

Washington bridge league

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we, hereunder, present a copy from their 2012 Jan-Feb bulletin on Major Suit Raises by columnists > Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer. Read original - [Here](#)

MAJOR SUIT RAISES - PART 3

THE GAME FORCING RAISE

The first two parts of this series on Major Suit Raises focused on evaluating hands after partner opened 1 \heartsuit or 1 \spadesuit . We divided hands with support for partner's suit as game forcing, invitational, constructive or simple raises.

Now we want to look at how to bid when we have support and a game forcing hand.

When partner opens 1M (1 of a Major) and you, as responder, also have an opening hand, and you have extra trump support, you can best describe your hand by using Jacoby 2N.

This is a popular conventional bid that conveys a hand with these characteristics:

- 13+ support points;

- No singleton or void in a side suit (assuming you also play Splinter Bids); and,
- FOUR OR MORE card support for opener's major.

The last point is very important. Jacoby 2N is a specific bid that promises 4+ cards in Opener's major. The bid should not be used with only 3 card support. We'll discuss what to do with 3 card support at the end of this article.

Benefits of Jacoby 2N: In some auctions, you and partner may not know until the 4th bid hat together you have game values. And even after that 4th bid, you still may not know the best strain to play the hand. The beauty of Jacoby 2N is that both of you know after only 2 bids that you will play in no less than 4 of your Major.

Value of Nine Card Fit: Volumes have been written about the value of 9+ card trump fits. In a nutshell, having at least nine cards in a suit roughly triples your chance of getting a good trump break. Consider this trump suit: A Q 8 7 3 opposite K 5 4

You play this suit by taking the top three honors. With eight cards, you will get a favorable (3-2) break 68% of the time. (See March-April WBL Bulletin for more on distribution) and probabilities.) That means that 32% of the time you will lose a trump trick.

Now add a 4th trump to responder's hand, giving her K542. The addition of the lowly "2" reduces the probability of losing a trump trick to a mere 10% (the chance of a 4-0 break), substantially lowering the risk of a bad trump break. Additionally, after pulling trump, declarer may be able to use one or more trumps in dummy to ruff side suit losers. For all of these reasons, a Jacoby 2N raise will always promise 4+ card support.

Opener's Second Bid:

Another significant benefit of the Jacoby 2N convention is the wealth of information that Opener can convey about her hand with her second bid. Opener can show a good second five-card suit (4-level bids); Opener can show a singleton or void (3-level bids); or Opener can show relatively balanced hands and pinpoint her HCP range. Here are the specific bids:

Bid	Shows	
4♣ 4♦ (or 4♥ if trump suit is spades)	A good (2 of the top 3 honors) 5 card suit	*these are suggested ranges that can be tweaked by partnership agreement.
3♣, 3♦ or 3 of the OTHER major	A singleton or void in the suit bid	
4 of the agreed major	12-14 points, no singleton or void *	
3 of the agreed major	8+ points, no singleton or void	

Responder can now bid either game or slam with suitable hands, cuebid to show an ace and ask about slam tolerance, especially after a bid that neither showed nor denied extra values, such as a 3-level bid showing shortness, or bid 4NT (Blackwood) if she has sufficient values no suits with two fast losers (i.e., no suit with Qx or worse).

♠AQ853 ♥KQT42 ♦K9 ♣5	Bid 4♥, promising a 5 card suit. Since partner knows about 10 of your cards, she is sure that you hold a singleton or void in a minor. Partner will know immediately how to evaluate her hand and will downgrade with wasted values in the minors such as ♦KJx or ♣QJxx	NOTE: both the Jacoby 2N bid and the follow up bids are alertable. Make sure to alert the bids and explain their meaning to opponents if asked
♠AJT84 ♥T ♦KT53 ♣KQ6	Bid 3♥, showing your heart shortness. Partner, with as little as ♠KQ53 ♥9732 ♦A84 ♣A8, can envision a 6♠ slam being very possible. With ♠9732 ♥KQ53 ♦A84 ♣A8, partner knows that the ♥KQ are not as valuable, and will stop in game. You want low cards opposite partner's short suits; high cards other than the ace are wasted	
♠98643 ♥KQ5 ♦A7 ♣K42	Bid 4♠. You have a minimum hand with bad trumps and no distributional points. Partner, with a very big hand, can still bid on, but you need to warn her not to expect more than a bare opening bid from you.	
♠A8643 ♥KQ5 ♦A7 ♣K42	Bid 3NT. You still have mediocre trumps and no shortness, but you have a very good hand with 16 HCP. Slam would be very good opposite ♠KQ75 ♥J862 ♦K94 ♣AT, losing only a heart if trumps are 3-1 or 2-2 (90%).	
♠AQJ43 ♥KQ5 ♦A7 ♣K42	Bid 3♠. You have 19 HCP. If partner has almost anything useful, you will want to be in 6♠, and 7♠ is not out of the question. Blackwood will keep you out of slam if partner holds ♠KT87 ♥JT ♦KQJ5 ♣QJ8. Even though she has 13 high card points, you are missing two aces. But most other game forcing hands will make slam.	

Finally, what do we do if we do not have 4 card support for partner, but do have 13 or more high card points and 3 card support? We bid another suit, and then jump to game in partner's suit if you are playing Standard American. If you are playing 2/1 Game Forcing you bid a side suit at the two level, and then show support for partner, since you are in a game forcing auction. Opener will know you have only 3 card support since you did not use Jacoby 2N/