

TRIAL BIDS

Wednesday 1st February 2017

Typical way of trying for game

1 ♠ pass 2 ♠

3 ♠ pass ? raise to game with 8-10 HCP
pass with 6-7 HCP

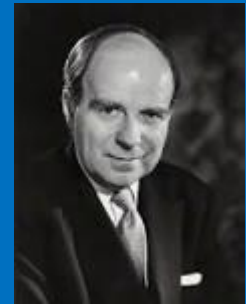
When we bid game, we find it's unmakeable

When we pass, we make game

Can we do better? Perhaps a trial bid!

BRIDGE IS AN EASY GAME

Iain Macleod
Falcon Press (1952)
(ISBN: 9780584100327)



This was the first book I read on bridge, it has a good explanation of trial bids and Eric Crowhurst refers to it in

“Precision Bidding in Acol”

What is a trial bid?

- You've opened one of a suit, usually a major
- Your partner has given you a simple raise
- You think there's a chance of game but you're weak in a particular 3 or 4-card suit
- You bid it to ask for help (the trial bid)
- It's forcing so partner must respond

What constitutes a simple raise

- 4-card support (exceptionally three)
- 6 to 9 HCP (sometimes even 10)
- 9 or 10 losers

What are losers?

- a void 0 losing tricks
- a singleton other than an A 1 losing trick
- a doubleton A K 0 losing tricks
- A x or K Q 1 losing trick
- K x 1½ losing tricks
- x x 2 losing tricks.
- a 3-card suit A K Q 0 losing tricks
- A K x 1 losing trick

Three card suits

- A Q x 1 ½ losing tricks
- K Q x 1½ losing tricks
- A x x 2 losing tricks
- K x x 2 losing tricks
- Q x x 2½ losing tricks
- x x x 3 losing tricks.
- The maximum of losers in a suit is 3

The opening bid is one of a major, why do you think there's game?

- You usually have a 5-card major (else 4 4 4 1)
- You have 5 or 6 losers overall
- You have 2 losers in the trial suit (3+ cards)
e.g. K x x, Q J x
- You have quick tricks elsewhere

What are quick tricks?

- 2 quick tricks = A K of the same suit
- 1½ quick tricks = A Q in the same suit
- 1 quick trick = A
- 1 quick trick = K Q in the same suit
- ½ quick trick = K x (not K singleton)
- not a quick trick = Q J x
that's a slow trick

Partner's response

- Maximum HCP and 9 losers – bid game
- Minimum HCP and 10 losers, no help in trial suit – sign off in three of the major
- 9 or 10 losers but not maximum HCP –
if you have a void, singleton, Q x, Q J x, K x x
or better in the trial suit then bid game

Example of a trial bid

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ 7	♠ 8 6 5	1 ♥	2 ♥
♥ K Q T 8 6 2	♥ A 7 5 3	3 ♦	4 ♥
♦ K 8 4	♦ Q J 6 2		
♣ A T 2	♣ 9 5		
12 HCP + 2 for length in trumps 6 – losers	7 HCP 9 – losers help in diamonds		

Rejecting the game try

WEST		EAST	
♠ 7		♠ Q J 5	
♥ K Q T 8 6 2		♥ A 7 5 3	
♦ K 8 4		♦ 9 7 6 2	
♣ A T 2		♣ 9 5	
12 HCP + 2 for length in trumps 6 – losers		7 HCP 9 – losers but no help in diamonds	
		WEST	EAST
		1 ♥	2 ♥
		3 ♦	3 ♥

What is your second bid with this hand?

♠ J 7
♥ A Q 8 3
♦ K Q J 4
♣ A J 5

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
?	

18 HCP

6 losers

**You don't always make a trial bid,
here you can make a limit bid**

WEST	EAST
♠ J 7	♠ 8 6
♥ A Q 8 3	♥ J T 5 2
♦ K Q J 4	♦ A 6 3 2
♣ A J 5	♣ 9 5 4
18 HCP 6 losers	5 HCP 10 losers

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
2 NT	3 ♥

**Opener has shown
17-18 HCP.**

**Return to hearts
because of the
general weakness.**

Let's change that hand a little

WEST
♠ A J 7 2
♥ A Q 8 3
♦ K Q J 4
♣ J

18 HCP

5 losers

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
?	

Example with a 4-4-4-1 shape

WEST	EAST
♠ A J 7 2	♠ K 6
♥ A Q 8 3	♥ K 9 5 4 2
♦ K Q J 4	♦ T 6 2
♣ 7	♣ 8 6 4
17 HCP	6 HCP
5 losers	9 losers

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
2 ♠	4 ♥

You have the absolute minimum HCP but a vital spade.

9 losers but reluctant to sign off

- You don't have a good enough fit in the trial suit
- You're reluctant to sign off since you have another useful holding.
- Make a return trial bid if you can bid it below three of the major.

Reluctant to sign off

Responder

♠ A T 3

♥ 7 5

♦ K T 9 4 3

♣ J 9 2

8 HCP

9 losers

1 ♠ 2 ♠

3 ♣¹ 3 ♦²

¹ trial bid

² return trial bid, not sure that there's
enough in clubs to justify game

Another return trial bid

WEST	EAST
♠ A J 7 2	♠ 8 6 4
♥ A Q 8 2	♥ K J 5 3
♦ K Q J 4	♦ A 6 5
♣ J	♣ 9 6 5
18 HCP	8 HCP
5 losers	10 losers

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
2 ♠	3 ♦
4 ♥	

No help in spades but
a useful diamond holding.
This is a return trial bid

Opener has both majors

The trial bid is made in the other major

i.e. 1 ♥ 2 ♥ or 1 ♠ 2 ♠
2 ♠ 3 ♥

If you have 4-card support for the second major, raise this suit if you would have bid game in the first major suit.

Example

WEST
♠ K J 7 3
♥ A J 7 5 2
♦ A K 9
♣ 7

16 HCP
6 losers

EAST
♠ A 8 6 4
♥ Q 9 6 4
♦ Q 7 3
♣ 9 2

8 HCP
9 losers

WEST	EAST
1 ♥	2 ♥
2 ♠ ¹	3 ♠ ²
4 ♠ ³	

¹ trial bid

² double fit ?

³ oh yes!

Responder's suit is supported

WEST	EAST
♠ 3	♠ 8 6 5 2
♥ A J 8 3	♥ K Q 5 3
♦ K J T 4	♦ A 6
♣ A 9 5 4	♣ J T 8

13 HCP

7 losers

10 HCP

8 losers

W	N	E	S
1 ♦	pass	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	2 ♠	3 ♣ ¹	pass
4 ♥			

¹ Partner must be short in spades, trial bid in clubs because of the diamond Ace doubleton

The opening bid is one of a minor

A trail bid acquires a slightly different meaning.

1 ♣

2 ♣

2 ♠

The opener's 2♠ bid is still a trail bid in the sense that it cannot be passed, but the objective is more likely to be 3NT rather than the distant 5♣

♠ A J 7 2

♥ 8

♦ A K T

♣ K Q 7 5 4

1 ♣ 2 ♣

2 ♠ trial bid

Bid 2♠, the best forward-going move available. While you are prepared to play in 5♣ if partner has little to spare, you should investigate other possible game contracts first. If partner signs off in 3♣, make a further try by bidding 3♦. Partner should bid 3NT with good heart stops else 5♣.

Trial bids after a double raise

1 ♠ 3 ♠

4 ♣

In the 80's this was treated as a slam trial bid holding something like

♠ A K x x x x

♥ 8

♦ A K T

♣ Q J x x

but today it's usually taken as a cue bid with first round control in ♣ inviting partner to cue bid.

To summarise

- Trial bids are mostly used after a simple raise of a major suit
- They are an alternative to opener inviting game by bidding three of the major
- Opener 's major suit is usually 5+ cards and opener shows a 5 or 6 loser hand with two losers in the trial suit
- Trial bids ask for a useful holding in that suit Q x, Q J x or better
- It works because losers disappear from the combined hands e.g. Q x opposite opener's K x x

**There are articles on game try
& hand evaluation in Wikipedia**

Now lets play some hands

Board: 1

Dealer: N

None Vul

♠AJ976

♥5

♦A542

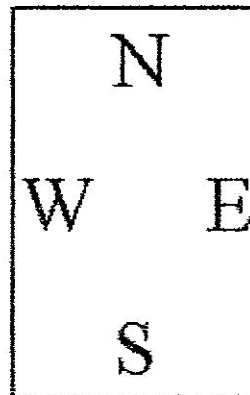
♣KQ7

♠542

♥AQ1062

♦93

♣A43



♠3

♥K743

♦QJ1086

♣J108

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	1	5			3
S	1	5			3
E			2		
W			2		

♠KQ108

♥J98

♦K7

♣9652

		14	
10	HCP		7
		9	

Board: 2

Dealer: E

NS Vul

♠A102
♥7
♦K10853
♣J942

♠43
♥J10932
♦Q92
♣A75

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠KQJ98
♥A5
♦A64
♣Q103

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N			1		
S			1		
E	2	4		4	3
W	2	4		4	3

♠765
♥KQ864
♦J7
♣K86

	7	
8	HCP	16
	9	

Board: 3

Dealer: S

EW Vul

♠753
♥AK103
♦543
♣1097

♠J1042
♥QJ86
♦76
♣KJ4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠K9
♥954
♦J1098
♣A852

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	3	4	3	3	3
S	3	4	3	3	3
E					
W					

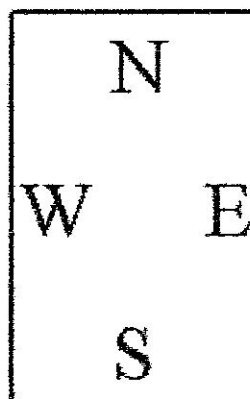
♠AQ86
♥72
♦AKQ2
♣Q63

	8	
7	HCP	8
	17	

Board: 4
 Dealer: W
 All Vul

♠A10932
 ♥J
 ♦1098
 ♣Q863

♠7
 ♥KQ10764
 ♦K42
 ♣A102



♠J85
 ♥A853
 ♦QJ63
 ♣95

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N		3			3
S		3			3
E	1		4	2	
W	1		4	2	

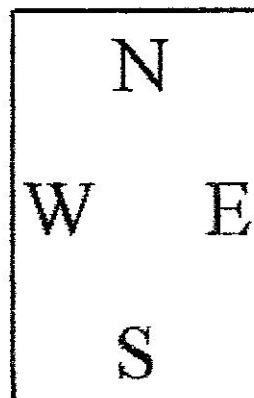
♠KQ64
 ♥92
 ♦A75
 ♣KJ74

	7	
12	HCP	8
	13	

Board: 5
 Dealer: N
 NS Vul

♠1042
 ♥A843
 ♦932
 ♣A43

♠AJ965
 ♥2
 ♦A54
 ♣KQ76



♠8
 ♥K9765
 ♦KQJ10
 ♣1082

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	1	3			1
S	1	3			1
E			2	1	
W			2	1	

♠KQ73
 ♥QJ10
 ♦876
 ♣J95

	14	
8	HCP	9
	9	

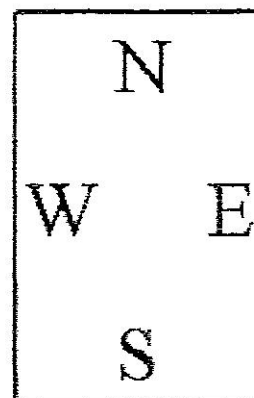
Board: 6

Dealer: E

EW Vul

♠K742
♥K85
♦9832
♣64

♠108
♥Q963
♦KQ10
♣7532



♠AQ653
♥A7
♦J765
♣KQ

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N			2		2
S			2		2
E	2	3		3	
W	2	3		3	

♠J9
♥J1042
♦A4
♣AJ1098

	7	
6	HCP	16
	11	

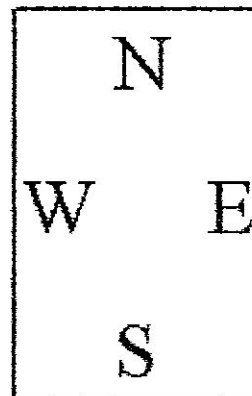
Board: 7

Dealer: S

All Vul

♠ J94
♥ J743
♦ KQ98
♣ AJ

♠ K872
♥ 852
♦ A3
♣ 9863



♠ 10
♥ KQ109
♦ 1075
♣ 107542

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	2	4			
S	2	4			
E			2	1	
W			2	1	

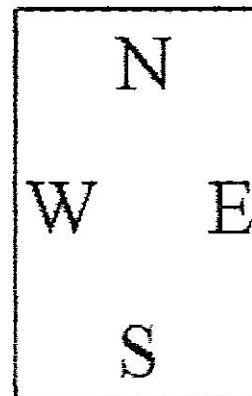
♠ AQ653
♥ A6
♦ J642
♣ KQ

	7	
12	HCP	5
	16	

Board: 8
 Dealer: W
 None Vul

♠3
 ♥K743
 ♦QJ1086
 ♣J108

♠AJ976
 ♥52
 ♦A54
 ♣KQ7



♠KQ108
 ♥J98
 ♦K7
 ♣9652

	N	♠	♥	♦	♣
N			1	1	
S			2	1	
E	2	4			2
W	2	4			2

♠542
 ♥AQ106
 ♦932
 ♣A43

		7	
14	HCP		9
		10	