



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(455) Partnership Bidding: Our Minor Suit Auctions**

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Level: 5 of 10 (2 of 6)

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#### **General**

When the auction starts with a 1-minor opening there are a lot of options for the way that the auction can go. That can mean that we need a lot of agreements to keep the auctions straight. Though there are not a lot of conventions in an immediate response to 1-minor, there can be many more conventions later in the bidding. Another thing to keep in mind is that auctions can get complicated and quickly reach a place that we and partner have not discussed before. It is inevitable that we will encounter one of these auctions. We try to make sure that we do not panic when we do. Many players make the mistake of the “panic pass.” A good way to not do that is to follow *ASBAF – All Strange Bids Are Forcing!* This is a good philosophy for modern bidding. Let’s take a look at some minor suit auctions and make sure that we have some good agreements with partner.

#### **Constructive Bidding**

We can still have some difficult auctions even when the opponents leave us alone.

##### *Example 1*

1♦    1♠  
2♣    3♥

One time that we might have a mixup is when Responder makes a jump on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the bidding. Do we have an agreement about the meaning of this bid?

Most partnerships play 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing to game – so 2♥ would be a game forcing bid. In that case, a jump to 3♥ shows 5-5 shape (at least) and invitational values. This is a good agreement about 2<sup>nd</sup> round jumps.

Here is another tricky one.

##### *Example 2*

1♣    1♦  
1♥    1♠

What does 1♠ show in this auction?



I personally like to play that 1♠ is 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing to game – with or without ♠. But some players like to play this as natural. I prefer to play 2♠ as natural and invitational. This keeps with our agreement above that 2<sup>nd</sup> round jumps are invitational. But the most important thing is that we and partner have an agreement.

4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing is an agreement that can cause a lot of mixups.

*Example 3*

1♦     1♠  
2♣     2♥  
\_\_\_?

2♥ is artificial and game forcing. What do we rebid with 0-4-5/4 or 1-4-4-4?

With a 4-card ♥ suit, does Opener rebid 3♥ or 2NT? This is certainly a partnership agreement. I like to play that 3♥ says “I don’t have a ♥ stopper” and 2NT shows a ♥ stopper – not focus on showing a 4-card ♥ suit in this auction. But there are times that is not always best. This makes it easier to find a ♥ stopper, but harder to find a 4-4 ♥ fit. We should discuss what to do with a 4-card ♥ suit and what a 3♥ rebid shows by Opener.

### Competitive Bidding

Competitive bidding is often even more complicated than constructive bidding. This is especially true when conventions are used in competition.

*Example 4*

1♦     X     1♠     P  
1NT    P     2♣?

What does 2♣ mean in this auction?

Some partnerships play this as natural bid. But I still like to play this as New Minor Forcing – just as I would if the double had never happened.

What about an auction like this one?

*Example 5*

1♦     1♠     2♣     P  
2♦     P     \_\_\_?

What does 2♦ show and what are Responder’s options?

Some partnerships play that the 2♣ bid requires a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid from Responder. But I like to play that it shows 10+ points and does not require a rebid unless Opener shows extra values. So, in this auction Responder can pass a 10-11 pt hand and 3-card ♦ support.



Support doubles can cause a lot of mixups in the bidding as well.

*Example 6*

1♦	P	1♥	1♠
X	P	2♣?	

What does 2♣ show here?

The most important thing is that we and partner are on the same page about when a bid is forcing and when it is not. If there is any confusion, try to find a reasonable bid. But I like to play this is natural, non-forcing, and an offer to play. It should be a hand with only a 4-card ♥ suit, at least a 5-card ♣ suit and about 6-9 pts. Opener's support X forced us to bid again and so we do the best we can by bidding our long suit (a jump to 3♣ should show a similar hand with invitational values).

### **Conclusion**

We open the bidding with 1-minor on a regular basis. Make sure that you put in time with partner to discuss some of the follow-up bidding. It will come up and if you and partner have good agreements, you will be in a much better place for good communication. This is especially true if you try to use a convention in competition.