

Raising Responder's Major with 3-Card Support

One of the basics of modern bidding is that an 8-card major fit is a desirable trump holding. Toward that end, we raised partner's 5-card major suit opening bids holding three card support.¹ When we open a minor, Responder bids a major and we hold three of Responder's major, the typical rebid is 1NT because raising Responder's major in this sequence implies 4-card support.

Example hand A in the diagram shows a typical 1NT rebid; B illustrates a raise on 4-card support. However, certain hand types do not lend themselves to either of these rebids, such as Hand C.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
?			

A	♠ Q 9 3 ♥ 6 5 2 ♦ K Q 10 6 ♣ A Q 5	B	♠ K 7 5 4 ♥ A K 3 ♦ Q J 6 2 ♣ 6 5	C	♠ A Q 2 ♥ A 10 5 4 ♦ Q 7 6 5 4 ♣ 4
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Guidelines

Rebid 1NT	12-14 playing points. 4333 or 4432 where xx is Qx or better.
Raise Major	12-15 playing points. 4-card support. 3-card support with shortness or with 4432 shape where xx is Jx or worse.

Advantages

- ❖ Responder often has a 5-card suit
- ❖ Blocks opponents more effectively
- ❖ Allows Responder to compete
- ❖ The 4-3 major fit may be only game making
- ❖ Opponents balance without 8-card fit available

This treatment raises an issue: With 11-12 points, how does Responder invite game and which game, the major or NT? There's a treatment which allow Opener to indicate strength and if the raise is based on 3- or 4-cards.

¹ Part of this lesson uses ideas from an online article by Jim Diebel.

2NT Non-Forcing Ask

After Opener makes a simple raise of Responder's major, Responder with 4 cards in the major and 11-12 points, asks about the Opener's major length and strength using a non-forcing 2NT, e.g., 1♦ - 1♠ // 2♠ - 2NT. The table shows Opener's standard replies.

Bid	Meaning
Pass	Minimum with 3 of major
3NT	Maximum with 3 of major
3M	Minimum with 4 of major
4M	Maximum with 4 of major

Opener's minimum is 11-12 HCP; a maximum is 13-14 HCP. Opener's return to 3 of the major denies values for game, i.e. *to play*.

Any other call by Opener, besides those listed in the table, shows a maximum and "values" in the suit bid with a concern for NT. In the above auction, if Opener holds: ♠AQ2 ♥A54 ♦KJ76 ♣42 Opener bids 3♥ showing values in ♥s and no ♣ stopper for a NT game.

Responder uses the 2NT "ask" only when holding 4-cards in the major and 11-12 HCP. In other words, Responder is willing to play in 2NT if Opener is a minimum with a 3-card raise. With a stronger hand, up to 17 balanced, Responder uses a jump to 3NT as a "choice of games." Or, with 5+cards in the major and 11-12 points, Responder invites game by bidding three of the major: e.g., 1♦ - 1♠ // 2♠ - 3♠.

After Interference

If the opponents make a suit bid before Opener's raise, e.g., 1♦ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♣), you can agree with Partner to play *Support Doubles* thru 2♥ to show exactly 3-card support. This agreement is highly recommended. Opener's double or redouble (if the intervening bid was a double) is Alertable. E.g. 1♦ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♣) // X! The double shows exactly 3-card ♠ support. Playing *Support Doubles*, a raise after interference guarantees 4-card support.

If the interference occurs after Opener's raise, e.g., 1♦ - (P) - 1♠ - (P) // 2♠ - (3♣), the 2NT Non-Forcing Ask is off including a X, even though 2NT is available.

Raising Opener's Minor

If instead of any of the above, Responder rebids 3 of Opener's minor, e.g., 1♦ - 1♠ // 2♠ - 3♦!, Responder is forcing to game with an unbalanced hand and 4+♦ (or 5+ if ♣s). However, Responder is not interested in a NT game. Opener only bids NT with 3-card support and the other two suits stopped. This treatment is Alertable.

Quiz 6

You have opened a minor and Partner has responded with a major. Fill in your rebid.

	Your Bid	Your Hand		Your Bid	Your Hand
1a.	1♣ – 1♥ _____	♠ K4 ♥ Q78 ♦ J75 ♣ AKT54	2a.	1♣ – 1♥ _____	♠ A86 ♥ 9874 ♦ AK ♣ Q952
3a.	1♣ – 1♥ _____	♠ AQ83 ♥ KJ98 ♦ 3 ♣ A742	4a.	1♣ – 1♥ _____	♠ K8 ♥ KJ3 ♦ 85 ♣ AQT942
5a.	1♣ – 1♥ _____	♠ 52 ♥ KQ8 ♦ J653 ♣ AKJ9	6a.	1♦ – 1♠ _____	♠ AQ4 ♥ AT52 ♦ Q7654 ♣ 5

In these hands, your Partner has opened the bidding with a minor and the auction proceeds as shown. What is your rebid?

	Your Bid	Your Hand		Your Bid	Your Hand
1b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ KT83 ♥ KQ964 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 5	2b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ AJ83 ♥ KJ75 ♦ KT8 ♣ J6
3b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ T4 ♥ KQ86 ♦ KQ4 ♣ A984	4b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ AQ ♥ T976 ♦ QT4 ♣ AT72
5b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ Q4 ♥ 9854 ♦ 84 ♣ AQ954	6b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – _____	♠ Q64 ♥ KQ84 ♦ T943 ♣ J2

Quiz 7

It is your third bid after opening a minor and supporting Partner's major. Fill in your bid.

	Your Bid	Your Hand		Your Bid	Your Hand
1a.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – 2NT – P —	♠ 43 ♥ Q78 ♦ KT5 ♣ AKT54	2a.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – 2NT – P —	♠ A4 ♥ 9874 ♦ QJ2 ♣ AJ95
3a.	1♦ – P – 1♠ – P 2♠ – P – 3♠ – P —	♠ AQ8 ♥ 86 ♦ K9842 ♣ K74	4a.	1♦ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – 2NT – P —	♠ 8 ♥ KJT3 ♦ AQ85 ♣ K942
5a.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – 3NT – P —	♠ 95 ♥ KT83 ♦ K65 ♣ AKJ9	6a.	1♣ – P – 1♠ – P 2♠ – P – 2NT – P —	♠ AQ4 ♥ AT52 ♦ 5 ♣ Q7654

After opening a minor, your Partner responded with a major and the bidding proceeded as shown. Fill in your next bid. Opponent's bidding is shown in (...).

	Your Bid	Your Hand		Your Bid	Your Hand
1b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P —	♠ AK ♥ KQ9 ♦ J7 ♣ AJT532	2b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – (1♠) —	♠ AJ83 ♥ KJ75 ♦ KT8 ♣ J6
3b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – (1♠) —	♠ T43 ♥ KQ8 ♦ K4 ♣ AQ984	4b.	1♦ – P – 1♠ – P —	♠ AQ3 ♥ AQ97 ♦ QJT94 ♣ A
5b.	1♣ – P – 1♥ – P 2♥ – P – 3♦ – P —	♠ KQ4 ♥ KJT ♦ 84 ♣ AQ954	6b.	1♦ – P – 1♥ – P 1♠ – P – 3♦ – P —	♠ AQ64 ♥ KQ8 ♦ KJT92 ♣ 4