



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(384) Raising Advancer's Suit

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Levels: 5 of 10 (2 of 6)

Robert S. Todd

robert@advinbridge.com

General

When the opponents open the bidding and we interfere, that starts our side's effort to win the contract. If partner, the Advancer, then bids a new suit we know they have values. We need to communicate with them about the strength of our hand as well as the fit we have for their suit. Locating and determining the size of our fit is one of the most important parts of investigating game when the opponents open the bidding.

Advancer's New Suit at the 1-Level

When partner advances our overcall at the 1-level then they show what is usually a 5+card suit (though a good 4-card suit is possible). They also show about 8+ points, assuming that we have the agreement that this bid is forcing. (If your partnership chooses to play this new suit as *Non-Forcing Constructive* then the bid shows about 8 to a bad 12 points).

In this situation, we need a variety of ways to describe a hand with a fit for partner. Since our simple overcall at the 1-level was so wide ranging (about 7 to 17 HCP) then communicating to partner our values is one of our priorities.

Example 1

1♣ 1♦ P 1♠

P ___?

- 2♠ 4-card ♠ (could be Honor third), 7 to bad 12 points (sub-min or min overcall)
- 3♠ 4-card ♠ (could be Hxx), good 12-14 points (sound overcall)
- 4♠ 4-card ♠, 15-17 points (occasionally Hxx) (strong overcall)
- 4♣/4♥ 4-card ♠, 15-17 HCP, shortness in suit bid, *Splinter*

Notice that cuebidding the opponent's suit is not involved in any of our bids where we raise partner. Though we are in a competitive auction, we make a simple raise or jump raise to show support. This is because we are making a second bid and thus cannot have a weak hand.



Advancer's New Suit at the 2-Level

When partner's suit is a new suit at the 2-level then it shows about 10+ points and a 5+card suit, assuming it is forcing for 1-round. We have less space available to describe our hand to partner, but we know that partner has a bit more values.

Example 2

1♣ 1♠ P 2♥
P ___?

- 3♥ 3+card ♥, 7 to a bad 13 points (sub-min, min, or bottom of sound overcall)
- 4♥ 3+card ♥, good 13 to 17 points (top of sound, or strong overcall)
- 4♣/4♦ 4-card ♥, 14-17 HCP, shortness in suit bid, *Splinter*

When partner bids a minor suit, we might need to use a cuebid of the opponent's suit even with a fit for partner's suit.

Example 3

1♣ 1♠ P 2♦
P ___?

- 3♦ 3+card ♦, 7 to a bad 13 points (sub-min, min, or bottom of sound overcall)
- 4♦ 4+card ♦, good 13 to 14 points, highly distributional
- 5♦ 4+card ♦, good hand, highly distributional
- 3♣ *Western Cuebid*, usually good 13+ points, often a ♦ fit, asking for a ♣ stopper.

Rebids After Making a Takeout Double

Another time where we may want to raise the Advancer's suit is when we make a takeout double and then bid again.

Example 4

1♥ X P 1♠
P ___?

Here we have forced partner to bid, and partner showed 0 to a bad 8 points. That means our raises of their suit are all going to be very strong hands.

- 2♠ 4+card ♠, 14-16 points
- 3♠ 4+card ♠, 17-19 points
- 4♠ 4+card ♠, 20+ points
- 4NT Keycard in ♠, 4+card ♠, monster hand
- 2♥ good hand, usually with 3-card support, about 16+ points



If Opener further competes in the bidding, then we have a 2nd takeout double available to show that we have enough values to compete in the bidding, but do not have 4-card support.

Example 5

1♥ X P 1♠
2♥ __?

Here we have forced partner to bid, and partner showed 0 to a bad 8 points. That means our raises of their suit are all going to be very strong hands.

- 2♠ 4+card ♠, 13-16 HCP (competitive with 4+card support and some extra values)
- 3♠ 4+card ♠, 17-19 points
- 4♠ 4+card ♠, 20+ points
- 4NT Keycard in ♠, 4+card ♠, monster hand
- X *good hand, usually with 3-card support, about 16+ points*

Conclusion

When partner, as the Advancer, bids their own suit then we need to take what we know about their hand (expected HCP and length) and combine that with our hand to communicate our side's assets. The problem we face is that we often do not know partner's hand well and our first bid was often very blurry in terms of both strength and shape. If we are fortunate enough to have found a fit, then we should let partner know. But since our initial action (say an overcall at the 1-level) is often very wide-ranging in possible values, then we need to work hard to further describe our hand to partner so they can help us make a decision about how high to drive the auction. Make sure that you do not simply raise partner, jump because you have found a fit. You've got to use all your bidding space to try to communicate both your shape and strength to them.