted minors.
- Be on the lookout for a minor suit slam.
- But be careful.