



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(486) Dealing with 4-Major Jump Overcalls**

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

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#### **General**

When the opponents jump to 4M over our opening bid they apply maximum pressure to us (and partner). These auctions are very difficult! Since we have so little room for error (literally) we need well-defined agreements about the meaning of each of our bids in each of these auctions. We may need to do a lot of guessing about what the right action is, but at least we can have good agreements with partner. Let's develop these agreements by looking at some details.

#### **General Agreements**

Let's begin by examining our high level competitive bidding tools:

- Negative Doubles through 4♥.
- Double of 4♠ is penalty-oriented (not a ♠ stack, but values with a relatively balanced hand)
- 4NT is takeout! (We'll have a better idea of how this works when we see some examples.)
- Very few bids are forcing – Cuebid and 5NT!

#### **Auctions**

We begin by looking at auctions where our side opens 1-minor and we have a negative double available.

##### *Example 1*

1♣      4♥      \_\_?

- Double      Negative (usually 4♠, 11+ points). Sometimes just values, as doubles need to become more flexible at high levels.
- 4♠      5+♠, To Play (10+ points, sometimes need to stretch under pressure)
- 4NT      Usually both minors (5+♦, 4+♣ - often 6-4)
- 5-minor      To Play
- 5♥      Pick a Slam w/ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♥ control and some extra values (mild Grand Slam Try)
- 5♠      Natural, 6+♠, Slam Try – We don't preempt a preempt.
- 5NT      Pick a Slam



### Example 2

1♦ 4♥ \_\_\_?

- Double Negative (usually 4♠, 11+ points). Sometime just values, as doubles need to become more flexible at high levels.
- 4♠ 5+♠, To Play (10+ points, sometimes need to stretch under pressure)
- 4NT Usually both minors (4♦, 5+♣ - usually 4-6)
- 5-minor To Play
- 5♥ Pick a Slam w/ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♥ control and some extra values (mild Grand Slam Try)
- 5♠ Natural, 6+♠, Slam Try – We don't preempt a preempt.
- 5NT Pick a Slam

*Note: We may have to stretch to double with even fewer than 11 HCP if we feel we need to be the one to get into the auction. If we do stretch with fewer HCP, it is good to have "quick tricks" for defense.*

Now we look at auctions where we open 1-minor, and the opponents have taken away our negative double.

### Example 3

1♣ 4♠ \_\_\_?

- Double Card Showing, Penalty Oriented – Expecting partner to pass with most hands.
- 4NT "At Least Two Places to Play!" – Takeout, usually shapely
  - 3-Suited Hand – usually something like 0-4-5-4 OR
  - 2-Suited Hand -- 5+♦, 4+♣ (longer ♦) OR 4+♥, 5+♣ OR 4+♥, 5+♦
- 5-minor To Play
- 5♥ To Play
- 5♠ Pick a Slam w/ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♠ control and some extra values (mild Grand Slam Try)
- 5NT Pick a Slam

### Example 4

1♦ 4♠ \_\_\_?

- Double Card Showing, Penalty Oriented – Expecting partner to pass with most hands.
- 4NT "At Least Two Places to Play!" – Takeout, usually shapely
  - 3-Suited Hand – usually something like 0-4-4-5 OR
  - 2-Suited Hand -- 5+♣, 4+♦ (longer ♣) OR 4+♥, 5+♣ OR 4+♥, 4+♦
- 5-minor To Play
- 5♥ To Play
- 5♠ Pick a Slam w/ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♠ control and some extra values (mild Grand Slam Try)
- 5NT Pick a Slam



Now we look at auctions where we have bid and Major and so have the opponents.

#### Example 5

1♥ 4♠ \_\_\_?

- Double Card Showing, Penalty Oriented – Expecting partner to pass with most hands.
- 4NT “At Least Two Places to Play!” – Takeout, usually shapely
  - 2-Suited Hand – Both minors OR long ♦ with some ♥ (correct ♣ to ♦).
  - Slam Try in ♥ - If we bid 4NT and then bid 5♥ it is a slam try in ♥.
- 5-minor To Play
- 5♥ To Play
- 5♠ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♠ control and some extra values (mild Grand Slam Try) – usually ♥ fit.
- 5NT Pick a Slam

*Note: Some partnerships may agree that the 5♠ cuebid is a Grand Slam Try (with 1<sup>st</sup> round ♠ control agreeing in partner’s opening bid suit - in particular, if partner has opened ♥). This is a good discussion to have with partner before making this bid!*

#### Example 6

1♠ 4♥ \_\_\_?

- Double Negative (11+ points). At least 4-4 minors or occasionally long ♦ with two ♠. Or just values as doubles need to become more flexible at high levels.
- 4NT “At Least Two Places to Play!” – Takeout, usually shapely
  - 2-Suited Hand – Both minors OR Strong Slam Try in ♠
- 5-minor To Play
- 5♥ 1<sup>st</sup> round ♥ control and slam try with ♠ fit.
- 5♠ Slam Try looking for a ♥ control
- 5NT Pick a Slam

### Conclusion

These auctions, where the opponents brazenly attack us with a 4-Major jump overcall, make us face difficult bidding situations. By having a good understanding of how to use double (negative vs. card-showing) and 4NT (takeout), we have a chance to describe our hand to partner. Responder will frequently have to stretch (“Now or Never!” Situation) to compete in the bidding. This will leave us guessing whether to bid a slam or settle for only game. In these auctions, it is important to cut Responder some slack – occasionally we will miss slam, but this lets partner confidently compete when they have shape and are a little bit light on values. Responder should be the one to stretch for slam when they have both a great hand and excellent shape. Keep these ideas in mind and try to survive these difficult auctions!