

Finding a Fit – The Wrap Up

This will be a summary of all the techniques and tools that have been discussed in the last few weeks. First though, there is one more useful tool to talk about.

Support Doubles

Suppose you open 1♦ and partner bids 1♥. Next player interferes by bidding 1♠.

♠ T 6 2
♥ K J 2
♦ A Q J 8 3
♣ Q 2

Before the interference, you had been planning to bid 1NT. If partner has five hearts, Checkback could be used to find a heart fit.

The opponent's overcall has wrecked this plan. You cannot bid 1NT with no spade stopper.

You could bid 2♦ but then it will be hard to find out if partner has five hearts. Bridge players are ingenious people and they came up with the **support double** for just this situation. A double of the opponent's suit here promises exactly three cards in partner's major.

♠ T 6 2
♥ K J 2
♦ A Q J 8 3
♣ Q 2

West opens 1♦, East responds with 1♥ and South overcalls 1♠. Now, West can show three card heart support with a **support double**. Possibly, North will raise South's spades but East bids game in hearts.

♠ 9 5
♥ A Q 6 4 2
♦ T 7 3
♣ A K 3

Finding a Fit – Rules for Responder

If partner opens one of a major and you have three or more cards in that suit, supporting the suit takes priority over everything else – even if you have a good suit of your own.

Otherwise, the hunt is on to find the best contract. Some rules for responder:

- To make any response, at least six HCP are required.
- To bid at the two level, a five card or longer suit and at least ten HCP are required. With a six card suit, reduce the HCP requirement to nine.
- Bid the longest suit first
- Bid four card suits up the line
- The 1♦ opening promises four diamonds. Four or more diamonds are required to support the suit.
- At least five clubs are required to support that suit. An opening 1♣ promises only two cards but the vast majority of the time, it will be at least three.
- Prefer bidding a major to supporting a minor
- Prefer a NT bid to support for a minor

Finding a Fit – Rules for Opener's Second Bid

If responder has bid a major and you have four or more cards in that suit, supporting the suit takes priority. Some rules for opener's second bid:

- Responder's bid of a new suit is forcing. You should not pass.
- Responder's no trump bid is not forcing. You may pass with a minimum hand.
- Bid the longest suit first
- Bid four card suits up the line
- Prefer bidding a major to supporting a minor
- Prefer a NT bid to minimum support for a minor

Finding a Fit – Forcing Bids

A **forcing bid** is a bid that prohibits partner from passing at the next turn to call. Examples of forcing bids:

- Any bid that shows an unlimited number of HCP. For example, a bid of 1♥ after opener's 1♦ shows any number of HCP from six upwards. It is unlimited.
- Any artificial bid.

Any bid that is limited and natural is **not** forcing. Some examples:

- Any opening bid of one of a suit. These bids are limited to 19 points since stronger hands would open 2♣.
- Any natural no trump bid.
- Any raise of partner's suit.
- Any rebid of your own suit.

Most of the time, a forcing bid only prohibits partner from passing at the **next** turn to call. However, there are some situations where the prohibition exists until game is reached. An example is a positive response to a strong 2♣ opening. Let's say you open 2♣. Partner bids 2♥ showing seven or more HCP. This means the partnership has enough points for game. Neither player should pass until game has been reached.

Once you are in a game forcing situation, a jump to game shows a minimum hand. A more round-about way shows a stronger hand. Say partner opens 2♣ and you bid 2♥ which is game forcing. Partner now bids 4♥. This is **fast arrival** and shows minimum values for the 2♣ opening. A bid of 3♥ shows a stronger hand with heart support and interest in slam.

Slow arrival = **S**trong

Finding a Fit – Opener's Rebid with a Strong Hand

If opener has 16 or more HCP, the strong hand can be shown by:

- Making a jump bid in the original suit. This promises six cards in the suit.
- Making a jump bid in a new suit. This promises five cards in both suits.
- Using a reverse. This is a bid of a new suit that responder skipped. It promises five cards in the first suit and four in the second.

Finding a Fit – Responder's Second Bid

If opener's second bid was 1NT or 2NT, responder can use **Checkback** to ask for more information. This is 2♣ after 1NT or 3♣ after 2NT. It gives opener the opportunity to define strength more clearly and to show three card support for responder's major.

If three suits have been bid, responder can use **Fourth Suit Forcing** to ask for more information. Just as with Checkback, opener can show strength and support for responder's major.

Both Checkback and Fourth Suit Forcing require game invitational values. Opener will make a jump bid if combined values are enough for game.