



## *Issue 15: January 2009 BridgeHands Newsletter*

### **Forcing Bids, Part II**

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**Dear Bridge Friend,**

Welcome to **Bridgehands** eMag Newsletter, Issue 15. In this issue, we continue our exploration of forcing bids. As we learned in Part I, categorically we have three types of bids: forcing, invitational, and signoff calls. We learned that when responder bids a new suit, it's forcing for one round. In this issue, we will explore bidding in competitive auctions, balancing bidding and other challenging auctions. We should caution you that this newsletter may be too advanced for our newcomers. In fact, many of our novice players will be challenged with some of these bidding scenarios. No worry – you can profit from those auctions that meet your comfort level and save the tough ones for later in your Bridge career. We have underlined the bids we believe are the most challenging, including bids that likely require a partnership agreement before you begin playing. But as long as you are up to speed with [Part I of our Forcing Bids newsletter](#), you should have a sound bidding foundation. And hopefully you'll take solace knowing from time to time we will ponder forcing/non-forcing bids in our fair game. [Quiz yourself here on forcing bids.](#)

Also in this newsletter, we're up to the Rule of 13 in our "Rules of" tips. Oops, we are not aware of such a rule but fear not, we'll wing it and come up with our own variation of how to use the number 13. Sometimes 13 is a "lucky" number after all.

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## Forcing Bids – Persuasive bidding for the strong silent type!

Recall in our last issue we learned that when we make a call, our partner determines if our bid is forcing, invitational, or a signoff attempt. For our newsletter series we will use the modern Standard American system with 5 card majors, takeout and negative doubles, preemptive weak two opening bids and briefly touch on cuebids. Here again is a brief review of bidding basics:

Signoff: Either partner bids or rebids Notrump at the lowest available level.

Signoff: Either partner rebids either their own suit or partner's suit at the lowest level.

Forcing: One partner opens the bidding and the other partner responds with a new suit (unless partner already passed the bidding).

Invitational: Including a jump bid in partner's suit or a raise to 2 Notrump after partner's opening 1 Notrump bid.

It's probably worth restating some basic thoughts on how to be a good partner:

1. Learn the basics of what bids are forcing, invitational, and signoff.
2. Be aware of who's "captain" (in control) – the partner of the bidder limiting hand.
3. Avoid making confusing bids that will torture partner – don't "get creative" at the table.
4. Consider all strange bids as forcing.
5. When a bid could be interpreted as natural, take that inference.
6. Never mastermind the bidding – bid your values.
7. New bids show new values – suit rebids should show extra length (don't repeat yourself).
8. Never pass a known forcing bid by partner. Even if you think you know the bid as right, your partner may not trust you again.
9. When an opponent makes an intervening bid after a forcing bid by partner, you may temporarily pass knowing partner will not pass. Freebids generally show extra values unless signing off in game.
10. When partner made a forcing bid and you are forced to make a difficult call, consider making the cheapest available non-conventional suit bid (not notrump).
11. For mortal partners, avoid psyches (false bids). Your partner may neither understand nor appreciate the "joke." If you elect to psyche, take full responsibility for the false bid and be prepared to apologize to partner.
12. Do not make bids that punish your partner, such as passing and then pushing the bidding after partner made a balancing bid in the passout seat.

Also recall that both the opener and responder hand strengths come in three varieties: maximum, medium, minimum. According to partner's bid and our hand strength, partner's bid takes one of three forms: forcing, invitational, signoff.

Opener: 12-15 minimum, 16-18 medium, 19-21 maximum (22+ super maximum).

Responder: 6-9/10 minimum, 10-12 medium, 12/13+ maximum.

Game is at the 4 level in a major suit or 3 Notrump game, requiring 25/26 playing points. Figure on adding 4 points to go up each bidding level, so a 5 level minor suit game requires 29 playing points; a small slam at the 6 level requires 33 or more points with a 7 level grand slam requiring 37+ points with all the attendant Aces and Kings.

Okay, let's jump into bidding some challenging auctions and their meanings:

1C – 2N; Game forcing (denies a four card major) according to the Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC). However, today many play this call as invitational when playing the modern Standard American system. As always, be sure you and your partnership agree on your methods **before** you sit down at the table.

1H – 4N; Most play 4 Notrump as Ace asking Blackwood convention.

2N – 4C; Many play 4C as Ace asking Gerber convention over partner's Notrump call.

1H – 1S; Responder could rebid 2 or 3 Notrump with a stopper. For most bidding systems, bidding the fourth suit is a forcing bid asking opener for a further hand description. But after this auction where opener rebids 3 Notrump, partnership agreements are needed how to ask for Aces (4C, 5C, 4N?)

1D – 2S; Typically a strong jump shift by responder, game forcing (16-18 points) with a great self-sustaining suit and interest in slam in the specified suit (setting trump suit).

1S – 1N; Strong jump shift by opener – game forcing, showing 19+21 points.  
3D

1D – (X) – 3D; For many classic bidders, 3 Diamonds in a limit raise. However, the modern style is to play skip bids after opponents' takeout double as a weak jump raise (preemptive with less than 6 points). Incidentally, while a weak jump raise is not alertable in this auction, it may be "kosher" for opener to alert your opponents of such treatment when playing in a friendly social game.

1D – (X) – 2S; Ditto here – the modern style considers a jump in a new suit as a weak jump shift. With 6+ points, responder can simply bid their 4+ card suit (forcing), signoff in 1 Notrump with 8-10 points, invite 2 Notrump with 11-12 point, or redouble with 10+ points and lacking a clear suit bid.

1N – 2C; Making a 2 Notrump rebid is not a proper Stayman response; responder is captain so opener must either bid 2 of a four card major suit or 2 Diamonds without a four card major. The only exception is when an opponent intervenes before opener's rebid.

1C – 2D; Partnership agreement, possibly strong jump shift or a conventional bid.

1D – 3C; Partnership agreement, possibly strong jump shift or a similar conventional bid.

1N – 3C/D; Partnership agreement – one popular treatment uses responder's minor suit jump here to invite 3 Notrump game with good 6 cards in minor suit (invitational). Opener passes or accepts the 3 Notrump invitation with help in the minor suit (usually 3 cards in the minor).

1N – 3H/S; Partnership agreement, classically slam interest in the major suit.

1N – 2C; Partnership agreement – probably game forcing as well as a slam try in the minor  
2x – 3C; suit (legacy treatment was a signoff bid).

1H – 3C; Likely a strong jump shift, but some use special conventions – partnership agreement.

1C – 1S; Generally, responder's new suit rebid is forcing one round (but see below).  
2C – 2H;

1C – 1S; A challenging auction – opener's 1 Notrump rebid shows a balanced 12-14 points.  
1N – 2H; But unlike the above auction, after opener rebids 1 Notrump then responder's rebid in a lower suit is not forcing. Yes, at first this is subtle difference is confusing! Many emerging players are not aware that this bidding scenario "should be" non-forcing, figuring any new suit bid by responder should be forcing. Regardless, it's far more important to be in tune with partnership methods than be technically right according to generally accepted Bridge standards.

1H – 1S; For most, responder's jump in new suit is game forcing. However, some advanced  
1N – 3C; players prefer to play this auction as non-forcing (when playing [New Minor Forcing](#)).

1C – 1H; A [reverse](#) rebid by responder is game forcing, promising 12+ points.

2C – 2S; Okay, what's a reverse you ask? A reverse is when a player "breaks the barrier" from one bidding level to a higher level and also rebids in a higher ranking suit (the second suit is *always* shorter). In this example, responder indeed made a reverse by both raising the bidding from the one to two level and bidding a higher ranking suit at the higher level – from 1 Heart to 2 Spades. If this is a bit much to remember, consider the challenge of opener's next bid. In most situations, opener will not have a fit with responder's second suit. At this point opener must make a difficult 3 level bid to support responder's first bid. Thus, a reverse bid is forcing – game forcing by responder and at least one round forcing when opener makes a reverse. Now let's look at opener's reverse.

1C – 1H; Here it's the opener that is making a reversing call, first bidding 1 Club then  
2D both breaking the barrier into the 2 level and rebidding a higher ranking Diamond suit. Again note partner, here the responder, must rebid at the 3 level to support either of opener's suits. And since responder may only hold 6 HCP, it makes sense that opener should hold 17 or more points to ensure the partnership can make a 3 level contract.

1H – 1S; Classically responder's new minor suit rebid is at best invitational after opener  
1N – 2D; rebids 1 Notrump, with responder showing an apparent misfit after opener's Notrump rebid. However, advanced players use the new minor suit as an artificial (forcing) treatment, known as the [New Minor Forcing](#) convention.

3C – 3H; One round forcing. If responder's rebid is yet another new suit after opener's rebid, the bid is game forcing (more common when opener begins with a preemptive weak two bid).

1H – 2H; Opener is making a [game try](#) after reaching a suit agreement; typically opener is  
3C seeking help in rebid suit.

1D – 1S; Bidding the fourth suit at the 2 or 3 level may be an artificial bid.

2C – 2H; At the 2 level, bidding the fourth suit is one round forcing (or game forcing, with partnership agreement).

1D – 1S; After partnership finds a major suit fit, responder's new suit bid is game forcing.  
2S – 3C;

A partnership should also discuss methods when partner is a passed hand or conventional bids are made in a competitive auction.

Now let's explore situations when an opponent overcalls with a double:

1D – (X) - P With a balanced 6-7 points and no 4+ card major or combined 8 card fit with partner, responder may temporarily pass. Playing Standard American 5 card major suit opening bids, responder requires 3 cards in the major suit to respond in opener's suit. However, when opener begins with a minor suit, it's a good idea for responder to hold 5+ cards in the suit since opener may have begun with a 3 card minor, e.g. a "convenient minor."

1S – (X) – XX One level suit redoubles by responder promises 10+ points. The opponents may begin squirming with adverse vulnerability. In fact, your side may enjoy more points when opponents are set when vulnerable at the 2 level than if your side had a non-vulnerable game. But be careful if the opponents have a long trump suit or your side has the makings of a slam.

1D – (X) – 2N Invitational, some play as showing a fit in opener's suit (the [Jordan convention](#)).

For those who are comfortable with responder redoubling with 10+ points and bidding Jordan 2 Notrump as a limit-plus raise in partner's opening bid suit, they may wish to play the advanced treatment below. For the rest of us mortals, we will stick to classic methods.

1C – (X) – 1S Most classic players adhere to the theory that *any* new suit bid by responder is forcing at least one round, showing a 4+ card suit. However, some advanced (duplicate) players play a peculiar treatment where responder's 1 level overcall shows a 5 card suit but is not forcing. Playing matchpoint scoring where making a Notrump contract enjoys a premium, these duplicate players bypass a four card major figuring it would be unlikely to find a major suit fit after RHO's double.

1D – (X) – 2C Here again, the classic treatment is that responder's new suit bid is forcing, always showing 5+ at the two level. But here again, some advanced (duplicate) players play responder's 2 level bid as not strictly forcing (less than 10 points after takeout double). But unless you are playing special methods with an advanced partner, it's best to consider partner's 2 level bid as forcing for one round.

When an opponent makes an intervening call after partner opens 1 Notrump:

1N – 2C Recall 2C [Stayman](#) is conventional, asking opener to bid a major or 2D.

1N – (2C) – X A convenient method is to play responder's double of the intervening 2C overcall is "Stayman" promising a 4 card major suit. While this treatment is fairly common, it's still an alertable bid since technically the double of 2 Clubs a conventional response.

1N – (2D) – ? How should responder show Hearts – bid 2H or double the intervening 2D overcall as a "stolen bid," implying a [Jacoby Transfer](#) to the next higher suit? While either method has merits, playing "[shadow doubles](#)" as a stolen bid is both forcing and alertable by opener since the call is conventional and not for penalty. More on Jacoby Transfers below.

1N – (P) – 2C – (X); With an intervening call by opponent, opener may pass without a better bid.

1N – 2D/2H/2S Playing [Jacoby Transfers](#), responder bids are conventional requiring opener to bid higher ranking suit bid.

1N – (P) – 2D/2H/2S – (X) Playing Jacoby transfers, opener may pass without a fit.

1N – 2D/2H/2S If not playing Jacoby transfers, the "standard treatment" for responders 2D/2H/2S bids are signoff. However, be certain your partner agrees with this standard agreement. Experience shows that even though a player does not play Jacoby transfers, a fair number of social Bridge players have their own idea that all responder 2 level bids are still forcing. So while you are technically "right" that 2D, 2H or 2S ought be signoff bids if not playing transfers, it's still a good idea to double-check with a new partner before sitting down to play.

This brings up an interesting question: should a partnership play peculiar or different forcing/non-forcing methods when playing Rubber Bridge with a part score? Bridge books and

teachers would generally say “no” but some partners have their own ideas. Know thy partner!

When partner makes a strong 2 Club artificial bid, responder’s methods vary. Playing 2 Diamonds as a waiting call is standard. With 8+ points and a very good 5+ card suit, responder can respond 2H, 2S, 3C, 3D; with a balanced 8+ count, responder bids 2 Notrump. However, some play conventional treatments as point step bids, control step bids, 2H bust, etc. Here we will focus on responder’s 2D response as a waiting bid.

2C – 2D;      Waiting, generally indicating less than 8 points.

2C – 2D;      Opener’s 2 Notrump rebid is invitational with 22-23 points, responder may pass  
2N - ?;      with a bust. Responder’s rebid should be treated the same as when an opener began with a 2 Notrump call. So if you are playing Stayman and Jacoby Transfers, these bids ought to apply here as well – just be sure your partner agrees before making these bids!

2C – 2D;      Opener’s suit rebid is one round forcing.  
2S

2C – 2D;      Responder’s jump bid after a strong 2C opener is game forcing.  
3H

2C – 2D;      How would responder bid Stayman or Gerber Ace asking? (4C/5C/4N)?  
3N - ?;      Know thy partner! Also, Jacoby Transfer bids would apply here.

2C – 2H;      Responder shows 8+ points and usually 2 of top 3 in a 5 card suit with slam interest, absolutely game forcing.

2C – 2N;      Responder shows 8-10 and interest in slam. Without very good honors in a suit, responder should not take away strong partner’s play of the hand. So responder’s 2 Notrump call could be with a fair 5 card suit.

2C – 2D;      A tough auction – many play opener’s 3H rebid as invitational but non-forcing.  
2H – 2S;      But holding a Queen or better, responder should try to bid game somewhere.  
3H

2C – 2D;      Responder’s 2D bid followed by the cheaper non-bid minor suit is known as a  
2H – 3C;      “double negative” warning opener of poor values. At this point, opener must set the final contract in partscore or game.

2C – 3H;      Now here’s an odd bid that responder should avoid without a prior partnership agreement. Fundamentally, it’s considered anti-partnership for the player with the weak hand to autonomously steer the auction. Unlike the scenario where responder is “captain” when opener begins with a Notrump call, the 2C opener has a strong say on steering the auction. Some partnerships use the irregular 3 level jump bid by responder to show a poor hand denying game values. If so, responder is asking strong opener to either allow responder to play in the named suit or bid game with extras. ***BridgeHands*** does not endorse peculiar bids that tend to confuse one’s partner or are easily forgotten, so be extra careful when making odd bids.

2C – (interference) - ?      When an opponent overcalls partner’s 2C strong opening bid, how should we proceed? Many partnerships ignore the overcall, where responder’s suit call is natural, promising a very good 5+ card suit and is forcing beneath game-level auctions.

2C – (2x) – P      Responder may pass opener’s strong 2C call in a “freebid” seat after an overcall; opener has another chance to make a call, such as:



2C – (2x) – P – (P);      Typically responder is forced to bid after opener's takeout double  
X – (P) – ?                      of Right Hand Opponent's suit. But if responder has a big trump stack in  
RHO's suit, it's a tough bid that requires careful consideration of vulnerability (penalty versus  
bonus points).

(1C) – X – (P) – ?    When partner makes a takeout double and responder passes, we are forced  
to make a bid in a new suit. As advancer, we make the lowest level bid to show 0-7/8 points  
(signoff), jump one level with 9–11 points (invitational) and either double-jump or cue-bid then  
opponent's suit to force game.

(1C) – X – (2C) – ?    When responder overcalls, the advancer is no longer forced to make a call.  
In this "freebid" situation, we may pass with lackluster values (less than about 4 points and no  
long suit).

When partner makes a takeout double, advancer is generally forced to bid.

(1D) – X – (P) – 1H;    With 0-7/8 points, advancer makes the lowest available suit bid.

(1D) – X – (P) – 2S;    Advancer's jump bid shows 9-11 points and is invitational.

(1S) – X – (P) – 1N;    With 6-8 points and at least one stopper, advancer may bid Notrump.

(1D) – 1H – (P) – 1N;    Incidentally, when partner overcalls in a suit and advancer has around 7-  
10 points and no better call, advancer may balance making a Notrump call (non-forcing). In  
most situations like the above auction, we should have 1.5 – 2 stoppers in opponents' suit to  
make a Notrump bid. But here, advancer's Notrump call does not promise a stopper after  
partner overcalls making a suit bid.

(1D) – X – (P) – 2D;    Advancer's cuebid of opponent's suit is game forcing (not natural).

(1D) – X – (P) – 1H;    When doubler raises advancer's minimum bid, typically it's invitational  
(P) – 2H                      although some play the bid simply as competitive.

(1C) – ?      What should the overcaller bid when holding a very good hand with 17+ points? We  
don't want our partner to pass with a lackluster 8 points, so how do we alert partner we hold a  
terrific hand seeking game when partner holds 8+ points. A nice treatment is to first double,  
then rebid Notrump or a long self-sustaining suit (5+ cards with very good honors). Here's the  
theory: when advancer is asked to pick from among 3 suits and overcalling partner then **denies**  
advancers request for help, the advancer is alerted partner has a terrific hand. Playing this  
treatment, overcaller's double and irregular follow-up bid is strongly invitational. Note: some  
partnerships do not play this treatment – their treatment is called an "off-shape double" (doubler  
does not promise a 3+ card side suit nor promise a strong hand when rebidding a different suit  
than advancer's bid suit.

(1H) – X – (P) – 1S;    When opener doubles and bids a new suit, it shows 16-21 points and is  
(P) – 2C                      highly invitational

(1H) – X – (P) – 1S;    When overcaller doubles, advancer dutifully bids a new suit, and  
(P) – 2H                      overcaller next cuebids the opponent's suit, the cuebid is game forcing.

Entire books have been written on cuebids – we won't attempt to cover all the permutations  
here. Basically, when partner bids the opponents' suit, pard is "cueing" with a strong forcing  
response. Depending on the bidding scenario, cuebids can be used to:

Show a strong suit fit with partner.  
Show a two-suited hand.  
Show a control in a suit (Ace, King or shortness).  
Show a stopper in a suit.  
Ask for a stopper in a suit.  
Show a half-stopper in a suit.

For the curious and brave Bridge players, we refer you to our [\*\*BridgeHands Encyclopedia covering cuebidding\*\*](#). In summary, without interference all cuebids are forcing, including [\*\*Limit Plus Raise\*\*](#), [\*\*Western Cuebid\*\*](#), [\*\*Eastern Cuebid\*\*](#), [\*\*Control Showing\*\*](#), [\*\*Michaels Cuebid\*\*](#), [\*\*Splinter Bids\*\*](#), [\*\*Choice of Game Cuebid\*\*](#), [\*\*All Purpose\*\*](#), [\*\*Tops and Bottoms\*\*](#), [\*\*Colorful\*\*](#), [\*\*Unassuming\*\*](#) (exception: [\*\*Sandwich Overcall\*\*](#)). We've covered some above and give you another taste test below.

When your side interferes with the bidding, the overcaller and advancer bids take new meaning.

(1H) – 1S – (P) - ?; Without a fit, no 5+ card suit, and no stoppers in opponents' suit, it's okay to pass when holding less than 8 points. Remember, partner may have overcalled with 8 points. As we saw above, partner can first double and rebid Notrump or a new suit when holding a good 16-21 points.

(1D) – 1H – (P) – 1S Advancer's 1 level bid is non-forcing.

(1D) – 1H – (P) – 2C Advancer's 2 level bid in a new suit is constructive, some play as one round forcing.

(1D) – 1H – (P) – 2D; Cuebidding opponents' opening bid by advancer is one round forcing showing a fit with partner's suit. With a minimum, overcaller simply signs off with cheapest bid.

(1D) – 1H – (P) – 3D; A jump cue in opponents suit promises 4 trump and is an invitational limit raise.

1C – (1H) – 2H; However, when responder cuebids overcaller's suit, the cuebid is one round forcing.

(1D) – 2C – (P) – 2H; Partner's 2 level overcall shows opening values so responder's new bid is forcing one round. Most play the advancer should have a decent 5+ card suit to bid a new suit at the 2 level.

Okay, let's go back to our side opening the bidding but now the LHO overcalls. When an opponent overcalls below the agreed penalty double threshold (many partners like 3 Spades), responder may use a negative double in these situations. For instance, responder may be unable to make a 2 level bid which promises a 5 card suit and 10+ points. Here are some situations where the negative double allows responder to show values and no better call. Points held by negative doubler generally fall within these ranges:

1 level = 6+ points,  
2 level = 7-8+ points,  
3 level = good 8+ points.  
Here are some examples.



1D – (1H) – X Forces opener to rebid, showing 4 Spades and 6+ points; bid 1 Spade directly when holding 5+ Spades. Both bids are forcing.

1C – (1D) – X Promising 4-4 in the majors, forcing.

1D – (1N) – X As we will see below, here responder's bid is a penalty double (not a negative double) showing 8+ points. Why is this double used to invoke a penalty? Well, if opponents have a balanced hand without a fit, then it stands to reason your side will not have fit either. If it helps you to remember, this is called a "[Balance Of Power](#)" double.

1D – (2C) – X Forcing negative double, generally with 7+ points and no apparent fit

1D – (2H) – X Forcing, generally with 8+ points when opponent overcalls 2H or 2S. As the bidding level increases, the partnership needs additional points. By the way, with lots of cards in opponents' preempt suit and little else, consider passing and passing again after partner makes a reopening double. This technique is called making a penalty pass – opener should rebid a double with shortage in opponents' bid suit.

1D – (3C) – X Still forcing, generally with a good 8+ points and no apparent fit.

1D – (3S) – X Opponent is too high to compete, double is for penalty.

1D – (4H) – 4N Traditional treatment of responder's 4 Notrump here might be Ace asking Blackwood, while advanced players like to play 4 Notrump here as "takeout." As always, double-check with your partner before making peculiar bids. No surprises please!

1H – (4S) – 4N However, when partner opens in a major suit, responder's 4 Notrump is still [Blackwood](#) asking opener to show Aces. Again, these bids are for advancing partnerships that probably play Duplicate Bridge with a fair number of other conventions.

When opponents interfere with the bidding, partner is not required to immediately respond to a forcing bid.

1C – (P) – 1H – (1S);  
P Lacking a Heart fit with responder, opener may temporarily pass.

1H – (P) – 1S – (1N);  
P Opponent's Notrump bid may be artificial. Opponents may be playing the conventional "[Sandwich Notrump](#)" treatment, overcalling 1 or 2 Notrump between the opposition's two suit bids. Playing the Sandwich Notrump convention shows length in the remaining two suits. Of course, this artificial bid is alertable and would be forcing unless the opener made an intervening call.

1N – (X) – XX After opponent doubles partner for penalty, a redouble is "SOS" forcing opener to bid 2C. Note: earlier we saw responder's redouble showed 10+ points. However when the opponent's double is for penalty it makes sense to change the meaning the redouble to an escape bid. After opener puppets to 2 Clubs, responder may then pass or correct to a long weak suit and opener must pass.

1D – (1H) – 2C – (2H);  
P Responder shows 10+ points, so opener may make a forcing pass in the freebid seat.

1D – (X) – 2C – (2H);  
P Let's begin by reviewing the first 3 bids. Opener shows 12+ points, doubler probably shows 12+ points and responder shows 10+ points.

Thus, everyone should be aware the poor advancer holds less than 6 High Card Points. However, with a long suit and reasonable strength, responder may make a competitive 2 level bid. At this point, opener's pass should be taken as forcing (the partnership has 22+ points and should be able to hustle for a partscore or game.

2H – (P) – 2N – (3C);      Responder asks opener for a feature.  
P                                      After interference and lacking a feature, opener may pass.

1H – (P) – 3H – (3S);      Pass is not signoff, opener must bid 5H or double. This is known as a  
4H – (4S) – P                      [forcing pass](#).

Finally, try to avoid really confusing bids:

1H – 1N;      When in doubt, treat all strange bids as forcing. Responder could have bid 1S  
2D – 2S;      earlier but instead made a signoff bid of 1 Notrump. So with less than three or less  
Spades and nine-plus cards in the remaining suits, why is responder not supporting one of  
opener's suits?

1D – 1H;      Invitational by Rubber Bridge players, forcing by many Chicago/Duplicate players.  
3D – 4D;

1S – 2H;      Apparently forcing to 4N looking for slam. Some may play Gerber convention.  
3D – 3N;

1H – 3S/4C      Double jumps in a new suit are very unusual and game forcing, usually  
conventional. Advanced players treat unnecessarily high jumps as "[splinter](#)" bids, showing a 4+  
card fit in partner's suit and a singleton or void in the splinter suit. Unfortunately, all too many  
partnerships have at some point gotten confused by splinter bids. As the saying goes, you really  
haven't lived until you or your partner play in a 2-1 trump fit due to a terrible bidding  
misunderstanding – certainly opponents happily pass out such a mistaken auction!

1H – 4S              Triple jumps to game are usually signoff "to play", not slam invitational.

When a partner is in the passout seat, we should tolerate bids with fewer points. In the  
balancing (aka passout) seat, our partner is trying to compete in a partscore contract. One of  
three good things may happen: the partnership may make the contract, the opponents may  
continue bidding too high and get set, or we may go down a modest amount – less than the  
score opponents would otherwise enjoy.

A good rule of thumb is that in the balancing seat, "[borrow a King](#)" from your partner's hand.  
Adding 3 points often will help partner find a bid or make a reopening double in the passout seat.  
Of course, the balancer's partner must then remember to **subtract** 3 points when making follow-  
up bids. Just don't punish your partner by continuing to bid after pard makes a balancing seat  
bid! When you've already passed, your partner has the final word.

(1C) – P – (P) – 2C;      When partner bids opponents minor suit in passout seat, it is natural

(1H) – P – (P) – 2H;      However, when partner cuebids opponents known 5+ card major, it's a  
conventional cuebid requiring partnership agreement. One popular treatment is [Michaels Cuebid](#),  
showing 5+ Spades and an unspecified 5+ card suit here.

(1H) – P – (P) – 2N;      2 Notrump is not a cuebid in passout seat. In this auction, 2 Notrump  
shows 19-21 points with stoppers in the opponents' suit and interest in game.

Are you ready to test your skills on forcing bids? [Take a 20 question quiz here](#). Good luck!

## The Rule of 13:

Counting up in our "Rules of" we've arrived at the Rule of 13. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any arithmetic aids for number 13 so we'll have to wing it. Let's see, each player is dealt 13 cards. Aha, here's a thought. After you've been dealt your cards, you should always count your cards (face down) to ensure you've been dealt exactly 13 cards. Each player is responsible to count their own hand – no excuses please! If you were dealt the incorrect number of cards and either bid or played the hand, you could be penalized for your indiscretion. Many long-time Bridge players have a story where they were dealt an incorrect number of cards, bid and played a marvelous hand making slam, only to find on trick 13 that they were not dealt 13 cards. How sad or unlucky – take your pick! Regardless, 13 is indeed a lucky number of cards to hold when playing Bridge. One wonder's if that's the reason the Bridge Law authors covered this criteria on lucky [Law number 7](#)! How's that for a bit of irony!

## ***BridgeHands Back Issues***

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